

Racism, slavery and social perspective on slavery in
Oroonoko and Twelve Years A Slave

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

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Abstract

This thesis explores the theme of racism and slavery in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* and Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years A Slave*. This study examines how the two novels show the brutality of racism and slavery. By using the post-colonial lens, this thesis aims to analyze how racism against black people has turned their normal lives into slavery and how much black people had to suffer under white dominance. Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* is about Oroonoko who belongs to a royal family but had to face the cruelty of slavery because of his race. It portrays that, white people did not care about the royal background, they treated every black person in the same manner and forced black people to work under them. It also shows the society's perspective on slavery and how they think that death is better than slavery. On the other hand, *Twelve Years A Slave* is an autobiographical novel by Solomon Northup. This novel is about his real-life experiences of racism and slavery. In this novel, he depicts how he has to face racism and slavery even though he is a free man. Northup's story shows how terrible and humiliating slavery was by describing how slaves suffered both mentally and physically. This novel shows how prejudice and hatred ruled American society at that time, which helps explain why slavery lasted for a long time. Through their writings, Aphra Behn and Solomon Northup show the reality of white people about the black community and how badly they treat black people because of their race. It shows how hard it is for black people to live in such an environment and their perspective on slavery. Through the use of post-colonial theory, the purpose of this paper is to analyze Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* and Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years a Slave* in order to demonstrate the existence of racism and slavery between whites and blacks.

Keywords: Racism; slavery; social perspective; Post-colonialism; Orientalism; white people's thoughts about blacks; black people's sufferings under white dominance.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“And why,” said he, my dear friends and fellow-sufferers, should we be slaves to an unknown people? Have they vanquished us nobly in fight? Have they won us in honorable battle? And are we by the chance of war become their slaves?”- Aphra Behn, “*Oroonoko the royal slave*”

Behn through her prototype novel raises an important question for postcolonial resistance to the novelist Colonial misrepresentations of others. In this particular section of this novel, the protagonist Oroonoko is planning to raise his voice against white people as well as slavery. Black people were getting dehumanizing treatment. White people treated them like beasts rather than human beings. White people were served by black people but in return they were living under oppressive conditions. Their condition was getting worse day by day, so they took the decision to stand against that injustice. Moreover, as a versatile writer Aphra Behn represents the miserable condition of Black people through her fictional character Oroonoko. Although Behn holds a remarkable place in the history of English literature because of her contribution to the development of the novel as a genre, not much is known about her early life. In the years before the English Civil Wars, she may have been born in Canterbury to a barber father and a wet-nurse mother. As an adult, she moved among the aristocrats of Europe. They were without a doubt very poor parents. Some biographers say that after the narrator told the story of her own life in *Oroonoko* (1688), Behn went to the English (later Dutch) colony of Surinam in the Guianas of South America. This is because the storyteller who wrote *Oroonoko* based it on her own life. She may have met an African slave chief. This may have led her to write *Oroonoko*, which is now one of the oldest novels written in English. Most people think that Behn had gone back to England by the time she married Johan Behn, a trader, in 1664. *The Forced Marriage* and *The*

Amorous Prince, Aphra Behn's first two books, did not sell very well. Behn died when she was 49 years old, but she had written many plays, books, songs, and translations. Most of Aphra Behn's works were published during her lifetime without her name on them. *Oroonoko* was a turning point of Behn's career when it came out. So, Behn's fame is mostly built on how important these books are and how much she did for poetry. Behn is best known for her poetry and the books *The Fair Jilt* and *Oroonoko*. Even though *Oroonoko* isn't explicitly anti-slavery, it was unusual for its time to treat a main character who isn't white or English with respect, as it does in *Oroonoko*.

“My sufferings I can compare to nothing else than the burning agonies of hell! Credit leads a man into temptation. Cash down is the only thing that will deliver him from evil.

It is not the fault of the slaveholder that he is cruel, so much as it is the fault of the system under which he lives.” – Solomon Northup *Twelve Years A Slave*

These are the lines that Solomon Northup writes in *Twelve Years A Slave* to describe the agonizing suffering that he is experiencing at the time of the book's writing. He suggests that, rather than relying on credit or taking on debt, you should use cash so that you may stay clear of negative influences and pressures. Northup also studies the violence of slaveholders and comes to the conclusion that it is not a product of the slaveholders' own personal faults but rather the consequence of the oppressive system in which they operate. These phrases drive home the horrifying reality of slavery as well as the influence that the structures of a society can have on an individual's behavior. Solomon Northup was an African-American man who was born free in July 1807 in Minerva, New York. He lived with his wife and three kids in Saratoga Springs, New York. He was a hardworking farmer, a good singer, and a loyal family man. He liked living a quiet life until his life took a turn. In his autobiography he mentioned the hardship of his life

during his slavery period. This novel is about Solomon Northup himself where we see racism, slavery, social discrimination, Violence, dominance and oppression of whites towards black. In his autobiography he also mentioned his experience during slavery time as a black American in a racist society where he represented the black community in the United States. Though he was an American the racial discrimination drew a line between the white Americans and the black Americans.

1.1 Contextual Background of *Oroonoko*

Oroonoko was written by Aphra Behn in 1688 where she talked about slavery and the true story of a royal slave. In this novel the writer shows the dark reality of slavery and the tragic end of the protagonist and his beloved Imoinda. Through her writing Behn portrayed racism, colonialism and slavery. White colonists used to think they are superior to black. The colonists had good relationships with the Surinamese, but this is mostly because there were so many more Surinamese than outsiders. The English didn't see the natives as social partners. Instead, they saw them as primitive and naive people from whom they could trade and learn useful ways to stay alive. Slaves with African roots were at the bottom of society because of this. Even though the colonists might think of Africans as an "inferior" race, they knew that Africans are better able to do the hard work needed to keep plantations running. White people used to dominate black people through different mediums. They demolished black culture, literature and their belief in God to establish their own superiority. Whites believed that black Africans were born to be slaves. Black people had to follow every command of their master and work very hard to survive. The saddest part of the slavery is that the black people were sold in exchange for a little amount of money which affected their freedom as well as they became separated from their

families forever which reflected through the character of our main protagonist Oroonoko. In the novel *Oroonoko* our main protagonist was carrying the royal blood but he had to face the cruel reality of slavery and racism because of the betrayal by one of the white Europeans. Though he was a prince he had to accept fate and became the slave of Trefry. Along with a new name Oroonoko had to accept slavery which was considered worse than death. Additionally, if anyone tried to escape from slavery they would be punished to death. Moreover, the female slaves are not an exception, when a female slave becomes pregnant and gives birth to a child, they cannot stay with their parents. The newborn used to be sold in a different place. That is why when the partner of Oroonoko became pregnant he wanted to escape from Suriname to give a better life to their offspring and had to face death by whites. White Europeans visualized the hardship of black Africans and portrayed that through their writings, Aphra Behn is one of them. She shows the dark side of slavery and racism. She also depicts how black people were treated by the whites, no matter what family they belong to. White people treated the royal family and common families in the same manner. All the hardships of slavery were perfectly depicted by Aphra Behn in her novel *Oroonoko* through various characters.

1.2 Contextual Background of *Twelve Years A Slave*

Twelve Years A Slave was published in 1853. It is an autobiographical novel written by Solomon Northup where he depicts his twelve years sufferings as a slave; even though he was a free man. In 1841, two different people tried to get the young man to leave his family by promising him a well-paying job in Washington, D.C. This changed the young man's life for the worse. Unfortunately, as soon as he got to the island, he was given drugs, taken away, and made to work as a slave. He was taken from Africa and taken to Louisiana, where he was beaten often

and made to work in terrible conditions. He was a slave in Louisiana for a large part of his life. Even if Northup and the other slaves did something small wrong, the rude master would beat them badly. One of those slaves was Northup. Even though his living situation was terrible, he worked hard regardless because he was hungry and had nowhere to hide from the weather. Except one every master of him humiliated and punished him physically. Northup had to deal with constant shaming, beatings, and emotional pain by the slave owners. They used to beat Northup pretty badly. Even though he grew up free, he had to hide the fact that he was literate because it was against the law at the time to teach slaves. During the time that Northup was a slave, his masters used his knowledge and skills to their advantage by putting him to work in jobs that were not related to farming. One of the worst things about Northup's situation was that he had to be away from his family. He felt helpless and alone without his family, and he longed for freedom and the chance to get back in touch with his loved ones. Northup never stopped having hope, no matter how hard things got. He never lost his desire for freedom, though, and he never stopped looking for ways to get away from his attackers. Northup had been in pain for a total of twelve years before he was finally freed when a stranger helped him get in touch with his friends in New York. In 1853, thanks to the work of his friends, he was finally freed from slavery and able to go back to his family. Solomon Northup's struggles as a slave show how terrible the slave system was. His life shows how strong the human spirit is and how people always want to be free. It is also a sad reminder of how cruel, dehumanizing, and unfair slavery was for millions of slaves. His life is a great example of how the human spirit is strong and how people always want freedom. Though Solomon Northup faced all the difficulties by the plantation owners, he was not ready to give them all the blame because according to him not only the plantation owners but also the system played a vital role. So, we can say that *The Twelve*

Years A Slave is not only the autobiography of Solomon Northup but also the document of the hardship and struggle of the black people in America.

Both the novels *Oroonoko* and *Twelve Years A Slave* have some things in common that show how hard slavery, racism, and social bias were for black people at the hands of whites. These facts are shown through the eyes of the two main characters in the books. Both Behn and Northup's works show how innocent black people were when they were tricked by white people and made into slaves. After being a slave, they lost their own identity and had to adopt the identity given by the plantation owner. Through *Oroonoko* and Solomon Northup, we learn more about the problems black people face. Both of the main characters stood up against slavery, even though they face a lot of resistance and their slave master treated them badly. In the end, white people brutally killed *Oroonoko*, which was a very sad end to his life. On the other hand, Solomon Northup was a slave for twelve years before he got his freedom.

1.3 The purpose of this thesis:

The goal of this thesis is to look at *Oroonoko* by Aphra Behn and *Twelve Years a Slave* by Solomon Northup and examine the themes of racism, slavery, social prejudice, and betrayal in both of these works. This research is aimed at examining how racism has turned black people's normal life into tragedy in the white society, what was the condition of black slaves under white dominance in slavery and what was social perspective on slavery during that time. To support my point, I will use post-colonial theory. Both *Oroonoko* and *Twelve Years a Slave*, which were written by different people, show the pain that black people in post-colonial countries went through because white people were in charge.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

African Americans make up a large part of the United States with many different kinds of people. But because African American people looked different from the European Whites looked black in white American society, they had to deal with a lot of trouble and struggle. Before the 1950s, African-Americans were treated unfairly by the laws and rules of the United States, which put them in a very bad position. Slaves from Africa were taken to the Americas in the past, and today's African Americans are their relatives. During slavery, African-Americans were treated as if they were less important than other people. White people often thought that black people were less advanced culturally and should be seen as primitive, barbaric, and wild. On the other hand, they thought they were more polite and developed artistically than black people. People of African descent had to work hard to get their freedom back then. We can see two different perspectives of slavery from different writers, while Aphra Behn wrote *Oroonoko* from a white women's perspective towards slavery on the other hand Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years A Slave* represents the true scenario of slavery from a slave himself. Moreover, in the novel *Oroonoko* Aphra Behn gave importance towards the physical appearance of the main protagonist rather than his struggle as a slave. The demonic side was avoided by Aphra Behn because firstly, she was a white woman and secondly, she experienced it from a second person perspective. On the other hand, we can see the true side of slavery through *Twelve Years A Slave* by Solomon Northup as the novel was written from a first-person perspective. Solomon Northup experienced brutality, identity crisis, betrayal by all the white men he met during his slavery era. As it was his own experience as a free man who was kidnapped and sold as a slave. The actual picture of slavery was portrayed in this novel by the protagonist himself. These works discuss how cruel

and inhumane slavery was. They also show how the writers and their times thought about race, power and social norms.

In the "Introduction" to *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said argues that authors are bound to the past of their societies and their ideas are shaped by the social forces they encounter. Said says that writers' ideas are affected by what's going on in society at the time they write. Several studies have looked at how African Americans are portrayed in the works of authors from different literary styles. Aphra Behn was an English writer who lived in the 1600s. At the time, her works were very well-liked. It is argued that, despite her assertions of objectivity and independence in her portrayal of Oroonoko, the former African Prince, she ultimately loses her objectivity as the story progresses. Anne Fogarty makes a good point when she says that Behn uses *Oroonoko* to share her colonial view of the world. The novel *Oroonoko*, which takes place in the English Plantation Colony of Surinam and came out for the first time in 1688, has a long history of colonialism. Behn's portrayal of the natives as "others" who are morally, mentally, physically, and socially inferior to the Europeans adds to the widespread prejudices of the colonial era. The author uses pronouns a lot to show the difference between the "white superior race" and the "natives" throughout the novel. Said says that the book genre started with a story about history that was based on real events and real countries. He thinks that the book is a result of bourgeois culture and an important part of the West's global growth. Without the Empire, there would be no such thing as the contemporary European novel. *Oroonoko*, being a work of fiction, shows the influence of colonial ideology and imperialism. Another important part of *Oroonoko* by Aphra Behn is that it is written from a European point of view. Eurocentrism is the idea that everyone should live by European standards. This way of thinking makes people think badly of other cultures. A young African prince named Oroonoko is taken by slaveholders and

sold into slavery in the Dutch settlement of Surinam. Behn's Eurocentric viewpoint is clear in the novel, especially in how she shows Oroonoko and the native people as "other" and less important than Europeans. She says what makes "us" (the Europeans) different from "them" (the locals) in terms of their races and cultures. Behn also portrays European culture as more refined and superior while sexualizing and exoticizing Oroonoko. By downplaying his "otherness" and elevating his European-like qualities, the narrator's colonial ideology shapes her portrayal of *Oroonoko*. This helps keep up the false idea that African culture can only grow by interacting with European culture. The novel spreads negative thoughts about colonialism and keeps up the thought that Europeans are better. In the novel *Oroonoko*, both the colonial discourse and the idea of the "self" as given by the novel's narrator, Aphra Behn, are presented. Colonial rhetoric shows how colonizer and colonized people felt about each other. The concept rests on the idea that the colonizers' culture is superior and that the colonized must be "civilized" to fit in. In the book, Behn shows her culture and intellectual superiority by having an African hero, Oroonoko, be taught by a French teacher. By making Oroonoko's African background look poor, she reinforces colonial ideas about "barbaric" people and gives the impression that they have no morals or intellectual standards. Throughout the novel, the difference between "self" (the Europeans) and "others" (the locals) is used to show that Europeans are better in terms of race and culture. Even though her time with Native Americans made her question some of her established ideas, the narrator still thinks Europeans are better. The narrator sees herself as an extension of her country's past, and her view of the world is still shaped by the imperialist environment in which she grew up. "Zero-focalized narrative" is a term for the way Aphra Behn told the story of *Oroonoko*. This means that the narrator is not a specific person, but rather the general tone or style of the story. The term "authorial persona" is used to describe this kind of

storyteller, who doesn't take part in the story. Behn's use of the personal plural words "we" and "our" to make it seem like she was helping to enslave Africans is an example of her colonial style of writing. So, Behn looks like he agreed with keeping Africans as slaves. The novel also has an omniscient point of view because the author is able to get into the thoughts of the main characters. By changing pronouns, the narrator can push her colonial view of the world while giving the idea that she is being objective. The narrator is very proud of her European roots, and she blames the African hero, Oroonoko, for having any worries about her. This way of controlling the story helps to keep colonial stereotypes alive by showing how different the White race is from the "Others." By carefully coordinating her way of telling a story with her ideas about colonialism, Behn is able to use the plot to her advantage while keeping the story's trustworthiness. Behn's way of telling the narrative, which is in line with her colonial beliefs, makes the difference between "us" (the Europeans) and "them" (the locals) even bigger. This study uses Aphra Behn's novels as a way to look at how black studies has looked into how people see Africans and African-Americans. Next, the colonial language in *Oroonoko* by Behn is broken down, and then the Eurocentrism in the book is looked at. The next-to-last section is a critical analysis of Behn's way of presenting narratives. It is based on Said's theory that literature and writers are products of the historical environment in which they were written. This research study disagrees with Behn's claim that *Oroonoko* is a true and fair history by saying that it supports colonial ideas and gives more weight to Eurocentric points of view. Due to Behn's Eurocentrism and his use of colonial rhetoric and narrative strategy, the text parts show how she misrepresents the topic and makes it seem like it is about someone else. The study report comes to the conclusion that *Oroonoko* mostly serves the colonial goal because it meets the colonial standards of culture, beauty, education, intelligence, and manners. (Iqbal, 2014).

In the article, "Slavery and power in Behn's Social Context; A New Historicist Reading of *Oroonoko*" I look at how Aphra Behn shows authority figures and what she thinks about slavery in her novel *Oroonoko*. At the beginning, it talks about how European culture and ideas became more important during the Renaissance because of the focus on learning and the belief that man is the center of everything. Behn makes the Indians look like they don't know much, which is different from the way Europeans try to learn as much as they can. In this narrative, Behn shows that the locals are naive and deserve to be ruled over. However, she also seems to like Oroonoko for how much he looks like an English person, which shows that she has mixed feelings about slavery. We look at Oroonoko's first act of resistance and talk about how she and her people were put down. In the controlled frame of society, the ruling power has been able to keep social practices in check. It looks like the slaves don't fight back much, as if they've fully accepted their jobs as slaves. This study says that even though Oroonoko rebels for a short time, he eventually comes to terms with being a slave, and that Behn seems to like the idea of slavery for some people. Oroonoko is seen using a European product right before he is killed, which is a sign that he is trying to do something wrong. Oroonoko's death is shown to be sad and hard, and the last part of the section asks why his bravery is not fully recognized because he was a slave. (Poorghoban, 2020)

In Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* the author's portrayal of events in Surinam is subject to debate regarding its accuracy. Some critics have accused Behn of borrowing and inaccuracies, suggesting she could not have been an eyewitness to the events as her first-person narrator claims. However, recent feminist biographers have defended the tale as a reliable autobiography. The truth lies somewhere in between these extreme views. While there is no concrete evidence of Behn's presence in Surinam, some circumstantial evidence suggests that she might have been

there. Her use of a first-person narrator similar to herself and the inclusion of local color details from Surinam and Africa hint at a foundation of fact, potentially including personal experiences. Behn's representation of the African background in the story appears to be well-informed. She accurately depicts certain aspects of West African culture, such as the constant warfare, the selling of prisoners of war to European slavers, and the marked class stratification. The difference paid to kings and the subjection of women are also accurately portrayed. Furthermore, some details, such as Oroonoko's knowledge of European culture and his special treatment in Surinam, are not as fantastical as they may seem. While Behn's work may contain a mix of fact and fiction, it is essential to recognize her artistic achievement in creating an imaginative story based on a potentially factual foundation. In the end, *Oroonoko* should be appreciated as a work of fiction that draws on real-life elements to enrich its narrative. The physical descriptions of Oroonoko and Imoinda in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* adhere to certain romance conventions but also incorporate some realistic details. Behn portrays them as exceptionally good-looking individuals, reflecting the belief among travelers that certain tribes were closer to the European standard of beauty. Oroonoko's hairstyle, similar to that of the Issinese of the Gold Coast, and Imoinda's body art mirror practices observed in West African cultures. While Behn refers to Oroonoko as belonging to the kingdom of Coramantien, a specific inaccuracy, the term "Cormantine" was commonly used in the colonies and represented a group of blacks who were considered brave, loyal, and dignified. Oroonoko's sophistication and familiarity with European manners and languages are plausible due to the longstanding interactions between coastal blacks and Europeans. During the time the story is set, enslaving black people was seen more as a matter of class than race. African rulers engaged in slave trading, and legitimate traders operated within certain boundaries, treating slaves they purchased from their legal owners with respect.

Kidnapping and mistreatment of free people were frowned upon even by those involved in the slave trade. Some exceptional slaves, like Oroonoko, could receive special treatment and recognition for their qualities, and even captors acknowledged their extraordinary nature. In general, *Oroonoko* portrays a mix of romance conventions and realistic elements in its character descriptions, adding depth and authenticity to the narrative. The grisly details of Oroonoko's execution and his extraordinary stoicism under torture are supported by actual historical events. Behn's portrayal of the brutal punishments, such as whipping and rubbing wounds with pepper, aligns with documented accounts of similar practices. Actual cases of condemned black individuals enduring burning to death with astonishing resilience, as depicted in the story, serve as further validation. Oroonoko's behavior as a traditional African king, selling prisoners of war as slaves, was in line with the prevailing beliefs and practices of the time. Africans considered slavery a matter of class rather than race, and the involvement of Europeans in the slave trade was not yet perceived as the cause of its increased destructiveness. Despite being a work of fiction, *Oroonoko* incorporates a level of realism and research to substantiate its portrayal of Oroonoko's African background and the events in Suriname. While Behn embellished certain aspects to align with contemporary aesthetic ideals and dramatic conventions, she showed a genuine interest in foreign cultures and concern for probability. Through Oroonoko's character, Behn symbolically contrasts the ideals of natural nobility, honesty, and nobility with the corrupt society of the story. He questions religious dogma and hypocrisy while demonstrating the values of personal honor and concern for others. In doing so, Behn employs the heroic play conventions to elevate *Oroonoko* as an embodiment of "natural" virtues and a voice against the hypocrisy of European Christians. *Oroonoko* is a work that addresses Christian hypocrisy and attacks slavery. Thomas Tryon's "Friendly Advice to the Gentlemen-Planters of the East and West Indies" (1684)

also condemns slavery and presents a moral slave who rejects religious intolerance and doctrinal arguments. While few people in the 17th century would have outright condemned slavery, it is evident that Behn shows serious concern for the subject through her detailed portrayal of Africa, Surinam, and slavery. Behn's portrayal of Oroonoko as a highly superior black man compared to the white characters challenges the idea of enslaving people based on their race. She exposes Christian hypocrisy to disprove the notion that slavery brings European culture's blessings to the enslaved. Oroonoko's eloquent speech asserts that slavery is beneath human dignity. Behn's use of realistic detail and a clearly defined narrator sets Oroonoko apart from typical 16th and 17th-century fiction. The narrator, representing an intelligent upper-class woman, provides an intellectual context for the story. Despite some structural weaknesses and misjudgments of tone, Oroonoko combines romance, authenticity, and moral vision, foreshadowing the great achievements of 18th-century fiction. The novel's significant theme contributed to its recognition as an abolitionist tract in the following century. (Rogers, 1988).

The Prince of Ghana, William Ansah Sessarakoo's life is a real-life example of a royal servant like the Oroonoko character. He was a prominent Fante royalist and diplomat of the 18th century. He was the son of John Corrente, the paramount chief of Annamaboe in the Central Region of Ghana. Sessarakoo's decided to go to England to pursue higher education and to know the English culture as well as to establish a good partnership with the British. Corrente decided to send him with the captain of a slave ship and thought that it would be more secure for his son's future. But it was a big mistake for him. Sessarakoo was sent by a ship for England but the ship's captain David Bruce Crichton sold him as a slave in Barbados instead of reaching England during 1748. It causes a tragic fall in his life. As Sessarakoo lost contact with his family, his father tried to search for him in England. But he did not find any trace of him and blamed the

English for his son's disappearance. While Sessarakoo's was in Barbados, a Fante trader recognized him and informed his father about his son's fate. As a result, he demanded to send his son to England. This recognition also earned him an advantageous status even as a former slave. He even got the opportunity to appear in London's high society event where he came to know about Oroonoko and his tragic end. How he lost Imoinda and ended up a slave as well as death as a slave in a very brutal way. However, in 1750, he was successful to return to Annamaboe with higher education and enormous knowledge of English culture. Then he became a writer and a slave trader. Moreover, he recorded the events of his life in his memoir, *The Royal African: or, Memoirs of the Prince of Annamaboe*. Although Sessarakoo's life as a slave was a horrific experience for him, he remained involved in the slave trade throughout his life. Here both the stories of Sessarakoo and Oroonoko are alike. But the thing is even though Sessarakoo had suffered a lot as a slave, later he started his profession as a slave trader. Moreover, he was well known in the West Indies for his wonderful enslavement which hints at irony. On the other hand, after experiencing the horrific life as a slave, Oroonoko taught other slaves how to protest against the British power and how to fight for themselves which makes him a hero. (Dawkins, 2018) .

The article “Racism in the Victorian age: Representations of slavery and the Black Character” represents the two different eras of slavery where the author mentioned two tragic heroes of different times. Shakespeare’s play *Othello* and Alpha Behn’s novel *Oroonoko* were mentioned by the writer Hazel Waters. Though both of the main protagonists Othello and Oroonoko came from the same racial background, their experiences were different. While Othello was experiencing slavery through the prejudice and misconception of white society, on the other hand Oroonoko was experiencing the bitter taste of slavery. Although both of the protagonists accepted the same fate, but their life experiences were totally different. He says that

the difference between the slave Oroonoko and General Othello is not in their individual traits, but in the political situation they are in, from this line we can understand that racism not only dominates a society but also it decreases its political position geologically. When comparing Oroonoko to Othello, Waters says that the "context of enslavement can be seen both as a contrast to Oroonoko's natural nobility and as a strategy that allows the expression of extremes of pathos and sentiment" in the play. In contrast to the tragic hero Othello, who "could not have existed as a slave," Oroonoko's position as a slave "provides a context of such absolute control that no protagonist could overcome it." Theater historians will find *Racism on the Victorian Stage* especially useful because it has much to say about how the British empire and race and ethnic identity affected the time. But the book will also be interesting to people studying the nineteenth century and wanting to learn more about racism. (Waters, 2009).

In the news article, "12 Years a Slave: the book behind the film," the author describes the film based on the novel *Twelve Years A Slave*. Churchwell here also shows another slave story named William Grimes who is a runaway slave. In 1825, he wrote an autobiography to make \$500 so he could buy his freedom from his former master, who had found him in Connecticut and was trying to bring him back into slavery. *The Life of William Grimes* was the first book-length story written by an American slave who had escaped. It started a new type of writing called the slave narrative. Slave narrative was a new field in literature as slaves were not allowed to be literate during this period. About 100 slave stories were written in the United States between 1750 and 1865, and many more were written after the Civil War ended. The ones by Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs are the best known, but a new movie has brought attention to Solomon Northup's story. *Twelve Years A Slave* was a big hit when it came out in 1853. It was one of the longest and most detailed slave diaries. Slave owners knew this, too, and

punished slaves harshly if they tried to read or write. A common punishment was cutting off a slave's arm. In the novel *Twelve Years A Slave*, we can see that, Solomon tried to write a letter to his family but when his master doubted this, he was afraid because at that time, no slaves were allowed to read and write. Because of this, very few slaves could read or write. When slave tales were found again in the 20th century, the fact that most of them had been ghostwritten or edited by white people brought up the question of whether or not they were true. Many historians repeated the old claim that progressives made up or exaggerated the stories. The book by Solomon Northup was turned into the movie *Twelve Years a Slave*. (Churchwell, 2014).

The novel *Twelve Years A Slave* is a remarkable work by Solomon Northup based on his life. In this novel, he shows the psychological relationship between master and slave. (Stauffer). The subject of the article "12 Years Between Life and Death" had very poor cognitive functioning for over a decade. The main findings and themes of this literature review articles show the psychological mind of plantation owners and slaves of the time. In this article, the author delves into the financial, emotional, and physical costs that loved ones pay when someone is in a coma or vegetative state for an extended period of time. It shows how important it is for caregivers and patients to be healthy and how important it is to have full support systems and services. In this article John Stauffer shows that there is a chance for long-term recovery, especially when new treatments and assistive technology are used. Patients in vegetative states can gain from these interventions because they will help them communicate better, think better, and live better. Third, the article looks at ethical questions about using life-sustaining treatments and giving end-of-life care to people who are still not aware of what's going on around them. There is a lot of focus on having honest talks and making laws to help healthcare providers, patients, and the general public deal with the ethical problems they face. In this novel Solomon

Northup suffered and experienced extreme violence which led him to the road between life and death. Sociologist Orlando Patterson called this state “Social death”. Social death represents not only the cruel situation of the society but also the power imbalance between master and slave. In the novel, the unequal relationship between the master and the slave is represented by the main protagonist Solomon Northup and his masters. How brutality he faced during his twelve years of slavery life, whenever he made some small mistakes they beaten him so badly which affected his psychological mind and lead him from escaping that situation. For example, once his master Tibeats beat him so badly that he took wing from that plantation. Along with Solomon Northup there were many slaves who faced injustice during their slavery life, one of them is Patsey who was physically assaulted and beaten by her master. To free herself from this miserable life she wanted to take her life. It shows in “Suicide is a form of rebellion” (Stauffer,320). The death wish of Patsey represents “the psychology of slavery” which shows that they recovered their physical health but couldn't overcome the mental trauma. The author of the article Stauffer shows the important role of family and dear ones during the recovery period of mental trauma. In the novel when Northup achieved his freedom the support and forgiveness of his wife helped him to recover from the dark era of his life. Thus Northup not only shows the brutality of slavery but also the cognitive mind of a slave because of the torture they were facing while serving their masters. (Stauffer,2014).

The piece "Just Like Black, Only Better: Poor White in the Antebellum South of America Depicted in Solomon Northup's Novel *Twelve Years As A Slave* " looks at how poor whites were portrayed in Solomon Northup's groundbreaking novel *Twelve Years as a Slave*. During this tough time in American history, the author looks at how low-income whites and African Americans held in slavery interacted with each other. The main point of this article is that poor

whites in the South before the Civil War, even though they were on the bottom economically, took advantage of a system of systemic racial dominance that gave them a sense of racial superiority over enslaved African Americans. The author says that Northup's novel shows this complicated relationship and shows how poor whites in an age of economic exploitation and racial subordination had very different experiences. In this novel Northup represents The stereotype of poor white people in the South is that they are not good people by the characters named James H Burch, Rad Burn, Mr. Chapin, Tibbeats. For survival the work they choose to do is in the bottom line of the economy. Poor whites in *Twelve Years A Slave* depicted as slave trader, overseer, carpenter. "They seemed free labor in glimpse, but essentially enslaved".(15) Though they were not slaves, they were not free from the clutches of slavery. They used to sell slaves to their white masters to live life. "Although poor whites were certainly not slaves, they were adversely impacted in multiple ways by the institution of slavery and the vast inequality that is produced among whites."(15) The paper also says that Northup's portrayal of poor whites goes against the common story, which usually leaves out the fact that poor whites helped keep slavery going. In this article the author criticized Northup's ideas about poor whites. According to Northup all whites were the same but the unprivileged whites had to do the lower economic work which includes trading slaves because of the system which was made by elite whites. From Northup's perspective, he criticized all whites negatively but on the other hand we can say that they had to sell those slaves because they had to live their live. By focusing on the ties between poor whites and slaves, the author shows how both groups took advantage of each other in a society with slaves. This examination shows how much the white establishment benefited from having racial lines clear and in place. In Solomon Northup's book *Twelve Years A Slave*, the lives of poor white people in pre-Civil War America mirror, in small ways, the lives of black people

who are "enslaved." They were also shown to have bad attitudes, which was said to be because they had been in jail before being sent to the U.S. from Ireland and the rest of Great Britain. Whites who are poor are shown in the same bad way as their white slave masters. As overseers, carpenters, and slave traders who worked for their white masters, it's clear that their status is better than that of black slaves. Since they depended on the bourgeoisie (white masters) for their money, poor white people can be thought of as proletariat. But because of white dominance, even poor white slaves were expected to do more than black slaves. Because white people thought they were better than black people, they thought black people didn't have any power in society. White slave owners made up the idea of "white privilege" as a way to quiet people who didn't agree with their system of slavery. Because the white elite were afraid that blacks and poor whites might join forces, they tried to make the two groups hate each other. They know that this threatens their power to the core of its being. (Rasiah, et al. 2021)

The article "Analysis of Racism and Discrimination in *Twelve Years a Slave* Encountered by Solomon Northup" is a close look at how racism and discrimination show up and affect Solomon Northup's famous memoir, *Twelve Years a Slave*. The author looks at the bigger effects of the different kinds of racism that Northup had to deal with while he was a slave. In his article, Rodney Clark mentioned two types of racism which are "verbal" and "non verbal racism". Under the umbrella of verbal racism he categorized "attitude racism" and "behavioral racism" and in non-verbal racism he categorized "economic" and "prejudice racism". In *Twelve Years A Slave* the attitude racism refers to the power dynamics between white and black groups, who are often separated by skin color. This can be seen in the way white people pressure black individuals to conform to their orders and confirm their position in the social structure. This can be seen in the dialogue between white men and black individuals, who may use language such as yelling,

mocking, and humiliating them. This attitude is represented by characters like Mr. Tibeats, Mr. Freeman, and Mr. and Mrs. Epps, who demonstrate the negative effects of white power on minority groups. Additionally, behavioral racism refers to the act of an individual or group denying equal treatment to an individual or group due to ethnic groups. Differences in attitudes towards black individuals are deeply ingrained in society. While some white characters treat African Americans well, racism persists. Americans treat black people like animals, which makes them feel comfortable dealing with them but still makes them feel like property or animals. This is because the white character doesn't want to treat the black character like a slave or an animal. In the novel we can see one of Northup's master William Ford was a kind man who treated him well but still he was enslaved under Ford which shows the complexities of master and slave relationship. Racism in the United States started because people wanted to get away from the king's control and pressures, which hurt their finances. Through the triangular trade system, the UK, which helped colonize the US in a big way, sent slaves to America to work on farms and in factories. It's obvious that Mr. Ford was the type of white person who was nice to black people as long as his economic purpose was served. Ford had good intentions when it came to treating his slaves well in order to secure their loyalty. Mr. Ford's attitude after throwing Platt to the ground betrayed an arrogant contempt for black lives. There are some good examples, like Mr. Ford, but prejudice is still typical among the slaves and in his master's residence. White people's ideas about evolution, especially Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, lead to racism. At first, people thought that there was no equality because some people had evolved correctly. In the novel which caused trouble between Tibeats and Solomon, who had to live in a dangerous place. Edwin Epps was known for freeing slaves, so Tibeats gave Solomon to him. White people thought that Africans were backward and that they used their bodies more

than their minds. In the novel, *Twelve Years a Slave*, young black people were locked up and whipped to death by white people. This showed the difference in power between white and black people. This violence teaches black people that they are the lowest class in society and makes them more sure that they are better than them. In the end, a comprehensive look at the racism and discrimination that Northup talks about in his sad biography. The author shows how racial discrimination continued to hurt people in the early modern period by looking at specific cases and placing them in a larger historical context (Anshari and Marsuki, 2022)

The article "Violence against African-American Slaves as Seen in Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years a Slave*" looks at how violence against African-American slaves affected and was portrayed in Solomon Northup's famous book. The book goes into great detail about the mental and physical mistreatment that Northup and his fellow slaves had to go through during the time when slavery was legal in the United States. In this article, Manikomi says, "The writers found there are two kinds of violence against African-American slaves that can be seen in *Twelve Years a Slave*, those are; physical violence and psychological violence." Physical violence against African-American slaves is a big part of the story *Twelve Years A Slave*. Master and Mistress Slave owners, who are called "masters" and "mistresses," tell slaves what they have to do and make sure they follow the rules. Slaves worked for their owners without pay for most of their lives and were beaten and whipped. Slave owners could control their slaves and often didn't treat them like people. Master Epps, for example, keeps his slaves under control by hitting them, even when they are drunk. The second kind of violence shown in *Twelve Years A Slave* is psychological violence. It means using fear and threats to get control over someone. Slaves were treated badly by their masters, who hurt them physically and mentally. Before he was sold to the South, Burch made Solomon feel bad about himself. Solomon couldn't talk about his past, which

was against the rules of his slave owners. Burch made him stop. Solomon also got threats from Burch when he accidentally told a slave owner where he was from, which made Burch angry. Slaves were not allowed to talk behind their masters' backs, and it was considered psychological violence for Epps to try to support Patsey while he was drunk. It can be said that white slave owners did whatever they wanted to their black slaves because they were superior. The major point of the piece is that Northup's memoir explores violence as an all-pervasive and demeaning component of the slave experience. The book describes the many ways slave owners and overseers used brutality, from beatings and starvation to sexual assault and mental torture. The essay examines these specific acts of violence to show how systemic brutality permeated the institution of slavery and negatively affected the lives of African-American slaves. The essay also contends that Northup's vivid and precise descriptions of the violence he experienced help readers gain a profound awareness of the psychological and physiological costs of slavery. The author stresses the ways in which Northup's sense of self was altered, his identity was shattered, and his worldview was formed as a result of watching and experiencing violence. In this article the author helps us grasp the brutalities of slavery and the lasting effects of violence against enslaved African Americans by dissecting specific incidents of maltreatment and offering a broader historical perspective. (Manikomi, et al. 2021)

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Question

This research paper examines how racism against black people has turned their normal life into tragedy in the white society, what was the condition of black slaves under white dominance and what is social perspective on slavery during that time in the novel *Oroonoko* and *Twelve Years A Slave*. For my content research my primary sources are Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* and Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years A Slave*. The structure of this paper is based on a study of secondary data, which was gathered by looking at articles, books, and newspapers from reputable sources in order to answer the research questions.

3.2 Data Collection Method

Qualitative method is followed in this research paper. This paper is about racism and slavery against blacks which is presented through the two novels Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* and Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years A Slave*. These two novels are used as primary texts. Here, I have designed a systematic data collection in which I aimed to research according to thematic analysis. I have collected some journal articles from ResearchGate and Google Scholar about racism, slavery and the impacts of slavery. As this research is very concerned with how racism has turned black people's normal life into slavery, as presented in the novels, it gains knowledge by primarily researching articles on the themes of racism and slavery in these two novels. Researcher searched for research articles referring to famous writers and critics' works and opinions. This research mentions intellectuals and prominent authors like Katharine M. Rogers, Anzor Putra, John Stauffer, Maria S. Manikome, Younes Poorghorban and many more to

understand how they have reacted as well as their criticism of these two novels. Some of the pieces talk about the author Solomon Northup's real life experience and how different parts of it affected his writing. Several books talk about how cruel racism and slavery were and what happened as a result. I also found a news article that praised the movie version of *Twelve Years a Slave*. Then, a newspaper narrative talks about the prince of Ghana, whose life was the exact same as Oroonoko's. The main focus of this paper is to focus the articles from the present and reliable sources rather than articles from the past. Since *Oroonoko* is from the 17th century and *Twelve Years A Slave* is from the 19th century, my research includes some articles that were published in the 19th and 18th centuries. Firstly, this paper looks at how racist ideas and the system of slavery have been used by white Americans to oppress black Americans in the past. The thesis statement discussed the issues of black slaves who are owned by whites, how racism and slavery are shown in these two works, and how society views slavery. In the literature review, the trustworthy sources that were used to make this paper. In the "Methodology" part, the different study methods and literary theories that were used to guide the rest of the work are talked about. This paper looks at the study that has already been done, points out where we don't know enough, and offers possible solutions. The next step is to analyze the primary texts, which should be done with the help of secondary sources and the researcher's own assessment.

3.3 Research Gap

The study in the research paper has helped answer the research questions. In the end of the work, there is a clear understanding of three claims describing the poor condition of black people under racism, the sufferings of black slaves under white dominance, and the social perspective on slavery. I used articles that discussed regarding my main texts, *Oroonoko* and

Twelve Years A Slave, to make my research more useful. My aim was to analyze racism, slavery and social perspective on slavery in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* and Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years A Slave* but I have found inadequate research articles about social perspective on slavery during that period in these two novel *Oroonoko* and *Twelve Years A Slave* which includes how society prefers death to slavery, the upcoming generation of the slaves will also have to be slaves, then the biased manner of the masters towards their white servant and black slave. There are plenty of journal and newspaper article about social perspective on slavery and how the society treat the black people. But there is not enough article about the social perspective into these two novels. So in my research paper I tried to show this in details by sharing some incidents from these two novels *Oroonoko* and *Twelve Years A Slave* to justify my points. However, despite the fact that I discovered these research gaps while I was analyzing my data, I feel that my research can, complete the gaps, and that future scholars can locate the concept of a social perspective on slavery in these two books by looking at my research paper.

3.4 Analysis of theories

In this research, the postcolonial theory is used. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1942-present), Homi K. Bhabha (1949-present), Edward Walde Said (1935-2003), and Frantz Omar Fanon (1925-1961) their writings from are considered to be the core of the post-colonial theory. In my paper, I will discuss post-colonial theory through Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978). *Orientalism* is key in the field of postcolonial studies because it defines and analyzes what *Orientalism* means and how it relates to the history of a country after it has been ruled by another country. The world is split into two parts: the East and the West. The word "Orient" refers to the part of the world that is East or non-Europe like - Asia, Africa, etc. On the other hand,

"Occident" refers to the West or the countries of Europe. So, any place that is not located in Europe is called the Orient. Orientalism is the study of the East or people from the East. It includes any ideas, concepts, thoughts, gossip, talks, views, myths, or facts about the East or people from the East. European authors wrote a significant amount of poetry and fiction based on the Orient. Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and E. M. Foster's *A Passage to India* are two good examples of this type of narrative. Here, European authors talk about people and places in the East and Orient. One can refer to the practice of orientalism as a discourse. The people of the Occident discussed, wrote, and expressed their opinion about the people of the Orient, their lives, and their culture through various forms of literature such as poems, books, and stories. Aside from that, for their purposes, they spread false beliefs and ideas about the people of the Orient.

Postcolonial theory is a type of critical literature theory that looks at how European colonial rule affected the growth of colonial society and economy from the 18th to the 20th centuries. It starts with the process of independence and goes on to talk about the effects of colonialism and how people changed to live in the colonies. In his book *Orientalism*, which came out in 1978, Edward Said is credited with setting the groundwork for this philosophical view. Even though he didn't say this word, the ideas and reasons he put forward in the book set the stage for this term to grow. Colonialism is when one country rules over another country or a dependent area in terms of its economy, government, culture, and society. It can also be called "cultural imperialism." It happens when one race is able to take over and rule over another. During the colonial era, white people from many different countries, including the British, spread their areas of influence to new parts of the world. The Europeans didn't just want to settle the Indians; they also imposed their ideas, views and perspectives over the colonial people. All of this was part of their plan to settle in the area. They thought they were more educated and

civilized than the blacks and Africans. They thought the blacks and Africans were wild, not civilized, not cultured, and socially below them.

Moreover, Europe's countries set up colonies in non-European or Orient countries like Africa, America, and Asia, among other places. White Europeans or occident people often thought they were better than Oriental people. European rulers tried to convince the Orient people that they were inferior, uneducated, barbaric, and illiterate. So that they would be more willing to accept European rule and the colony's power. Europeans looked down on the people who lived there. So that they could use natives as slaves or free workers. They tried to teach them their own culture, ideas, and ways of thought. Since most Europeans were civilized, there was no one willing to take low-paying jobs. So, it was a great chance for them to finish those jobs without having to pay a single cent. But Orient people didn't have much knowledge, so it was easy for Europeans to trick them. This means that white Europeans were able to change their minds. Even though people in the Orient had their own ways of thinking and living, they started to feel like they were less than people in the West. They kept thinking that the ruler was right, so they adopted Western culture, ideas, and, slavery to make them progressive, knowledgeable, and modern. The majority of these people from the Orient were formerly sent to other countries to work as slaves, and they had to live with their bad luck for the rest of their lives. They were not only used for their work but they were also made to believe what their European masters did. They weren't even permitted to follow their own set of beliefs and customs because the Europeans didn't like them. This made it possible for the Europeans to take control of the area. Because of this, they started to feel like total failures, but they also learned about the good things about European culture. The idea of "Otherness" was brought to people around the world who were not from Europe or the Orient by the European colonizers. When the local people started to

think the Europeans were better and that they were nothing compared to the Europeans, it was almost as if they were talking about themselves in the third person. Post-colonial theory tries to explain why racism and bias continued to exist in the colonies long after they were no longer under British rule. Because many white people still think that they are better than black people, even though British rule is over. People start to control and hurt people of African descent because of the color of their skin.

Chapter 4: Analysis of *Oroonoko*

Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*, which came out in 1688, is still an important piece of early English writing. It looks at race, slavery, and social norms through the lens of colonialism and the slave trade. Racism is a big part of what happens in *Oroonoko*. Oroonoko is the main protagonist. He is a royal African prince who was sold into slavery in the British colony of Surinam. Even though Oroonoko was portrayed as a hero, the way European characters treated him and his people showed that the narrative was based on the racist ideas of the time. The Europeans in the story, on the other hand, are intent on hurting Oroonoko and the other Africans. Africans were often portrayed as uncivilized or bizarre in the 17th century, and Behn's description of Oroonoko as a "noble savage" shows this. During this time, Oroonoko was shown by Behn as a "noble savage." Slavery is another major theme of the novel. The fact that Oroonoko went from being a prince to an enslaved person shows how disgraceful the slave trade was. The novel gives a clear picture of the mental and emotional distress that African slaves went through at the hands of their cruel European masters. Behn's description of the horrible truths of slavery is a criticism of slavery as an institution and of how it makes slaves and their masters less moral. When looked at from a social perspective, *Oroonoko* shows the social hierarchies and power structures of the colonial age. Oroonoko is a prince back home, but while he is held captive in Surinam, he is treated like a commoner. In the context of colonialism, Behn draws attention to the huge differences in how Europeans and Africans were treated. The novel also shows how hypocritical the European invaders were. They said they believed in Christian morals and culture, but they did bad things like enslaving and betraying the native people. Aphra Behn gave a detailed look at racism and inequity in the 17th century, showing how slavery degraded people and how power worked in colonial society.

4.1 Racism

Racism is a set of beliefs or a theory that says some racial or ethnic groups are inherently better or worse than others. Discrimination, prejudice, and unfair treatment based on a person's perceived race or ethnicity are all signs of racism. In this novella *Oroonoko* we can see how black people are mistreated because of race, dragged into slavery, discriminated and oppressed. The main protagonist Oroonoko was from a royal family but because of his skin color, he was sold into slavery.

The relation between colonizer and the colonized is portrayed through their behavior. The word "colonization" refers to the process by which one country takes over the political, economic, cultural, and social structures of an area that used to be independent. European countries first set up colonies in places like Africa, the Americas, and India. The people who moved there stayed for a long time. Most white Europeans thought they were superior to people of other races. European rulers tried to make the indigenous people believe that they were inferior, illiterate, uneducated, barbaric, and wild so that they would accept the colony and let them rule over them. They thought these people were not as capable as them. By forcing their own modern culture and ideas on the locals, they worked hard to make them enslaved people or use them as free labor. White people choose black indigenous people as slaves because of their different skin color. The inequality that black people faced during the colonization period because of their skin color is known as racism, which is another dark side of colonization. One of the most obvious ways in which *Oroonoko* shows racism is in the way the white invaders treat the native characters as if they were not humans. European salaries were higher than American ones because Europeans were more cultured, and fewer people were fighting for low-paying jobs. So, the fact that they could finish these projects without spending any money was a great

chance for them. But the lack of formal education among colonial people made them easy targets for black Europeans. The white Europeans who tried to change their minds were successful. The European figures in the novel always say terrible things about Oroonoko and his people. People say bad things about them, and the differences in their looks and cultures are brought up. This kind of dehumanization of local people is a common racist way to excuse how badly indigenous people are treated. This suggests that the "other" is weird and powerless. Black Africans were once looked down on because they weren't as civilized as others. Also, many European countries bought and forced them to work for them. They spent a lot of time and energy doing what their superiors told them to do so they could get sustenance. In *Oroonoko*, the white invaders use a wide range of strategies to keep the local slaves under their control. The use of physical force and violence is one of these ways. They use whipping, shackling, and other forms of physical punishment to get people to do what they want. This harsh treatment exemplifies the racist belief that violence is an excellent way to control non-white people. It helps spread the idea that native people are naturally rebellious and need strict rules to keep them in line. According to them, black Africans are born to be sold as slaves. Though colonizers were always brutal towards the colonized people but to achieve their own benefit, sometimes they were good towards them. In the novel, the narrator paints a picture of white colonists as kind and caring toward locals. This is very different from how they treated African slaves.

‘tis fit I tell you the manner of bringing them to these new colonies; those they make use of there, not being natives of the place: for those we live with in perfect amity, without daring to command 'em; but, on the contrary, caress 'em with all the brotherly and friendly affection in the world; trading with them for their fish, venison, buffalo's skins, and little rarities; as marmosets, a sort of monkey... (Behn, 147).

By this lines Aphra Behn tried to show us that, in order to deal with and make money from the natives, the colonists must always be friendly. Lastly, *Oroonoko*, which was written by Aphra Behn, shows how colonialism hurts people in a very realistic way. White Europeans kept black Africans as enslaved people because they thought they were better than them, no matter if they came from a novel family or a commoner. According to them, black Africans are born to be sold as slaves. White people took away Oroonoko's freedom and cut him off from his family for good when he sold him into slavery.

Additionally, from a member of the royal family to an enslaved person in Surinam, Oroonoko lived this journey of slavery because of his dark skin color. Prince of Coramantien and male heir to the throne; grandson of the King. When Oroonoko is five years old, he is taken from the court and sent to a military school to learn the art of war. He learns his trade from the best military scholar in the country, who is also Imoinda's father and will later become Oroonoko's foster father. Oroonoko is only 17, but he has become a great leader, one of the bravest and most daring people in the army, and a popular hero for his bravery and good looks. But tragedy hits when his foster father takes the arrow meant for Oroonoko and dies in battle to save his life. Oroonoko, the new general, is saddened by this turn of events. He sees the fight through to the end and then goes back to court. The complicated relationship between Imoinda, the king and Oroonoko leads Imoinda into slavery. Oroonoko, preparing for battle, suspects Imoinda's death and learns of the King's sorrow and guilt. He promises not to seek revenge, believing death will come soon. Oroonoko's depression leads to poor battle performance, and his army, led by Aboan, struggles. Oroonoko's fighting spirit overcomes his grief. Oroonoko returned to the court, and a white man who served as a captain invited him on his ship. At first, he acts like Oroonoko's friend, an English sea captain known for being polite and kind. Most of the time, people call him

"the Captain." At Coramantien's court, the Captain is as important and well-liked as a royal family member. Moreover, One day, Oroonoko and a hundred of his troops will fall into a trap he sets, and then they will be sold into slavery. After a night of drinking at a party, the Captain throws on board, he ties up Oroonoko and his staff. "So that the captain, who had well laid his design before, gave the word, and seiz'd on all his guests... all the rest; and all in one instant, in several places of the ship, were lash'd fast in irons, and betray'd to slavery." (Behn, 179). It shows how Europeans treated the black; they never consider them as their friend. Then, when Oroonoko and his group refused to eat, the captain told them they would be set free in the next town if they just ate. Oroonoko and his group kept their fast, though. Ultimately, the Captain sends his prisoners to Suriname, where they are sold into slavery. Though the captain treated Oroonoko, one of his close friends, the true intention of the captain was unknown to him. As I mentioned earlier, sometimes white people used to maintain a good relationship with black people which is also true in the case of Oroonoko. The friendly behavior as well as the betrayal of white captain led Aphra Behn's main protagonist Oroonoko being a prince from a royal African family to ultimately sold into slavery. The true intention and the tragic fate of Oroonoko shows the reader that the friendship between the colonizer and the colonized is not possible. Because of their skin color, colonizers consider them as superior which led them to rule the inferior which was the black people. The novella's major theme, which is about how much racism affected society during the time it is set, is brought out by an unexpected turn of events. Oroonoko should have been safe from slavery because he was born into a noble family and part of a royal dynasty. People from all walks of life would have respected and adored his moral courage, intelligence, and ability to lead if we lived in a more equal world. The story, on the other hand, shows a world that is very different from this ideal. The outcome of his life will

depend on his skin color. Because they aren't fond of people of different races, the European characters in a novella have a narrow and biased view on them. They only see them as a block of color. When we look at Oroonoko through this dehumanizing lens, it makes Oroonoko seem less human and hides his real qualities. Oroonoko's sale into slavery shows how horrible the global slave trade was, fueled by greed, racism, and the idea that Africans were less than human. Also, the events that led to Oroonoko being sold into slavery are good examples of how racism works as a widespread and long-lasting form of social injustice. For slavery to remain acceptable, it was important to keep up adverse racist stereotypes and treat Africans like things instead of beings. In the novel, Oroonoko's story shows how racist ideas were used to mistreat people and take advantage of them just because of the color of their skin. The novel *Oroonoko* strongly attacks the morally bankrupt society it shows. A system that lets people with good character and African roots be treated like property just because they are black is shown to be harsh and unfair, and readers are forced to face this truth. This writing forces readers to face that a system that lets this happen is inherently cruel and unfair. Lastly, the fact that Oroonoko was sold into slavery despite being a prince and having good looks is a disturbing example of how badly racism may impact people. His story, as told by Aphra Behn in her narrative, shows how horrible the slave trade was and how wrong it was to treat people like property just because of the color of their skin. Even though what happened to Oroonoko was terrible, it has remained a powerful warning of the long-term effects of racism and the need to change social and cultural norms.

4.2 Slavery

Slavery is a system in which people identified as slaves are treated like property and forced to work without their consent, generally in dehumanizing and abusive ways. Throughout history, slavery took many different forms; one group (the enslavers) always had power and ownership over another (the slaves). Aphra Behn's novella *Oroonoko* makes allusions to the practice of slavery and forced work that was done to Africans who were enslaved and taken to the Americas, specifically the British colony of Surinam. In this novella, the author shows us the terrible and disgraceful parts of slavery. It uses Oroonoko's and other slaves' experiences to deliver how hard life was for them.

In *Oroonoko* by Aphra Behn, the main character is an African prince who is sold as a slave. This heartbreaking novel shows how the cruel practices of slavery make black people feel like they are not human. This fictional story about the transatlantic slave trade shows how slavery destroyed the victims' identities, memories, and futures authentically. At the beginning of the slave journey, Oroonoko served his master Trefry, who was kind hearted master. Trefry brought Oroonoko from the Captain after hearing about what he went through. Trefry does what many slave owners do: he gave Oroonoko a Christian name "Caesar" on the way to the plantation. "For the future therefore I must call Oroonoko Caesar; since by that name only he was known in our western world, and by that name he was received on shore at Parham House, where he was destin'd a slave." (Behn, 186). By these lines Aphra Behn tried to shows us how slavery took away the real identity of a royal prince. Cultural isolation is a theme that is reflected in this novel. Oroonoko's well-known African background has no significance now that he is in slavery. His captors have eliminated the customs, rituals, and skills that made him who he was and replaced them with their own. Because his captors don't understand how important his

ancestry is to him, he has no choice but to follow British colonial rules and ideals. This is an example of the larger cultural homicide that was done to enslaved African-American during this time. Slaves were used for this process. The most tragic part of Oroonoko's loss of identity is probably how he stops being seen as an individual. He is treated more like an object than a person because he is tortured, made to work, and monitored constantly. The reason for mistreating him is to break his will and self-respect. Because of the rules that have been imposed upon him, he can no longer choose how his life progresses. This stark example of how slavery takes away people's freedom and turns them into simple production tools is very powerful.

Furthermore, not only Oroonoko but also Imoinda got the bitter taste of slavery when her slave trader changed her identity by changing her name "Clemene". But Aphra Behn used her name as Imoinda in the novella. Because of the changed name and the misinformation that Oroonoko got at his homeland created a communication gap between them. While Trefry told many times about Clemene's to Caesar and praised about her beauty. Oroonoko could not recognize the love of his life, Imoinda, because of the changed name. "fate had brought them again together" (Behn,190). White people took the freedom of the enslaved person along with their name to create a gap between the slave and the family of that slave. When the family members of that wanted to find them, they could not find their close ones because of the name that the owner gave them. While reading, we see a good relationship between Trefry and Caesar but they cannot be friends because of their relationship status. Though Trefry was kind towards Caesar, but he did not do anything that will help Caesar to gain his freedom. Because of his superior thought, Trefry broke his promise which was made with. This broken promise shows that the slave master and the slave cannot be friends. Though Trefry knew about the sorrow of Caesar and felt sorry for him but he didn't think differently; after hearing all of the history of

Oroonoko, he also did what other slave traders would do. *Oroonoko* by Aphra Behn is a powerful piece of writing that goes into great depth about the identity problems caused by slavery. Through the novel *Oroonoko*, she shows how the slave trade had wider effects, such as the loss of cultural history, the loss of individual freedom, and the dehumanization of victims. The novel gives an intense review of how cruel slavery is and forces us to think about how it hurts the human spirit.

Slaves were continually denied by their masters when they sought freedom. The things that happened to Caesar show how slavery limits people's freedom. He used to be a king in his country, but now he is a slave who has to do what the harsh European colonists want. Caesar's loss of freedom and respect is an excellent example of how slavery violates fundamental human rights. Even though he has a high birth and is a natural leader, Caesar was not allowed to choose his own way in life. The narrative also looks at how being confined affects a person's mind. His strong sense of who he is and where he comes from drives his desire to be free. The less freedom he has, the angrier he gets, and he finally rebels on his own. Caesar's inner struggle and resolve to fight back show how strong the human spirit is and how everyone wants to be free. This portrayal is a good critique of how slavery makes people less human because it shows how losing freedom imprisons the body and mind. The slave system made people feel less like people because it took away their freedom. Behn also shows how freedom denial is sexist through the figure of Imoinda, who is in love with Caesar. Imoinda also has to deal with the same system of exploitation as Caesar, and she is also physically objectified and used. Her story shows how people who live and work in a setting of slavery have to deal with many problems. This shows how much freedom can be taken away, not just through physical imprisonment but also through social and mental confinement. Moreover, Caesar seeks freedom from the very beginning but

when Imoinda gets pregnant he is concerned about the future of their offspring and becomes restless to gain freedom from slavery by any means necessary. Caesar along with Tuscan, who was another slave, drew a blueprint for rebellion and created a team who would support them. The rebellion group started to raise their voice against the injustice that was happening against them. As well as Imoinda was brave enough to help the rebellious group by throwing a poisonous arrow towards Byam, the English Governor. Which made the slave trader and the English Governor scared. Caesar told Byam “he had rather die than live upon the same earth with such dogs.”(Behn, 212). He compared them with dogs. It shows how badly the white people or the slave traders treated the enslaved black people. Byam, the governor of Suriname, will not hesitate to use low and dishonorable methods to keep the sugar farms running well. Byam knows that Caesar can't defend himself against his mental strikes. Byam uses Caesar's high sense of honor against him because Caesar is easily controlled. He slowly wins Caesar's trust by giving him the words he thinks he wants to hear. This gives Caesar a false sense of security. Because Byam is such a good liar, even Trefry thinks what he says is true. Caesar, still upset about how his fellow slaves betrayed him, has given up on the good in people. Now, he goes back to the idea that enslaved people need a system that keeps them slaves because they aren't ready for freedom. This is because he needs to know why the slaves are acting so scary in order to deal with it. This changed the way colonial masters thought. After being cheated by his fellow team member Caesar was betrayed by the governor Byam also. “But they were no sooner arrived at the place where all the slaves receive their punishments of whipping...which was at once both awful and terrible to behold.” (Behn, 213). Though he acted friendly and ensured his freedom he ultimately captured him and other members of the rebellious group and punished them. It portrays how English people adopted the sense of betrayal at that time because of their

superiority. It was common for them to brain wash the slaves and enslave them for the rest of their lives; if any enslaved people tried to rebel against the slave ritual or try to free themselves from slavery, they had to face brutal consequences.

As I mentioned before, punishment is very common in slavery. Caesar and Tuscan are tired and confused when the Parhamites catch them. While Byam watches, the other slaves tie them up tightly and start whipping them. It's rare for a prince to be beaten in his own country. On the other hand, Caesar may be treated in the New World like any other slave. The fact that he is being whipped shows how bad his current situation is. Behn is against this violence not because it is violent in and of itself but because it hurts a rightful king or queen significantly. Caesar didn't move at all while he was being beaten. He angrily looked at Byam and the other escape slaves, who were taking turns hitting him.

When they thought they were sufficiently revenged on him, they unty'd him, almost fainting with loss of blood, from a thousand wounds all over his body; from which they had rent his clothes, and led him bleeding and naked as he was, and loaded him all over with irons, and then rubb'd his wounds, to complete their cruelty, with Indian pepper, which had like to have made him raving mad; and, in this condition made him so fast to the ground, that he could not stir, if his pains and wounds would have given him leave.

(Behn,213)

It shows that, at that time, if any enslaved person tried to escape from slavery or raise their voice against the system, how brutal consequences they had to face. Caesar has lost all trust in other people and feels like he has been lied to repeatedly.

Furthermore, along with betrayal, slaves had to accept the harsh cruelty of slavery. While Caesar was being punished, Imoinda did not witness Caesar's punishment because the

Parhamites took steps to keep her safe and keep her inside Parham House. They did this because they knew that her having an abortion was more likely if she saw something so horrible. Keeping Imoinda from knowing that Caesar was whipped was not a kind thing to do. The Parhamites are a group of heartless soldiers who only care about themselves. They wanted the mother and child to live so that they could stay alive. The Parhamites might try to use the couple as a bargaining chip against Caesar since it's clear that if they live, the number of slaves will grow. Behn told "which was not in kindness to her, but for fear she should die with the sight, or miscarry, and then they should lose a young slave, and perhaps the mother." (Behn, 213). It shows they were not concerned about Imoinda or the baby she was carrying. They were thinking about Imoinda and the future slave that they would lose if she faced a miscarriage. This incident shows how inhuman and selfish they were. Caesar has given up on ever returning home or having a happy life with Imoinda.

Moreover, Byam has spent the last few months getting better after Imoinda shot him with a poisoned arrow and plotted his own revenge on Caesar. To help him, he calls together a group of men who had all been in jail and are called "notorious Villains" by the narrator. The Parhamites decided that killing Caesar was the best way to get their message to the slaves because he was both the leader of the slave society and a sign of hope for them. They don't think their slaves will respond well to kindness, unlike masters like Trefry who are more forgiving. By making Parham's gang out of ex-convicts and other "lower-class" "villains," Behn shows that there is a social hierarchy even among the white colonists, with the elites being shown as more moral. There is superiority and inferiority even in white society. Upper-class whites used lower-class people to take revenge on their behalf of them. Even though he is hurt, Caesar is already planning his next move. He knows that he will have to pay for killing Byam and never see his

family in Coramantien again. He doesn't care about any of these things, but he was very sad about what might happen to Imoinda and the baby she is having. He dreamed that all the other slaves and English people were plotting to rape and kill Imoinda. At first, Aphra Behn shows us how horrified the decision of Caesar is by his choice to kill his wife, but she soon comes to see it as "brave and just." Caesar first asked Trefry to walk with him and Imoinda while they were alone. This was part of his plan. They find a quiet place in the woods where Caesar can look at his new wife with desire. When she says that, he starts crying and tells her his plan: when he kills Byam, he wants to kill her instead of letting her die in an embarrassing way. Even though he has been through many bad things, this picture of Caesar shows that he has mental weaknesses that no one has ever seen before. When Imoinda hears this, she falls to her knees before Caesar and begs him not to use her as a victim of his critics. Caesar pulls out his knife while still holding her in his arms. As the narrator says, Imoinda treats Caesar with the reverence and fear that a god deserves, so she looks at him with love as he cries. In their society, if a man loves his wife and there is no reason for them to be apart, he is expected to kill her. Imoinda's calmness draws attention to the fact that Caesar's real partner and the only person who shares his strict sense of honor, virtue, and courage. Caesar's outburst would have shown how different Coramantien and the United Kingdom are culturally. Imoinda has grown to the point where he can love and follow easily. So that Imoinda's death did not go in vain, he must kill Byam for revenge. Killing Byam will be a fair way to punish him.

Furthermore, on the other hand, he saw Tuscan make up with Byam, which showed that Tuscan is a "degenerate" like the other slaves. This is another act of betrayal, showing that the rebellion can't go on (without Caesar). Even though Caesar has been severely hurt, the surgeon leaves him alive long enough to torture him again. Which shows the inhumanity of white

people. Caesar wants to die for now so he can be with Imoinda again and stop feeling ashamed. Byam tells Banister, a wealthy but cruel Irishman, to take a recovering Oroonoko from Parham's house and take him to the whipping post. Mr. Banister was born and raised in Ireland. Banister was a very rude person. Banister told Caesar he would be put down, just like all other dogs. Caesar says that "This was the first piece of bravery that ever Banister did, and he never spoke sense till he pronounc'd that word; and, if he would keep it, he would declare, in the other world, that he was the only man, of all the whites, that ever he heard speak truth." (Behn, 223). He also says Banister is the only white person he has met who has been honest with him. Caesar wants to die for two reasons: first, he badly wants to end his life and take revenge for Imoinda's death, and second, he thinks that the only way he can successfully rebel against his captors is by dying with honor. Even though he is in a dangerous position, he keeps his dignity and calm by asking his captors to tie him up. Caesar asks for a smoke right before the Council starts to question him. Caesar smokes a cigarette as the slaughter pulls out his private parts and throws them into the fire. He keeps smoking while his ears and nose are cut off with a "ill-favoured Knife" and thrown into the fire by the executioner. He isn't doing anything to stop the executioner from cutting him up slowly, but by smoking a pipe the whole time, he still seems confident and brave. Caesar kept smoking cigarettes even after one of his arms was cut off. Caesar stops smoking, and his shoulders droop when doctors cut off his other arm. He dies quietly and peacefully, without making a sound or saying anything wrong. People came from all over to see Caesar's body while he was still living, and they still do so to this day because it was the most beautiful and dignified thing of its time. Now that he's dead, though, his body can be used as a tool to frighten and resist anyone who gets too close to it. It shows us the harsh cruelty of slavery, at that time.

4.3 Social perspective on slavery:

The sociological view of slavery is how a society or group sees slavery as a system and tries to make sense of it. It includes the different views, principles, perspectives, and ideas that the people of that nation have regarding slavery. This point of view might change throughout of history, and it might appear different in various nations. In the novella *Oroonoko*, the author also shows some facts and thoughts about slavery at that time.

Death is better than slavery. After selling Imoinda into slavery, the grandfather of Oroonoko mentioned that “Death is better than slavery”, which holds a profound meaning. According to him, accepting death is easier than being a slave. In Aphra Behn's novella *Oroonoko*, this phrase has deep social meanings that show how miserable life was in the 17th century. This short but strong statement shows how racism, authority, and free will all interact in a colonial setting. It shows the state that slaves are in society. In the narrative of *Oroonoko*, the way Europeans harshly treated African slaves. In the narrative, slavery is shown to be both an economic and a moral system. It's about a group of people who are ruled by an authoritarian English people who treats them badly. Even by choosing death over slavery in the end, Oroonoko shows that losing freedom hurts more than dying. This comment indicates again how racist people were at the time. The idea that the noble African prince Oroonoko would rather die than be a slave shows that many people think Europeans are naturally better than Africans. It's a criticism of how people thought at the time, which made it okay for Europeans to be cruel to Africans and treat them like animals. This idea is wrong because Oroonoko's determination shows that people of all races want freedom and respect. "Death is better than slavery" isn't the only thing that makes people think about free will and democratic ideals. Oroonoko's decision to kill himself instead of becoming a slave shows how important human freedom is. This point of view questions the

reality of the colonial society established in this narrative, in which Europeans had almost complete control over enslaved Africans. Oroonoko's determination shows that, no matter how hard things are, people always want to be in control. This message is about the bigger fight for social justice and equal rights. People who were mistreated have always fought back, even if it meant risking their own lives. After Imoinda's death, Oroonoko's declaration shows that the fight against oppression will go on forever. It will encourage people in the future to stand up to injustice and fight for what they believe in. Last but not least, the line "Death is better than slavery" in Oroonoko shows how dehumanizing slavery is, breaks down race stereotypes, and shows that everyone wants freedom and control over their lives. Its theme of resistance and justice is just as important now as it was when it was written, and it shows a lot about how people behaved in the colonial age. This statement shows how the human spirit is strong and will not accept any kind of servitude. It offers the social perspective that, at that time, people thought that death is much better than the brutality of slavery.

Moreover, children from slave parents had to accept their fate as an enslaved person from birth. In the novella *Oroonoko* when his wife Imoinda (Clemene) got pregnant Oroonoko becomes tense while thinking about his offspring. "he began to suspect them of falsehood, and that they would delay him till the time of his wife's delivery and make a slave of that too: for all the breed is theirs to whom the parents belong." (Behn, 191). It shows that, as a father, he wanted to give his children a better life by escaping from slavery and was not ready to see his children as slaves. He started a rebellion against the slave traders for his freedom because of the social perspective that an offspring of an enslaved person would also be a slave. In Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*, the idea that "slavery includes bringing the next generation into slavery" has deep social meanings that show how slavery is a cycle of cruelty. This idea is a depressing warning of

how the effects of slavery can last for generations. It shows that the problem will still be there for the next generation. This point of view indicates mostly how slavery worked in the structure of the made-up colonial society. Slavery doesn't happen just once. Instead, it's a systemic problem that comes from abusing and controlling a big number of people. Behn shows that slavery lasts forever by saying, "Slavery includes the next generation into slavery." This means that service is passed down from one generation to the next. The harsh truth of their time was that the children of slaves would grow up to be slaves and have few opportunities. This line shows again how slavery makes people less human. It shows how slaves become nothing but instruments that their masters use to get what they want. The harsh society does not see children as innocent or safe. Their slave owners decide everything about their lives from the moment they are born. This shows once again how cruel slavery is. This idea also shows how the social structure of colonial countries worked. Slavery is shown as a way for the ruling class, which is mostly made up of European colonists, to keep control over the slaves and future generations. The ruling class stays in power and has an assembled workforce because they keep enslaving. This makes it possible for slavery to keep taking advantage of the business and maintaining power for many generations. Even though slavery ended a long time ago, the offspring of slaves will face economic and social discrimination. In other words, they have to deal with the effects of their parents being slaves. This idea is a warning about how injustices done to oppressed groups in the past can hurt them in the future. The main idea of "slavery includes the next generation into slavery" in *Oroonoko* shows how the brutality and dehumanization of slavery can be passed down from one generation to the next. It shows how power is established and slavery is kept going from one generation to the next, from the present to the far future. This point of view aligns with historical worries about the long-term and far-reaching social effects of slavery.

Aphra Behn's novella *Oroonoko* supports the post-colonial theory through Edward Said's Orientalism. In the novel *Oroonoko*, Africa belongs to the Orient part which was a European settlement at the time. Black Africans used to be treated as uncultured subhuman because they were not as developed as whites. They were also sold into slavery in some countries around Europe. They had to do everything their masters told them to do, and it took a lot of work just to make sure they got food and could stay alive. Orientalism played a role in making it easier for Europeans to take over Africa. The Europeans wrote a version of history that suited their own needs. They made "the Eastern" people seem different, lower, and less human than themselves, and they set up colonies to teach and educate those people. People from the Orient were bought and sold as slaves a lot, which caused them a lot of pain. In the novel *Oroonoko*, Aphra Behn shows the reality of Orientalism and colonialism. White Europeans thought black Africans were inferior and kept them as slaves because they thought they were better than them. This was true whether the black Africans were part of the royal family or just regular people. The main protagonist of the novel named Oroonoko, belongs to a royal family, who is taken by English attackers and made into a slave. The main idea of the narrative is slavery, racism, and the tragic end of the protagonist. The novel is mostly in alignment with post-colonialism in how it shows how catastrophic European colonialism was for native people and their customs. Authorities from the colonial government took advantage of Oroonoko and his people brutally. In the novella, power dynamics, racial hierarchies, and conflicts between cultures are all looked at. Oroonoko's internal struggle between his African roots and the European values he's been introduced to shows how hard it is for people to figure out who they are. Oroonoko the main protagonist, is from a royal family. He lost his freedom and royal life after being betrayed by a white man. They colonized them and imposed white culture and religion upon the blacks. Their

brutality had no bounds. They only thought about their own benefits. Though Oroonoko is from a noble family, they did not consider him like that. They treated him based on his skin color. Because of the oppression of their superior thought Oroonoko the main protagonist failed to protect Imoinda his wife and himself.

Chapter 5: Analysis of *Twelve Years A Slave*

The autobiographical novel *Twelve Years A Slave* by Solomon Northup represents the miserable condition of slavery and racism experienced by the writer himself at that time. Northup's story raises the issue of the white supremacist and anti-black nature of the prevailing colonial ideology, which made it permissible for African Americans to be enslaved. Northup's terrifying narrative of being taken and sold into slavery as a free man shows how colonial ideas about race were wrong. His narrative shows how inhumane it is to treat people like things and how random it is to put people into groups based on race. The idea of race also shows how one group of people thinks that they are better than another, like when white people rule over others by taking their identity and their basic human rights, abusing, discriminating against, and even using violence against black people. Northup also portrayed the harsh cruelty of slavery. In the plantation, they used to be treated like animals. Additionally, he showed the social perspective of slavery. He also showed how the cruelty of slavery is going on from generation to generation. The reason for choosing this particular novel is to show and describe the demonic side of slavery as well as the discrimination between the races in American society.

5.1 Racism

In the beginning of the novel *Twelve Years A Slave* our main protagonist, Solomon Northup describes his normal life before slavery and how his life took a turn because of his dark skin color. As he was a free man who was enjoying his family life and job, he was happy within himself. In the introduction, we can see that, Solomon says that he wants to do more than just talk about his time as a slave. His evidence is essential for legal and political reasons, as there were many controversies about black writings so, it can be candid or a true story. By talking about what it was like to be enslaved, Solomon hopes to get people in the North to speak out

more against slavery and testify against those who have stood in the way of justice. Solomon tells a short story about his family. The ancestors and the father of Northup used to serve the master whose plantation was in Rhode Island. Solomon's father, Mintus was a slave but gained his freedom when his master took his last breath. Solomon points out that Mintus's former owner, Northup, is a distant relative of the abolitionist and lawyer Henry B. Northup, who freed Solomon from a life of slavery. Solomon and his wife Anne live in a cozy house in Saratoga Springs. The names of their three children are Elizabeth, Margaret, and Alonzo. Northup met two people named Hamilton and Brown, and they promised him a better life in Washington D.C . As a freeman, he had some documents that ensured that he was a freeman, and these two white people suggested him to carry those papers for safety. Solomon did not give much attention to the papers as he considered them as his friends. He also believed the kindness that two white people showed towards them, though he was a black person. Hamilton and Brown seemed worried about Northup and like they would do anything for him. After some time, Northup understood that Hamilton and Brown were shady individuals using their friendship with Northup and their generosity to hide their true intentions from him. Solomon says that at the time, he didn't know that they were "subtle and inhuman monsters in the shape of men—designedly luring me away from home and family, and liberty, for the sake of gold." (Northup, 34) who were about to do "great wickedness." It shows the idea that slavery brings out the worst in humanity. After Solomon wakes up, he is shown to his room in the back of the hotel. Because the room is at the hotel's very end, it is very private and not near any other rooms. The men drink a little at each bar they go to during the day, and they always leave some liquor for Solomon, who drinks a little but doesn't get drunk, but gets violently sick. This shows that Hamilton and Brown had more than one chance to put a drug in Solomon's drink before he got ill. Solomon has

only a vague idea of what's going on, and he doesn't even know the faces of the other people because Hamilton and Brown may have given him drugs. Solomon's room is on the ground floor and in the back of the hotel. This makes it easy and quick to sneak him out without anyone else in the building noticing. When Solomon finally wakes up, he is chained up in a small, dimly lit room. He tries to remember how he got here and where Hamilton and Brown are, but he can't remember much of either. When he put his hands in his pockets, he realized that losing his "Free paper" took away his status as a free man from the North. From being friends with Northup, the kidnapper showed the actual color of white people. They may seem good from the outside, but their intention was not always pure. During that time, white people were not trustworthy, and were doomed in the thought of their superiority.

The following day, James Burch, a well-known slave dealer, and Ebenezer Radburn, a white man who worked with him, walk in. In a harsh voice, Burch tells Solomon that he has bought him as a slave and will take him to New Orleans. Burch says that Solomon is from Georgia, even though Solomon says he is a free man in New York. Solomon says that he was born and raised in New York. Solomon keeps telling Burch to let him out of his chains, and he keeps his rebellious attitude. Burch yells at Solomon, "Every other profane and vulgar epithet that the most depraved imagination could come up with." (Northup, 44) Solomon says in answer, "I'm not a liar!" After Bruch says something bad about him, Northup is sure that there is no justice. Now that he is in the slaveholders' hands, Northup knows he is a slave. If he were to tell the truth about who he was, more people would be in trouble. Solomon learns that being honest about who he is dangerous and not worth the risk. In slavery, no slaves were allowed to talk about their past life, which would bring them misfortune. Burch gets angry when Solomon says he is free. This shows that he knows selling a free man into slavery is a bad idea, but he still did

it. Solomon insisted on being on his own. Burch brutally beats and whips Solomon after telling Radburn to get the paddle and whip. Every time Solomon says he is free, Burch hits him harder. Burch tells Radburn to get the paddle and the whip, which he does. Northup, a 12-year-old slave on a farm, says that his masters were so cruel that “A man with even a little bit of mercy in his soul would not have beaten a dog so cruelly.” (Northup ,45). In the last moments before he goes, Burch tells Solomon that he will be killed if he ever tries to get his freedom. Radburn tries to help by telling Solomon that it would be best for him not to tell anyone that he's free. By hitting Solomon over and over again, Burch is clearly playing out his most violent and brutal tendencies, which he tries to explain by talking about racism and slavery. From a family man to a slave, Northup's fate took turn only because of his skin tone which differed from whites. The superior mentality of a white turned a black human into a slave where he isn't even considered a human. White people believed that “Black people” were born to be enslaved, and their duty was to serve them. Though Northup was a freeman. he was betrayed by his white friends only because of his black skin color, which can be seen as the racial part of slavery.

In the novel *Twelve Years A Slave*, Northup showed his reader that, the government cannot ensure justice for the black people because for black people their skin color is a great barrier. Northup gained his freedom after passing his life as an enslaved person for twelve years. As I said earlier, because of his skin tone, he was dragged into slavery, and after his freedom, his justice was denied because of racism. The situation of slavery didn't change much after an era. The fate of an enslaved person still depended on the white people as blacks were considered inferior in white society. When Northup was free from slavery, he along with his lawyer Henry B. Northup, went to Washington D.C. When they arrive, they go straight to the police officer to tell them that Burch sold Solomon into slavery. During the whole process, Solomon is on Henry

B. Northup's side. Benjamin O. Shekels, who works with Burch and also sells slaves, gives him bail when he is jailed. Later in Solomon's trial, both Shekels and another guy named Benjamin A. Thorn gave false witness against Northup. He said that Solomon planned to go to the South and identified himself as a slave and hid the fact that he was a freeman. Solomon's innocence has been proven beyond any doubt, but he is still not allowed to speak. Burch, on the other hand, is allowed to speak and is found not guilty in the end. Burch has gone so far as to pay off two fake witnesses, which is more evidence that he is lying about the crime he did. Even though the claim that Solomon wanted to move to the South is entirely false, the court took it seriously because white witnesses said it was true. The court is trying to hide the truth so that Burch and other slave traders don't hurt them. The court's choice to let Burch testify but not Solomon is only a clear sign of bias, but it also gets in the way of justice. Solomon is taken into custody and taken to court, where Henry B. Northup will represent him. During the trial, Burch chose to drop all charges against the person on trial. Solomon says in an open letter to the reader that he never tried to trick Burch and that he is completely clean. He says that he did not plan to steal from Burch. Burch was found not guilty, but he chooses to file a complaint against Solomon to get back at him. Burch can make up a fake reason because he is naturally bad person. The court also ignored the justice of Northup as he was a black man, and denied its duty to serve people. It shows the white hypocrisy against the black, and implemented what they thought about. The white people were taking advantage of the hypocrisy they were thought of. They were taking advantage of the discrimination happening in white dominant society. They didn't let go of any chance to punish black people even if the person was not guilty. All human beings are the same, but people took advantage of the skin color that a man was born with and racism made a huge difference in society.

5.2 Slavery

Identity change is one of the main facts of slavery, where an enslaved person has to let go of his past name and his past life. Moreover, a slave's name changed along with his master because our main protagonist had to let go of his name "Solomon Northup" and adopt the name "Platt" given by the plantation owner. Northup served multiple owners during his slavery life, so he had to adopt several names as well for example, when he was serving Ford, he was called by the name "Platt Ford", during Tibeats's time he was called as "Platt Tibeates" and lastly he was called as "Platt Epps" when he was serving his master Epps. The main problem he faced because of his changing identity was that he could not even respond when Mr. Theophilus Freeman, the slave dealer who worked in New Orleans and was very cruel, called Northup by his new name "Platt". As Northup was unaware about the changing name, he could not respond. "I informed him that was not my name; that I had never been called by it, but that I had no objection to it as I knew of. "Well, I will learn you your name," said he; "and so you won't forget it either, by ——," he added." (Northrup, 76). It shows that without even informing the slaves, the slave traders used to change their name and identity. If the slaves didn't respond to them by the new name, which they didn't know, slave traders blamed them for that. We can consider "changing identity" as the most impertinent part of slavery. It not only forces a slave to let go of his name but also all the experiences and memories he gathered during life, which creates an identity crisis for the slave. This changing identity creates a barrier between the family member and Solomon Northup (Platt). When the family members of Northup came to rescue him from slavery after twelve years, they could not reach him easily because of his new identity.

It would have been impossible for them to have gone into the fields and examine all the gangs at work. They were not aware that I was known only as Platt; and had they

inquired of Epps himself, he would have stated truly that he knew nothing of Solomon Northup. (Northup, 295).

Here, the author himself is worried that his family members will ever find him, as his full identity has been changed in his twelve years of slavery. It shows the white superiority towards blacks that they are not only capable of buying them as enslaved people but also they can create a new identity for them with that money.

Moreover, slavery not only detaches a person from their family but also takes away a woman's motherhood. In *Twelve Years A Slave* "Eliza Berry" who played the role of a mother and slave was detached from her children. Solomon spends two weeks in Williams' Slave Pen. During that time, he meets Eliza, the mother of little Randall, whom he had already met, and Emily, a beautiful young daughter of Eliza. Eliza admits that before she was free, she was a slave in Washington, D.C., and worked for a rich man named Elisha Berry. After he and his wife fought, Elisha built a new house and asked Eliza to move in with him. He promised that Eliza and their children would be set free when he died. Eliza and him were happy and wealthy for nine years, which made Elisha's wife and daughter jealous. Eliza, Elisha's daughter, married a guy named Jacob Brooks. After that, she was no longer Elisha's property but Brook's. It can be said that Eliza's jobs as a slave and a wife were complicated. Though Eliza was never treated like a slave, her rich master did not give her a proper identity as a wife. She was loved like the wife of a rich man for the first nine years of her life. As a slave, she was seen as property instead of a person, so she was only given the rights and benefits provided to slaves for a short time. Eliza tells how Brooks, Elisha's son-in-law, was tricked into thinking she would be set free. With Eliza's help, Brooks got some free papers in town, and then he sold Eliza and her kids to James Burch. So, it shows how white people used to give fake promises to the black slaves regarding

their freedom. Eliza sold dishonestly to Burch, probably for money, in a way that was very similar to what happened to Solomon. Solomon and Eliza thought they were safe because they had free papers. Solomon felt he would be safe in Washington, D.C., because he had free papers, and Eliza thought she was going into town to get free papers. Both times, the free papers were a falsehood. In the case of Solomon Northup now known as Platt, the same thing happened with Eliza. In this novel, every time that free papers were given away, it turned out to be a trick. The story Eliza tells makes the author cry and feel sorry for her. He says it would be “enough to melt a heart of stone to listen to the pitiful expressions of that desolate and distracted mother.” (Northup, 51)

Now the story takes a tragic turn when the elder son of Eliza named Randall is taken away. Solomon feels terrible to see Eliza and her kids being taken away. No matter how much Eliza begs and how many tears she sheds, the man who buys Randall first won't have enough money left to buy Eliza and Emily. Randall is being taken away while, he said, he says, “Don't cry, mama. I will be a good boy. Don't cry.”(Northrup,82). The situation describes the cruel scenery of slavery where people who bought and sold slaves would split up from their families forever. The situation of Eliza didn't affect her master at all, it seems like whites have no heart.

Now, it's time for Eliza to be separated from her only daughter Emily. Emily's current slave master, Freeman would sell Emily to William Ford. William purchased Solomon, Eliza, and another slave named Harry. Considering the situation of mother and daughter, William wanted to buy Emily too. As every slave worth a lot of money, Freeman wanted to sell Emily when she was to be an adult so that Freeman could sell her in exchange for more money. At that time, a young slave was worth more money than a kid or an old slave. Emily and Eliza cry and scream when they are taken apart. Emily screamed, “Don't leave me mamma – don't leave me,”

(Northrup, 87). But it's all in vain. Ford seems to feel bad about it. Ford represents the sympathetic side of the slave masters. Platt has met many people who might buy his slaves or sell them, but William Ford is nothing like the others. Ford's interactions with the slaves are similar to the ones he wants to have with the kids he hopes to adopt. His offer to buy Emily so that she won't have to be taken away from her mother is another sign of how caring he is. Emily has been standing in line with the other slaves as if she were for sale the whole time, but Freeman says all of a sudden that she is not for sale. Freeman wants Emily and her mother to be apart for no reason other than to be apart. Freeman and Ford were from White society but represent the different sides of humans. While Freeman was cruel towards his slave simultaneously, by showing sympathy, Ford shows that humanity still exists. Solomon Northrup gave the readers tragic news of Eliza. Eliza took her last breath while taking the burden of maternal sorrow. "Eliza never after saw or hear of Emily or Randall. Day nor night, however, were they ever absent from her memory." (Northrup, 88). Slavery is not always about physical torture or sexual harassment but also a disgrace to the mother who wanted to be with their child. A mother who gave birth and brought up their children with all her emotions, slavery snatched the beautiful childhood from the children and the motherhood from the mother.

Moreover, slaves were used to facing bigger punishment even for small mistakes. Due to several bad things that kept happening at the Ford estate, William Ford had to sell Platt to the estate to his builder, John M. Tibbeats. Platt follows his new owner, Tibbeats, to his ranch 27 miles away at Bayou Boeuf. Platt and Tibbeats work for Ford in that area and help with building jobs. Platt says that Tibbeats and William Ford are like opposite poles. Tibbeats is a cruel master who never gets what he wants and can't be made happy in any way. A white man named Chapin runs the Bayou Boeuf farm. He is nice, but he hates Tibbeats. When Tibbeats is in charge of Platt, he

has to work in challenging conditions. Solomon never stops working hard and never takes a break, but his master still finds something wrong with everything. He is always yelling at him with “He never spoke to me a kind word. I was his faithful slave, and earned him large wages every day, and yet I went to my cabin nightly, loaded with abuse and stinging epithets.” (Northrup, 107). It clearly shows that Tibeats had no reason to abuse Platt but still to prove his superiority, he did all that. Platt doesn't deserve what is going to him because he follows Tibeats' orders, even though he is tired and doesn't like his demanding master. The following day, Tibeats tells Platt to get the nails from Chapin and return to work as a carpenter. After a good night's sleep, Platt returns to ask Chapin for his nails the next day. Chapin has no problem using that exact quantity if that's what Tibeats wants. Platt sees that when Tibeats is working, he is in a terrible mood. Platt tells him again that he will be able to find more nails, just like Chapin said he could. Platt gets a “flood of curses” from Tibeats, who also reaches for the whip. Platt is angry about the idea of Tibeats whipping him because he thinks he has done everything he was supposed to do. When Tibeats tells Platt to take off his clothes so he can beat him, Platt says, “I will not.” (Northrup, 110). The overall situation describes that the plantation owners sought mistakes to punish the slaves. In Platt's case, we can see that he did nothing wrong to be punished by his master brutally, but his master did not consider that. Tibeats comes at Platt vigorously with his jumps, but Platt catches him and pins him to the ground with a tackle. Platt puts his foot on Tibeats's neck and starts to beat him, even though the master is yelling for help. When Platt gives Tibeats a taste of his own complex medicine, it's like all the cruel things he had to go through as an enslaved person come back to him at once. After a brief moment of success, justice is quickly and without much controversy turned on its head. When Platt beats Tibeats back, he will be killed; he knows that because whipping slaves is a normal and harsh thing that

slave owners do, but at that time, it was not acceptable to the whites or slave masters that any slaves beat them up. After an hour, Tibeats and two other men on horses with whips and ropes ride through the swamp with Tibeats. One of the other men said that if Platt fights while Tibeats ties his hands and feet, the other man will break Platt's head and rip off his limbs. Tibeats makes a knot out of the rest of the rope, which he then puts around Platt's neck to choke him. Chapin is in a hurry to get to where Tibeats and his friends have pulled Platt. He has a pistol in each hand as he makes his way there. He said that whatever he did was not wrong, and he says this with absolute certainty. After that, Tibeats and the other men left that place, but Solomon was tied to a tree.

As the sun approached the meridian that day it became insufferably warm. Its hot rays scorched the ground. The earth almost blistered the foot that stood upon it. I was without coat or hat, standing bare-headed, exposed to its burning blaze. Great drops of perspiration rolled down my face, drenching the scanty apparel wherewith I was clothed. (Northup, 118).

Here the author describes how brutally the slave traders treated their slaves; if they made any mistakes, they had to face harsh consequences. Platt is standing in the blazing noon sun with his arms and legs bound and the rope still around his neck. Because he is tied so tightly, so he can't hide in the shade to escape the heat. The whole story describes that there is also a hint at the importance of human respect and the fact that people can be cruel to each other. After a bitter day, finally Mr. Fort came to save him. The situation of Solomon describes the whole scenery of slavery, where slaves used to be punished even if they were not guilty, which represents the sufferings of black slaves under white dominance.

Furthermore, Tibeats hired Platt for Ford's brother-in-law Peter Tanner after that incident. In Peter Tanner's plantation, Platt was free from the fear of Tibeats. Platt had to return to Tibeats because he was no longer needed in Peter Tanner's plantation. Platt was sure about the attack coming his way because of the past incident with Tibeats. And the fear of Platt came true when Tibeats attacked him. The only way that can save him from further punishment is to leave Tibeats plantation, and he successfully escapes from that plantation by reaching Ford's plantation. It can be said that slaves were more like products to the plantation owners, and they wanted to make use of most of it. As they were considered a product so the plantation owner did not think twice while torturing them brutally for even the slightest mistake. Slave like Solomon Northup (Platt) chose the way of escaping because the torture was unbearable.

Additionally, slaves were forced to do overwork on the plantation. They were treated in an inhumane manner. Platt worked for Epps, his third and cruelest master, for over a decade. Platt and the other slaves who work for Epps are mistreated by their master. Epps doesn't think of his slaves as much more than animals because they help him make money by gathering cotton. They had to work from dusk till dawn. In the novel, *Twelve Years A Slave*, we can see that during cotton picking season at Epps plantation, the cruelty towards the slaves has no bounds. Most of the crops are ready to be picked by the end of August. Slaves are forced to gather about 200 pounds of cotton daily, and those who don't meet their target face punishment. Platt says that the whole process of picking cotton is driven by instinctual fear. Author says, "The cotton will not bloom upon a broken branch." (Northup, 167). By saying this, he wants to say that if Epps' slaves are treated harshly, they won't be able to do their jobs, just like a cotton plant with broken branches won't be able to grow. The slaves are clearly at the end of their physical strength because they don't get enough food or sleep. One of the many things that Epps punishes his

slaves for is picking too little or too much cotton. At the end of the work day, every slave “approaches the gin-house with his basket of cotton but with fear.” (Northup,167) This quotation shows the relentless side of cotton plantations. If the day's crop is smaller than usual, the slave will be punished, and if it's bigger than expected, they will have to pick the same amount in the next few days. It shows that slaves had their most basic rights ignored and abused. They were treated like objects, didn't get a fair trial, and couldn't say anything about choices that affected their lives and well-being. Slaves were often denied simple needs like clothes, food, and rest. They were also forced to work long, hard shifts in horrible conditions. Slave owners didn't care about their slaves' well-being and would force them to do as much work as possible.

Epps continues to invoke the institution of slavery to justify the heartless manner in which he treats other people. Phebe, also called Aunt Phebe, is a slave who works in Edwin Epps's home. In one conversation she hears, an old guy named O'Niel says he wants to buy Solomon from Edwin Epps. When she found out, she told Platt right away. He tells Phebe that he still hopes O'Niel will buy him, but Mistress Epps overhears them and tells Epps about that. After hearing that, Epps got furious and whipped Platt so badly. Solomon (Platt) tells the reader that “nothing will more violently enrage a master [...] than the intimation of one of his servants that he would like to leave him.” (Northrup, 251). Because of this, Epps beats Platt in a very cruel way. It was not even Platt's fault or anything. If Epps had not known that Solomon wanted O'Niel to buy him, he might have been more willing to sell him to him for the agreed-upon price. It looks like Epps wanted Solomon to suffer. I have previously mentioned Freeman's refusal to sell Eliza's daughter Emily, which caused the family to break up. It shows that whites or the slave traders purposely tried to hurt the slaves as much as they could.

Moreover, in the novel *Twelve Years A Slave*, Solomon (Platt) writes that Abram, an old slave who belonged to Epps, was often hurt in horrible ways. When Solomon returns, Abram lies in a pool of blood on the floor of his house. Abram says that their drunk master stabbed him because he made a small mistake when spread cotton. Another example that shows how badly they treat their slaves that even Epps tried to kill him just for a small mistake.

In the novel, we can see that as an enslaved person Platt had to work more than his capability, so when Solomon (Platt) gets smallpox during the summer, he still has to work and is reprimanded when he doesn't do what he's supposed to do. In September, Solomon's health kept getting worse. But Epps was not coming to check on him. At that time, if slaves were sick, masters were not looking after them. When Solomon's (Platt's) situation is close to death, Epps reluctantly takes him to the vet because he doesn't want to lose "an animal worth a thousand dollars." (Northup, 177) The doctor told Epps to give Solomon enough food to keep him alive. Plantation owners assess them with animals, which they bought with thousands of dollars, so when Solomon was sick, his master did not even come to see until he received the message of Solomon's worst situation. They did not rest properly to recover and had to work immediately. One day, after a heavy work day, unfortunately Solomon overslept which caused him punishment for whipping. The overall situation describes the hardship that a slave has to go through.

Furthermore, not only men but also women could not get out of the terrible clutches of slavery. In the novel, a character who represents a woman named "Patsey". Edwin Epps is a cruel owner who treats his slave Patsey like a piece of property, even though she is strong. She is forced to pick cotton from plants, but the protagonist, Solomon Northrup (Platt) can help her, seeing that her situation is hopeless. Mistress Epps's jealousy and anger are made worse because

her husband seems to prefer Patsey. This makes Mistress Epps even more unkind and insulting to her. In the novel *Twelve Years A Slave*, the protagonist said that the beating Patsey got was the worst he had ever seen. When the slaves were doing their laundry on Sunday, Epps asked where Patsey was but couldn't find her. Patsey doesn't get soap from Mistress Epps, so she went to her friend Harriet Shaw to get some. When she came back, she said she was visiting. When Epps thinks Patsey has gone to see Harriet Shaw's white husband, he gets angry and jealous. It can be said that Patsey gets in trouble over and over again for no good reason. Mistress Epps punishes Patsey because Mr. Epps constantly acts sexually abusive toward Patsey, even though it is Mr. Epps who is to blame. Even out of her jealousy, Patsey also can't use soap because Mistress Epps keeps it from her on purpose so that Patsey could be punished by her husband. Epps has asked Platt to drive four stakes into the ground. Patsey is made to remove her clothes before the other slaves tie her hands and feet to the stakes and put her on her back. Patsey can't stop getting her back beaten when Epps tells Platt to do it, and Solomon can't do anything about it. Mistress Epps, in the meantime, "gazes" at the "demoniac exhibition" with a look on her face that shows both pleasure and sadness. Narrator says that, "My heart revolted at the inhuman scene" (Northrup, 257). At this point, Platt has hit Patsey forty times, and has no plans to keep doing so. In this situation, Epps takes charge of the whip and uses it "ten times harder" than Platt did. Patsey's condition was so bad that - "Her screams and supplications gradually decreased and died away into a low moan. She no longer writhed and shrank beneath the lash when it bit out small pieces of her flesh. I thought that she was dying." (Northrup, 257). This horrific situation left a deep scar in Patsey's mind as the author Solomon Northrup mentioned in his novel that - "she was not what she had been." (Northrup, 258). Patsey may recover physically but could not be the old Patsey she used to be. "She became more silent than she was, toiling all day in our midst, not

uttering a word.” (Northrup, 259). The behavior towards women slaves is portrayed by Patsey as we can see her in different ways. She used to be the best cotton picker but she was physically assaulted by her master and also faced the jealousy of the mistress.

5.3 Social perspective on slavery

The rights of black people were routinely disregarded in a society in where white people held the majority population. The institution of slavery had a detrimental effect not just on people of African heritage but also on black children who were born within the system. The behaviors of a white husband can sometimes be the basis for their separation from their wife. When a family is ripped apart, it may negatively impact the mental health of the children raised inside that family.

In the novel *Twelve Years A Slave*, there is a scene in which Epps's wife displays extreme jealousy with Patsey. In addition, Elisa Berry's wife and children reacted negatively to Elisa Berry's presence since it made them jealous. Elisa Berry is to blame for this situation. The hypocrisy of white people affects black children and also the white children. From a moral thought, we can say that a son will invariably follow in his father's footsteps. It is inevitable that the son will continue the brutal treatment that the father meted out to their black slaves. Which is something that can be seen in the situation of Epps's oldest son at this point. Even though he is just ten or twelve years old, Young Master Epps takes after his father and is rather brutal to the slaves. He follows in his father's footsteps. “The child is the father to the man” (Northrup, 261). Even his father was a pretty cruel person. When he is "playing the overseer," a game in which he rides out into the fields and uses a whip to discipline the slaves, he has a terrific time. He is having a great time playing this game. Solomon is under the notion that Epps's son does not

understand the significance of the expression "in the eye of the Almighty there is no distinction of color." (Northup, 261). Epps oldest son, much like his father before him, thinks of the slaves as being equivalent to animals rather than human beings. This was also the case with his father. The actions of Master Epps's oldest son illustrate the notion that racism is not something that people are born with, which is a vital aspect to bear in mind. The brutal game that Epps's son played is just one more example of how children will replicate the habits and words of their parents. Solomon Northup is saying that racism is bad conduct that God abhors and that it is something that humans engage in.

Moreover, though black slaves and white servants used to serve their plantation masters, their attitudes towards them were different regarding their skin color. The difference between slaves and servants was that Servants were used to being free. They could work and spend time with their family but on the other hand black slaves were bought and their rights were snatched from them. Though both of them were responsible for serving their master, but they were treated differently because of their skin color. Solomon tells the reader that he was always looking for ways to write letters to his family and friends, even as a slave. Mistress Epps sends Platt to town nine years into his service to buy a variety of things, including a stack of paper. Platt takes the bottom sheet off the bed and tucks it under the wooden plank he sleeps on to keep it from getting cold. After a lot of practice, he learned how to make his ink and pen. He was passionately looking for someone who could help him. Solomon keeps the letter hidden for a long time until he can give it to the person. Armsby, a poor white man, joins the slaves on Epps's plantation when he hears that Epps needs help there. Platt tries to be his friend, and in the end, he asks Armsby to take a letter to a city address. Since Platt doesn't know if he can trust Armsby, he doesn't tell him that the letter has been written and the paper has been found. Armsby promises

Solomon (Platt) that the letter he is writing to him will be kept secret. Platt has to ask a white man for help because he can't make the delivery on his own because of racism and slavery. Platt's neediness is shown by the fact that he wants Armsby's help even though he doesn't trust him. The next day, it had been proven that Platt was right about his thoughts. Epps walks into Platt's bedroom with a whip to talk to him about the letter. The letter is the subject of the talk. Platt told him that he can't write a letter without ink and paper; Epps looked confused. Solomon made Epps think that he has no friends by saying he does not know anyone he could write a letter to. This event shows how racism can make it hard to find the truth and do what's right. The parts were switched after Epps decided that Platt did the crime because Armsby was white and thought Solomon was guilty. Since Armsby was white, Epps gave his story more weight than Platt's. Society didn't treat black slaves and white servants with the same amount of attention. It was a curse towards the black slaves that they had to take all the blame that came from society.

The novel *Twelve Years a Slave* supports the post-colonial theory through Edward Said's Orientalism. During the time known as "colonialism," Europeans controlled and ruled over the colonized people. In this novel, the people in charge are the white ones. Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years A Slave* is about Solomon Northup, a free African American man, kidnapped and sold into slavery in the American South before the Civil War. The novel is told from the narrator's point of view. This novel is about post-colonialism and Orientalism because it discusses how colonial power systems, racism, and abuse made people less human. This novel shows how colonialism and Orientalism had led to ideas of racial superiority, economic slavery, and cultural rule that have stuck around for a long time. What Northup went through is enlightening because it shows how the slave trade in the colonial era was violent and cruel on a large scale. This shows how the spread of colonialism and Orientalism worldwide has had far-

reaching effects. His novel shows how important it is to talk about colonialism's continuing impacts and acknowledged its long-lasting effects on disadvantaged groups. Because of this mistaken idea, they used to think that because Orient people were black so they should be their slaves. They started to be interested in the slave trade. Instead of paying large sums of money, some white men would provide slaves. In the novel *Twelve Years a Slave* Solomon Northup was a freeman who entered into slavery after being betrayed by the colonizers because of his skin color. In this novel, we can see the superiority of the whites over the blacks and their dehumanizing behaviors towards them. They treated Orient people as inferior.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In both novels *Oroonoko* and *Twelve Years A Slave* our two main protagonists were involved in racism and slavery because of their dark skin tone. In the novel *Oroonoko* Aphra Behn shows the tragic turns of protagonist Oroonoko. Though he was carrying Royal blood, that could not save him from the grasp of slavery. In the 17th century, slavery was at its peak that slaves preferred death over slavery. On the other hand, in the novel *Twelve Years A Slave*, which was written by Solomon Northup himself based on his own experience. He was a freeman who was supposed to be safe from the dark side of slavery, but her fate decided something else for him. Though he was a free man he faced extreme torture and psychological pressure from every plantation owner he served. To sum up, our two main protagonists were from different eras. One is from the 17th century and another is from the 19th century but we can say that their fate was connected because they were ditched by whites and became slaves. Oroonoko and Solomon Northup, both of them were supposed to be free as Northup was a free man and Oroonoko was a member of the royal family. They had to give up their freedom as well as their family because of their skin color, which turned them into slaves. The behind picture of slavery did not change even after two decades because the white people were carrying their superiority over the blacks from generation to generation. Although the writings were different, their writings were not. Aphra Behn as a white woman, visualized everything and wrote it down for her audience on the other hand Solomon Northup experienced all the suffering in twelve years of his slavery life and wrote it down for the reader. The novels were connected with each other in terms of slavery, racism and social perspective on slavery.

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