

**A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE CONCEPT OF DOUBLE
CONSCIOUSNESS IN SELECTED AFRICAN-AMERICAN
AUTOBIOGRAPHIES**

By

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DECLARATION

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I, Lento Mzukisi Jerrey, declare that **“A Critical Investigation of the Concept of Double Consciousness in Selected African-American autobiographies”** is my work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

(MR M. J. LENTO)

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SUMMARY

The study critically investigated the concept of “Double Consciousness” in selected African-American autobiographies. In view of the latter, W.E.B. Du Bois defined double consciousness as a condition of being both black and American which he perceived as the reason black people were/are being discriminated in America. The study demonstrated that creative works such as Harriet Jacobs’ *Incidents in the Life of Slave Girl: Told by Herself*, Frederick Douglass’ *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass*, W.E.B. Du Bois’ *The Souls of Black Folk*, Booker T. Washington’s *Up from Slavery*, Langston Hughes’ *The Big Sea*, Zora Neale Hurston *Dust Tracks on a Road*, Malcolm X’s *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Maya Angelou’s *All God’s Children Need Travelling Shoes*, Cornel West’s *Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud* and bell hooks’ *Bone Black* affirm double consciousness as well as critiqued the concept, revealing new layers of identities and contested sites of struggle in African-American society. The study used a qualitative method to analyse and argue that there are ideological shifts that manifest in the creative representation of the idea of double consciousness since slavery. Some relevant critical voices were used to support, complicate and question the notion of double consciousness as represented in selected autobiographies. The study argued that there are many identities in the African-American communities which need attention equal to that of race. The study further argued that double consciousness has been modified and by virtue of this, authors suggested multiple forms of consciousness.

KEY TERMS

African-American

Autobiography

Double consciousness

Passing

Racism

Gender

Class

Slavery

Reconstruction

Harlem Renaissance

Civil Rights Movement

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DEDICATION

This work is principally dedicated to Gladys Lento, Bomikazi Lento, Akahlulwa Lento, Asathi Lento, Zukiswa Lento, Sipiwo Lento, Phumla Lento, Lillian Lento, Zola Lento, Nontsikelelo Lento, Thandile Lento, Eliz Lento, Zikhona Nandipha Nkubevana Lento, Nosipiwo Gomomo, Phumzile Malambile, Azola Hani, Samkelisiwe Jafta, Minikazi Jafta, and Siyabulela Manqunyana.

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Chapter 1

Critical Interrogation of ideological shifts in the meanings of the concept of double consciousness in the African-American Literature

1.1. Area of Study

The aim of this study is to explore the concept of double consciousness in selected African American autobiographies. To provide a historical context of this study, it is worth mentioning that African-Americans were kidnapped from the African continent and exported to Europe and America. In substantiating the latter, Rodney (2005) claims that “In East Africa and the Sudan, many Africans were taken by Arabs and were sold to Arab buyers. This is known as the ‘Arab Slave Trade’ (Rodney, 2005: 108). The Africans taken to Europe and America were made to become slaves. This massive and enforcement of Africans to the western hemisphere is known as the transAtlantic slave trade. My study is concerned with the fate of Africans in and after the transatlantic trade as depicted in African- American autobiographies. It is import to note that during the voyage to Europe and America, an African was not yet a slave, but a captive. Rodney concurs with the above that “strictly speaking, the African only became a slave when he reached a society where he worked as a slave. Before that, he was first a free man and then a captive” (Rodney, 2005: 108).

Upon the arrival in the foreign lands, Africans were forced to do hard labor to maximize the profits for the white slaver masters. Rodney asserts that “[...] and this was in the interest of European capitalism, nothing else” (2005: 108). The slaves were subjected to all sorts of violence until slavery was abolished in 1845. The abolishment of slavery did not mean good life to former slaves and freedmen as African-Americans were further marginalized and segregated. Segregation and marginalization affected the African-Americans psychologically as they were denied equal opportunities such as education and employment. W.E.B. Du Bois one of the educated African American living during the period of slavery reflected on the painful lives of black people in America and concluded that these blacks were living under a condition “Double Consciousness.” The fact of being black and American did not guarantee civil rights to black people. Thus, blacks were trapped by the slavery and its after-effects. However, not all African

Americans view their lives as being entrapped in what Du Bois described as this two-ness, and the consciousness of being black and American. Some African American creative artists affirm Du Bois's view even as they also seek to modify his view that there seems to be no other identities available to blacks other than being black and American.

Therefore, this study investigates the ideological shifts in the meanings of the concept of double consciousness as depicted in some selected African-American autobiographies. Conceptions of the meanings of double consciousness are manifested in fiction and formed as 'work-in-progress' ever since the time of slavery. The idea of 'double consciousness' refers to being both black and American. In Du Boisian understanding, double consciousness refers to a condition of being black and American in which "One ever feels his two-ness,-an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings" (Du Bois, 1989: 5). It is the condition of double consciousness that describes how black people were subjected to racial segregation. The American society gave no hope that African-Americans would at any time be accepted as human beings and members of the American society. Instead, the American society did not cease to mock black people making blacks accept a white people's belief that black people are an inferior race. The latter made some African-Americans to want to be white and do things like white people. Also some black people did not want to have anything to do with a black race. However, other blacks adopted militant approaches in dealing with the fact of being black and American. These shifts of agency have been under-theorized especially in relation to double consciousness within African-American autobiography.

Critical debates on the significance of spaces of memories in African American literature carried out by African American critics have tended to be descriptive of the physicality of these places of memory without meaningfully engaging the multiple values suggested in these sites. Consequently, an assumption has settled which is that these spaces or places of memories carry meanings that reflect more or less similar ideas shared in black communities. But, Phillis Wheatley's celebration of her condition of captivity as a slave, and her vaunted views that the space of the American plantation represented a

necessary civilizing school for blacks strongly suggests difference in perceptions attached to spaces of memories in African American cultures. This study uses the autobiographical works by Douglass, Jacobs, Du Bois, Washington, Hughes, Hurston, Malcolm X, Angelou, West, and hooks to figure out and re-signify spiritual and physical territories with new and unanticipated meanings for blacks in the period of slavery and after its abolition, as a way to locate the contradictory agency of the Black Atlantic (Gilroy, 1993).

Dixon says that in African American literature, physical and spiritual spaces of memories are both real and invented spaces that allowed African Americans, who were “often considered alienated from mainstream culture” (ibid, 2), to create “alternative landscapes where black culture and identity [could] flourish apart from any marginal, prescribed space”(ibid, 2). Imagined spaces of freedom produce spiritually “conquered spaces, [and] imagined havens” (2) through which black memories of slavery and the struggle against this institution could be imaginatively recreated and immortalized. Spaces of memory have also been understood as liminal and carnival spaces where identities were performed to represent the “changing topography in black American quests for selfhood located [in] alternative places of refuge and regeneration” (Dixon, ibid, xi). African American writers may remember certain physical geographical spaces, linked to the institution of slavery, but their interpretation of the meanings of these places and the memories that they conjure were not the same.

Singh and his fellow researchers note that the meanings of what was described as collective memories of certain remembered places actually had originated from “a vast variety of popular sources”(op cit, 8) within black American communities. Academic work on the literary appreciation of places of memories in African American literature needs to foreground the idea that social and political messages ascribed to historical and African American religious sites captured within the artistic creations of a single author could offer differentiated perceptions in the meanings of these spaces over time.

Within autobiographical works by different generations of black artists in America, critical dialogue and forms of interrogation exist, focusing on how certain places whose meanings would have been thought as settled or stabilized are challenged. Physical

spaces have entered into African American folk imagination and are remembered as notorious sites of slavery and social death. In some artistic works physical and spiritual spaces of memories are re-evaluated, and re-signified with meanings associated values linked to heroic escapes and struggles for freedom by former slaves and their descendants. The struggles over meaning of spaces of memories such as the woods, the wilderness, the Northern American cities and the underground are recurrent themes that are imagined and constructed differently in African American literature.

African-American autobiographies, “novels, narratives and songs reveal significant variations of archetypal patterns in black Americans’ quests to change the land where they were forced to live into a home they could claim”(Dixon, 1987, 3). Singh, Skerrett and Hogan agree and are even more forthright in their belief that different physical places or spaces elicited and evoked differentiated memories among African Americans. Quoting Greene, they argue that African American women like other ethnic women in general in autobiography:

Feel the necessity to “differentiate nostalgia from productive forms of memory.” There are reasons for women not to have much to be nostalgic about, “for the good old days when the grass was greener and young people knew their place was also the time when women knew their place, and it is not a place to which most women want to return”(Greene quoted in Singh, Skerrett & Hogan,1996, 10).

Such candid acknowledgments that African American people do not share or ascribe similar values, and meanings to spaces they may collectively remember in the forms of mountain-tops, the woods, the plantation, the wilderness, the South, and the North require academic research that is systematic in explaining their occurrence in African American autobiography. They prepare the reader not to be surprised when the analysis of the works of a single African American author, a group of male authors or female authors manifests different perceptions about their memories of places once remembered as possessing the value of a usable past imaginatively preserved to restore black identity.

Individual black authors in America manipulate the significance of remembered places to arrive at their own understanding of how the African American past can be related to

the future. If the idea of 'memories of space' should be seen as inherently not meant to yield similar responses among black Americans, then the notion of 'spaces of memory' in African American autobiography is even a more complicated idea. This is because spaces of memories being symbolical exist as songs, cultural values, folktales, written autobiographies and other orally-based non material cultures of African Americans. However, the advantage of thinking of African American autobiography through the trope of spaces of memories is that these can be re-interpreted anew, and stretched in different directions during explication and this can allow a literary critic to yield more than one meaning of the notion double consciousness from these spaces. Such cultural resources have been described by Tony Morrison as forming the basis of "re-memory" that can be deployed to recuperate African American identities because they allow "positive ways of constructing a new identity, even out of the painful experiences of the past" (Morrison in Singh et al, 1996, 7). But the process of remembering one's own experiences is fraught with contradictions. Du Bois argues that African-Americans experience a life akin to what he calls 'double consciousness.' For Du Bois double consciousness is:

a peculiar sensation...this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,-an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (Du Bois, 1989: 5).

In the above passage, firstly, double consciousness is one contested space of memory. But what is remembered is not only the fact of being black and American. Other identities of class, gender, and generation sensibilities manifest in African-American communities. Secondly, as a form of memory of space, autobiography affirms double consciousness but also interrogates the manicheanism of black identities. Thirdly, creative authors rework the staff of self, selves and project these as collective identities.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Slave narratives are representations of personal experiences of the slaves, with allegorical meanings, in the sense of a personal story representing collective aspirations. But slave narratives distinguish themselves from each other through the

manipulation of narrative voice where some prefer emphasising “the separate, and separated, self [others] stresses ties to others” (Petesch, 1989, 24-5). Almost all slave narratives validate collective and common bonds of experiences of pain and quests for freedom. However, the content of the memories remembered in evoked physical and spiritual spaces in autobiographical narratives recall symbolically fractured narratives that question the outside world and their internal worlds in the sense that what they remember is selected, ordered and manipulated from a range of possible narratives. Slave narratives elevate certain expressions of meanings of double consciousness as metaphorical spaces while at the same time suppressing other memories. Male slave narratives Frederick Douglass and Booker T Washington and others imagine comprehensively, patriarchally-defined felt spaces of freedom and self-actualisations that are affirmed and interrogated in female authored autobiographies such as in Harriet Jacobs’ *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by herself*.

When women’s slave narratives engage male constructions of place and memories, the women’s slave narratives emerge with a “new discursive economy”(Gilroy 1993, 69) marked by the refusal to subordinate the particularities of women’s slave experiences of remembering differently, the meanings of life from physical, spiritual, emotional, and moral landscapes of memories. To the totalising language of pain and triumphalist ‘nationalist’ narratives revealed in overly optimistic self-fulfilled expressions such as ‘Up from slavery’(Washington, 1986) or its pessimistic view captured in notions of slavery and social deaths (Patterson, 1985) are questioned for their veracity and sincerity in problematizing double consciousness in autobiography.

In African American women’s slave narratives double consciousness reveals unstable memories and the revisioning of alternative moral communities. Autobiographical narratives of narrating places, personal and collective struggles are completely fractured and recreated as retold fragmented stories that affirms, but significantly depart from the view of double consciousness as merely registering as absolute but dual identity. Women’s autobiographical stories talk about their rise to fame, but their need to be freed from sexual abuse and to be mothers. This is more of a spiritual aspect of memory

and it questions its own ways of creating its own space, thereby providing counter images in the memories of meanings and the meanings of memories imagined by men in the physical and metaphysical geographies of slavery and its aftermath.

1.3. Aim of the study

The aim of this study therefore is to critically interrogate shifts in the depiction of double consciousness in Africa-American autobiographies.

1.4. Research Objectives

This study hopes to

- Clarify the concepts of 'double consciousness' in African-American literature and thought.
- Apply the range of meanings of these concepts on the analysis of autobiography and African-American fiction.
- Evaluate the significance to black life, in the symbolical constructions of African-American communities of meanings attached to double consciousness and autobiographies.

1.5. Research Questions

- What is the theoretical understanding of double consciousness in African-American literature?
- What are the forms through which double consciousness is manifested and modified in African-American autobiographies?
- What are the findings of the authors of these primary texts?

1.6. Justification of the study

Critical studies on African-American autobiography have emphasized the question of race in the formation of cultural identities for black people (Du Bois 1973). Racial conscious has been discussed as if it is absolute. These studies have been significant in linking the race issue to the political economy of the plantation during slavery. However, there is need to re-interpret African-American autobiography and double

consciousness in ways that do not minimize but acknowledge the significance of other dynamic factors such as gender, class and generational differences. Secondly, criticism of African-American autobiography has tended to confirm and not question founding mythologies such as one propagated by Du Bois in which the phenomenon of being black and American is always seen as a hindrance to the spiritual progress of black people. This study revises this view, and emphasizes the point that double consciousness is precisely the spiritual and ideological mechanism that allowed black people to filter different views, and amalgamate cultural identities from different sources in order to sieve new cultural experiences and get by in a hostile American context.

When this perspective is applied to the analysis of autobiographical narratives it also reveals the multiple literary codes that African-American authors deftly used in order to address a wide range of audience, at a time when to testify, -as many former slaves did in front of a white audience – one had to compose the features of one's language in order not to offend former slavers, but persuade as many as possible to support the anti-slavery abolitionist movement. In other words, linguistic double consciousness was in fact, the bi-focal lens through which former slaves created new identities in the face of their former enslavers. Dixon has drawn attention to the presence of spaces of memories such as mountain-tops, the plantation, the wilderness, the Northern cities and the underground in African-American autobiography. However, Dixon's work is extraordinarily optimistic as it ascribes agency of resistance as the only value that was dramatized in the narrative interstices of African-American autobiography. There are several competing consciousnesses or identities in the autobiographical form.

Although my study agrees with Dixon's conclusions, I also seek to modify his conclusions in order to accommodate the contradictory articulation of African American agencies realized in the form of autobiography. For example, the plantation was not only the space of suffering as attested in the case of Douglass. In his autobiography he was able to confront Mr. Covey in that space transforming it to a space of heroic resistance. While the woods, or the wilderness have been given the emblematic meaning of a space outside the control of slave masters, most former slaves died in these wilderness while escaping from the plantation. The dominance of language

theories that emphasize vernacular and ethnic particularities of African American communities (Gates 1988) can help to understand the cultural grammar of the language of slave narratives. However, these theories need to be augmented by a Post-colonial that will reveal the relationship between material existence and the forms through which these realities are conveyed in African American autobiographical narratives.

Post colonialism has been chosen because its multiple versions are flexible and can explain the content of the form of autobiographical narratives as genre (White 1987) while at the same manifesting the political economy of slavery. Lastly, the positivist approach to African-American autobiography has resulted in critics always imagining a coherent and similar poetics from the black writers who were writing from the margin of the slave economy. This study will demonstrate that despite the fact that African American people had common experience of discrimination based on skin, their responses to slavery are ideologically uneven. This point is important to highlight because once it is rendered thinkable that African American communities are not at the same level of consciousness, it become easy to identify that although slavery was the main enemy of black people, some of these black people reproduced unequal relations of oppression in their own communities. The theme of the 'enemy within the African communities' occupies a central place in most of the autobiographical narratives that are analysed in this study. Furthermore, the theme of double consciousness is depicted differently and from different ideological perspective using different cultural fictions of the language of metaphor.

Zora Neale Hurston claims that a simple definition of autobiography is that it constructs private self for public use (2008). This 'construction of private self for public use' emphasises certain aspects of an author's life and the irony is that attempts to countermand other views necessarily result in the suppression of other selves contained in the narrating voice. The 'I' at the centre of autobiography is individualistic and at the same time projects collective identities. The 'I' in self-narrative may attempt to command a coherent narrative of the self but there are potential other selves outside the 'I' that can be in contradiction with the original voice of the self that claims a singular truth. This

paradox encourages a re-reading of the concept of double consciousness in the context of the ever-changing images of blackness created by African-American authors.

Betty Bergland describes autobiography as the detailed complex secular narrative of the author's unfolding mind and fortunes during a considerable part if not the total of his or her life span (1993: 446). Bergland, accentuates the centrality of the author as well as his/her memories of his/her past experiences. Of course memories can be selective based on what the author aims to achieve or aspire to share with the readers. Vambe (2009) appropriates the term "autre-biography or an account of another self" (Coetze in Coullie, Meyer, Ngwenya & Olver 2006: 81) to suggest that accounts of one self can project other selves. The significance of this view to my study is that it suggests the possibility of literary and political repression of certain views that may not be contained in the autobiography even when this form insists on suggesting that the narrating voice is the only authentic voice. The theory of autobiography will be discussed in detail in the extended literature review in chapter 2.

1.7. Literature review

W. E. B. Du Bois' book, *The Souls of Black Folks* (1973) formulated the question of the existence of African American people in America in fundamental ways that have continued to influence approaches to the study of African American literature, history, religion, music. Du Bois controversially posited that the problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color-line. While this might seem obvious from different accounts of African American life - and certainly this is a seamless theme in African-American slave narratives and novels-, Du Bois further believed that in America, African-Americans feel that they are locked in a binary identity; their "two-ness, an America, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two un-reconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body" (1973, 3). For Du Bois this peculiar condition of "double consciousness" (3) is a problem for blacks because they are viewed as inferior. This inferiority complex foisted on blacks make them begin to believe that they are indeed inferior, so that the struggle of African Americans to attain the status of being human is dictated upon and narrowed towards merely "longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self"(4).

These assertions can be said to be true of the ante bellum American context, when African Americans were mocked because of their dark skin and viewed as a source of cheap slave labour. As a result, the experiences of being black in America bred a condition of cultural schizophrenia among African Americans (Khan, 2012). Blacks in America were forced to express their identities through comparison with the white race whose racial achievements were described as the norm and standard of civilized beings. The cultural alienation embedded in the idea of being black in the American context resulted among the black people in the development of a double consciousness. This 'two-ness' that blacks were made to feel in America, in turn, bred a variety of morbid symptoms in African Americans. Some blacks took their blackness as a sign of being an abject object, poor and came to believe that, indeed, they were not naturally endowed with the assumed positive intellectual gifts that white people were thought to have. Other blacks wallowed in self-hate and worked hard to be accommodated in the exploitative American capitalist system. The phenomenon of passing from being black into identifying with white values, white skin and white cultures is dramatized in James Weldon Johnson's autobiography called *The autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* (1975). The theme of self-hate in being black is also present in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1986).

At the heart of Du Bois' thesis is the fact that 'double consciousness' is a condition of cultural anomie. These forms of alienation underline the marginality of African Americans. In the 21st century, Du Bois' understanding of the problem of the color line must be readjusted to take on board new challenges and gains within African American communities (Khan, 2012). Racism remains one of, but not the only intractable problem for black people. Poverty, class differentiations and gender struggles among African American communities are problems that can no longer be subsumed under the question of race. These problems have their autonomous existence and solutions to them do not necessarily lie in resuscitating originary myths associated with the cultural authenticity of blackness.

Furthermore, the idea of double consciousness as merely a narrative denoting loss of controlling processes of self-identity-making cannot be entirely be justified. Instead of

double consciousness revealing conditions of cultural schizophrenia, the concept has been re-appropriated in some autobiographies where it has been deployed to suggest the capacity and agency in characters to “conquer spaces, project “imagined havens” through “geographical metaphors for the search, discovery, and achievement of self.”(Dixon, 1987, 5). Singh, Skerrett and Hogan add that “many Americans of African descent might see their double consciousness today as a useful bifocal lens, and not as the crippling diplopia of the past” (1996, 6). In African-American autobiography, ‘double consciousness’ is depicted as a volatile cultural space where progressive interpretations of the agency of people such as African Americans can be experienced. Double consciousness is, to use, a famous phrase from Fanon, a “zone of occult instability”(Fanon, 1963, 83) where it is registered the dislocations within identities created by both the dominant social groups as well as the subaltern ones (Madsen 1991, 125).

In other words, in place of two-ness of identities, African Americans manifest and can command multiple identities. With plenitude of identities, African Americans are not grooved; they can use multiply cultural sieves to understand their positionalities in a fluxing world. These radical shifts in interpreting double consciousness of African Americans in the Black Atlantic open new ways of thinking about senses of African American communities and how these are given narrative forms in autobiographical narratives (Khan, 2012). Rethinking ‘double consciousness’ must surely now mean something more than defining blackness in simple terms.

Stuart Hall’s view in ‘New Ethnicities’ (1995: 223-227) is that blackness is not a fixed identity. Politically, the term black was ‘coined as a way of referencing the common experience of racism and marginalization’ of black experience. In the first moment, ‘The Black Experience’, as a singular and unifying framework based on the building up of identity across ethnic and cultural difference between the different communities, became ‘hegemonic’ over other ethnic/racial identities’(Hall 1995: 223). In the American and British racialised contexts, the idea of blacks as having a single idea created ‘counter position of ‘positive’ black imagery (ibid). It also created ‘necessary fiction’ which worked with and through difference so that in the place of the bad old essential white subject, the new essentially good black subject was born’ (ibid: 223).

Hall's perspective privileges the idea of viewing African American community as a cultural construction that cannot be defined through a single meaning expressed in culturally absolute terms. This understanding of African American agency informs this present study because it pictures African American experiences in America as diverse and its literature as bound by a common thread of fighting socio-economic, political and racial forms of discriminations. Gilroy argues, - as I do in this study – that African American slave narratives, their songs and novels constitute a “counterculture” (1-40) to American forms of modernity whose roots are deep in slavery.

But, Gilroy also directs readers' attention to the fractal patterns that characterize the ideology and styles of African-Americans' use of autobiographical narratives in the old and new spaces of memories in America. In other words, this study subscribes to Gilroy's view above, and also makes use of Hall's revealing insight that the:

“end of innocence” or “the end of the innocent notion of the essential black subject” means blackness cannot be grounded in a set of fixed trans-cultural or transcendental racial categories. It cannot, as well, habitually be mapped out as an expression of a culture plotted between “high and low; resistance versus incorporation; authentic versus inauthentic; experiential versus formal; opposition versus Homogenization (Hall 1992:21-33).

There are simply not only two thoughts carried in the head of an individual African American, or within a community African Americans, but several thoughts; not merely any two souls, but multiple ones. The resolutions to African American problems in literature - as in life - are not simplistically reducible to ‘irreconciled strivings’ as Du Bois believed. Literary critics have revealed the effects of Du Bois' essentialising theory on African American literature because critics believe that there are a variety of views and spaces upon which black agency is performed (Khan, 2012). The residual trace of cultural absolutism in Du Bois formulation of African-American lived experiences has to be modified in the face of evidence showing that African American communities can in fact live with, and manipulate double consciousness to their own advantages. African American slave narratives and fiction is precisely the space to explore how the black people's multiple subjectivities are dramatized.

It is of immense benefit to refer to African American communities in the plural because African Americans have harnessed, and engaged the fact of blackness from diverse sources. Apart from emphasising the “fractal patterns of cultural and political exchange” (1993, 15) that richly endows the experiences of black peoples in Africa, Gilroy foregrounds complicated cultural nexus based on negotiated relations of “dependency and antagonism” (Ibid: 22) between African-Americans autobiography and American capitalism. When black cultural identities in America are recognized as existing “both inside and outside the West” (Gilroy 1993: 30), this helps one anticipate, not one, but a variety of spaces of memories in African American communities that they draw on when imagining new literary and cultural communities for their future in America. Senses of communities (Khan, 2012) in African American creative imaginations are linked to “images of physical and spiritual landscapes that reveal over time a changing topography in black American quests for selfhood...from early slave songs” (Dixon1987, xi) and also to modern varieties of the forms African American popular cultures. If it is possible to speak of ‘senses’ of ‘communities’ flowing from senses of different cultures within lived experiences of African American people, then, an entirely new approach to exploring places or spaces of memories and memories of spaces in autobiographical narratives is justified.

Slave narratives, and autobiographies are some of the crucial sites upon which processes of remembering dismembered multiple identities of African Americans have been performed. Gilroy (1993) cautions us that when approaching African American slave narratives we need not limit our assertions to the statements such as that black culture is only the counterculture to American modernity. The African American expressive narrative forms resist Americanism, and also acknowledge “growing cleavages within the black communities” (Gilroy 1993: 32) in their diverse understandings of what it means to be black and African American in the United States of America. There is, therefore, no community of African Americans ideologically bound by uniform values in America. In short, the theory of the “Black Atlantic” anticipates the versions of post-colonial theories used in this study because they emphasize multiplicity of black subjectivities in African-American literature and society that continue to assist in explaining some important aspects of black autobiographies in America. Viewed from

this perspective, autobiography could be considered as an expression of an “anti essentialism” (Gilroy, 1993: 99).

The common feature among African American experiences during slavery was that they wrote to tell the world about the cruelties of slavery, emphasising the need for freedom. With regard to this longing for freedom, Antony Appiah concurs and says that:

The major goal of these authors was to speak for black Americans, to America and, in particular to white America. Because these narratives were addresses to an America that did not believe in the ability of the Negro, the authors thought of themselves, not only as witnesses to the condition of black people, but as exemplars- living, breathing and above all, writing refutations of the slanders of racism (Appiah, 1990: ix).

However, Mitchell (1981) claims that the narrativity is based on projecting some values as natural while suppressing other values as unwanted. In the context of slavery, this problem faced African American writers because, according to Mitchell:

What we call “Mythic” narrative is under no obligation to keep the two orders of events distinct from one another. Narrative becomes a problem only when we wish to give to *real* events the *form* of story. It is because real events do not offer themselves as stories that their narrativization is so difficult (Mitchell, 1981: 4).

In other words, African American authors also face the problem of translating what they know into telling of lived experiences that had been characterized by extreme forms of violence. The contradictions of narrating double consciousness are further discussed in chapter two that provides extended review of literature on the relationship between double consciousness and autobiography.

1.8. Theoretical framework of the study

Afro-centric theories of literature have been used on African American literature. The more flexible of these theories have helped to explain the emergency of critical practice by black critics (Gilroy 1993). These critical practices have shown that black people in African American fiction struggled against slavery. However, other versions of Afro-centric theories have explained black American literature in essentialistic terms, often

suggesting, baselessly, that orality is *sui generis* to African American communities of writers (Asante 1989). The ascendance of Gates' theory of the '*signifying monkey*' affirmed the significance of vernacular cultural resources in the shaping of black aesthetics. Though these black- focused theories attempt to carve a discursive space outside Euro-centric perspectives on black art, Afro-centric theories have tended to underestimate the variety of responses to slavery engendered by African American writers.

This study is based on postcolonial theories of literature. There is not one version of postcolonial theory and as such this study deliberately filters, selects and justifies the use of some theoretical strands or perspectives within the larger body of postcolonial theory. Young argues that the explanatory potential of postcolonial theory can be favored in analyzing literature because the theory

involves issues that are often the preoccupation of other disciplines and activities, particularly to do with the position of women, of development of ecology, of social justice, of socialism in its broadest sense. Above all, postcolonialism seeks to intervene, to force its alternative knowledges into the power structures of the west as well as the non west (2003, 7).

Other than simply helping to explain power relations, and how hegemonic discourses are contested to insinuate new values and political reorganization of society, postcolonialism also emphasizes that symbolical representation is a battle field where images clash for cultural supremacy. This view is endorsed by Stuart Hall for whom "how things are represented and the 'machineries' and regimes of representation", play a formative, not simply an expressive or reflective, place in the "constitution of social and political life" (Hall, in Bobo, 1992, 66).

Since postcolonial theory manifests itself in multiple versions, the theory is eclectic. One is able to apply postcolonial feminism that helps explain patriarchal power, gender inequalities and how women fight these sources of oppression (Boehmer, 1995). African-American black female scholars such as Jacobs, Hurston, Angelou, and hookshave applied their minds in order to reveal not only how women are oppressed, but also, how women form political agency manifested through contesting patriarchal systems and capitalism. Angela Davis is emphatic in her belief that African American

women writers' "agenda for women's empowerment [is] unequivocal in its challenge to monopoly capitalism as a major obstacle to the achievement of equality" (1984, 14). A postcolonial theory that pays critical attention to the material injustices that cause women to suffer can easily be extended to address other social evils such as the analysis of the source and impact of "sexism, homophobia and racism"(ibid, 12) that undermine the efforts by women of color to realize their freedom.

The second strand of postcolonialism useful to this study allows one to recover the history of the oppressed that systems of injustices have worked to suppress and bury. This version of post colonialism emphasizes the need to re-appropriate devalued African American folk wisdom (Vambe, 2004) in ways that re-establishes "a restorative connection with that which colonialist discourse had denied – the internal life of the colonized, their experience as historical actors" (Boehmer, 1995, 195). In this formulation, the emphasis shifts from centering the activities of the dominant classes towards valorizing the agency of women and men who fight oppression. As Elleke Boehmer suggests, in postcolonial creative works of art

"occupation and settlement plotted from the colonial centre to the colonies have been supplanted by journeys from the hinterland to the city – with the extra inflection of the final moment of homecoming and return... Incorporating indigenous cultural material, defiant of Western authority, the postcolonial quest seeks mastery not in the first instance over land or other peoples but history and self (ibid, 202).

But the process of recovering self-identities for African American people is not an easy one that can simplistically be plotted on a linear continuum of resistance. Contesting "bruted existence" (Petesch, 1989, 28) can initiate dialogic processes that makes possible "incorporation as well as resistance" (Pechey, 1989, 54).

Critical postcolonial theory rejects assertions based on assumptions that it is possible to retrieve from the human imagination intact identities from the past. Power relations in the post colony such as America "cannot simply be perceived as a relationship of resistance or collaboration but it can best be characterized as illicit cohabitation, a relationship fraught by the very fact of the rulers and the ruled having to share the same living space"(Mbembe, 1992, 19). This understanding of the politics of self-writing is

useful to this study that refuses to simplify or romanticize the historical agency and processes through which African Americans have engaged their oppressors. Colonial violence that dehumanizes ordinary people is not always responded to through the use of liberating violence. Some of the ordinary people can succumb to the “feeling of inferiority of the colonized that becomes a correlative to a feeling of superiority” (Fanon, 1967: 93) among oppressors. This turns into a danger when these feelings are not effectively challenged in the works produced by those whose works purport to be fighting oppression.

The third version of post-colonialism used in this study also raises questions related to the reliability of narratives and the processing of narrating. The post-colonial theory applied in this study acknowledges the difficulties of “translating knowing into telling” (White, 1987) as a big problem for writers. It is a problem that suggests that in any act of narrating, some ‘facts’ are consciously or unconsciously suppressed during selecting and ordering of poetic or narrative imagery. In the words of Depelchin in the act of rewriting historiography “silences are facts which have not been accorded the status of facts” (2005: 4). On the other hand, the ‘incompleteness’ of autobiographical narratives can be of immense advantage to an artist who perceives history as open ended. The symbolical instability of imagery can then, in those situations, allow a conducive literary environment to interpret the meaning of a work of art without suggesting that the meaning[s] arrived at are the only ones, that the work of art can yield at all times.

In other words, all narrated past memories can be reinterpreted differently and in different spaces and times. This can present an “occasion for a subversive revision of the dominant version of history; it gives voice to a text muted by dominant historical referents; and it makes possible an imaginative invention of a self beyond the limits of a historical representations available to the ethnic subject” (Palumbo-Liu, 1996, 211). Post-colonial theory thus pays attention to the slippages in meanings within metaphors, a situation that complicates attempts to subvert dominant history and values via stable narrative. Reconstructing absolute identities of the collective and the self from memories that shape discourses of freedom for the African-American communities is constrained by the fact that narrating involves deletion, distortion and omission.

And, the paradox of creating images of counter-memory in fiction is that “to carve out an area for revision...[to] dis-place history...such destabilization of the dominant history necessitates a preliminary critique” (ibid, 211) of meanings contained in the new images, so created. Bakhtin adds that the effects of the double-voicedness or heteroglossia in the language of metaphors and images addresses, “simultaneously two different intentions: direct intention of the character who is speaking and the referenced intentions of the author (1981, 324). In short, the main attraction for applying post-colonial theory is that the theory can explain how conceptions of double consciousness as ‘memory of space, and the space of memory in black American art’ involve self-creating performances using metaphors of identities that can “reverse special values and invert directions for upward mobility” (Dixon, 1987, 4) while affirming “double consciousness as a useful bifocal lens, and not as the crippling diplopia of the past” (ibid: 4).

1.9. Research method and methodology

This study is textual analysis of selected African American autobiographical narratives. By virtue of that, the method that is going to be employed in this study is qualitative method. Qualitative methods direct the researcher to be interested in the ways people make meaning and sense of their lives, experiences and their structures in the world. A qualitative method enables the critic to reveal contradictions viewed as representative of the spirit of an era in the content of creative works under study. Focusing on variation and deviations in creative voices can ensure production of multiple narratives, from which competing meanings of life can be secured (Bradley 1992). For Guba (1981) the major test of the validity and dependability of a qualitative method is its applicability by which is meant whether or not the method satisfies the criterion of fittingness and transferability. Maritz and Visagie argue that qualitative research methods satisfy this criterion of transferability when the findings fit or can be used to explain contexts “outside the study situation that are determined by the degree of similarity or goodness of fit between two contexts (2006: 44). These insights are useful to my study whose main aim is to rethink notions of history, space, identity and memory in African-American autobiographical art.

One of the strengths of qualitative method especially in relation to my study is that it interprets data that has everything to do with the experiences of the people. Stake (2010) concurs with the latter view as he asserts that “Qualitative researchers seek data that represent personal experience in particular situations” (Stake, 2010: 88). In the case of my study, those human experiences are the experiences of slavery, racial segregation and marginalization of black people in America. An additional strength of qualitative method is that it gives a researcher an opportunity to interpret data and draw conclusions based on the data available and the he or she thinks. And in substantiating the latter, Minichiello and Kottler (2010) argue that “Qualitative researchers believe that there is no fixed way of thinking about the world and that different people can experience the same events but think about them very differently” (Minichiello and Kottler, 2010: 16). In view of the above, Minichiello and Kottler further gives an example to make sense of what they are saying in the latter quote “As one example, sex workers and clients can be engaged in the exact same physical activity (having sex) yet interpret the experience quite differently” (Minichiello and Kottler, 2010: 18).

Qualitative methods however, have also weaknesses. Stake (2010) perceives the subjective nature of qualitative method as a weakness as he argues that “Qualitative research is subjective. It is personalistic” (Stake, 2010: 29). One disagrees with Stake given that being subjective could be viewed as both a strength and weakness. It could be the strength in that it would be a way of displaying different and independent thinking. It can also be a weakness because it might be in conflict with other people’s thinking. Another weakness is that a researcher has no time to interview the authors who are still alive and who died. This makes sense and relevant to my study as some of the authors are no long alive. Even those who are alive are not accessible but their works which represent them.

1.10. Chapter delineation

Chapter 1 discusses the background of the study, outlines the objectives and aims, describes the research problem. The chapter justifies the study, gives brief literature review, outlines and explains theoretical framework. This chapter further discusses the

theoretical framework, literature review and research methods used in the study. A brief chapter overview is also given.

Chapter two will focus on an extended literature review. This chapter will interrogate the secondary literature and the reason for that is to demonstrate a body of works previously published in relation to the subject of double consciousness. This chapter will clarify the gap in scholarship on the meanings and implications of uncritically endorsing Du Bois' concept of double consciousness. The chapter provides a narrative bridge that emphasises continuities and discontinuities in African-American perceptions of their identities as represented in the form of the autobiography.

Chapter 3 explores Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. It underlines the significance of physical space of the plantation, the wilderness and the North American cities as places where forms of "double consciousness" are appropriated and redeployed to suggest multiple identities of the self and collective that go beyond the diplopia of slavery. The chapter explores the linguistic strategies that Douglass uses to convert a 'narrative of loss' into one that favours but, complicates meanings of memories, and double consciousness as captured in African-American imagination. Chapter three also interprets Harriet A. Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by herself*. The chapter views the various humiliations, including tortures, rapes, and lashes visited on the body of Harriet Jacobs as a slave, as constructing a dossier or counterargument in support of the abolition of slavery. The body of the slave woman is an abject, speaking of perpetual vulnerabilities that if taken metaphorically belie the desire for freedom. The human female body is imaged as space of contradictory memories that simultaneously affirm and provide counterpoint to characterizations of women's relationship to the meanings of physical and spiritual spaces of memories as portrayed in male authored slave narratives. This analysis prepares further ground to refuse essentializing black art, and experiences of place and memory.

Chapter four focuses on Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery*. The chapter questions Du Bois' notion of the 'Talented tenth'. Unlike Douglass, for whom the

plantation was brutalizing but also providing the necessary impetus to acquire the slave master's language for self-expression, Washington rose from a slave child during the Civil War, got education at Hampton University, and established Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Washington's narrative resonates with some aspirations of black people. His emphasis that black people should acquire practical skills in life, and in order to pull themselves, as a race, questions the build-up of a culture of entitlement that blacks feels America owes. *Up from Slavery* is living evidence that complicates notions of resistance build around visible, organized political movements such as were to be expressed through the Black Panther movement. I argue here that Washington's autobiographical narrative compromises black people's quest for intellectual pursuits and triggered a critique for W.E.B Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk* where he argues that:

“This is an age of unusual economic development, and Mr. Washington's programme naturally takes an economic cast, becoming a gospel of Work and Money to such an extent as apparently almost completely to overshadow the higher aims of life” (Dubois, 1989:43).

If Washington's life narrative is viewed as pacifying black people as Dubois argues, then the complexity of Washington's slave narrative is its ways of simultaneously expanding and narrowing the meanings of intellectual, cultural and moral spaces that black people could re-live. The narrative demonstrates the problems of the “trapped tenth”, whose relation to the institutions of slavery were one of “dependency and antagonism” (Gilroy 1993, 48) for an emerging elite class of blacks who liked to view themselves as “progressives and the [co-opted]” (West 1992, 698). This ‘postmodern crisis of black intellectuals’ (ibid, 688-705) characterizes the articulation of form and content in Du Bois' book, *The Souls of Black Folk*. It is in this book that Du Bois coins and elaborates the concept of double consciousness. This study will argue that Du Bois also narrows black identities and that the author privileges race in a way that underplayed other identities of gender, class, and generational differences within African-American communities.

Chapter five focuses on Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston. In Hughes' *The Big Sea*, the personal experiences of racism in the American society which compelled

Hughes to travel the world in search of good life explains the plight of black people in the American society. Through this narrative, Hughes successfully showed and echoed Du Boisian proclamation that the “The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of a color line” (1989: 13). Zora Neale Hurston’s *Dust Tracks on a Road* is another portrayal of the plight of black people which is characterized by racism. Interestingly, Hurston further adds the dimension of female oppression to show the dynamics of the changes the African-American communities.

Chapter six focuses on Malcolm X and Maya Angelou. If the documentary impulse in conventional African American autobiography makes use of verifiable and “*knowable sets of facts*”(Smith, 1992, 56) expressed in memories embedded in physical spaces, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* uses the cultural fictions embedded in collective and individual dreams, the folktale mode and other pneumatic forms such as fantasy that are borrowed from the African American vernacular imagination to question constructs of memories of physical and spiritual places and the meanings ascribed to these places in male African American writings. In contrast in *All God’s Children need Travelling Shoes*, Angelou’s spiritual narratives are fissured; black female experiences are depicted as spaces of remembrance of the iniquities of racial segregation within African-American patriarchal communities.

Chapter seven focuses on Cornel West and Bell Hooks. West’s *Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud* depicts West’s life from childhood up to he is now. It recounts West’s racial experiences and how he managed to be a professor, preacher, and singer in a racist society where black people are not given opportunities to empower themselves. West also touches on the theme of politics and sexuality which seem to be some of the challenges of African-American communities. Bell Hooks’ *bone black: memories of girlhood* dwells on racial segregation which is an obstacle in the advancement of the black people. Like other female authors, Hooks adds a female dimension. Hooks is distinguishable at the same time from other female authors because of her fearless approach to sexuality and gender. Hooks’ courage to confront gender and sexuality suggest that there are many problems in the African-American communities which need to be attended to.

In post-colonial terms, history is the recognition of multiple temporalities. However, it is in autobiography that one can create a language that captures the “unnamed and unnamable”(Grewal, 1996, 142), to show that narratives are not always coherent with meanings that have settled for all times, because these individual narratives by African American authors also reveal the “crevices of the self” (ibid, 159) through characterization. It shall be argued that if autobiographical narratives aspire to give form to a story with a well-made beginning, middle, and end, signaled by closure in individual freedom, the fictive dimension of autobiography is that it forces one to multiply interpretive meanings of the concept of double consciousness. Each of that meaning can be viewed as open-ended to anticipate the possibilities re-interpreting new identities emerging from analysis of double consciousness within black communities.

Chapter eight is the conclusion of the study. It ties the arguments made and recommend the direction for future studies on the subject of memories of space, the theoretical debates on spaces of memory and double consciousness in African-American literature.

Chapter 2

'Double Consciousness' and double identities in autobiographies: A Literature Review

2.1. Literature Review

The aim of this chapter is to provide an extended literature review. This will be done by explaining the concept of double consciousness, linking it to the autobiographical form. In one of his essays "Of our spiritual Strivings" published in *Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B. DuBois coined the concept of "Double Consciousness" and regarded being black and an American as a hindrance to the progress of the black race. In explaining this "Double Consciousness", Du Bois claims that it is this two-ness that made blacks be seen and certainly sometimes see themselves as inferior resulting in blacks "often wooing false gods and invoking false means of salvation, and at times has even seemed about to make them ashamed of themselves" (1989: 6). Being black has also resulted into African-Americans being denied access to education, employment, freedom, and racially discriminated. Racism has made some blacks to believe that really they are an inferior race and that their white counterparts are a superior race. This chapter seeks to reveal how double consciousness should be viewed as a concept with many meanings.

This chapter also seeks to build confidence, self-consciousness in African Americans and inspire them to empower themselves and make use of opportunities available in the American society as depicted in most of the autobiographies under study. This chapter also attempts to create awareness of the paradox of double consciousness. Most critics erred in uncritically under evaluating the potential of black consciousness to create alternative meanings embedded in the autobiography. The chapter argues, that Gilroy's (1993) characterising of double consciousness as *Janus faced* is a significant break from the Du Boisian view of double consciousness as exemplifying a negative dialectic of discursive/ideological entrapment of resistance within the voices of black people. The chapter discusses how double consciousness in America manifested multiple selves.

2.2. Introduction

The history of the African Americans may seem obvious given the nature and the attitude of the American society especially in relation to racial segregation from the Trans-Atlantic slave Trade to Post-Civil Rights Movement epoch. Slave narratives have been used as the suitable tools for individuals to recount their own personal stories under slavery in the American society. Winifred Morgan states that life under slavery created diverse experiences, and imposed servitude on blacks (1994).

Slave Narratives such as those of Frederick Douglass, Booker T Washington, Harriet Jacobs, Harriet Beecher Stowe and others received a warm welcome from the Anti-Slavery movements and organizations that showed disapproval of slavery and racism. Although slavery finally came to an end late in the 19th century, that did not guarantee freedom from racial discrimination. The continued conditions of marginalisation of blacks, ironically, contributed to the emergence of the Harlem Renaissance. Lewis (1994) viewed Harlem Renaissance as:

[...] a somewhat cultural nationalism of the parlor, institutionally encouraged and directed by leaders of the national civil rights for the paramount purpose of improving race relations in a time of extreme national backlash” (Lewis, 1994: xiii).

One of the recurring themes of the period was racism as the phrase improving race relations” suggests. Lewis (1989) adds that “[...] they were promoting a culture of comity and understanding that would transform a racist nation” (Lewis, 1989: xvi). Lewis above suggests that black people were victims of racism as they found themselves being subjected to all forms of segregation. Dubois claimed that ‘The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line’ (Du Bois, 1989: 13) arose from these contexts. Other themes were the quest for spiritual freedom- and were expressed through arts, painting, poetry, and autobiography which are major genres for self-actualisation.

Several generations of the African Americans across the African American history have written in various literary genres to resist and narrate to the world these racial discriminations. These genres vary from poetry, novels, short stories, plays, autobiographies and music. However, this research will focus on autobiographies written by African Americans. This research seeks to investigate the concept of ‘Double

Consciousness' in the African American autobiographies. Each epoch will be represented by two analysed autobiographies. The epochs are starting from the Antebellum period characterised by slavery, Reconstruction, Harlem Renaissance, Civil Rights Movement, up to the Post-Civil Rights epoch. The depiction of the concept of 'Double Consciousness' will be thoroughly investigated in the African-American autobiographies under study.

The *Narratives of Frederick Douglass (1845)* by Frederick Douglass and *Incidents in the life of a Slave Girl (2008)* by Harriet Jacobs will be explored under the antebellum period. Langston Hughes' *The Big Sea (1993)* and Zora Neale Hurston's *Dust Tracks on the Road (2006)* focuses on the Harlem Renaissance, while Malcolm X's *Autobiography of Malcolm X (1999)* and Maya Angelou's *All God's Children need Travelling Shoes (1986)* represent the Civil Right Movement epoch. Finally, under Post-Civil Rights Movement, Cornel West's *Brother West: Living and Loving out Loud (2009)* and Bell Hooks' *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood (1996)* are analysed.

2.3. Defining autobiography

It may seem obvious that autobiography is the life story of an individual written by him or herself. However, there are various definitions of autobiography put in different ways but saying the same thing about what autobiography is or can be. Zora Neale Hurston for instance in *The Cambridge Introduction to Zora Neale Hurston* claims that a simple definition of autobiography is the construction of private self for public use (2008).

This 'construction of private self for public use' suggests that an individual or an author documents information about him or herself which is about his/her life experiences to the successful individual for public consumption. This information is meticulously selected to fit the purpose of documenting one's past experiences. This process emphasises certain aspects of an author's life and the irony is that attempts to countermand other views necessarily result in the suppression of other selves contained in the narrating voice. Stanley (1992) in the *The auto/biographical* concurs with Hurston and further emphasized the fact that in order for a genre to be seen as an autobiography, it has to focus on an individual self. The 'I' at the centre of autobiography

is individualistic and at the same time projects collective identities. The 'I' in self-narrative may attempt to command a coherent narrative of the self but there are potential other selves outside the 'I' that can be in contradiction with the original voice of the self that claims a singular truth.

Bergland describes autobiography as the detailed complex secular narrative of the author's unfolding mind and fortunes during a considerable part if not the total of his or her life span (1993: 446). Bergland emphasises the centrality of the author as well as memories of his/her past experiences. Of course memories can be selective based on what the author aims to achieve or aspire to share with the readers. Vambe (2009) appropriates the term "autre-biography or an account of another self" (Coetze in Coullie, Meyer, Ngwenya & Olver 2006: 81) to suggest that accounts of one self can project other selves. The significance of this view to my study is that it suggests the possibility of literary and political repression of certain views that may not be contained in the autobiography even when this form insists on suggesting that the narrating voice is the only authentic voice.

In fact, Agamben (1999) expands the notion of autobiography as witness and archive and underlines the aporia at the centre of autobiography as testimony. Agamben's view is that there is no one to one relationship between experience and how it is captured through language. What is implied in this view is that the language of autobiography can understate or exaggerate certain identities in order to project certain selves at the expense of other selves. This approach to autobiography is useful in my study that explores different interpretations of double consciousness in African-American autobiography because the above view suggests that one who witnesses, or participates in an experience can enjoy the narrating power of what Chennels calls the "authority of presence" (2009: 98-114). However, it will be argued in my study that this authority of presence can be contested by other narratives from other witnesses. In other words, autobiography can suggest more meanings than what is implied in mundane experience and interpretation of double consciousness in the context of African-American lives.

2.4. Theoretical representation of an autobiography

Both definitions of autobiography concur that it has to hub on the individual self. Javangwe (2009) argues that “The self is the subject that presides over its own creation, over its own birth, though not in contradiction to the other selves imposed by society” (Javangwe, 2009: 42). The self in this case is the author telling the reader about his or herself especially the previous experiences and memories related to the author. Rubin (1986) for instance, sees the self as the multifaceted mental structure that includes the ego, self-schema, and bits of long term memory which is associated to the ego-self, with some of the examples including personal memories, generic personal memories, and autobiographical facts (1986). These views attest to the significance of the self when writing an autobiography. But, can the self be trusted as recounting the truth? How sincere is the self especially in articulating these memories and experiences?

Writing about the sincerity of narrating individual self, Marcus (1994) avers that if the auto-biographer is sincere in trying to understand the self and to explain that self to others, then the autobiographical objective turns out to be accepted as a sombre one (1994). This further emphasises what really constitutes an autobiography without which cannot be regarded as an autobiography. The notion of autobiographical objective reminds one of Anthony Appiah (1990) where he argues that the main aim of an autobiography is to create the author-protagonist’s presence as an independent agent whose experiences and life matters to every reader (1990: x).

An example one may use is that of slave narratives where the experiences and life of the author matters to everyone. The cruelties to which the slaves were subjected to and their response to slavery which led to the end of slavery really matter to every reader. Matlack (1979) concurs that the finest recognized and most influential slave narrative ever written in America is that of Douglass because about five thousand copies of its publication were sold in 1845 within four months (1979: 15). This does not only tell how much people trust and how much they value an autobiography. Of course Frederick Douglass is just an example and a microcosm of the entire genre. To a certain extent this communicates that autobiography is very useful as it educates, inspire, and reveals that one must never give up irrespective of horrendous experiences.

Dixon (1987) reveals that for Marion Starling slave narratives are works of sub-literary quality whose chief importance lies in their generic relationship to popular slave novels of the 1850s such as that of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1987: 11). Marion clearly implies wrongly that slave narratives were of poor quality and therefore did not deserve to be compared or seen as autobiographies. In buttressing his claim, Dixon further avows that historians, until recently, have ignored narratives because of their supposedly unreliable subjectivity (1987: 11).

Dixon believes that slave narratives deserve to be viewed as documents that recount the past of the slaves (1987: 11). In making this point, Dixon restores the unique authentic nature of slave autobiography or narratives constructed out of reliability to the readers. That obviously indicates that readers can enjoy an autobiography as a true representation of the author's life and past experiences. Stanley (1992) concurs that the reader is guaranteed that they are reading an essentially referential version of the autobiographer's life, one which presents as truthfully as possible that life on paper (1992).

Furthermore, it is worth noting that slave narratives of African-American autobiographers because they talk about the lives, past experiences, and the quest for up-ward mobility towards freedom from slavery. Bergland (1993) believes that slave narratives were the only widely used American autobiographical plot of the early nineteenth century to produce a distinguished literary tradition in the twentieth century (1993). This assertion puts forward the idea that slave narratives were the early autobiographies of the African Americans. It further implies that the current African American autobiography developed from the slave narratives. This present study endorses this view but it also complicates any notion that there is any easy transition from the heavily fact-based slave narratives to modern African-American autobiography which though containing verifiable facts, largely reflects independent imaginative creativity.

Then again, today's autobiography (American) which is developed from the slave narratives and which is very popular in America focuses most of the time on the vicissitudes blacks go through up to the success typical of a bildungsroman narrative. Stanley (1992) is of the same opinion when she maintains that the autobiographical

archetype is the bildungsroman, the tale of the progressive travelling of a life from disturbed or silent beginnings; in which obstacles are overcome and the true self-actualised or revealed. However, the tale may proto-typically end or may go on to document yet further troubles turned to triumphs. Autobiography is thus unstable, open-ended and contains plural narratives of the self. This perspective argued here is useful to my study in that it anticipates and assists the study to unpack the layers of contradictions that haunt the identities of the author-narrator. A post-colonial theoretical perspective applied to the individual autobiographical texts emphasises that the 'I' narrative voice of the genre of autobiography is in reality made up of general other selves of the 'I' (Vambe, 2009).

Additionally, Stanley states that an example of bildungsroman autobiography is Maya Angelou's successive volumes of autobiography. In it, black characters are victims of rape in a racist and sexist society. Despite being subjected to the plight of slavery, racism, sexism in the American society, the authors analysed in this study rise up and use their art to resist subjugation.

2.5. The impact of Autobiography in the American society

Production of autobiographies by African American authors has benefited the American society immensely. These autobiographies have created role models of the African Americans in a white dominated society that dislikes and disapproves the blacks as human beings. Autobiographies also assist the reader in communicating to the world the personal experiences of the African Americans from the Antebellum to Post Civil Rights Movement. To appreciate further the significance the argument made here, this chapter attempts to show how African American autobiographies have reconstructed the American literary imagination.

Firstly, the Antebellum was characterised by slavery which followed the Trans- Atlantic Slave Trade. Through slave narratives such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Narratives of Frederick Douglass*, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Told by Herself* the world started to focus its attention to the peculiar institution. My study interrogates how the notion of the peculiar institution produced double consciousness depicted in selected

autobiographies by male and female African-American artists. Slave narratives have undoubtedly made a huge impact towards bringing slavery to an end.

The Harlem Renaissance that followed the antebellum epoch inspired African-Americans to express frustrations and black people's quest for total freedom. Unlike their male counterparts, female authors focus attention not only on racism and segregation, but also on patriarchy which made them see themselves as doubly oppressed in the American society. Racism during Harlem Renaissance was the biggest problem and it is the people of African descent who suffered from it the most.

2.6. The American society and racism

Evidently, the American society is recognized for its problem of racism since the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Compelled by the latter, W.E.B. Dubois proclaimed that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line" (1989: 13). Since the arrival of black people in America as slaves, racism did not cease to aggravate in the American society. Even today, there are scholars who believe that the problem of racism is not yet solved in America. But racism is compounded by other forms of oppression such as the impact of patriarchy on women, and class differences amongst African-Americans. Khan says that while racism remains the most visible stumbling block to black people advancement, racism remains one of, but not the only intractable problem for black people (Khan, 2012). This view is supported by Hall in Khan (2012) who argues that the idea of double consciousness actually reduces duality of consciousness to a single identity only marked by parallel formations. When analysing African-American autobiography, we should emphasise "The end of innocent notion of the essential black subject' and this means blackness cannot be grounded in a set of fixed trans-cultural or transcendental racial categories" (Hall in Khan, 2012: 3). Autobiography is complex and the African-American identities it narrates are multiple and ambiguous.

It may seem obvious to say that it was the Africans that were traded during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. However, Walter Rodney in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (2005) says, significantly, that in East Africa and the Sudan, many Africans were taken

by Arabs and were sold to Arab buyers. This is known as the 'Arab Slave Trade (2005: 111). On the other hand Roger Anstey in *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition 1760- 1810* sees the Atlantic slave trade as an era that has for a long time been the greatest involuntary migrations in the history of African Americans as everyone knew its volumes and its rare profits (1992). My study affirms the above views and also interrogates how double consciousness was also, partly, produced by blacks who oppress other blacks as portrayed in the African-American creative imaginations.

Gregg's use of the words "involuntary" and "volume" imply that it was a vast forced movement. Walter Rodney observes that: "This has long been an object of speculation, with estimates ranging from a few millions to over one hundred million" (2005: 109), and that: "A recent study has suggested a figure of about ten million Africans landed alive in the Americas, the Atlantic Island and Europe" (2005: 109). In addition to the latter information, Lovejoy (1982) estimates the figures of this slave trade at 11, 969, 000 of slaves exported from Africa between 1450 and 1900 (1982). These numbers clearly communicate the seriousness of this forced migration and devaluation of black lives as a solemn business. Loss of Africans undermined productivity in Africa while it created the basis of capitalism in America (Williams, 1994).

This slave institution separated child from mother, husband from wife, brother from brother and sister from brother. Frances Harper in her poem "The Slave Auction" depicts that crying mothers saw their children sold while oppressors were exchanging them for gold (2000). Black people were reduced to the level of animals. This also buttresses a claim by Cornel West (1999) where in his attempt to show how black people looked like animals in the eyes of their white counterparts, quotes Tolstoy who said, "My God, I used to think they were animals; now they're human beings; I have a different life and a new set of lenses with which to view it" (1999: 502).

Most Africans did not have a clue that they were going to be made slaves. Also, many did not know if they would arrive alive at their destination. Some were perhaps wondering if they were going to come back as they left behind their families, children,

parents, brother and sisters as they were not yet slaves but captives during that voyage. Walter Rodney concurs as he claims that an African only became a slave when he arrived in a society where he worked as a slave and before that he was a captive (2005). This reminds one of Olaudah Equiano's captivity and the conditions he describes during a voyage across the Atlantic. In *Equiano's Travels* Equiano says:

When I looked round the ship too and saw a large furnace or copper boiling and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, everyone of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted of my fate; and quite overpowered with horror and anguish, I fell motionless on the deck and fainted (Edwards, 1980: 25).

While the latter quote tells the hostile conditions in the ship during the Atlantic Slave Trade, it also tells how blacks felt about the voyage let alone not knowing their destination. Feelings of gloominess and unhappiness also led some to commit suicide.

Apart from the trading of the African people from Africa to various parts such as Europe to America, this involuntary migration had affected Africa negatively. It affected Africa socially, politically and economically. Rodney (2005) describes this impact as the "underdevelopment of Africa by Europe". He contends that: "The massive loss to the African labour force was made more critical because it was composed of able-bodied young men and young women" (2005: 110). The latter implies that if one takes able-bodied people who can work to uplift the level of economy from a particular land that economy would certainly under perform.

In buttressing the latter, Rodney (2005) maintains that the opportunity presented by European slave dealers became the major stimulus for a great deal of social violence between different African communities and within any given community (2005: 112). The latter also brought fear among Africans and Rodney concurs that "[...] and that fact increased the element of fear and uncertainty" (2005: 112).

However, the unbearable treatment led slaves such as Nat Turner to fight slavery. Smith (1996) gives the impact of Nat Turner's insurrection which he argues seriously

disturbed Virginia and culminated in talks about a need to abolish the incubus of slavery (1996: 16). Williams adds that “To every dealer in flesh and blood the ‘Nat. Turner Insurrection’ was a poetic justice” (Williams, 2007: 34). Turner’s rebellion had shaken the existence of slavery. Despite the end of slavery in the United States of America in the late 1860s, African Americans were still subjected to racial discrimination in the early years of the twentieth century. And it is racial discrimination which compelled Du Bois to proclaim that “The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line” (Du Bois, 1989: 13).

The Harlem Renaissance particularly influenced the literature of African Americans. That implies that black people were able to voice their grievances in a racist America. Authors such as Langston Hughes, Zora Nearle Hurston, Jessie Fausset, and Allain Locke emerged during Harlem Renaissance. These authors wrote numerous works in protest against inequality and racial discrimination in America. Racism in America was still a problem even after the end of slavery. The latter implied that better opportunities were reserved for white people only, and not for black people. Furthermore, anything white was associated with good while black was associated with bad.

The dominant part of the Harlem Renaissance sought to elevate black love, self-love and black consciousness. That ranged from the works of W.E.B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes’s works and those of other black artists. If one looks at Du Bois’ *Souls of Black Folk*, one may discern that black consciousness is at the centre of the book. In many of the essays Du Bois talks about the predicaments to which black people were subjected. In each situation, Du Bois depicts a black man as could emerge and becoming something in the society should black people be given opportunities. In almost all of his essays, Du Bois portrays the strengths of the Negro in a racist society. In the essay “Of the coming of John”, one observes the evil practices and experiences subjected to the black people in a racist America. *Souls of Black Folk* sought not only to reveal the injustices subjected to the black people, but resistance to slavery.

Another artist who inspired African Americans was Langston Hughes. He inspired black people to love their blackness and be proud of who they are. One of Hughes' works is the essay titled "The Negro Artist and the racial mountain" (Nappier, 2000: 27-30). This essay is about a young African-American poet who aspired not to be a black poet but a white poet. According to Hughes, one of the most promising of the young Negro poets said to him that he wanted to be a poet- not a Negro poet, write like a white poet meaning subconsciously he would like to be a white poet (2000: 27). This tells that this poet black as he is, sees being black as insignificant and inferior.

The literature of the Harlem Renaissance reflects the social and political activism of the early twentieth century, when African-Americans fought for civil rights signalling their desire to free black people, Lewis (1994) argues that "[...] the Harlem Renaissance demonstrated- finally, irrefutably, during slightly more than a decade- the considerable creative capacities of the best and brightest of a disadvantaged racial minority" (Lewis, 1994: xii).

The poet Langston Hughes used blues and jazz rhythms as the foundation for many of his poems by incorporating the rhythms of the African American music and the black vernacular expression into literature. The African Americans could display their creativity and dominance in these areas. Huggins (1973) argues that many of Hughes' early poems were efforts to touch the dignity of the common man's life (1973: 78). And to understand Hughes' poem which foundation is the blues tells that his poems were about the plight of the people, especially black people. In explaining blues, Hughes says "Songs folks make up when their heart hurts, that's what the blues are" (Hughes, 1958: 159). Huggins concurs with Hughes that "It all added to Langston Hughes' insistent theme that Negro art would be achieved through capturing the common black man's experience in art forms" (Huggins, 1973: 78).

One would say music was used as a form of communicating racial experiences of the African-Americans. On the other hand, music would be seen as something that would help to unite some of the Americans. In addition to the latter, Huggins further declares that Locke saw the spirituals, blues, and jazz as the stuff from which American

musicians would have to build their classical music and would be the germ of modern music. (1973: 77). The significance of this observation to my study is that it supports my argument which is that autobiographies contain dialectic of suffering and struggle which questions the idea of an uncontested double consciousness.

2.7. The coinage of the concept of Double Consciousness

The beginning of the twentieth century saw the proliferation of racial discrimination against black people in America. African-Americans were being treated with contempt and that led them into being denied educational and employment opportunities.

Although Moore (2005) looks at double consciousness from a Fanonian point of view, Moore has a similar understanding of double consciousness with Du Bois. A Fanonian perspective on double consciousness implies the thought process of being a Negro (i.e. Black) and or an American (i.e. non-Black) (2005: 751).

Allen Jr. (2003) agrees with Gerald Early's view that the Duboisian double consciousness refers to a tension between the "Nationalist and assimilated collective identity of Afro-Americans, but where the concept of identity is combined with "culture" drawn in broad, anthropological terms (2003: 25). However, Allen Jr. seems to have a problem with the concept of culture being associated with double consciousness. In revealing his problem, Allen Jr. argues that "late 19th- century Afro-American intellectuals were already culturally assimilated Americans whose nationalist leanings, when expressed in what we today would call "cultural" terms, mainly took the form of vindicationist histories extolling the accomplishments of peoples of African descent" (2003: 25). One would argue that Allen Jr. contrasts the word 'culture' as it asserts that black people had achieved something America. My study agrees with the above argument which suggests that to some extent, double consciousness reveals the problem of black elites more than the experiences of the ordinary black population.

Critics such as Adell believe that the concept of 'double consciousness' is originally coined by Du Bois, but taken from Hegel by Du Bois. Adell (1994) justifies the latter claim that "[...] as Joel Williamson points out in 'W.E.B. Du Bois as a Hegelian,' is laden

with words that were favoured by Hegel” (1994: 13). Adell in the above quote suggests that Du Bois was an admirer of Hegel and found the concept befitting the condition of African-Americans in America. Adell further mentioned some of the words Hegel used which Du Bois adopted “Words such as *consciousness*, *double consciousness*, *strife*, *self*, and *spirit* all point to a Hegelian metaphysics of the self” (1994: 13). Be that as it may, the originality of Du Bois’ deployment of the concept is that he largely describes the conditions of African-Americans before and after slavery. Black authors have affirmed as well as imaginatively reworked the idea of double consciousness. The aim of my study is to determine in which direction and with what differences of emphasis the authors place on identities produced by double consciousness.

2.8. Critical reviews and literary works on Double Consciousness

Since its coinage, double consciousness received quite a lot of criticism both for and against. These critiques have emphasised different issues in diverse ways in attempting to interpret the notion of double consciousness and its consequences for black people in America.

Writing about this two-ness, Dubois emphasizes that an African-American does not want to lose any of the two but to be accepted as both an African and American as Du Bois declares that “He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face” (1989: 5). African-Americans have contributed to the American economy, and fighting for America only to be spit upon and denied education and employment opportunities. Moore explains the notion of being both a Negro and an American and states that:

To be a Negro is to be coloured, Black, African American, or to be associated with the cultural heritage that stem from Africa. To be American is to be a black person in skin pigmentation who mentally identifies with white people and European culture (2005: 752).

Gilroy (1993) in *The Black Atlantic* also talks about double consciousness although his emphasis is on the British context which can be considered similar to that of America. Like Dubois, Gilroy encourages being both an African and American. He does concede

that to be accepted as both requires a lot of effort and commitment as he claims that “Striving to be both European and black requires some specific form of double consciousness” (1993: 1). Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic* (1993) also can be a useful theoretical text for any work that deals with double consciousness, Evans (2009) concurs that:

Furthermore, Gilroy’s comparative reading of black British and African American cultural production brings into his argument another kind of duality, presenting just one example of a theoretical framework structured around the idea of “double consciousness” (2009: 255-6).

Gilroy’s comparison of both black British and African American situations as Evans has indicated can be substantiated by similar experiences of black people in both America and Europe which can be attributed to Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, slavery, and racial segregation to which black people were subjected. Also in both scenarios, double consciousness makes white people to perceive black people as subhuman, inferior, and insignificant. Related to the latter, Dubois also maintains that “it is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (1989: 5). My own study emphasises the alienation of blacks in America while the study also reveals the contradictory ways through which black creative authors have depicted resistance within black cultures.

How black people are looked at and negatively remarked upon does make black people believe that what white people say and see is true. It also leads African-Americans into being segregated racially by white people whose hatred for black people started years immemorial. Voicing his dislike for the above, Moore avers that:

It is not psychologically healthy to measure your worth through the eyes of others. Moreover, it is not psychologically healthy to be denied full expression of your blackness or manhood in a white dominated society (2005: 753).

The racial segregation that blacks experienced in America creates morbid symptoms among blacks. Du Bois further provides a sensible explanation of double consciousness in addition to what he has already said:

Work, culture, liberty, all these we need, not singly but together, not successively but together, each growing and aiding each, and all striving toward that vaster that swims before the Negro people, the idea of human brotherhood, gained through the unifying ideal of a race; the ideal of fostering and developing the traits and talents of the Negro, not opposition to or contempt for other races, but rather in large conformity to the greater ideals of the American soil two world's races may give each to each those characteristics both sadly lack (1989: 11).

While the above quote emphasises freedom from racial segregation, it also stresses the significance of unity among both black and white people. It also implores the African-Americans and Americans not to focus on their racial differences and hatred, but using their talents in growing the American economy, political stability, social stability and equality for all.

Dubois' explanation of double consciousness underscores the notion of brotherhood and oneness for the benefit of American society without losing black identities. Brotherhood suggests a feeling of camaraderie and unity for a common purpose while oneness implies sameness of political aspirations among blacks. My study seeks to explore the ways African-Americans have moved beyond the entrapment in the duality of identities of being black and American. My study argues that there are other identities based on class, sexism, and acquisition of education which the idea of double consciousness is inadequate to represent.

In relation to the above, my study agrees with Neal (2000) who says that "The problem of living in racist society, therefore, is something that lurks on the immediate horizon, but which cannot be dealt with until certain political, social and spiritual truths are understood by the oppressed themselves inwardly understood" (2000: 75).

Neal meant to tell that racism will not just disappear, but African-Americans must fight in different ways to end their marginalisation in America. He says African-Americans should accept and know that they were taken from Africa and be made slaves. That they are black and live in a white dominated society where a black person is seen as sub-human and insignificant. And that black people need to believe in themselves,

accepting who they are, and be ready to liberate and fight racism in the American society.

2. 9. Critical voices on the autobiographies

Certain critics have written on some of the autobiographical texts that my study focuses on. For example, Gabrielle (1990) has explored *Incidents in the Life of Slave Girl*, and the critic argues that Jacobs “undermines Child’s confidence in the Truth” (317) in telling her personal experiences. Gabrielle (1990) explains that Jacobs’ descriptions fall short of the facts” (317). The latter suggests that Jacobs’ experiences of slavery were more evil than she had delineated in her narrative. Kreiger (2008) concurs as he argues that “Her (Jacobs) strategy may be compared to thanatomimeses” (607). My study agrees with this view and seeks to depict the different ways authors use fiction to reinvent meanings that can be attached to being black and American. Davis (1960) suggests that authors give “the concrete first-hand knowledge” (271) which is about slavery and experiences of the author. Matlack (1979) agrees and further adds that “Lurid reports on the evils of slavery were plentiful” (15). The latter emphasises the authenticity of the first-hand version of truth as personally experienced by authors during slavery. My study will agree that both Jacobs and Douglass agree on the fact that blacks were subjected to evils of slavery and marginalised. The present study will, however, critique the ways in which Jacobs and Douglass inclined to constrict the meaning of the lives of black people in America.

Adell (1994) has analysed *The Souls of Black Folk*, and the critic argues that Du Bois misses the fact that “Contradictoriness” (18) in the concept of double consciousness is exactly what lends it to be interpreted in multiple ways. My present study agrees with this view and seeks to reveal how different authors have employed fiction to reimagine other possible meanings that can be attached to the term. Ngugi, for instance, suggests that there are “two opposing consciousnesses”(123) in African-American literature and society. Ngugi also narrows our understanding of how consciousness operates. Ngugi further simplifies when he argues that “*Up from Slavery* is merely” a song in praise of

social and mental subjugation” (133). This view is not entirely agreed upon by critics because Moore (2003), believes that Washington was easily “The most powerful black man in America” (35). The critic seems to praise Washington for using the Tuskegee institute to open up some avenues for black people. My own study will argue that both Du Bois and Washington agree on the fact that blacks in America were marginalised. The present study will, however, critique the ways in which Du Bois and Washington tended to narrow the meaning of the lives of black people in America.

Woodson (1940) has analysed *The Big Sea*, and he argues that Hughes is spot on when he asserts that the concepts “impoverished Negro” (568) in the concept of double consciousness is what makes it analysed and interpreted in different ways. My present study agrees with this view and seeks to reveal the ways in which different authors used fiction to reinvent other possible meanings that can be linked to the term. Woodson further adds that “Hughes was the only one who visioned about the entire race as a mass of suffering humanity” (1940: 568). Rayson (1973) suggests that “Hurston avoids as stumbling blocks the issues of politics and race in her fiction” (39). Rayson (1973) adds and substantiates that “she ends *Dust Tracks on a Road* by saying, “I have no race prejudice of any kind” (39). This view is agreed upon by critics because Walker (1998) believes Hurston’s *Dust Tracks on a Road* has an “apparent unreliability, its inconsistency or fragmentary nature, and its seemingly assimilationist racial politics” (387). The latter may be attributed to Hurston’s unwillingness to openly criticize racism and inequality in America as expected. Although Huston does not come out openly in criticizing racism, my own study will argue that both Hughes and Hurston agree on the fact that black people in America were marginalized. The present study will, however, critique the ways in which Hurston and Hughes tended to meagre the meaning of the lives of black people in America.

Gibney (1992) has analysed *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, and the critic argues that the book has politicized him “If there was one book that gave me a political wakeup call it was this one” (657). The critic suggests that the book had exposed the critic to racial inequality, injustice and segregation. In substantiating the latter, Gibney (1992) adds

that “the book provided the first glimpse that I had ever had of race relations from a black perspective” (657-8). Vogel concurs with the latter and says: “Through the eyes of Malcolm Little, one sees the hardships and the barriers which feed bitterness and lead to hatred” (1967: 127). My own study agrees with the latter view and seeks to reveal the different ways in which different authors use fiction to reimagine other possible meanings that can be attached to the concept. McDowell (1986) argues that Angelou “cover miles of geographical territory and milestones of personal history” (17). The history expressed in the latter is the one that includes racism and slavery. My study will argue that both Malcolm and Angelou agree on the fact that African-Americans were marginalized in America. The present study will, however, critique the ways in which Malcolm and Angelou tended to narrow the meaning of the lives of black people in America.

Cornel West’s *Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud* (2009) suffers from critical reject. However, one has detected that West’s memoir touches on his life, tells how West transcended an entrapment of double consciousness and his other selves. Shockley (1997) perceives bell hooks’ *bone black* “As she negotiates adolescence, hooks is faced with the blunt injustice of racism, sexism, and classism, in her family and her community” (553). Although saying it differently, Light (1999) concurs with the latter that “It is the story of girlhood rebellion, of my struggle to create self and identity distinct from and yet inclusive of the world around me” (240). My own study will argue that both West and hooks agree on the fact that black people in America were marginalized as black, American, and woman. The present study will, however, critique the ways in which West and hooks tended to narrow the meaning of the lives of black people in America.

2.10. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to provide an extended review of the literature that will be central to this study. Although this study is not about autobiography, interrogating the concept of double consciousness is done through the analysis of the form of autobiographies by African-Americans. This chapter has discussed the theories and critics of autobiography. It also reviewed literature on double consciousness. It traced

the background of the concept of double consciousness to show how it came into existence. It also explained the relationship between the concept of double consciousness and the American society. Because double consciousness refers to a condition of being black and American which results into African-Americans being subjected to racial segregation, autobiographies have been found to be suitable to analyse the plural identities of African-Americans. The main gap established in this chapter is that having depicted/discussed the marginalisation of black people, most critics and some creative authors have tended to emphasise entrapment of blacks. My study will demonstrate that there are more identities that go beyond being black and American that blacks experience in autobiographical fictions can reveal. The next chapter is chapter three and it investigates the concept of double consciousness in the works by Douglass' and Jacobs.

Chapter 3

Contrasting views on Double Consciousness in narratives of Douglass and Jacobs

“Nothing has been left undone to cripple their intellects, darken their minds, debase their moral nature, obliterate all traces of their relationship to mankind; and yet how wonderfully they have sustained the mighty load of a most frightful bondage, under which they have been groaning for centuries!” (Douglass, 1845: 12).

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the emphasis was on extended literature review which attempted to show that this research will reveal new knowledge. It also attempted to show an awareness of multiple meanings of double consciousness in African-American literature. Chapter 3 will investigate the concept of double consciousness through arguing and examining views as depicted in Frederick Douglass' *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave (1845)* and Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (2008)*. This chapter focuses mainly on the antebellum period which was characterized by slavery.

During slavery, black Americans had a very limited space to express themselves and were subjected to all sorts of evils. By using the narratives of Douglass and Jacobs, this chapter seeks to show that women were equally enslaved like men. It mainly seeks to show that racial dynamics and double consciousness as some of the reasons that contributed to the enslavement of black people. It also attempts to show the shifts in double consciousness which suggests that slavery was not the only challenge, but that there were other challenges such as gender within the African-American communities. Arguments in chapter 3 will be anchored on critical works by George Fitzhugh (1854), Wolfgang Zach and Ulrich, Pallua (2010), David Brion Davis (1992), Kathryn Lofton and Maffly-Kipp (2010).

3.2. Views in Frederick Douglass' *the Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass*

It is not questionable that slavery stripped the African Americans of human dignity in a ruthless manner. Americans of African descent were reduced to the level of property and animals because slaveholders believed they owned them and that they were sub-

human. The fact that slaves could not even remember even their dates of births does not only attest to the latter, but also reveals how the African Americans had been emasculated from their identities. Frederick Douglass delineates the plight of the slaves in relation to their dates of birth and ownership over them:

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 (Douglass: 1845: 21).

Douglass appears to suggest that almost if not all the slaves knew little about their birth days given the assumption that anything associated to knowledge was supposed to be kept unknown to the slaves as it was believed it was going to spoil the slaves. And knowing one's birth date was part of such knowledge. It seems slaveholders were very careful about allowing Negroes to acquire knowledge.

Slaveholders believed that knowledge would make the slaves know the truth about the slaves' history and origins. Slaveholders were scared that should slaves know the truth about their past, the slaves would revolt. One prominent revolt incident in slavery is that of Nat Turner which left about seventy-three blacks and fifty-seven whites dead (Williams, 2007: 34). Although Douglass does not remember to have met a slave who could tell his birth day, that does not mean there were none. Douglass also implies that even the very few slaves, who could maybe remember, did not tell the precise dates.

In controlling the slaves for the sake of the profits slaveholders were making, they subjected these poor souls to a number of evils such as whipping, raping, and killing. Whipping was the slaves' daily bread which was used to keep the slaves on track and working very hard. It did not matter if a slave was right or wrong, a whip was there not only to make the slaves work more, but also to remind the slaves that they belonged to an inferior race which was uprooted from a land the slaveholders associated with evil and barbarity. Being whipped and associated with Africa in the American society could be argued as being entrapped in Du Bois manifestations of double consciousness. Simultaneously, being slave could be viewed as expanding double consciousness as

expression of victimhood. Douglass shares a heart breaking scenario of lashing he observed to show what it was like to be a slave and be subjected to a lash:

I have often been awakened at the dawn of day by the most heart-rending shrieks of an own aunt of mine, whom he used to tie up to a joist, and whip upon her naked back till she was literally covered with blood. No words, no tears, no prayers, from his gory victim, seemed to move his iron heart from its bloody purpose. The louder she screamed, the harder he whipped; and where the blood ran fastest, there he whipped longest. He would whip her to make her scream, and whip her to make her hush; and not until overcome by fatigue, would he cease to swing the blood clotted cowskin (Ibid: 24).

The above quote describes an inhuman whip executed to a woman slave by a slaveholder. “The most heart-rending shrieks” of Douglass’ aunt on regular bases communicates the pain of the lash. The fact that it happened regularly tells that this slave could be lashed on fresh wounds without being given time to heal. The phrase “The louder she screamed, the harder he whipped; and where the blood ran fastest, there he whipped longest” tells the extent of inhumanity slaves had to endure. The latter phrase reveals that even animals were treated far better than black people.

One may argue that animals could not talk and slaves could irrespective of being reduced to the level and maybe lower than that of animals. The latter claim shows that white people had no room for black people in the American society. Also an expression “and not until overcome by fatigue, would he cease to swing the blood clotted cowskin” divulges that slaves were not appearing as human beings in the eyes of slaveholders, but sub-animals. Douglass relates a fable of a slave who after honestly answering questions asked by a white man who he was not aware was his master found him-self in serious trouble:

The poor man was then informed by his overseer that, for having found fault with his master, he was now to be sold to a Georgia trader. He was immediately chained and handcuffed; and thus, without a moment’s warning, he was snatched away, and forever sundered, from his family and friends, by a hand more unrelenting than death. This is the penalty of telling the truth, of telling the simple truth, in answer to a series of plain questions (Ibid: 33).

Douglass in the above quote explains how unsafe it was to tell both truth and lies as each could put one into trouble: “To be accused was to be convicted, and to be convicted was to be punished; the one always following the other with immutable certainty” (Ibid: 35).

The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education does not specify the main reason slaves were being punished, it concurs with Douglass as it maintains that slave torture was employed simply for the amusement of sadistic field bosses and overseers (Editorial, 2009: 42). It seems taking a lash was a must irrespective of whether one tells a truth or lie. Not to be believed when telling a truth is a punishment enough, but to be punished for that should cause an unpardonable pain. One would say lying was better than telling the truth because one may bear the lash accepting that one had lied and that should be punished. From a white man’s point of view, slaves should be treated anyhow. Wolfgang and Ulrich quote Fitzhugh who say that: “Negro slavery has no other claims over the other forms of slavery, except that from inferiority, or rather peculiarity, of race, almost all Negroes require masters” (Wolfgang and Ulrich, 2010: 150). In addition, Douglass explains in his autobiography the real life of slavery and how one is dealt with regardless of what one has done:

A mere look, word, or motion, a mistake, accident, or want of power, are all matters for which a slave may be whipped at any time. Does a slave look dissatisfied? It is said, he has the devil in him, and it must be whipped out. Does he speak loudly when spoken to by his master? Then he is getting high-minded, and should be taken down a button-hole lower. [...] It is owing to his carelessness, and for it a slave must always be whipped (Ibid: 75).

Douglass, in the above quote, is trying to raise not only the evil nature of slavery, but also that a slave is never considered right. Douglass also raises that by being black and slave was seen as a sin by slaveholders. In this way, Douglass totally affirms Du Bois’ characterization of African-Americans as entrapped in a dual identity of being black and American slave. The questions Douglass raises explain white people’s belief that black people are sub-human.

David Brion Davis in Bender (1992) sums it up when says the slave was both innocent and a victim, since he could not be held responsible for his condition. Cornell West also

confirms as well what white people think about black people: “My God, I used to think they were animals; now they are human beings. I have a different life and a new set of lenses with which to view it” (West, 1999: 502). The questions raised by Douglass and white people’s thinking expressed by West above are manifestations of double consciousness because blacks are subjected to the evils of slavery for being black, American, and slave. So, double consciousness exists with the inclusion of being a slave. Douglass finds himself regretting his own existence by wishing to die than to be a slave:

I have often find myself regretting my own existence, and wishing myself dead; and but for the hope of being free, I have no doubt but that I should have killed myself, or done something for which I should have been killed (Ibid: 49).

The sentence “I have no doubt but that I should have killed myself, or done something for which I should have been killed” recounts the heavy burden Douglass carried which is also unbearable. Fanon (1967) has theorized sense of loss of personal identity as revealing psychological neurosis by colonialism engendered in double consciousness. This unbearable heavy burden Douglass feels is also a result of the effects of slavery and its evils. Lawrence Brown (2010) quotes Fitzhugh’s who justifies why slavery should not end.

According to Fitzhugh “if the abolitionist cause is reached, the current prosperity of the white race will bankrupt. Moreover, if slavery is not defended the foundation of white society will erode and collapse under the occupancy of African Americans” (Wolfgang and Ulrich, 2010:152). The above quote tells that white people were excessively benefiting from double consciousness induced by being black, slave, and American. Albeit white people’s fear of losing wealth is used to justify slavery, hard working without compensation and appreciation in bad weather conditions makes slavery unbearable. Douglass accusingly says that blacks:

[slaves] were worked in all weathers. It was never too hot or too cold; it could never rain, blow, hail, or snow, too hard for us to work in the field. Work, work, work, was scarcely more the order of the day than of the night. The longest days were too short for him, and the shortest nights too long for him (Ibid: 65).

Ruthless, voracious, malevolent, and pernicious, all these words fall short in describing slavery and slave masters. The white people's ruthlessness which is at variance to white people's belief that Negroes are sub-human, ironically tells that it is white people who are sub-human. To justify the above claim, Douglass argues "I was immediately sent for, to be valued with the other property" (Ibid: 52). The latter quote tells how slaves were equated to animals, which also substantiates a claim made earlier about white people perceiving black people as sub-human. The above suggests that slaves have an equal value to pigs, horses, and sheep. Below Douglass explains how the ranking was done:

We were all ranked together at the valuation. Men and women, old and young, married and single, were ranked with horses, sheep, and swine. There were horses and men, cattle and women, pigs and children, all holding the same rank in the scale of being, and were all subjected to the same narrow examination (Ibid: 52).

In the above quote, Douglass delineates the degrading valuation of slaves together with animals. The phrase "there were horses and men, cattle and woman, pigs and children, all holding the same rank in the scale" suggests that black lives were equated to that of animals.

In supporting the above claim, Douglass avers "We have men sold to build churches, women sold to support the gospel, and babes sold to purchase Bibles for the POOR HEATHEN! ALL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE GOOD OF SOULS" (Ibid: 102). In the latter quote, Douglass implies that just like the money made from selling animals, the money made from selling slaves is used to spread the word of God. One wonders if God is aware of this massive violation of human rights and crime which is done in God's name. Dwight Hopkins (2010) explains God's intervention to slavery "Slavery exploited and robbed one group within society, and its perpetrators will one day face 'the divine rule. The exploiters will stand with a fearful accountability before the supreme Judge'" (Hopkins, 2010: 299). Whichever way it happens, it does not change the fact that nothing lasts forever as Steve Earle in "Ashes to Ashes" in his album, *Jerusalem* as he utters:

But it's always best to keep it in mind

That every tower ever built tumbles
No matter how strong, no matter how tall
Someday even great walls will crumble
And every idol ever raised falls
And someday even man's best laid plans
Will lie twisted and covered in rust
When we've done all that we can but it slipped through our hands
(Earl, 2002).

The passage above recounts that even slavery shall pass. This passage could be a source of hope to the slaves in despair. In spite of the above claims, some white people believe that African American slavery was a blessing as Donathan Lawrence Brown (2010) asserts "In Fitzhugh's creation of negativity, the image is put forth and thoroughly maintained that slavery is a mutual blessing for both races" (Brown, 2010: 151). Apart from slavery being wrongly viewed as a blessing to black people, pro slavery white people such as George Fitzhugh (1854) argues that the Old or New Testament do not condemn slavery, instead these Testaments recognized and enforced it (Fitzhugh, 1854: 96). One wonders if it is human to regard enslaving another human being as a blessing. It is a blessing for some white racist people because it benefits them in profits and power. But it is certainly not a blessing for black people as they are victims. Referring to being victims, Douglass narrates how white people relish watching a black man being attacked or killed by a white man:

But here the carpenters interfered, and I thought I might as well give it up. It was impossible to stand my hand against so many. All this took place in sight of not less than fifty white ship-carpenters, and not one interposed a friendly word; but some cried, "Kill the damned nigger! Kill him! Kill him! He struck a white person." I found my only chance for life was in flight. I succeeded in getting away without an additional blow, and barely so; for a strike a white man is death by Lynch law, and that was the law in Mr. Gardner's ship-yard; nor is there much of any other out of Mr. Gardner's ship-yard (Ibid: 86).

The latter quote recounts how helpless and unprotected African-Americans were in America. The above quote also reveals America's double standards by claiming to be a democratic country while it practices the opposite. The words "Kill the damned nigger! Kill him! Kill him!" imply a deep hatred of Afro-Americans by white people. Killing an

African-American is not regarded as an offence while striking a white man is as good as death by law in Mr. Gardner's ship-yard as Douglass puts it: "I speak advisedly when I say this, that killing a slave, or any coloured person, in Talbot county, Maryland, is not treated as a crime, either by the courts or the community" (Ibid: 37).

Francis Harper (2010) concurs with Douglass as she share what she said in the supreme court when she asked for justice "Upon my tortured heart is thrown the mocking words, 'You are a negro; you have no rights which white men are bound to respect'" (Harper, 2010:32). While the above quote emphasises the insignificance of the Afro-Americans, it also communicates the ferocity, woe, and glaring odiousness of the American society toward African-Americans. This compels Douglass to elucidate his feeling in a strange situation:

Mr. and Mrs. Auld were both at home, and met me at the door with their little son Thomas, to take care of whom I had been given. And here I saw what I never seen before; it was a white face beaming with the most kindly emotions; it was the face of my new mistress, Sophia Auld. I wish I can describe the rapture that flashed through my soul as I beheld it (Ibid: 41).

While Mrs Auld's smiling face seems to have brought a sigh of relief momentarily to Douglass, it is not deliverance from bondage. The mere fact that Douglass runs out of words to describe this atypical and beautiful reception from Mrs Auld may have convinced Douglass that not all white people are ruthless. Mrs Auld's smile moreover, restored hope. Douglass's relief confirms the significance of freedom in one's life. Related to the significance of emancipation, Shields (1988) uses an imagery of the Israelites:

Otherwise, perhaps, the Israelites had been less solicitous for their freedom from Egyptian Slavery; I do not say they would have been contented without it, by no Means, for in every human Breast, God has implanted a Principle, which we call Love of Freedom; it is impatient of Oppression, and pants for Deliverance; and by the Leave of our Modern Egyptians I will assert, that the same principle lives in us (Wheatley in Shields, 1988: 176-177).

Wheatley's quote explains the significance of freedom not only to slaves, but every human being. The above quote in relation to Douglass's predicament could be seen as

calling upon the slaveholders to have mercy. Wheatley could also be understood as reprimanding the institution of slavery. Freedom, as articulated by Wheatley, seems to be everything to an individual, but it should be more than everything to a slave. Douglass buttresses the above by claiming that, "In writing to a dear friend, immediately after my arrival at New York, I said I felt like one who had escaped a den of hungry lions" (Ibid: 94). The phrase "In writing to a dear friend" tells that Douglass managed to get education in slavery. Douglass got his education from his new mistress and some white boys whom he be-friended in order for them to teach him.

Douglass's effort in getting education, his act of befriending white boys and successful escape from slavery could be seen as going beyond the limits of double consciousness. To escape a den of hungry lions implies to narrowly escape death. In a way, Douglass equates slavery to death and hungry lions that are feeding on Negro blood voraciously. In further expressing the significance of freedom, Hallie Quinn Brown (2010) narrates another slave's excitement when granted freedom, "The strong man who could stand under the master's whip without a groan, burst into a hysterical passion of weeping and singing, so that his fellow passengers thought he had gone crazy" (Brown, 2010: 223). According to Dixon (1987) "Escaping North to free territory or overt resistance to slavery usually started with flight deep into the woods" (Dixon, 1987: 3).

Finally, the concept of double consciousness has been at play in Frederick Douglass's *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave*. Double consciousness in Douglass's text did not only manifest itself through being black and American, it had included being a slave as an additional identity. So being black, an American, and slave modifies double consciousness. The above claim implies that it is no longer double, but multiple consciousness. Furthermore, double consciousness is modified when Douglass gets educated and escapes to the north. As argued by Dixon (1987) slaves commanded several identities that they used to renegotiate Du Bois' concept of Double Consciousness. Jacobs's narrative extends and complicates Douglass's alteration by introducing a gender dimension to the debate on double consciousness.

3.3. Views in Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Like black men black women were also subjected to slavery and like their male counterparts women were being subjected to the whip, rape, and other forms of cruelties. As a former slave, Harriet Jacobs endured the inhuman nature of slavery like other former slaves such as Douglass, Washington, Wheatley, Equiano, and Beecher Stowe. However, there are differences in the ways Harriet writes about the institution of slavery. For example, despite the contrasting beliefs about who was oppressed the most between men and women, Dorothy Roberts (2010) claims, "Slavery is terrible for men," wrote Harriet Jacobs, "but it is far more terrible for women" (Roberts, 2010: 43). What makes women appear enslaved horrendously is that they could be subjected to evils such as rape, not accessing their children, and watching their children sold into slavery. Jacobs tells how her father wanted to buy his children but unsuccessfully: "His strongest wish was to purchase his children; but, though he several times offered his hard earnings for that purpose, he never succeeded" (Jacobs, 2008: 11).

The phrase in the above quote "but, though he several times offered his hard earnings for that purpose, he never succeeded" suggest that selling an Afro-American's offspring to an African-American was very rare, but that did not mean it did not happen. Jacobs argues that "The reader probably knows that no promise or writing given to a slave is legally binding; for, according to Southern laws, a slave, being property, can hold no property" (Ibid: 12). Although Jacobs was referring to her grandmother who did not get her money back which she loaned her mistress, talked to parents as properties of the masters that slaves could not own money, children, or anything as slaves were properties belonging to slaveholders. Properties cannot have properties. Jacobs remembers an old woman who said to her "It is hell in missis's house. 'Pears I can never get out. Day and night I pray to die" (Ibid: 47).

The phrase "It is hell in missis's house" suggests that it is better to die than be in slavery. The above phrase also tells that freedom can bring a huge relief and death in this case is represented as a liberator. One perhaps questions the nature of the institution of slavery given the heartlessness and the shameful treatment with which slaves were subjected to. Knowing that one could be sold at any time the master wants

or inherited by a relative should something happen to the master is one of the hellish things about slavery. The issue of inheritance could be originated from pro slavery white people such as Fitzhugh (1854) who believed that a black man would be unbearable burden to society should a black man not be enslaved (Fitzhugh, 1854: 83). Jacobs narrates the bitterness of inheritance of slaves “After a brief period of suspense, the will of my mistress was read, and we learned that she had bequeathed me to her sister’s daughter, a child of five years old. So vanished our hopes” (Ibid: 13).

This is not only an expression of disappointment as Jacobs anticipated and hoped that her mistress was going to leave her free, but also a suggestion that freedom is too far from reach. To be inherited implied to be under a new master irrespective of a new master’s relationship with an old master. Jacobs explains a possible punishment a slave gets when a slave is reluctant to go to the new master “If a slave is unwilling to go with his new master, he is whipped, or locked up in jail, until he consents to go, and promises not to run away during the year” (Ibid: 19).

To be put in jailed and whipped were meant not only to make a slave more willing to be sold, but also to obey and respect the master. Hallie Quinn Brown (2010) recounts a tale of a slave who was bought by a new master “A slave named Joe fell into the hands of a new master whose first order to him was to strip and take a whipping as a reminder to better behave himself” (Brown, 2010: 222). Refusal to be sold was deemed to be disrespect. Slaves were in most of the time cooperative to avoid the consequences being sold.

In relation to the latter, Harriet Jacobs recounts a similar heart rending sight of a slave woman who watched her children sold and who was hoping that her master was not going to sell all of them:

On one of these sale days, I saw a mother lead children to the auction-block. She knew that some of them would be taken from her; but they took all. The children were sold to a slave-trader, and their mother was brought by a man in her own town. Before night her children were all far away. She begged the trader to tell her where he intended to take them, this he refused to do. How could he, when he knew he would sell them, one by one, wherever he could command the highest price? I met that mother in the street, and her wild, haggard face lives to-day in my mind.

She wrung her hands in anguish, and exclaimed, "Gone! All gone! Why don't God kill me?" (Ibid: 20).

The above quote expresses and delineates a woman's pain of losing children in slavery. The phrase "She knew that some of them would be taken from her; but they took all," talks to the slaying of this woman's hope that she was going to be left with some of her children. It is difficult to describe or imagine a pain this woman felt for losing her children. Also to even attempt putting one in this mother's shoes is difficult especially if one is not a woman.

The phrase that can describe this mother's pain and loss is "She wrung her hands in anguish, and exclaimed, "Gone! All gone! Why don't God kill me?" Once again, death is perceived as the only way of liberating one from slavery. Toni Morrison (1997) represents death as the only way to save her children from returning to slavery after she had murdered her children "I took and put my babies where they'd be safe" (Morrison, 1997: 164). Unlike Morrison, this mother did not murder her children but asked God to liberate her. Without exploring a woman's heart and pain of losing children to slavery, it is easy to notice that losing children brings an extreme pain. Jacobs further relates another case of losing children:

In my childhood I knew a valuable slave, named Charity, and loved her, as all children did. Her young mistress married, and took her to Louisiana. Her little boy, James, was sold to a good sort of master. He became involved in debt, and James was sold again to a wealthy slaveholder, noted for his cruelty. With this man he grew up to manhood, receiving the treatment of a dog. After a severe whipping, save himself from further infliction of the lash, with which he was threatened, he took to the woods. He was in a most miserable condition—cut by the cowskin, half naked, half starved, and without the means of procuring a crust of bread (Ibid: 48).

The above quote explains the pains parents of slaves inherited and passed on to their children. Being bought and sold depended not only on the [mis] fortunes of a slave, but also those of the buyer and seller. Some slaves were fortunate to be bought by good slaveholders. The phrase "Her little boy, James, was sold to a good sort of master," implies that he was purchased by a master who was treating him not so bad. The not-so-bad masters are those that gave their slaves enough food, did not kill them, or subject slaves to whipping very often.

Bad slaveholders are those masters who whipped, killed, and starved slaves. The phrase, "He became involved in debt, and James was sold again to a wealthy slaveholder, noted for his cruelty. With this man he grew up to manhood, receiving the treatment of a dog," suggests that being sold brought misery to a slave who was bought by a ruthless slaveholder. The phrase "miserable condition" in which this slave was found after severe whipping attests to treatment equated to that of a dog. Misfortunes of James continued under the ruthless slaveholder:

When he had been in the press four days and five nights, the slave informed his master that the water had not been used for four mornings, and that horrible stench came from the gin house. The overseer was sent to examine into it. When the press was unscrewed, the dead body was found partly eaten by rats and vermin. Perhaps the rats that devoured his bread had gnawed his before life was extinct. Poor Charity! Grandmother and I often asked each other how her affectionate heart would bear the news, if she should ever hear of the murder of her son. ... They put him into a rough box, and buried him with less feeling than would have been manifested for an old house dog. ...He was a slave; and the feeling was that the master had a right to do what he pleased with his own property (Ibid: 48-49).

The quote describes a difficult life and treatment James had to endure under this cruel slaveholder until he met his dreadful death. The phrase "When he had been in the press four days and five nights, the slave informed his master that the water had not been used for four mornings, and that horrible stench came from the gin house" communicates the appalling death James had encountered. And the phrase "They put him into a rough box, and buried him with less feeling than would have been manifested for an old house dog" recounts how insignificant slaves were to slaveholders.

The above phrase also divulges that animals and dogs were more important and respected than slaves. A slave could be buried anyhow and anywhere the master wants a slave to be buried. And the last phrase "He was a slave; and the feeling was that the master had a right to do what he pleased with his own property" is testimony to the above claim. The slaves had no rights. Jacobs and her grandmother's worries about how Charity will receive the news of her son, James emanate from an understanding of motherly love for her children. The gendered nature of slavery and pain women went through Du Bois' rather rigid formulation of double consciousness.

Apart from the slaves who were negatively affected by slave trade, there were slaves whose loyalty to their masters Jacobs, shares an interesting tale of such loyal slaves:

When the new master claimed this family as his property, the father became furious, and went to his mistress for protection. "I can do nothing for you now, Harry," I no longer have the power I had a week ago. I have succeeded in obtaining the freedom of your wife; but I cannot obtain it for your children" (Ibid: 49-50).

Despite the plight that befell this family, some black slaves refused to take freedom. Therefore, as argued by Alexander (2012) "The notion that black people have always been united in opposition to American caste systems is sheer myth" (Alexander, 2012: 211). Like James who was sold by a good slaveholder to a ruthless slave master, this family refused freedom on the basis of loyalty and found itself tasting the true nature of slavery. The phrase, "but I cannot obtain it for your children", recounts that this family would be treated like slaves. Refusing freedom suggests that some slaves continued to be vectors in their own enslavement. Such an observation implied in Jacobs's narrative interrogates the idea that blacks were at all times trapped in the prison-house of double consciousness. This family's knowledge that there was nothing their former mistress could do resulted into the father fleeing to the bush as Jacobs continues to narrate:

The father was put in jail, and the two oldest boys sold to Georgia. One little girl, too young to be of service to her master, was left with the wretched mother. The other three were carried to their master's plantation. The eldest soon became a mother; and when the slaveholder's wife looked at the babe, she wept bitterly. ...She knew that her own husband had violated the purity she had so carefully inculcated. She had a second child by her master, and then he sold her and his offspring to his brother. She bore two children to the brother and was sold again. The next sister went crazy. The life she was compelled to lead drove her mad. The third one became the mother of five daughters. Before the birth of the fourth the pious mistress died (Ibid: 50).

Being made pregnant many times by the master and being sold to a brother who also made her pregnant, let alone another sister who gave her master five children was unbearable. It seems the mistress could not bear the outcomes of her husband's adultery as the mistress died. The above quote recounts that slave women were used as sex objects and the machines to maximize the slaveholders' wealth. The cruelty of

the slaveholders was something out of this world, beastly and animal-like. Writing about rapes and sexual victimization, Dorothy Roberts states that:

The pervasiveness of sexual victimization in the lives of enslaved women and girls is reflected by the fact that “virtually every known nineteenth-century female slave narrative contains a reference to, at some juncture, the ever present threat and reality of rape (Roberts, 2010:43).

This “pervasiveness of sexual victimization” suggests attractiveness of black women’s bodies and also divulges white women’s inability to control their husbands. The white women’s inability to control their husbands can be attributed to patriarchy. The presence of women and rapes tells that the African-American society faced so many challenges in addition to double consciousness, which like being black and American needed some attention. An element of black woman suffering under white and black men during slavery alters double consciousness and further expands what has already been argued by Douglass.

Roberts (2010) states that “Although black women and girls served as objects of sexual gratification, their own sexual health, desires, and decisions were disregarded” (Roberts, 2010: 43). Conceivably, this lack of respect can be attributed to the American laws which did not protect a slave but master and mistress. The latter implies that slaveholders were taking advantage of the laws that were in favour of them. Roberts (2010) concurs that “Because black women did not have the right not to be raped, they could not appeal to laws that made white women’s self defence against rape justifiable” (Roberts, 2010: 44).

And in substantiating the latter quote, Roberts (2010) tells a story of Celia: “When an enslaved girl in Missouri named Celia killed her master, Robert Newson, who had raped her repeatedly from the time he purchased her in 1859, she was hanged” (Roberts, 2010: 44). If it were the black woman who had been killed, the master was not going to be hanged as there were so many black women that were killed and not a single step was ever taken to punish these white murderers. Instead of dealing with their husbands, mistresses grow jealous and badly treated their female slaves who had children with their husbands. Jacobs relates an identical story to that of Celia:

I once saw a young slave girl dying soon after the birth of a child nearly white. In her agony she cried out "O Lord, come and take me!" Her mistress stood by, and mocked at her like an incarnate fiend. "You suffer, do you?" she exclaimed. "I am glad of it. You deserve it all, and more too." The girl's mother said, "The baby is dead, thank God; and I hope my poor child will soon be in heaven, too." "Heaven!" retorted the mistress. "There is no such place for the like of her and her bastard" (Ibid: 18).

The above quote further illustrates the plight of women in slavery. White mistresses were ruthless. The ruthlessness demonstrated by the mistresses had made those mistresses not very different from their husbands in terms of how they treated black slave women. The above quote also asserts that the mistresses' inability to deal with their husbands put the women slaves' lives at risk. The mistresses only dealt with the helpless slave women. The hard heartedness of the mistresses is divulged by their action in taking pleasure to a slave's painful situation such as one Jacobs has narrated above.

The phrase "Her mistress stood by, and mocked at her like an incarnate fiend. "You suffer, do you?" (Ibid: 18). The mistress mocked this woman just because she was a slave. The latter could be seen as another manifestation of double consciousness given that a black woman is oppressed by patriarchy and by mistresses in slavery. Some scholars perceive the latter claim as double oppression. And the last phrase of the above quote "The girl's mother said, "The baby is dead, thank God; and I hope my poor child will soon be in heaven, too." "Heaven!" retorted the mistress. "There is no such place for the like of her and her bastard" (Ibid: 18), shows that despite the girl's mother's hope that the infant and her daughter would find freedom in heaven, the white mistress automatically dismissed that hope with impunity.

Again, as alluded to earlier on death is seen as liberator from slavery. The mistress's reply could be perceived as emanated from the slaveholders' misinterpretation of the Bible that slavery is necessary. Fitzhugh (1854) substantiates that the latter that slaveholders find slavery repeatedly instituted by God (Fitzhugh, 1854: 96). But Dixon argues in a different direction showing that sometimes female slaves "attained important levels of spiritual mobilizing" (Op cit: 3) to liberate themselves.

Slaveholders paid no or little attention to warnings such as those of John Wesley and other abolitionists (Davis, 1992: 24). The reason is that these slaveholders convinced themselves that by enslaving black people they are doing the right thing inspired by a misguided belief that white people were influenced by mercy in enslaving black people. David Brion Davis (1992) buttresses the latter by asserting that, "The Negro's cultural difference commonly served as the justification for his enslavement reinforcing the myth that he had been rescued from heathen darkness and taken to a land of spiritual light" (Davis, 1992: 24). In the above quote, the white people considered themselves as the custodians of God and Christianity and that they could behave and treat other people anyhow. Expanding on the latter claim, Jacobs further relates her personal encounter with the mistress:

As Mrs. Flint went out, Sally told her the reason Benny was lame was, that a dog had bitten him. "I am glad of it," replied she. "I wish he had killed him. It would be good news to send to his mother. Her day will come. The dogs will grab her yet." With these Christian words she and her husband departed, and, to my great satisfaction, returned no more (Ibid: 113).

Mrs Flint hated Linda because she suspected that she was sleeping with her husband. She also hated Linda's children as a result of her suspicion. Mrs Flint's response is astonishing after she had been told that Linda's son had been bitten by a dog. As a parent, one would have expected Mrs Flint to quickly jump and find out if the child is not seriously injured. Mrs Flint's assertion that she is glad and wished the dog had killed the lad and that it would be good news to send to Linda further explains the mistresses' cruelty. The above claim tells how much Mrs Flint hated Linda. And the phrase "Her day will come. The dogs will grab her yet" are a testimony of Mrs Flint's hatred. Jacobs further reveals Mrs Flint's contemptuousness:

Mrs. Flint, like many southern women, was totally deficient in energy. She had no strength to superintend her household affairs; but her nerves were so strong, that she could sit in her easy chair and see a woman whipped, till the blood trickled from every stroke of the lash. She was a member of the church; but partaking of the Lord's supper did not seem to put her in a Christian frame of mind (Ibid: 16).

Although the above passage reveals the invidious social position of women under slavery, the passage also questions the terms by which Du Bois' character used black

problem. In the passage, Mrs Flint can be looked at as a microcosm of mistresses during slavery, especially, in showing how brutal some of the mistresses were. Attesting to this brutality, Jacobs's phrase in the above quote "had no strength to superintend her household affairs; but her nerves were so strong, that she could sit in her easy chair and see a woman whipped, till the blood trickled from every stroke of the lash" verifies how some mistresses took pleasure on slave woman's whipping. And the phrase in Jacobs's quote "till the blood trickled from every stroke of the lash" expresses the beastly and animal-like nature of slaveholders. The fact that Mrs Flint was a member of the church qualifies mistresses to be seen as odiously comparable to their husbands. In justifying the above claim, Jacobs argues:

The poor man lived, and continued to quarrel with his wife. A few months afterwards Dr. Flint handed them both over to a slave-trader. The guilty man put their value into his pocket, and had the satisfaction of knowing that they were out of his sight and hearing. When the mother was delivered into the trader's hands, she said. "You promised to treat me well." To which he replied, "You have let your tongue run too far; damn you!" she had forgotten that it was a crime for a slave to tell who was the father of her child (Ibid: 17-18).

Jacobs recounts a situation where a woman slave is quarrelling with her husband just because she is made pregnant by her master who promised to treat her well, but after the mistress found out, the master decided not to keep his promise. The master sold the slaves. The slaveholder's response after this slave woman reminded him of his promise displays the master's ironic self-hatred. The master who hates his offspring hates himself. The reason this master did not care is because he saw slave women as sexual objects whose child born out of such sexual exploitation cannot be linked to the master.

The fact that the slave woman had forgotten that for a slave to tell who the father of the slave's child is was a crime is comprehensible given the frustration of not being treated as promised by her master. Dorothy Roberts' (2010) substantiates the above claim "One of the most horrific aspects of slavery's ownership of black bodies was enslaved women's experience of sexual exploitation by white men" (Roberts, 2010: 43). The latter explains some of the problems associated with double consciousness. The women's

plight and identity alter double consciousness. Jacobs further recounts the outcomes of sexual exploitation of woman slaves:

The secrets of slavery are concealed like those of the Inquisition. My master was, to my knowledge, the father of eleven slaves. But did the mothers dare to tell who was the father of their children? Did the other slaves dare to allude to it, except in whispers among themselves? No, indeed! They knew too well the terrible consequences (Ibid: 36).

The latter quote tells that this master was not only sexually exploiting his slaves, but also betrayed his own blood. Weldon Johnson quoted in Appiah concurs with the above view and also perceives being an African-American as shame “I knew it was shame, unbearable shame. Shame at being identified with a people that could with impunity be treated worse than animals” (Appiah, 1990: 561). Johnson and Jacobs in the above quotes explain the reason Negroes were enslaved and treated mercilessly. To make it a criminal offence to tell who the father of a child is when the father is a slaveholder, has silenced the slaves in fear of their lives. One wonders if it is also the same situation when a slave fathers a child by a mistress as Jacobs narrates the story:

I have myself seen the master of such a household whose head was bowed down in shame; for it was known in the neighbourhood that his daughter had selected one of the meanest slaves on his plantation to be the father of his first grandchild. She did not make her advances to her equals, not even to her father’s more intelligent servants. She selected the most brutalized, over whom her authority could be exercised with less fear of exposure. Her father, half frantic with rage, sought to revenge himself on the offending black man; but his daughter, foreseeing the storm that would arise, had given him free papers, and sent him out of the state. In such cases the infant is smothered, or sent where it is never seen by any who know its history. But if the white parent is the father, instead of the mother, the offspring are unblushingly reared for the market (Ibid: 51).

It is interesting to note that even slaveholders can be embarrassed and be in shame. One wonders if slaveholders knew the pains African-Americans endured from what white people perceived as good for black people. The phrase “Her father, half frantic with rage, sought to revenge himself on the offending black man; but his daughter, foreseeing the storm that would arise, had given him free papers, and sent him out of the state” tells that there were white people who perceived African-Americans as human

being. Making a mistress pregnant and being a slave at the same time is one way of destabilizing binary identities implied in double consciousness.

The offspring of the meanest slave and master's daughter is also remained locked in double consciousness at its best. The child possessed both an African blood and white American blood. The phrase "In such cases the infant is smothered, or sent where it is never seen by any who know its history" reveals that to white people it does not matter whether a slave has a mistress pregnant or a slaveholder made a slave pregnant, such a child is not welcomed in the white family. Although the latter claim had been the case, a case of slaveholders making slaves pregnant had been more prominent. Dorothy Roberts (2010) buttresses the above claim "The institution of slavery created for slaveholders the possibility of unrestrained sexual access and control" (Roberts, 2010: 43).

Jacobs further clarifies how the slaveholders' sexual access begins using her personal experience "My master began to whisper foul words in my ear. Young as I was, I could not remain ignorant of their import. I tried to treat them with indifference or contempt" (Ibid: 30). Black women thus suffered the burden of having their bodies exploited without compensation. Black women suffered as blacks, slaves, American, and women. This compounded the women's lives as slaves. Such a portrayal of slave women confirms as well as interrogates the Du Boisian notion of dual consciousness. Slaves commanded several identities under slavery.

Starting to whisper foul words in the ear of a young girl implies an intention to rape or sexually abuse that girl. Although Jacobs argues that she tried to treat these foul words with disdain, she was still her master's property. And being a property implied that a slaveholder could do anything a slaveholder wanted to his property. Being property also meant conforming to the slaveholder's instructions irrespective of a girl's age. Roberts (2010) confirms the latter "Jacobs referred not only to forced sex but also to the premature exposure of girls to sexualisation by masters, impressing on girls at an early age that their value was reduced to sexual commodity" (Roberts, 2010: 43). Roberts in the latter quote recounts that a girl's age did not matter to slaveholders, what mattered

was that a girl was a slaveholder's property. Jacobs further narrates her master's reaction after she treated the foul words with contempt:

He told me I was his property; that I must be subject to his will in all things. My soul revolted against the mean tyranny. But where could I run for protection? No matter whether the slave girl be as black as ebony or as fair as her mistress. In either case, there is no shadow of law to protect her from insult, from violence, or even from death; all these are inflicted by fiends who bear the shape of men. The mistress, who ought to protect the helpless victim, has no other feelings towards her but those of jealousy and rage (Ibid: 30).

In the above quote, Jacobs reveals the unwelcoming attitude of white people towards African-Americans. The phrase "No matter whether the slave girl be as black as ebony or as fair as her mistress" recounts that it does not matter how light-skin an African-American can be, there is no room for a black man in America. The latter asserts to Du Bois' double consciousness which states that Afro-Americans are being subjected to discrimination on the basis of being black and American.

In her narrative, Jacobs questions the quietness of those freemen and women in the north who do nothing to condemn slavery. It could be that these people did not see anything wrong in American racism and discrimination. Jacobs is supported by Alexander who states that "Disagreements within the African American community about how best to respond to systems of control- and even disagreements about what is, and is not, discriminatory- have a long history" (Alexander, 2012: 211). Jacobs is also grateful and appreciates all the endeavours some people are making to condemn slavery and call them noble men and women. The fact Jacobs has people she calls noble men and women recounts that there were attempts to get slavery abolished. The above tells that the evils of slavery and the plight of African-Americans reached other continents and countries whose show of sympathy compelled Jacobs to describe them as noble men and women. The movements these noble men and women are making to condemn slavery appear not enough to end slavery. The slaves continue to experience all sorts of evils.

During the period of slavery, torture was used as a standard instrument for racial control (The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2009: 42). The phrase "Never before, in my

life, had I heard hundreds of blows fall; in succession, on a human being” confirms not only the latter claim, but also the insignificance of a black race. In view of the evils of slavery mentioned above, without any doubts God does not approve slavery and Smith (1956) adds that “domestic slavery is a great moral, political, and social evil, is restricted to its appropriate meaning, *sin* (Smith, 1956: 19). Moreover, Jacobs cannot help but talk about an unbearable scene of an old slave who was starved to death:

Among those in waiting for their allowance was a very old slave, who had faithfully served the Flint family through three generations. When he hobbled up to get his bit of meat, the mistress said he was too old to have any allowance; that when niggers were too old to work, they ought to be fed on grass. Poor old man! He suffered much before he found rest in the grave (Ibid: 88).

The above quote explains how older slaves were deemed useless and starved to death when they no longer have power. These elders are slaves who have worked for these masters including these masters’ parents for so many years and with loyalty. The phrase “When he hobbled up to get his bit of meat, the mistress said he was too old to have any allowance; that when niggers were too old to work, they ought to be fed on grass” makes one wonder if loyalty and long service are necessary if at the time one is supposed to be taken care of by both the master and children, is starved and chased away to die merely because one is old and can no longer be useful to the master. Jacobs narrates how a slaveholder who killed slaves with impunity got haunted by those deaths:

Murder was so common on his plantation that he feared to be alone after nightfall. He might have believed in ghosts. His brother, if not equal in wealth, was at least equal in cruelty. His bloodhounds were well trained. Their pen was spacious, and a terror to the slaves. They were let loose on a runaway, and if they tracked him, they literally tore the flesh from his bones. When the slaveholder died, his shrieks and groans were so frightful that they appalled his own friends. His last words were, “I am going to hell; bury my money with me” (Ibid: 47).

The latter quote recounts how a slaveholder was haunted by deaths of slaves he had been killing. It is quite interesting to note that this slaveholder feared to be alone at

night. Apart from the latter, Jacobs delineates how her grandmother was asked to thank God:

Poor old Aggie clapped her hands for joy. "Is dat what you's crying fur?" she exclaimed. "Git down on your knees and bress de Lord! I don't know whar my poor chillern is, and I nebber 'spect to know. You don't know whar poor Linda's gone to; but you do know whar her brudder is. He is in free parts; and dat's de right place. Don't murmur at de lord's doings but git down on your knees and tank him for his goodness" (Ibid: 123).

In the above quote, old Aggie asked Linda's grandmother to thank God because she knows where her children are, unlike her. Many slave women did not know where their masters sold their children and did not expect to see their children again. Old Aggie was saying Linda's grandmother was better because she knew her children and must be grateful to God for that. Old Aggie asked Linda's grandmother not to question God's glory. Old Aggie was telling her that not all slaves got what God has done for Linda's grandmother. Old Aggie was saying slaves must appreciate every little thing God was doing for them. Prayers and songs could help the slaves to endure slavery, and also belittle slavery. Jacobs explains how music benefited the slaves:

Precious are such moments to the poor slaves. If you were to hear them at such times, you might think they were happy. But can that hour of singing and shouting sustain them through the dreary week, toiling without wages, under constant dread of the lash (Ibid: 68).

These times of singing and praying were precious because they restored hope and happiness to the slaves. It seems music made slaves not to mind the evils of slavery. Also music was used a mask to cover the unhappy moments of slavery as the phrase "If you were to hear them at such times, you might think they were happy" implies. One would argue that music to slaves was not only a source of courage, but also a way of telling slaveholders that slaves could bring slavery to an end. This is supported by Dixon who states that slave songs "called into being a place behind the confines of the plantation where they might undergo fundamental change in self-perception and moral status" (Dixon, 1987: 13). The above quote does not only tell slaves could make themselves happy through music, but explains what music can cause to an individual.

Undoubtedly, it was that inspirational element that could be viewed as the reason slaves sang sorrowful songs in times of despair.

Paul Gilroy (1993) adds that the moral geography of the sorrow songs contained a dialectic that blackened sorrow and hope: and expressed a counterculture to American modernity” (Gilroy, 1993: 124). In Jacobs’s narrative, the slaveholders observed the impact of music to the slaves were refused a privilege of meeting. Jacobs further explains the latter claim:

The slaves begged the privilege of meeting again at their little church in the woods, with their burying ground around it. It was built by the colored people, and they had no higher happiness than to meet there and sing hymns together, and pour out their hearts in spontaneous prayer. Their request was denied, and the church was demolished (Ibid: 64).

The slaveholders thought they were the custodians of Christianity. The slaveholders also equated themselves to God. The fact that the request of the slaves was denied and the church was demolished justifies the latter claim. The slaveholders’ refusal showed also a fear that slaves might revolt. One could see the slaveholders’ move as a way of keeping the slaves frightened and uninspired. And keeping slaves frightened and uninspired would mean belittling slaves through threats of death and slavery. The above claim would also mean that there was nothing to keep slaves happy. Acts such as denying slaves a privilege to meet made some slaves to flee away in search of freedom. The latter conditions such as being denied meetings contributed to Jacobs’ fleeing to the north. Jacobs described how she felt when she arrived at the north:

The day after my arrival was one of the happiest of my life. I felt as if I was beyond the reach of the bloodhounds; for the first time during many years, I had both my children together with me. They greatly enjoyed their reunion, and laughed and chatted merrily. I watched them with a swelling heart. Their very motion delighted me (Ibid: 164).

The above quote recounts Jacobs’ successful escape from slavery, her joy and her reunion with her children. The phrase “the day after my arrival was one of the happiest of my life” reminds one of Douglass when he said felt like he had escaped a den of hungry lions after he fled slavery. Jacobs surely could not express her happiness as she

was about to experience life without being treated with disrespect, without a lash, no fear of being killed, no fear of rape. The phrase “for the first time during many years, I had both my children together with me” implied that an escape from slavery implied access to her children.

Jacobs’ successful escape could be seen as modifying double consciousness given that she stood up for herself and against gender stereotypes. Jacobs’ refusing to be raped by her master and her escape could also be perceived as victory for women in slavery who were sexually exploited by their masters. However, her arrival in the free states did not mean complete freedom in the north as she experienced racism. This view is shared by Dixon who argues that for freeing slaves “The wilderness, the underground, [the north] and the mountaintop are broad geographical metaphors for the search, discovery and achievement of self” (Dixon, 1987: 4-5).

Undoubtedly, Jacobs was so sure that she would mingle people of other races without being treated badly and discriminated against. Surely, Jacobs visualised the kind of life she was going to lead in the north which was a complete opposite to that of slavery. Jacobs did not know that to be free from slavery did not mean to be free from racism. In view of racism, Jacobs narrates her first experience of racism in the north after she was stirred at by some nurses who perceived themselves as better than her because of their skin colour “I found it hard to preserve my self-control, when I looked round, and saw women who were nurses, as I was, and only one shade lighter in complexion, eyeing me with a defiant look, as if my presence were a contamination” (Ibid: 159). In America, nobody wanted to be linked or to be an African-American because of the stain America had attached to blackness. Jacobs explains further how the rebellion of the waiters confirmed racism:

But the waiters of the establishment were white, and they soon began to complain, saying they were not hired to wait on negroes. The landlord requested Mr. Bruce to send me down to my meals, because his servants rebelled against bringing them up, and the colored servants of other boarders were dissatisfied because all were not treated alike (Ibid: 159).

The phrase “But the waiters of the establishment were white, and they soon began to complain, saying they were not hired to wait on negroes” shows the highest level of racism in America. The above phrase also informs one that white people did not see Afro-Americans as human beings. The landlord’s request to Mr. Bruce recounts that even those in positions of power saw racism as an acceptable norm. The landlord’s request together with the rebellion of the servants reveals America’s reluctance to accept African-Americans as members of the American society. In further narrating racism experiences in America, Jacobs asserted how her brother got discriminated:

He was liked by the master, and was a favorite with his fellow-apprentices; but one day they accidentally discovered a fact they had never before suspected- that he was colored! This at once transformed him into a different being. Some of the apprentices were Americans, others American-born Irish; and it was offensive to their dignity to have a “nigger” among them, after they had been told that he was a “nigger.” They began by treating him with silent scorn, and finding that he returned the same, they resorted to insults and abuse (Ibid: 168).

The latter quote tells how Jacobs’ brother suffered from racial discrimination after he had been found to be an African-American. Being liked and be a favourite to a master was possible if a master was convinced that one was white. The phrase “but one day they accidentally discovered a fact they had never before suspected- that he was colored!” changed how Jacobs’ brother was perceived by his white colleagues because the master and the rest of his fellow-apprentices had discovered that he was not white. The above discovery implied a change of fortune and the manner in which he was liked and treated by his colleagues. The phrase “it was offensive to their dignity to have a “nigger” justified the latter claim given that no white person wanted to be associated with Afro-Americans. The fact that his colleagues resorted to insults and abuse, recounted the hostile nature of American society’s racism. In spite of racism, the north had luxuries compared to slave dominated areas in the south. In relation to luxuries, Jacobs substantiates “The relations of husband and wife, parent and child, were too sacred for the richest noble in the land to violate with impunity. Much was being done to enlighten these people” (Ibid: 166).

In the above quote, the phrase “The relations of husband and wife, parent and child, were too sacred for the richest noble in the land to violate with impunity” explains how holy and significant a family is. The latter phrase also tells that a family is a foundation of every society and through unity in families, a society cannot be easily polarised. The above claim is also a complete opposite to the manner in which a family was upheld during slavery. In slavery the word family only existed in abstraction and when slaveholders wanted. If a slave couple could manage to get married with permission from a slaveholder, such a couple would never find peace and happiness for they could be sold at any time a slave master wishes to. And when such a couple gets, the children belong to the master, not to the couple. Such families are always left with nothing but sorrow and wretchedness because they will never see their children again after the children are sold. Moreover, Jacobs shares the conditions in which poor people in the north were living, which were far better than those in the south:

The people I saw around me were, many of them, among the poorest poor. But when I visited them in their little thatched cottages, I felt that the condition of even the meanest and most ignorant among them was vastly superior to the condition of the most favored slaves in America. They labored hard; but they were not ordered out of toil while the stars were in the sky, and driven and lashed by an overseer, through heat and cold, till the stars shone out again. Their homes were very humble; but they were protected by law (Ibid: 166).

This juxtaposition of the conditions of the poorest of the poor in the north to that of slavery affirmed a paradox of freedom in the North. The above comparison also tells that in spite of racism in the north, slavery was the worst in the South. Furthermore, by comparing north to south, Jacobs tells that “No insolent patrols could come, in the dead of night, and flog them at their pleasure. The father, when he closed his cottage door, felt safe with his family around him. No master or overseer could come and take from him his wife or his daughter” (Ibid: 166). Certainly, the living conditions Jacobs had observed in the north are every slave’s dream and wish. Although racism appeared to be a serious problem in the north, evils such as those Jacobs experienced in slavery were a thing of the past. Considering what the situation had been in the north for Jacobs, one understands when Jacobs confesses after she got her freedom “I had objected to having my freedom bought, yet I must confess that when it was done I felt

as if a heavy load had been lifted from my weary shoulders” (Ibid: 180). The above quote is testimonial of being free from slavery.

3.4. Conclusion

In conclusion to this chapter, both Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs have experienced and endured the evils of slavery as revealed in this analysis. The above claims are what make Douglass experiences similar to Jacobs’s. Firstly, both Douglass and Jacobs affirm Du Bois’ understanding of double consciousness. Douglass and Jacobs concur that being both black and American was a problem in America. The duality or doubleness possessed by Afro-Americans in America resulted in blacks being enslaved and treated badly. By conceding that double consciousness was a problem for African-Americans the two authors were writing in the protest tradition implied in Du Bois formulation of double consciousness as entrapment.

Douglass and Jacobs also have modified double consciousness. Frederick Douglass suggests that in addition to being black and an American the capitalist system introduced being a slave as an identity of African-Americans. So, slave as the third identity alters doubleness to triple identity. Douglass’ resistance to slavery and subsequent escape to the North imbues slaves with agency not entirely anticipated in the notion of double consciousness as entrapment. Harriet Jacobs also modified double consciousness. In addition to what has been modified by Douglass to form triple identity, Jacobs introduced woman.

In Jacobs’ case, double conscious has been modified to multiple identities as it consists of being black, American, slave, and woman. Both Douglass and Jacobs have modified the concept of double consciousness. Because of the changes and shifts that have taken place in double consciousness especially in the Antebellum period, one argues that double consciousness should be seen as multiple consciousness. In fact, according to Paul Gilroy (1993) double consciousness is a paradoxical reality indicating “unfinished identities [which] necessarily [don’t] exhaust the subjective resources of any particular individual (Gilroy, 1993: 1).

Furthermore, the fact alone that Douglass and Jacobs' experiences of freedom in the North shown that African-Americans resisted slavery as practised in the South. But as Gilroy suggests, the ambiguity of slave resistance is that though meant to be counter cultural, that resistance existed inside and outside (Ibid: 30). American and modernity (48) expressed a relationship of "dependency and antagonism" to American modernity. But despite the fractal patterns of cultural and political identities of Douglass and Jacobs' narratives in relation to double consciousness, it can be said that the two authors manipulated the white men's language to produce their accounts of the journeys from slavery to freedom. In short, the very act of using English to lay bare cruelties of slavery is a manifestation of minds that have gone beyond the scourge of double consciousness as a mode of racial entrapment.

Chapter 4

“Diverse views on double consciousness in Booker T Washington’s *Up from Slavery* and W.E.B. Dubois’ *The Souls of Black Folks*.”

4.1. Introduction

Chapter 3 focused on the Antebellum period, discussed the injustices of slavery and race relations. Chapter 3 explored Douglass’ *The Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass (1845)* and Jacobs’ *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (2008)*. The chapter demonstrated that Douglass and Jacobs confirmed as well as revised the Du Boisian idea of double consciousness. This current chapter now will investigate the concept of double consciousness through evaluating views in W.E.B. Du Bois’ *The Souls of Black Folk (1989)* and Booker T. Washington’s *Up from Slavery (1986)*. This chapter focuses mainly on the Reconstruction period which followed the Civil War. The Civil War determined the end of slavery.

Reconstruction in short was a period which followed the abolishing of slavery in America. This period was meant to redress the challenges of the American society such as racism and inequality. The end of slavery did not mean freedom to black people as they were segregated racially. The choice of Du Bois and Washington in this chapter is that the coinage of the concept of double consciousness took place in their time. Du Bois and Washington are primarily chosen because although they agree on the concept of double consciousness, they differ on the solutions to the problem.

The centrality of this chapter to the thesis is that the whole debate of double consciousness was originated by Du Bois in response to Washington’s politics of racial appeasement. The discussions as represented in both authors shall be anchored in theoretical work by Frantz Fanon (1967), Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Cornell West (1996), Winston Napier (2000), and Paul Gilroy (1993).

4.2. Outlooks on W.E.B. Du Bois and Double Consciousness in *The Souls of Black Folks*

Du Bois described the nature of the American society’s racism as defined by double consciousness. He says “[...] the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil and

gifted with a second-sight in this American world” (Du Bois, 1989: 5). Du Bois implies in the latter quote that an African-American is less significant as African-Americans were subjected to all sorts of ruthlessness and discrimination. And Harris (1993) concurs that Afro-Americans have struggled for equality and justice since they arrived in America (Harris, 1993: 3). In view of inequality and injustices, Du Bois observed that being a black man in America was not an advantage that “It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (Dubois, 1989: 5). This peculiar sensation which Du Bois perceived as double consciousness seems to be a problem for African-Americans for it makes other races to see African-Americans as an inferior race. And Khan (2012) concurs with the latter claim that “For Du Bois this peculiar condition of ‘double consciousness’ is a problem for blacks because they are viewed as inferior” (Khan, 2012: 1).

Du Bois further explains the reason he perceived double consciousness a problem “One ever feels his two-ness,-an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder” (Ibid: 5). Du Bois saw this duality within one dark body as a cause for all the evils and cruelties to which an African-American is imperiled. Gilroy concurs with Du Bois that “Double consciousness was initially used to convey the special difficulties arising from black internationalization of an American identity (Gilroy, 1993: 126).

And to be both black and American is to possess two contradictory identities. Adell (1994) substantiates the above assertion that “Contradictoriness is therefore the essence of the unhappy consciousness” (Adell, 1994: 18). Undoubtedly, it is the black part of double consciousness which white people associate with darkness, inferior, and primitive African continent that seemed to be a problem. Khan (2012) recounts the negative impacts of two-ness in African-Americans that “This ‘two-ness’ that blacks were made to feel in America, in turn, bred a variety of morbid symptoms in African-Americans” (Khan, 2012: 2).

Khan in the above quote suggests that this two-ness also causes inner conflict in African-Americans which result into self-doubt and self-hate. In relation to the latter, Khan (2012) further argues that “Some blacks took their blackness as a sign of being an abject, poor and came to believe that, indeed, they were not naturally endowed with the assumed positive intellectual gifts that whites were thought to have” (Khan, 2012: 2). Khan’s argument in the above quote further implies that it is the condition of two-ness which makes some of the African-Americans aspire to be white. In view of the plight of African-Americans in America, one comprehends Du Bois when he further elaborates the plight of African-Americans and simultaneously recommends a solution to the condition double consciousness that “The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife- this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost” (Ibid: 5).

Du Bois expresses his “longing to attain self-conscious manhood” and Adell (1994) explains self-consciousness as “In the ‘lordship and bondage’ relationship, self-consciousness is both independent of and dependant on another” (Adell, 1994: 16). This ambiguous relationship of two warring identities which Du Bois describes as strife to African-Americans is further clarified by Adell (1994) “It is essentially a consciousness ‘divided and at variance with itself,’ yet it is always striving for a reconciliation of the very elements that constitute its essence” (Adell, 1994: 18). Fanon (1967) concurs as he expresses Hegel’s understanding of self-consciousness “man is human only to the extent to which he tries to impose his existence on another man in order to be recognized by him (Fanon, 1967: 216).

The striving of this self-consciousness affirms Du Bois’ wish “to merge his double self into a better and truer self.” In relation to a better and truer self, Adell (1994) echoes that “It is always seeking to reconcile itself with its Other. It is always striving for true self-consciousness” (Adell, 1994: 18). Adell in the above quote suggests that true self-consciousness is for a black man to be accepted as who he is without being discriminated against on the basis of two-ness. And Du Bois concurs “This, then, is the end of his striving: to be a coworker in the kingdom of culture, to escape both death and

isolation, to husband and use his best powers and his latent genius (Ibid: 5). Apart from Du Bois' delineation of what would it take to acquire true self-consciousness, Du Bois recounts his first encounter with racial segregation as a result of double consciousness:

In a wee wooden schoolhouse, something put it into the boys' and girls' heads to buy gorgeous visiting cards- ten cents a package- and exchange. The exchange was merry, till one girl, a newcomer, refused my card,-refused it peremptorily, with a glance. Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil (Dubois, 1989: 4)

Du Bois in the above quote explains how he first experienced racism in his childhood. The newcomer's refusal to accept Du Bois' card is not only an eye opener to other children that Du Bois was black, but also tells that the newcomer was not used to an environment where African-Americans were not treated differently. And the phrase "that I was different from the others" confirms the latter claim. Du Bois' longing is different to that of white children because he wanted to be accepted as human being. Du Bois' longing was also for better life, justice and opportunities. In the phrase "in heart and life and longing" which is interpreted above emphasizes that the aspirations of a black child are different to that of a white child. And the phrase "but shut out from their world" recounts segregation. The above phrase also suggests that Du Bois was being discriminated on the basis of his skin colour.

It is out of a sense of being marginalized in America that Du Bois proclaimed that "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line" (Ibid: 13). In elaborating the latter, Du Bois gives an example of Alexander Crummell who experienced racism and who was also highly admired by Dubois. In expressing his admiration for Crummell, Du Bois asserts that "Instinctively I bowed before this man, as one bows before the prophets of the world" (Ibid: 177). Gilroy (1993) adds that Du Bois' inclusion of Crummell points to the conspicuous power of non-biological kinship and shares something of the same bitter spirit (Gilroy, 1993:139). In relation to Crummell being a victim of racism in the church, Du Bois narrates:

They said slowly, "It is all very natural- it is even commendable; but the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church cannot admit a Negro." And when

that thin, half-grotesque figure still haunted their doors, they put their hands kindly, half sorrowfully, on his shoulders, and said, "Now,-of course, we-we know how you feel about it; but you see it is impossible,- that is—well- it is premature. Sometime, we trust- sincerely trust- all such distinctions will fade away; but now the world is as it is" (Ibid: 179)

The phrases "It is all very natural," and "it is even commendable" must have given Crummell some hope that he was going to be accepted. But being told subsequently that the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church cannot admit a Negro must have torn his heart into pieces. The attempts to strengthen and implore Crummell not to despair must have fallen on deaf ears especially knowing that it is going to take longer for racism to fade away. In affirming the above claim, Du Bois argues that "Restless still and unsatisfied, he turned toward Africa, and for long years, amid the spawn of the slave-smugglers, sought a new heaven and a new earth" (Ibid: 183). And one understands when Du Bois recounts the damage racism has done to Crummell when he asserts that:

He sat one morning gazing toward the sea. He smiled and said, "The gate is rusty on the hinges." That night at star-rise a wind came moaning out of the west to blow the gate ajar, and then the soul I loved fled like a flame across the Seas, and in its seat sat Death (Ibid: 185)

In the above quote, Du Bois reveals that the frustrations which emanate from racism can kill an individual as it became the case in Crummell. The death of Crummell is not only a testament to the level of racism in America, but also of psychological and physical impacts thereof. Talking about the impacts of racism one could be reminded of John Jones whose frustrations which originated from racism led him into killing a white judge's son who was attempting to rape John's sister. In narrating John's story, Du Bois declares "He said not a word, but, seizing a fallen limb, struck him with all the pent-up hatred of his great black arm; and the body lay white still beneath the pines, all bathed in sunshine and in blood" Ibid: 202).

John's story explains that racism can also create hatred within a victim. Brodwin (1972) explains Du Bois' rationality behind Crummell and John's situation that "deals with the necessity to affirm life in the face of tragedy as seen through Alexander Crummell and

John Jones” (Brodwin, 1972: 307). The racial experiences of both Crummell and John are examples of African-Americans who are trapped in the web of double consciousness. Crummell and John were not strong enough to escape an entrapment in double consciousness by rising beyond expectations. Du Bois further expounds the effect double conscious has on an African-American’s strengths:

Here in America, in the few days since Emancipation, the black man’s turning hither or thither in hesitant and doubtful striving has often made his very strength to lose effectiveness, to seem like absence of power, like weakness. And yet it is not weakness,-it is the contradiction of double aims (Ibid: 6)

Du Bois maintains in the above quote that this doubleness is a problem given that it creates self-doubts within an African-American which makes an African-American believe what the world or other races say about an African-American. Other races perceive an African-American as good for nothing and inferior. And it is the latter belief that makes an African-American loses his/her strength. The loss of strength as a consequence of double consciousness compels an Afro-American to believe that being both an American and African is a weakness. And Du Bois, through the phrase “And yet it is not weakness,-it is the contradiction of double aims,” advises that being both African and American is not a weakness, but a failure of the American society to accept an African-American as human being and citizen of America. Du Bois further asserts that this conflict within one dark body coerces African-Americans to make wrong choices in education to escape the white people’s hatred:

The double-aimed struggle of the black artisan- on the one hand to escape white contempt for a nation of mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, and on the other hand to plough and nail and dig for a poverty-stricken horde could only result in making him a poor craftsman, for he had but half a heart in either cause (Ibid: 6)

Du Bois argues in the latter quote that the making of wrong choices by African-Americans to do handy-works instead of opting for higher education would make out of black men poor artisans and craftsmen who would never be respected. Overtly, Du Bois regards a choice of industrial education as mere mockery and degradation of a black man. One indeed credits Du Bois for claiming that “EASILY the most striking thing in the history of the American Negro since 1876 is the ascendancy of Mr. Booker T.

Washington” (ibid: 36). Norrell (2003-4) adds that Washington “acquiesced in segregation,” accepted “complacently” the denial of equal rights after Reconstruction” (Norrell, 2003-4: 96).

Indubitably, one of the highlights of Mr. Booker Washington’s dominance is the agitation of industrial education among African-Americans. One understands when wa Thiongo says about Washington “His autobiography, *Up From Slavery* could better have been entitled: *Back To Slavery*” (wa Thiongo, 1981: 131). Talking more about the emergence of Booker T. Washington, Du Bois narrates that “It began at the time when war memories and ideals were rapidly passing; a day of astonishing commercial development was dawning; a sense of doubt and hesitation overtook the freedmen’s sons,-then it was that his leading began” (Ibid: 36). Du Bois in the above quote sees Washington’s dominance and rise as the dawning of a day of disaster as Du Bois terms it a period of unusual commercial development.

Commercial development created a sense of doubt and hesitation to an African-American. For Du Bois an African-American needs higher education in order to advance in life. In relation to the latter, Norrell (2003-4) is not astounded by the above criticism because Washington rose to power only because he was chosen by white people to lead blacks and his leadership amounted to a setback for the black race (Norrell, 2003-4: 96). This was a time, in addition to a need for higher education when an African-American needs political freedom which involved equal rights and right to vote. And Washington’s strategy seems to underplay the significance of political freedom and higher education.

Du Bois contends that “Washington came, with a simple definite programme, at the psychological moment when the nation was a little ashamed of having bestowed so much sentiment on Negroes, and was concentrating its energies on Dollars” (Ibid: 36). Du Bois in the above quote recounts that Washington’s programme came at a time when America was regretting ignoring an African-American. So in relation to the latter assertion, Du Bois implies that Washington’s programme messed up everything. Washington’s strategy encourages African-Americans to work for wealth, their bellies,

and acquire property. Out of disappointment and in regard to Washington's programme, Du Bois asserts that:

In the history of nearly all other races and peoples the doctrine preached at such crises has been that manly self-respect is worth more than lands and houses, and that a people who voluntarily surrender such respect, or cease striving for it, are not worth civilizing (Ibid: 43)

Du Bois clarifies that it never happened that a race compromise self-respect at the expense of material prosperity. In relation to race compromise, Dagbovie (2007) claims that Kevern Verney describes Washington as a self-centered, conservative, greedy, dictatorial, black conscious-less despot who remained ideologically static from 1895 to 1975 (Dagbovie, 2007: 240). But, Calista (1964) expresses how a former Tuskegee student felt about Washington on the contrary "The shortest and plainest solution of the long discussed race problem hangs on the hinges of Education and property" (Calister, 1964: 249). Du Bois believed the double consciousness in Washington forced him to represent and claim to love a black race and which simultaneously spearheading self-disrespecting culture. Explaining in detail Washington's compromise, Du Bois says:

Mr. Washington distinctly asks that black people give up, at least for the present, three things,-
First, political power,
Second, insistence on civil rights,
Third, higher education of Negro youth,-and concentrate all their energies on industrial education, the accumulation of wealth, and the conciliation of the South (Ibid: 44)

For a race to give up on political power implies that such a race would not be able to use political office to change their economic and political fortunes. In addition, it also tells that a black race is not going to have a say or influence the policies including those that directly affect a black race. It also denotes that African-Americans are not going to vote. Du Bois likewise states that Washington asks a black race to also give up on civil rights and higher education. Foner (1970) adds that "His position is that a colored boy should not be educated in the same way as a white boy, this he plainly stated before the Wharton school at the University of Pennsylvania" (Foner, 1970: 344). Foner's claim

above suggests that under Washington's approach, African-Americans would always be inferior to white people. Foner (1970) further asks "How are these races ever to harmonize and live together if differently educated, the whole make-up of the man depends upon his education (Foner, 1970: 344).

In view of Washington's compromise, one understands when Gardner (1975) maintains that Black Intellectuals charged that Washington's system of industrial education was intended to keep blacks in a poor position and perpetuate the caste system (Gardner, 1975: 514). While giving up on civil rights implies being content with being exposed to all sorts of discrimination, giving up on higher education means not to progress in life and be dominated intellectually by other races. One can argue that giving up on political rights, civil rights, and higher education is tantamount to disaster and destruction of a black race. And in relation to giving up the rights cited above, Du Bois probes "Is it possible, and probable, that nine millions of men can make effective progress in economic lines if they are deprived of political rights, made a servile caste, and allowed only the most meagre chance for developing their exceptional men?" (Ibid: 44).

Du Bois retorts "If history and reason give any distinct answer to these questions, it is an emphatic *No*" (Ibid: 44). Du Bois' answer does not only mean a black race would despair, but also remain at the margin of society. Dagbovie (2007) affirms the latter that Washington's "programme practically accepts the alleged inferiority of the Negro race, and he withdraws many of the high demands of Negroes as men and American citizens" (Dagbovie, 2007: 239). In Du Bois' view, it appears to be mere foolishness to opt for industrial education and compromise political rights, civil rights, and higher education given that how a race acquires material and wealth depends on the race's access to intellectual and political capital and improvement of the race's economic status. A white man would implement policies which regulate acquisition of wealth on which a black race would have no say because African-Americans considered political freedom as not urgent. Given the significance of political freedom in any race, one comprehends Du Bois when expressing the nation's reaction:

It startled the nation to hear a Negro advocating such a programme after many decades of bitter complaint; it startled and won the applause of the South, it

interested and won the admiration of the North; and after a confused murmur of protest, it silenced if it did not convert the Negroes themselves (Ibid: 37)

It surprised the South as Du Bois claims because the African-Americans for many decades had been longing for freedom. Black people had been calling for equal rights since the abolition of slavery. Southern whites must have been happy because a choice for material prosperity meant retaining some of the former slaves as workers. It also meant inequality with African-Americans occupying the lowest status in the American society. Knowing how Washington's programme was going to disadvantage the African-Americans, Du Bois criticized Washington "It is wrong to encourage a man or a people in evil-doing; it is wrong to aid and abet a national crime simply because it is unpopular not to do so" (Ibid: 47). Du Bois in the above quote suggests that it is better to be unpopular than supporting wrongdoing. Du Bois courageously inspires black people to have courage and reprimand any evil doing that will subject a black race to disastrous results as he says: "We have no right to sit silently by while the inevitable seeds are sown for a harvest of disaster to our children, black and white" (Ibid: 47).

Du Bois uses the phrase "We have no right to sit silently by," to emphasize the greater need for African-Americans not to be silent. But one wonders if other African-Americans saw what Du Bois perceived. Franklin (1980) expresses the views of one of the people who did not see what Du Bois saw "After fourteen years of intimate association with Washington, J.L.M. Curry, a leading Southern educator, could say that he had never once known the principal of Tuskegee to say or to do an unwise thing" (Franklin, 1980: 276). The above quote confirms the support Washington had among the Americans. It is also possible that the Americans had a different view about industrial education and the compromise of political freedom. To claim that "We have not right to sit silently by," sounds harsh at the same time given that it reveals Du Bois' blindness to different views. Du Bois puts the blame on double consciousness as he maintains that:

This waste of double aims, this seeking to satisfy two unreconciled ideals, has wrought sad havoc with the courage and faith and deeds of ten thousand people,- has sent them often wooing false gods and invoking false means of salvation, and at times has even seemed about to make them ashamed of themselves (Ibid: 6)

Du Bois stresses that double consciousness has created a serious mayhem among African-Americans. This duality is also a cause for black people's belief on the lies some white people are telling about African-Americans. African-Americans started not to believe in themselves and developed self-hatred. In relation to the above claim, Frantz Fanon (1967) asserts that "It has been said a Negro is the link between monkey and man- meaning, of course, white man (Fanon, 1967: 30). Some African-Americans also developed self-doubt and accepted that it is true that a black race is an inferior race. Regarding the self-doubt which some Afro-Americans had developed, Du Bois argues that "He began to have a dim feeling that, to attain his place in the world, he must be himself, and not another" (Ibid: 9). In relation to the above, some African-Americans chose to emulate white people simply because white people had successfully attached superiority to skin color. The latter could be attributed to the past of slavery that denied opportunities to black people. Talking about slavery and poverty, Du Bois avers that:

[Black man] he felt his poverty; without a cent, without a home, without land, tools, or savings, he had entered into competition with rich, landed, skilled neighbors. To be a poor man is hard, but to be a poor race in a land of dollars is the very bottom of hardships (Ibid: 9)

Undoubtedly Du Bois here is talking about a period after the abolition of slavery. During Emancipation, slaves started life with nothing and as a result found themselves being struck by poverty. The African-Americans had to compete with white people for resources. In view of the competition between the two races, Khan (2012) asserts that "Blacks in America were forced to express their identities through comparison with the white race whose racial achievements were described as the norm and standard of civilized being" (Khan, 2012: 1). The hard-hearted white American society relished competition with a poor black man. African-Americans do not need to enter into competition to flourish; they (African-Americans) also need white people's commitment and willingness to accept black people as human beings.

Brodwin (1972) concurs with the latter claim "Du Bois recognized the fact that the black community could not, with its weak power base, achieve a social revolution completely on its own" (Brodwin, 1972: 306). It would also take a black race's self-love, self-belief, self-pride, and commitment. Relating to discrimination and self-love, Du Bois reasons

that “But the facing of so vast a prejudice could not but bring the inevitable self-questioning, self-disparagement, and lowering of ideals which ever accompany repression and breed in an atmosphere of contempt and hate” (Ibid: 10). While Du Bois does not propose any solution to the plight of the African-Americans, he reveals what the nation thinks about black people and what came later:

Be content to be servants, and nothing more; what need of higher culture for half-men? Away with the black man’s ballot, by force or fraud,-and behold the suicide of a race! Nevertheless, out of the evil came something of good,-the more careful adjustment of education to real life, the clearer perception of the Negroes’ social responsibilities, and the sobering realization of the meaning of progress (Ibid: 10)

Du Bois says that American society sees black people as only fit to be servants, and unfit for higher education as white people perceive African-Americans to be sub-human. Brodwin (1972) reveals how Du Bois helped in American race relations expressed in the above claim “Therefore *The Souls of Black Folk* had to be not only a force in awakening black pride, but also a spiritual guidebook for whites, most of whom had little awareness of the genuine strivings and psychic realities in black folk” (Brodwin, 1972: 306). Du Bois at the same time expresses joy for what has come out of racial discrimination of African-Americans as he says in the latter quote “out of the evil came something of good.”

In addition to what came out of evil, Du Bois acknowledges changes in education, perception on social responsibilities of black men, and realization of the meaning of progress. The above mentioned changes are a clear indication of slight progress and improvement in how an African-American is looked at in the American society. Regarding the “sobering realization of the meaning of progress,” it is not what it seems; instead it was a huge disappointment. Du Bois, in expressing his disappointment on the progress of black people, asks these questions:

How shall man measure progress there where the dark-faced Josie lies? How many heartfuls of sorrow shall balance a bushel of wheat? How hard a thing is life to the lowly, and yet how human and real! And all this life and love and strife and failure,-is it the twilight of nightfall or the flush of some faint-dawning day? (Ibid: 62)

African-Americans had their lives made difficult by white American society which deliberately put black farmers in debt in the South to prevent the progress of an African-American. The preventing of the progress of a black man through unfavorable conditions compelled Du Bois to ask this question "is it the twilight of nightfall or the flush of some faint-dawning day?" Du Bois appears to suspect that what was meant to be a progress might be the reemerging of slavery. In justifying the latter explanation, Du Bois argues that "The bright ideals of the past,-physical freedom, political power, the training of brains and the training of hands,-all these in turn have waxed and waned, until even the last grows dim and overcast. Are they all wrong,-all false?" (Ibid: 11). Referring to what could be seen as a result of deadlocking of the progress of the black men, Du Bois wonders if the ideals African-Americans had in place were false or wrong. Du Bois simultaneously and covertly, divulges that a black man's lack of progress can be attributed to the delay in granting African-Americans freedom. Du Bois supports the latter when he says that "The power of the ballot we need in sheer self-defence,-else what shall save us from a second slavery?" (Ibid: 11).

Du Bois expresses the need for a right to vote in order to protect the African-Americans from being enslaved again. Du Bois' insistence on a right to vote show African-Americans' attempts to liberate them-selves from an entrapment of double consciousness. Although Du Bois does not explain in detail how black people are going to use balloting as self-defence, one can tell that African-Americans would vote against any law that would agitate second slavery of black people.

In addition to the right to vote, Du Bois upholds the granting of complete freedom for African-Americans as he supports that "Freedom, too, the long sought, we still seek,-the freedom of life and limb, the freedom to work and think, the freedom to love and aspire. (Ibid: 11). Du Bois emphasizes the fact that some African-Americans in the South have been given farms on which through inauspicious circumstances cannot progress, does not mean a black man has forgotten his aspiration for freedom. Du Bois expands further on the need for freedom and says that:

Work, culture, liberty,-all these we need, not singly but together, not successively but together, each growing and aiding each, and all striving toward the vaster ideal

that swims before the Negro people, the ideal of human brotherhood, gained through the unifying ideal of Race; the ideal of fostering and developing the traits and talents of the Negro, not in opposition to or contempt for other races, but rather in large conformity to the greater ideals of the American Republic, in order that someday on American soil two world-races may give each to each those characteristics both so sadly lack (Ibid: 11)

Du Bois further maintains that African-Americans are striving for unity of all races and human brotherhood in America. Du Bois also claims that a nonracial society where no race will subject the other race to discrimination of any kind is the ideal or opposite of double consciousness. Du Bois further endorses that unity among racial groups in America will not only help share the skills the different races possess, but also help attain the higher goals of the American Republic. The higher goals of the American Republic include improving the economy, politics, and social stability. Moreover, Du Bois accentuates that the African-Americans are coming with something to benefit the American society:

We the darker ones come even now not altogether empty-handed: there are to-day no truer exponents of the pure human spirit of the Declaration of Independence than the American Negroes; there is no true American music but the wild sweet melodies of the Negro slave; the American fairy tales and folklore are Indian and African; and, all in all, we black men seen the sole oasis of simple faith and reverence in a dusty desert of dollars and smartness. (Ibid: 11-2)

Du Bois further maintains that African-Americans are bringing along their music without which America is culturally impoverished. In addition to music, Du Bois says black people bring tales which are Indian and African in origin. Regarding music, Du Bois implies that the music for which America is famous, is African. To illustrate the latter and how music of African-Americans has benefited and made America famous, Du Bois narrates about the Fisk Jubilee Singers who left the world amazed with their music “So their songs conquered till they sang across the land and across the sea, before Queen and Kaiser, in Scotland and Ireland, Holland and Switzerland. Seven years they sang, and brought back a hundred and fifty thousand dollars to found Fisk University” (Ibid: 206).

In addition to what Du Bois has said, Franklin (1980) recounts that black singers through their music made the college treasurer certain about attracting money in the North “The treasurer of the college, George L. White, conceived the idea that through the singing of a group of young Negroes, the hearts and hence the pockets of the Northern citizens could be reached” (Franklin, 1980: 272). It seems the Fisk Jubilee Singers made their mark and simultaneously market the American Republic. Du Bois claims that “But the true Negro folk-song still lives in the hearts of those who have heard them truly sung and in the hearts of the Negro people” (Ibid: 206). Du Bois questions in the latter phrase, but unaware that he answers it. By claiming that these songs are the articulate message of the slave to the world, Du Bois asserts that these songs are articulating the plight of the slaves and evils of slavery.

By claiming that folk songs could uplift the spiritual tunes of Americans Du Bois is making an ironic admission that double consciousness was not a permanent identity for blacks. In addition to the above, Du Bois says “They are the music of an unhappy people, of the children of disappointment; they tell of death and suffering and unvoiced longing toward a truer world, of misty wanderings and hidden ways” (Ibid: 207). Johnson and Johnson (1925) adds that “It is, of course, pardonable to smile at the naïveté often exhibited in the words, but it should be remembered that in scarcely no instance was anything humorous intended” (Johnson and Johnson, 1925: 13).

Du Bois in the above phrase suggests that these songs expressed how slaves were treated, killed, raped, and entertain themselves. One would argue that through these songs and the money they have made, the Jubilee Singers have not only modified Du Bois’ double consciousness, but also showed that African-Americans can escape double consciousness entrapment. It also seems these songs made slavery life bearable in spite of evils to which the slaves were subjected as Du Bois adds that “Of death the Negro showed little fear, but talked of it familiarly and even fondly as simply crossing of the waters, perhaps- who knows?” (Ibid: 212). One would surely argue that to slaves, these songs were sources of courage and means of belittling slavery. Revealing the power of these songs, Du Bois relates a tale where one of these songs was sung:

Another whose strains begin this book is “Nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen.” When, struck with a sudden poverty, the United States refused to fulfill its promises of land to the freedmen, a brigadier-general went down to the Sea Islands to carry the news. An old woman on the outskirts of the throng began singing this song; all the mass joined her, swaying. And the soldier wept (Ibid: 208)

The latter quote confirms a claim made earlier in the previous page that these songs also could help make slavery bearable. “Nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen” seems to have an impact on the listener similar to making a soldier weep expressed in the above quote. In relation to this song, Johnson recounts the same impact “Anyone who without shedding tears can listen to Negroes sing “Nobody knows de trouble I see, Nobody knows but Jesus” must indeed have a heart of stone” (Johnson, 1960: 181). One precisely understands when Du Bois raises these questions “Are not these gifts worth the giving? Is not this work and striving? Would America have been America without her Negro people?” (Ibid: 215). America is what it is because of these song, but what makes America subject a black race to racial discrimination. Du Bois indirectly answers the questions asked above by also disclosing the meaning in these songs that “But whichever it is, the meaning is always clear: that sometime, somewhere, men will judge men by their souls and not by their skins” (Ibid: 214).

It seems the meaning carried by these songs was ambiguous; on one hand the songs bemoan slavery, on the other hand the same songs allowed blacks to create and occupy a spiritual space that slavery could not totally eclipse. When talking about these songs, West (1999) claims that “The spirituals not only reveal the underside of America- in all of its stark nakedness; they also disclose the night side of the human condition- in all of its terror and horror (West, 1999: 464). According to Melvin Dixon Negro songs brought out the black people’s double consciousness: “Negro spirituals contain the souls of the broad range of images about home, self, and deliverance (1987: 13). Undoubtedly, it is through racism and profit maximization that made America so evil and subjected innocent souls to slavery. Believably, there is no way America can be impoverished by propositions raised in the above questions. The African-Americans want only to be accepted as who they are and be given an opportunity to participate in developing America.

It appears the American society has no choice as it cannot change an African-American into white. As Du Bois further reasons that the black man “simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face (Ibid:5). Du Bois is imploring the white American society to accept a black man both as black and American. It also appears that an African-American wishes to be given equal opportunities both educational and employment without being subjected to racial discrimination. Du Bois argues that meeting those African-Americans’ aspirations would be the end of strife as he asserts that “This, then, is the end of his striving: to be coworker in the kingdom of culture, to escape both death and isolation, to husband and use his best powers and his latent genius” (Ibid: 5). With all the aspirations being put to practice, Du Bois suggests that America shall have no trouble in attaining its objectives of economic prosperity, political, and social stability. In short if it appears that Du Bois begins *The Souls of Black Folk* with a sense of utter dejection, his analysis of the folk sources modifies the picture of political malaise brought out by the condition of double consciousness. Paul Gilroy supports the view above when he says that *The Souls of Black Folk* represents “...escape not just from the South or even from America but from closed codes of any constricting or absolutist understanding of ethnicity” (1993: 138).

4.3. Critique of W.E.B. Du Bois

Despite the theoretical fecundity of the idea of double consciousness, Du Bois has been criticized for his perceived ambivalence on black people’s historical agency. Du Bois’ proclamation that the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line was meant to reveal that the twentieth century was mainly characterized by racism. Du Bois observed that the condition of being both black and American was the reason African-Americans were exposed to racism. Du Bois coined this condition of being black and American and called it double consciousness. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (1996) adds that “Du Bois did nothing less than narrate a black dual nationhood: a nationality at once American yet paradoxically and resonantly African-American” (Gates and West, 1996: 115-6).

Du Bois portrayed double consciousness as an entrapment and used the examples of Alexander Crummell and John to justify it. Du Bois also showed that there is a possibility for one to break out of entrapment through the Fisk Jubilee Singers. Du Bois claimed that the only way out of double consciousness is ballot and higher education. Du Bois openly criticized Washington's accommodation approach and industrial education. But Du Bois' critique of Washington that political freedom and higher education come first downplays the African-Americans' poverty. Du Bois claimed that a black race will be uplifted by "The talented tenth" in America. Paul Gilroy (1993) clarifies the latter by quoting Cornel West that "Du Bois felt that their backwards could be remedied by an elitist and paternalist political agenda that viewed racism as an expression of stupidity and implied that progress, rational social policy, and the Victorian moral virtues advocated by the talented tenth could uplift the black masses" (Gilroy, 1993: 137).

The talented tenth project is not perceived as a successful project both by black critics and African-Americans. Gates (1996) is one of those critics who argues that "Despite the powerful achievement of Souls, however, in it Du Bois had failed to account adequately for class differences within the black community, the differences that resulted from broadly diverse access to education among blacks themselves" (Gates and West, 1996:119). It seems the talented tenth did not do what it was initially meant and hoped to do. Allen, Jr. (2002) supports the latter claim that Du Bois' Talented Tenth lived out "its values, style of living, and patterns of behaviors, collectively known as 'respectability' and highly prized in the black community, [that] bore a remarkable resemblance of 'respectable' white Americans" (Allen, 2002: 219). The title of Booker T. Washington- *Up from Slavery* is also a critique of entrapment suggested by the notion of double consciousness and paradox of double consciousness.

4.4. Outlooks on Booker T Washington's *Up from Slavery*

Like other former slaves, Washington has a vivid picture of his childhood as a slave. One would recall that children in their early childhood were not made slaves, but witness their parents and other relatives being subjected to evils of slavery until they (children) reach a certain age. And Washington was no exception. Affirming the latter,

Washington claims that “The earliest impressions I can now recall are the plantation and slave quarters- the latter being the part of the plantation where the slaves had their cabins” (Washington, 1986: 1). The mere fact that he has childhood memories of slavery like other former slaves confirms the evil nature of slavery. It also tells that even children were able to notice that their brethren were not treated fairly by their masters. The latter also reveals that children could be affected by slavery just like any other human being as Washington maintains “My life had its beginning in the midst of the most miserable, desolate, and discouraging surroundings” (Washington, 1986: 1).

Washington’s revelation of inauspicious conditions from which his life had started suggests unsuitability of slavery for children, and anyone for that matter. Washington understands with the latter that “The Negro boy has obstacles, discouragements, and temptations to battle with that are little known to those not situated as he is” (Ibid: 36). Fanon argues that “A normal child that has grown up in a normal family will be a man” (Fanon, 1967: 142). Washington asserts that “When a white boy undertakes a task, it is taken for granted that he will succeed. On the other hand, people are usually surprised if the Negro boy does not fail” (Ibid: 36). The fact that it is taken as obvious that a white boy will succeed when undertaking a task while it is outrageous when a black boy prospers verifies the damage racism has done in the American society.

In later years, I confess that I do not envy the white boy as I once did. I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed. Looked at this standpoint, I almost reach the conclusion that often the Negro boy’s birth and connection with an unpopular race is an advantage, so far as real life as concerned (Ibid:39-40)

While Washington overtly voices that he does not hate a white boy anymore, he expresses that one’s success should be only measured by hindrances one has overcome on one’s way to success, instead of one’s position. Here Washington seems to imply one’s position has nothing to do with one’s success. One may refute what Washington is saying by claiming that an exposure and access to resources can be more advantageous and that it would be unfair to treat people with resources equally to those who have no resources at all. In relation to the above, Fanon (1967) concurs that

“children of pickpockets or burglars, accustomed to a certain system of clan law, would be surprised to find that the rest of the world behaved differently” (Fanon, 1967: 142).

And about hard working, Washington maintains that “With few exceptions, the Negro youth must work harder and must perform his tasks even better than a white youth in order to secure recognition” (ibid: 40). Washington in the latter quote encourages a black boy to use his duality to his own advantage to secure recognition. Washington recounts that an African-American boy through working hard can prove a white man’s perceptions about African-Americans wrong and simultaneously gets respect. Washington is encouraging African-Americans that it is possible to break out of double consciousness entrapment only if they can work diligently. In clarifying turning of the Negro plight to one’s advantage, Washington says “But out of the hard and unusual struggle through which he is compelled to pass, he gets a strength, a confidence, that one misses whose pathway is comparatively smooth by reason of birth and race” (Ibid: 40). Washington articulates his pride of being black and who he is “From any point of view, I had rather be what I am, a member of the Negro race, than be able to claim membership with the most favoured of any other race” (Ibid: 40). Talking about the African-Americans’ past and racism experience, Washington shares his first experience of racism in America:

After all the other passengers had been shown rooms and were getting ready for supper, I shyly presented myself before the man at the desk. It is true I had practically no money in my pocket with which to pay for bed or food, but I had hoped in some way to beg my way into the good graces of the landlord, for at that season in the mountains of Virginia the weather was cold, and I wanted to get indoors for the night. Without asking as to whether I had any money, the man at the desk firmly refused to even consider the matter of providing me with food and lodging. This was my first experience in finding out what the colour of my skin meant (Ibid: 47-8)

Moore (2003) expresses the psychological impact of racism “Turner’s experiences convinced him that America was a racist country and that the only solution for blacks was to emigrate” (Moore, 2003: 97). The above quote reveals the decisions some black people made because of racial segregation. The fact that Washington concluded that the man at the desk was a racist confirms the intolerable nature of racism. Washington’s encounter with racism justifies Du Bois’ notion of double consciousness. Washington

was only subjected to racism merely because he was black and American something Du Bois regards as a hindrance to an African-American progress. It is an obstacle because the American society does not regard black people as human beings. Considering what the impact of racism can make in an individual, one comprehends Washington's bitterness toward the hotel landlord "My whole soul was so bent upon reaching Hampton that I did not have time to cherish any bitterness toward the hotel-keeper" (Ibid: 48).

Understandably, Washington's bitterness emanates from being subjected to racism. It seems Washington had no problem with being denied lodging because he had no money. Washington's bitterness is short-lived because it was not the reason he took his journey. It appears that the sight of Hampton Institute has made him to forget the racial experience he had encountered which made him bitter. Washington substantiates the above claim that "To me it had been a long, eventful journey; but the first sight of the large, three-story, brick school building seemed to have rewarded me for all that I had undergone in order to reach the place" (Ibid: 50-1).

The fact that Washington claims to have been rewarded by only sighting Hampton elucidates the man's eagerness to get education. Washington's eagerness to get education at Hampton Institute is a sign of wanting to break away from double consciousness entrapment. Washington's desire to get education could also be seen as microcosm of the entire African-Americans' thirst for education. In spite of the white people's lack of confidence in African-Americans and Washington's first experience of racism, racism appeared to have been gaining strength every day in America as Washington remembers another incident:

This reminds me of a conversation which I once had with the Hon. Frederick Douglass. At one time Mr. Douglass was travelling in the state of Pennsylvania, and was forced, on account of his colour, to ride in the baggage-car, in spite of the fact that he had paid the same price for his passage that the other passengers had paid (Ibid: 99-100)

What Frederick Douglass had encountered on account of his (Douglass) color shows that white people believed that it was wrong to share and mingle with black people.

Undoubtedly, white people strongly believe that to be a human being, one must possess a white skin. The above simply means anything darker than white is sub-human and inferior. There were, however, African-Americans who were light-skinned and who could be easily confused to white people. Some of these African-Americans did escape being associated with Negroes. The light-skinned African-Americans took advantage of their (African-Americans) skin color by passing for white race. The light-skinned were passing in order to improve their lives and get access to opportunities which were only meant for white people. Conyers and Kennedy (1963) support the latter that: "Passing is also seen as a means by which Negroes occasionally obtain a thrill in outwitting whites by 'putting something over' on them, an avenue of escape from a policy of relative total exclusion" (Conyers and Kennedy, 1963: 217).

Washington asserts that white people are very impatient with other races especially a black race. Also what Washington is saying is that white people do not hide their (white people) hatred for African-Americans and go to an extent of making African-Americans feel their being black and American by subjecting African-Americans to racial prejudice. Conspicuously, Washington proclaims that a true gentleman does not subject people of less fortunate races to racial discrimination.

In view of true gentlemen, Washington provides an example of gesture by George Washington that "An example of what I mean is shown in a story told of George Washington, who meeting a coloured man on the road once, who politely lifted his hat, lifted his own in return. Some of his white friends who saw the incident criticized Washington for his action" (Ibid: 101). The above quote signals respect for other races especially those perceived to be inferior. One may claim that George Washington perceived African-Americans as human beings, not as sub-human creature when he greeted African-Americans. One is certain that the white people who criticized George Washington for greeting a black man did not regard black people as human beings.

Booker T. Washington expresses his shame for anyone who is racist "I pity from the bottom of my heart any individual who is so unfortunate as to get into the habit of holding race prejudice" (Ibid: 165). Washington appears to contradict himself, but simultaneously one hopes that with the latter quote, he (Washington) refers to any

African-American who because he (African-American) was racially discriminated by a white man, decides to subject a white man to racial discrimination. Washington further substantiates his bitterness for what people have done to African-Americans “The white man who begins by cheating a Negro usually ends by cheating a white man” (Ibid: 166).

It is astonishing to note that Washington is taking pleasure in being commended by white people wherever he goes. Washington appears to have forgotten what he and other African-Americans in America have experienced and bore. Washington himself has just mentioned how he had been subjected to racial segregation by white people and now is the first to acknowledge white people’s generosity. Taking the above into cognizance, one cannot blame Norrell (2003-4) when he argues that “One crucial context for understanding Booker T. Washington was the thinking of whites in the 1880s and 1890s about the future of race relations (Norrell, 2003-4: 97).

Washington believes that it emanates from trust “I have said that there are few instances of a member of my race betraying a specific trust” (Ibid: 14). Washington in the above quote recounts that African-Americans are trustworthy people. In substantiating a claim of not betraying a specific trust, Washington further explains:

After they had remained away for a time, many of the older slaves, especially, returned to their old homes and made some kind of contract with their former owners by which they remained on the state (Ibid: 24)

Some of the former slaves were born in the plantation and knew nothing about where their forefathers were uprooted from. The former slaves also knew no other place except plantation life. It seems these former slaves had accepted that the plantation was home to slaves. The latter quote emphasizes that one can call a place home in spite of its inauspiciousness. The above quote also explains the significance of freedom to any individual. Talking about the importance of freedom especially from slavery, Washington shares his mother’s happiness:

My mother, who was standing by my side, leaned over and kissed her children, while tears of joy ran down her cheeks. She explained to us what it all meant, that this was the day for which she had been so long praying, but fearing that she would never live to see (Ibid: 21)

Washington's mother is certain now that nobody will separate her children from her by selling them or her. She is no longer master's property which will be treated anyhow. Freedom to slaves also means to be free from a risk of being raped by a slave master. Washington had also a high regard for bathing and use of tooth-brush. The latter expression implies that bathing made Negroes in Hampton to be always clean something Washington links to self-respect. Self-respect is all about looking after one's self and staying clean is looking after one's self. It also means as a result of bath, African-Americans were healthy and confident. In addition to bathing, Washington does not believe the wonders and civilization the use of tooth-brush brought "It has been interesting to note the effect that the use of the tooth-brush has had in bringing about a higher degree of civilization among the students" (Ibid: 175).

Undoubtedly, African-Americans in slavery were not washing their tooth, and if they did, they used something else other than a tooth-brush. General (2000) supports Washington that "He believed that it was the little things that counted. For example, his obsession with the toothbrush was legendary" (General, 2000: 229). However, one would want to know if there were no better things than toothbrush to talk about. And Larson (1970) perceives the issue of talking about toothbrush as inappropriate "with the kind of toothbrush fixation Booker T. Washington had, there must have been something wrong with him" (Larson, 1970: 125).

Washington also expressed his impatience with any school that did not teach its students the dignity of labour. The latter expression infers that Washington did not find any significance in going to school other than industrial school. Washington seems to be encouraging all the African-Americans to take industrial education as it would teach students the dignity of labor. Moreover, and in relation to industrial education, Washington appears not to be happy with political agitation as he argues "Besides, the general political agitation drew the attention of our people away from the more fundamental matters of perfecting themselves in the industries at their doors and in securing property" (Ibid: 84-5). Washington above articulates his unhappiness on political agitation which diverted the African-Americans' attention from industrial education.

Washington's assertion in the above quote is what made white people to like him. John Hope Franklin (1980) concurs with the latter claim "White Southerners liked Washington's relative disinterest in political and civil rights for Negroes" (Franklin, 1980: 276). One gets a sense that Washington did not find any significance in those political rights, but industrial education. Washington justifies his agitation for industrial education "I saw coloured men who were members of the state legislatures, and county officers, who, in some cases, could not read or write, and whose morals were as weak as their education" (Ibid: 85).

Washington misses a point here because one believes that political agitation does not encourage people not to go to school. Part of political agitation, one understands is equal education and education opportunities. Wa Thiongo (1981) is correct when he criticizes Washington's industrial education that "It calls upon the oppressed, the robbed, to accept the condition of their robbery and oppression with gleeful gratitude (wa Thiongo, 1981: 133). What is rather seems to be the case is that Washington's passion for industrial education surpassed his reasoning especially in relation to political agitation. In defending his position on the insignificance of political agitation, Washington maintains:

Not long ago, when passing through the streets of a certain city in the South, I heard some brick-masons calling out, from the top of a two-story brick building on which they were working, for the "Governor" to "hurry up and bring up some bricks." Several times I heard the command, "Hurry up, Governor!" "Hurry up, Governor!" My curiosity was aroused to such an extent that I made inquiry as to who the "Governor" was, and soon found that he was a coloured man who at one time had held the position of Lieutenant-Governor of his state (Ibid: 85)

Washington's story of "Governor" appears to be telling the African-Americans that industrial education will brighten their future. Washington also suggests that with industrial education in place, the mistakes of the Reconstruction period are not going to be repeated. But Washington finally concedes that some African-Americans were good at their jobs as he avers "But not all the coloured people who were in office during Reconstruction were unworthy of their positions, by any means" (Ibid: 85-6). The fact that Washington selectively used the African-Americans who could not read and write

as his examples denotes that he did that to strengthen his argument for industrial education.

Washington insists and emphasize the need for industrial education at the expense of political rights as he contends “Even then I had a strong feeling that what our people most needed was to get a foundation in education, industry, and property, and for this I felt that they could better afford to strive than for political preferment” (Ibid: 93). Meier (1962) adds that “Ideologically, however, this doctrine was framed in terms of improving the economic standing of the Negro community as a whole and indirectly obtaining citizenship right by demonstrating the ability of Negroes to meet American petty-bourgeois standards of respectability and success (Meier, 1962: 258). Washington’s upholding of industrial education seems to top his plans as he emphasize in the latter quote.

In supporting his argument for industrial education, Washington makes an example of brickmaking which was done by students “Brickmaking has now become such an important industry at the school that last season our students manufactured twelve hundred thousand of first-class bricks, of a quality suitable to be sold in any market” (Ibid: 152). The latter example does not only voice that the students were well trained in brickmaking, it also recounts that the students could stand on their own and open their brickmaking business as the demand for bricks also increased. Getting education could be seen as modifying and going beyond an entrapment of double consciousness. In relation to the demand for bricks, Washington asserts that “Many white people who had had no contact with the school, and perhaps no sympathy with it, came to us to buy bricks because they found out that ours were good bricks” (Ibid: 153).

I spoke of an instance where one of our graduates had produced two hundred and sixty-six bushels of sweet potatoes from an acre of ground, in a community where the average production had been only forty-nine bushels to the acre. He had been able to do this by reason of his knowledge of the chemistry of the soil and by his knowledge of improved methods of agriculture (Ibid: 202)

Meier and Rudwick (1970) concur with Washington and add that “Washington’s emphasis upon economic development and black support of Negro business

undoubtedly attracted the majority of the rising bourgeoisie, whose income was based on the Negro Market (Meier and Rudwick, 1970: 211). In the above case, one is not sure about being respected because white people still regard a black person as a sub-human. In relation to the latter, Thornbrough (1968) claims that “It has frequently been asserted that Washington’s great reputation as the leader and spokesman for Negro Americans was conferred upon him by white Americans” (Thornbrough, 1968: 161). White people can only pretend as if they respect this black farmer just to suck the techniques to improve their farming. Surely the white farmers did not like to be surpassed by a black farmer in production. In addition to these good results, Washington claims that:

I explained that my theory of education for the Negro would not, for example, confine him for all time to farm life- to the production of the best and most sweet potatoes- but that, if he succeeded in this line of industry, he could lay the foundations upon which his children and grandchildren could grow to higher and more important things in life (Ibid: 203)

Washington boastfully articulates that industrial education can also help African-Americans make a lot of money out of it in order to help their (African-Americans) children achieve a lot in life. One believes that it is fruits such as the ones Washington is boasting about in the above quote that made critics such as John Hope Franklin (1980) asserts that “but Washington’s influence, sometimes for better and sometimes for worse, was so great that there is considerable justification in calling the period the Age of Booker T. Washington” (Franklin, 1980: 280).

In spite of the above commendation, Washington is not clear and failed to elaborate what are higher and more important things in life, but one believes that Washington is talking about making businesses and study further. But one wonders if the higher and more important things in life are better than political freedom. One also cannot rule out the possibility that Washington by higher and more important things in life is referring to political freedom. In confirming the latter, one would recall that the African Americans are coming from slavery and stricken by poverty, to them industrial education was a way of stabilizing life and get rid of poverty ahead of political freedom. Flynn (1969) criticizes Washington’s approach that “Washington’s approach appealed more to the self-

interests of whites rather than to their sense of distributive justice (Flynn, 1969: 264). The latter claim could be proven to be false if one understands Washington when he says:

I tried to emphasize the fact that while the Negro should not be deprived by unfair means of the franchise, political agitation alone would not save him, and that back of the ballot he must have property, industry, skill, economy, intelligence, and character, and that no race without these elements could permanently succeed (Ibid: 208)

The fact that Washington claims that he tried to emphasize the significance of acquiring skills, wealth, and education before political freedom does tell one how confident Washington was about the success of his theory of education. It also shows that political freedom was going to be insignificant and useless to the poverty stricken, unskilled, and uneducated. Meier and Rudwick criticized Washington that his accommodating ideology had brought together the South, the North, and the Negro in a monumental compromise that 'practically accepted the alleged inferiority of the Negro' (Meier and Rudwick, 1970: 207).

And wa Thiongo (1981) concurs with Meier and Rdwick that "[Washington] he articulated better than most members of the Euro-American ruling class the racist ideology that rationalized the oppression of Afro-American workers" (wa Thiongo, 1981: 131). In relation to the latter, one would argue that political freedom to an African-American was going to mean equal access to education, ballot, opportunities, fight against poverty, and racial equality. But the latter does not take away the fact that industrial education brought some stability in the lives of African-Americans fresh from slavery. Referring to the mistakes of the Reconstruction period, Washington argues:

Ignorant and inexperienced, it is not strange that in the first years of our new life we began at the top instead of at the bottom; that a seat in Congress or the state legislature was more sought than real estate or industrial skill; that the potential convention or stamp speaking had more attractions than starting a dairy farm or truck garden (Ibid: 218-9)

One would recall that Washington in the previous pages claimed that during Reconstruction some African-American worked in public service without being able to

read and write. Washington also explained how a lack of education left hopeless such African-Americans when mistakes of the Reconstruction period were rectified. By using an example of those African-Americans who were not able to read and write, Washington was trying to reveal their entrapment in double consciousness. Washington's introduction of industrial education in the case of those who could not write nor read could be seen as a way of releasing African-Americans from an entrapment of double consciousness. In explaining the latter claim, Washington makes an example of a ship lost in the sea:

A ship lost at sea for many days suddenly sighted a friendly vessel. From the mast of the unfortunate vessel was seen a signal, "Water, water; we die of thirst!" The answer from the friendly vessel at once came back, "Cast down the bucket where you are." A second time the signal, "Water, water; send us water!" ran up from the distressed vessel, and was answered, "Cast down your bucket where you are." And a third and a fourth signal for water was answered, "Cast down your bucket where you are." The captain of the distressed vessel, at last heeding the injunction, cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh, sparkling water from the mouth of the Amazon River (Ibid: 219)

Undoubtedly, Washington compares this lost ship to poverty stricken African Americans who instead of grabbing the opportunities brought to them by industrial education to improve their lives; seek political freedom. Washington says African-Americans like this lost ship which is not aware that it is standing at the mouth of the Amazon River, are not aware of rewards and wonders industrial education has brought for them. By casting the bucket where they are is asking the African Americans to acquire skills in various areas as he argues "Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions" (Ibid: 219). Orey (2004) adds that "Booker T. Washington used the 'cast down your bucket...' metaphor to encourage blacks to pursue a strategy of economic development through self-help rather than racial blaming and political organizing" (Orey, 2004: 18).

There is no doubt that Washington is telling black Americans that it is through industrial education that African-Americans will get rid of poverty, earn respect, improve their lives, build their wealth, and get properties. In substantiating the latter, Washington asserts "No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as

in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top. Nor should we permit our grievances to overshadow our opportunities” (Ibid: 220). Washington in the above quote calls upon a black race not to permit its complaints to surpass its reason; African-Americans must take what is best for them, industrial education. In further emphasizing the significance of starting from the bottom rather than at the top, Washington says:

The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all the privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing (Ibid: 223)

Washington concedes as well that calling for political freedom instead of industrial education would be the foolish deed ever committed by an African-American. Washington appears not to be against political and social equality, but asserts that it is untimely for it. Washington asks black Americans to grab education and then political freedom as they (African-Americans) would be ready by then. In justifying his call for industrial education, he utters “This, this, coupled with our material prosperity, will bring into our beloved South a new heaven and new earth” (Ibid: 224-5). Washington believes the possible success of industrial education among African Americans would transform the lives of African-Americans and thereby preparing them for political freedom.

To substantiate the latter claim, Washington affirms “My own belief is, although I have never before said so in so many words, that the time will come when the Negro in the South will be accorded all the political rights which his ability, character, and material possessions entitle him to” (Ibid: 234). One way of explaining Washington in the above expression is that political freedom is useless to a people that is poor and uneducated, and that it has to be preceded by industrial education. Through industrial education Washington has expanded education as it produced artisans, farmers, and brick-makers. The above claim implies that Washington and those African-Americans who acquired industrial education skills have gone beyond the entrapments of double consciousness.

4.5. Critique of Booker T. Washington

Washington's *Up From Slavery* describes Washington's rise to prominence in America. It also highlights Washington's insistence on his accommodationist approach and industrial education which believes would help African-Americans prosper. Strangely Washington insisted that African-American stop agitating for political freedom, but industrial education. But also Washington's emphasis on industrial education appears to modify the concept of double consciousness. By accessing industrial education, African-Americans escape being trapped in double consciousness as they become artisans and farmers.

However, Washington's choice for industrial education is seen by many critics as inappropriate given that it discourages the right to vote for African-Americans. It is claims such as the latter that made John Hope Franklin echo Du Bois' words that "The ascendancy of this man is one of the most dramatic and significant episodes in the history of American education and of race relations" (Franklin, 1980: 273). Undoubtedly some of the reasons Washington's ascendancy is seen as the most dramatic is his compromise of freedom which pleased white people both in the South and North. John H. Franklin (1980) substantiates the latter claim "The Washington doctrine of industrial education, or, more properly, vocational education, for the great mas of blacks was hailed by whites in the North and the South (Franklin, 1980: 276).

4.6. Conclusion

The views expressed in *The Souls of Black Folk* and *Up from Slavery* re-affirmed double bind that blacks experienced under slavery. The authors confirmed that duality expressed in the sort of being both an African and American, African-Americans were subjected to racial discrimination. The authors also represented being an African-American as a disadvantage in America because it meant to be denied opportunities such education and employment that were being enjoyed by white people. The authors also have extended and revised identities which existed in the American society.

W.E.B. Du Bois, who coined the term double consciousness, expanded the identities by adding role of song, spirituality and religion in liberating blacks. Booker T. Washington

similarly stretched and reviewed the concept of double consciousness by adding identities in which blacks could remain as farmers and bricklayers through the introduction of industrial education.

The differences in both Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk* and Washington's *Up From Slavery* are significant as they explain how each author planned to solve double consciousness. Du Bois insists on the Talented Tenth as could save the black race. But Du Bois failed to address a question of class difference. But that was obvious given that by virtue of being a professional and earn something puts one in a class. It seems the emergence of the Talented Tenth did not help as expected given that it created different classes among African Americans. It also appears that the Talented Tenth were concerned about themselves, enriching themselves as Green (1977) asserts that "As it was, his Talented Tenth became too often selfish money grabbers" (Green, 1977: 364).

The latter quote suggests that the Talented Tenth aspired to live a life that was lived by white people. One would argue that they no longer see themselves as black. And Green (1977) further adds that "They simply wanted to make money and spend it as they pleased; they hated "Communism" and "Socialism," imitating white Americans; they had beautiful homes, nice automobiles and expensive clothing (Green, 1977: 364). Green explains that they forgot what they were expected to do, uplifting other unfortunate members of a black race. Instead of uplifting the unfortunate African-Americans, they simply ignored that. Green concurs with the latter that "They simple could not understand that one might sacrifice income for a moral conviction" (Green, 1977: 364). So the above implies that the majority of African-Americans remained trapped in double consciousness.

The ambiguous nature of double consciousness, stagnation and entrapment of African-Americans in double consciousness complicated the lives of the African-Americans who by virtue of the latter found themselves being regarded as sub-human and inferior. African-Americans also found themselves being subjected to racial discrimination as a result of double consciousness and its ambiguity. A race finding itself in such a plight needs spiritual upliftment, a role the Talented Tenth failed to play. But also it is worth

noting that one does not suggest that it was a failed project. The mere fact that a black race managed to have it existing tells that it had its own successes. Whatever successes it might have accomplished were not enough to uplift a black race. An upliftment of a black race would mean being free from an entrapment of double consciousness.

Washington's introduction of industrial education on the other hand narrowed what African-Americans wished. His prescription of labor for black is far less than double consciousness. It reduced African-Americans to laborers something that resembles slavery. The highlight of Washington's program is his underplaying of the significance of political freedom. His agitating for industrial education at the expense of political freedom was criticized by many for African-Americans wanted political freedom more than anything. But also, although Washington's programme narrowed double consciousness, it simultaneously released some African-Americans out of an entrapment of double consciousness. In view of the latter, Washington's programme cannot be perceived as completely evil. The next chapter will explore how Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston deal with the issue of double consciousness in the Harlem Renaissance.

Chapter 5

Diverse views on double consciousness in the autobiographies of Hughes and Hurston.

“The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line.” (WEB Dubois, 1989: 13)

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the Reconstruction period. It discussed W.E.B. Dubois' *The Souls of Black Folk* (1989) and Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery* (1986). While both authors affirmed the concept of double consciousness as coined by Du Bois, they differ on the solution to double consciousness. Chapter 4 showed that the end of slavery did not bring freedom to a black man. Instead the latter chapter exposed that despite the end of slavery in the United States of America in the late 1860s, African Americans were still subjected to discrimination in the early years of the twentieth century. This compelled many of the artists of the African origin to express their plight and racial segregation in America especially prior and during the Harlem Renaissance.

Chapter 5 seeks to investigate the shifts in the concept of double consciousness in Langston Hughes' *The Big Sea* (1993) and Zora Neale Hurston's *Dust Tracks on a Road* (2006). The choice of Hughes and Hurston was primarily to explore the psychological impacts of double consciousness in America. It is also to demonstrate the shifts in double consciousness. Both Hughes and Hurston belong to the period of the Harlem Renaissance, a period that was characterized by racial segregation and marginalization of black people. During the Harlem Renaissance, black artists protested and showed their disapproval of racial discrimination and racism in America through arts and literature. The artists associated with the Harlem Renaissance employed the theme of slavery versus freedom in their works, highlighting the challenges ahead before they would attain complete freedom in terms of human rights.

Related to the latter, debates exist with regard to the dates of the Harlem Renaissance with some scholars centering its beginning towards the end of World War 1 and the

return to the United States of black troops who were demanding equal rights. Others differ, although David Levering Lewis sees its beginning in the following light: "From its authentic beginnings in 1919, with soldiers returning from the great war, to its sputtering end in 1934, with the Great Depression deaths of two principals, the racial goals of the Renaissance remained constant" (Lewis, 1989: xvi).

Levering emphasizes the actual beginnings of the Harlem Renaissance to 1919 as he uses the word "authentic". The returning of soldiers is an event that Levering uses to affirm and justify his claim. Also about returning soldiers, Dubois in his essay titled "Returning soldiers" clarifies that these soldiers were black soldiers who were returning from war but still facing a challenge of racism when they arrive back home in American (Lewis, 1994: 2). Related to this, and especially with regard to opposing racism and fighting for equality, Dubois' "Returning Soldiers" argues that "We return from the slavery of uniform which the world's madness demanded us to don to the freedom of civil garb. We stand again to look America squarely in the face and call a spade a spade" (Lewis, 1994: 4).

This phrase suggests that while these soldiers are returning home victorious, it is also the right opportunity to demand their freedom from the American society which refuses to treat Negroes like human beings, instead subjecting these Negroes to racial discrimination. Nathan Irvin Huggins agrees that "American Negroes had joined that struggle with the conscious intent of making this their fight too. They had made their contribution as military men, they had served their nation, and now they would insist on being treated like full citizens" (Huggins, 1971: 54). Being treated like full citizens suggests not to be subjected to racism and discrimination in America.

Moreover, The Harlem Renaissance is seen as a period that produced well known African American authors such as Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Zora Neal Hurston, W.E.B. DuBois, Marry White Ovington, Ralph Ellison and Dorothy West, who embraced the notion of the New Negro, education, black pride and cultural advancement. All these were meant not only to promote black consciousness and equality, but also to tell the

American society that Negroes like other human beings have intellect, ability to work, learn, and can equally contribute to the advancement of the American society and its economy. By embracing the notion of black pride and self-determination, the African American writers sought to modify what was seen to be a set of stereotypical notions about African American life, art and culture as Nathan Huggins writes:

It was commonly thought, in those decades around World War 1, that culture (literature, art, music, etc.) was the true measure of civilization. Harlem Intellectuals, sharing in that belief and seeing themselves as living out the moment of their race's rebirth, naturally marked of their achievement by such artistic production. Thus they promoted poetry, prose, painting, and music as if their lives depended on it. Most of us who have looked at this episode have merely accepted those same assumptions and applauded this self-styled Harlem Renaissance because it was a period of considerable artistic activity. (Huggins, 1973: 9)

Perhaps the thought of culture as a true measure of civilization prompted the African American artists to massively produce their arts and thereby fighting racism and inequality in America. This massive production of arts presented a golden opportunity to Negroes showing their pride and telling the world and the American society that blacks are beautiful and intelligent perhaps more than their white counterparts. Through poetry, music, painting and other literary forms, Negroes have been able not only to showcase their talents, but also created a self-styled Harlem Renaissance as Huggins maintains in the last sentence of the latter quote that "Most of us who have looked at this episode have merely accepted those same assumptions and applauded this self-styled Harlem Renaissance." While it may also be seen as a period of cultural emergence of African Americans, It emerged, however, as a product of racism and oppression in America and in relation to the latter, David Levering Lewis sees the Harlem Renaissance in the following light:

The Harlem Renaissance was a somewhat forced phenomenon, a cultural nationalism of the parlor, institutionally encouraged and directed by leaders of the National civil rights established for the paramount purpose of improving race relations in a time of extreme national backlash, caused in large part by

economic Gains won by Afro-Americans during the great war. (Lewis 1994: xiii)

Lewis regards the Harlem Renaissance as an occurrence which was spearheaded by leaders of National Civil Rights for the principal reason of fighting racism in the American society. Undoubtedly, racism especially in art and other facets of the society made black people want to do things like white people because it emphasized that white people do things better than blacks because they are the most intelligent. George Schuyler for instance in “The Negro Art Hokum” talks about the nonexistence of the Negro Art in the American society as he maintains that “Negro art there has been, is, and will be among the numerous black nations in Africa; but to suggest a possibility of any such development among the ten million colored people in this republic is self-evident foolishness” (Napier, 2000: 24).

Schuyler hints that there is and there will be nothing that is known as the Negro art in the American society. Instead what could be perceived as Negro art is nothing other than a replica of the white art as he further claims that, “As for the literature, painting, and sculpture of Afro-Americans- such as there is- it is identical in kind with the literature, painting, and sculpture of white Americans; that is, it shows more or less evidence of European influence.” (Napier, 2000: 25)

While Schuyler is refusing to acknowledge the existence of the Negro art, W.E.B. Dubois on the other hand, in “Criteria of Negro Art” relishes the conspicuous role Negro art is playing in mending the race relations and which has been seen as a the potential solution to these relations in American as he asserts that “With the growing recognition of Negro artists in spite of the severe handicaps, one comforting thing is occurring to both white and black. They are whispering, “Here is a way out. Here is the real solution of the color problem” (Lewis, 1994: 100). This clearly shows that this cultural explosion that some are referring to as Harlem Renaissance is slowly improving race relations in America. Harlem Renaissance particularly positively influenced the literature of African Americans. That implies that black people were able to voice their grievances and status quo through art. Authors who emerged then were people like Langston Hughes

and others who wrote numerous works in protest against inequality and racial discrimination.

Furthermore, the dominant part of the Harlem Renaissance sought to elevate black love, self-love and black consciousness. This ranges from the works of W.E.B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes's works and those of others. If one looks at Du Bois' *Souls of Black Folk*, one may detect that black consciousness is at the centre of the book. In many of the essays Du Bois talks about the predicaments to which Negroes were subjected. In almost all of his essays, he portrays the strengths of the Negro in a racist society. If one looks at the essay which is titled "Of the coming of John", one observes the evil practices and experiences subjected to black people in a racist America. *Souls of Black Folk* sought not only to reveal the injustices subjected to the black people, but inspire them to be proud of themselves and their skin color. Almost all the essays in this book sought to unify the Negroes, as Huggins affirms:

Atlanta had been James Weldon Johnson's college, and when Johnson returned, fresh from his success on the New York stage, for the tenth reunion of his class. He had in his hands *Souls of Black Folk*, just published by a brilliant Yankee Negro from Harvard and Europe. Du Bois's book was enormously important, not merely because it dignified the Negro through some of the finest prose of the period, but because it laid bare a rift that had been widening between young Negro Intellectuals like Du Bois and the established leadership under Booker T. Washington. (Huggins, 1973: 19)

Huggins recounts a critical role played by the publication of *Souls of Black Folks*, not only as an eye opener and a revealer of the actual gap that was existing between two races, but also a unifying factor among the factions within a black race. He further discloses that this widening gap is between two generations and implicitly implies that this book's arrival suggests hope and unity among Negroes. Another artist who inspires African Americans is Langston Hughes. He inspires them to love their blackness and be proud too. One of his works is the essay titled "The Negro Artist and the racial mountain" which is about a young Negro poet who aspires not to be a Negro poet but a white poet as Hughes maintains:

One of the most promising of the young Negro poets said to me once, "I want to be a poet- not a Negro poet," meaning, I believe, "I want to write like a white poet"; meaning subconsciously, "I would like to be a white poet"; meaning behind that, "I would like to be white." (Lewis, 1994: 91)

The phrase "I want to be a poet- not a Negro poet" tells an extent to which this young poet is affected by racism. This poet's aspirations justify a claim that racism did not only make Negroes see themselves as inferior, but also made them aspire to be white. This black poet seems to have made his mind already about wishing to be white perhaps influenced by negative stereotypes about Negroes. This young poet certainly is not proud of his blackness. Essays like this were written to instill black consciousness into the African Americans who might be looking down at themselves. This essay was written to help black people do away with their inferiority complex. One would argue that what has been said by this young poet projects the stigma attached to the black race. Nobody wants to be poor, insignificant and inferior in any society.

Likewise, the Harlem Renaissance reflected the oral tradition in African American literature through its interdisciplinary mode and the valorization of music, particularly jazz and blues. One would argue that black people had no competition in this cultural explosion as it was portraying their experiences as a result of racism. These experiences were conspicuous during the Harlem Renaissance. Langston Hughes used blues and jazz rhythms as the foundation for many of his poems by incorporating the rhythms of the African American music and the black vernacular expression into literature. The African Americans could display their creativity and dominance in these areas as Huggins argues:

Many of his early poems were efforts to touch the dignity of the common man's life. "Mother to Son," in *Weary Blues*, and "Song for a dark girl" in *Fine Clothes to the Jew*, are clearly such efforts. But during this period, Hughes also made an attempt to transpose the blues into a poetic form. Sometimes as in "Weary Blues," the poems borrow blues rhythms and incorporate entire blues phrases for emphasis and definition. In other poems, such as "Homesick Blues," Hughes seems merely to have transposed a blues lyric to a poem. It all added Langston Hughes's insistent theme that Negro

art would be achieved through capturing the common black man's experience in art forms (Huggins, 1973: 78).

The first phrase which talks about efforts to touch the dignity of the common man's life recounts the significance of the Negroes' dignity in the American society which disrespects, segregates, humiliates, and does not see black people as human beings like them (white people). Through these poems, Hughes is trying to restore a black man's dignity and respect. Huggins also seems to imply that these poems could be switched to blues and vice versa. Perhaps this was done deliberately after noticing that Negroes embraced art in their endeavor to free themselves from American racism.

This also conveys the power of art especially in a form of literature and music. Related to the latter, Paul Gilroy quotes T. W. Adorno who claims that "Since the mid nineteenth century a country's music has become a political ideology by stressing national characteristics, appearing as a representative of the nation, and everywhere confirming the national principle...Yet music, more than any artistic medium, expresses the national principle's antinomies as well" (Gilroy, 1993: 72).

Gilroy in the latter statement implies that music was used to voice not only the status quo of the nation or society, but also to communicate the social ills of the American society such as racism, inequality, and discrimination. Though referring to a different genre of music, Dubois concurs when he says "Through all the sorrow of the sorrow songs there breathes a hope a faith in the ultimate justice of things" (Dubois, 1989: 213). This does not agree to the former, but also attempts to reveal the power of music in informing and perhaps educating. One would say music was used as a form of communication in America by African Americans. On the other hand, music would be seen as something that would help to unite some of the Americans, even if not all. In addition to the latter quotation Huggins says:

Locke saw the spirituals, blues, and jazz as the stuff from which American musicians would have to build their classical music. They would be the germ of modern music. He knew this would be, because he already had heard the soul sounds of Negroes in the music of European composers: Milhand, Dvorak, Stravinsky. It was only for Americans, white and black to discover their souls in

this true American folk music; then the American could truly come of cultural age. (Huggins, 1973: 77)

While Huggins sees eye to eye with Dubois, he also asserts that American music would be the origin of modern music given perhaps its dominance during racial inequality in America and its ubiquity. He further poses a challenge to both black and white that it all depends on their utilization of the message and unity that the American music is brought about to eliminate the scourge of racism and inequality. One would perhaps argue that Huggins is trying to warn Americans both black and white to heed a call made through music that racism and discrimination will not take America any further, but polarize it if they do not take upon themselves as a unity to deal with the plight of discrimination and thereby bringing about racial justice in the American society.

5.2. Views in Langston Hughes' *The Big Sea*

As indicated in the previous chapter that through slavery, racism, and racial segregation, white people have almost succeeded in treating the Negroes inhumanly. White people believed that Negroes were properties and sub-human. A belief by white people that black people were an inferior race and deserved to be treated ruthlessly made African-Americans also believe that they truly belong to an inferior race. Through this belief, some African-Americans preferred not to be associated with a black race, while some considered themselves white. They did think like white men and did not want anything that had to do with the Negroes as if they were going to be white. Langston Hughes shares a unique case where one Negro whose fondness for Africa was immeasurable but who also seemed not impressed with the African way of dressing:

This trip the passengers were all Nordic missionaries- but one. That one was a colored tailor, a Garveyite who had long worshipped Africa from afar, and who had theory of civilization all his own. He thought that if he could just teach the Africans to wear proper clothes, coats and pants, they would be brought forward a long way toward the standards of our world. (Hughes, 1993: 8)

Plausibly, this Negro tailor's love for Africa could be attributed to his considerable support for the ideology of Marcus Garvey. Garvey was a Negro who was loyal to Black

Nationalism and Pan-African movements whose origins can be traced to Jamaica. He strongly believed and advocated a back to Africa campaign. The phrase “a Garveyite who had long worshipped Africa from afar,” substantiates his fondness for Africa. As for the part of theory of civilization, one cannot be certain given the complexity of the subject especially in relation to Africa. Another interesting phrase from the passage which says that, “He thought that if he could just teach the Africans to wear proper clothes, coats and pants,” seems to suggest perplexity and ambiguousness. Related to the latter, Frantz Fanon argues that “White civilization and European culture have forced an existential deviation on the Negro” (Fanon, 1967: 14), perhaps this accounts for Negro tailor’s attitude.

A claim that he loves Africa but not how Africans dress implies that he has assimilated too much of the western culture. In an expression “they would be brought forward a long way toward the standards of our world,” he believes that what white people believe that Africa is barbaric and backward. The “standards of our world” completes this Negro’s perplexity about civilization and his undermining of the African culture. But one wonders if it would not be sensible for him to teach his world about African standards. Hughes further shows how quickly some of the Negroes hate other Negroes whose blackness is more conspicuous: “But Rosalie, Mary’s friend from the West Indies, said she did not like Claude McKay because he was too black. Rosalie was a light-skinned Jamaican, who had a violent prejudice toward dark Negroes- as, unfortunately, so many West Indian mulattoes have” (Ibid: 165).

Negroes in the West Indies like those the United States of America were once subjected to slavery and racial segregation. It should be understandable that there are mulattoes who are not ashamed to claim publicly that they hate Negroes who are too black. A problem of mulattoes who want to be disassociated with the Negroes seems to be a universal problem. One wonders if they are aware that in their veins runs a Negro blood and most of them are not aware that some of their grandparents were slaves who were raped by their slave masters.

These slave masters wanted to have nothing to do with their offspring on slave women and the law in America supported that. Just because their (mulattoes) light skin makes

them (mulattoes) look perhaps like white people does not take away the fact that they (mulattoes) have a Negro blood. "Who had a violent prejudice toward dark Negroes" means that these mulattoes did not see themselves as mulattoes but white people who are superior to their black counterparts. Perhaps it is because anything associated to black or black is regarded as inferior and deserved to be treated anyhow and believes that mulattoes are not aware that the Negroes are their (mulattoes) brothers, sisters, and cousins. Relevant to the latter, Hughes utters a fable of one light-skinned Negroes who convinced himself that he was white:

"Don't point at me," George said. "I'm from Lexington, Kentucky, U.S.A. And no African blood, nowhere." "You black," said the Kru man. "I can part my hair," said George, "and it ain't nappy." But to tell the truth, George shaved a part in his hair every other week, since the comb wouldn't work. The Kru man knew this, so they both laughed loudly, for George's face was as African as Africa. (Ibid: 103)

Just like some of the Negroes who have made peace with a claim and belief that black race is inferior and who also refuse to be associated with the Negroes anyhow despite their blackness. Apart from claiming to be coming from Lexington, Kentucky in the United States of America, a white American suburb, he plainly denies that he has a Negro blood. Hughes further reveals that George went to an extent of shaving part of his hair so that he cannot be seen as Negro. Certainly this part he could shave is the one that is not curly and perhaps blonde and maybe he thinks having curly hair would make one white.

There are so many Africans who hair are curly than others' who never even thought of being white. It is of course insane to claim to be white while black and in the case of George as "African as Africa." Perhaps if people can learn to put themselves in other people's shoes, knowing the experiences one has endured and reasons underpinning one's claim to be something one is not, such claim would be justifiable. Assuming that George had a mixed blood, one doubts if he deserves to be censured for not choosing to be black. He can choose to be white just because he also has a white blood. Hughes explains how individuals like George and other mulattoes find themselves (mulattoes) having light-skinned or curly-haired:

I am brown. My father was a darker brown. My mother an olive-yellow. On my father's side, the white blood in his family came from a Jewish slave trader in Kentucky, Silas Cushenberry, of Clark County, who was his mother's father; and Sam Clay, a distiller of Scotch descent, living in Henry County, who was his father's father. (Ibid: 11)

Connected to mixed blood and choice to be either a Negro or a white man, Hughes's explanation on how he became brown which can be attributed to his parents and grandparents can make one believe that it depends on an individual whether one wants to be a Negro or a white man especially if one is stronger on either side. Words "I am brown. My father was a darker brown. My mother an olive-yellow" justifies a claim made earlier about how mulattoes came into existence. Whether in a meeting or miscellaneous marriages an offspring is in most of the time a mulatto. One can also be reminded of authors and activists such as Weldon Johnson, Booker T. Washington, and Frederick Douglass whose parents were both black and white. Although Hughes is trying to tell that his light skin can be attributed to his mixed parents, he is also recounting that it does not matter whether as an offspring of miscellaneous marriage or mulatto white people detest anything that has to do with Negroes. Hughes confirms the foregoing assertion by saying:

You see, unfortunately, I am not black. There are lots of different kinds of blood in our family. But here in the United States, the word "Negro" is used to mean anyone who has *any* Negro blood at all in his veins. In Africa, the word is more pure. It means all Negro, therefore *black*. (Ibid: 11)

Hughes further says it does not matter if one does not want to be linked anyhow with the Negroes irrespective of one's mixed bloodedness, in America you are a Negro. While this warns those mulattoes and light-skinned individuals who hate Negroes that they are Negroes too in America, it also warns them including those who like Hughes accepted the fact that one is a Negro if one has a Negro blood and that in Africa they (mulattoes and light-skinned) are not. One wonders of course if these discriminatory mulattoes do not mind being regarded as Negroes and also not accepted by white people just because they have a Negro blood in them regardless of being light-skinned and see themselves as better than the dark-skinned Negroes. It seems also in Africa, mulattoes are not seen as Negroes because they are not black and Hughes delineates

a situation where a young mulatto boy whose parents were both black and white was isolated in the African community:

Edward said that it was very lonely for them there. The whites inside the compound naturally would have nothing to do with them, nor would they give him a job, and the Negroes did not like his mother, because she had lived for years with a white man, so Edward had no friends in the village, and almost nobody to talk to. Was our boat going to England? Could we take him away with us? Was it true that in America the black people were friendly to the mulatto people? But the white people were bad to them all? Were the white people generally bad to colored people everywhere? (Ibid: 105)

A phrase that it was lonely for them and that whites do not want to have anything to do with them substantiates a claim made earlier in the previous paragraphs about the way white people in America see mulattoes because mulattoes possess Negro blood. The white people in Africa did not see Edward as one of them because he possessed a Negro blood, and relates to what the white race in America do to mulattoes. But being also sidelined by Negroes just because his mother lived with a white man and that he is a mulatto worsens the situation because it means they have nowhere to go nor shoulder to cry on. Perhaps one may understand their plight because in Africa, Africans have their way of doing things which is different to that of Americans and which is also underpinned by cultural beliefs. The question asked by Edward whether white people were bad to colored people is evidently delineated by Hughes below:

At first, they did not want to admit me to the school, because there were no other colored families living in that neighborhood. They wanted to send me to the colored school, blocks away down across the railroad tracks. But my mother, who was always ready to do battle for the rights of a free people, went directly to the school board, and finally got me into the Harrison Street School- where all the teachers were nice to me, except one who sometimes used to make remarks about my being colored. And after such remarks, occasionally the kids would grab stones and tin cans out of the alley and chase me home. (Ibid: 14)

Although the setting of Hughes' description is not in Africa, he tries from his personal experiences to show how ruthless white people can be especially towards Negroes. Closely related to this cruelty, he divulges that white people did not want to admit him in their school simply because he was black and referred to colored schools where other

coloreds were. Although he attributes his admission to his mother's battle for the rights of a free people, he finds it worth revealing an unbelievably entrenched racism he found himself subjected to by one of the teachers who kept remarking about his being colored in spite of all the rights for a free people. "And after such remarks, occasionally the kids would grab stones and tin cans out of the alley and chase me home" (ibid:14). This revelation reminds one of Weldon Johnson when he first discovered in the classroom that he was not white as he explains:

One day near the end of my second term at school the principal came into our room and, after talking to the teacher, for some reason said: "I wish all the white scholars to stand for a moment." I rose with the others. The teacher looked at me and, calling my name, said: "You sit down for the present, and rise with the others." (Johnson, 1960: 16)

While this may have severely embarrassed and affected Johnson psychologically, it nevertheless describes the extent of polarization in the American society. This may have helped him realize who really he is in a society where being light-skinned or white is not attached to superiority but also embraced with reverence. Amazingly, the teacher who is asking this child to sit down for the present, and rise with the others does not seem to be unaware of an embarrassment and danger she might have caused to the mind of this child.

In light of parenthood role which a teacher is expected to play, one perhaps wonders if they (teachers) had pretended as if they have counted this child among those who rose and perhaps find a suitable way of informing him afterwards would have cursed the white race. Ubiquitous such cases as they may be in the American society, white people never bothered themselves with accepting Negroes as human beings, but despised Negroes as they (white people) could in most of the time assail them (Negroes). Related to these violent attacks to the Negroes, Hughes revealingly shares his personal experience:

"I wandered too far outside the Negro district, over beyond Wentworth, and was set upon and beaten by a group of white boys, who said they didn't allow niggers in that neighborhood. I came home with both eyes blacked and a swollen jaw." (Ibid: 33)

From above piece of evidence, what is clear is that one was not expected to stray in white areas where no Negro was expected to live and Hughes' wandering off in Wentworth, a white dominated neighborhood brought him into serious trouble as he was severely beaten by white boys. Telling him that they did not allow niggers in that area followed by beating signals is not only a display of superiority complex and disregard of the Negroes as human beings, but also a deep hatred which is compatible to a wish that Negroes or a black race could be eliminated completely.

Divulged by blackened eyes and swollen jaw, the seriousness of racial segregation in America seemed to have reached its highest levels that even prayers could not end. Whatever crime a black race might have committed, even Negroes may not tell and even white people may not, except perhaps a claim that Negroes are inferior and sub-human. For Hughes to have severely been beaten resulting in bruised eyes and damaged jaw was to rationalize Negroes' inferiority in the eyes of their white opponents. The following incident also confirms that whites saw themselves as more superior than blacks:

Shortly, I noticed him staring at me intently, as if trying to puzzle out something. He stared at me a long time. Then, suddenly, with a loud cry, the white man jumped up and shouted: "You're a nigger, ain't you?" And rushed out of the car as if pursued by a plaque. I grinned. I had heard before that white Southerners never sat down to table with a Negro, but I didn't know until then that we frightened them that badly. (Ibid: 50)

Hughes' claim that he saw a white man staring at him absorbedly as if trying to puzzle out something, implies that he wanted to be sure if Hughes was truly a Negro as he could be easily confused to a white man because of his light-complexion. It also seems Hughes was at a place where Negroes were not allowed but was not aware of it. After this careful examination of Hughes by this white man, his (white man) sudden loud cry does not only suggest that he has finally found that really Hughes was a Negro, but also shocked, intrigued, and angered by knowing that he was sharing a table with a Negro. In this case, there was nothing wrong in sharing a table with another white person but sharing it with a Negro was considered unbearable and immensely abhorred by the

majority of white people in America. One may be reminded of Hughes personal experience in Africa where Africans did not believe he was an African as he avers “But there was one thing that hurt me a lot when I talked with the people. The Africans looked at me and would not believe I was a Negro” (Ibid: 11). Perhaps this emanates from stereotypical beliefs of race by white people about Negroes that Negroes are inferior, sub-human, and barbaric. The words “but I didn’t know until then that we frightened them that badly” reinforces the latter and that Negroes were some form of animals which deserve the unkindest treatment and respect ever accorded to an animal. Hughes shares another unfortunate experience:

I went up to the counter and asked for an ice cream soda. The clerk said: “Are you a Mexican or a Negro?” I said: “Why?” “Because if you are a Mexican, I’ll serve you,” he said. “If you’re colored, I won’t.” “I’m colored,” I replied. The clerk turned to wait on someone else. I knew I was in the U.S.A. (Ibid: 51)

The above statements show clearly that Mexicans were seen as better than coloreds and maybe closer or equal to whites. It would still not help dwelling more on skin color issues, but rather on consequences of racism or color line. However, one is not trying to trivialize the significance of skin color. Being asked if one is a Negro or a Mexican and if a Negro one will not be served does not only come as consequence, but also hatred of anything originates from the African shores or possesses an African blood. The fact that he asked if one is a Negro or a Mexican suggests that there is a thin line between a Negro’s and a Mexican’s appearance and complexion especially the light-skinned Negroes.

This question also recounts that white people had a difficulty in telling if one is a Negro or a Mexican, hence they asked before helping anyone whom they suspect could be either a Negro or a Mexican. And also the fact that if one happens to be a Negro, he/she would not be served buttresses a claim that a problem is with possessing a Negro or an African blood and that is further strengthened by the words “The clerk turned to wait on someone else. I knew I was in the U.S.A.” The latter implies that as long as one is a Negro, one will never find peace and recognition as human being in the

American society and Hughes continues to reveal the cruelties which are associated with the problem of the color line:

Once at the Hill School, a fashionable boys' preparatory school in Pennsylvania, Alain Locke and I were asked to appear on a morning program devoted to Negro literature. Afterwards we were invited to luncheon. Later I learned that the whole seating arrangement of the boys' dining hall had been disturbed, a special table allotted to us, and the boys asked to volunteer as to who would be willing to sit beside a Negro! Such a procedure seemed to me absolutely amazing- especially in the light of Dr. Locke's having represented the United States as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, his wide travel background, and his important contributions to American life (Ibid: 302).

Perhaps the Hill School is a preparatory school for learners who aspire to go to college because it is unlikely that small kids in their early years and grades could be introduced to Negro Literature. Also the sitting arrangement by the boys who were asked to volunteer to sit with the Negroes at a table assigned to them justifies the latter. To invite Negroes because they specialize on Negro literature to an event where such literature will be on the program and afterwards subject these Negroes to racism by allocating them a special table during lunch simply because they are not white is not only an embarrassment but also inhuman and very racist.

What amazes Hughes is the manner in which Locke has been treated after all he has done for America. This means that America does not care who you are and how much and good have you done for it will never be enough and good as long as it is done by a Negro. This further reveals the glare fact that had the Negro boys been white, a decent treatment would have been provided for them and no boys would have been asked to volunteer to sit next to them. This racism in America elongates also to opportunities such as employment, education, and many other opportunities. In relation to these unequal employment opportunities, Hughes reveals that:

But even way over there, the American color line stretched out its inconvenient prejudices. Several American boats came into the harbor during my weeks in port and, one by one, the white boys were signed on. But they would not take a Negro in the crew. I had to wait for a ship that had an all-colored crew or a colored stewards' department, before I could have a chance (Ibid: 197).

While Hughes emphasizes the widening of American racism, he also recounts an unfortunate incident where he was subjected to racism at the harbor when he was looking for a job. Scarcity of employment opportunities for Negroes in America irrespective of how educated one was compelled Hughes to work at the harbor because that was where a Negro could find a job as decent jobs were only reserved for white people. Hughes provides an example of a job suitable for coloreds in America “When I look at the colored boy porter who sweeps out the office, I think that that’s what I might be doing if I wasn’t light-skinned enough to get by” (Hughes, 1990: 52). The arrival of several American boats at the harbor and employing white boys one by one suggests the absence of a place for Negroes in the American society especially in the employment industry where one would have expected the opposite.

The words “but they would not take a Negro in the crew” and “I had to wait for a ship that had an all-colored crew” for Hughes to get a job implies that even in the ships there were no jobs for Negroes serve perhaps for the most insignificant ones. It became useless to look for a job especially making a follow up on an advertised one as Hughes delineates “Nine times out of ten- ten times out of ten, to be truthful- the employer would look at me, shake his head and say, with an air of amazement: ‘But I didn’t advertise for a colored boy’ (Ibid: 86). Because there were less significant jobs which were preserved for Negroes, Hughes claims that such jobs would be marked colored: “Unless a job was definitely marked COLORED on the board outside, there was no use applying, I discovered. And only one job in a thousand would be marked COLORED. I found it very hard to get work in New York” (Ibid: 86).

The words “Unless a job was definitely marked COLORED on the board outside, there was no use applying,” do not only reveal how racist the American society is, but also shows that this racism is being supported by government laws because if it was not, such writings would not have been written on the bill boards. The fact that it would only be one job in a thousand reflects the extent of poverty and wretchedness Negroes have been deliberately subjected to with impunity. One wonders if these racist whites in America were aware that some of these Negroes were fathers, mothers, and breadwinners who were expected to feed their families and in order to do that they

needed jobs like their white counterparts. Consequently, many Negroes educated or not found it difficult to pick and choose jobs but taking any type of job available to make ends meet.

Hughes was no exception to that as he explains how some people felt about him taking a job of a laundry being a poet“ Cultured Washington, I mean cultured colored Washington, who read my poems in the Crisis, did not find it fitting and proper that a poet should work in a wet wash laundry” (Ibid: 204). One may not blame these cultured coloreds who did not find it proper that a poet should work in a laundry because poets were believed to be earning a lot of money. Perhaps it is for that reason that a young poet in “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” by Hughes aspired to be a white poet, not a Negro poet as Hughes explains: “I want to be a poet- not a Negro poet,” meaning “I want to write like a white poet”; meaning subconsciously, “I would like to be a white poet”; meaning behind that, “I would like to be white” (Napier, 2000: 27).

It seems racial segregation in America has made some of the Negroes aspire to be white. Correlated to the poet whose job was to work in laundry, one wonders if this poet had any choice in America where there are very few jobs for Negroes. And these cultured Negroes who criticize the unsuitability of laundry job for a poet did not make available an alternative job that would fit a poet. This lack of an alternative job that would fit a poet gave Hughes no choice but to stick to what is available as he maintains that “Still, they did nothing much about it. And since none of them had any better jobs to offer me, I stayed there” (Ibid: 204).

While Hughes cannot be blamed for sticking to this laundry job, cultured Negroes also cannot be blamed given the attitude of the American society towards Negroes and that they (cultured Negroes) are also victims of racism despite the fact that they are not in the South. Being in the North also did not mean Negroes in the North were free from segregation as Hughes enlightens “But Washington is like South. It has all the prejudices and Jim Crow customs of any Southern town, except that there are no Jim Crow sections on the street cars” (Ibid, 1993: 206).The absence of Jim Crow sections on the street cars did not only differentiate the North from the South, it also meant a slight relief by not being segregated against in public transport especially in

Washington. This slight relief did not entail freedom as the Negroes were dealt with differently and Hughes once again explicates: "But in Washington I could not see a legitimate stage show, because the theaters would not sell Negroes a ticket. I could not get a cup of coffee on a cold day anywhere within sight of the Capitol, because no "white" restaurant would serve a Negro" (Ibid: 206).

A claim Hughes makes that he did not see a stage show in Washington because theaters would not sell Negroes a ticket substantiates the last statement of the previous paragraph that Negroes were not off the hook. In addition, not finding a coffee on a cold day anywhere within sight of capitol because no white restaurant would a Negro recounts that the North is not better than the South despite the history of being linked with the South. This also reflects that being a Negro in America means to be spit upon and abhorred because of traces of African blood inherited from a primitive continent of Africa. One can understand Hughes when he describes the life of Negroes as "Ghetto life" and at the same question the American democracy which is portrayed as the best in the world by asserting that: "Negro life in Washington is definitely a ghetto life and only in the Negro sections of the city may colored people attend theaters, eat a meal, or drink a Coca-Cola. Strangely undemocratic doings take place in the shadow of "the world's greatest democracy" (Ibid: 206).

Hughes is spot on when he further claims that Negro life in Washington is certainly a ghetto life given the level of segregation and racism abounds in America. Moreover, utterances such as that Negroes only attend theaters and other entertainment activities only in their areas justify the assertion about ghetto life. Patently, this reminds one of W.E.B. Dubois's allegation in "Returning Soldiers" published in *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader* that "It disfranchises its own citizens" (Lewis, 1994: 4). The deprivation of the Negroes rights such as employment opportunities, education opportunities, and other rights does not only polarize the American society, but also tell the world that America is not what it claims to be.

Dubois further explains the level of disfranchisement and accuses America for hiding behind the banner of democracy as well as preaches a 'false gospel' that

“Disfranchisement is the deliberate theft and robbery of the only protection of poor against rich and black against white. The land that disfranchises its citizens and calls itself a democracy lies and knows it lies” (Lewis, 1994: 4). Dubois regards American society as thieves and robbers who steal from the poor and black and also great lies who deliberately do so. This makes some of the Negroes to wish to be white, and some even go to the extent of proving if they do not have white or American ancestry. Regarding ancestry and being white, Hughes delineates:

One of the things that amused me in Washington, though, was that with all their conventional-mindedness, a number of the families in the best colored society made proud boast of being directly descended from the leading Southern white families, “on the colored side”- which, of course, meant the illegitimate side. One prominent Negro family tree went straight back to George Washington and his various slave mistresses. (Ibid: 208)

A move by a number of families in the best colored society of being proud for being directly descended from the leading Southern white families is shocking hence it amuses Hughes. Possibly, these families were discriminated against by the same families for which they have been boasting about irrespective of their light skin color just because Negro blood runs in their veins. Proudly boasting for that will certainly not going to change the way white people look at them that they are coloreds. Perhaps since racial segregation has made some of the Negroes to aspire to be white and some to not want to be associated with Negroes anyhow, this would make them feel better than the Negroes whose ancestry is purely African. Some Negroes have descended from white people because their grandmother was raped by a white men during slavery and during that epoch slave women were prohibited by law from telling who the real father of their children was regardless of the fact that the child was born too white to attributed to a black father. Hughes shares a similar fable:

“Your kids?” I asked, nodding toward the three children. “Sho is,” he said. “All boys.” Two of the children were quite dark, but the skin of one of them was an ivory-yellow, near white. A curious contrast, two dark, one light. I think he read my thought. “Course,” he said, hunching over on the pile of dirt, “one chile truthfully ain’t mine.” “Oh,” I said. “that little one yonder, the meriney, belongs to de overseer. But I treats him like it’s mine.” (Ibid: 289-290)

It understandable that Negroes were seen as sub-human and animals by white people, but one wonders if was sensible for a human being to develop sexual desire and subsequently have sex with an animal. The response “that little one yonder, the meriney, belongs to de overseer. But I treats him like it’s mine” suggests that the slaves had no choice but to accept such difficult situations without a question. Perhaps male slaves did accept that on the basis that it was not the fault of the victims, but that of the evil heartedness of slave masters and overseers. To save their lives, slaves had to keep such secretes to themselves because a punishment for telling who the real father was when the real father is a slave master or an overseer was tantamount to death.

Taking that into cognizance, one would understand why this man says “But I treat him like it’s mine.” It did not matter telling who the real father was because that would not change the truth that a slave master or an overseer fathered a child by slave woman whether or not that slave woman was still a slave. For that reality, Hughes asserts “The problem of mixed blood in America is, to be sure, a minor problem, but a very dramatic one- one parent in the pale of the black ghetto and the other able to take advantage of all the opportunities of American democracy.” (Ibid: 263)

Moreover, this dramatic minor problem of one parent having to live in the black ghetto and the other taking advantage of all the opportunities is not something for which only racism can be blamed, but also the parent or the one taking advantage of all the opportunities. Of course the American system should be blamed for encouraging division and inequality through racism, but a white parent has to be blamed for taking advantage of the situation by victimizing the vulnerable and helpless.

The white parent had a choice not rape or victimize the vulnerable knowing very well that they were not going to live together and in some cases these victims were married already and their husbands were expected to just accept the situation by raising the children that were not theirs. While it is difficult for some of these children who happen to have parents from different environments to choose whether to be white or black, racism, and self-hatred compelled some of them to prefer to be called white than black with the hope that they were going to have access to the opportunities made available

only for white people. Some find themselves in a dilemma and not knowing what to do in terms of choosing a parent as Hughes explains in his poem titled "CROSS":

My old man's a white old man
And my old mother's black.
If ever I cursed my white old man
I take my curses back.

If I ever cursed my black old mother
And wished she were in hell,
I'm sorry for that evil wish
And now I wish her well.

My old man died in a fine big house.
My ma died in a shack.
I wonder where I'm gonna die,
Being neither white nor black? (Ibid: 263)

The poet who happens to have black and white parents seems to be in dilemma as he does not know whether to go for white or black in a colour conscious America. In the first stanza, the poet overtly mentions that his father is white and mother black. He further mentions that if he curses his father, he curses himself too because he has a white blood. In the second stanza, he also claims that if he wished his mother in hell, he is sorry for such evil wish and wished her well. Now he touches on the environments in which they died. Through these environments which are opposite in nature, the poet is trying to recount that his father by virtue of his light skin colour has an exposure to white opportunities while his black mother is denied such opportunities.

And now, in the third and final stanza, he is not sure whether to associate himself with white or black people. This state of confusion when it comes to color preference is very rare in America as most of the Negroes wish to be white given the availability of opportunities. Hughes proffers an example of Toomer when he says, "The next thing Harlem heard of Jean Toomer was that he had married Margery Latimer, a talented white novelist, and maintained to the newspaper that he was no more colored than white- as certainly his complexion indicated" (Ibid: 242).

Some, especially those light skinned enough to be confused to white people opt for passing for another race. Weldon Johnson equates success with having access to money, and this is clearly reflected through his statement when he says that, "I had made up my mind that since I was not going to be a Negro, I would avail myself of every possible opportunity to make a white man's success; and that, if it can summed up in one word, means 'money'" (Appiah, 1990: 563). Johnson implies passing for another race or white race and his main aim is to have an access to opportunities available for white people. No body or very few Negroes or people wanted to be Negroes. This may perhaps be intelligible because no human being wants to be associated with poverty as Hughes elucidates:

Because it is very hard for a Negro to make money in the United States, since so many jobs are denied him, so many unions and professional associations are barred to him, so many banks will not advance him loans, and so many insurance companies will not insure his business, my father went to Cuba and Mexico, where he could make money quicker (Ibid: 39).

Since opportunities were there for white people, Negroes who pass for white or wanting not to be linked to Negroes do so for survival or desire to get a decent job. To be a Negro in America meant not only to be denied opportunities, but also not to be trusted. Not to be trusted made Negroes to lose important opportunities such as having access to loans and insurance or any financial aid that would assist a Negro with business vested interests. It is therefore understandable under such unfavorable conditions why Hughes' father decides to leave America to make a living in Cuba and Mexico where skin color or racial segregation would not be an obstacle to one's attempts to make ends meet. As a result of American racism, Hughes maintains that his father disliked Negroes and perhaps anything that had to do with Negroes:

My father hated Negroes. I think he hated himself, too, for being a Negro. He disliked all of his family because they were Negroes and remained in the United States, where none of them had a chance to be much of anything but servants- like my mother, who started out with a good education at the University of Kansas, he said, but had sunk to working in a restaurant, waiting on niggers, when she wasn't in some white woman's kitchen. (Ibid: 40)

His father's hatred for Negroes, himself for being a Negro, and his family who lived in America who would also not get a decent job but continue to serve the white men irrespective of a nigger's level of education. He further provides an example of Hughes' mother who in spite of her education continues to work in a white woman's kitchen. One wonders whether hating his family and himself for being Negroes is going to change situation or make them white instead of finding means for survival. He has for sure forgotten that Negroes did not create the difficult situation they find themselves but an American greediness, cheap labor, and profit seeking endeavors which drove them to Africa and excavate Africans in order to make them slaves. Talking about Africa to which the origin of the Negroes is linked, Hughes and some Negroes victimised by the plague of white racism in America could not wait to step in Africa one day to touch the land of their ancestors. Correlated to this, Hughes declares:

But all those days I was waiting anxiously to see Africa. And finally, when I saw the dust-green hills in the sunlight, something took hold of me inside. My Africa, Motherland of the Negro peoples! And me a Negro! Africa! The real thing, to be touched and seen, not merely read about in a book (Ibid: 10).

"Waiting anxiously to see Africa" recounts not the zeal to see the land of their forefathers where they involuntarily uprooted, but also a sense of hope and deliverance from the American racism. But, words "something took hold of me inside" do not only mean physical and blood connection with Mother Africa, but also spiritual connection. This also affirms the truth behind a trite saying that "blood is thicker than water." In addition, the phrase "My Africa, Motherland of the Negro peoples! And me a Negro! Africa! The real thing, to be touched and seen, not merely read about in a book" is not only a dream come true for Hughes, but expresses a pride for being linked to Africa as a Negro and an exciting as well as joyous shock of finally kissing and touching the land he had been reading in the books most of the times.

This may be described as a family reunion made possible by the ruthless and racial American social conditions which are hostile to Negroes and which compelled Hughes to prefer working at the harbor. Although Hughes seems to be filled with disbelief, but spiritual elevation is what touching and seeing Africa has created in him. In further narrating his African experience, he says: "The next day we moved on. And farther

down the coast it was more like the Africa I had dreamed about- wild and lovely, the people dark and beautiful, the palm trees tall, the sun bright, and the rivers deep. The great Africa of my dreams!" (Ibid: 11).

The words that "it was more like the Africa I had dreamed about- wild and lovely" justifies a claim made earlier in the previous paragraphs that for Hughes stepping on Africa was a dream come true. "The people dark and beautiful" deconstructs what white people made Africans to believe about themselves that they are ugly and sub-human. However, one may question the certainty about darkness and beauty given a claim that beauty is in the eye of a beholder.

It can be said that what is beautiful to Hughes is necessarily beautiful to people of other races and there was no way he would argue that Africans are ugly because in his veins run a Negro blood. Either way, Africans are human beings and like people of other races possess intellect and everything a human being is expected to have. Despite attributing Africans to qualities of beauty, Hughes observed confusion and modest: "Africans are baffled and humble. They listen to the missionaries and bow down before the Lord, but they bow much lower before the traders, who carry whips and guns and are protected by white laws, made in Europe for the black colonies" (Ibid: 102).

The humbleness of the Africans in Africa and the way they listen and bow before the traders more than they do to the Lord puts them (Africans) in trouble. It is not that they invited the missionaries, but the point is the reason they have found themselves slaves, whipped, and killed sometimes because they allowed the situation to be the way it was. The fact that they bowed more to these traders than to God suggests that they do that in fear for their lives. They kill, kidnap, and colonize black people having the guns and protected by laws made in Europe for these colonies confirms their corrupt deeds in Africa and the continuation of slave trade at the African shores.

In relation to this, Hughes communicates what other natives say about this ill-treatment: "Their men," say the natives, "their white strong men come to take our palm oil and ivory, our ebony and mahogany, to buy our women and bribe our chiefs" (Ibid, 1993: 120). This tells that relying on their guns, these white people robbed, raped, kidnapped

for slavery, and bribed the African chiefs to have more access to Africans for enslavement. Apart from these dirty deeds, Hughes, exposes a rape scenario that took place in his presence which also shows how badly slave raiders treated Africans on their own land:

The girl said: "Mon-nee! Mon-nee!" but nobody had any money. Thirty men crowded around, mostly in their underwear, sat up on bunks to watch, smoked, yelled, and joked, and waited for their turn. Each time a man would rise, the little African girl on the floor would say: "Mon-nee! Mon-nee!" but nobody had a cent, yet they wouldn't let her get up. Finally, I wouldn't bear to hear her crying: "Mon-nee!" any more, so I went to bed (Ibid: 108).

Despite that the African girl was a prostitute selling her body anywhere in the world especially at the harbor, the fact that she kept calling for money should have reminded that it is not for free. A statement that "Thirty men crowded around, mostly in their underwear, sat up on bunks to watch, smoked, yelled, and joked, and waited for their turn" suggests rape and that there was consent between these men and this African girl. Because they had money, one wonders why they sat up on bunks to watch. Watch, smoked, yelled, joked, and waited for their turn recounts that they were raping this girl with impunity simply because she was an African girl.

Certainly if this was an American or European girl, there was no way they could rape her. One of course cannot blame Hughes for his inability to bear this ruthless, sinful, and banal racist act. If this African survived that, that must have affected her both physically and mentally. This is amazing because like their forefathers had been doing during slavery, they raped and had sexual desire for what they perceived to be an animal and sub-human. This incident is a sign of ubiquity of racism not only in Europe and America, but also in the African continent. Talking about racism and its influence, Hughes further reveals that in America, even Negro schools are being controlled by white people who take decisions for Negroes:

When I first went there, it had an all white faculty teaching an all-Negro student body. And, other than the football coach, no Negro had ever, in all its seventy years, held a professorial position at Lincoln, a college for, as its catalogue states, the training of Negro leaders. There was an unwritten official color line that said no Negro could teach on that faculty (Ibid: 279).

Having knowledge that Lincoln College had an all-white faculty teaching an all-Negro student body is not only insensible, but also tells that the Negroes are not intellectual enough to teach at the college. Certainly there were Negroes in the American society who were educated enough to teach at college but racial stereotypes about Negroes made that faculty not have a Negro as a teacher. This implies as it has been stated in their catalogue "the training of the Negro leaders" that Negroes should be given an education that is poisonous and not equal to that of white people. The fact that a faculty is an all-white faculty further suggests that everything being taught a Negro is being decided upon by racist white people who have no interests of the Negroes in their hearts. Perhaps their duty was to make sure that no Negro progresses academically to the level of a white man. Related to this, Hughes explains how these all-white institutions destroy the education of the Negroes while in the process Negroes think they are getting the best education under white administration:

From chapel in the morning until classes were over in the afternoon, we saw our teachers only in the classroom. After that until the next morning they disappeared into their houses bordering the campus, leaving the main yard and the dormitories entirely to the students- which gave student life a certain freedom not enjoyed by most Negro colleges (Ibid: 280).

The fact that students saw their teachers only in the classroom from morning until classes are over in the afternoon justifies the evil presence and wicked intentions of their populating Lincoln College. People who care about the education of the students do not disappear into dormitories leaving students without even a minimum supervision lest they misbehave and badly injure themselves. And words "which gave student life a certain freedom not enjoyed by most Negro colleges" is a sign of being less concerned about Negro education.

This student life and too much freedom which is not enjoyed by most Negro colleges accorded these Negro students by this all-white faculty exposes the actual intentions of the white people. It further projects fears that should Negroes get a good education which is equal to that of whites, they (Negroes) would transcend their (whites) intellect and attain success and perhaps realize their (Negroes) strength and know that they (Negroes) are human beings just like their white counterpart. This shows that racism

has affected and keeps affecting the Negroes to such an extent that some Negroes have been affected psychologically. Talking about the impact of racism, Hughes shares how he thought a joke about racist acts in the South was true in an attempt to show its mental effects:

While I was standing on the platform, some of the Fisk students came cautiously up to me and whispered in my ear: Mr. Hughes, don't you know the white folks down South don't allow Negroes to wear smoked glasses?" quickly I snatched my glasses off and looked around to see if any white folks had noticed me wearing them! The students laughed loudly, then I knew it was only a joke. But I had heard *true* stories of cities where colored people were permitted to drive only second-hand cars; and other cities where they had to step off the sidewalk when a white man passed; and towns with sign up:

NIGGER DON'T LET THE SUN
GO DOWN ON YOU HERE.

(Ibid: 287)

The fact that these Fisk students joke about white people down in the South who do not allow Negroes to wear smoked glasses indicates that there were so many things Negroes were not allowed to do. One cannot blame Hughes for snatching his glasses and look around to see if there is anyone who had noticed him because there were serious and inhuman consequences for doing something a Negro is not supposed to do. Sometimes one could be severely beaten, whipped, and maybe killed because the segregation laws were very much in favour of the white people. Apart from this being a joke, he further mentioned that he heard of towns and cities where Negroes were only allowed to drive second-hand cars and where they were expected to step off the pavement when a white man passes which shows the strength of racism in the South.

Not being allowed to drive a brand new car was not only meant to tell Negroes that they cannot afford it, but to inform them of their status in the American society that they belong to the lowest class which is inferior to whites After all being allowed to drive second-hand cars was seen a favour being given to the Negroes. And stepping off the sidewalk when a white man passed, concludes that white people did not only see themselves as superior to Negroes, but also equated themselves to God. Words

“NIGGER DON’T LET THE SUNGO DOWN ON YOU HERE” were meant to inform Negroes that they were expected to leave the towns and cities before the sun set and should that not be the case, they were going to face the consequences as Negroes were not allowed at night in these towns. It is racist acts like these that did not only made the Negroes suffer, starve, and be treated like animals but also made the Negroes to decide on finding ways of making ends meet and sometimes through using the word of God. Hughes shows how the word of God was used for personal enrichment by some Negroes having noticed how that benefited white people:

The Reverend Dr. Becton, I thought, was a very bad preacher, running back and forth across the platform, mouthing inanities and whistling for God, but he could make people shout, nevertheless. And the stirring rhythms of his excellent gospel swing band would cause many to rise and dance in the aisles for joy (Ibid: 276).

Hughes’s thinking that Dr. Becton was a bad preacher because he could run and forth saying hypocritical and silly things seems to be spot on. He further says in spite of that, he could make people shout which is an indication of people’s thirst not only for the word, but for deliverance and divine intervention to the problems Negroes found themselves deeply rooted and inescapable. These problems certainly were associated to racism. The church band which caused the congregants to rise and dance in the aisles for joy can be linked in a way not only to the band, but also to the power of music.

Related to music, especially of the Negroes, one can be reminded of Weldon Johnson’s claim that “Anyone who without shedding tears can listen to Negroes sing ‘Nobody knows de trouble I see, nobody knows but Jesus’ must indeed have a heart of stone (Appiah, 1990: 555). The latter catalogues some of the things music of the Negroes could do in an individual. Dr. Becton himself seems to be aware of what music could do as Hughes explains “He said he knew the effects of music and rhythm on the human emotions, for he had made a study of audiences and their reactions, and he knew how to handle them” (Ibid, 1993: 278). Despite playing with human emotions for his personal benefits, Hughes tells that this attracted so many white people from afar:

A great many white people came to watch him put on his show, and churches anywhere in the East fortunate enough to have him grace their rostrums for a month or two were sure to come out of the red. For, besides the collections at the altar, Dr. Becton had an envelope system, called "The Consecrated Dime- A dime a day for God." And every Sunday he would give out his envelopes. And every Sunday he would collect hundreds of them from the past week, each with seventy cents therein, from the poor working men and women who made up the bulk of his congregation (Ibid: 276).

The coming of many white people and churches from the East fortunate enough to have him were sure to come out of the red means they would be making a lot of money. The money he was making from the collections and an envelope system is a sign of peoples' desperation to get help for whatever reason that brought to the church with a hope that they will find solutions in spite of Dr. Becton's self-enrichment. To claim that these collections and envelopes were made for God while making himself rich is not only robbery, but also crooked because these poor souls are making these contributions wholeheartedly with the hope that their prayers would be answered. To show that through these collections he was enriching himself (Dr. Becton), Hughes reveals what he found shocking and made possible by these poor people's monies:

The furnishings were of the finest, from an old established Fifth Avenue shop. There were luxurious drapes at the windows, with the sign of the cross woven in them. There was a private chapel where Dr. Becton prayed at dawn before a lighted cross. And he slept in a specially built bed with two transparent crystal crosses in the bed-panels at head and foot crosses that gave out a soft glow as he slept, lighted, he said, by God. Those members of his congregation, most faithful in contributions and attendance, would, on occasion, be shown through this house (Ibid: 277).

The exceedingly lavish and finest furnishings in Dr. Becton's house justify a claim of personal enrichment and robbery. Sleeping in a specially made bed with transparent crosses in the bed-panels which he said is lighted by God. Saying it is lighted by God implies that he is lying to these poor souls so that they can contribute to his massive wealth while some of them did not have food, places of sleep and not knowing if they would find anything to eat the following day. Yet, Dr. Becton is being trusted by these people as somebody who is close to God and going to plead on their behalf so that they

can be better people also. What sickens and annoying is his courage to show around faithful members of his congregation without any remorse that these people giving their last penny for what they were convinced that is for a good cause.

Amazingly, a man of God trusted as he was by his congregants and making himself appear as saint in the eyes of these poor souls, never even mention God but his wealth and material things as Hughes clarifies that “During his talk with me, never once did he mention God. In the quiet of his study, he talked business, God being, no doubt, for public consumption” (Ibid, 1993: 278). This means that such people like Dr. Becton used the word when they are in the church to make people to contribute more and more willingly. They go to an extent of pushing and coercing people to come to Jesus and be saved despite their not being ready to do so and Hughes shares his personal experience in relation to this un-readiness:

Finally all the young people had gone to the altar and were saved, but one boy and me. He was a rounder’s son named Westley. Westley and I were surrounded by sisters and deacons praying. It was very hot in the church, and getting late now. Finally Westley said to me in a whisper: “God damn! I am tired o’ sitting here. Let’s get up and be saved.” So he got up and was saved (Ibid: 19-20).

While a statement that “all the young people had gone to the altar and were saved, but one boy and me” implies that all other children acted as told and only Hughes and Westley who were still there because they had not yet seen Jesus. It seems being saved here is to stand and go to where one is asked to go in order to be declared saved. The words “God damn! I am tired o’ sitting here. Let’s get up and be saved” justify the latter. It seems the main reason Westley got up is because of unbearable heat in the church, tired of sitting there, and that it was getting late, not that he wanted to. And the minister’s desperate imploration affirmed the latter claims and Hughes delineates such imploration:

I heard the songs and the minister saying: “Why don’t you come? My dear child, why don’t you come to Jesus? Jesus is waiting for you. He wants you. Why don’t you come? Sister Reed, what is this child’s name?” “Langston,” my aunt sobbed. “Langston, why don’t you come? Why don’t you come and be saved? Oh, Lamb of God! Why don’t you come?” (Ibid: 20)

Asking Hughes time after time why he does not come is not only a sign of desperation, but also raises eyebrows and questions. People are not supposed to be told and begged in order to be saved, but to preach and pray for until they are willing to surrender themselves to God. Understandably, the reason he is so persistent is because he wanted to increase his congregants and thereby receive more contributions. Having noticed that there was nothing happened to Westley, Hughes compelled by the same reasons that made Westley to go to the altar and be saved, he went and Hughes further elucidates that “God had not struck Westley dead for taking his name in vain or for lying in the temple. So I decided maybe to save further trouble, I’d better lie, too, and say that Jesus had come, and get up and be saved” (Ibid: 20). This, in a way, caused children to lie by pleasing the minister that he had seen Jesus at the altar. The minister made God to be perceived by children and other congregants as God that is ruthless and punishes anyone who perhaps does not do what the minister asks one to do.

While going to the fore is seen as some kind of freedom from the tiredness of sitting there and the minister’s imploration, the lad (Hughes) was left scared and wondering if God is not going to punish him. In addition, this also left him a feeling of guilt as Hughes describes that “But I was really crying because I couldn’t bear to tell her that I had lied, that I had deceived everybody in the church, that I hadn’t seen Jesus, and that now I didn’t believe there was Jesus any more, since he didn’t come to help me” (Ibid: 21).

A claim that he could not stand to tell his aunt that he had lied and that he had deceived everybody in the church which emanated from a lad’s feeling of guilt and remorse affirms the misrepresentation of God and construction of lies for self-enrichment. And “that he did not see Jesus and did not believe there was Jesus anymore” does not only justify the misrepresentation of God, but also shows how lies can influence others negatively. Perhaps the boy has to be commended for being remorseful and what about those who use the word of God wickedly and for their personal benefits.

5.3. Views in Zora Neale Hurston's *Dust Tracks on a Road*

The American society is notably known for its racism and cruelty to the Negroes who in the process of trying to prove to their white counterparts that they are human beings just like them, attempt at the same time to believe what white people say about them. A belief that Negroes belong to an inferior race and whites to a superior one, complicated things as it promoted inequality in America. This inequality implied unequal education, work opportunities, racial discrimination, and other activities which were only meant for white people only. Also the intellect of the Negroes was being questioned and seen as not competent enough to make Negroes participate in issues to do with governance and building of the American economy. But considering issues about governance vis-a-vis Negro intellect, Hurston shares a personal experience where she astonishingly witnessed a Negro being made a Mayor in Maitland:

The Whites nominated a candidate and the Negroes, under the aggressive lead of Joe Clarke, a muscular, dynamic Georgia Negro, put up Tony Taylor as their standard bearer. I do not know whether it was the numerical superiority of the Negroes, or whether some of the Whites, out of deep feeling, threw their votes to the Negro side. At any rate, Tony Taylor became the first Mayor of Maitland with Joe Clarke winning out as town Marshal. This was a wholly unexpected turn, but nobody voiced any open objections. The Negro Mayor and Marshal and the White City Council took office peacefully and served their year without incident (Hurston, 2006: 5).

The mere fact that white people allowed Negroes to nominate their candidate to contest the position of a Mayor tells that not all the white people in America saw Negroes as sub-human. In spite of accepting the outcomes of the votes which were in favor of the Negroes, these white folks did not say they did not accept the results and this can perhaps be linked to these white folks' inexperience and non-familiarity with racial segregation. This does not imply that whites were not aware of racial segregation in other parts of America. By putting Tony Taylor as a Mayor in Maitland working with White City Council, could suggest that Whites had cultivated some confidence in not only Taylor but also Negroes in general.

It is this confidence, unity, and willingness to work with Negroes showed by white people and Taylor's diligence that resulted in him (Taylor), the Marshall, and the White

City Council served their year without incident. And this success becomes possible without any white folk forecasting mismanagement by Taylor. The latter perhaps helped to communicate a message to other American parts where racism is at its highest levels that Negroes like white folks have intellect and are reverential human beings as well who deserve to be treated as such. So Hurston unravels the success of towns under the Negro leadership in America:

So on August 18, 1886, the Negro town, called Eatonville, after Captain Eaton, received its charter of incorporation from the state capital at Tallahassee, and made history by becoming the first of its kind in America, and perhaps in the world. So, in a raw, bustling frontier, the experiment of self-government for Negroes was tried. White Maitland and Negro Eatonville, have lived side by side for fifty-five years without a single instance of enmity (ibid: 6).

Testimonial to the previous paragraph is a Negro town's receiving of its charter of incorporation from the state capital at Tallahassee which made history by being the first of its kind in America and the world. Making history both in America and the world is enough to convince the white American society that Negroes are proficient and perhaps more in doing what other human beings are capable of doing. A claim that it was the first of its kind further suggest that it was chosen from a massive white led towns in America which did not qualify for this charter including those who previously governed Eatonville substantiate a statement that that the experiment of self-government for Negroes was tested.

It is of course understandable why white Maitland and Eatonville lived side by side for many years without any single occurrence of hostility and this could at the same time be attributed to white people's respect for humanity and other human beings in Maitland and Eatonville irrespective of their skin color. Taking into cognizance the spirit of humanity and respect for human kind, other Negroes from afar integrated their families with Eatonville and these include Hurston's family as she reveals:

So he heard about folks building a town all out of colored people. It seemed like a good place to go. Later on, he was to be elected Mayor of Eatonville for three terms, and to write the local laws. The village of Eatonville is still governed by the laws formulated by my father. The town clerk still consults a copy of the original printing which seems to be the only in existence now (Ibid: 9-10).

Having heard folks building a town all out people and a statement that, "... it seemed like a good place to go"... must be astonishing and at the same time seem like an inviting call especially upon Negroes to be part not only of building but also encouraging peaceful environment free from racial segregation. While to be elected Mayor of Eatonville for three terms and writing the local laws could connote freedom, that may also represent unity and self-governance. This also acted as a microcosm of what America could be had the Negroes been given an opportunity to participated in the building of American economy, politics and society. And the fact that Eatonville is still governed by laws written by Hurston's father indicates not only an excellent word being done by Negroes, but also an admiration of a Negro talent in spite of non-recognition of Negroes as human beings by the American society. In spite of a job well done by Negroes in Eatonville, Hurston's father is able to detect the nature of society Eatonville was. It was a society precisely like any African society with its own stereotypes about women and that can be revealed by Hurston's father who wished to have not more than one daughters but many sons and Hurston explains:

It seems that my father was away from home for months this time. I have never been told why. But I did hear that he threatened to cut his throat when he got the news. It seems that one daughter was all that he figured he could stand. My sister, Sarah, was his favorite child, but that one girl was enough. Plenty more sons, but no more girl babies to wear out shoes and bring in nothing (Ibid: 19).

By merely threatening to cut his throat when he got the news that his wife has given birth to a baby girl is enough to claim that he did not want a girl child and that the one he already had was enough. Hurston's father was a typical African and this can be seen through his negative attitude towards having more than one baby girl and his want for many boys. A statement that "Sarah, was his favorite child, but that one girl was enough" may sound like a contradiction especially when put against his desire for more sons and one girl. Perhaps Sarah was his favorite simply because she was the first girl and though it was enough. He might as well loved Sarah for his personal reasons other than the latter.

But certainly having more sons even in Africa is linked to growing the name of the family, having heirs, and to bring more wealth in the family. There is a strong belief that

girls would grow and get married to other families and by doing so grow these families. Perhaps it is for that reason that girls in some societies are not allowed to go to school because such endeavor is regarded as waste of time and money. So Hurston's father could be sharing similar thoughts about having girl children. When his wife finally gave birth to a baby girl, there was no one to help and got help from a white man "Help came from where she never would have thought to look for it. A white man of many acres and things, who knew the family, had butchered the day before" (Ibid: 20). This should not be amazing because Negroes had been living side by side and peacefully with whites. Hurston seems to be fond and excited about white people especially the way they related to her and she gives details:

But I had one person who pleased me always. That was the robust, grey-haired, white man who had helped me get into the world. When I was quite small, he would come by and tease me and then praise me for not crying. When I got old enough to do things, he used to come along some afternoons and ask to take me with him fishing. He said he hated to bait his own hook and dig worms (Ibid: 30).

A statement that, "But I had one person who pleased me always" suggests that there was only one person who was not close to Hurston, and who made her feel comfortable and happy. The fact that this person happens to be a white man that helped her more when she was giving birth to her compels one to question her father's relationship with her. This seems to suggest that her father had no time and enough love for her which can be attributed to her father's wish for having more sons and one girl. Perhaps the main reason Hurston admires this man most and more that her father is fatherly love he has given her which she hardly got from her biological father.

Hurston further discloses this man's advice as he asked her never to be a nigger "Snidlits, don't be a nigger," he would say to me over and over. "Niggers lie and lie! Any time you catch folks lying, they are skeered of something. Lying is dodging. People with guts don't lie" (Ibid: 30). Asking Hurston never to be a nigger because niggers lie sounds offensive and racist. He could have gone straight to the point and told her never to be a liar. Interestingly, Hurston is trying to justify that the word "nigger" was not used to degrade Negroes as she avers that "I knew without being told that he was not talking

about my race when he advised me not to be a nigger. He was talking about class rather than race. He frequently gave money to Negro schools” (Ibid: 32).

Although Hurston claims that she knew he was not talking about her race, it is obvious to everyone that the word “nigger” is being used in America to degrade Negroes. A claim that he was talking about class when he used the word “nigger” does not hold water. One without doubt fails to understand the connection between “nigger” and class. Perhaps Hurston’s being always away and not being close enough to her to give her fatherly lessons, forced her daughter to accept a white man as a father figure And Hurston discloses what she perceives as a positive lesson by this white man:

And while I’m on the subject, don’t you never let nobody spit on you nor kick you. Anybody who takes a thing like that ain’t worth de powder and shot it takes to kill ‘em, hear?” “Yessir.” “Can’t nothing wash that off, but blood. If anybody ever do one of those things to you, kill dead and go to jail. Hear me?” I promised him I would try and he took out a peanut bar and gave it to me (Ibid: 31).

Teaching a child not to be tolerant and to accept killing as a norm, is way in which children are dehumanized. People are in fact supposed to live together in peace especially children who should be taught to be tolerant, accept love, unity, and help others so that they can be better citizens in future when they are adults. One is of course not pleased and convinced to tell a child to kill and go jail when stepped upon her/his toes. Perhaps one would have expected such a lesson from a white person. This implies that despite goodies some white people may do for a Negro, they will never wish good for Negroes. At the same time this reflects that had Hurston’s father been very close and accommodating to her, such a racial lesson would not have taken place. Had her father not been more on Sarah only and be away most of the times, he would have given Zora a better guidance and lessons. Correlated to this, Hurston explains how her father exploded to her when she asked something:

“I want a fine black riding horse with white leather saddle and bridles,” I told Papa happily. “You, what?” Papa gasped. “What was dat you said?” “I said, I want a black saddle horse with....” “A saddle horse!” Papa exploded. “It is a sin and a shame! Lemme tell you something right now, my young lady; you ain’t white. Riding horse!! Always trying to wear de big hat! I don’t know how you got in this family nohow. You ain’t like none of de rest of my young’uns” (Ibid: 29).

Perhaps the reason she asked her father to purchase her a black riding horse originates from her access and closeness to white people. This aspiration comes as a consequence of seeing white people as models whose lives should be emulated by black person with a progressive mind. However, from the conversation cited above between Hurston and her father, it can be said that in the African and Negro societies or families, a woman is not expected to ride a horse while it is opposite in the white families. Perhaps from an African point of view one would understand Hurston's father who regards a riding of a horse by a woman as a sin and a shame. A statement that, "I don't know how you got in this family no how. You ain't like none of de rest of my young'uns" affirms a claim made earlier that he loved only Sarah, maybe if it was Sarah who asked a horse the same response and reaction would have been different.

Through this harsh response, he seemed to have pushed her a little farther than he had been to her which underpins his wish for one girl child, not more. Correlated to this tension, after Hurston's mother's death, her father got a new wife whose arrival has even resulted into her father not being in good terms with his favorite Sarah. His new wife also treated them badly to such an extent that Hurston hated her and wanted to lay hands on her (father's new wife) as she testifies: "As for me, looking on, it made a tiger out of me. It did not matter so much to me that Sarah was Papa's favorite. I got my joys in other ways, and so, did not miss his petting. I do not think that I ever really wanted it. It made me miserable to see Sarah look like that" (Ibid: 75).

The words, "As for me, looking on, it made a tiger out of me" tells how angry and desperate Hurston was in wanting to lay hands on her father's new wife. In the above paragraph, Hurston even testifies that she does not miss her father's petting because she gets her joys in other ways, and this seems to suggest that she does not care how her father is going to feel because he never gave her the love she deserved as his daughter. Apart from the latter, she also seemed to have already taken a decision to assail her father's wife as her (father's wife) presence brought more misery and instability in the family. The latter is further substantiated by Hurston's claim that it made her miserable to see Sarah in that condition.

It looks like there is no way back, she is going forward to teach her father's wife a lesson which is properly planned as she maintains that "Consequences be damned! If I died, let me die with my hands soaked in her blood. I wanted her blood, and plenty of it. That is the way I went into the fight, and that is the way I fought it" (Ibid: 76). One would perhaps hope that her willingness to be prepared to die and want her father's wife's blood could emanate from that white who told her to kill and be ready to be jailed. In relation to this, Hurston explains to her father after his wife left as result of being beaten "Papa went to see a lawyer and he said to send her clothes to her if she had not come back after three weeks. And that is what Papa did" (Ibid, 2006: 78). Perhaps the reason Hurston's father did not mind that fight is because it was a fist fight in spite of his wife's wicked treatment to his children. About a fist fight, Hurston explains how insignificant it was regarded in that society:

For example, two men came before the justice of the peace over in Maitland. The defendant had hit the plaintiff three times with his fist and kicked him four times. The justice of the peace fined him seven dollars- a dollar a lick. The defendant hauled out his pocketbook and paid his fine with a smile. The justice of the peace then fined the plaintiff ten dollars. "What for?" he wanted to know. "Why, Mr. Justice, that man knocked me, and I never raised my hand." "That is just what I'm fining you for, you yellow-bellied coudar! Nobody with any guts would have come into court to settle a fist fight" (Ibid: 33).

The mere fact that men fight with their fists and not with swords, knives, and guns suggests that Maitland was not a violent town. It appears that there was law which was being obeyed by perhaps everyone. Maybe the reason the plaintiff quickly ran to the justice of peace is because cases were solved amicably. And the mere fact that both the defendant and the plaintiff were both fined simply because they brought a fist fight into court. Perhaps this was meant to teach them to resolve their own personal disputes that at the level of a fist fight rather than encourage the plaintiff to fight back. So Hurston's father's beating of her wife could to a certain extent be understood merely on the bases of the claims made in the previous paragraphs that he contributed hugely in the writing of the laws of Eatonville and one would remember that Eatonville was living side by side with Maitland. "Peaceful" these towns may have been, there were violent

cases such murder that could be heard which were happening during the night and Hurston narrates one memorable incident which occurred in her locality:

The attacker expected the white man to pass that way, but not Jimmie. When he found out his mistake, he had forced a certain Negro to help him move the body to the railroad track without the head, so that it would look as if he had been run over by the train. Anyway, that is what the Negro wrote back after he had moved to Texas years later. There was never any move to prove the charge, for obvious reasons (Ibid: 64).

A declaration that “The attacker expected the white man to pass that way, but not Jimmie” is enough to convince one that this attacker was also a white man. Substantiating the latter claim is a statement that after he found out that it was the person he had been waiting for, he decided to force a Negro move a body to the railroad track. If the attacker was a Negro certainly he was not going to ask somebody to help him fearing that the helper might inform the police resulting into him getting arrested. A white man might have done that without much fear because he was not going to be suspected but a Negro. A Negro is always a suspect in the American society.

The statements that that is what the Negro wrote years later after he had moved to Texas and there was never any move to prove the charge for obvious reasons also confirms that the attacker was white. The latter also implies that the Negro was not willing to testify against a white man in a racist America and the obvious reasons being racism. Talking about racism, perhaps there are so many things that come to one’s head such as slavery, killings, slave trade, and discrimination of course. Correlated to slavery, Hurston expresses what she had been told by another black man who was taken from Africa to be made a slave in America when she was doing her research:

He told me of the circumstances in Africa that brought about his slavery here. How the powerful Kingdom of Dahomey, finding the slave trade so profitable, had abandoned farming, hunting and all else to capture slaves to stock the barracoons on the beach at Dmydah to sell to the slavers who came from across the ocean (Ibid: 164).

What the old man quoted above is trying to say is that white people would not have been successful in kidnapping and trading Africans for slavery without the help of some greedy Africans who were helping them (white people). He further expresses his astonishment about the manner in which the Kingdom of Dahomey benefited massively from the profits of slave trade in the Atlantic. Dahomey was an African kingdom (Benin) which developed on the Abomey Plateau amongst the Fon people in the early 1600s and became a regional power in the 1700s by attacking cities on the Atlantic coast. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Kingdom of Dahomey was a key regional state, and a major location for the Atlantic slave trade supplying up to 20% of the slaves to Europe and the Americas (Wikipedia, 21 February 2014). If the old man's claims are to be taken as true, it means Africans played a big role in the enslaving of their brethren. Related to this, Hurston continues:

One thing impressed me strongly from this three months of association with Cudjo Lewis. The white people had held my people in slavery here in America. They had bought us, it is true and exploited us. But the inescapable fact that stuck in my craw was: my people had *sold* me and the white people had bought me (Ibid: 165).

It is really difficult to understand what impressed Hurston in her conversation with this old man, but one can assume that hearing that also black people have played a big role in selling other blacks to white people for slavery. At the same time, one can understand why Hurston was so impressed because this selling of black people to the white people by black people seems to be an inescapable fact that stuck in this old man's throat. Perhaps it would have been better if black people did not participate or were not the ones who sold their brothers and sisters to the white people.

This raises a question that if white people can entirely be blamed for slavery then black people have also participated in helping them. Certainly, black people should be blamed for landing a hand into making slavery possible. However, that does not mean whites are innocent as they were the ones who enslaved the Africans whipping, killing, raping, and treating them like animals. But a correct answer perhaps to the question raised about black people's participation in slavery comes also from this old man as Hurston utters:

I know that civilized money stirred up African greed. That wars between tribes were often stirred up by white traders to provide more slaves in the barracoons and all that. But, if the African princes had been as pure and as innocent as I would like to think, it could not have happened. No, my own people had butchered and killed, exterminated whole nations and torn families apart, for a profit before the strangers got their chance at a cut (Ibid: 165).

It is true that money is the mother of all evils as this old man put that money stimulated up African greed. As a result of this greed some Africans opted to kill and kidnap other Africans for trading. The greed this man is talking about also resulted into wars among African tribes which benefited slave traders immensely. A claim that such wars could not have happened if African princes had been honest and innocent is true. A statement that “my own people had butchered and killed, exterminated whole nations and torn families apart, for a profit before the strangers got their chance at a cut” recounts that the presence of a white man in Africa has not only brought problems in the African continent, but also hatred and inhumanity among Africans, brothers, sisters, and neighbors.

It as well informs one that black people were as greedy as white people. While black people were greedy for profits they were making out of selling their own blood, white people benefitted through enslaving Africans, were also making huge profits through slave trade and cheap labor. The level of ruthlessness these white people have successfully implanted among Africans is certainly unbelievable as Hurston further give details:

The Kings of Dahomey once marched up and down West Africa, butchering the aged and the helpless of the surrounding tribes and nations, and selling the able off into Western slavery. The Dahomans would have been outraged if anybody had said they were unjust. What could be more just? The profits were enormous. But they did feel that there was no more justice in the world when the French came in and conquered them (Ibid: 257).

It seems greediness can turn a man into a lion as it turned Africans into killing machines that killed each other mercilessly merely for a profit. Marching up and down West Africa butchering the aged and the helpless does not only suggest insatiable hunger and an unquenchable thirst for blood, but also inability to think, show remorse and humanity.

And the statement “selling the able off into Western slavery” implies stripping Africa its sources of economy, defenders, offspring, generation, and capable hands that were going to keep the fire burning in the families and households of these Africans. One wonders if the latter did not even surfaced in the minds of the Dahomans.

It does not how enormous the profits were; a value for human life will always surpass that. Strangely, in a statement “But they did feel that there was no more justice in the world when the French came in and conquered them” are calling for justice as if they were doing justice when they were ruthlessly butchering their brethren especially the aged and the helpless for a profit. One wonders if they knew what justice is. Perhaps they were not aware that to do justice is when one is doing righteousness or what one wish might be done unto one. Correlated to justice, perhaps the white girls who visited Hurston’s school did what they wish could be done unto them, and she says:

The whites who came down from the North were often brought by their friends to visit the village school. A Negro school was something strange to them, and while they were always sympathetic and kind, curiosity must have been present, also. They came and went, came and went. Always, the room was hurriedly put in order, and we were threatened with a prompt and bloody death if we cut one caper while the visitors were present (Ibid: 34).

The fact that these whites were brought by their friends and Negro school being something strange to the firstly means that they did not trust the Negroes and secondly they did not believe that Negroes could have a school. Perhaps these whites cannot be blamed for that because America has taught its citizens that a Negro is unfit for education and therefore white people hardly heard about Negro school. And the reason a Negro school was something strange is that they never imagined a Negro going to school. They did not understand how a Negro whose intellect is challenged and who inferior could suddenly become competent in education.

The issue of sympathy and kindness cannot be genuinely linked to the true meanings of these words. They were sympathetic and perhaps were wondering if Negroes would cope intellectually with their studies as they were perceived as sub-human. And it is possible that the reason learners were being threatened if they cut one paper while the visitors were present is because they were not used to having white visitors who had

nothing to do with the Negroes. They (teachers) might have been very shocked indeed and hence the threats to the learners. This could have emanated from that many Negroes believed that white people were really inferior and therefore aspire to be like them, sometimes respect them highly. Because Hurston shone above other learners, these white visitors invited her to the hotel:

When everybody had gone, he told me I was to go to the Park House, that was the hotel in Maitland, the next afternoon to call upon Mrs. Johnstone and Miss Hurd. I must tell Mama to see that I was clean brushed from head to feet, and I must wear shoes and stockings. The ladies liked me, he said, and I must be on my best behavior (Ibid: 37).

When the school Principal (Mr. Calhoun) asked Hurston to tell her Mama to make sure that she brushed her from head to feet and that she must wear shoes and stockings showed how much he feared and unnecessarily respected white people. One perhaps doubts if Hurston was going to meet black people, the principal would have asked her to tell her Mama these things. The statement that “The ladies liked me, he said, and I must be on my best behavior” seems to be a distortion of what really had happened. The principal should have been straight to the point that because she performed above everyone else in the classroom, the white guests were very impressed and so they wanted to meet her at the hotel instead of telling her that the ladies liked her. This certainly would have been more inspirational to Hurston.

To ask Hurston to be in her best behavior further justifies the principal’s fear of a white person. However, one would claim that the principal was doing so to encourage a good behavior and to protect the image of the school especially in relation to discipline. In addition to the edible things they gave her, they also gave her a box and Hurston tells what was inside “In that box was Gulliver’s Travels, Grimm’s Fairy Tales, Dick Washington, Greek and Roman Myths, and best of all, Norse Tales” (Ibid,2006:39). Interestingly, there was nothing that talks about the history of the Negroes or about the Negroes. Perhaps the assumption was that there was nothing to talk about Negroes because Negroes were an inferior race that deserved to be denied any educational opportunity lest they know who they are. Correlated to this, Hurston divulges her personal racial experience in Jacksonville:

Jacksonville made me know that I was a little colored girl. Things were all about the town to point this out to me. Street cars and stores and the talk I heard around the school. I was no longer among the white people whose homes I could barge into with a sure sense of welcome. These white people had funny ways. I could tell that even from a distance. I didn't get a piece of candy or a bag of crackers just for going into a store in Jacksonville as I did when I went into Galloway's or Hill's at Maitland, or Joe Clarke's in Eatonville (Ibid: 70).

Being made to know that she (Hurston) was a colored was something very unusual to her because both Negroes and white people were living side by side in Maitland and Eatonville. So Jacksonville was one of those towns where racism was at its height and Negroes were seen as insignificant and sub-human. In a statement "I was no longer among the white people whose homes I could barge into with a sure sense of welcome" does not only imply that she was isolated but made aware that she was different and therefore not welcomed.

And to barge into any house of white people with a sure sense of welcome tells that people in Eatonville and Maitland had even forgotten the color bar that separated blacks and whites in America but, instead focused on the fact that they were all human beings and were equal. Further substantiating this, Hurston claims that she could not get a piece of candy or a bag of crackers when she could go into a store in Jacksonville which clearly shows the inhuman nature of racist whites. Having experienced a lot of oppression as a slave girl, Harriet Jacobs avers "The scripture says, 'oppression makes even a wise man mad;' and I was not wise" (Jacobs, 2008: 179). Talking further about racism, Hurston further reveals the advantages of having a lighter skin in the American society:

The light-skinned children were always the angels, fairies and queens of school plays. The lighter the girl, the more money and prestige she was apt to marry. So on into high school years, I was asking myself questions. Were Negroes the great heroes I heard about from the plantation, or were they the ridiculous monkeys of every-day talk? Was it really honorable to be black? There was even talk that it was no use for Negro boys and girls to rub all the hair off of their heads against college walls. There was no place for them to go with it after they got all this education (Ibid: 185).

Claiming or seeing white as a color of superiority and opportunities is being affirmed in the above paragraph. The mere fact that the light-skinned were always the angels, fairies and queens of school plays justifies the latter. A claim that it is useless to educate Negroes because there was no place for them to go with may be true in a sense that better employment opportunities were reserved for whites no matter how educated a Negro was. Also going to college and getting a qualification as a Negro does not only show that Negroes have intellect like white people, but also tells that America has no place for black people. This implies that being educated as Negro means nothing to America as it does not matter how eager one is to contribute to the building of the American economy. Hurston further explains the latter:

Therefore, after straining every nerve to get an education, maintain an attractive home, dress decently, and otherwise conform, he is dismayed at the sight of other Negroes tearing down what he is trying to build up. It is said every day, "And that good-for-nothing, trashy Negro is the one the white people judge us all by. They think we're all just alike. My people! My people!" (Ibid: 178).

The first line of the latter quote suggests that it does not matter how good and beautiful a Negro can do, that will never be enough to white people. In fact anything a Negro is will always be far from good to convince the white people that Negroes are also capable of producing anything just like them. And a statement that "It is said every day, "And that good-for-nothing, trashy Negro is the one the white people judge us all by" means that white people judge all the Negroes by a bad thing that is done by one bad Negro. Evidently, racist whites only focus on negative things that Negroes do. If for instance one Negro has raped or stole something, it does not mean all Negroes are rapists or thieves, but in America it is like that.

But when a Negro has gone to college and graduate, nobody says Negroes are educated, it is also that way in America and that is the price one pays for being a Negro. This shows that it is more than a sin to be a Negro and one wonders whether the color black is a problem or is the link of the black people with a continent perceived as dark and retrogressive. In relation to hatred accorded to blacks, there are several myths which are associated with this curse and Hurston narrates one of them:

So as the multitudes heard that, they all jumped up and went running towards the throne hollering, "Give us our color! We want our color! We got as much right to color as anybody else." So when the first ones got to the throne, they tried to stop and be polite. But the ones coming on behind got to pushing and shoving so till the first ones got shoved all up against the throne so till the throne was careening all over to one side. So God said "Here! Here! Git back! Git back!" but they was keeping up such a racket that they misunderstood Him, and though He said "Git black!" so they just got black, and kept the thing going (Ibid: 51).

The myth narrated above does not only recount how black people became black or got their black colour, but also reveals that black is a color that is associated with evil. It also tells that black people got their color because they could not behave as a result misunderstood God when He asked them to get back but not to get black. It is since then they became black and never changed. While this myth is attempting to explain how black people acquired their "blackness" the myth also disrespects God Himself. In a way this myth says God has many faults and could not have good control of His own creation. It is also an insult to black people as it discloses how evil white people think about Negroes to such an extent that they inadvertently perhaps disrespect God. Correlated to disrespect, Hurston relates another myth:

It seems the Negro was asked to lead the congregation in prayer. He got down on his knees and began, "Oh, Lawd, I got something to ask You, but I know You can't do it." "Go on, Brother Isham and ask Him." "Lawd," Brother Isham began again, "I really want to ask you something but I just know You can't do it." "Aw, Brother Isham, go on and tell the Lawd what you want. He's the Lawd! Ain't nothing He can't do! He can lead a butt-headed cow by the horns. You are killing up time. Go 'head on, Brother Isham, and let the church roll on." "Well then, Lawd, I ask you to get these Negroes together, but I know You can't do it." Then there is laughter and "My people! My people!" (Ibid: 180)

A claim that after a Negro was asked to lead a congregation in prayer and subsequently got down and told God he had something to ask is a serious not only belittling of Negroes' intellect and respect, but of degrading a Negro. A claim that a Negro said "I really want to ask you something but I just know You can't do it" is untrue because it says there are difficult things which even God cannot do and that is to unite Negroes. Perhaps this myth was created purposely to address the impossible dream of uniting

Negroes. Perhaps instead of praying to God to unite Negroes, the best thing one can do is to ask God to make white people to stop looking down upon Negroes, and make Negroes see themselves as good for nothing creatures because some of the divisions among the Negroes originate from white people's attitude towards Negroes. It may be possible that this myth may have been created to indicate the urgency of unity among Negroes. Regarding unity, one may be reminded of Bob Marley's "Africa Unite" where he maintains that:

How good and how pleasant it would be before God and man, yea-eah! -
To see the unification of all Africans, yeah! -
As it's been said a'ready, let it be done, yeah!
We are the children of the Rastaman;
We are the children of the Iyaman.

<http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/bobmarley/africaunite.html>

While the man who ask God to unite Negroes is certain that God cannot do it, there seems to be an association between God, black man, and Africa which is where black people originally come from. Related to this association, Marley puts it better when he says how good and how pleasant it would be before God that people of the world unite within the spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood. The fact that such myths have emphasized the significance of unity among Africans suggests that this call for unity is long overdue. One perhaps wonders if it would be good and pleasant before God, why would it take a prayer from Negroes to make God unite the Negroes.

One doubts if would punish Himself that much by denying Negroes unity in order for Him to have a good feeling and enjoyable time. And a statement "We are the children of the Iyaman" and in addition to the latter, one also doubt if God would wait that long watching His children being subjected to ruthlessness and all other sorts of evils of slavery and racism. Perhaps, all human beings are God's children and He wants to deliver Negroes from these evils when he feels that it is the right time to do so. Although the latter may be the case, it does not take away the fact that the reason black people find themselves in this dilemma is the white man and Hurston is correct when she argues that "Were it not for the envy and greed of the white man, the Negro would hold his rightful place- the noblest and the greatest man on earth" (Ibid: 181).

Perpetrated by envy and greed, white people found it necessary to enslave, kidnap, and inhumanly treat Negroes. After having successfully made black people to believe that they are inferior and white people superior, some Negroes strongly believed that anything associated with white people is worth doing. This mimic way of doing things by black people deeply entrenched and affirmed the negativities about Africans and the African continent. Correlated to this, Hurston claims that "Utter scorn was in the saying. "Old cuffy just had to cut de fool, you know. Monkey see, monkey do. Nigger see de white man do something, he jump in and try to do like de white man, and make a great big old mess." "My people! My people!" (Ibid: 181). Words such as "Monkey see, monkey do" do not only have a negative connotation, it also scoffs at Negroes who perceive whites and view anything that has to do with white people as superior while at the same time reducing Negroes to status of monkeys. Substantiating the latter claim, Hurston avers "The classic monkey parable, which is very much alive wherever the Negroes congregate in America, is the one about "My people!" (Ibid: 183).

Whenever white people see black people, they see monkeys. Perhaps that is black people appear in the eyes of the white people. Talking about pleasure, Hurston states that "I found the Negro, and always the blackest Negro, being made the butt of all jokes, particularly black women" (Ibid: 184). It is funny because they (white people) make fun of black people, but treat their dogs and other animals decently and far better than a Negro. Hurston reveals that they (white people) even compare and interpret dreams of the Negroes as she explains: "They even had evil dreams. White, yellow and brown girls dreamed about roses and perfume and kisses. Black gals dreamed about guns, razors, ice-picks, hatchets and hot lye" (Ibid: 184).

A claim that black girls even had evil dreams imply that everything that is associated with Negroes is evil and nothing good and that is according to white people. The mere fact that the white, yellow, and brown girls dreamed about roses and perfume and kisses implies that whites are the only human beings as they dream about love and other related things. And "Black gals dreamed about guns, razors, ice-picks, hatchets and hot lye" recounts that black people like animals dream about fighting and weapons. This implies that Negroes are creatures that lack not only intellect, but also many

features to qualify to be human beings. One would want to know how white people get to know about dreams dreamed by black girls because a dream is an exclusive thing. Perhaps they meant to vilify black people so that they cannot make any progress or an attempt to better their lives. Whatever the actual intention may be, Hurston explains this black girl's dream blow-by-blow:

But you take and wake up a black gal, now! First thing she been sleeping wid her fists balled up, and you shake her, she'll lam you five or six times before you can get her awake. Then when she do git wake she'll have off and ast you, "Nigger, what you wake me up for? Know what I was dreaming when you woke me up? I dreamt dat you shook your old rusty black fist under my nose and I split your head open wid a axe.' Then she'll kick your feets away from hers, snatch de covers all over on her side, ball up her fists agin, and gwan back to sleep. You can't tell me nothing. I know." "My people!" (Ibid: 184-185)

The claim that a black girl sleeps with her fists ready and that when you wake her she will hit you five or six times before you can get her awake suggest that Negroes know only violence and nothing else. It also implies that there is nothing shrewd and constructive one should expect from a Negro. Worsening and showing that really white people hate Negroes is a statement that even when she does get up, she will want to know the reason that made one to wake her up for because one would have disturbed her as she was dreaming. In addition to this violent manner of Negroes talked about in the latter is Negroes' laziness and stubbornness. About being lazy and stubborn, it is argued that a Negro girl would kick your feet away from hers, ball her fists again and go to sleep.

Going to sleep summarizes almost everything that Negroes are lazy and instead of trying to create something that is going to help them survive or looking for a job, they go to sleep and dream about fighting. However, this dream myth may have been used to encourage and inspire Negroes to wake up and do something for themselves. It also should serve as a wake-up call to Negroes waiting for something to be provided will instead make them suffer more. In spite of all this, it can be argued that Negroes are not a cursed race, but that white people deliberately constructed all these difficulties to

stifle progress among the Negroes. In addition, Hurston also believes that Negroes were not cursed:

Therefore I saw no curse in being black, nor no extra flavor by being white. I saw no benefit in excusing my looks by claiming to be half Indian. In fact, I boast that I am the only Negro in the United States whose grandfather on the mother's side was *not* an Indian chief. Neither did I descend from George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, nor any Governor of a Southern state (Ibid: 191).

By claiming that she (Hurston) saw no curse in being black, or anything extra ordinary by being white implies that both black and white people are equal as human beings. In actual fact, Hurston makes a case that many Negroes see being black as curse and being white a blessing. He further suggests that the only difference between whites and Negroes is skin color, nothing else. Instead of boasting by faking herself to be something she is not on which she saw no benefit, she prefers to boast that she is the only Negro in the United States whose grandfather on the mother's side was not an Indian chief. This reflects that many Negroes have a tendency of claiming that their grandfathers on the mother's side were Indian chiefs and some do not want to be associated with black race. She further asserts that she never claimed of having been descended from any white family. Perhaps people like Weldon Johnson and other white folks did not find the difference either and hence opted to passing for black and Hurston says:

We have white folks among us passing for colored. They just happened to be born with a tinge of brown in the skin and took up being colored as a profession. Take James Weldon Johnson for instance. There's a man white enough to suit Hitler and he's been passing for colored for years (Ibid: 238).

If Hurston's claim that we have white folks among us passing for color is something to go by, then it means they also see no curse in being black or no extra flavor by being white in spite of the fact that there may have been other reasons that compelled them to pass for color. Hurston's substation for these white people's passing for color is that "they happened to be born with a tinge of brown in the skin and took up being colored as a profession," seems to have obscured some critical background information which would have assisted her to understand the rationale behind these people's passing for

color. If light skinned enough people who are known as Negroes decide to pass for white on the basis of the skin color, one wonders why it does not make sense to Hurston when dark skinned people who are known as white decide to pass for black on the basis of their dark skin. Perhaps it is an unusual type of passing that left Hurston wondering why one would opt to pass for black in the America that is deeply entrenched in racism. This would take one back to a claim made earlier that there could be other reasons making these white people to pass for color.

Maybe they are also segregated against on basis of dark features manifested in their skin colour. Correlated to this, it may not easily escape one's mind that Weldon Johnson declares that "In thus travelling about through the country I was sometimes amused on arriving at some little railroad station town to be taken for and treated as a white man, and six hours later, when it was learned that I was stopping at the house of the colored preacher or school-teacher, to note the attitude of the whole town change" (Appiah, 1990, 550). Questioning Johnson's lack of confidence in publicly identifying himself as Negro may be a topic for another day, but Hurston is confident and proud of being a Negro as she asserts:

I maintain that I have been a Negro three times- a Negro baby, a Negro girl and a Negro woman. Still, if you have received no clear cut impression of what the Negro in America is like, then you are in the same place with me. There is no *The Negro* here. Our lives are so diversified, internal attitudes so varied, appearances and capabilities so different, that there is no possible classification so catholic that it will cover us all except My people! My people! (Ibid: 192)

Declaring that she has been a Negro three times and that is being a Negro baby, Negro girl, and a Negro woman does not mean she accepted who she was, but also conveys and displays an enormous confidence she has about who and what she is. Although she concedes that she cannot tell what the Negro in America is like, she accepts that Negroes are disintegrated that in their lives and attitudes are so wide-ranging and that makes it difficult to come up with an umbrella word to pigeonhole them. This polarization among Negroes certainly should be making facing the challenges of racial segregation, self-hate, and others as consequences of racism difficult to conquer. In their division, some Negroes want to be white, some want to live like white people, and some lost

hope and poverty stricken that they do not know which is which. As a result, there were several calls made upon Negroes or black race to unite so that they can be able to fight their enemy as a unity and Hurston reveals some such attempts:

There is a folk-tale of the white man who hired five men to take hold of a rope to pull up a cement block. They caught hold and gave a yank and the little stone flew way up to the pulley the first time. The men looked at one 'nother in surprise and so one of them said to the bossman: "Boss, how come you hire all of us to pull up that one little piece of rock? One man could do that by himself." "Yeah, I know it," the bossman told him, "but I just wanted to see five Negroes pulling together once" (Ibid: 239).

Hurston argues in the latter quote that even white people are quite aware of these differences and divisions among Negroes. The mere fact that a white man hires five Negroes to experiment if Negroes can pull together once is enough to tell the conspicuousness of this disintegration of the Negroes. It also means this disunity among Negroes is not sitting well on some smart white people who know the impossibility of a race to successfully confront its challenges if it is not united. One would for sure want to know if Negroes are to be held responsible for this lack of unity especially when they are still discriminated against and made to hate each other. Through racism White people have successfully sowed seeds of division among Negroes for their own benefit. This white man's experiment aims at checking if Negroes can work together is part of the American society which is a catalyst for this polarization and he does fully benefit from that as well. In relation to this absence of unity among Negroes, Hurston explains the case of Negroes in Jamaica:

The moment you meet a mulatto there he makes an opportunity to tell you who his father was. You are bound to hear a lot about that Englishman or that Scot. But never a word about the black mama. It is as if she didn't exist. Had never existed at all. You get the impression that Jamaica is the place where roosters lay eggs. That these Englishmen come there and without benefit of females they just scratch out a nest and lay an egg that hatches out a Jamaican (Ibid: 243).

A mulatto's making an opportunity to tell who his father was without doubt originates from racial stereotypes that Negroes are inferior and whites superior. But if this happens every time one meets a mulatto, one wonders why it is difficult for mulattoes to also talk

about their black mothers. Perhaps they think they are motherless and that they were born only from their father. Hurston puts it correct when she uses an imagery of roosters and eggs that in Jamaica one would think that it is place where people lay eggs. A statement “That these Englishmen come there and without benefit of females they just scratch out a nest and lay an egg that hatches out a Jamaican” suggests that mulattoes in Jamaica keeps mum about their mothers as if they were hatched from eggs. It informs one of the levels of racism and race conscious in Jamaica with anything white or linked to light-skin being held in high esteem. This race consciousness in Jamaica does not only make Negroes aspire to be white and mulattoes not wanting to have anything to do with their black mothers, it makes them replicate white people in almost everything that they are do and Hurston puts it this way:

And right here in these United states, we don't miss doing a thing that the white folks do, possible or impossible. Education, Sports, keeping up with the Joneses and the whole shebang. The unanswerable retort to criticism is “The white folks do it, don't they?” (Ibid: 243)

Hurston makes it clear here that Negroes in the American society are a race of imitators. They copy and do everything a white man does. She goes to an extent of encapsulating some areas that Negroes imitate such as sports, education, and others. The angry reply that “The white folks do it, don't they?,” recounts that anything being done by a white is good and a Negro must do it as well. It also informs one that if whites can swallow poison or hang themselves, Negroes also would in spite of knowing that they would die. This indicates that a goal of race pride or black consciousness is far from being attained. One would argue that had Negroes been proud of their race, there is no way they would replicate white people, let alone aspiring to be white. Having lost hope especially in relation to imitation and race pride among Negroes, Hurston lost her race pride and further questions why she should be proud of being black:

So “Race Pride” in me had to go. And anyway, why should I be proud to be a Negro? Why should anybody be proud to be white? Or yellow? Or red? After all, the word “race” is a loose classification of physical characteristics. It tells nothing about the insides of people (Ibid: 249).

A statement “So “Race Pride” in me had to go” suggests that she did not only lost pride for being black, but also hope for freedom from racial segregation and inequality. Her wondering why she should be proud to be a Negro could have happened to anyone especially observing one’s own race divided at a time one expected it to be unite in order to be able to deal with their own problems. Perhaps she did not find it necessary because Negroes seem to have made peace with their plight. Perhaps she had noticed that issues of race pride and race consciousness were not seen as immediate and urgent. While she questions why one should be proud of being white, she maintains that the word race is insignificant as it says nothing about the insides of people.

Undoubtedly, the insides she is talking about are a good heart, kindness, respect for the humankind, intellect, humanity, ethics, and others whose absence has compelled white people to enslave Negroes. Can the presence of these insides of people be seen as some of the reasons that also led to the enslavement of the Negroes in the unfamiliar lands. If these are some of the reasons to go by, then it means white people took advantage of the insides of black people. Having been deserted by race pride, Hurston further declares that: “So Race Pride and Race Conscious seem to me to be not only fallacious, but a thing to be abhorred. It is the root of misunderstanding and hence misery and injustice. I cannot, with logic cry against it in others and wallow in it myself” (Ibid: 250).

While she also maintains that both race pride and race consciousness to her are not only deceptive, she makes it clear that they (race pride and race conscious) should be rejected very strongly. Perhaps she wants to put emphasis on a call that had been made for centuries by many activists that there should be only one race, a human race. Or she wants the word “race” to be completely banished and not exist in everyone’s vocabulary for the sake of respect for humanity, unity, love, and peace among dissimilar races on earth. The statement that “I cannot, with logic cry against it in others and wallow in it myself” does not substantiate the latter, but also reveals to one that Hurston has seen how racism has stripped Negroes of their dignity and degraded them into animals and properties of other races. The cause of all of this is greed which evil has been imbibed in the head of a Negro. This has further implanted hatred and

ruthlessness among the Negroes which give them courage to trade away their own brothers, sisters, and most importantly their own blood. Linked to this, Hurston is not coy to speak overtly about this evil:

We are influenced by a pain in the pocket just like everybody else. During the Civil War Negroes fought in the Confederate Army because many Negroes were themselves slave-owners, and were just as mad at Lincoln as anybody else in the South. Anybody who goes before a body and purports to plead for what "The Negro" wants, is a liar and knows it. Negroes want a variety of things and many of them diametrically opposed (Ibid: 251).

Hurston seems to suggest that Negroes are more easily influenced by money and go to an extent of trading with their own blood. A claim that some Negroes were slave owners and that is why they were not pleased with participation in the Civil War. Being a slaveholder in the south implied having slaves working for one very hard like other slaves were doing for white slaveholders and be subjected to all evils associated with slavery. This creates a huge confusion as one would expect such involvement with slavery to white people, not Negroes.

One may perhaps understand Hurston's claim that whoever claims to plead for Negro's independence is a liar. This means that the division among the Negroes has made them want different things which cannot be easily met. No one can claim to be representing Negroes anyhow because there is no unity among Negroes and he who does that is representing his personal interests. This prompts Hurston question the significance and the use of thinking about the Negro past and having a vengeance against a grandson of former slaveholders who enslaved the Negroes:

I see no reason to keep my eyes fixed on the dark year of slavery and the Reconstruction. I am three generations removed from it, and therefore have no experience of the thing. From what I can learn, it was sad. No doubt America would have been better off if it never had been. But it was and therefore is no use in beating around the bush. Still, there seems to me to be nothing but futility in gazing backward over my shoulder and busing the grave of some white man who has been dead too long to talk about. Neither do I see any use in button-holing his grandson about it (Ibid: 254).

In short, she wants to forget about the past and focus on the present and the future although she concedes that she heard that slavery was evil. Sometimes it is not wise to forget and leave the past behind because for some wrongs and imbalances to be solved and understood, one would need to visit the past. The status quo of any society has been influenced by the past just like slavery influenced race relations and resistance in the American society. And her claim that America would have been better off had it not been for slavery also recounts the significance of the past.

It means if there was no slavery, America would today have a society that has fewer problems of racism and polarization. Perhaps one may not see any use in button-holing a grandson of a former slaveholder, but the past especially of a race and nation, will always be important in solving the problems of the nation and society. Another, example which shows the significance of the past is that without Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, there was no way perhaps there could be slavery just like there could be no Harlem Renaissance without problems of race relations or slavery in America. The name of slavery is not bad, but the institution itself, in spite of Hurston's claim that is at variance with the latter:

Already it has been agreed that the name of slavery is very bad. No civilized nation will use such a term anymore. Neither will they keep the business around the home. Life will be on a loftier level by operating at a distance and calling it acquiring sources of raw material, and keeping the market open. It has been decided also, that it is not cricket to enslave one's own kind. That is unspeakable tyranny (Ibid: 258).

Perhaps an assertion that it has been agreed to do away with the name of slavery because no one civilized nation will use it anymore is one of the attempts to run away from the past. It is shameful that people who were the slave masters that were treating their slaves worse than the animals are the ones who want it not to be used again. One wonders if they care how the painful past of slavery had in many ways affected the Negroes. It is of course true that it is not easy to enslave one's own kind, but they want this rich history of an African to be forgotten because it perhaps reminds them of their cruelty and the inhuman treatment to which they subjected black people.

Just like slavery, it is disrespectful to tell people what they should do about their past. Also just like in the past when they (white people) were claiming that they were compelled by mercy to enslave Africans in a democratic America, they do not want the name of slavery while they are discriminating Negroes racially. Every act of cruelty they (white people) have done to black people such as rape, killing, racial segregation, lashing and other evils of slavery, were all done in the name of democracy. For many centuries, America failed to practice democracy while in the process kept portraying itself as the champion of democracy and Hurston warns Africa and Asia about democracy:

Looking at all these things, I am driven to the conclusion that democracy is a wonderful thing, but too powerful to be trusted in any but purely occidental hands. Asia and Africa should know about it. They should die for it in defense of its originators, but they must not use it (Ibid: 260).

Hurston feels she is driven to conclude that democracy is a wonderful thing and too powerful to be trusted. Perhaps she means that it sounds good for non-Europeans and non-Americans but they must not use it because it is even problematic to its inventors. Since it is not good for Africa and Asia, knowing it is enough. Perhaps Hurston saw how Americans and Europeans struggled to practice it in their own countries while at the same time tell the world that they are democratic states.

5.4. Conclusion

Taking into cognizance the views presented in this chapter in an attempt to prove that Harlem Renaissance was also characterized by double consciousness, the researcher has managed to detect that there was racism. Hughes' moved all over the place looking for employment and ended up working most of the time in the harbors in spite of the writing talent that he possessed. It was revealed in this chapter that racism has made it difficult for Negroes to get proper jobs and education. Decent jobs were only reserved for white people. Hughes' personal experiences of racism from his childhood have made him realize how difficult it is to be a Negro in America. These personal experiences also made him realize that the American society has no place for Negro irrespective of how light-skinned a Negro can be. Like Hughes, Hurston was also made

aware of her blackness by racist white families and grew up watching Negroes and herself being subjected to racism.

Unlike Hughes, Hurston did not have an experience of travelling a lot even outside America as a result of a lack of decent jobs in America. In spite of racism in America, Hurston seemed to be fond of white people because she lived with them in Maitland and Eatonville where racial discrimination was hardly heard of. Hurston seemed also to be more concerned about a lack of unity and hatred among Negroes in a racial American society, while Hughes is not comfortable with racial segregation. Common about Hurston and Hughes is their personal experiences of racism which affected them pitifully and which has been closely looked at in this chapter. It is worth noting as well that they personally experienced racism on the basis of their blackness or being Negroes.

Being black and American was the main reason Negroes were racially segregated because white people believed that black people belonged to Africa, a land associated with barbarism and darkness. White people believed that black people were inferior and therefore, deserved to be discriminated against. But black people did not voluntarily leave their land of origin, but forcibly up-rooted by white people to increase the white man's profit in the plantations. If during Harlem Renaissance as it has been detected from the autobiographies of both Hurston and Hughes that black people were subjected to racism and therefore denied opportunities on the basis of their skin color, one can then overwhelmingly claim that Harlem Renaissance was also typified by double consciousness.

Chapter 6

Views on double consciousness in autobiographies of Malcolm X and Maya Angelou

“But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free; one hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination; one hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of vast ocean of material prosperity; one hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself in exile in his own land” (Washington, 1992: 102).

6.1. Introduction

Chapter 5 explored Langston Hughes’ *The Black Sea* (1993) and Zora Neale Hurston’s *Dust Tracks on a Road* (2006). Chapter also focused on the Harlem Renaissance which was characterized by racial discrimination. Hughes and Hurston in the previous chapter affirmed Du Bois’ double consciousness. The rationale behind the choice these two authors, male and female, was to establish that there were shifts in double consciousness. The shifts established in double consciousness modified the concept of double consciousness. Chapter 6 will explore Malcolm X’s *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1999) and Maya Angelou’s *All God’s Children Need Travelling Shoes* (2012). The choice of these two authors is establish if there are shifts in double consciousness in the Civil Rights Movement. The choice is also to detect if the authors affirm Du Bois’ concept of double consciousness. These authors represent the Civil Rights Movement, an epoch which was characterized by the disrespect of human rights especially black people.

After the Harlem Renaissance came to an end in the 1930s with the hope of any form of deliverance from American racism, African Americans persevered in their struggle for liberation. Several protests have been registered, but before one examines closely the nature and manifestations of these protests especially in literary form, it is critical that one provides a brief background of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States of America. Jamie Wilson explains the Civil Rights Movement by asserting that “In its totality the Civil Rights Movement was the political and social reaction to years of white supremacy in the United States” (Wilson, 2013: ix). The phrase “political and social

reaction” suggests that this reaction took place in the American society and was politically motivated as American society was entrenched in racism as “white supremacy” dominated. In reality the Civil Rights Movement meant to oppose racial segregation which resulted into African Americans being denied equal opportunities such as education, employment, and equal treatment on the basis of their skin colour. Jack Bloom writes that:

I contend that the racial practices and beliefs that the civil rights movement confronted- the denial of political rights to blacks, forced segregation, and the degradation of blacks to second-class citizenship- were embedded within the class, economic, and political systems of the South (Bloom, 1987: 1).

The locution that “the civil rights movement confronted- the denial of political rights to blacks, forced segregation” elucidates that African Americans were also not allowed to participate in the country’s political activities such as right to vote which was only given to white people. And “the degradation of blacks to second-class citizenship” implies that Negroes were not only treated like animals and an inferior race but perceived as such. The Negroes’ resistance of these cruelties strengthened during the Harlem Renaissance with several campaigns taking place in many corners of the American society by men and woman of African ancestry. Glasrud and Pitre concur “During the height of civil rights struggles, black women, like black men, were foot soldiers in sit-in, pray-in, and stand-in campaigns” (Glasrud and Pitre, 2013: 1).

Men such as Malcolm X, Dr Martin Luther King, Elijah Muhammad, Louis Farrakhan, WEB Dubois, and many others kept the fire burning in terms of resistance in spite of the fact that many women who participated in these protests are not mentioned as having contributed to the freedom of the black people in America. Glasrud and Pitre further agree that “Yet during the era understudy, black women were not typically quoted in the media or consulted by white politicians. Even in historians’ accounts, the contribution of women remained obscure for a long time” (Glasrud and Pitre, 2013: 1). This substantiates a little or the absence of recognition of women’s contribution in the Civil Rights Movement. In recording their dissatisfaction with this non-recognition of women’s role in the struggle for liberation during the Civil Rights Movement, Glasrud and Pitre argue: “As Charles Payne has argued, this historical invisibility did not match the

historical reality. What is now needed as a match for historical reality is a study that identifies, explores, and evaluates the roles of women remained obscure for a long time” (Glasrud and Pitre, 2013: 1).

6.2. Different outlooks on Malcolm X

Just like other African-Americans, one would certainly not expect Malcolm X to be treated differently or otherwise, as horrendous circumstances seemed to have taken their toll in the American society which can vary from family difficulties, race relations in America and perhaps the influences of black ghetto life. One cannot be expected to pretend under such circumstances as if nothing is or has happened. Most of the Negro children grew up watching their parents and other Negroes being subjected to racist related evil treatments such as being denied equal opportunities both education and employment, detentions, and ruthlessness. Malcolm X was surely no exception to such Negro children. Malcolm’s father’s association with Garveyism and activism against racism affirm the latter as he asserts:

With the help of such disciples as my father, Garvey, from his headquarters in New York City’s Harlem, was raising a banner of black race purity and exhorting the Negro masses to return to their ancestral African homeland- a cause which had made Garvey the most controversial black man on earth (Malcolm X, 1999: 1).

It seems Malcolm’s father’s support for Marcus Garvey did not go unnoticed as it attracted also the white man’s attention. Perhaps given not only the manner in which Garvey was making his ideology known, but also his black skin, white people hated him. Malcolm’s father was not the only person of African ancestry who responded positively to what Garvey was inculcating to the Negroes; Bob Blaisdell discloses the feelings of those who synonymously heeded the call by Garvey that “He raised in me a certain knowledge of me belonging to people all over the world, the African people, and he gave me pride, and he gave me great knowledge of the history of the wealth of Africa” (Blaisdell, 2004: iii).

This affirms a claim that white people distorted the history of the African Americans to deny Negroes open access to the truth about Negroes. Denying these poor souls access to their history is more contradictory in many ways given that white people were

denying what they perceive as animals knowledge and truth. If really these Negroes were animals, one doubts if there is any sensible reason that could have made these white people to make such a truth not available to African Americans.

He was from Reynolds, Georgia, where he had left school after the third or maybe fourth grade. 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. (Ibid, 1999: 2)

Perhaps having observed the worsening American racism which showed no signs of improving and what Garvey stood and advocated for, Malcolm's father could not help but found sense in the notion of leaving America to white people by going back to Africa. One unquestionably doubts if going to Africa was a good idea given that they were no longer clued where exactly they were coming from in Africa. Also, Africa, in spite of its problems, was not going to be able to look after such a large number of African Americans whose number has multiplied many times the original numbers that were taken from Africa many centuries ago.

However, one cannot rule out the possibility of some going back to Africa and successfully settle there as Africans. The creation of the African states of Sierra Leone and Liberia where former American slaves were settled through a 'Back to Africa Movement', give testimony to the feasibility of resettling African Americans in Africa. Furthermore, and apart from back-to-Africa campaign, Malcolm's father was married to Louise who was not an active subscriber to Garveyism, but also not a hater in spite of being fathered by a white man as Malcolm shares:

Louise Little, my mother, who was born in Grenada, in the British West Indies, looked like a white woman. Her father was white. She had straight black hair, and her accent did not sound like a Negro's. Of this white father of hers, I know nothing except her shame about it (Malcolm X, 1999: 2).

The phrase that explains that Malcolm's mother looked like a white woman and that her father was a white man affirms that white men in spite of being married to their white women, were using black women as their sex objects. It was also no secret that should a black woman gets pregnant by a white man, such an act would be kept under the

carpet or the white father would turn his back and never support his own child. It was an embarrassment to make a black woman pregnant as a white man. This embarrassment originates from racial stereotypes that black people are sub-human. No wonder Louise was shameful about her white father. It makes sense now why Malcolm had the lightest skin among his siblings.

Being light-skinned could be taken as an advantage for one in the American society, but this also depended more on how light-skinned one was. Perhaps that is the reason why it was easy to find those light-skinned enough to be confused to white people pass for white race. This reminds one of a light-skinned Negro who passed for white as saying "Since I've begun to pass for white, nobody has ever doubted that I am a white man" (Hughes, 1990: 51). It seems Malcolm was not one of those light-skinned enough as he explains:

I was the lightest child in the family. (Out in the world later on, in Boston and New York, I was among the millions of Negroes who were insane enough to feel that it was some kind of status symbol to be light complexioned- that one was actually fortunate to be born thus. But, still later, I learned to hate every drop of that white rapist's blood that is in me) (Ibid, 1999: 2).

Malcolm acknowledges the fact that he was the lightest in the family and further tells that he was not one of those who were fortunate. The fact that he concedes to be one of many light-skinned Negroes who felt it was advantageous to possess a light complexion, does not appear to have pleased Malcolm. Perhaps it is because he became aware of the fact that he got the white blood in his veins through rape or that the white people inhumanly oppressed the Negroes. So knowing that some white people raped the Negroes and the manner in which these white people racially segregated a black race; he could not help but hating white people. It is so strange that the people who associate themselves with Heaven could possess a sexual desire for the people they perceive as subhuman and animals and subsequently rape them. It seems the life of the white people was self-contradictory and ambiguous in nature. Ambiguous the lives of the white people as they were, race relations in America between black and white did not improve, but worsened.

The murdering of Malcolm's father is enough to justify the latter, and Malcolm asserts that "Northern white police were later to shoot my uncle Oscar. And my father was finally himself to die by the white man's hands" (Ibid, 1999: 2). Apart from inhuman incidents akin to that of the killing of Malcolm's father as a consequence of racial segregation, some Negroes never ceased to accept that white people are a superior race. It is admissions like the latter that made Negroes to associate anything lighter than black to superiority and Malcolm explains the negativity of such connotation:

I've thought about why. I actually believe that as anti-white as my father was, he was subconsciously so afflicted with the white man's brainwashing of Negroes that he inclined to favor the light ones, and I was his lightest child. Most Negro parents in those days would almost instinctively treat any lighter children better than they did the darker ones. It came directly from the slavery tradition that the "mulatto," because he was visibly nearer to white, was therefore "better." (Ibid: 4-5).

It is in a way difficult to deprecate Malcolm for believing that his father had a soft spot for light-skinned children given the association of anything light to superiority by many Negroes. It appears that a phrase "Most Negro parents in those days would almost instinctively treat any lighter children better than they did the darker ones" contributed largely to Malcolm's belief perhaps considering that his father cannot be different from other parents. Tracing this soft spot for light-skinned children by their parents; slavery should be blamed for all of this given that there is blood ties between whites and mulattoes who as a result of rape of Negro women by their slave masters came into existence.

So because light-skinned children were deemed close to whiteness which is mostly linked to superiority should not be an astonishing matter. But surely it should be shocking on the part of the Negroes who love their light-skinned children more than other sons on the basis of skin complexion which is criminally accidental. One wonders if Negro parents who have the courage to discriminate their own children on the basis of skin colour, had reasonable grounds for doing so. Talking about racial discrimination, Malcolm shares his mother's racial and painful experience: "And then she went to work herself. She would go into Lansing and find different jobs- in housework, or sewing- for

white people. They didn't realize, usually, that she was a Negro. A lot of white people around there didn't want Negroes in their houses" (Ibid: 12).

The fact that Louise decided to go to work suggests that things were becoming difficult and she was forced to work to make ends meet so that her and her children can get something to eat. The phrase "She would go into Lansing and find different jobs- in housework, or sewing- for white people" reveals not only her not having a professional education, but also the scarcity of jobs especially for Negroes. The maxim that "They didn't realize, usually, that she was a Negro" exposes that had they been able to realise that she was a Negro, there was no way they could give her work as it is spelt clearly that white people did not want Negroes in their houses.

This expresses that life was not good for Negroes as they could not find work on the basis of their skin colour. It also compels one to conceive the extent of poverty among the Negroes given the attitude of the white people towards black people. Because she cannot hide herself forever, Malcolm explains the results when she could be discovered that she was a Negro: "She would do fine until in some way or other it got to people who she was, whose widow she was. And then she would be let go. I remember how she used to come home crying, but trying to hide it, because she had lost a job that she needed so much" (Ibid: 12).

It seems white people had a way of finding out if one was really white or a Negro even if that would take a while. The point that she would be finally caught and be let go justifies the latter. While this appears to have brought a lot of pain to the family, it nevertheless pained Louise (Malcolm's mother) more perhaps because she knew that her children were looking up to her for something to eat. Louise's hiding of her crying for losing her job was the only way of not wanting to hurt her children and thereby brought despair in her family. Malcolm further exposes one of the accounts where white people discovered that she was a Negro for which she got fired "I cannot remember which- had to go for something to where she was working, and the people saw us, and realized she was actually a Negro, she was fired on the spot, and she came home crying, this time not hiding it" (Ibid: 12).

To lose a job just because one has been found to be a Negro is a pain that may feasibly leave one wondering if these white people know that nobody chooses a race or a skin colour, let alone the fact that all human beings are God's creatures of whom they (white people) claim to be custodians. In relation to white people's attitudes towards Negroes, Malcolm tells how people from the state welfare treated his mother:

When the state welfare people began coming to our house, we would come from school sometimes and find them talking with our mother, asking a thousand questions. They acted and looked at her, and at us, and around in our house, in a way that had about it the feeling- at least for me- that we were not people. In their eyesight we were just *things*, that was all (Ibid: 12).

It is common understanding that a welfare department in government looks after the families and individuals who are unemployed, poor, disable, orphans and many others who experience problems in the society. Also it is easy to know that people who were represented or working in the state welfare were white people and that can be told by the way they acted and looked at Malcolm's mother and her children. The phrase "in a way that had about it the feeling- at least for me- that we were not people" further justifies a claim that these people were white people. And the maxim "In their eyesight we were just *things*, that was all" does not only affirm the latter, it reminds one that white people in the American society did not believe that black people were human beings like white people and that is why white people looked at the Negroes differently.

One can also detect from the way these welfare people looked at this family that they (welfare people) were not dealing with them (Malcolm's mother and family) in a kind and responsible manner that exhibited keenness to help. No wonder Malcolm's mother got a mental breakdown because it is possible that these welfare people threatened to take Louise's children away from her as if she chose to be a widow, Negro, and unemployed. Malcolm recounts how this treatment by welfare people affected her mother "Eventually my mother suffered a complete breakdown, and the court orders were finally signed. They took her to the state Mental Hospital in Kalamazoo" (Ibid: 21).

Surely, to suffer from a complete mental breakdown implies to be taken to a mental institution and be declared unfit to live with and take care of children. Perhaps to know

that one's mother is suffering from a complete breakdown is punishment and unbearable enough, but for one not to be recognised by one's own mother is something else as Malcolm enlightens: "But she didn't recognize me at all. She starred at me. She didn't know who I was. Her mind, when I tried to talk, to reach her, was somewhere else. I asked, "Mama, do you know what day it is?" She said, starrng, "All the people have gone" (Ibid: 22).

The saying that "She didn't know who I was" must surely be perturbing especially when one knows that there is nothing one can do to rescue one's own mother from the situation one's mother is in. Likewise, it must have brought to Malcolm a sense of despair as she responded that "All the people have gone" after he had asked her what day it was. In addition, it must have convinced Malcolm that his mother will never recover from that breakdown. This whole situation of Malcolm's mother from complete breakdown particularly not recognising her own children articulates how deep she had been affected by whatever the welfare people have said to her.

One may claim that what befell Malcolm's mother is a price a Negro woman pays for being black and also a woman in the American society. Assuredly, knowing that one will never find employment on the basis of racial belonging and being subjected to segregation by people who are expected to help one which are additional to the condition of being a widow and having children, could have affected anyone anyhow, and maybe worse than that. If one can put one's shoes into that of Malcolm, one undoubtedly can similarly say the following words which Malcolm helplessly asserts:

I can't describe how I felt. The woman who had brought me into the world, and nursed me, and advised me, and chastised me, and loved me, didn't know me. It was as if I was trying to walk up the side of a hill of feathers. I looked at her. I listened to her "talk." But there was nothing I could do. (Ibid: 22)

Believably, Malcolm was not feeling good as he was unable describe how he felt. Unquestionably, no normal human being would have expected him to given that no human being would relish watching a relative suffering from a mental breakdown let alone a biological mother. Perhaps watching a loved one suffering knowing that there is something one can do must be making any situation similar to that of Malcolm bearable.

But, if like Malcolm, there is nothing one can do, it must be heart rending and difficult to cope with especially if an individual suffering is one's own mother as it is in Malcolm's case. The phrases such as "The woman who had brought me into the world," and "nursed me, and advised me, and chastised me, and loved me, didn't know me" do not only rationalise the latter, but also tells the extent to which Malcolm's heart had been broken. Undoubtedly, this must have left some unanswerable questions in Malcolm's mind knowing that such situation could have been avoided which compelled him to blame those involved including the American society's racial segregation as he further maintains:

And knowing that my mother in there was a statistic that didn't have to be, that existed because of a society's failure, hypocrisy, greed, and lack of mercy and compassion. Hence I have no mercy or compassion in me for a society that will crush people, and then penalize them for not being able to stand up under the weight (Ibid: 22).

Understandably, Malcolm's blaming of the American society is what was perhaps is anticipated given that no one in a similar situation would have smiled or pretended as if nothing has happened. Perhaps one would also want to know why Malcolm has not been specific by blaming the state welfare. Believably, the reason Malcolm chose to blame the American society is because the racial attitudes manifested by welfare people are deeply entrenched in the American society. American racism towards Negroes is peculiar in such a way that it does not end in looking at the Negroes as an inferior race, but also closes all the doors of opportunities such employment and education.

So, how state welfare people looked and treated Malcolm's mother and her children was how the American society looked at black people as if they are not human beings like them. Malcolm's claim that, "Hence I have no mercy or compassion in me for a society that will crush people" which emanates from his hatred and grudge for what this society has done to his mother does not only explain how people like Malcolm who have been inhumanly offended by this racist American society feel, it exposes the rottenness of this society. Talking about racism in the American society, Malcolm reveals how his racist teacher made fun and mockery of the Negroes during one of his lessons:

He added, I remember, an anthropological footnote on his own, telling us between laughs how Negroes' feet were "so big that when they walk, they don't leave tracks, they leave a hole in the ground (Ibid: 30).

How white people discriminate black people makes one suspicious and doubts sometimes if it is only a question of skin colour and racial superiority as it is alleged most of the time. Interestingly, this ridiculing and mocking sometimes is being followed by sexual desire for what was previously perceived as sub-human and animal. The Negroes who have big feet and leave holes instead of tracks were and still sexually attractive to those who most of the time mocked these Negroes. One may perhaps confuse this fun making to irony or a white people's way of sometimes expressing appreciation and desire.

If this is a form of appreciation, there is something wrong about it as it is offending and inhuman especially when it is done in the classroom because it has a potential of impacting negatively and psychologically on black children. It seems the classroom was one of the preferred playing grounds white people could use to segregate Negroes because Malcolm once again narrates another racial incident where his teacher discouraged him from studying law as a profession because of a belief that Negroes cannot be lawyers but other field perceived to be inferior:

Mr. Ostrowski looked surprised, I remember, and leaned back in his chair and clasped his hands behind his head. He kind of half-smiled and said, "Malcolm, one of life's first needs is for us to be realistic. Don't misunderstand me, now. We all here like you, you know that. But you've got to be realistic about being a nigger. A lawyer- that's no realistic goal for a nigger. You need to think about something you *can* be. You're good with your hands- making things. Everybody admires your carpentry shop work. Why don't you plan on carpentry? People like you as a person- you'd get all kinds of work (Ibid: 38).

White people's problem with the existence of the Negroes in the American society is unusually ruthless. The depth and width of racism in America seemed to be well spread and ubiquitous. It seems white people have no choice but to accept Negroes in their schools because it appears that had it been in their power, there would be not a single Negro learner or child in what they recognise as their schools. In discriminating Negroes, white people went to an extent of choosing and dictating the professions

suitable for Negroes and the ones suitable for white people. The phrase “A lawyer—that’s no realistic goal for a nigger” affirms not only the latter, but also an element of insecurity among white people.

After discouraging Malcolm from studying law, one wonders where did this Mr. Ostrowski get the courage to advise Malcolm that carpentry would be good for a nigger? Perhaps Mr. Ostrowski is telling the truth because Negroes are being denied opportunities in the American society. This explains why Negroes are said to have no place in the American society other than that “places” chosen for Negroes by the white American society. In proving that Mr. Ostrowski’s advice was influenced by racism, Malcolm further discloses a guidance Mr. Ostrowski gave to white learners:

What made it really begin to disturb me was Mr. Ostrowski’s advice to others in my class- all of them white. Most of them had told him they were planning to become farmers. But those who wanted to strike out on their own, to try something new, he had encouraged. Some, mostly girls, wanted to be teachers. A few wanted other professions, such as one boy who wanted to become a country agent; another, veterinarian; and one girl wanted to be a nurse. They all reported that Mr. Ostrowski encouraged what they had wanted. Yet nearly none of them had earned marks equal to mine (Ibid: 38).

Firstly, it is clear that Mr. Ostrowski is a white man, but the fact that he is a teacher; he is expected surely to play a parental role and not discriminate learners. The encouragement he gives to white learners which he did not give to Malcolm just because he is black signals not only the serious challenge of racism, but also teaches learners of both races about racial dynamics of the American society. Maybe this teacher is right by guiding white students given that the opportunities are open for only for white people. In spite of the latter, learners are supposed to be treated equally and be similarly encouraged to do what they want to study irrespective of a career a child wants to follow.

Perhaps this teacher does not understand that learners are also clever enough to tell that a certain decision or advice is influenced by racism. Maybe he is not aware of the hatred he is planting in the mind of a black child. Surely, he thinks by discouraging Malcolm, he is doing what is acceptable and a norm in the American society. It seems

the American society influenced by racism cares not about the welfare of the Negroes and Malcolm moreover describes the horrendous living conditions of the Negroes:

I was astounded to find in the nation's capital, just a few blocks from Capitol Hill, thousands of Negroes living worse than any I'd ever seen in the poorest sections of Roxbury; in dirt-floor shacks along unspeakably filthy lanes with names like Pig Alley and Goat Alley. I had seen a lot, but never such a dense concentration of stumblebums, pushers, hookers, public crapshooters, even little kids running around at midnight begging for pennies, half-naked and barefooted (Ibid: 75).

Even if these worse conditions under which Negroes are living are not in the nation's capital, it does not make sense for government to allow people to live in such conditions irrespective of their racial belonging. But, having such conditions in the nation's capital communicates to the world that the American society does not regard Negroes as human beings. It further expresses that racial discrimination and inhuman acts to which black people are subjected did not end with slavery. The locution that "even little kids running around at midnight begging for pennies, half-naked and barefooted" recommends that America does not care about the future of black people because these kids that are allowed to go naked and beg at midnight are supposed to be future leaders not only for a Negro race but also for America.

Had America cared for its own future and that of the Negroes, it would have made it possible for these kids to go to school and be looked after by the state. On the other hand, this is not uncommon in the American given that even those Negroes who fortunately managed to get professional qualifications are not accorded the respect they deserve; they too are given irrelevant jobs because there are no open doors for Negroes in America. In relation to the shut doors for Negroes, Malcolm relates further:

The old "Colonial" railroaders had told me about Washington having a lot of "middle-class" Negroes with Howard University degrees, who were working as labourers, janitors, porters, guards, taxi-drivers, and the like. For the Negro in Washington, mail-carrying was a prestige job (Ibid: 75).

Surely it must be really frustrating to the holder of a qualification who cannot be employed on the basis of racial belonging. To work as porter, taxi-driver, janitor, and mail-carrying seem to have only been taken by these Negro graduates simply because

there were no other jobs for Negroes in America. This tells that these qualified Negroes that the American society is telling Negroes to go back to Africa where they belong. It further explains to Negroes that no matter how hard they try to convince white people that Negroes have intellect and are human beings like them, they (Negroes) will never be regarded as human beings. Doing these low jobs as a university graduate because one has no choice has a potential of convincing Negroes that studying at university is inadequate if one cannot secure a job that befits one's training.

One, on the other hand, wonders if these graduates are referred to as middle-class by virtue of possessing university degrees because one is convinced that having a degree in the American society is meaningless if one will occupy a job befitting a lower class. One may even argue that calling these graduates as middle-class Negroes is an insult. Talking about class, Malcolm further comments on the upper-class Negroes who see themselves as better than other Negroes: "So many of those so-called "upper-class" Negroes are so busy trying to impress on the white man that they are "different" from those others" that they can't see they are only helping the white man to keep his low opinion of all Negroes" (Ibid: 109).

The fact that there is upper-class Negroes who are busy trying to impress white people that they (Upper-class Negroes) are different reveals the extent of damage racism has caused in dividing the Negroes. Perhaps they believe that to be a Negro is to belong to the lower-class only. They convinced themselves that being in the upper-class is tantamount to whiteness and therefore should be accepted as such. Prompted by different circumstances, Fanon talks about Negroes who aspire to be white as he maintains that "Out of the blackest part of my soul, across the zebra striping of my mind, surges this desire to be suddenly white" (Fanon, 1967: 63). This is madness because this Negro desires the impossible and instead would end up being a laughing stock in the white world as Malcolm suggests in a phrase "that they can't see they are only helping the white man to keep his low opinion of all Negroes."

keeping low opinion about Negroes may not only imply to vilify Negroes, but also to further segregate the Negroes. Racial segregation is moreover exposed by Malcolm in his encounter with the law: "The girls got low bail. They were still white- burglars or not.

Their worst crime was their involvement with Negroes. But Shorty and I had bail set at \$10,000 each, which they knew we were nowhere near able to raise” (Ibid: 152).

Malcolm explains the arrest of white girls with them and how a focus in their case shifted to their involvement with these white girls. This shift undoubtedly is perpetrated by racism given that no Negro is expected to relate or befriend a Negro in the American society. The saying that “Their worst crime was their involvement with Negroes” substantiates a claim made earlier about a shift in their case in spite of their (white girls) involvement and role in burglary. Malcolm and Shorty’s relationship with these white girls is not taken lightly as that leads them to getting high bails which are impossible to pay.

Questions related to burglary which is their crime are never asked; and Malcolm explains this shift and focus on relationship “How, where, when, had I met them? Did we sleep together? Nobody wanted to know anything about robberies. All they could see was that we had taken the white man’s women” (Ibid: 153). The latter suggests that it is even a criminal offence to befriend or having a relationship with a white girl. Malcolm delineates how a friendship with these white girls exacerbated their crime: “Later, when I had learned the full truth about the white man, I reflected many times that the average burglary sentence for a first offender, as we all were, was about two years. But we weren’t going to get the average- not for our crime” (Ibid: 153)

It seems it had dawned in Malcolm’s mind how ruthless white people were especially if one belongs to a race that is not theirs, a black race obviously. It also appears that after he realised a white man’s cruelty, he went to an extent of investigating a sentence befitting a first time offender. The phrase “But we weren’t going to get the average- not for our crime” which further explains that as a result of a crime they had committed especially that of being involved with white girls which appears to have aggravated their situation, tells one that to be black is also another form of a crime. Overtly, this means that black people must learn to distance themselves especially when it comes to having a relationship with white people or be prepared to face the wrath of the American discriminatory laws. One would perhaps argue that these unjust laws have been oppressive since Negroes have been uprooted from their ancestor’s land to be made

slaves in America and Europe. Moreover, through these discriminatory laws, Americans have successfully managed to erase the African culture and Malcolm explains:

You don't even know your true family name, you wouldn't recognise your language if you heard it. You have been cut off by the devil white men from all true knowledge about your own kind. You have been a victim of the evil of the devil white man ever since he murdered and raped and stole you from your native land in the seeds of your forefathers (Ibid: 164).

Malcolm is trying to explain how slavery and these American unjust laws negatively affected Negroes. He expresses that Negroes through slavery have lost who they are, their culture, and where exactly they were taken from in Africa. Surely inculcating knowledge of what Negroes lost and how they lost it to their children so that the next generations could know about their genealogy and family backgrounds was strictly prohibited and a punishment for any slave who could disobey that could have been tantamount to death or harsher punishment. It makes sense when Malcolm calls white people evil and devil because what white people did to Africa cannot be justified anyhow let alone the evils of slavery. An expression "ever since he murdered and raped and stole you from your native land" mentions not only the modes of evils of slavery, but also delineates the vulnerability of Africa, and inhuman nature of white people. Malcolm recounts the story behind the prohibition of knowledge about the history of black people:

"The true knowledge," reconstructed much more briefly than I received it, was that history had been "whitened" in the white man's history books, and that the black man had been "brainwashed for hundreds of years." Original man was black, in the continent called Africa where the human race had emerged on the planet Earth (Ibid: 165).

The phrase "reconstructed much more briefly than I received it" sustains a claim made earlier in the previous paragraphs of prohibition of Negroes from knowledge and truth about their (Negroes) history and families. A claim that the history of the Negroes had been whitened makes sense given that most of the time it seems to suggest that there was no life in Africa before they (white people) came to kidnap Africans and make them slaves in America and Europe. In another phrase "brainwashed for hundreds of years" which is related to the previous assertion, verifies claims many African American

authors such as Phillis Wheatley have been making about what white people kept saying about making Negroes see being enslaved as a sensible and a noble thing.

Wheatley in her poem "On being brought from Africa to America" reveals what white people say about enslaving Africans that: "Twas mercy brought me from my *Pagan* land" (Shields, 1988: 18). Wheatley submits that these white people say white people were perpetrated by mercy to enslave Africans. One surely wonders if it is mercy to kidnap a human being from his or her home-land who have a good life and enslave, whip, and murder him or her. Malcolm is correct when he avers that "The devil white man," down through history, out of his devilish nature, had pillaged, murdered, raped, and exploited every race of man not white" (Ibid: 165). Correlated to this, Malcolm gives more details:

In one generation, the black slave women in America had been raped by the slave master white man until there had begun to emerge a homemade, handmade, brainwashed race that was no longer even of its true color, that no longer even knew its true family names. (Ibid: 165)

Malcolm tells how a race was created as a result of rapes of slave women by slave-masters during slavery. Malcolm is trying to divulge that these rapes produced a race that is not black, nor white. This offspring of slave-masters was not welcomed by the white rapists as they made sure that it was tantamount to serious crime to tell who the father of the child. So many slave women had to keep it unto themselves the secret that their children were fathered by slave-masters. Perhaps that is the reason why sometimes slavery is referred to as a peculiar institution because everything about it was inhuman and difficult to believe if human beings could subject other human beings to such ruthlessness.

Considering what white people have done to Africans, one would understand why Malcolm says "Sometimes I would speak to no one for hours, thinking to myself about what the white man had done to our people here in America" (Ibid: 206). Perhaps if not possibly, there were so many African Americans who like Malcolm think deep about what white people did to Africans and Africa. Chatting about what white people did, Malcolm continues to divulge what these white inhuman creatures did:

Yes! Yes, that raping, red-headed devil was my *grandfather!* That close, yes! My mother's father. She didn't like to speak of it, can you blame her? She said she never laid eyes on him! She was *glad* for that! I'm *glad* for her! If I could drain away his blood that pollutes my body, and pollutes my complexion, I'd do it! Because I hate every drop of the rapist's blood that's in me (Ibid: 206).

Perhaps this may take one back to slavery where slaves by law were regarded as properties of their slave-masters and slave-masters could do as they wish to them. The latter suggests that because slave-masters owned these slaves, they (slave-masters) believed that they could do anything they wanted just like they could whip, sell, murder, and all other evil things to their slaves. Raping women slaves was one of these evils, but what is fascinating about this is how these slave-masters make pregnant their women slaves and denied their offspring even though some children could be born almost white. This raping of slave women was not only a problem for slave women, but also for the wives of slave-masters and husbands of slave women. Under normal circumstances, just like it would not sit well to a slave to know that a slave-master is busy raping his wife, it would not as well sit well to a wife of a slave-master to know that her husband has made a slave pregnant.

As much as being born light-skinned because of rape has its own advantages; there are those light-skinned who really hate being light-skinned after they became aware that they are the products of rape by white men and hence a phrase "Because I hate every drop of the rapist's blood that's in me" in the latter quote. This shows that there are people who are more concerned about their identity and the benefits that go with one's complexion. Malcolm further expresses his anger as he questions the raping of black women by white people: "Why, the white man's raping of the black race's woman began right on those slave ships! The blue-eyed devil could not even wait until he got them here! Why, brothers and sisters, civilized mankind has ever known such an orgy of greed and lust and murder" (Ibid: 216-217).

It appears that the raping of black women did not start in the plantation, but started when Africans were still captives in the ships. This was really horrendous to African women and other Africans who were in the ships because they (Africans) were also frightened by the voyage not knowing their fate. Malcolm poses a difficult question

perhaps to everyone asking why these greed, lust and murder were to happen to Africans by people who associate themselves with God. And also the phrase “The blue-eyed devil could not even wait until he got them here” represents white people as animal-like in nature. Animal-like in a sense that if an animal catches a prey; it starts eating it where it caught it and not even think about eating it in its dwelling place. But a human being takes it home. So one can argue that given the latter claim and all the evils to which white people had to subject black people, white people were heartless and animals. Talking about white men’s heartlessness, Malcolm expresses his wish:

I wish it was possible for me to show you the sea bottom in those days- the black bodies, the blood, the bones broken by boots and clubs! The pregnant black women who were thrown overboard if they got too sick! Thrown overboard to the sharks that had learned that following these ships was the only way to grow fat (Ibid: 216).

He (Malcolm) wishes it was possible for him to show one the remains of Africans in the bottom of the sea where they were being thrown. In a phrase “The pregnant black women who were thrown overboard if they got too sick!” Malcolm recounts that white rapists did not want to take responsibility for making these African women pregnant. African women did not rape themselves whether they became sick or not. Furthermore, pregnant women got sick at some stage during their pregnancy, it is usually not a serious sickness. Whether the sicknesses of these pregnant African women was serious or not, white people did not have a right to take the lives of other human beings.

An expression that the sharks had learned a way of growing fat by following these ships, informs one that there were so many black women who were made pregnant by these white people. It also tells one that apart from being sick, these pregnant black women were thrown in the sea for the reason of erasing evidence so that their wives cannot question their evil acts. Perhaps affirming a claim made earlier about a learnt way of growing fat by sharks, Malcolm reveals the largest number of black people who were murdered during the slave trade:

Over 115 million African blacks- close to the 1930’s population of the United States- were murdered or enslaved during the slave trade. And I read how when the slave market was glutted, the cannibalistic white powers of Europe next carved up, as their colonies, the richest areas of the black continent (Ibid: 180).

If the numbers disclosed by Malcolm are correct, one surely now understands why Africa has so many political and economic problems which are difficult to solve. Also one understands as well why the economies and politics of both Europe and America encounter fewer problems than those of Africa. One understands surely that white people found that Africa has so many resources that would quench their thirst for profit maximization. Perhaps it would have been better if these white people had only taken these Africans to slavery or leave them in their continent than murdering them in millions.

Furthermore, and seeing these millions of murdered Africans, Malcolm is correct when he interrogates that “Because who in the world’s history ever has played a worse “skin game” than the white man?” (Ibid: 182). Surely no one because no race in the history of the world has ever inhumanly treats another race let alone murdering it in millions. Assuredly, anyone like Malcolm would have questioned God’s actions especially allowing white people to grossly violate the rights of innocent people:

Not even in the *Bible* is there such a crime! God in his wrath struck down with *fire* the perpetrators of *lesser* crimes! *One hundred million* of us black people! You grandparents! Mine! *Murdered* by this white man. To get fifteen million of us here to make us his slaves, on the way he murdered one hundred million (Ibid: 216).

Malcolm is spot on when he alleges that there is no crime even in the bible that can match what white people inhumanly did to Africans. Also the locution that “God in his wrath struck down with *fire* the perpetrators of *lesser* crimes!” is accurate because God struck Saul with a lightning for a crime that is not even closer to what white people did. In spite of what white people did, there are still black people who want to be like them, consider them superior, and buy their justification for treating Africans in such a horrendous manner.

About the latter, Malcolm expresses his disappointment and disbelief in black people who still believe that white people were perpetrated by mercy to enslave black people as Wheatley revealed in the previous paragraphs that “It’s unbelievable how many black men and women have let the white man fool them into holding an almost romantic idea of what slave days were like” (Ibid: 217). Some black people go to an extent of trusting

that had white people not invaded the African continent, enslave, and colonise the African people; Africa by now would be too much backwards. Some go to an extent of wanting to be integrated with white people claiming that it is their forefathers who were enslaved, not them. Malcolm warns them about the negativity of racial integration:

This is the sort of kindly condescension which I try to clarify today, to these integration-hungry Negroes, about their “liberal” white friends, these so called “good white people”- most of them anyway. I don’t care how nice one is to you; the thing you must always remember is that almost never does he really see you as he sees himself, as he sees his own kind. He may stand with you through thin, but not thick; when the chips are down, you’ll find that as fixed in him as his bone structure is his sometimes subconscious conviction that he’s better than anybody black (Ibid: 28).

Malcolm is trying to warn those Negroes who because they are friends with white people make a call for racial integration that white people are not what they (white people) appear to be. He further warns these Negroes that they will always be black and black means nothing to these white people. He is in fact advising Negroes never to trust these white liberals even the nicest ones because they do not see a black man as their equal. Frantz Fanon, in relation to the latter, tries to show what white people think about black people “if you aren’t a bastard they take you for a poor shit. Since I am a Negro, you can imagine how I’m going to get it either way...” (Fanon,1967: 61).

He (Malcolm) further claims that these white liberals cannot be trusted because of their unreliability and their firm belief that anything non-white is inferior. Some of these Negroes deny that they are Negroes because they do not want to associate themselves with blackness, inferiority and nothingness. Malcolm related to the latter shares his personal experience of not wanting to be a Negro, but white as he says “Which is why I am spending much of my life today telling the American black man that he’s wasting his time straining to “integrate.” I know from personal experience” (Ibid: 33). The reason Malcolm warns these Negroes is because he knows it and had tried it before. In affirming this, Malcolm upholds that “And I was proud; I am not going to say I wasn’t.

In fact, by then, I didn’t really have much feeling about being a Negro, because I was trying so hard, in every way I could, to be white” (Ibid: 32-33).The fact that he had tried so hard implies that he had thoroughly observed white people and concluded that there

is no way they can accept black people as their equals or human beings. While Malcolm doubts if white people in America could as he observed in Mecca among the Muslims accept oneness of God; he infers what could happen should that be the case: "I could see from this, that perhaps if white Americans could accept the Oneness of God, then perhaps, too, they could accept in *reality* the Oneness of Man- and cease to measure, and hinder, and harm others in terms of their 'differences' in color" (ibid: 347).

The oneness of God perhaps Malcolm is referring to is to look at other human beings as human beings irrespective of their skin colour or racial belonging. It is believed that because God created all the human kind, all human beings are equal and the same in the eyes of God. This could be seen as Malcolm's visions and a wish that race relations could improve in America and people of different races accept and respect one another as he observed in Mecca. He believes that should people of different races in America accept each other as human beings, possibly they will cease discriminating one another on the basis of racial belonging. In relation to racism, Malcolm emphasises the scourge of being black or a Negro in the American society by giving an example of a white man who tried to experiment for two month what is like to be black:

James Baldwin's books, translated, had made a tremendous impact, as had the book *Black Like Me*, by John Griffin. If you're unfamiliar with that book, it tells how the white man Griffin blackened his skin and spent two months travelling as a Negro about America; then Griffin wrote of the experiences that he met. "A frightening experience!" (Ibid: 353)

Malcolm discloses how John Griffin masked himself by blackened his skin in order to appear like a black man in his endeavour to find out what is like to be a black man. Travelling as a Negro in America for Griffin implied to be subjected to racial segregation in almost all the corners of the American society. So a locution "A frightening experience!" tells it all. It tells that Griffin had been denied access to places that were perceived to for white people only. This meant that he could be denied employment on racial grounds. It meant to be beaten and arrested if found in white areas. One obviously cannot blame Griffin for claiming that to be black is a frightening experience given the horrendous and inhuman experiences he had to go through which black people experience on regular basis of their lives in the American society. Shocked by

Griffin's report on his experiences as a black man like anyone could, Malcolm questions how much more for Negroes who have to endure such experiences on regular basis if it was frightening to Griffin only for two months:

But I never heard it without opening their thinking further: "Well, if it was a frightening experience for him as nothing but a make-believe Negro for sixty days-then you think about what *real* Negroes in America have gone through for four hundred years" (Ibid: 354)

This question of wanting to know if it was frightening for Griffin for two months, how much for Negroes who face such segregation and hellish life every day of their lives; the answer is obvious, the life of a Negro in the American society. It also represents Negroes as very strong and tolerant people to be able to survive under such conditions. On the other hand, one would claim that the reason it became a frightening experience for Griffin emanates from his unfamiliarity with poverty and ghetto life. And perhaps further maintains that black people are used to such horrible living conditions which are underpinned by racial segregation.

Either way, the unbearable high levels of poverty which are fuelled by highest levels of racial discrimination to which black people are subjected can never be justified anyhow. Malcolm makes sense when he says "The white man can't separate himself from the stigma that he automatically feels about anyone, no matter who is not his color" (Ibid: 370). The latter suggests that there is no way white people can accept black people as their equals or non-animals. So, even Griffin having experimented what is like to be black, one doubts if he wanted to have anything to do with black people. If he did, it would have just been a way of wanting to appear generous, sympathetic, and unusually kind than other white people as Malcolm argues that "I have these very deep feelings that white people who want to join black organizations are really just taking the escapist way to salve their consciences" (Ibid: 383).

Although Malcolm avers that white people join black people to feel good and pretending, he does not refute the fact that there are white people who are not racists and his change of attitude towards white people can be attributed to his visit to Mecca where he saw white people rubbing shoulders with black people. In substantiating the latter, he

reasons: “I have learned that not all white people are racists. I am speaking against and my fight is against the white racists. I firmly believe that Negroes have the right to fight against these racists, by any means that are necessary” (Ibid: 374).

Mecca seems to have changed Malcolm, given that before he went there; he was so radical so much that he even claimed that all white people are devils and evil. Perhaps he is right because there are white people who are sympathetic with the plight of the Negroes in spite of what he observed in Mecca. The belief that Negroes have the right to fight against white racists appears to propose that without fighting, there is no way Negroes can get their freedom. It also indicates that a fight against racism together with those white people who are anti-racism could make attaining freedom possible. Talking about fighting in order to get freedom, Malcolm claims that “We never can win freedom and justice and equality until we are doing something for ourselves!” (Ibid: 225). So, through the latter phrase, Malcolm encourages a move against racism and at the same time discourages any folding of the arms. He also appears to be aware of the menaces of fighting for freedom and justice as he explains:

Yes, I have cherished my ‘demagogue’ role. I know that societies often have killed the people who have helped to change those societies. And if I can die having brought any light, having exposed any meaningful truth that will help to destroy the racist cancer that is malignant in the body of America- then, all of the credit is due to Allah. Only the mistakes have been mine. (Ibid: 389)

In this quote, Malcolm maintains that he is satisfied with the role he has played and still playing. He does not recoil from the fact that leaders whose own brethren’s interest is in their heart do not last longer. He simply implies that such leaders get assassinated by those who do not want a change. He seems to be convinced that his day is drawing close given that he speaks like someone who is making his last dying wish. Also the phrase “all of the credit is due to Allah” tells one how close Muslim religion was especially Allah to Malcolm’s heart. He appears to strongly trust that all the good things he has been doing for his brethren were done in the name of Allah. One would perhaps argue that during this time, Malcolm had heard that there were plans to assassinate him for what he believes was for the good of the Negroes and Allah. Also he is aware of the fact that in the process of fighting for his people, he could have stepped in

other people's toes and made enemies inadvertently for which he is willing to take the blame. To express his courage and readiness for his death, he says, "To speculate about dying doesn't disturb me as it might some people. I never have felt that I would live to become an old man" (Ibid: 385).

As he was sensing his death as nearer, he expresses at the same time that he entered the struggle for liberation knowing of the consequences and hence he never imagined himself living to become an old man. Regarding the struggle for freedom for which he does not regret being part of, he is at the same time vexed and confused about the manner in which black women conduct themselves: "And you'll see black women wearing these green and pink and purple and red and platinum-blond wigs. They're all more ridiculous than a slapstick comedy. It makes you wonder if the Negro has completely lost his sense of identity, lost touch with himself" (Ibid: 57).

He claims that black women dress in such a way that embraces a white man's culture which is a clear contrast of what he and other Negroes stand for in a racist American society. He expresses his astonishment on these women's desertion of their own culture and identity. The phrase that "It makes you wonder if the Negro has completely lost his sense of identity" surely tells that maybe Negroes are no longer united and that those who embrace a white culture are showing signs of defeat. They have given up, perhaps accepting what the white men believe about them, an inferior race. This explains that as it appears, given the acts of black women; white people have successfully divided the black race. Perhaps as sour grapes or as an expression of anger; Malcolm, furiously instructs the Negroes that "Every time you see a white man, think about the devil you're seeing! Think of how it was on your slave for parents' bloody, sweaty backs that he *built* this empire that's today the richest of all nations-where his evil and his greed cause him to be hated around the world" (Ibid: 217).

Conceivably white people deserve to be referred to as devils given that even the devil cannot match the ruthlessness and evilness white people imposed on black people. All these centuries a white man has been oppressing a black man and in the process stopped talking about Jesus Christ. Maybe this is the reason why Malcolm does not want to have anything to do with Christianity as he confirms: "Even at the young age, I

just couldn't believe in the Christian concept of Jesus as someone divine. And no religious person, until I was a man in my twenties- and then in prison- could tell me anything. I had very little respect for most people who represented religion (Ibid: 5).

Although Malcolm does not explain why he never believed in Jesus Christ even from the young age, he seemed to have noticed Jesus Christ was being cherished and upheld by the evil doers. He refers not only to Christianity, but any religion until he was a grown man. The axiom that "I had very little respect for most people who represented religion" could be emanating from his non-exposure to any form of religion. Or it originated from observing how evil and inhuman those white people who publicly represented themselves as children of God have been. Either of the latter or both could have influenced Malcolm into using drugs and becoming a burglar. Although Malcolm does not mention his reasons for the hatred of religion especially Christianity, one cannot rule out the possibility that at his home there were always meetings organised by his father who was a great supporter of Garveyism or that a religion was not there when the welfare people discriminated them, an act which led to his mother's complete mental breakdown.

But, central to Malcolm's hatred for Christianity is the white men's association with Christianity as he avers that "You have been far and away better Christians than this slave-master who taught you his Christianity!" (Ibid: 259). How black people embraced Christianity to which they were introduced by white people surpasses a white men's commitment to it, something which greatly astonishing Malcolm. Referring to this Christianity-white-men-relationship, he further argues that: "And, still, this Christian American white man has not got it in him to find the human *decency*, and enough sense of *justice*, to recognize us, and accept us, the black people who have done so much for him, as fellow human beings!" (Ibid: 259).

Malcolm has a point when he argues in the latter quote maybe compelled by Christian values that white men acted in contrary to those values as one would have expected otherwise. In spite of the fact that many white people believe in Christian religion, they are always caught in the wrong side. The wrong side being oppressors, slave-masters, rapists, murderers, and other evil things one cannot associate with Christian values and

that is what Malcolm is trying to say. Individuals who associate themselves with a religion such as Christianity are expected in a society to behave in particular manner that resembles what their religion up-hold. Practically, the Bible instructs especially those who believe in Christianity not to kill, but white people did the opposite by killing, raping, and treating black people in a manner that prompted some of the black people to question God's existence. Precisely, Malcolm is making a case that white people using a Christian religion brainwashed and tricked the African people so that they could earn trust and sympathy. Pin-pointing the flaws of Christianity; Malcolm argues that:

Christianity is the white man's religion. The Holy Bible in the white man's hands and his interpretations of it have been the greatest single ideological weapon for enslaving millions of no-white human beings. Every country the white has conquered with his guns, he has always paved the way, and salved his conscience, by carrying the Bible and interpreting it to call the people 'heathens' and 'pagans'; then he sends his guns, then his missionaries behind the guns to mop up (Ibid: 246).

Malcolm makes it clear that Christianity is a white man's religion and interpreted the Bible to suit his (white man) dirty and evil agenda which is to oppress and enslave black people. Malcolm also mentions that once white people finish tricking black people, they come with their guns to kidnap, control black people, and kill them if they are not cooperating fully. This happened all over the African continent where the evil white men have set their foot. They (white people) interpret the Bible in such a way that divide the African communities as they make some of the black people believe that they are heathens in a pagan and primitive land. Though not overt, Malcolm reveals that once they settled and in control, they start trading for slavery, raping, killing, and ruthlessly treat black people. So having come across the latter knowledge about white men, Malcolm treated anything that had to do with Christianity with contempt. Alternatively, he found a religion that he claims to best for African people and which understand their plight as he delineates:

And when the religion of every other people on earth taught its believers of a God with whom they could identify, a God who at least looked like one of their own kind, the slave master injected his Christian religion into this "Negro." This "Negro" was

taught to worship an alien God having the same blonde hair, pale skin, and blue eyes as the slave master. (Ibid: 166)

Malcolm in this quote recounts that when black people were made to understand that there is God they can worship, a God that looked like them, not the one white people made to look like them (white people); they started to recruit black people. The point Malcolm is trying to make here is that for a very long time white people represented God as a white man and Satan as a black man. It is for that reason that anything black is being associated with evil and white with good and heaven. Malcolm also maintains that when black people through Muslim religion realised that there is God of their own, the one that has no blue eyes, blonde hair, and pale skin; the slave-master enforced Christianity into black people. The reason the slave-master imposed Christianity into Negroes is that he wanted the Negroes to be docile, obedient and remained properties of slave-masters. About the Muslim religion, Malcolm shares his experience of unity among difference races in the Muslim religion that he witnessed when he was in Mecca:

During the past eleven days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and slept in the same bed (or on the same rug)- while praying to the *same God*- with fellow Muslims, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white (Ibid: 347).

Astonishingly and boastfully, Malcolm explains that he had eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and slept in the same bed while praying to the same God with other Muslims who were white people, whose hair was blondest, eyes bluest, and skin whitest. What he witness in Mecca is absolutely opposite and contrary to how things are done in the American society. In America, black people are not regarded as human beings and therefore not allowed to share anything with white people. In America, black people are discriminated against and subjected to inhuman acts such as being killed, raped, and starved. Perhaps Malcolm felt like he met heaven itself given that he never saw white people sharing things in the name of love and God with black people since he was born. Surely to him this miracle was a marvel to watch and maybe had wished the American society could do what he had seen. Moreover, he shares what he had seen in Mecca with amazement:

In two weeks in the holy land, I saw what I never had seen in thirty-nine years here in America. I saw all *races*, all *colors*, - blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans- in true brotherhood! In unity! Living as one! Worshiping as one! No segregationists- no liberals; they would not have known how to interpret the meaning of those words (Ibid: 369).

It seems Malcolm had been to Mecca for two weeks, and claims that he saw what he had never seen in thirty-nine years in America. Malcolm implies that since he was born he had never saw peace, unity among race, and a place where race does not matter until he was thirty nine. He claims to have seen a true brotherhood among all races in Mecca, something one will surely never witness in America with one's naked eye. He argues to have observed all races living as one, in unity; worshiping together and with no segregationists and liberals. These are all impossible to witness in the American society and is certain that the American society does not even think nor dream about these things. There is no unity among races in America. The phrase "they would not have known how to interpret the meaning of those words" confirms not only unity among races, but also tells one that these Muslim members mostly forget that they are from different races, but taking each other as brothers and human beings created equally by one God.

Who under these circumstances can blame Malcolm when he joyously contends that "In my thirty-nine years on this earth, the Holy City of Mecca had been the first time I had ever stood before the Creator of All and felt like a complete human being" (Ibid: 372). The things that make Malcolm to feel like a complete human being are unity and sharing everything with other races such as white without being segregated. Plausibly, Malcolm's visit to Mecca has turned how he sees things and believes in them as he says "I told him that the Islam I believed in now was the Islam which was taught in Mecca- that there was no God but Allah, and that Muhammad ibn Abdullah who lived in the Holly City of Mecca fourteen hundred years ago was the last Messenger of Allah" (Ibid: 379).

The knowledge he got from Mecca has opened his eyes and made him know that the real leader of the Muslims as Muhammad Abdullah. Strangely, he does not seem to have a problem with what Elijah Mohammad had taught him as he maintains: "The

Honorable Elijah Mohammad teaches us that the black man is going around saying he wants respect; well, the black man never will get anybody's respect until he first learns to respect his own women" (Ibid: 225).

Part of the teachings, Malcolm claim to have been taught by Elijah Mohammad are that a black men demand respect undeservedly. He further says Mohammad similarly taught them that in order for black men to get respect; they must learn to respect their own women. Mohammad sees women as should be valued and treated with respect. Interestingly though, he does not talk about love and equality between men and women. Perhaps what he means is that men must learn to look after their women by meeting their needs. Although Mohammad fails to elaborate on learning to respect women, but Malcolm in relation to women avers that:

Now, Islam has very strict laws and teachings about women, the core of them being that the true nature of a man is to be strong, and a woman's true nature is to be weak, and while a man must at all times respect his woman, at the same time he needs to understand that he must control her if he expects to get her respect (Ibid: 230).

Malcolm tells that the Islam religion has very strict laws and teachings about women and concedes at the same time that men are by nature too strong and women weak. This could have surfaced in the context of men protecting their families and women from enemies. In addition to the latter, when it comes to sharing duties, men are expected to take the heavy ones and women taking the lighter ones. The phrase "at the same time he needs to understand that he must control her if he expects to get her respect" does not appear to promote peace and equality in the family provided otherwise. The word "control" seems to be very strong and not proper in the family context as it may connote disrespect and violence. Surely in the context of family, things are made clear through suggestions, and issues are discussed upon by both men and women. One, looking at these laws made for women, would allege that Muslims are too disrespectful and oppressive to their women. Covertly or overtly, women are painted as dangerous partners men should be careful of rather than partners as Malcolm claims to have seen dangerous women:

I had seen too many men ruined, or at least tied down, or in some other way messed up by women. Women talked too much. To tell a woman not to talk too much was like telling Jesse James not to carry a gun, or telling a hen not to cackle. Can you imagine Jesse James without a gun, or a hen that didn't cackle? (Ibid: 230).

Malcolm claims to have seen men being messed up and ruined by women, but fails to assert that he had also seen women being muddled up and degraded by men. He appears to suggest that this mess is caused by a nature of loquaciousness of women. But men talk too much also if women are talking too much because they are all human beings and able to talk as well. While he attributes talking too much to women; he does not cease to perceive women as dangerous as he compares women to the Biblical myth of Samson who was tricked by a woman to tell a secret of his strength by maintaining that "Even Samson, the world's strongest man, was destroyed by the woman who slept in his arms. She was the one whose words hurt him" (Ibid: 230).

This seems to be nonsensical given that women should not be punished for a sin committed by one of their kind. This is generalising and reductionist of Malcolm to make such a comparison. However, the latter does not take the truth that there are some women who dangerously trick men just like there are men who do so. In the previous paragraphs, Elijah Mohammad suggested that men learn to control their women and one claimed at the same time that Mohammad did not elaborate his expression clearly; and perhaps Malcolm is trying to reveal what Elijah Mohammad meant by "control":

Los Angeles, July 3 (UPI)- Elijah Muhammad, 67-year old leader of the Black Muslim movement, today faced paternity suits from two former secretaries who charged he fathered their four children. . . . Both women are in their twenties . . . Miss Rosary and Miss Williams charged they had intimacies with Elijah Muhammad from 1957 until this year. Miss Rosary alleged he fathered her two children and said she was expecting a third child by him . . .the other plaintiff said he was the father of her daughter (Ibid: 301).

Malcolm tells of the allegations brought to the authorities for maintenance against the leader of the Nation of Islam by his secretaries. It surely does not make sense to learn that the leader of Islam, a 67-year old, slept with young women who were in their twenties and fathered their four children. This is too disgraceful to have been done by

the leader of the religion after having spoken so evil about women. Maybe by “control” he meant to tell men that women should be slept with and be made pregnant and that what he has done and how he has done it makes him not different to white people and slave-masters. One cannot be blamed for arguing that Elijah Mohammad is a leopard in a ship-skin because he benefits himself by pretending to be something he is not. But because he has managed to create a certain belief and attitude about women, that they are dangerous and tricksters; maybe he thought he could do as he wished as Malcolm tries to explain how these girls were dealt with:

They were brought before Muslim courts and charged with adultery and they confessed. Humiliated before the general body, they received sentences of from one to five years of “isolation.” That meant they were to have no contact whatsoever with any other Muslims (Ibid: 301).

The fact that these girls were brought alone before Muslim courts confirms the Islamic negative perception about women in general. One wonders why Elijah Mohammad was left out because these girls did not commit adultery unto themselves. Mohammad is the one who made these girls to commit adultery with him. The fact that Mohammad is not seen as also having committed adultery implies that men are angels and that they do not commit adultery. It also shows oppression against women by men which is cemented by patriarchy. Maybe the situation would have been dealt with differently had it not been Elijah Mohammad who committed adultery with these girls.

To be sentenced one to five years of isolation and not make any contact with anyone who is a Muslim is a heavy punishment considering that Mohammad put his lust first and did not care about these girls. If one can look at this situation from a woman’s point of view, men, especially leaders can do as they wish when it comes to committing adultery; they will remain untouched. About this adultery, Malcolm explains how Elijah Mohammad defended himself: “I’m David,” he said. “When you read about how David took another man’s wife, I’m that David. You read about Noah, who got drunk- that’s me. You read about Lot, who went and laid up with his own daughters. I have to fulfil all of those things” (Ibid: 305).

Without denying what he had done, Elijah Mohammad unashamedly compares himself to the Biblical David who committed a similar misconduct. He further compares himself to other Biblical heroes such as Noah and Lot. Noah's building of the ark outweighed his getting drunk just like Lot's sleeping with his daughters outweighed by Sodom and Gomorra story. Elijah Mohammad's comparing himself to these Biblical heroes is enough to convince one that he committed adultery very much aware of what he was doing and the consequences thereof. In spite of comparability of adultery with these young girls to what these Biblical Heroes have done; these Biblical heroes were not heads of religions and never painted in public a negative picture about women. Perhaps one would say he had been carefully planning what he had done taking into cognizance his teachings because what he had done does not fall off from what he taught. Malcolm in conceding that Elijah Mohammad's comparison is spot-on; expands on Mohammad's Biblical comparisons:

Loyal Muslims could be taught that a man's accomplishments in his life outweigh his personal, human weaknesses. Wallace Muhammad helped me to review the Quran and the Bible for documentation. David's adultery with Bathsheba weighed less on history's scales, for instance, than the positive fact of David's killing of Goliath (Ibid: 304).

One may interpret the latter quote as saying Muslims were taught to achieve as much as they could so that their personal weaknesses could be outweighed by their achievements. Malcolm is correct when he says David's killing of Goliath outweighed his adultery with Bathsheba and the fact that many people who know David know little about the adultery he had committed. It appears that the same happened to Elijah Mohammad given that he is well known as the leader of the nation of Islam. The latter phrase's possibility can be confirmed by the finding of guilty which is followed by a suspension of these girls with Mohammad's name not even appearing. In relation to this adultery by Elijah Mohammad, Malcolm is also suspended although a pretext of Malcolm's comments on the assassination of JF Kennedy was used to justify his suspension.

It becomes clear to Malcolm that his knowledge of Mohammad's adultery which Mohammad did not deny affected Malcolm's relationship with Mohammad. Talking

about Malcolm's relations with Mohammad and his suspension, Malcolm explains his reaction and how Elijah Mohammad suspended him as he says "And then, as if Mr. Muhammad's voice came from afar, I heard his words: "I'll have to silence you for the next ninety days- so that the Muslims everywhere can be disassociated from the blunder" (Ibid: 308). Again, correlated to his suspension, Malcolm expresses his regrets for believing in Mohammad:

I had spent with Elijah Muhammad as if it were a motion picture. I guess it would be impossible for anyone ever to realize fully how complete was my belief in Elijah Muhammad. I believed in him not only as a leader in *ordinary* human sense, but also I believed in him as a *divine* leader. I believed he had no human weakness or faults, and that, therefore, he could make no mistakes and that he could do no wrong. (Ibid: 372)

Malcolm explains his belief and trust in Elijah Mohammad as was something out of this world and does not forget to blame himself for that. He further maintains that the manner in which he believed in him was heavenly and divinely. Here Malcolm reveals that he went to an extent of putting Mohammad to the level of God and forgot that Mohammad was a human being as he avers that "I still struggled to persuade myself that Mr. Muhammad had fulfilling prophecy. Because I had actually believed that if Mr. Muhammad was not God, then he surely stood next to God (Ibid: 312).

Perhaps expressing his bitterness on his suspension and that of the girls by Elijah Mohammad, he claims that "Many times I had said to my own assistants that anyone in a position to discipline others must be able to take disciplining himself" (Ibid: 308). Surely Malcolm wonders why people in high positions like that of Elijah Mohammad are always keen to suspend others to save their skins; and fail to suspend themselves even when they have committed a sin or crime. Perhaps knowing that there was nothing he could do to salvage himself and to improve the situation; he could not help but reasoning that "That was how I first began to realize that I had believed in Mr. Muhammad more than he believed in himself" (Ibid: 313).

In spite of an element of regret expressed in the latter maxim by Malcolm, race relations were still not look like going to improve; but there were rumours of racial integration which interpretation was expressed by white people who were convinced that it was

wanted by black people. About racial integration, Malcolm delineates: “This “integration” image, as it is popularly interpreted, has millions of vain, self-exalted white people convinced that black people want to sleep in bed with them- and that’s a lie!” (Ibid: 278).

It may perhaps disturb one to know that self-exalted white people deliberately misinterpreted racial integration as a way in which black people want to sleep in bed with the. Malcolm refutes such a claim as a lie given that black people only wanted not to be discriminated against as he upholds that “Human rights! Respect as *human beings*! That’s what America’s black masses want. That’s the true problem” (Ibid: 278). Black people surely wanted access to equal opportunities both education and employment. They (black people) wanted the American society to accept them as who they are, not as sub-human and animals as Malcolm claims “They want to live in an open, free society where they can walk with their heads up, like men, and women”(Ibid: 278). Like many white, black people also do not want racial integration, because they do not want to sleep with white people as it is alleged.

In describing how integration would disadvantage both races, Malcolm declares that “Integration,” ultimately, would destroy the white race ...and destroy the black race” (Ibid: 282). Certainly, Malcolm is trying to explain what would happen should racial integration take place; both races would cease to exist. When people of different races meet and produce a mixed child, such a child is likely to be a hybrid, meaning it would have both the Negro and a white man’s blood. Such hybrids have manifested themselves in the American society from the period of slavery across the American history. Some of these hybrids who are also known as mulattoes, taking advantage of their light-skin, pass for white. Those who could pass for white were those who were light-skinned enough to be confused to white people for the reason of accessing good opportunities that were only meant for white people. About these white Negroes, Malcolm shares their experience:

I’m told that there are in America today between two and five million “white Negroes,” who are “passing” in white society. Imagine their torture! Living in constant fear that some black person they’ve known might meet and expose them. Imagine everyday living a lie. Imagine hearing their own white husbands, their own

white wives, even their own white children, talking about “those Negroes.” (Ibid: 282).

Malcolm claims to have been told about white Negroes who pass for white who subsequently find themselves in torture. While some fear that they might be realised and discovered by black people who know them, some fear that should they have children with their white spouses; children might be born black. It should surely be painful for someone who has passed for white and marry a white person when it is discovered that that someone is black given the negative attitude of the white people towards the Negroes. Perhaps the consequences of that would be to be driven out of marriage and white society. Also it is possible that one would not live freely for a reason that one will have to be careful and avoid mistakes lest it be known that one is a Negro. Weldon Johnson discloses his own experience of trying to avoid people who knew him as a black man after he decided to pass for white and got a white girl who was so convinced that Johnson was also white:

It took me only an instant to recognize in him my old friend “Shiny.” My first impulse was to change my position at once. As quick as a flash I considered all the risks I might run in speaking to him, and most especially the delicate question of introducing him to her (Johnson, 1990: 568).

Johnson does not only explain how long it took him to recognize his friend, he also explains how a sight of his friend compelled him to hide himself as it was risky to speak to his friend. It seems that he was avoiding meeting him because he was going to be forced to introduce him to his girlfriend. Surely introducing his friend to his girlfriend who knew him as a white man was going to make her suspicious that he was black or suspect that he had just passed for white. Johnson’s hiding from everyone who knew him as a black man surely was torture and punishment enough. The latter does not only expose the drawbacks some of those who passed for white confronted, but showed that white people did not have a room for black people who passed no matter how light-skinned one could be as Malcolm elucidates:

But I will tell you that, without any question, the most bitter anti-white diatribes that I have ever heard have come from “passing” Negroes, living as whites, among

whites, exposed every day to what white people say among themselves regarding Negroes- things that a recognized Negro never would bear (Ibid: 282).

Malcolm describes those Negroes who pass for white as the most bitter given that they hear and tolerate all the bad things that are said about Negroes in their presence without being suspected as Negroes. Malcolm also says these passing Negroes tolerate things a recognized Negro would not tolerate. Perhaps out of anger that has been growing inside them, they would tell what white people say about Negroes and Malcolm concurs that “Why, if there was a racial showdown, these Negroes “passing” within white circles would become the black side’s most valuable “spy” and ally” (Ibid: 282).

Surely being spies and ally would be their way of seeking relief and maybe a way of paying revenge to make themselves feel better. Surely that is a price they are paying for wanting to be what they are not as Richard Kostenaletz argues that “The price of “passing” is not only a loss of heritage and the sacrifice of one’s self-chosen mission but guilt over an opportunistic materialism equal to Esau’s who , in Genesis 25: 29-34, himself so famished from toiling in the fields, frivolously exchanged ‘his birthright’ with his brother Jacob for “bread and pottage of lentils”” (Kostenaletz, 1969:24).

6.3. Different outlooks on Maya Angelou

Being subjected to racism of the Negroes for so many centuries has made some African Americans so docile and be blind to the fact that not all societies are similar to the American society. This can be interpreted as acknowledging that Negroes have accepted their situation and fate in America. The fact that there were Negroes who conceded that truly Negroes are inferior to their white counterparts and that there were so many Negroes who were light-skinned who opted to pass for a white race confirms and affirms the latter. Negroes were also made to believe that Africa is a jungle where there are only monkeys and a jungle which retarded a dream some African Americans had of returning to Africa, their ancestral land.

Talking about Africa and African Americans, Angelou discloses a shocking sight and a warm welcome in Africa as she declares “We were black Americans in West Africa, where for the first time the color of our skin was accepted as correct and normal”

(Angelou, 2012: 1). To them (Angelou and friends), that was astonishing given that they were used to being discriminated against, and now something opposite came; being accepted as who they are as Angelou further explains:

Seeing Africans enter and leave the formal building made me tremble with an awe I had never known. Their authority on the marble steps again proved that whites had been wrong all the along. Black and brown skin did not herald debasement and divinely created inferiority (Angelou, 2012: 16).

What astounded and made Angelou to tremble was an unusual participation of black people in their government. Whatever she had seen deconstructed what white people have constructed as lies about black people in Africa. They lied to African Americans that Africans in Africa have dropped the standards set by Europeans who were colonisers in those countries. Apart from labeling Africa as a primitive continent, they did not cease to vilify these poor Africans. So, Angelou claims that her arrival in Ghana made her see the lies of white people differently. Perhaps that is the reason Angelou maintains that “Whites were not needed to explain the working of the world, nor the mysteries of the mind” (Angelou, 2012: 16).

The phrase “did not herald debasement and divinely created inferiority” is enough to convince Angelou that while white people were oppressing the African Americans, and at the same time frighten the Africans about Africa maybe so that they (Africans) could not even think about going back to Africa, but remaining slaves in America. Out of excitement, Angelou describes Africa as home since she stepped in Africa which is free from racial prejudices: “We had come home, and if home was not what we had expected, never mind, our need for belonging allowed us to ignore the obvious and to create real places or even illusory places, befitting our imagination” (Angelou, 2012: 19).

Angelou and friends’ feeling at home in Ghana in spite of what they claim to have been expected. Perhaps they had been expecting Ghanaians not to welcome them by discriminating against them because they were used to being segregated. Angelou does not paint a picture of a perfect environment that perhaps met their needs and imaginations fully, but confirms that Ghana was good to them hence they felt at home as she avers that “For the first time since my arrival, I was very nearly home. Not a

Ghanaian, but at least accepted as an African” (Ibid, 2012: 113). It seems in Ghana these African Americans were exposed to places and things they were never able to do in America because of racial segregation.

Given their excitement, a feeling of security, and home feeling were like a writing on the wall and surely one would understand Angelou’s feelings when she says “In the yearning, heaven and Africa were inextricably linked” (Angelou, 2012: 20). Coming from hell and be subjected to all sorts of discrimination, one should surely be understood when uttering such words because Africa was a complete opposite of hellish society these African Americans were accustomed to, which compelled them to see Africa and heaven as inseparable. Correlated to discriminatory American society, Angelou explains how this American society has affected them:

Which one of us could know that years of bondage, brutalities, the mixture of other bloods, customs and languages had transformed us into an unrecognizable tribe? Of course, we knew that we were mostly unwanted in the land of birth and saw promise on our ancestral continent (Angelou, 2012: 21).

Angelou questions which one of them knows how slavery and its evils have negatively transformed and affected the Negroes. How slavery has affected Negroes has also been touched on in the previous chapters and surely including languages and rapes which resulted into a mixture of blood and formation of mulattoes and others. She fearlessly and candidly tells how much Negroes were not wanted in their land of birth, America, and how Africa (their ancestral land) emerged as a source of hope for Negroes. Perhaps Ghanaian people were not aware as well of how these African Americans felt after they were given a warm and parental reception by Africans. This reception has evoked in their minds their link to the continent of Africa, their ancestral land. It made them think, one would claim, about how their forefathers were taken from Africa to be made slaves in America. Their link to Africa and how they found themselves in America prompted them to claim Africa as their home as Angelou maintains:

So I had finally come home. The prodigal child, having strayed, been stolen or sold from the land of her fathers, have squandered her mother’s gifts and having laid down in cruel gutters, had at last arisen and directed herself back to the welcoming

arms of the family where she would be bathed, clothed with fine raiment and seated at the welcoming table (Angelou, 2012: 21).

The locution “So I had finally come home” recounts how eager Angelou was to come to Africa, the home of her forefathers. It also indicates an escape from a den of hungry lions if one can use Frederick Douglass’ words which he used after successful escape from slavery. Home to Angelou and other Negroes implies freedom and access to opportunities both employment and education. It also means not to be subjected to racism and be treated like animals and sub-human, but as human beings created by God like all humankind as Angelou avers that “For the first time, we could not lay any social unhappiness or personal failure at the door of color prejudice” (Ibid, 2012: 87).

An expression “The prodigal child, having strayed, been stolen or sold from the land of her fathers” reminds one of both slavery and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Certainly, it pains to know how Africans were being kidnapped by their own brothers to be sold for slavery to strangers from the foreign land. Now, this coming home marks the returning of the prodigal children to their home, coming from a land that has not been kind, generous, and pleasant to them. Moreover, the land that sought to maximize its profits by exploiting the energy and strength of the Negroes through slavery. But not all those Negroes who called Africa home behaved in a manner that explained their eagerness to escape a racist American society and be welcomed in Africa as granddaughters. Some started to look at Africa in a condescending manner that resembles a manner in which white people looked at African Americans in America as Angelou puts it:

The second group had come under the aegis of the American government and were viewed with suspicion by Ghanaians, and black Americans stayed apart from them as well. Too often they mimicked the manners of their former lords and ladies, trying to treat the Africans as whites had treated them. They socialized with Europeans and white Americans, fawning upon the company with ugly obsequiousness (Angelou, 2012: 24).

The fact that the second group came under the protection of the American government should create suspicions not only among the Ghanaians, but also among the African Americans who sincerely called Africa home and relish being treated like human beings. The word “mimicked” which tells that these African Americans copied the manners of

their oppressors in America by treating the Africans the way they were treated by white Americans should be annoying. It should be annoying not only to these African Americans, but also to Africans who have given them places to stay and welcomed them. These could be those African Americans who had assimilated the American culture and who believed that they are better than Africans.

Strangely, the attitude that they displayed in Ghana to Africans would not be done in America, where they are treated like nonentities by white people. About being treated like nothing of these Negroes in America, Angelou clarifies: "In America we danced, laughed, procreated; we became lawyers, judges, legislators, teachers, doctors, and preachers, but as always, under our glorious costumes we carried the badge of a barbarous history sewn to our dark skins" (Angelou, 2012: 84-85).

Angelou says in spite of the things they could do in America such as having entertainment, procreate, and becoming professionals; white American society did not cease to discriminate Negroes. Their skin colour alone, she argues, carries a badge of barbarous history and that of a primitive continent. Through clarifying how these Negroes who treat Africans the manner in which white people treat Negroes in America; Angelou recounts that these African Americans are treated badly. Angelou has a point given that they have forgotten that these Africans are their brothers and that Africa is the home of their forefathers in spite of what white people did. In relation to what befell the African continent which resulted into slavery and colonialism, Angelou salutes all those affected:

I lay on my bed drinking for myself and for all the nameless orphans of Africa who had been shunted around the world. I drank and admitted to a boundless envy of those who remained on the continent, out of fortune or perfidy. Their countries had been exploited and their cultures had been discredited by colonialism. Nonetheless, they could reflect through their priests and chiefs on centuries of continuity (Angelou, 2012: 84).

Angelou seems to be going back down memory lane and mostly what truly befell the Africans in their own continent. She does not only salute those who because of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and slavery find themselves dislocated all over the world especially in Europe and America, but also those who because of the latter cannot

reclaim or lost their true identity. It is assuredly no secret that some of those Africans who were taken from Africa are all over the world to such an extent that anywhere one can go, there is a black man. Bob Marley talks about those Africans taken from Africa to be made soldiers in “Buffalo Soldier” to narrate maybe this dislocation of Africans in the world as he maintains that “There was a Buffalo Soldier in the heart of America, Stolen from Africa, brought to America, Fighting on arrival, fighting for survival” (Marley, 2001). Bob Marley may not be very open but the fact remains that, through his song “Buffalo Soldier” is trying to disclose a black man’s history and identity. But talking about identity, this may remind one of Peter Tosh’s “African” where he claims that it does not matter where one is, as long as one is black; one has an African identity:

Don't care where you come from
As long as you're a black man, you're an African
No mind your nationality
You have got the identity of an African
(Tosh, 2002)

Tosh’s revelation of being a black man irrespective of one’s dislocation to be an African appears to be coming from someone who does not speculate, but certain about what he is claiming. One would argue that Tosh seems not only to be reminding those who have turned their backs and who do not want to have anything to do with Africa that the fact remains that they are Africans, and that will never change, whether they like it or not. Tosh’s phrases may remind one of those African Americans who want to be white only because black is associated with inferiority. No matter how hard they try to be white and even go to an extent of living with white people, as long as they have an African blood in their veins and black; they are Africans. Plausibly, Tosh is trying to notify those Africans who because of white people’s association of Africa to barbarism and primitiveness, chose to dissociate themselves from their past and who they are. About those African Americans who chose not to be who they are supposed to be, Africans; Angelou reveals the consequences of what these African Americans did in Ghana:

A high ranking pundit said, ‘America can use its black citizens to infiltrate Africa and sabotage our struggle because the Negro’s complexion is a perfect disguise. Be wary, Africa, of the Peace Corps blacks, the AID blacks, and the Foreign Service

blacks.’ He suggested finally, that Africans should approach all American blacks with caution, ‘if they must be approached at all’ (Ibid, 2012: 89).

Authorities in Ghana cannot be blamed for suspecting that America can use its black citizens to infiltrate and sabotage their struggle. This was possible because there were those African Americans who went there under the protection of the American government who also treated Africans the way they (African Americans) are being treated by white people in America. And also it was going to be easy for the American government to use these African Americans given that they did not see themselves as blacks. This was also going to create a bad image for those Negroes who really went to Ghana for good reasons and regard Ghana as their home and ancestral home too. Thinking about how they might be affected by this, Angelou tells how they felt about this as she declares that “We saw ourselves as frail rafts on an ocean of political turbulence. If we were not welcome in Ghana, the most progressively black nation in Africa, where would we find harbour?” (Ibid, 2012: 89).

The latter expresses the worries and vexations of those African Americans who went to Ghana to escape the plight of racism and seek home in the land of forefathers. Speaking about racism which compelled these African Americans to seek a place which they can feel at home, Angelou narrates Osagefo’s experience of racism in America as she claims that “Osagefo knows America. He said that in the United States he was not an African from the Gold Coast. Whites only saw the color of his skin and treated him like a nigger” (Ibid, 2012: 122). Osagefo’s racial experience in America affirms the white man’s hatred for any human being who is not white irrespective of one’s background. In relation to racism, Angelou further narrates that:

Kwesi added, ‘Aggrey of Africa also lived in the United States for a while. You know who he was, don’t you, Sister? Nana intruded, ‘Dr. Kwegyr Aggrey from Ghana earned a doctorate from Columbia University and taught in North Carolina. He understood racism and loved his skin color (Ibid, 2012: 122).

She also added that Aggrey of Africa, who lived, studied and worked as lecturer in the United States properly understood racism and his skin colour. Firstly, living in America as a black man has its own complications such as being subjected to racism by white American society and sometimes by African Americans who do not see themselves as

black. Studying and earning a doctoral degree in America as a black man does not mean one will deservedly earn a respect and be free from discrimination. As long as one is black in the American society, one is still sub-human and inferior. The maxim that “He understood racism and loved his skin color” implies that Aggrey did not even have a single moment of doubt about his racial belonging. He loved and was very proud of being black and racial segregation seemed to be strengthening that. In further showing how much some of the Africans loved their black skin colour, Angelou relates:

He said, “If I died and went to heaven and God asked me would I like to be sent back to earth as a white man” Nana’s voice was thundering again-“I would say no, make me as black as you can and send me back.” The klaxon trumpeted. ‘Aggrey of Africa said, “Make me completely black, BLACK, BLACK” (Ibid, 2012: 122).

One’s love for one’s race is a matter that is worth looking at especially in the context of Africans. In the previous paragraphs, this issue has been touched on, just like there were Negroes who want to be white and do things like white people, there are those Negroes who really love their dark skin and who they are. The conversation in the latter shows also that some people love their blackness in such a way that even if they can be given chances to be white they would refuse because of their love for their own race and skin colour. The phrase “Make me completely black, BLACK, BLACK” clearly shows a deeper meaning a black skin has to some black people.

This does not mean there are no Negroes who after being given a chance to be white, would prefer whiteness with both hands and declare that they do not want to have anything to do with black race. To show a sincere love for a Negro race, Angelou recounts about Negroes who made a toast for being black as a way of showing pride and love for their race as she maintains that “Kwesi said, ‘To the African personality.’ I gestured with my glass and repeated, ‘To the African personality.’ Nana roared, ‘To the African personality,’ and we drank” (Ibid, 2012: 123). These are Negroes who unapologetically and irrespective of the situation, would not be coy to express their love for their own race.

Most of the time this love for a black race could be expressed even when Negroes were not free in the American society. Angelou expressed her wish for South Africans to do

something about their plight so that America could be exposed to the world as the oppressors and racists as she reasons that “If South African blacks can petition the U.N. against their country’s policy of apartheid, then America should be shown on the world’s stage as a repressivist and bestial racist nation” (Ibid, 2012: 145). Perhaps Angelou is trying to say African Americans have tried their best to liberate themselves in America but without success; if South Africa can petition against apartheid policies, America would be exposed to the world as real oppressors. Angelou has every reason to wish for the latter given that the American racism did not show any signs of coming to an end. One can surely understand why African Americans cry for assistance from Africans and Angelou in echoing the words of Malcolm X says “We are lambs in a den of wolves. We will need your help. Only with the help of Africa and Africans can we succeed in freeing ourselves.” (Ibid, 2012: 154).

Angelou compares the American society’s racial discrimination to a den of wolves and African Americans to lambs to explain the danger and inhumanity to which Negroes are subjected. Talking about racism and white people, Malcolm X appears to see things differently and in a manner one can describe as “soft” and Angelou further resonates him: “I have had to rethink a number of things.’ He said that though his basic premise that the United States was a racist country held true, he no longer believed that all whites were devils, nor that any human being was inherently cruel at birth” (Ibid, 2012: 143)

Malcolm X’s visit to Mecca has unbelievably changed him completely and destroyed his radical manner of dealing with racism and white people. Malcolm seems to have forgotten that Mecca is not America and that the white people who mingle with black people there are not from America. One may argue that what Malcolm saw in Mecca was evidence befitting a situation in Mecca as he had not yet seen white people in America rubbing shoulders and mingling with black people before he publicly claims that not all white people were devils. An expression that “nor that any human being was inherently cruel at birth” is something one cannot deny, but the latter fact cannot guarantee that one may later become racist and cruel. So Malcolm’s sudden change of attitude is suspect in itself, for, it had a potential of intensifying and encouraging racism

in America. Deliberating about white people and racism, Angelou gives another racial experience of one of the Negroes in Germany:

In Germany, during the 1936 Olympics, the black runner Owens, representing the United States, had won four gold medals and shattered Adolf Hitler's dictum that the Aryan race was superior. The German audience reportedly booed Owens, and Hitler refused to allow the winner to accept the medal from his hands (Ibid, 2012: 176).

Angelou explains how Adolf Hitler compelled by racism refused to allow a Negro winner from America to accept the medal from his hands. Perhaps Hitler did not understand how on earth a sub-human, an animal, and an inferior creature beats in a world race a white man who is associated with superiority before the world's eyes. Surely Hitler struggled to make peace with the fact that black people are human beings gifted like any human being of any race. The German audience who booed the Negro athlete shared the same sentiments with Hitler about black people, so booing was used as an expression to show disapproval of the black athlete's action. Believably, being subjected to racism did not amuse the athlete even the entire world except maybe the Europeans and the Americans. Racism and segregation are no laughing matters as Angelou tells what Malcolm X says about the oppression of the Negroes:

The fact is, I am in no mood to dance. I think of our brothers and sisters at home, squirming under the heel of racial oppression, and I do not care to dance. I think of our brothers and sisters in the Congo, squirming under the heel of imperialist invasion, and I do not care to dance. I think of our brothers and sisters in Southern Africa squirming under the heel of apartheid, and I do not care to dance. (Ibid, 2012: 148)

Malcolm, as explained by Angelou, is not into entertainment while racism is making the lives of the Africans miserable. He has important things to do as he is preoccupied with what black brothers and sisters are experiencing everyday as a consequence racism. He appears to be concerned about what is happening in Africa because of apartheid and imperialist invasion which turn the lives of the Africans up-side-down. He is also in deep thoughts about the African Americans at home in America who are also on regular basis discriminated against on racial grounds. Malcolm X does not seem to be deeply troubled by merely racism that is taking place in the world, but what seems to be more of

concern to him is the fact that only a black race that is being subjected to this racial segregation in all corners of the world. Imaginably within him-self, he is wondering if black people have committed a serious crime befitting the misery and ruthlessness to which they are being subjected which he is not aware of. Perhaps because of the role Malcolm has played in the American society in fighting racism and discrimination of black people by white people, Angelou affirms Malcolm's inextricability by comparing him to other indispensable figures in their respective circumstances:

Just as Jomo Kenyatta was Kenya's 'Burning Spear,' so Malcolm X was America's Molotov cocktail, thrown upon the white hope that Americans would follow the nonviolent tenets of Dr. Martin Luther King. 'Freedom at any cost' had been his rallying cry. He had been the stalking horse for the timid who openly denied him but took him, like a forbidden god, into their most secret hearts, there to adore him (Ibid, 2012: 142-143).

Perhaps by comparing Malcolm X to Burning Spear and Molotov cocktail, Angelou is trying to show how influential Malcolm X is to the Negroes especially in encouraging violence as a solution to the Negro plight of racism in the American society. Certainly he was opposed to the idea of nonviolence which was spearheaded by Dr. Martin Luther King. Apart from Malcolm's call for violence which contributed to King's fall out of favour of African Americans, Angelou reveals that people of whom King fell out of favour and who openly criticised him, secretly admired him as the phrase "for the timid who openly denied him but took him, like a forbidden god, into their most secret hearts, there to adore him" confirms the latter. It seems African Americans loved King perhaps as a source of hope and that out of nonviolence approach there was no possibility of casualties as a consequence thereof. Angelou takes a look through Dr. Martin Luther King's notion of nonviolence as an individual who worked for him:

After all, when I worked for him, I had been deluded into agreeing with Reverend King that love would cure America of its pathological illnesses, that indeed our struggle for equal rights would redeem the country's baleful history. But all the prayers, sit-ins, sacrifices, jail sentences, humiliation, insults and jibes had not borne out Reverend King's vision. When maddened white citizens and elected political leaders vowed to die before they would see segregation come to an end, I became more resolute in rejecting nonviolence and more adamant in denying Martin Luther King (Ibid, 2012: 134-135).

Angelou seems not to be a good fan of nonviolence given her fear of being misled into agreeing with Dr. King's notion of nonviolence. What seems to have created a problem is not a proclamation that love would cure America and its irrational problems and that the struggle for human rights would salvage America's vindictive past, but the consequences which were contrary to King's vision. In substantiating what she believes to be her reason for ceasing to believe in nonviolence apart from discouraging results of King's vision; she claims that the vows some maddened white people made that only after their deaths would they see segregation coming to an end have prompted her ceasing.

Perhaps the notion of nonviolence was perceived to be a sign of weakness and docility by African Americans. This could be confirmed by how uncomfortable white people could be when Malcolm X claimed that only true violence will black people free themselves from the American racism and discrimination. Maybe showing that she is one of those black people who she said "openly denied him but took him, like a forbidden god, into their most secret hearts, there to adore him" because there she was, embarking on a March (which was central to the nonviolence) in Ghana to the American embassy calling for civil rights in America as she contends:

We marched and sang thinking of home and the thousands who were marching in Washington, D.C., and many of us held in our minds a picture of the dapper little man, sporting a Vandyke beard, perfectly groomed, who earned a Harvard doctorate before the end of the 1800s and who said in 1904, 'The problem of the twentieth century will be the problem of the color line.' (Ibid, 2012: 138)

Angelou concedes that they marched and sang and having in mind a picture of elegant W.E.B. Dubois. How she describes Dubois in an acclaiming manner is thought-provoking as it recounts the reverence African Americans accord this wonderful Negro intellectual. Angelou's overt and perfect admiration of Dubois which could be attributed to Dubois' famous avowal which is an opening phrase in his essay "Of the dawning of freedom" appears to be more relevant to the march in Ghana and the one that took place in Washington which both were about crying for human rights and freedom from racial segregation in the American society. Surely when Dubois made this proclamation, he was hugely disappointed after hoping that the abolishing of slavery in the nineteenth

century also signalled the end of racism. Perhaps one would be reminded of Kwame Anthony Appiah whose commending of Dubois for his contribution on race matters which was expressed in the these words “Not only did Dubois live long, he wrote much; if any single person can offer us an insight into the archaeology of Pan-Africanism’s idea of race, it is he” (Appiah, 1992: 28).

One understands Angelou for uttering such laudatory statement considering also Appiah’s admiration. In this march in Ghana in the American embassy where Angelou beautifully described and commended Dubois, Angelou expresses her disappointment with a Negro soldier: “One of the soldiers was black and during the ceremony, no doubt nervous, the soldiers fumbled and the flag began to sag toward the ground. It was the black man who hurriedly caught the cloth and folded it lovingly into the white soldier’s arms” (Ibid, 2012: 139).

Perhaps this would have shocked anyone including those who were not in the march. While a phrase “It was the black man who hurriedly caught the cloth and folded it lovingly into the white soldier’s arms” may indicate patriotism on the part of the black soldier, it may likewise signal self-hatred. Maybe the black soldier does not deserve to be blamed for what he did given that he was at work and there was no way he could help the marchers. Had he helped the marchers anyhow, he would have put his job at risk. Perhaps this soldier is one of those Negroes who chose to distance themselves from other Negroes and believes that he is better than other black people.

Also there was nothing wrong in folding the flag lovingly because it shows how much this black soldier loves America, and maybe not his black skin. Apart from the march Angelou was part of in Ghana, she could not stop thinking about how black people find themselves in America and how black chiefs assisted white people during a slave trade to kidnap other black people. In addition, Angelou finds it difficult to forgive those chiefs who were involved in kidnapping their brothers and sisters for slavery and to get it out of her head as she maintains that:

In Ghana I worked hard at forgiving those African chiefs who collaborated in the slave trade centuries before, but couldn’t find it in my heart to exonerate the stewardesses who were toddlers at the time of the holocaust. Prejudice is a burden

which confuses the past, threatens the future and renders the present inaccessible (Ibid, 2012: 171).

Angelou cannot believe how hard she tried to forgive those African chiefs who played a part in the slave trade that resulted into her forefathers being enslaved in the American society where she is being racially discriminated. She sees prejudice as a burden which confuses the past. Perhaps it confuses the past in a sense that it made Africans to sell and kill each other and that is can be confirmed by her struggle to forgive those Africans who collaborated with white people. She also sees prejudice as threatening the future given that people who can help brighten the future are being denied opportunities to showcase their talent and thereby guarantee a bright future.

A claim that it renders the present inaccessible could mean the chances and opportunities both employment and education which are being accessed by a particular race while another race is being denied such opportunities as in the case of black race in America. While in Ghana Angelou found it hard to forgive the collaborators with white people in the slave trade, she had made many distinguished friends. Because of this, she was asked by one of her friends to sing for the president of Liberia as she explains how she reacted to the request:

I choked again, 'What? Sing? Sing what?' 'Oh, but Auntie, you know Old Man studied in the states and he loves the Negro Spirituals. Auntie, you used to sing them to us and the children. So Old Man is expecting to sing "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" with you.' (Ibid, 2012: 196)

One surely cannot blame this friend of Angelou for insisting that she sings "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" for the president of Liberia (Old Man) because she knows that the Negro Spirituals are a marvel to listen as James Weldon Johnson claims "The talent exhibited by the Bantus in contriving the most complex rhythms is nothing short of marvellous" (Johnson and Johnson, 1925: 19). So given the talent many attribute to Africans especially in relation to the spirituals and rhythmic music, one does not doubt the talent Angelou possesses. About the talent that is most of the time attributed to Africans, Angelou recounts how Old Man and his friends amazingly followed her in her singing of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and she says "They sounded neither like whites nor like

black Americans, but they sang with such emotion that tears filled my eyes” (Ibid, 2012: 201).

Imaginatively, one does not doubt the wonderful and emotional manner in which “Sweet Low, Sweet Chariot” these Africans sang and this is better explained by tears that filled Angelou’s eyes. Also Angelou finds it very difficult to be mum about a God given talent Africans possess across the globe especially in Africa as she concedes that: “Of all Africans I had heard, only the Zulus, Xhosas, and Shonas of South Africa produced the velvet and wistful sound which were capable of reaching the ear and heart with an undeniable message of pain” (Ibid, 2012: 202).

Although she does not look down at the talent of other African tribes, she does specify however by referring to those she had listened to such as Xhosas, Zulus and Shonas for whom she takes off her hat for singing wonderfully and emotionally. Considering that only Africans who could produce this kind of music in their endeavour to cope with the plight of slavery and racial discrimination, Angelou wonders if this music could only be produced by Africans given the situation they found themselves in and she asks “Did it mean only the African, and the African living in total despair, pressed down by fate, refused, rejected and abandoned could develop and sing this kind of music?” (Ibid, 2012: 202).

Maybe the answer is within the question because other races of other continents never found themselves in a situation similar to that of Africa and Africans which compelled them to produce these songs as a way of belittling the inhuman and evil treatment they were subjected to by white people. It is therefore music that is being discussed and other forms of entertainment which Angelou never joyously tasted in the American society because of racial segregation that makes her uncontrollably express her feeling at home in Africa:

When I went dancing, between the beats and during the steps, I thought, ‘Here I am, Maya Angelou, dancing in Africa. I know I’m having a good time.’ Shopping in the crowded streets I thought, ‘This is me at last, really me, buying peppers in Makola market, aren’t I lucky?’ I decided I was too aware of my location; not just in Accra, or in Adabraka, or Asylum Down. (Ibid, 2012: 162-163)

Revealing her thoughts, Angelou excitedly claims to have a good time, shopping, walk freely, and does not forget to ask herself if she is not lucky. The things she is enjoying, thought about which also compel her to consider herself luck were not possible to enjoy in the American society because of racism. Racism limits Africans from doing things that white people are doing spontaneously in the American society. American racism has stripped African Americans their dignity as it made sure that Negroes do not get equal opportunities which are fully enjoyed by people of other races and that is not secret. Possibly, it is these opportunities that are made available for Angelou in Africa which she never tasted in America that make her not even think about home as she professes that “Homesickness was never mentioned in our crowd. Who would dare admit a longing for a white nation so full of hate that it drove its citizens of colour to madness, to death or to exile?” (Ibid, 2012: 132). Plausibly, nobody would condone racial segregation and inferiority as Angelou suggests in the latter phrase.

6.4. Conclusion

Taking into consideration the diverse views that have taken place in both autobiographies, one would certainly claim that there are more than one identities detected from each author and that signals the changes that have taken place since slavery or since Dubois coined the concept of double consciousness. There is no doubt as it is indicated earlier that Dubois looks at double consciousness from the perspective or context of binarism, which is being both an African and also an American. Perhaps binarism was a suitable tool at that time given the values of the society and also the period itself. It is also important for one to consider factors such as patriarchy, racism, and the epoch which could have been the main contributing factors that might have prompted Dubois not only to coin the concept of double consciousness but also to overlook some of the critical factors such as gender which could have led him to conclude otherwise. Each epoch in history has its own characteristics which sometimes could be determined by both political and economic stability. Coming to this chapter and in relation with double consciousness, it is critical to closely look at each author before making conclusions.

In addition to being both a Negro and an American, there are other factors which could be termed as identities in Malcolm X's autobiography (*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*) which could deconstruct or make double consciousness in Duboisian sense irrelevant in this chapter. These factors are being a member of Muslim religion and being both a political leader and leader of the Nation of Islam. So with the consideration of these latter identities, one can quickly claim that Malcolm X could be identified as an African, American, religious leader, Islamic religion member, and maybe a political leader. Considering these identities and especially in the case of Malcolm X, one may argue that double consciousness in the context of binarism is not relevant. Possibly if one can be asked to re-coin double consciousness in this context, many decades after Dobois' time, one would call it "multi consciousness".

Then again and coming to Maya Angelou's autobiography (*All God's Children Need Travelling Shoes*), considering the views in the text; the same can be said about Angelou's autobiography that there were other factors that have been detected which make double consciousness not appropriate in this case. These factors are being an African, American, woman, multinational, and maybe an author. Unlike in double consciousness where identities are limited to two, in the case of Maya Angelou's *All God's Children Need Travelling Shoes*, it is different. Like in the case of Malcolm X, considering a number of identities found, one may call it multi consciousness. Cognitively, both cases consider double consciousness as should be multi consciousness it can be applied in their case and epoch as it has been specified in the previous paragraphs that Dubois was a man of his time and space.

Chapter 7

Double consciousness in Cornel West and Bell Hooks

7.1. Introduction

Chapter 6 focused on the Harlem Renaissance and also discussed the injustices African Americans had to endure in America. During Harlem Renaissance African-Americans had freedom to literary express their disapproval of racial segregation and the social ills in the American society. Chapter 6 explored Malcolm X's *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1999) and Maya Angelou's *All God's Children Need Travelling Shoes* (2012) who both agreed that there were shifts in double consciousness during the Civil Rights Movement. Both Malcolm X and Angelou affirmed Du Bois' understanding of double consciousness. Chapter 7 of this research continues to investigate the concept of double consciousness through evaluating Cornel West's *Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud* (2009) and bell hooks' *Bone Black* (1996). It is argued in this chapter that these two writers suggest alternative identities without minimizing the effects of racism in America's self-knowledge as black and America.

7.2. Interpretations on Cornell West's *Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud* (2009)

Cornel West's *Brother West* recounts the life of Cornel West and vicissitudes he had confronted in a racist American society. In this text, West explains how he and his family survived the evils of racism. Most importantly West recounts how through education and other means managed to escape an entrapment of double consciousness. He also shows the little changes that took place in the American society which manifested themselves in a form of affirmative action. It is through affirmative action that West managed to work and study in institutions that were previously for whites only. In this text, West also instills hope to other entrapped African-Americans that it is possible to go beyond the duality of double consciousness.

There is no doubt that since the abolition of slavery, race relations, epoch-after-epoch kept improving. Racism, however, did not fail to manifest itself although that did not obliterate in the minds of the African-Americans "hope" for justice. Racism is a form of

callous experiences. Some African-Americans find themselves unable to forget their past and personal experiences in America since the experience of slavery. West recounts circumstances which were difficult to avoid, as he remembered one of the racial experiences:

[Mrs. Yee]Her request stirred up ugly memories of racist treatment of my family in Jin Crow Texas during the summers and the piercing story of how my great uncle was lynched and his broken body was left hanging, wrapped in the American flag. In my little boy's mind, I saw saluting the flag as an insult to my family and an imposition on my free will (Ibid, 2009: 24).

Also knowing that his lynched uncle's broken body was left hanging and wrapped in the American flag did not only upset, but also infuriated him. In relation to lynching, Aberjhani (2003) asserts that "Lynching is a national evil of which Negroes are the victims. It is perhaps the greatest disgrace from which this country suffers" (Aberjhani, 2003: 65). The use of the American flag in covering West's uncle's broken body must have convinced him that America was a racist country and did not care about African-Americans. So seeing saluting the American flag as an insult affirms his anger and annoyance. The conclusions he implicitly draw from his teacher's command which reminded him of his uncle's outrageous killing appear to be making sense given that he witnessed that only African-Americans were subjected to lynching and ruthlessness. The latter reveals double consciousness as African-Americans were lynched and treated badly because of being black and American.

West reacted by hitting a teacher. It is, however, easy to assume that one at least should have taken an option of leaving the classroom rather than that which West has taken. Attesting to the latter is West's inability to forget the incidents surrounding his uncle's death, inability to sit on the ground where white kids sat, and the manner in which African-Americans were being treated irrespective of good they might have done for America. Adding to what could be perceived as had contributed to an anger towards America, West further narrates that:

When Mom was three, her mother complained of a bad tooth. During the decay, the pain became unbearable and Big Daddy took his wife to the only hospital in Crowley. The sole black doctor was working elsewhere that week, and no white

doctor would touch my grandmother. She was told to wait outside on the steps. The infection spread and within a day or two she passed. She was thirty one. (Ibid, 2009: 27)

The above quote expresses the evil nature of racial segregation which in some cases leads to the death innocent African-Americans. Undoubtedly, this is an incident West and his mother struggled to forget. Also this could be an experience that convinced West and his mother that racism is alive. In the case of West's grandmother, it appears that her toothache was never attended to and a phrase "no white doctor would touch my grandmother" confirms that. It also implies that white doctors were not allowed to attend to black patients. West's grandmother's situation explains the plight of women in America. In view of the plight of women in America, Aberjhani (2003) argues that "Du Bois considered this physical, mental, and spiritual abuse of black women- with its inevitable result being the destruction of the traditional African family- the highest crime committed by slave-holders and the one thing for which he said he could not forgive them" (Aberjhani, 2003: 20).

Although Aberjhani is referring to incidents that were happening during slavery, such incidents were still happening long after slavery had been abolished and West's grandmother's testimonial to the ruthlessness subjected to blacks in America is clear. This does not only tell that the black doctor who was absent at that time was only responsible for black patients; it also informs one that the absence of a black doctor suggested not to be attended to. West further recounts his father's experience of racism who did not get a job for which he was qualified on the basis of his skin color "They demanded a photo of Dad before giving a final word. He sent the photo and the final came back: Sorry, Mr. West, no job. They had presumed anyone that qualified had to be white" (Ibid: 28).

In a racist society like America and being asked a photo before you get employed gives one a clue of a specific race the potential employers want to employ. To be told there is no job after having submitted a photo must have not just confirmed the suspicions mentioned above, but also recounts the ubiquitous nature of racism in the America. It also tells that if one is black, one has got to dig deeper and harder to get a decent job.

To be denied a job for being black is racist enough, but to know that better jobs are reserved for white people as West maintains in the last phrase of the latter quote that “They had presumed anyone that qualified had to be white” must be unbearable and painful. One believes that because white people perceive black people as sub-human, they think black people lack intellect. In view of the latter, Dhlomo in his poem “Because I’m Black” in Visser and Couzens (1985) enlighten white people that: “Because I’m Black you think I lack the talents, feelings and ambitions that others have; you do not think I crave positions that others crave” (Visser and Couzens, 1985: 370-1).

The latter expresses that a black man is a human being just like a white man. It seems, apart from racial experiences West had encountered, he had tasted racism from childhood as he further asserts:

The bridge was a metaphor, a symbol of racist neglect. It was the symbol of the fragility of life and the easy fall to death. But the bridge was also literal. It was the path that I was forced to cross over to get to elementary school every morning. (Ibid, 2009: 37).

In spite of its precariousness, black children were forced to use it because it was the only route to school for them. Interestingly, what West is saying here is that white learners had secured means and ways of getting to school without even a little exposure to danger. One would argue that, because only black learners who were exposed to such life-risking walk to school and with no one seemed to care in America society, West is understandable when he sees that bridge as a symbol of racist neglect. The bridge also evokes double consciousness; possible death and potential liberator as West chose freedom through education. In affirming this claim of racist neglect in relation to this bridge, West avers:

The white kids came from the north and their road led directly to school. But we black kids approached school from the south. To get to the school building, we had to walk over a rickety bridge that looked like something out *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. The bridge was always on the verge of collapse (Ibid, 2009: 37).

It is either the school was in the white neighbourhood or the road to school was beautiful and that made it easy for white children to arrive quick, safe and easy. The fact

that black children were to walk over a shaky bridge that was on the verge of collapse sustains a claim of racism. One believes that if racism could be even noticed by children, it is clear that it is practiced overtly and at highest level. This noticeability of racism by children is not an astonishing matter given that the American society is ubiquitously known for its attitude and ruthlessness towards African-Americans. Talking about the American racism, West narrates his family's experience of racism after his parents had bought a house in the white neighbourhood:

When the white neighbors heard that we were coming, they panicked. They decided to stop us, as in Lorraine Hansberry's classic play, *A Raisin in the Sun*. They had a series of meetings in which they concluded that the only way to keep us away was to pool their money and buy the house out from under us. (Ibid, 2009: 53)

The reaction white people showed West's family justifies how white people perceived black people. To panic and have numerous meetings just because a black family is coming to stay in the white neighbourhood, emphasises the depth of racism in America. It also tells that racism in America is a way of life and some white people see nothing wrong in that. Buying houses out from under black families appears to be one of the strategies of preventing black people from inhabiting areas white people see as belonging to white people only. As a result of racism which led to the assassination of Dr Martin Luther King, West's plans of attaining highest grades at school were affected immensely as he explains:

My life up to that point revolved around winning every track meet and getting an "A" in every course. Now those goals didn't seem to matter. Hitting the tape no longer mattered. Acing the history paper no longer mattered. Not when they shot down Dr. King like a dog (Ibid, 2009: 57).

Dr Martin Luther King was one of the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement whose opposition to racism was unquestionable. His preaching of hope to African-Americans and his inspiring speeches such as "I have a dream" which brought hope to the African-Americans are a testimony. Knowing the role Dr King has played against racism and his influence to African-Americans, it is not astonishing to know that his death had affected many including West's plans in life. In spite of Dr. King's assassination doors opened for some of the African-Americans as some were allowed to work and study at universities

that were previously known as for whites only. In relation to this, West and Gates maintain that “More than a quarter of a century later, since that dreadful day in 1968 when Dr. King was so brutally murdered, the size of the black middle class- again, primarily because of affirmative action- has quadrupled, doubling in the 1980s alone” (West and Gates, 1996: xi). This surely was an attempt to uplift blacks were previously had no access to equal opportunities. In relation to racism and former white universities, West again exposes the hostilities African-Americans had to confront:

Wash and I had a special bond. When we arrived at Union, we had both been told by white men in authority that we would never gain tenure. We didn't believe them for a minute. Wash and I promised each other that Union would have no choice but to tenure us. We would out-write, out-publish, and out-shine anyone in the country. (Ibid, 2009: 109)

Wash and West must be commended for their courage and eagerness to make their mark and their presence conspicuous through maximum production which exceeded every white man in that institution. The phrase “We would out-write, out-publish, and out-shine anyone in the country” does not only affirm the two Negroes' resolutions, but also that Negroes are as equal human beings as their white counterparts. In this case double consciousness is a bonus. It spurs blacks to exceed stereotypes. This view modifies Du Bois' idea for whom double consciousness is doomed for blacks.

The ubiquitous nature of racism in the American society which rolls even to institutions of higher learning where such discriminations are supposed to be addressed and the nation taught the insignificance of racism in any society must indeed intensify hopelessness among the Negroes. West's attitude could as well be associated with black consciousness. West's courage should be deemed as being influenced by activists and scholars such as Edward Said whose opposition to racism and social inequality is unquestionable. To affirm the latter, West asserts:

I was also working with Edward Said. Edward was an uncompromising and inspiring humanist, a professor at Columbia and a towering public intellectual of late-twentieth-century America. As a Palestinian American, he was an absolute original. I cherished his friendship. (Ibid, 2009: 112)

Working with intellectuals of Edward Said's calibre must be eye opening, enlightening, and an encouragement to intensify the struggle against racial injustices in the American society as West upholds that "Edward was an uncompromising and inspiring humanist." West became an uncompromising figure, intellectual, and an activist in the American society. Furthermore, West confirms the latter by claiming that "Finally, with the considerable prestige of Princeton behind me, I had the wherewithal to publicly recognize black thinkers who had triumphed in academia on their terms against heavy odds" (Ibid: 151).

This however does not suggest that had West not worked with people like Said his role in the struggle against racism would be minimal. What West has learnt from these intellectual towers mingled with his personal experiences of racism can be traced and detected from the following declaration which he made in his disapproval of racial discrimination which for centuries Negroes had to endure:

That violence is both psychological as well as physical. To control and exploit blacks, white supremacists have taught blacks an insidious and corrosive form of self-hatred. No other black people have had to endure the terrorism of Jim Crow after the nightmare of slavery. (Ibid: 170)

The impact of racism as West submits is that it affects African-Americans in physically and psychologically. In light of the above, Fanon (2004) tells that "And for many years to come we shall be bandaging the countless and sometimes indelible wounds inflicted on our people by the colonialist onslaught" Fanon, 2004: 181). About taking advantage, West makes an example of Bill Clinton sympathising with poor, using the situation of the poor to benefit himself "In my view, Clinton was using the poor as a political football to win the 1996 election against Bob Dole" (Ibid: 191). This demonstrates that a white person who shows compassion with the plight of the Negroes is misleading; he/she wants to benefit something.

But this does not mean Negroes would not welcome such people. West could be correct when he claims that "To come from a people who were denigrated, enslaved, and despised, and still place love in the centre of life is to be part of a miracle" (Ibid: 228-9). Miraculous as Negroes may have been, they are not welcoming when it comes to

gender equality. In relation to gender inequality, West narrates his personal experience: “There was a lot of heat on Michele due to the publication of *Black Macho*. I travelled around the country with her, listening to her publicize her book and supporting her against an army of black male intellectuals who took her to task. (Ibid, 2009: 116)

West explains how he and Michele are welcomed by a group of men whose belief in patriarchy is unquestionable. Michele’s book on gender equality reveals the damage patriarchy has caused in oppressing women. It would take a lot of effort to convince men about the oppression of women by men let alone gender equality. And about patriarchy, West avers that “To tell the truth about patriarchy in black America in 1979 took tremendous courage. Michele has tremendous courage” (Ibid, 2012: 116). West shifts from black gender in part of man and includes woman dimension which modifies double to multiple consciousness. To help women cry foul and criticise patriarchy as a man is deemed an assault to manhood. West affirms the latter as he argues that:

I was, however, attacked in much the way she was being attacked. I was accused of criticizing the black male community. The critique of my critique went something like: *Hey, Brother West, aren't the assaults from the white supremacists on black malehood enough? Do we have to suffer assaults from you as well? Where's your manhood, Brother West? Where's your sense of solidarity with your brothers?* (Ibid, 2009: 116)

Most men do not expect women or other men to tell them that what they believe about patriarchy is right, is wrong. These men see this as disrespect of culture or rebellion against how things are supposed to be done in regard to gender. In spite of gender issues, African-Americans had been making a progress in America. In relation to the latter, West claims that he made history by becoming a professor at Yale (Ibid: 135). At Yale, West was one of the very few black professors. West claims that “Yale was unhappy with my expression of solidarity with its female workers and, to this day, it had much to do with the cancellation of my sabbatical, which had been promised to me in the spring” (Ibid: 136). The strikers were black women. Black women were also oppressed by patriarchy. The punishment West had to endure was a way of reminding him of his blackness. Talking about women and blackness, West asserts that:

Any way you look at it, you can't talk about race without introducing the red-hot topic of sex. I argue for the demythologizing of black sexuality and extend sexual empathy for black women who are subject to racism from white men and scorn from black men, as well as black lesbians and gay men, whom the black community so coldly ostracizes. (Ibid, 2009: 170)

Emphasizing the significance of addressing gender issues, West argues that the theme of sex is as important as that of race. Moreover, he calls for sexual understanding for black women who are victims of racism and abuse by men. One concurs, that sexism like racism needs to be dealt with but also taking into consideration the perceptions especially in African societies. Rubin (1993) echoes the latter that "The time has come to think about sex. To some, sexuality may seem to be an unimportant topic, a frivolous diversion from the more critical problems of poverty, war, disease, racism, famine, or a nuclear annihilation" (Rubin, 1993: 3). Regarding sexism, West also agrees that: "My answer was that sexism, like racism, needs to be called out, and let the chips fall where they may. If anything, going through this ordeal- incurring the wrath of so many bright but, in my view, misdirected brothers- brought Michele and me closer. (Ibid, 2009: 117)

West calls for sexism like racism to be ended. Simultaneously, he does not seem to care whether a particular society is African or not as he further says "and let the chips fall where they may." It is through knowing the sensitive nature of the subject of sexuality in many societies that compelled West to express the latter. Rubin (1993) adds that "The realm of sexuality has its own internal politics, inequities, and modes of oppression" (Rubin, 1993: 4). The above explains that many societies struggle to accept people of different sexualities such as gays and lesbians. In light of inequities and oppression in the realm of sexuality and other social challenges, West perceives music as therapeutic and a source of hope.

West voices how inspirational King Jr. is, like music that inspired African-Americans to keep on pushing while it simultaneously brings hope. The role played by music is undoubtedly comprehended and documented as West continues to admire music as he avers that "Music helped the most. Marvin Gaye spoke to me with "Ain't That Peculiar" (Ibid: 57). West (1999) appears to have found some inspiration, hope, and healing in the music of Marvin Gaye. It is not astonishing that West followed Gaye's progress in

music. Furthermore, West cannot help but talk about Marvin Gaye's musical contribution in the struggle against racial discrimination:

Marvin worked with uncertainty and fear. They were his emotional clay. He moulded them into things of lyrical beauty. His answer to the profound question "What's going on?" was in the imagery of his songs. Police brutality. Ghettos ravaged by drugs. Boys going off to die in an unconscionable war. A planet ravaged by greed and waste. A political landscape of hopelessness. Yet hope comes. (Ibid, 2009: 84)

This song questions all forms of discriminations to which black and poor people were subjected which emanate from racism, and capitalism. In substantiating the latter, West (1999) says "[...] but also the first concept album that hung together by means of a set of themes- themes concerned with socio-economic critique and Christian outlook" (West, 1999: 472). The notion of hope which pervades the lives of the African-Americans in a racist American is further underpinned by creativity African-Americans have manifested in picking themselves up. One of the areas where such creativity has been beneficial is music where language has been altered to better communicate the message which is exclusively for African-Americans in the streets as West explains:

They understood that their gift of language- the poetic language of the streets where they were raised- was a special gift. They didn't have to learn and relearn another lexicon to express their artistic souls. They could be themselves. They could come at the world with their own equipment, their own stories, their own emotional and linguistic grammar. They were real. (Ibid, 2009: 123)

West regards this creativity as in poetic language which is embedded in the music of the Negroes as a special gift. This is acknowledged by a claim that Negroes do not have to learn a new language, but using their own which they moulded here and there to express their art. In relation to this, Gilroy quotes Glissant as he argues that "It is nothing new to declare that for us music, gesture, dance are forms of communication, just as important as the gift of speech" (Gilroy, 1993: 75). Gilroy overtly pronounces that music and Africans are inextricably linked. Johnson and Johnson likewise agree with Africa being the origin of music in America as they assert that "The Negro brought with him from Africa his native musical instinct and talent, and that was no small endowment to begin with" (Johnson and Johnson, 1925: 17). This does not only tell the significance of music to Africans, but that music inspires, educates, communicates, and entertains.

In other words, double consciousness is not absolute. It does not prevent blacks to imagine alternative ways of living. Talking about multidimensional nature of music, West narrates about Trane:

You can't listen to Trane and not feel the tragic dimension of the stories he tells. "Alabama," for instance, the composition he wrote to memorialize the four young precious black girls killed in the September 1963 bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, ranks alongside the speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr., whose poetic cadences had such a deep influence on his jazz musician. (Ibid, 2009: 128)

West's appreciation of John Coltrane's music as telling the tragic stories of the people confirms a claim made earlier about music of the Africans as expressing human experiences. "Alabama" is surely a touching story of four young girls who were bombed. This concurs with a statement made earlier which singles out music of the African-Americans as a source of hope and inspiration. In addition, especially about the power of black music, West further avers that "Among large numbers of black youth, it is black music that serves as a central influence regarding values and sensibilities" (Ibid: 37). In relation to hope, values, sensibilities, and music, West thinks of "powerful new wave of national and global leaders distinctively black and female (Ibid, 2009: 237).

The song seems to propose that there is no turning back as the African-Americans approach the Promised Land (freedom). "Kingdom" is deployed deliberately to talk about freedom and to create a mental picture of goodies and niceties that one is likely to relish on the appointed day. The graduation of 500 girls and a thought of powerful new wave of leaders black and female avow hope which pervades in this chapter. African-Americans never ceased to strongly believe in God as West argues "We decided to make Jesus our choice on Christmas Day and to be faithful unto death with baptism on New Year's Day. We vowed to never forget it" (West, 2009: 21). And in defending Christianity, West says: "We vowed to love our crooked neighbors with our crooked hearts. We believe that if the kingdom of God is within us, then everywhere we go we should leave a little heaven behind" (Ibid, 2009: 107).

To be specific and in relation to race relations in America, West is asserting that Negroes must not revenge or treat those who discriminated them badly. In his eulogy

for the martyred children, Martin Luther King says that, “We must not become bitter; nor must we harbor the desire to retaliate with violence” (Washington, 1992: 116). The latter reminds one of King’s approach of nonviolence which received mixed emotions among African-Americans. West seems to imply instantaneously that those who are racist need to be taught about the word of God so that they can change.

Moreover, West puts forward his own suggestion that “I restated that my faith that African-American Christianity promotes a gospel which empowers black people to survive and struggle in a God-forsaken world” (Ibid: 147). In short, West argues that poverty, racism, and inequality stricken world does not simply need prayers, but also actions by helping those who cannot help themselves.

Regarding an acknowledgement that there are many churches, he says “You’ve got Greek Orthodox, Egyptian Orthodoxy, Armenian Orthodoxy, and, along with many others, that deep, deep Russian Orthodoxy. Among these divisions, though, Ethiopian Orthodoxy is the most ancient” (Ibid: 162). To the extent that blacks have converted to these youths, one can suggest that blacks have transcended the bind implied in Du Bois’ duality of a double consciousness.

This could also be referring to denominations which hate each other such as Muslims and Christians in spite of their belief in one God. Perhaps this list does not exclude that of Africans which was regarded as pagan and primitive by white people when they arrived in Africa. This reminds one of Wheatley’s poem titled “On being brought from Africa to America” where she tells what slave masters thought about Africans as she maintains “Taught my benighted soul to understand that there’s God, that there’s Saviour too.” (Shields, 1988: 18). This appears to suggest that white people strongly believed that Africans knew nothing about God. It also points to a different form of identity that some blacks have argued in the new world. Africans had only their way communicating with God is different to that of white people. Christians like West do acknowledge and respect the existence of indigenous knowledge systems. Talking about indigenous knowledge systems, West confidently claims that he got healed and never left his Christian belief as he argues:

As the days and weeks and months went by, as I found myself free of even the smallest sign of an asthma problem, I was not tempted to abandon the love ethos of Christianity for voodooist practices. I did, however, see myself moving in a more ecumenical direction. I began to understand that answers to problems- physical, emotional, and spiritual- often require enquiries that go beyond the confines of a narrow dogma. (Ibid, 2009: 46)

It is not that West is not grateful about what the voodooist practices have done for him; it is just that he loved Christianity for its up-holding of love principles. Maybe he sees Christianity as merely a suitable platform that a modern Christian would use to improve the lives of the victimised and the poor. In an environment where self-doubt, lack of confidence, absence of self-consciousness, lack of self-belief and others are not part of such a nation, suggests that instability within double consciousness allows blacks to create some spaces of freedom. West proved that there are many identities in African-American communities which modified double consciousness. These identities include being an African, African, American, professor, priest, university student, husband, musician, and political activist. The presence of these identities suggested a shift in double consciousness. Bell Hooks in this chapter in the next pages will bring another dimension of gender and sexualities. Also the inclusion of female gender and sexualities such as gay and lesbian will further modify double consciousness.

7.3. Critique of West

West depicted his family's experience of racism in America. West also spoke about gender although he had made no emphasis. He had also talked about education which he used as a way of going beyond an entrapment of double consciousness. West mentioned sexuality as one of the problems of the African-American communities which require attention like racism. He expressed hope. West also made mention of popular music as inspirational. West also as a priest emphasised Christianity. West expanded and modified the concept of double consciousness by introducing other identities.

7.4. Interpretations on bell hooks' *Bone Black*

hooks' *Bone Black* recounts the life of a black girl in a racist and patriarchal American society as the title suggests. hooks recounts the difficulties girls and women encounter

every day. hooks tackles critical issues such as gender and sexuality which society avoids. Overtly, hooks invites the society to be accommodative to people of other gender and sexualities. hooks uses her own family as a microcosm to depict the negative attitudes of the society towards gays, lesbians and women.

Gender inequality and sexism are also challenges women face in the American society and in black communities. The strength of patriarchy gave no space to gender equality and the emerging of gays and lesbians. As a result this led to gender activists, and bell hooks claims that “Not enough is known about the experience of black girls in our society” (hooks, 1996: xii). The ‘not enough is known’ that hooks talks about relates to inhuman treatment in addition to racism that women, gays and lesbians have to bear in America. In relation to racism, hooks explains the plight of being a black child in the American society: “Because we are poor, because we live in the country, we go to the country school- the little white wood-frame building where all the country kids come. They come from miles and miles away. They come so far because they are black (Hooks, 1996: 4-5).

Blacks live in ghettos while white people live in luxurious residents. Coming from miles and miles away indicates that black children were to go far away to access education irrespective of the fact that there were white schools nearer. This did not matter because they were meant for whites only. The dilemma of being black in America also implies not to be allowed to anything that belongs to white people as the phrase “They come so far because they are black” submits.

In trying to explain a link between skin colour and access to resources, hooks reveals how people not exactly white, benefit from their light skin. hooks also explains how she and her siblings as children confused these light-skinned African-Americans to white people to an extent of not comprehending race. Some African-Americans do not want to have anything to do with dark-skinned African-Americans. This shows that not every black accedes or have the similar experience of double consciousness. But hooks politely questions their dyeing of their hair if they are really white. This further implies that to be dark-skinned for African-American it means lack of opportunities and no access to wealth.

To highlight the significance of colour in America, hooks maintains that “They tell me that I am lucky to be lighter skinned, not black, not dark brown, lucky to have hair that is almost straight, otherwise I might not be in the wedding at all, otherwise I might not be so lucky” (Ibid: 9). The latter quote stresses the worth of skin lightness because whoever happens to be light in complexion is deemed fortunate. Stressing further on colour, hooks reasons:

Deep within myself I had begun to worry that all this loving care we gave to the pink and white flesh-colored dolls meant that somewhere left high on the shelves were boxes of unwanted, unloved brown dolls covered in dust. Thought that they would remain there forever, orphaned and alone, unless someone began to want them, to want to give them love and care, to want them more than anything (Ibid: 24).

Although the latter quote could be understood from the context of dolls, the truth suggests that anything associated to whiteness is regarded as supreme and the case of white dolls is touted as a good illustration. The point hooks is trying to make here is that while white people have successfully promoted and attached significance to their skin colour, they have also managed to degrade and meritoriously link blackness to evil. hooks finds herself unable to understand the word race as she maintains:

When she learns of slavery in school or hears the laughter in geography when they see pictures of naked Africans- the word savage underneath the pictures- she does not connect it to herself, her family. She and other children want to understand Race but no one explains it. (Ibid: 31)

hooks explains how she and other children disassociate themselves from slaves after they have learnt about slavery in their school. hooks does not associate herself with naked Africans. hooks justifies the latter that no one explained race to her. It seems Hooks grew up thinking that she was white. hooks explains: “They learn without understanding that the world is more a home for white folks than it is for anyone else, that black people who most resemble white folks will live better in that world. (Ibid: 31)

While hooks is trying to explain the results of perceptions that white is superior to black, she reveals the reason that there are black people wanting to be white and trying to live like white people. This reminds one of the character of Jack in Hughes (1990) who after passing for white, says “When I look at the colored by porter who sweeps out the office,

I think that that's what I might be doing if I wasn't light-skinned enough to get by" (Hughes, 1990: 52). The latter recounts that light-skinned African-Americans pass for white in order to access opportunities. Undoubtedly, hooks is referring to those African-Americans whose skin is lighter than black who see themselves as far better than dark-skinned African-Americans. hooks further explains that:

They have a grandmother who looks white who lives on a street where all the other people are white. She tells them things like a Black nigger is a no-good nigger, that her Papa looked like a white man but was a nigger. She never explains to them why she has married a man whose skin is the color of soot and other wonderful black things, things they love- shoe polish, coal, women in black slips (Ibid: 31-32).

hooks explains the division among African-Americans as there are light-skinned and dark-skinned African-Americans. The latter quote recounts that hooks' grandmother was a mulatto and mulattoes saw themselves as different to African-Americans. The phrase that "a Black nigger is a no-good nigger" confirms the latter claims. In spite of all her grandmother's passion for whiteness, she married a black man and never bothered to give any explanation for that. This ambiguity hooks' grandmother displays appears to irritate hooks as she says that "They cannot wait to get away from this grandmother's house when she call one of them blackie in a hating voice, in a voice that seems to say I cannot stand the sight of you. hooks' grandmother seems to imitate the life of white people and perceive herself as one of the whites.

Childs and Williams (1997) substantiate the above that "Mimicry is ambivalence because it requires a similarity and a dissimilarity: a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (Childs and Williams, 1997: 129-130). They want to protect each other from all forms of humiliation but cannot" (Ibid: 32). A claim that she calls one of them 'blackie' in a hating voice reveals not only hatred for black people, but also her belief that she is white better than black. hooks argues that "They know their place. They are children. They are black. They are next to nothing" (Ibid: 32).

Racially, Indians are seen as better than African-Americans but not equal to whites. While the latter appears to be the case, they are not expected to be involved in interracial or miscellaneous marriages in spite of black men's persistence to marry the

Indian women. And in substantiating the latter, hooks further maintains “Saru tells me that white folks and even some niggers like to make fun when a colored person says that they are part Indian but she says in those days there were many such unions, many such marriages” (Ibid: 49). The fact that white people including black people make fun of those African-Americans who claim to possess an Indian blood suggests the American society’s readiness to have interracial relationships offspring. Those who claim to have Indian blood in their bodies are perceived to be lying and seeking an access to opportunities which are not available to African-Americans. Referring to those who lie about themselves, hooks narrates:

She talks sadly about this need in people to make other people deny parts of themselves. She tells me that a person cannot feel right in their heart if they have denied parts of their ancestral past, that this is not feeling right in the heart is the cause of much pain (Ibid: 49).

People deny who they are for various reasons only to access opportunities. Being an African-American in the American society as it implies to be subjected to all sorts of prejudices. It also suggests to be looked down by other races because a black man is seen as inferior and sub-human. Self-denial could be seen as what white people want. White people want black people to know nothing about their history and who they are in order to adopt a white man’s ways of doing things. In relation to this, hooks explains:

When she was a little black girl people remembered their homes in Africa, spoke languages different to English, and understood many things about life that white folks did not understand. She said they stopped talking about Africa because that was how the white folks wanted it. (Ibid: 49-50)

The above explains how central assimilation was in the agenda of white people. The latter quote recounts that even those Africans who could still remember their cultures after they had arrived in the foreign lands were made to forget about the cultures. The phrase “and understood many things about life that white folks did not understand” expresses that black people knew many things which some white people perceived to be primitive. These include religion and indigenous knowledge systems which were forcefully replaced by white man’s ways. It seems, therefore, white people achieved this goal given that many Africans are doing things the white man’s way to appear civilized

and be accepted in the white man's world as they stopped talking their languages and dressing their traditional attires and this is confirmed by hooks that:

SARU CALL THEM the people of the first snow. I call them Indians. I tell her we learn at school that they are Indians, that like the Africans, they are called savages in our books. She tells me that we go school to learn the white man's ways, to learn to deny parts of ourselves. (Ibid: 52)

hooks explains the similarities between the Indians and Africans and how they are both negatively seen by white people. She reveals subtly that both Indians and Africans are seen as barbarians in books that she studies which are written by white men. She also relates that even at school, the curriculum is about white men where black people learn to deny who they are and taught to believe that anything that is linked to white people is superior and civilized. In short, hooks exposes that this self-denial that black people are taught at school is self-evident in some of the African-Americans who do not want to be seen as blacks, let alone being associated to Africa. Also evident to the latter is how African-Americans dress, speak, and dye their hair to look like white people as she maintains "We cannot understand why women wear wigs, especially women with lots of hair. Wigs remind us of doll hair, of unloving things. We do not want to look dead" (Ibid: 57).

Mazrui (1972) adds that "In the words of J. Maynard Smith: 'Often, conquered or technically backward peoples have abandoned their own standards of taste in favour of those of their conquerors, just as they have abandoned their own gods for those of Christianity or of Islam'" (Mazrui, 1972: 8). hooks further asserts that these women who fix their looks and appearances to look like white people reminds her of white people's coldness and all sorts of evil to which some white people have subjected African-Americans. Talking about white people's aloofness and other sorts of evil, she makes an example of an old black man who works for them "He works mainly for white folks, retired ladies who come out of their houses and speak to him as if he was ten years old, demanding that he cut the yard, empty their trash" (Ibid: 89).

This man who works for these white retired ladies appears to have no choice but work and tolerate them. In the American society, better jobs are reserved for white people

and less important if they are available for African-Americans. The latter treatment to this man emanates from a superiority complex white people have. This superiority complex has negatively influenced some African-Americans to an extent of avoiding being black by aspiring to be white. In view of the above, hooks further exposes how some black women measure beauty: “Good hair is hair that is not kinky, hair that does not feel like balls of steel wool, hair that does not take hours to comb, hair that does not need tons of grease to untangle, hair that is long. Real good hair is straight hair, hair like white folk’s hair” (Ibid: 91).

In the above quote, the beauty of hair is measured according to white people’s standards. Possessing hair that is kinky, that feels like balls of steel wool, difficult to comb, and hair that needs grease to straighten out are associated here to blackness or black race. And surely if one claims that real good hair is like that of white people, then such an individual is a victim of inferiority complex and self-denial. Patton (2006) attributes the latter to racism “This racist legacy and African American internalization of this white supremacist racial classification brought about what Jones and Shorter-Gooden have termed ‘The Lily Complex’” (Patton, 2006: 26). Patton (2006) explains ‘The Lily Complex’ that “This complex is defined as altering, disguising, and covering up your physical self in order to assimilate, to be accepted as attractive” (Patton, 2006: 26). By wanting to possess hair that is like white people’s hair, surely one is not conscious about who one is, but wants to be white.

This is tantamount to accepting that a black race is an inferior race. In repudiating what seems to be obvious about having hair that looks like that of a white person, hooks justifies her denial that “For each of us getting our hair pressed is an important ritual. It is not a sign of our longing to be white. It is a sign of our quest to be beautiful. We are girls. It is a sign of our desire to be women” (Ibid: 92). Although she tries to clarify that their desire to have hair that resembles white people’s hair is not their aspiration to be white, the fact is they admire white people’s hair more than theirs. hooks further recounts the benefits of skin colour in America: “When we were small children we thought they were the color of pigs in storybooks. We know now that they are the black

landowners, business people. We know now that they stand between white folks and real black folks” (Ibid: 103).

A claim that these pig-like skin African-Americans were landowners and business people confirms a claim made earlier about the advantages of having a light skin. It seems their light skin open doors for them which are shut for dark-skin African-Americans. The perception being referred to perhaps is the fact that their skin colour puts them next to whites and that they also possess a white blood. In relation to the latter, hooks explains how these light-skinned African-Americans position themselves in the society:

[Light-skinned African-Americans] They hate both white folks and dark black people. They hate white folks for having what they want. They hate dark black folks for reminding the world that they are colored and thus keeping them from really getting what they want. They never pass for white. They do not want to live in white communities and be treated like second-class citizens, like poor white folks are treated. They want to live in the heart of black communities where they will be looked up to, envied, where their every move will be talked about (Ibid: 103-104).

The fact that light-skinned African-Americans hate both black people and dark-skinned African-Americans explains that they have ties with both races notwithstanding different reasons for such hatred. The phrase that “They hate white folks for having what they want” implies many things. It may also imply that they hate white people because they want to be white as well but are not given a chance. Light-skinned African-Americans hate white people simply because white people have more access to opportunities than they have. That also says the only obstacle that prevent them from being white and accessing opportunities is that they are African-Americans in spite of the lightness of their skin. Light-skinned African-Americans simultaneously hate dark African-Americans. It seems the dark-skinned African-Americans’ revelation to the world that these light-skinned African-Americans are black is an obstacle that prevents them from gaining access to opportunities that are being enjoyed by white people.

Because the world especially the white world knows who they are, they fear that they will not be treated like white people. Alternatively, they prefer to live with blacks where they will be respected highly. Because they are also African-Americans, they know what

it means to be light-skinned in a black community. Black people link light skin to beauty and superiority and hence they prefer black communities. In relation to skin colour, white people know and maybe can tell if an individual is not one of them or truly white. So white people do not want to share their resources with people of other races and hooks substantiates the latter claim that “Like so many places in the white folk’s world she knew they considered her presence at the library an intrusion. They watched her suspiciously” (Ibid: 118).

The latter shows the attitude of the white people towards any African-American who uses or likely to use the resources which they believe belong to them. It also appears that white people are not comfortable with sharing their resources with other races especial a black race. The latter is strongly affirmed by a phrase “they considered her presence at the library an intrusion.” And a claim that they watched her suspiciously suggests that they wonder if hooks was aware that black people were not allowed in white people’s library. In relation to whites not wanting to share their resources with people of other races, hooks adds that “We are not surprised that black boys are not in the smart classes, even though we know that many of them are smart” (Ibid: 155).

The reason the black boys were not in the smart classes was not a fear that they were going to outwit white boys, but was that they were black. One would remember that quite a number of attempts with facts in this research trying to show that white people do not see black people as human beings, but as animals and sub-human. Surely given the latter sentiment, white people do not want to mingle or have anything to do with African-Americans. hooks further substantiates the foregoing by saying that “Although black and white attends the same school, blacks sit with blacks and whites with whites. In the cafeteria there is no racial mixing” (Ibid: 156).

Again, hooks is trying to prove this difficulty of white people mixing with black people by recounting that black and white learners were not sitting together regardless of studying in one school. One would expect children at school irrespective of their racial belonging to play together given their oblivion about racism and racial profiling. Instead of the latter taking place, the opposite happened as hooks claims that “School is a place where we came face to face with racism” (Ibid: 156). In addition to what hooks is saying, school

has become a place children learn practically about racism. Because racism is not good and nobody wants to be racially discriminated as it may affect one negatively, hooks concurs as she explains how they felt as a consequence thereof “We feel despair and long for the days when school was a place where we learned to love and celebrate ourselves, a place where we were number one” (Ibid: 156). This unusual setting at school which compels children to sit together based on racial belonging is a social problem. About racism being a social problem, hooks narrates the perceptions about white people “BLACK WOMEN DO not go with white men. They learn early that all a white man does to a black woman is ruin her, prostitute her, throws her away like an old rag” (Ibid: 163).

hooks explains the disrespect white men show to black women which result into black women being reluctant to date white men. Because most white people in general take black people as insignificant and sub-human, they think they can treat black women like prostitutes and anyhow. In fact, this is not new because black women had been raped during slavery, made pregnant and be compelled by law not to tell who the father of a child when the father is a slave master. Okazawa-Rey et al (1986) concur with the latter claim that “In the American South, blacks were subjected to enforced segregation, while white men were able to sexually victimize enslaved and defenseless black women” (Okazawa-Rey et al, 1986: 13).

This bad treatment which black women endure when they are dating white men seems to be habitual and understandably normative in the eyes of white people. In spite of racism, hooks is concerned not only with how women are treated by men, but is also amazed by women’s generosity as she maintains: “We think her kindness and generosity are related to her fat. She never yells at us- never treats us harshly. The grown-ups say she lets us have our way. They are not eager to let us go and stay at her house. We come back spoiled” (Ibid: 26).

hooks describes her grandmother’s generosity and she compares it to fatness. By comparing her grandmother’s generosity to her fatness, she is trying to explain that her grandmother’s unlimited kindness is dangerous. Apart from features such as illiteracy,

chewing of tobacco and pipe smoking which substantiate her claim of her being her grandmother, one can tell that she is an African-American and a victim of racism which also prevented her from going to school. One can also detect the vestiges of slavery. Expanding on reckless generosity, she talks about her mother who is not very harsh to hooks and her siblings “When her punishments did not work she would threaten them with telling him, with Wait ‘til daddy comes home” (Ibid: 28).

The claim made earlier of linking women to kindness is also reinforced by hooks’ mother’s threat to tell their father. Interestingly, fathers are represented as lacking kindness and hence the threat. One surely would associate the latter with patriarchy or male dominance in the society. A lad is treated different to a girl and this can be confirmed by a scenario when a woman does not get a boy child she is not celebrated, but when she gets a boy, the father becomes the happiest. In putting more light on this scenario, hooks claims that “Her brother it seemed had all the fun games to play inside. He had coffee cans and mason jars filled with marbles. He would spread them on the floor making different patterns, shooting them with his favourite, his lucky one” (Ibid: 29). Her brother’s having toys to play with while she has nothing substantiates that claim of male superiority expressed earlier. Also to show the male dominance and significance of boy child in every household and society, she says:

The father was busy watching the game, while the boy played marbles on the floor. She did not want to play with her sisters, she wanted to play with the marbles. The boy said no. She hated the way he could assert these boy rights and not include them in games (Ibid: 29).

Evidently, the father’s interest in a boy’s playing with marbles is not for the sake of watching. It is inspired by a belief that a lad will one day take from where the father left the reigns and continue to uplift the name of the family. The latter is not expected from a girl because of a belief that she will get married and be taken away. In spite of the latter, hooks appears to be sick and tired of such stereotypes. Regardless of her desire to play the game, her father does not seem to be impressed simply because she is a girl and that maybe girls are expected to play with dolls. In buttressing the latter, hooks avers that “Several times the father had interrupted his game to tell her to leave him alone,

that he did not want to tell her one more time to leave him alone” (Ibid: 29). While the latter further validates the notion of man’s unkindness, it also exposes gender stereotypes in societies. In relation to her persistence to play marbles and gender stereotypes, hooks further explains:

Jumping from his chair the father began to hit her- not wanting to damage his hands since he needed them for work, he tore a piece of wood from the screen door that kept flies out. As he hit her with the wood he kept saying Didn’t I tell you to leave those marbles alone? Didn’t I tell you? The mama stood watching, afraid of this anger, afraid of what it might do, but too afraid to stop it (Ibid: 29-30).

Her father’s jumping from the chair to hit her explains how serious these gender stereotypes are taken both by men and women. Hitting a girl child with a piece of wood cannot be justifiable. The mother’s watching and too afraid to stop him from hitting a child recounts male dominance and superiority. It also uncovers and affirms the level of kindness associated with the two genders. It further tells about the helplessness of women which is strengthened by gender stereotypes that uphold the dominance of men.

And about the issue of being compelled to get married, hooks claims that “Instead I tell her that I will be a librarian, a writer, and will never marry. She laughs at me when I say that I will never marry, and tell me of course I will” (Ibid: 39). The reason she has the courage to tell her mother that she is not going to marry is because she observed an unfair treatment to which women are exposed even though they are equal to their male counterparts. hooks maintains:

She first spoke to me when I began reading the scripture for the morning offering, listening to my voice rising softly above the click of coins, the organ music, like smoke, drifting and settling. She waited for me after church, to hold me in those arms, to tell me that my reading (like the preacher’s sermon) also found its way into the heart, also pressed itself against the beating (Ibid: 44-45).

The church seems to be an alternative home to hooks given that nobody speaks sense and inspirationally at home. And at home hooks does not get any invitation or requests as an encouragement to read for others maybe short stories or Bible. This is what parents do to show that they care about their children’s progress at school. One would

argue that hooks wished a chance to read and the compliments she got were from her parents. One would further argue that hooks like any child wished she could get love and attention from her parents. In spite of the latter, hooks tells a story of a smoke woman who could fight men:

This story is about a magic woman who lives inside smoke. She hides in the smoke so no one can capture her. Smoke is to her what clay is to the red bird god. She can take the smoke and make it become many things. Using the smoke she turns herself into a male. She must be male to be a warrior. There are no women warriors. She fights fiercely against her enemies. They cannot understand when the arrows that pierce her body do not cause her to fall (Ibid: 50).

The fact that the face of a warrior in her dreams has a face similar to hers carries two possibilities. The first possibility is she must learn to stand for herself against patriarchy. The other one is that women have strength to fight anything and any enemy in their way as she says "I do not intend to fight in wars and battles. She says that there are many battlegrounds in life, that I will live the truth of the dream in time" (Ibid: 51). The wars she is talking about are battles such as racism, gender inequality, sexuality politics, and other forms of discriminations women encounter every day in their societies. Women's capabilities and strengths are not questionable as they are believed to have strength like men and equal to men. hooks argues that "The sight of her eldest daughter whirling a chicken in the air without blinking, without feeling moved by its cries and scattered feathers convinces me that in every way women are the equals of men" (Ibid: 58).

Women are not expected to kill an animal because they are deemed weak by men and that men consider that the role of women is too cook and look after the household. So this act of whirling a chicken proves that women are not weak and they can do anything men or a human being is expected to do. hooks asserts that killing an animal or whirling of chicken by women is something men know: "The men understand this, too. They do not wring the necks of chickens. They hunt with dogs and guns. Their prey will be placed neatly in a sack. It is the women who will look at it, who will prepare it" (Ibid: 58).

The phrase "The men understand this, too" tells that even men do comprehend and acknowledge a woman's courage. This phrase also paints men as not brave enough to do courageous works that women do. hooks further maintains that although men claim

to be fearless, they are not brave enough to wring the necks of chicken. She also maintains that the so called brave and strong in a form of men hunt with dogs and guns because they are not strong. This also implies that without guns and dogs, men would not hunt and even if they do, they would get nothing. She moreover claims that men cannot cook their prey in spite of the fact that it is delivered to them. But women on the other hand must not claim courage over the killing of the chickens because chickens are domestic and can be caught at any time without dogs and guns. One may argue that women are being reductionists here given their generalisation and telling what they can do which men cannot do. This means that just like there are things women cannot do, there are similar things men can do as well. Talking further about male dominance, hooks says the church is not different:

We thought maybe they were the evangelists rather than preachers 'cause women could speak the word of god at their services, could preach. In our Baptist church we had learned women were not supposed to preach, were not worthy enough to even cross the threshold of god's anointed space- the pulpit (Ibid: 74).

Although she seems to be astonished by an unusual act of allowing women to preach in the church, she questions the church rules that prohibit women not only from preaching, but also crossing the pulpit. Surely in saying the latter, she is trying to recount that women should be given equal space like men. Explicitly, she is wondering why there is gender discrimination in the church where it is not supposed to be. To show her disapproval of gender discrimination in the church, she does not want to go to those discriminatory churches as she avers that "I want to go the churches where women can preach, where god is calling women to come and talk" (Ibid: 74). She prefers churches where women are given equal space to men such as preaching. She does not seem to be tolerant of gender discrimination.

Simultaneously, she appears not to like male preachers because she does not believe that they represent the word of God as expected as she says "The preacher is a man. I am disappointed. He tells the story of the money lenders in the temple" (Ibid: 74). hooks does not think a story such as that of money lenders should be shared in the church. She is trying to show that men are more concerned about money, power and material things than the word of God. Although she seems not to trust men, she openly

acknowledges a need to trust men as she says she needs her boyfriend to help her achieve that. Talking about trusting men, she says “I need his presence in my life to learn that all men are not terrible, are not to be feared. He, too, is one of the faithful, one of the right-hand men of god” (Ibid: 85-86).

Although hooks concedes that there is a need for her to trust men, she makes no commitment that she will finally trust men. This lack of commitment implies that she will not do anything that will or make men think and act superior to women. One would argue that the former is hooks’ wish although she knows that it will take a lifetime for that to be realised. One of the things she thinks perhaps might make her not to trust men is marriage and she openly tell her mother that she will never get married “From her perspective the problem with marriage was not the good wife, but the lack of the good husband. She is sixteen years old. Her mother is telling her again and again about the importance of learning to cook, clean, etc., in order to be a good wife” (Ibid: 97). Maybe a good husband to her is the one that is not going to treat her like a subordinate but a partner.

She stomps upstairs shouting, I will never be married! I will never marry! When she comes back downstairs she must explain why, she must find words- Seems like, she says, stammering, marriage is for men, that women get nothing out of it, men get everything (Ibid: 97-98).

The fact that she shouts about not going to get married shows her defiance towards men who during marriage control, bully, and abuse women. hooks’ justification of her hesitancy to get married is simply because it benefits men makes sense. Men benefit because they have their lust satisfied irrespective of whether a woman wants or ready for sex or not. Also men used to decide the number of children and the women had no say. hooks is also correct when she claims that women get nothing, instead they lose because they are to obey and do as told by men. Women are being beaten sometimes and it does not matter whether a woman was right or wrong. Women are seen as men’s objects that should only comply and do what men want. Instead she believes that marriage takes away all the women’s happiness.

Women are human as well and to be given orders by man during marriage is inhuman. Marriage as an institution is supposed to be entered into with consent, respect, and love. The latter does not seem to be taken into cognizance because of gender stereotypes and patriarchy. Marriage can be represented as hell by women and as heaven by men because of benefits men are enjoying. In spite of all the negative and inhuman things women encounter every day, some women appear to be desperate for marriage and regard it as the only destination for a girl child. In relation to this, hooks maintains that:

When he was around she became silent. She reminded her daughter of a dog sitting, standing obediently until the master, the head of the house, gave her orders to move, to do this to do that, to cook his food just so, to make sure the house was clean just so (Ibid: 98).

Gender stereotypes and negative society's attitudes which are in favour of men put women at the margins of the society. The mere fact that a woman has to be fat, has hips, big breasts, big thighs in order to appeal to men does affirm the height of gender inequality. Surely one questions why it is the case because women are not expected to choose a man that possesses the features they would be comfortable with. Women take any man irrespective of beauty, shape, and size. One believes that it is unfair because women just like men should be allowed when it comes to marriage to choose men they want. Women just like men have preferences, likes and tastes. When it comes to choice, men have got all the powers.

This implies that an ugliest man can choose the most beautiful woman if he wants to marry her and that particular woman is not expected to refuse to marry that man even when the man is ugly, disabled or poor. Regarding choice on the part of men, hooks claims that men prefer women who conform, not questioning, and stupid "But more importantly she was too smart, men did not like smart women, men did not like a woman whose head was always in a book. And even more importantly men did not like a woman who talked back" (Ibid: 99).

Perhaps men are aware that some women do not like being ordered to do something and not asked their views and feelings. Men know that educated women and those who

like reading would understand that what they are subjected to is discriminatory. Men deem women who question, disrespectful. Men think and believe that conformity is the way women are supposed to be. On the contrary, it seems some women are aware that they should be treated fairly and be taken as equals to men rather than being considered as slaves and servants. In affirming the latter and showing admiration in talking back, hooks tells her mother's reaction that "She answers her mother back one day in the father's presence. He slaps her hard enough to make her fall back, telling her Don't you ever let me hear you talking to your mother like that. She sees pride in the mother's face" (Ibid: 99).

hooks explains that talking back is to reply or express dissatisfaction, but some adults especially men interpret that as disrespect when women talk back. Her being slapped by her father after she talked back to her mother confirms the latter claim about men's understanding of talking back. It also limits her in expressing her voice when she disagrees as she utters that "SHE WANTS TO express herself- to speak her mind. Each time hooks opens her mouth she risks punishment" (Ibid: 130). The claim that hooks sees pride in her mother's face after she talked back regardless of slapping suggests that her mother also has some hopes that the ruthlessness she had to endure under patriarchy shall not be experienced by her daughter. This also brings hope to hooks' mother although she keeps it to herself that her child will stand for her own instead of being pushed to comply on orders given to her by men.

Gender stereotypes and society's attitudes towards women have compelled some women to completely avoid getting married. hooks narrates a case of an old woman who never got married and never had children but led a lonely happy life with no man giving her orders and how her relatives downplayed her call when she was not feeling well "They were always busy, always unable to make it even after she made the regular phone calls suggesting that it would be a good thing if they stopped by" (Ibid: 126). This may suggest that society's attitudes towards women and gender inequality might have contributed to this family's not minding the calls this old woman had been making about her not feeling well. hooks tells how the same family reacted during this old woman's funeral: "This same family sat at the front of the church weeping, holding handkerchiefs

to their faces, holding on to one another. Their bodies shook with grief as they walked by the dead old lady whose grey hair they had the undertaker dye black” (Ibid: 126).

The phrase that tells that this family was weeping, holding one another with handkerchiefs in their hand explains not only the hypocritical nature of the societies, but also families. The reason surely these family members conducted themselves was to show everyone that they loved and cared about their relative not knowing that it was known by certain individuals that they did not care about this old woman. Maybe if she was a man, the response was going to be different because of superiority that society attaches to manhood.

Old men are expected to be ancestors and still look after those left behind by protecting them. There are also so many reasons that make one believe that had she been a man, she would have received an urgent attention. Maybe these evils taught her never to keep quiet so that she cannot be a victim like other women. Undoubtedly, other women are afraid to express themselves because they do not want to be seen as disrespectful and evil. In some societies witchcraft and evil things done by men are also linked to women as hooks argues that “Sometimes when a new male, a young male, joins the group that gathers at certain houses, the community blames it on his mother” (Ibid: 137).

They (society) criticise and label the mother for making a son to do such things as hooks explains that “They talk about how she made him learn to cook, to clean, to take care of small children- all the things that real men should never learn” (Ibid: 137). The fact that the society links everything that it deems evil to women and everything that is good to men tells that there is something wrong about society and gender inequality. In defending patriarchy and gender stereotypes, the society believes that there is nothing wrong in men giving orders to women as hooks maintains that “When I do they let me know quickly that men have the right to do whatever they want to do and that women must always follow rules. Rules like women are made to have babies” (Ibid: 138).

The latter quote does not only explain male dominance, but also represent women as properties and subordinates of men. And it is worth bearing in mind that in the process

of taking orders and obeying rules men made to oppress women, women are expected to comply and keep quiet. One may compare this to slavery. And also for an African-American woman it recounts double oppression as she has to tolerate both patriarchy and racism. In some cases, men feel it necessary to beat women as they regard beating as a way of making women to perform their duties. Men also believe that they have a right to beat their wives or do as they want to them because they own them. And in explaining this, hooks asserts that "Out of nowhere he comes home from work angry. He reaches the porch yelling and screaming at the woman inside- yelling that she is his wife, he can do with her what he wants" (Ibid: 146). This tells that women are used as punch bags. hooks, in line with the latter explains how her father assaulted and shouted at her mother "Yelling, screaming, hitting: they stare at the blood that trickles through the crying mouth. They cannot believe this pleading, crying woman, this woman who does not fight back, is the same person they know" (Ibid: 147).

ALL THAT SHE does not understand about marriage, about men and women, is explained to her one night. In her dark place on the stairs she is seeing over and over again the still body of a woman pleading, crying, the moving body of the man angry, yelling (Ibid: 148).

hooks sees this assault to her mother as an explanation that helps her understand inequality in marriage. Undoubtedly, this has also strengthened her childhood feeling and perception about marriage. One would recall that in the previous pages, she claimed that marriage is for men as it benefits them. The explanation she got is that marriage is about a woman being beaten by a shouting and an angry man. The whole scenario has explained to her that marriage is an institution where women are being severely punished, assaulted, yelled at, for no reason and without their plea listened to. Marriage surely is explained as hell where a woman could be killed if a man wants to. Also marriage is a place where women forever endure whippings, ruthlessness, and forever cry with no one coming to help because everyone knows it is a women's destination and that is how things should be. Instead of standing for their own, women grieve and weep in silence having no alternative because they fear of what the society will say about them and what a man would do should they decide to stand for their own. Staying in marriage and enduring all sorts of evils seems to be the only option. Talking

about tolerance, suffering in silence, and staying in marriage as the only option, hooks recounts all her mother could do:

When he leaves the room she comes to ask the woman if she is alright, if there is anything she can do. The woman's voice is full of tenderness and hurt. She is in her role as mother. She tells her daughter to go upstairs and go to sleep, that everything will be alright (Ibid: 148).

The phrase "The woman's voice is full of tenderness and hurt" reveals her mother's unhappiness especially knowing that her children are watching their father assaulting their mother. She could be unhappy that she cannot go anywhere. In relation to this, hooks is hopeful that her mother's favourite brother and her father would talk so that it does not happen again, instead she is disappointed at uncle's reaction as she argues that "When he finally comes, her mother's favorite brother, she cannot believe the calm way he lifts suitcase, box, sack, carries them to the car without question" (Ibid: 150). Her mother's brother's reaction is not what she expected, perhaps both of them. Also this shows what the society has inculcated to everyone that it is no big deal to beat a woman as husband and hooks concurs "She cannot bear his silent agreement that the man is right, that he has done what men are able to do" (Ibid: 150).

hooks' mother's brother's failure to sit her father and talk about her father's conduct towards her mother has disappointed her immensely. So her mother's brother's silence appears to be telling them that there was nothing he could do because that is how married people live or that there is nothing unusual about what this man has done to her mother. hooks' mother does not expect her brother to do anything because beating a woman has become a way of life or fashionable. One can argue that to get married requires courage and willingness to take orders from a man. This mean that everything in marriage is about a husband's or man's happiness.

If a man is happy, everyone is happy. hooks concurs with the latter as she maintains that "In some way I understand that it has to do with marriage, that to be the wife to the husband she must be willing to sacrifice even her daughters for his good" (Ibid: 151). This implies that a man is important more than anything and a woman must be prepared to put her daughters on the line. Being able to sacrifice, to hooks implies to

turn your back even to your offspring as she avers that “She has been told that a man should obey god, that a woman should obey man, that children should obey their fathers and mothers, particularly their mothers. I will not obey” (Ibid: 151). Maybe the reason hooks claims that she is not going to obey is because men are equal to women but they act like god that they can do anything to women. This reminds hooks of a movie where a man killed a daughter and his wife:

In the movie a man has killed his wife and daughter. He has killed the daughter because she witnesses the death of the wife. When they go to trial all the remaining family come to speak on behalf of the man (Ibid: 153).

hooks gives the impression of being saddened by what happens in this movie. She is also shocked by what a society can do to protect a murderer of the innocent only because he is a man. Also the fact that this man in this movie decided to kill his own daughter does explain the insignificance of women in a patriarchal world. Similarly, one wonders if it was a son who witnessed the killing, this man would have done the same. The coming of the family to speak on behalf of this man recounts the superiority that is attached to manhood. It further tells that a man is never wrong, but a woman. The society’s belief in man’s righteousness and superiority in this movie makes the society to pity with man rather than the dead innocent souls murdered by this man as hooks maintains “Everyone sympathizes with the man. His story is so sad that they begin to weep” (Ibid: 153).

The treatment hooks received from her parents has created a new hooks and made her look at life differently. Things such as how she looks like, how women are treated by men, how her parents attach superiority to boys, and how men dominate everything in the society are the ones that are referred to in the latter. These have surely made hooks question men’s superiority over women which she does not understand because both men and women are human beings. And also questions why so many things are perceived to be good and comprehensible when done by men, and considered immoral and unacceptable when practiced by women. Undoubtedly, she questions the whole notion of gender inequality which intensely underpinned by society’s attitude. In

questioning everything that is a result of gender inequality and patriarchy, hooks does not leave out issues that are concerning sex:

MASTURBATION IS SOMETHING she has never heard anyone talk about girls doing. Like so many spaces of fun and privilege in their world, it is reserved for the boy child- the one whose growing passion for sexuality can be celebrated, talked about with smiles of triumph and pleasure (Ibid: 112).

hooks recounts that masturbation is perceived to be something which can be done by boys and not girls. She implies that girls are not seen as people who can do it to entertain themselves. In view of the latter, Brill (2012) argues that “All authors agree that the overwhelming majority of boys masturbate at some period of their lives, and some hold the same to be true of girls (Brill, 2012: 66).

Covertly, hooks is trying to say girls are not seen as human beings whose needs are as important to them as that of boys. She attributes this attitude to the society which relishes it when it is done by boys. This recounts that people to whom sex is important are boys and women are merely sex objects. This also says women are not expected to enjoy sex, but allow it to be done to them so that they can give birth to children. hooks represents the society as taking pleasure in boys’ masturbation while it is mum about girls. This creates a sense that women’s sexuality is worth talked about and entertained.

The phrase “it is reserved for the boy child- the one whose growing passion for sexuality can be celebrated, talked about with smiles of triumph and pleasure” confirms a claim made earlier that the society enjoys when a boy masturbates. It appears at the same time that the society celebrates it because a boy will be able to produce children and have his own family. If the latter is one of the reasons for society’s relishing of boy’s masturbation, one can comprehend and not amazed when it is made to appear like a sign of victory as hooks claims “The stained sheets that show signs of his having touched his body are flags of victory. They- the girls have no such moments” (Ibid: 112). The fact that girls are undervalued members of the society and do not have such moments which boys have explain women as sex objects as hooks maintains:

Sexuality is something that will be done to them, something they have to fear. It can bring unwanted pregnancy. It can turn one into a whore. It is a curse. It will ruin a

young girl's life, pull her into pain again and again, into childbirth, into welfare, into all sorts of longings that will never be satisfied. (Ibid: 112)

hooks also seems to be amazed by how sex is made to appear negative and evil to women while it is made a good thing to men. One would argue that women are being prevented from entertaining themselves through sex for the benefit of men. The fact that they are being warned about the consequences of sex and men praised about it substantiates the latter statement. To further explain this, if two people either of different sex or not have eaten a poison or shot in the head, chances are they will both die. Like in accidents, people involved are expected to die or severely injured not because one is a woman. This is just an exposure to how patriarchy has invaded even the spaces that are supposed to be enjoyed and decided upon by an individual such as that of sex only to benefit men. Because of this patriarchal invasion on women's privacy, some women alternatively find other means of entertaining themselves as hooks explains:

When she finds pleasure touching her body, she knows that they will think it wrong; that it is something to keep hidden, to do in secret. She is ashamed, ashamed that she comes home from school wanting to lie in bed touching the wet dark hidden parts of her body, ashamed that she lies awake night touching herself, moving her hands, her fingers deeper and deeper inside, inside the place of women's pain and misery, the place men want to enter, the place babies come through- ashamed of the pleasure. (Ibid: 113)

hooks is talking about finding masturbation an alternative space for her sexual entertainment which the society and men have made women to be ashamed to do. Brill (2012) adds that "Guttcci, basing his statement on a thirty years' experience, assumed that almost all girls masturbate who attain the age of eighteen or twenty without any opportunity for sexual intercourse" (Brill, 2012: 68). hooks refers to her private part as a place of women's pain and misery to explain that it is because of it that women find themselves in the situation they are in. hooks says this to recount that had women not having a vagina, things would be different. Explicitly, she sees her private part as a source of evil and men's ruthlessness.

hooks also says because women possess vagina which seems to be very important to men both for entertainment and making children, they are not considered as important

subjects. The mere fact that whether they enjoy it or not is not an issue to men explains the latter. One would argue that to men, vagina is more important than women. So in this alternative space hooks is talking about, she claims that men do not even appear in the picture as she says:

Males are not objects of her lust. She does not touch herself thinking about their penises moving inside her, the wetness of their ejaculations. It is her own wetness that the fingers seek. It is the moment she thinks of, not as orgasm, for she does not know the word, but as the moment of climbing a tall place and reaching the top (Ibid: 113).

hooks tells that in this alternative space men are not her sources of lust. Just like men need women or to think about a woman to have a yearning for sex, women also need men to have sexual desire. In this space it is different, hooks does not need men to arouse her sexual desire, but herself. This could be a product of men's domination and women's desire not to be linked to men. Or its origin could be a women's wish or showcasing that they can do anything without men.

hooks seems to have found a peace of mind in her new space because she does not need a man to do something. Instead and in expressing her satisfaction, hooks compares her excitement with her childhood dream as she claims that "Like the caves she dreamed about in childhood it is a place of refuge, a sanctuary" (Ibid: 113). hooks sees it as a place of safety to which she has successfully run. One would say she is liberated. But because of the nature of the society which expects her to enjoy her space in secret or not doing it at all, she is put under surveillance and in relation to this, she argues:

They watch her, waiting. They open the door fast. They pull the covers quickly before she can free her hands. They bear witness to her pleasure and her shame. Her pleasure in the body, her shame at being found out. They threaten to tell, they can't wait to tell. She prepares her denial (Ibid: 114).

Being caught doing it denotes that her secret is out now. It also suggests that her source of happiness, her alternative space has been found out. The phrase that "They threaten to tell, they can't wait to tell" articulates that other children were not only aware of her lack of interest in boys, but also that there is something that keeps her

entertained which they did not know before. The latter also must have shocked others given that the society does not expect a girl to do it, but boys. Her being discovered appears to have shocked and scared her as she avers that “Like a party ending because the lights are suddenly turned on she knows the secret moments are gone, the dark, the pleasure, the deep cool ecstasy” (Ibid: 114).

This discovery of her secret seems to have compelled her to seek pleasure from books instead of her body and hooks claims that “Books like hands in the dark place are a source of pleasure” (Ibid: 115). It seems now books have replaced masturbation and are deemed to bring the very same pleasure she was enjoying from her body. Talking about pleasure these books are bringing, hooks maintains that “In bed with her new reading she finds that the books are about kinds of sex, not the sex married, religious people have, but the dirty kind, the kind people have for pleasure” (Ibid: 116). The coming out of her secret which forced her to replace her way of arousing sexual desire with books has simultaneously brought new knowledge and alternatives. About other alternatives and knowledge around sex, she further says:

Excited by the reading, by the coming together of these two pleasures, books and sex, she learns that sex does not take place solely between men and women. Sex takes place between women and women, men and men, women and men in groups. Sex takes place with people watching- with people masturbating (Ibid: 116).

Apart from being thrilled by this new discovery and pleasure, she seems to have started to relish reading books. The knowledge that sex does not take place between men and women only which she learns from her books does not only attest to the claim made earlier that women can do anything without the help of men, but also encouraging her to do anything without a man helping her. Interconnected to this discovery of knowledge, one would perhaps argue that it is a consequence of men’s ignorance and selfishness. One also wonders if men are aware of the fact that through oppressing women, they are also empowering them and hooks’ case is testimonial to that.

The revelation of these types of sex empowers women especially those who believe they can do anything for themselves without asking or getting any help from men that they do not need men to find pleasure, arousal of their sexual desire, sex, and many

others. In the process of reading about these types of sex, hooks explains that “Sex in the new books fascinates her. There are no babies to be had through the excitement these pages arouse, no pain, no male abuse, no abandonment” (Ibid: 116). The latter surely substantiates the notion that men’s absence in the lives of women as insignificant. In spite of all this, there are women who feel that there is nothing they can do without men regardless of abuse. Referring to those women who fully comply on men’s orders and who feel that they cannot survive without men in life, hooks argues that “She could never understand how the women did what they didn’t want to do, yet felt pleasure in doing it. She never felt pleasure doing what she did not want to do” (Ibid: 116).

hooks is not happy with how these women allow men to abuse them and treat them anyhow. Regardless of these women who comply on men’s orders, hooks concedes that there are those who like her do not need men in their lives and one of them is her aunt: “Unlike some women, Aunt Charley is no longer interested in men. She is mainly concerned with god, piano music, and her beauty parlor business. She has turned her kitchen into a beauty parlor” (Ibid: 55).

hooks’ aunt’s lack of interest in men shows that there are women who can successfully lead their lives without men. Such women do not need anyone to provide for them, they make ends meet. Unlike some women who rely on men for everything, they create opportunities for themselves just like hooks’ aunt who turned her kitchen into a beauty parlour. Instead, these independent women rely on God as a source of hope like everyone else. The reason they rely on God is because they believe that God answers their prayers and protect them, things men cannot do. In relation to loving and trusting in God, hooks further enlightens that “Aunt Charley likes talking about god and the Bible. She has a Bible sitting right near the stove amid the jars of Dixie Peach and Vaseline, near the trays filled with combs of all sizes and colors” (Ibid: 56).

An expression that “Aunt Charley likes talking about god and the Bible” authenticates their trust in God. It surreptitiously discloses that there is no place for men in their lives, except God. In their trust and belief in God, they are manifestly confident women and hooks concurs that “Everything in her house is arranged to remind you that it is hers”

(Ibid: 56). The manner of arranging her belongings to remind that are hers sustains the notion of confidence. hooks further mentions another successful independent woman who is thrilled with how she lives in spite of the society's speculations about her life:

Miss Robert is one of them. She is unmarried and getting on in age. She will never marry because no one is good enough they say. She will never marry because no one has asked her they say. She was my first grade teacher. She lives alone (Ibid: 104).

The society's speculations about Miss Robert originates from a society's expectations about women which Miss Robert dishonoured. These expectations include women getting married, having children, not working, depending on men for support, and comply on men's orders. The fact that she is alone, a teacher, single is testimonial to the latter. It appears that because Miss Robert did not do what the society expects of a woman, it does not bother asking or trying to find out, but speculate. Such speculations, one may argue, are nothing but sour grapes. Surely hooks questions not only the society's attitude towards women, but also questions what is wrong if a woman in the society prefers not to get married, work for herself, not having children, and not depend on man for survival. In answering this question, hooks maintains that "We both agreed that it is not a sad thing for she is able to be independent, to move around, to cook for herself, to plant a garden. She is alone, old, and happy. She tells me always, who could ask for anything more" (Ibid: 107). hooks concedes that there is nothing wrong especially if one is happy and able to do anything without help from a man. And the phrase "who could ask for anything more" recounts the beauty of independence and self-reliance.

Also like these independent women who do not want anything to do with men, there are women who are homosexuals like some men who are homosexuals. Brill (2012) adds that "[...] the sexual object of the homosexual man is not a woman but a man, and the sexual object of a homosexual woman is not a man but a woman" (Brill, 2012: 138). In many societies, homosexuals are not welcomed and are given names. Regarding the names that the homosexuals are given by societies, hooks argues that "WHEN THEY TALK about same-sex love they use the word *funny*. They never say the word *homosexual*" (Ibid: 136). Because of society's unfamiliarity to same-sex relationships, it

regards homosexuals as doing funny things. Or use the word funny to tell that not being heterosexuals make them funny. Also funny because the society does not know anything about it and do not want to accept it. Because of society's attitude towards homosexuals, hooks argues that "As small children we think to be called funny is a nice way of talking about something grown-ups are uncertain about, ashamed and even afraid of" (Ibid: 136). This emanates from a society's failure to know more about homosexuals and find out the cause. hooks talks further about society's take on funny people:

Mostly men we know are funny. Everyone knows who they are and everyone watches and talks about their business. They are good men, kind men, respected men in the community and it is not their fault, not their choice that they are funny- they are just that way. (Ibid: 136)

It seems the society knows these funny people and an expression that "Everyone knows who they are and everyone watches and talks about their business" confirms this. And also it appears that some of them are useful and respected in the society. In relation to the latter, Brill (2012) says "When we read the works of I. Bloch, M. Hirschfeld, Moll, Havelock Ellis, and others, we are soon convinced that homosexuality is ubiquitous" (Brill, 2012: 139). hooks is trying to tell that the fact that they are funny is not their fault. And she further says they did not choose to be funny. Interestingly and implicitly, hooks is trying to say they are created by God like everyone else. One would argue on the contrary and claim that their condition of being funny is a biological fault. Brill (2012) concurs "The same may be said of Krafft-Ebing's theory that the bisexual predisposition gives to the individual male and female brain-cells somatic sexual organs which develop toward puberty under the influence of the independent sex glands" (Brill, 2012: 142).

This biological fault makes them do things differently instead of being attracted to people of different sex. In relation to being different, hooks maintains that "Funny men are different from other men because they want secretly to be able to do the things that women do" (Ibid: 136). The mere fact that they are different does not mean they should be treated differently for they are also human beings. And because they are funny, that should be left to them, it is their business and those who are not funny must mind their

not being homosexuals. Concerning one minding one's business, she avers that "When I go to one of the houses where homosexual men are sitting around drinking and talking to one another, I feel as though I am entering a world that does not concern me" (Ibid: 137). hooks is putting it plainly that the society must learn to mind its own issues and that each and every member of the society has his or her own problems to take care of instead trespassing to provinces that are not theirs.

7.5. Critique of hooks

The title of hooks' text suggests that hooks talked about the experiences of a black girl or woman. This title alone modified the concept of double consciousness. hooks talked about her experiences of racism. hooks' mainly emphasised the oppression women experience under patriarchal society which start from the mediate families. hooks also emphasised the oppressive negative attitudes and gender stereotypes towards gender and sexuality. hooks' emphasis on sexuality and gender do not only add to West's alteration of double consciousness, but also adds dimensions of sexuality and women. hooks modified the concept of double consciousness that the African-American communities had more identities than the dual identity that Du Bois suggested.

7.6. Conclusion

In Cornel West's text, it had been detected that West shared the same understanding of double consciousness with Du Bois. The latter implies that West conceded that double consciousness is a condition of being black and American which is an obstacle for African-Americans as it closes all the door of opportunities. West in addition to being black and American, added identities such as gender, sexuality, musician, priest Christianity, and professor. It is also worth noting as well that although West attempted to address identities of gender and sexuality, he did not emphasise strongly in agitating for the recognition of these identities like it had been the case in racism. These identities modified the concept of double consciousness and some went to an extent of going beyond an entrapment.

In bell hooks' text on the other hand, it had been found that the title alone suggested modification of Du Bois' concept of double consciousness. hooks also showed the Du

Boisian understanding of double consciousness. hooks expanded the concept of double consciousness. Without underplaying the significance of race, hooks introduced gender and sexuality. She emphasised these identities through revealing her personal experiences as a black girl. hooks' deeper digging in those identities helped in understanding their significance which is no less than that of racism. hooks also explained these identities as the problems the African-American communities try to avoid which need attention and equal treatment to that of racism. Through these identities, hooks added new dimensions which modify double consciousness.

Although West added more identities compared to hooks, both authors did not only end in sharing a Du Boisian understanding of double consciousness, they also modified it. Both authors agree that the African-American community has more problems that transcend the practical manifestations of dualism or double consciousness. Through introducing these new identities in addition to duality, these authors suggest that the African-American community has multiple identities. Chapter eight is the conclusion and it will summarize the discussions that have taken place in this work and how it has arrived to its conclusions.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore the theme of double consciousness in selected African-American autobiography. The primary sources investigated were Frederick Douglass' *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave*, Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, W.E.B. Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk*, Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery*, Langston Hughes's *The Big Sea*, Zora Neale Hurston's *Dust Tracks on a Road*, Malcolm X's *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Maya Angelou's *All God's Children Need Travelling Shoes*, Cornel West's *Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud*, and bell hooks' *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood*.

In order to critically engage the different shifts in the meanings of double consciousness as depicted in the fictional narratives, the study theoretically anchored itself in the critical works by Paul Gilroy, Frantz Fanon, Khatija Bibi Khan, John Hope Franklin, Winston Napier, Jamie Wilson, Melvin Dixon, Sandra Adell, Thomas Bender, Henry Louis Gates, Cornel West, Liz Stanley, Peter Childs, Patric Williams, Anthony Appiah, Melvin Dickson, Ngugi Wa Thiongo, Jonathan Elmer, Lucy Evans, William Brewer, Booker T Gardner, George Fitzhugh, Peter Lang, Jacqueline Moore, Jamie Wilson, Bernadette Brooten and Jacqueline Hazelton. The analysis of the texts was guarded by three questions of study. The first question was:

Question 1: What is the theoretical understanding of Double Consciousness in African-American literature?

My study revealed or found out that there are several meanings linked to the notion of double consciousness. For example in chapter 3, Frederick Douglass understands double consciousness as a condition of being black and American which resulted into African-Americans being marginalised by white people. The author affirms W.E.B. Du Bois' view on double consciousness which is that being black and American is a disadvantage in America. Furthermore, Douglass adds that blacks' identity was formed as American, slave, and black. In the same chapter 3, Harriet Jacobs also upholds Du Bois' view of double consciousness. However, unlike Douglass, Jacobs introduces the

idea that a black, American slave who was a woman had an extra burden of being exploited as a woman. In other words, Jacobs emphasizes the gendered dimension of double consciousness without minimizing the agonizing feeling of blacks as slaves and American. In chapter 4, Du Bois does not only end in coining the concept of double consciousness. He uses it to explain the misfortunes of black people in America. Du Bois adapts the idea of double consciousness revealing it as a neurosis that created binary identities which he called this twoness in one that is a cause for African-Americans' suffering and the reason black people being segregated. Booker T Washington on the other hand, shares the same understanding of double consciousness with Du Bois. However, Washington further narrows the notion of double consciousness suggesting that blacks can only realize their dream as manual labourers for the predominantly white capitalist-run American society.

In chapter 5, Hughes understands double consciousness as a condition of being an African and American which he perceived as the reason black people were racially segregated in America. The author affirms Du Bois' understanding of double consciousness. Hughes also adds that black people's identities were formed as artists (poets and writers), who were African, and American. But, unlike Hughes, Hurston introduces an idea that an artist, black, American who was a woman had a heavy burden of being exploited as a woman.

In chapter 6, Malcolm X understands double consciousness as a condition of being black and American. Malcolm affirms Du Bois' view of double consciousness. He adds that black people's identities were formed by political activists, priests, Islamist, black, and American. In the same chapter 6, Angelou supports Du Bois' view of double consciousness. Unlike Malcolm, Angelou introduces identities associated with multiculturalism, being black, American and woman who fled to other parts of the world in search for better treatment. In chapter 7, West understands double consciousness also as being black and American. He affirms Du Bois' understanding of double consciousness. West adds that black people's identities were formed as priests, Christians, political activists, professor, African, and American. In the same chapter 7, hooks upholds Du Bois' double consciousness. Unlike West, hooks introduces

sexuality, gender, black, and American women as people who experience exploitation in America. The second question of the study was:

Question 2: What are the forms through which double consciousness is manifested and modified in African-American autobiographies?

In chapter 3, in Frederick Douglass' *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave*, double consciousness was manifested through being black and American. Double consciousness, however, was modified by introducing being a slave as an identity. In the same chapter 3, Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, double consciousness manifested itself through being both as black, woman and African and American. Double consciousness simultaneously was modified by the introduction of slave and female identities. The identity of woman in Jacobs adds the dimension of gender. So, slave and woman identities expanded and modified double consciousness. In chapter 4, in W.E.B. Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk*, double consciousness is manifested as being black and American. The latter manifestations were understood as the main reasons black people were/are discriminated. In this same chapter 4, in Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery*, double consciousness manifested itself through being black and American. Washington believed that it is the latter duality that led to black people's enslavement and discrimination even after slavery. But Washington was harshly criticized for accepting a lower social identity for black people in America.

In chapter 5, in Langston Hughes' *The Big Sea*, double consciousness is expressed as being an African and American. The latter manifestation is perceived as the reason African-Americans were discriminated. In the same chapter, in Zora Neale Hurston's *Dust Tracks on a Road*, double consciousness showed itself through being black and American. Hurston, however, adds a dimension of gender which suggests expansion in ways in which double consciousness manifested itself. In chapter 6, double consciousness in Malcolm X's *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* revealed itself through being black and American. Malcolm X modifies double consciousness by adding an

aspect of religion, political activism, convict, and priest which suggest a critique of double consciousness as postulated by Du Bois.

In chapter 7, in Cornel West's *Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud*, double consciousness showed itself through being African and American. West modified double consciousness by including gender, religion, professor, political activist and musician identities which imply a re-negotiation of the idea of double consciousness. In the same chapter 7, in bell hooks' *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood*, double consciousness exhibited itself through being black and American. However, hooks altered double consciousness by adding gender and sexuality and by doing so had questioned double consciousness as formulated by Du Bois. The third question of the study was:

Question 3: What are the findings of the authors of these primary texts?

In chapter 3, Frederick Douglass found that double consciousness is not only limited to twoness or being African and American, but also being a slave as an identity. In this same chapter 3, Jacobs represents other identities without refuting Du Bois' double consciousness. In addition being African and American, Jacobs adds slave and woman identities as having an independent life/dynamics that cannot be adequately be explained in Du Bois' idea. By adding other forms of identity, Douglass and Jacobs have expanded and modified double consciousness. In chapter 4, it has been found that Du Bois has limited double consciousness to twoness, which implies being both an African and American. In this same chapter 4, it has also be found in Booker T. Washington portrayed double consciousness as implying being both an African and American. In chapter 5, it was argued in Langston Hughes' *The Big Sea* that it is by virtue of being black and American that Afro-American found themselves being discriminated against. It has also been learnt that being black in America implies little access to education and employment opportunities. In this chapter 5, it has been detected in Zora Neale Hurston's *Dust Tracks on Road* that women were being discriminated on the basis of being black, American, and women.

In chapter 6, it was found out in Malcolm X's *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* that African-Americans were subjected to racial discrimination because of being black and American. It was also found out that there are disagreements among black people especially in the nation of Islam. In this same chapter 6, in Maya Angelou's *All God's Children Need Travelling Shoes*, it was revealed that African-Americans saw going to other parts of the world as an alternative to American racism. In chapter 7, it has been argued in Cornel West's *Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud* that there are alternative ways in which black people can empower themselves. It has also been found that Afro-Americans have made use of opportunities in America and resisted racism through art, Literature, music, education, and religion. One has also found that being subjected to racism can make one perceive leaving the American society as a possible solution. In this same chapter 7, in bell hooks' *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood*, it has been found that apart from racism, gender stereotypes, gender inequality, sexuality can bring negative outcomes both on the family and society.

My study revealed or found out that there are several meanings linked to the idea of double consciousness. For example, in chapter 3, Douglass and Jacobs affirm Du Bois' double consciousness both authors expanded double consciousness by including slave and gender dimension. Douglass for instance introduces an identity of slave in addition to being African and American. Jacobs in addition to being African and American, adds slave and women. In chapter 4, Du Bois and Washington do not only end affirming double consciousness, they also limited double consciousness to being African and American. In chapter 5, Hughes and Hurston affirm double consciousness. Hughes limited double consciousness to being black and American which perceived as the reason African-Americans are segregated. Hurston added a dimension of gender in addition to being black and American.

In chapter 6, Malcolm X and Angelou affirm Du Bois' double consciousness. In addition to being black and American, Malcolm added priest, Islamist, and political leader. Angelou added multiculturalism and gender in addition to being African and American. In chapter 7, West and hooks also affirm Du Boisian double consciousness. West introduced priest, Christian, singer, professor, and political activist in addition to being

African and American. In addition to being black and American, hooks added gender and sexuality. In view of the above identities that have been revealed in my study, Khan argues that: "Racism remains one of, but not the only intractable problem for black people. Poverty, class differentiations, and gender struggles among African American communities are problems that can no longer be subsumed under the question of race" (Khan, 2012: 2).

The above quote suggests that the other contending identities must be given space and attention they deserve. Taking into cognizance the answers to the research questions, one can confidently claim that W.E.B. Du Bois' concept of double consciousness has been reaffirmed by the authors in the study. It is also worth noting that instead of merely refuting the Du Boisian idea of double consciousness, these authors modified double consciousness and it is through this alteration that one can further asserts that in each epoch, there were shifts in understanding and depicting double consciousness. The modifications observed in the study suggest that there are shifts in double consciousness that have taken place. The latter observations endorse my overall argument which is that in place of two-ness of identities, African Americans manifest and can command multiple identities.

The presence of several identities does not only signal a shift in the views on double consciousness, but also that the presence of these identities suggests that the African-American communities have problems more diverse and serious to that of race or being African and American. The shifts in the creative interpretation of the Du Boisian double consciousness imply that there should be new ways of looking at African-American identities which accommodate the multiple identities. In view of the latter, Dayal (1996) advises that there should be a change in the way in which double consciousness is conceived that is not restricted to Du Bois'. (Dayal, 1996: 48). And Khan (2012) agrees that in the 21st century Du Bois' understanding of the problem of the colour line must be readjusted to take on board new challenges and gains within African American communities (Khan, 2012: 2).

So considering the changes that have taken place in double consciousness epoch after epoch, one can safely claim that Du Bois' double consciousness was syncretized by adding other forms of African-American identities. This claim compels one to argue that double consciousness should be viewed as multi-consciousness because this study has detected more than two identities among Afro-Americans. The fact that almost all the authors analyzed in this study viewed double consciousness in nearly the same way as did Du Bois reveals that there is a common thread of experience shared by the authors. To this extent, the authors are representative of a tendency which sees African-American lives as perpetually constrained by race.

But my study has implicitly argued that double consciousness is both a symptom of the racial malaise in America just as double consciousness is a cause that also suggests that there are certain political and economic ideologies vigorously at work to prevent African Americans to freely feel as American citizens. The authors analyzed in this study seem, following Du Bois, to want to be accommodated in the very capitalist system that in the first place pushed black people into the conditions of marginality. This paradox has not been critically dramatized in the autobiographies. To have done so would probably have revealed that although race is the window through which exploitation of blacks is viewed, it is in fact the capitalist system that produced the neurosis that Du Bois described as double consciousness.

Unfortunately, none of the authors discussed in the study offered a sustained critique of the economic relations that undergird capitalism in America. In other words, sometimes, it appears that the American capitalist economic system has contained the tones and voices of those black authors who would have liked to criticize the system. This fact alone is revealed in the language of seeking to be accommodated in the unequal system that African-American authors embrace. Autobiography as a form has also been channeled to speak of 'civil' rights and not the necessity of challenging the economic basis of what Cornel West calls "the criminal foundations of American democracy" (1999:51) which is the capitalist system itself. To conclude my study in this polemical way is not at all an attempt to minimize the contributions of the authors that were

studied. Rather it is to point to the ignoble paradox of American modernity in which the dilemma of black intellectuals who decide to write their selves that are then projected as forms of collective identities is manifest in the “widespread refusal of black intellectuals to remain, in some visible way, organically linked with Afro-American cultural life” (West, 1999:305).

Without giving extraordinary capacity to overcome oppression to the so-called ordinary African Americans, it can be argued that these ordinary people filter their experiences through multiple cultural sieves and most have in fact manipulated the condition of double consciousness in ways that benefitted them individually, and collectively. This dimension was not well manifested in the selected autobiographies whose main concern was with depicting layers of suffering. Perhaps, the very fact that the authors could write of their experiences should be taken as a veritable instance of primary resistance.

Recommendations

In light of the above findings of the study, it is recommended that future researchers should

- Focus on a single author to closely analyse the nature of double consciousness
- Compare how female authors of different generations/class background depict the idea of double consciousness;
- Explore new ways of thinking about the potential benefits of double consciousness and;
- Evaluate the best ways of expanding notions of identity beyond the binary suggested in the notion of double consciousness;
- Interrogate African-American works of fiction focusing on double consciousness from a materialist point of view;
- Examine the relationship between language and the theme of double consciousness;

- Investigate the relationship between creativity and double consciousness- something that may lead to interviews with selected African-American authors.

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