

A Literary Study of Black Feminism in 19th-Century American Context

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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.
5. This thesis was conducted with the help of some authentic primary and secondary sources.
6. This study wishes to interpret some scholarly sources regarding its field of study.
7. The findings of this study are trustworthy and credible.

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Approval

The thesis/project titled “A Literary Study of Black Feminism in 19th Century American Context” submitted by Humayra Hakim Maliha ID (23303025) of Summer, 2024 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English on 5th September, 2025.

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Abstract

Racism and sexism have made black women in America and Europe see white women as less than human for a long time. Black women who were slaves were seen as sexually entitled, falling behind, and less important than white women. There has been bias against them because of their race and sexuality. In the 1800s, books like "Ain't I a Woman?" by Sojourner Truth and "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl" by Harriet Jacobs were the first to give Black women a voice. It was easy to see how hard things were for Black women and how much they wanted to be human, strong, and free in these new works. Black feminists fought for equal rights for women and black people before the Civil War. They spoke out against slavery and male-dominated systems that put women down. They said that their fights weren't getting enough attention and were often left out of well-known activist and early feminist groups. Before the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, the U.S. Constitution didn't treat slaves or Black people very well as people. For representational reasons, the "three-fifths compromise" treated slaves as parts of a person. However, the fact that Black people's humanity was not legally recognized helped slavery to continue. This paper explores the literary and historical review of the American female slaves and explores their sufferings.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

From being a human civilization to capturing humans to being their slaves, there is a long history of humans and enslaved people. In history and human society, there is a complexion of human acts where human civilization causes cruelty more than innovating the society. When civilization improved with time, the progress created human comparisons and differences. For example, after the English merchants went around buying and selling things, they introduced improvements in their area, and this mission went back to capturing one-third of the land. They introduced us to Westernization, and we followed in the footsteps of it. However, we see that America was not the image of improvement for a long time. After England discovered America, America's new journey arrived at that time. Colonialization gave America a new shape in which to compose and explore its value.

In the 19th century, America had a new shape and transformation in political, social, and economic structures where slavery was the centralized issue. It questioned the racial and cultural values of America, highlighting the deep-seated prejudices and inequalities that underpinned the nation's development. Where we see through the modernization of America points out the unjustified gender roles, characterizing women's work as non-significant and

bounding their work with household and other indoor work. We can see the diversion between gender roles, but there was a deep hole acquainted with America's culture, which shows diversity and inequality at the same time. In American history, the time between slavery and freedom under British rule was a time of great struggle for Black women, who had a hard time figuring out who they were. By forcing European ideas on Black women about culture, behaviours, and gender roles, the "civilizing mission" created a "double identity" problem. Black women had to deal with both black and white ideas of what it meant to be a black woman, which made things complex and confusing. When the new Constitution was signed into law in 1787 and the American Revolution ended, slavery was already very weak. But by 1800, slavery was back on the rise, especially in the South of the United States. The development and widespread use of the cotton gin, which made cotton farming more profitable and appealing to owners and farmers in the South, was one reason for this recovery. African Americans who were enslaved worked in the fields. Some slaves worked on big cotton farms, while others worked with tobacco, hemp, corn, and animals.

People who were forced to work as slaves had no say over when they worked and were constantly watched and hit by their bosses. Slaves were not helpless victims of their owners and the system, even though they lived in terrible conditions and had no choice. Their rooms were where they wouldn't have to be watched all the time, and their society went beyond the family and the single property or farm. They made a lively social and culture life that slave owners couldn't get to. Even though no sane person would want to be a slave, they tried to make the best of their situation. Slavery, which grew to define the 19th century, especially in the first half, was important in this change. Concurrent with these changes in gender roles, women—especially white women—started to challenge their assigned domestic

responsibilities, even as Black women, both enslaved and free, experienced a special kind of dual oppression based on both their race and gender. The complicated junctions of slavery, race, and gender in 19th-century America are examined in this section. Slavery was the foundation of the American Social Structure and Economic System. Slavery had been firmly ingrained in the American South by the 19th century, where it was not just an economic tool but also a way of life affecting all facets of society. Often known as "King Cotton, cotton dominated the Southern economy, and enslaved African Americans were the workers maintaining this agricultural powerhouse. Southern elites argued that slavery was a "positive good" necessary for the cultural identity and economic existence of their area. Slaves were mistreated because they were seen as property and had no formal rights. They were forced to work, were beaten, were sexually abused, and were in danger of being sold far from their homes.

For a long time, the legal and governmental processes were similar to and supported slavery. Though not explicitly addressing slavery, the Three-Fifths Compromise and the Fugitive Slave Clause, among other clauses, safeguarded the rights of slaveholders in the U.S. Constitution. As the country grew westward, the issue of whether new states would allow slavery grew to cause great strife over time. With the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and, subsequently, the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which let territories choose the legality of slavery via popular sovereignty, this conflict finally boiled over. During this time, relationships between men and women in the Black community got worse. The rise of Black power groups made sexism worse. Black women had to deal with both race and gender abuse in their own communities, which made it harder for them to stand up for who they were and what their roles were in society. There were also colour and class hierarchies in colonial society that made it

harder for Black women to figure out who they were. Lighter-skinned Black people were often seen as more important than darker-skinned Black people. It was hard for Black women to get a clear sense of who they were in a society that was biased against them because of these differences between themselves and white women, mixed-race women, and other women.

The narrative of Mary Prince is one of incredible resilience at the same time as it is filled with unfathomable misery. By describing her life in bondage, Prince sheds light on the physical and mental pain that enslaved Black women were subjected to. In addition to being forced to do work, these women were subjected to sexual exploitation, humiliation, and the ever-present risk of being separated from their families. However, even in the midst of such challenges, Prince's voice continues to reveal itself as a powerful demonstration of the resiliency of Black women. It was one of the first of its sort to be published in England, and it played an important part in the abolitionist movement. It also helped to humanize the harsh reality of slavery for audiences in Europe. Her tale was dictated in the year 1831. *The History of Mary Prince* is not just a narrative about surviving; it is also about how she got independence. With her choice to tell her tale to the world, Prince is challenging not just the system of slavery but also the deeply connected racism and sexism that existed together in her historical period. This decision may be seen as an act of rebellion as we see from this narrative, she asserts control over her own body as well as her own history, which is a deep statement of Black femininity in the face of dehumanization.

Back in the same vein, *Behind the Scenes* by Elizabeth Keckley provides a fresh viewpoint on the feminism of African Americans throughout the 19th century. Keckley's book provides a unique view into the intimate lives of both enslaved and liberated Black women, as well as the privileged white women they often served. Keckley was a woman who had been enslaved in the past and had become the confidante and seamstress of First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln. Despite the fact that Keckley's story takes place in the political arena of Washington, District of Columbia, at the time of the Civil War, it also draws attention to the emotional work that black women did for their white employers, all the while looking for ways to improve their own lives and achieve a sense of dignity and independence.

Behind the Scenes is especially intriguing because of the way it compares the inner hardships of Black women, which are often invisible, with the public roles that they were obliged to perform. Not only does Keckley write about her experiences as a seamstress, but she also writes about her circumstances as a mother who had to deal with the death of her son during the Civil War. Through her narrative, we get an understanding of the intricate and sometimes distressing confluence of race, gender, and social status in the United States throughout the 19th century, as well as the ways in which Black women such as herself carved out areas of autonomy within a society that was highly prejudiced. Documenting the lived realities of Black women in a manner that had been done so seldom in the past, *The History of Mary Prince* and *Behind the Scenes* are both considered to be early works of Black feminist thinking. Not only do these stories question the cultural conventions of the period made by the white community, but they also provide a voice to the personal and communal issues that Black women have endured for years, while also expressing their power, agency, and humanity.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate, via the perspective of intersectionality, how these two works, albeit being distinct in their locales and scopes, have a similar thread: they both portray the experiences of Black women who battled to determine their own destiny in a society that consistently denied them that right. Although these works present a complex and strong criticism of the institutions of slavery, racism, and sexism, they also show the ways in which Black women opposed and subverted those systems. This is accomplished by weaving together the personal and the political. In particular, this thesis connects with Black feminism, as shown in these novels, was not just a reaction to the harsh reality of slavery but also a larger movement for racial and gender justice as we experience from these novels how these women are victim of this social systems. This point of view is supported by the data presented in the narratives. The narratives of Mary Prince and Elizabeth Keckley shed light on the significance of reclaiming their own story and using it as a means of both surviving and resisting oppression. Within the context of the wider abolitionist and feminist movements of the 19th century, their works give essential insights into the insight of the white community in which Black women managed the combined burdens of racism and sexism. In addition, their writings contribute to the progress of these causes.

In the end, the purpose of this research is to place *The History of Mary Prince* and *Behind the Scenes* into the larger framework of Black feminist writing. It will demonstrate how these two works established the groundwork for subsequent generations of Black women authors and activists. After looking into the lives of Mary Prince and Elizabeth Keckley, this thesis not only discusses how important their contributions were to American literature and

social justice but also how important their experiences are to current discussions about power, gender, and race.

Chapter 2

Historical Background

When industrialization started in England, it began to explore other lands through English people. England pushed the Indian subcontinent to grow more industries so the British could benefit, and they mostly used free manpower to work. Here, America was still a child to be British people, and through the communication of white people, they began to human trafficking black people. First, it was a way of contract, but after some time, it started to explore things like a disease, taking men and women by force. We can say that the economic factor of America solely depended upon the enslaved people. Slaves and slavery grew over time and centuries, and it influenced the economic system but also created the racial system by declining their basic needs as humans. In the journey of Industrialization and slavery, while some economists say that slavery had some influence in the Industrial Revolution, through time, they all agree that slavery boosted the economic growth of this revolution. Trevor Burnard and Giorgio Riello explain this detail in *Journal of Global History*. In the book chapter “Slavery and the New History of Capitalism,” where the author connects the dots with other historians and economists who argue that slavery and the slave trade did not damage economic growth, not even in Britain. The authors mention Eric Williams's chapter about capitalism and slavery, where he talks about how slavery affected life in Britain in the 18th and 19th centuries. Eric pointed out how slavery damaged the enslaved people and also showed how enslaved people.

Four of his points are very important to the work of the National Historical Congress (NHC): slavery played a significant role in the Industrial Revolution; the wealth of enslaved people was significant to British history in the 18th century; the West Indian slave economy declined after 1783; and West Indian slave-owners shifted from supporting progress in mercantilism to opposing it in industrial capitalism. In the 20th century, history changed

through the timeline, where people had different ideas about the British Empire and history. This is why Williams centres on Britain before and after the American Revolution. As he saw, a democratic government could only do what was best for its citizens. He believed that everything the British did had to be for the benefit of the British. But people who back Williams now look at the past in ways they hadn't thought of before. Africa and the idea that the Industrial Revolution owed a lot more to Africa and Africans than was felt before are not talked about. Williams now looks at the past in ways they hadn't thought of before. Africa and the idea that the Industrial Revolution owed a lot more to Africa and Africans than was felt before are not talked about; the opportunists only address America and cotton, not their hard and soul labor. Lockhart wrote a long article about slavery and how it affected the American economy. In it, he says that the bodies of the slaves were America's most valuable asset and that they were forced to keep America's most traded goods in good shape. The daily amount of cotton picked by a slave rose by 400% in the 60 years between 1801 and 1862. The US became one of the world's most powerful countries thanks to cotton gains, which made the South its most affluent area. So many Southern farmers became rich by owning slaves that the Mississippi River Valley had more millionaires per person by the start of the Civil War than any other area.

In another article written by Fleisig, he stated that there is qualitative data to support the idea that individual northern farmers had a labor shortage that southern farmers could get around by enslaving people. The unrestricted (slave labor) farm made more money because it created more land, labor, and capital. Still, the rates of capital to labor, land to labor, and capital to output were lower. This made more people want to become businesses, which decreased the demand for farming tools for the same amount of farming output and slowed down the progress

of farming technology. The essence of this paper is how slaves were used to work like non-human objects to achieve maximum profit. Here, every ratio is more than a number to show the black as an enforced worker to work to enrich the nourishment of the economy. Farms in the South had lower rates of capital to labor than farms in the North. For example, the value of one set of tools per farm worker was \$66 in the North and \$38 in the South, or \$77 in the Northeast and \$38 in the Deep South. In the South, the farm work and tools value for each worker (including slaves and owners) was \$982 (\$2279 in the Northeast and \$849 in the Deep South). In the North, it was \$1979. In agriculture in the north, the percentage of wealth to labor was much higher than in the south. In the North, there were 41 acres of improved land for every farm worker, but only 27 acres in the South. In the Northeast, there were 40 acres of improved land for every farm worker, and in the Deep South, there were 26 acres. Each southern farm worker owned \$869.9 worth of land, while each northern farm worker-owned \$1245.5 worth of land.^b A big difference existed between agriculture in the South, where the price of slaves did not change with the size of the farm, and agriculture in the North, where the price or supply of labor changed with the size of the farm. The expectations that the limited farm would make less food with less land, labor, and capital but higher rates of capital to labor and land to labor align with what we saw. These results are supported mainly by a different way of looking at things, which suggests that the middle-level effects of the constrained-labor model are not only consistent with that model. One way to refute the constrained-labor argument is to show that slavery either didn't change the flexibility of the labor supply on a single farm or had effects that were so small that they didn't matter.

Chapter 3

Context Review

There have been many times when how white people have portrayed black women has been different from how those women lived. The work that slave women did shows the two sides of women's work in a capitalist, patriarchal society: making things and services and having children and taking care of them so they can work in the future. The farm in the antebellum period showed how patriarchal and capitalist ideas about women's work could support each other. It showed how women as "equal" workers and women as different producers interacted with each other. It was a "peculiar institution" that abused women in ways that were different from the way women were treated in general. While the colonies were in place, white racist and patriarchal culture made the black woman the "ultimate other," and black men were drawn into Western progress by education and accepting Western culture. Black women stayed outside of or close to the risky lines that were drawn by sexual relationships between strong and weak people. In Diaspora societies, black women's roles were and still are confusing and contradicting. From the middle of the 1800s to the early 1900s, the first wave of feminism in the United States was mainly about women's right to vote, property rights, and schooling. But Black women, who were very important in the fight for race and gender equality, were often left out and their opinions and concerns were not heard. African American women were in "double jeopardy" because they were discriminated against because of their race and because they were women. They fought for their rights as women and as Black people in a society that was very racist. This didn't stop a lot of Black women from being involved in the first wave of the civil rights and feminism movements.

They were either sexually dangerous or passively subjugated and made male.

In 1851, a conference about women's rights caught everyone's attention. Around the 1800s, the feminist revolution started to flow everywhere. There are two waves of feminism, the first of which began in America. Both effects have a significant attribution for black American women. Their fights were most vital as they were treated as the worst forms in society. They had a lower status in society, and to change this, they started to make plans to release themselves from the shackles of slavery. The problem was almost the same, but black women were treated so harshly because of the conception created by white men. Sojourner Truth was one of the first speaker who was born into slavery in 1797 and went on to become a strong speaker and advocate for women's rights and the end of slavery. Harriet Tubman, who is known for her work on the Underground Railroad, was another important person in the first wave. Abolitionists were moved by her work as a leader, and her efforts to race and gender equality are a big part of the history of African American women in the first wave. Black women's groups, like the National Association of Coloured Women (NACW), which was started by Mary Church Terrell and Ida B. Wells in 1896, paved the way for Black feminist ideas in the future. Ida B. Wells was a writer and activist who helped start the NACW and fought for women's right to vote and civil rights. She also spoke out against racial injustices Black people, especially Black women, had to deal with.

It is very important to break down the white myths that have been used for a long time to define black women's identities in racist white societies. Cultural memories is vital to help black people confirm their experiences, build good identities, and put the past first in their modern black identities. However, because black women's writing is widespread in white culture studies, there is a tendency to overgeneralize and not give accurate information about when things happened. By breaking things down, we can better understand the complicated and sometimes contradictory identities that black women have created for themselves. Not only have they defined who they are, but they have also spoken out against economic abuse, cultural exploitation, and the power of black and white male patriarchy.

What White Myths Do to Black Identity This essay could look at how white myths have affected black people's identities throughout history and the present, talking about how these myths have changed how people think about black people and how society feels about them. The article might also talk about how black people have taken back their stories in answer to these lies. How the Media show blackness: This essay could look at how black people are portrayed in media and pop culture and talk about how white myths have affected these portrayals. It could also look at how these portrayals change people's ideas about what it means to be black and how they keep damaging stereotypes alive.

Using Education to fight white myths This subject could talk about how education can help challenge and break down white myths, including how different views and inclusive lessons can work against the effects of white myths. It could also talk about how important it is to teach cultural understanding and critical thought in schools to stop damaging stories from spreading. Firstly, these concepts basic's are from Africa as their culture has different aspects, but the white people narrated a wild narrative of their own for their disgraceful desire.

The "Jezebel" image shows Black women as being very sexual, immoral, and lacking in morals. It is one of the most well-known lies. This myth comes from the time of slavery, when using chained women for sexual abuse was okay because it was thought that they were naturally sexual. Even after slavery ended, the story of Jezebel kept going, which helped keep Black women sexualized and treated like objects in media and society. Another damaging myth is the "Mammy" image, where the whites say that Black women are caring, submissive, and loyal. This myth limits Black women to a one-dimensional role of service and doesn't acknowledge their uniqueness or agency. It also supports the idea that Black women are okay with being dominated, which makes their calls for equality and freedom even less critical.

Chapter 4

Literature Review

“"slavery" means the reduction of status and position of any person to a condition in which he is controlled or treated as property by another person and shall also include a condition arising from a debt or a contract made by that person.”

-(The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act of Bangladesh, 2012,6797)

Hannah Davidson, an enslaved person in Kentucky in 1937, wrote about her life as an enslaved American. She talked about how hard it was to work nonstop from dawn until midnight her whole life. In the United States, slavery was a way for white people to get as much work as possible from black people by forcing them to work. By law, none of the slaves could own property or learn to read and write. The slaves' relationships with each other over property did not change how the men and women interacted with each other. The work that slave women did was bad because it didn't include any tasks that directly or indirectly made things that could be sold. Even their work to care for themselves and their families helped the owner keep his employees and make the business more productive overall. During a day, slave women did three different kinds of work: they made things and provided services for different people and groups, and they also did work that directly helped their families, other slaves, and their owners. The master was in charge of all three types of work, but when it came to personal food, he didn't watch over certain tasks as closely as he did regarding farming or domestic service.

One of the first slave narratives, *The Story of Mary Prince*, is an important part of the history of British slavery in the Caribbean. The Abolition of Slavery Act of 1833 was passed after the Great Jamaica Slave Revolt in 1831. This law freed slaves gradually over six years. Prince, a 45-year-old woman who is sick and going blind, has lived a poor life and worked as a housekeeper her whole life. She may go back to Antigua to be with her husband. Her horrible story is about one woman's life in the Caribbean, a time in history when England made a lot of money at the expense of many lives. The horrible story she told her abolitionist friends in Birmingham became a political tool after it was made public.

Mary Prince was a slave in the West Indies. In 1828, she went to England with her fourth master, John Wood, and was officially free for the first time in her life. But her plans to go back to Antigua and live with her husband ran into trouble because masters could still take back freed slaves who voluntarily returned to colonies. Finding the voices of slaves below the storyline is one of the most challenging things about reading these types of written stories. Thomas Pringle changed some of her words and left out important parts, like the honest things she said about her sexuality and her relationships with Captain Abbot and a black freeman named Oyskman. Prince got in a lot of trouble for telling her story. She is a witness in a libel case and was kicked out of the Moravian Church. Her story starts with the happy days when she was small and experienced a happy childhood with her mother, brother, and sisters and a kind white mistress with her child. She writes, "This was the happiest time of my life because I was too young to fully understand my situation as a slave and too careless and full of spirits to look forward to the days of hard work and sorrow." we can see the exact expression at the beginning where Harriet Jacob writes about the difference between how innocent she was as a child and how hard her life was as a slave girl in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. "I was

born into slavery, but I never knew it till six years of happy childhood had passed away(Jacob 5)". The sadness of finding out she was a slave is a symbol of the misery of many captive children whose average growth and potential were destroyed by slavery. The quote is a strong opening to the themes of lost youth and the mental damage caused by slavery.

“The tasks given out to us children were light, and we used to play together with Miss Betsey, with as much freedom almost as she had been our sister(Mary Prince 7). “My mother was a household slave in the same family(Mary Prince 7). Here, Jacqueline Jones's article explains the household slaves' work and lifestyle. She says that the slave women wore harsh osnaburg dresses. Their skirts were fed up with a cord that was drawn tight around the body, close to the hips. They also wore kerchiefs on their heads and long arms pushed up above the elbows. They worked outside for up to 14 hours a day, often in very hot weather. They cleared fields, dropped seeds, hoed, picked, ginned, and sorted cotton in the cotton belt. Women showed tobacco, put up worm fences, and threshed, raked, and bound wheat on fields in Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Tennessee. In order to grow rice, people had to rake and burn the crop's stalks, dig ditches, plant seeds, plow, list, and hoe fields, and gather, stack, and grind rice. During the winter, women on nineteenth-century fields fixed roads, pitched hay, burned brush, and put up post-and-rail fences, among other things. Depending on the size and level of skill of a farm, women and men were given different tasks. A "substantial minority" of slave women were able to master these difficult tasks. In both the North and the South, white women and men liked how skilled and strong female plow hands were. When an individual grows up and learns what slavery means, they lose their youth. Early in the story, there is a very moving scene where Prince's mother had to sell her as their mistress became poor. She felt devastated and wanted to go back to her mother. Slaves in the 1800s went through a lot of hard times, and Prince's story shows how they felt. When Prince was young and naive, her life was full of happiness and peace. But when she learned about slavery, she lost her youth. At the

beginning of the story, Prince's mother puts her kids up for sale, and her family breaks up. People who read Prince's story will understand that black people are denied humanity because it shows how they are treated and how much pain they are in.

On her twelfth birthday, she first realized the cruelty of being a slave when she was first hired. After her first mistress died, her master sold all the children of her mother, and this separation hit hard for Mary. The journey of cruelty starts from here, where she understands that the life of a slave is dehumanizing. She shares some of her experiences as a slave at that time, living with many masters and mistresses during her lifetime.

“ Oh dear! I cannot bear to think of that day, it is too much. - It recalls the great grief that filled my heart, and the woeful thoughts that passed to and fro through my mind, whilst listening to the pitiful words of my poor mother, weeping for the loss of her children. I wish I could find words to tell you all I then felt and suffered. The great God above alone knows the thoughts of the poor slave's heart, and the bitter pains which follow such separations as these. All that we love taken away from us Oh, it is sad, sad! and sore to be borne! I got no sleep that night for thinking of the morrow; and dear Miss Betsey was scarcely less distressed. She could not bear to part with her old playmates, and she cried sore and would not be pacified(Prince,10)”.

Like any objects like sheep and cattle, she has been presented to buyers like a showpiece so anyone can buy her. And has sold like all her brothers and sisters. Her life story is painful, yet she is fighting for freedom for herself. There are many people who did not believe in her story; for example, the two most recent versions of the story, by Moira Ferguson (1995) and Sara Salih (2000), have extra parts that show why people don't believe Prince's story. These extra parts include parts of libel cases that Prince's former owners made against Pringle. History paints a very clear picture of how slaves were mistreated violently.

On the other hand, slave owners' women are poorly treated, but it's never said outright. Paying attention to this difference helps us better understand how Prince's story relates to specific ways marriage and slavery were linked. Suzan Raintoul expresses the understanding momentum of her pain; she states in her article to be vocal about Mary and other female slave's issues and questions up the risk of confusing slavery, which has been the main focus of history, with the abuse of black women at home, which reinforces a racialized order of suffering. In her book, she openly expresses how physical punishment is often seen as small things when others try contextualizing with other issues, she empathizes the need to address pain directly. The author examines how Prince's account reveals the intersection of domestic abuse and slavery, suggesting that the hierarchical structures of marriage contributed to the mistreatment of slaves. The author uses intense violence to show how painful it is to be alone, which Scarry says is caused by a culture that refuses to comprehend. The comparison between marriage and slavery is a good example because it shows two types of "missing of the pain" that Scarry talks about: silence (not showing pain) and redescription (describing suffering as something it is not). The writer says that history may show some similarities between free-married women and slaves, but in the end, she says that the "marriage/slavery" comparison leaves out and changes the meaning of slave pain. To understand the clear suffering in contrast to the story's vague descriptions, we must first understand the clear suffering in contrast to the story's vague descriptions.

In Mary Prince's case against slavery, her oral story is very important because it combines the public self-consciousness of the slave narrative with the private self-consciousness of the slave. Slavery as a real event in history is at the heart of her story, but she also says that she is both a slave and a free woman. In the authorial present of the story, Prince is free to use a public voice and image, which lets her imagine and fight for a time when all Black people who are slaves will be free. In the 17th century, Mary Prince was a slave in the English colonies. She was a famous figure in British revolutionary thought. A well-known British activist named Thomas Pringle thought of her as a stranger, a refugee, or an immigrant who lived in a country she could never call her own. This point of view showed the flaws in British activist speech. In 1787, Granville Sharp worked with Black people and the British government on a failed plan to move a lot of Black people from cities to Sierra Leone. Abolitionists and the government tried to take control of a social problem by making it harder for Black people to move around. Prince, Strickland, and Pringle wrote *The History of Mary Prince*. They wanted to free Black slaves by telling a story from the point of view of a slave about the violence that Black people often faced in the West Indies. The written story, on the other hand, is mostly about Prince's life as a slave and not about the life of a Black woman who was a slave. The story of Mary Prince was a big part of the movement against slavery in England, which led to the end of slavery in the West Indies. She tells a story about her past and the time when it was told in Pringle's London home. At that time, a new kind of history was being written that would include Black people's opinions and experiences. Henry Louis Gates Jr. says it best when he says that black writers wrote as if their lives depended on it—and in a strange way, their lives did, because black writers wrote about the "life of the race" in Western speech.

Sharpe states that History's excessive silences make readers think about the parts of a slave's life that aren't told, like how the slave's freedom depends on her ability to become a Christian. By looking at these cases that were skipped over, we can get a better sense of how abolitionist speech, sexuality, and the different ways that slaves may have been able to fight back may have been connected. Prince's story about her wild masters in the colony shows how problems in the home made it easier for slaves to be abused. People say that she was most violent to Mrs. Wood, her last mistress, because she wasn't scared of her husband and beat the slaves at her request. History uses silences, inferences, and breaks in the story to show things. When the story mixes graphic descriptions of slave abuse with less graphic descriptions of abusive marriages or hints of serious violence, it makes you wonder about the mistresses' lives and what the missing details mean.

In the dangerous world of slavery, Mary's family gave her a sense of security. Slave families often didn't have strong bonds with each other, and the threat of being split up hung over every family. When Mary was 12, she was sold away from her family. She had to leave the only home she had ever known. In her book *The History of Mary Prince*, she writes about the time she was taken away from her mother and brothers. A common theme in slave stories is the pain of being separated from family, and Mary's story is no different. The quick and violent breakup of her family left a permanent mark on her mind. She lost not only her family ties but also her sense of who she was and her safety. It was unfortunate that her mother could not do anything to stop this split. The fact that Mary was taken away from her family at such a young age shows how cruel the slave trade was. Slaves were treated like property, and their work and usefulness were the only things that were valued. The slave owners, who cared more about making money than about people, did not care that these separations caused people pain.

As she writes, Mary Prince not only talks about how hard it was for her to live in bondage, but she also talks about how hard it was for her to be away from her family. The fact that she was taken away from her family against her will was a terrible experience that shows how terrible slavery was for the slaves' thoughts and hearts. Mary Prince was abused physically, but she was also abused verbally and mentally. She and other slaves in the house were scolded and made fun of all the time, and they were treated like they were less than human. Slaves were treated this way to break their spirits, make them obedient, and make them feel like they were less important than others. Even though these things were done to Mary, her story shows that she still had a strong sense of self-worth and a strong desire for freedom, even at such a young age. Early in life, one of the most essential things that Mary went through was how it changed how she thought about slavery. She started to understand what it meant to be a slave, not just having to do hard physical work but also not having any freedom and always being afraid of being hurt. She later decided to fight against being a slave and seek freedom because of these events. One major theme throughout Mary's story is her strength, even though she is badly treated. She had an inner strength that helped her stay strong, which showed that she was becoming more aware of her power, even though she was a slave. Both inactive and active resistance would be a big part of Mary's life, and it all came together when she went to England later in life to get her freedom.

When Captain I bought Mary Prince as a slave and sent her to the Turks and Caicos Islands, she was forced to work in the salt ponds, which was a horrible place to work. Among the horrendous things she talked about were the beatings that enslaved people in the Caribbean got from Captain I and his wife. Mary overcame this challenging time by being strong, which made her even more determined to escape slavery. Mary began to grow intellectually and spiritually when she lived with Mr. D— in Antigua. She had to do hard physical work and was poorly mistreated, including being beaten by Mr. D—. Being around free Black people and talking to Christians helped her learn more about her rights and the ways she could be free. The Moravian Church in Antigua was an essential part of Mary's life because it gave her a sense of community, spiritual comfort, and schooling. Mary joined this group of Christians, and the Moravian Church's beliefs gave her the moral strength to get through her hard times. Mary's desire for freedom was greatly shaped by the abolitionist movement in Antigua, which was backed by Christian missionaries and other religious groups. People in Antigua who were against slavery worked to end it and made it possible for slaves to imagine a better future. Mary's contacts with church leaders and people against slavery helped her learn more about the giant fight for freedom. Mary Prince started to think about a life other than slavery as she became more involved with the Moravian Church and learned more about the fight to end slavery.

Mary Prince greatly changed her life when she went to England with the Woods family in 1828. She met a people who valued freedom and fairness but were deeply involved in colonial slavery. Mary had a tough time with the law because of this because she was socially and legally limited in England. Even though Mary was legally free in England, she was enslaved by the Woods family and wouldn't let her go. She also ran the chance of being a slaves again if she went back to Antigua because British law did not recognize her. Mary was still eager to fight for her rights and asked to be set free despite these problems. The Woods family was against her, and Mary could not get the full legal rights she wanted.

The British abolitionist movement, which was growing then, paid attention to Mary's case. The Anti-Slavery Society helped her get her story published in 1831 as *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave*. This story was the first account of a Black woman's life to be written in Britain. It gave a unique look into the lives of enslaved women and showed the special problems they faced while they were slaves. Today, people still talk about Mary Prince's impact when they talk about slavery, race, and gender. This is because her writing is still an important part of understanding the lives of slaves and the global slave trade in general. It also had a big effect on feminist research, giving people who don't have a voice a chance to speak out. It also changed how people remember and study slavery in the long term.

Behind the Scenes: Or, Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House, which Elizabeth Keckley wrote in 1868, is an important work in the fields of African American studies and women's history. Born in Virginia as a slave, Keckley was abused and exploited for many years, including being sexually abused and being made to work. Even though things were hard, she worked hard at being a tailor and finally made enough money to buy her and her son's freedom. She was born into slavery in 1818 and was abused because of her race and because she was a woman. Agnes Hobbs, her mother, was a slave, and Armistead Burwell, her father, was a white slave owner who was in charge of both her and her mother. This complicated family situation set the tone for Keckley's early life, during which she was abused physically and went through emotional and mental stress. When Keckley wrote about her youth, she showed how cruel slavery was by saying that kids born into slavery often didn't have any hopes for a better life. From a very young age, Keckley was poorly beaten and treated badly emotionally, which changed how she saw the world. Early experiences with violence and being taken advantage of set her up for her later fight for freedom.

The physical abuse Keckley went through while she was a slave was one of the worst parts of her life. Like many women who were slaves, she was abused by the men who were in charge. She gave birth to her son George after being raped by the son of her slave owner. One of the worst things that happened in Keckley's life was that she was sexually exploited. This is a typical part where we observe how little control slave women had over their bodies. Keckley's path to freedom was long and full of problems where even though she was good at sewing, she was kept as a slave for many years because her owners made a lot of money from her work. The first thing she tried to do was buy her freedom, but those who gained from her work kept stopping her. Finally, Keckley was able to get her freedom thanks to the help of kind customers in St. Louis, where she worked for the Garland family. By 1855, Keckley and her son were both free because she had saved enough money from loans her clients gave her.

When Keckley was finally freed, she was able to move to Washington, D.C., where her skills as a seamstress helped her start a new life. Her trip from being a slave to being freed showed how skilled and determined she was. It also showed how complicated the relationships were between slaves and the people in the community who sometimes helped them get free. Keckley's success as a seamstress in Washington, D.C., was a personal victory and a sign of her strength and creativity. The fact that she was able to get along with people from different races and social backgrounds shows how smart and determined she was. She turned the things that held her back in the past into a successful business and made a name for herself in a city full of social and political problems.

Keckley helped other people with her money, connections, and work as a tailor. While the Civil War was going on, she started the Contraband Relief Association to help people who had been slaves and fled to the Union lines. Her charitable work showed how much she cared about her neighborhood and how much she understood the more significant fight for freedom and equality. Mary Todd Lincoln and Keckley started out as coworkers but quickly became close friends. As the First Lady's tailor and friend, she knew everything that went on in the Lincoln home. Because she lived with Lincoln, she had special access to the political and personal events of the Civil War. Her story gives us important information about how the Lincolns' public and private lives related to each other. It's like looking at one of the most important presidencies in American history from the book *Behind the Scenes*.

Elizabeth Keckley's book gives a unique and personal look at the Civil War. It shows how the war affected the Lincoln family nationally and emotionally. All sides put more and more pressure on Mary Todd Lincoln about her policies on slavery and the progress of the Union. All sides put more and more pressure on Abraham Lincoln about his policies on slavery and the progress of the Union. These notes by Keckley are unique and useful because they show the human side of history, people who were usually only seen in their public roles. She shows how sad Mary Todd Lincoln was when her son Willie died in 1862, which is one of the most moving parts of Keckley's book, showing other's emotional perspectives. As things got worse, she became the ultimate rock of support, comfort, and spending time with her. There are many harsh things said about Mary Todd Lincoln, but her caring image gives us a better picture of her. Like Keckley's story, the Civil War was hard to understand, and people had different ideas about how to end slavery. She knew the president and his wife well, but she didn't talk about politics. Instead, she talked about her own life, her job as a tailor, and her

friends, which took place during the Civil War, showing how closely personal and political rights were connected to one another.

After President Lincoln was killed in 1865, Mary Todd Lincoln's relationship with Keckley got worse as she was having money problems and was being watched closely by the public, which made her mental health unstable. Keckley wrote her autobiography just to protect herself against claims of abuse and make money. People had different opinions about the book. Some saw it as an important piece of history, while others said she used her position to make money. The book itself is still an important part of history, despite getting bad reviews. It shows how race, gender, and class interacted in the 19th century in a way that no other show does. It is one of the few first-person accounts of life in the White House during one of the most troubled times in American history. It shows both the public and private lives of the Lincolns.

There are many narratives in this book, like Xiomara Santamarina, who wrote an article in 1868 called *Behind the Scenes of Black Labor: Elizabeth Keckley and the Scandal of Publicity*. In the article, she talks about how human ties are more important than actual wealth when it comes to describing accomplishment. Keckley, a famous tailor, thought that work was not just about the things that were needed to make something but also about the feelings of respect and connection that came with it. She was proud of her close relationships with critical white women clients, like First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln. Keckley believed that white and black women could be close and loyal to each other because she was good at making clothes as a slave and a free woman. Because of these work ties, she said the people could trust and

believe in her. Labor is more important than a black woman's production and movement of social worth. It's not just about taking advantage of people and making money.

Elizabeth Keckley was very important to the social lives of dressmakers in the years after the Civil War. Her work in the Lincoln White House helped calm people down after the "Old Clothes Scandal." There is a groundbreaking African American review article by Xiomara Santamarina which is about the book *Behind the Scenes*. It is about how freed black women can work to bring about racial peace and national progress through successful social and economic integration. People saw Keckley's work as a way to fight back against how black women's work was portrayed as only for women at work. In the years after the Civil War, black fighters who fought in the Civil War told black women that they should get married or work as reformers and play "domestic" roles like white women. She connected with a type of work businesses saw as skilled and valuable by making dresses. During slavery, women of all races could make good money as milliners and dressmakers. This was because as the capitalist economy grew, women's buying habits changed based on their gender.

Keckley's job helped her make friends and connect with a web of gender and class taste that went against the idea of the "degraded" slave woman. But because the stories are about work, it's hard to see how Harriet Jacobs' and Elizabeth Keckley's stories fit together. Two critics, William Andrews and William Andrews, say that Keckley's need for attention shows that he is skeptical and unsure of himself. They looked at Keckley's "materialism" after the Civil War and found that it was different from Jacobs's older "idealist" view of morality. Elizabeth Keckley's book is a groundbreaking African American book that really shows how

freed black women helped bring about racial peace and national progress through successful social and economic progression. *Behind the Scenes* is a story of a slave who went through the hard times of being a slave. There is a short story about her time as a slave and a long, famous story about her time as a formerly enslaved person who worked as a designer for rich white women in the nation's capital. The book shows how terrible slavery was, especially when work was divided up based on race, and how important it was for the main character to look out for her good-hearted friends.

The lessons Keckley learned in "hardy school" (slavery) are emphasized in her story. The "bright" side of bondage is shown without hiding the "dark" side by using the family ideology of slavery. Strangely, she makes the slave girl seem independent and full of "character," even though slave girls were taught to rely on their parents. The story also shows how slaves are seen as less important than their owners and how their "principles of character" can show how useful they are. In this story, Xiomara Santamarina is a main figure because she shows that her work was important and needed, even though slave owners didn't like it. She talks about how being part of the "family" and being away from enemies made it hard for her to see the social value in her job as a cleaner.

Keckley's story is about how hard it was to stay alive as a woman in the system and as a social worker. She thinks that women can fight back against the dehumanization that comes with slavery by making extra value in the form of social value. When other people see how important she is as a slave woman, she thinks she is important and takes credit for what she does. Keckley's success as a paid worker shows how important it is to trade standing. As a

designer, she is more useful when she can make clothes that show off her clients' racial or economic status and ideas about what a woman should look like. In the last part of the slave story, she frees herself with the help of her better-known friends and respect. In the end, *Behind the Scenes* is a strong story about the struggles of slave women, how important social status is, and the fight for freedom. Keckley's story is now a must-read for anyone who wants to learn about the lives of African American women in the 1800s. Not only does it show how the lives of women who were or were once slaves were different, but it also shows how society and politics were changing at the time. People usually think of Black women as either subservient or helpless, but her success as a businessman goes against that idea.

Keckley cared about the well-being of the Black community as shown by her work with the Contraband Relief Association, which helped freed slaves during the Civil War. This part of her life adds to her reputation as a supporter of Black freedom and social change at a very important time in American history. *The First Lady, the Seamstress, and the Politics of Black Women's Labor* by Elizabeth Garrett is a piece that looks at how black and white women worked together during the Civil War and Reconstruction. The way Garrett looks at Black women's work is more critical. She focuses on how the larger social and political situation at the time affected the work of Black women like Keckley.

There is a viewpoint of how white women reacted to different white American women had different reactions to black slavery in the America. This shows how complicated society, politics, and morals were in the 1800s. Some women actively worked to end slavery, while others kept it going by living in Southern society and having families who owned slaves. Gender norms had a big impact on their part, and their links to slavery went from being slave owners in the home to fighting for freedom. In the South of the Americas, many white women helped keep slaves by running the homes and making sure that racial roles were followed. They were in charge of keeping an eye on enslaved Black women and children every day, making sure they did their chores and sometimes punishing them. They were involved in slavery in more than just their own homes; they also played important social and political roles. Pro-slavery ideas were often spread by wealthy Southern women in public places and social groups. These women thought that slavery was "positively good" for both the slaves and the slave owners. In the 1800s, white women were very active in the abolitionist movement, fighting against slavery and fighting for the rights of people who were slaves. Angelina Grimké, Sarah Grimké, and Harriet Beecher Stowe were all well-known abolitionists who often led their lives by faith views and ideas of equality.

Angelina and Sarah Grimké were daughters of a rich family in the South that owned slaves. They were two of the first and most active women in the United States who worked to end slavery. They joined the Quakers and gave talks and wrote a lot about how horrible slavery was while traveling across the North. Angelina Grimké wrote an 1836 book called *Appeal to the Christian Women of the South*. In it, she asked Southern women to speak out against slavery because they were morally right to do so. Similarly, white American women had a range of emotions to the end of slavery after the Civil War. In the South, many white women had a hard time getting used to the new social order where they did not have control over slaves. During

Reconstruction, some Southern women actively worked to keep white dominance in place by backing groups like the Ku Klux Klan and pushing for continued racial segregation and Black people's inability to vote.

Sojourner Truth's 1851 speech "Ain't I a Woman?" is essential to feminism and civil rights discussions. Truth fought against the ideas about what it means to be a woman that kept Black women from being considered "women." The detailed account of that fantastic historical speech was held at a women's rights conference during the women's suffrage movement, which is one of the essential movements for feminism. At that time, women's rights activists, who were primarily white, pushed for fair treatment based on the belief that women were weak and needed to be protected. Truth's speech made strong disapproval of this idea by focusing on her own experiences as a strong Black woman who had lived through the difficulties of slavery. Truth also talks about how race and gender affect each other. It says that African Americans and women are both oppressed, but Black women are oppressed twice as much. She says it's not fair that society doesn't give women equal rights and doubts their skills while taking advantage of Black women's strength and work. Truth's message criticizes both white feminism and sexism and calls for everyone to join the fight for women's rights. She wants people to see how strong and kind all women are, no matter their race, and she stresses that the battle for equality and justice must include opinions that aren't heard as much.

Chapter 5

Theories

Male-dominated systems of society have been fought against for hundreds of years through feminist theory, which is both a set of ideas and a social movement. Feminists like John Stuart Mill and Mary Wollstonecraft were among the first to write about it. They fought for women to be able to go to school and be active in public life. Feminist theory is a movement that puts voices on and about women who has the ability to make their own decisions, break out of gender-based roles, and fight against oppression in society. The main idea behind it is that women's worth comes from being human, not from other connections in their lives. Feminism fights against female injustice, and the idea of dominance that runs through many parts of Western society needs to be gotten rid of. To be a feminist, each person needs to develop a critical political awareness based on their ideas and views. Liberal feminism, one of the first and most important types of feminism, wants to make laws and policies more fair between men and women. People who study feminism don't always pay enough attention to slave women because they show how all women's work is complicated in a capitalist, male society. Between 1830 and 1860, the "peculiar institution" of slavery in the rural South of the United States showed how slavery and American society worked on an economic and social level. People saw black women's efforts to keep up with their families as a political protest against the fact that their owners often didn't take gender into account when assigning work in the fields.

Feminist theory is an important way to understand and fight against the dominant role of white feminist thinking. Judging, asking questions, looking at things again, and looking for new options is important. Before the feminist movement, many women, especially black women, had never thought about fighting against male control. But now they know they can and should. Being raised in a working-class, black, Southern home where the father was in charge made them more aware of the plight of women. For example, they saw different levels of male oppression, some well-known liberal feminists like Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem. They fought for fair pay, reproductive rights, and an end to discrimination based on gender in the workplace. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 are two laws that were made possible by the work of liberal feminists, and it is being talked. In the 1960s and 1970s, socialist feminism grew out of a disagreement with liberal and radical feminism. It said that to understand gender oppression fully, one must also look at class oppression and the economic system. They say that policies like paid family leave, cheap childcare, and changing who does the housework should be made a priority for achieving gender equality. The law expert Kimberlé Crenshaw coined "intersectional feminism" in 1989. It stresses how important it is to look at how different kinds of social inequality, like race, class, sexuality, and disability, interact with and make gender abuse worse. Black feminist writers like Bell Hooks, Patricia Hill Collins have said that gender, race, and class are all connected and need to be looked at together to understand how Black women are oppressed thoroughly.

Very radical feminists say that gender inequality is deeply rooted in society and can't be fixed by changing rules or getting more women involved in public life. Speaking out against sexual abuse and the ways that sexism controls women's bodies has been something they have done the most. People have said that radical feminism is biased because it focuses on women's abuse and makes men look like the primary abusers. Still, it has also taught us much about how power and dominance work in society. Knowing about patriarchal politics made young, middle-class white women have very different ideas about what the feminist movement should be like. Although they were in the same feminist group, white women treated black women and other non-white members with disrespect. They didn't treat them or see them as peers. Black women with college degrees, even those from poor or working-class families, were seen as copycats. Because white women thought that "real" blackness meant speaking the patois of poor black people, not going to school, being street smart, and other stereotypes, their participation in movement activities didn't matter. Family life in the West has a long history of authoritarian male rule and authoritarian adult rule. Family is where most people learn to accept group abuse as usual. Family life is often a place of a lot of pain and suffering because of power battles, oppressive dictatorial rule, and violent claims of dominance. People leave the family, and naturally, the family falls apart. Many modern feminist studies of the family suggested that if the feminist movement was successful, it would either end families or start the process of doing so. This was very scary for many women, especially non-white women.

Some white women activists may see the family as the most cruel institution, but for many black women, the family is the most minor repressive institution. They know families aren't just homes with a husband, wife, kids, or even blood relatives. They also know that sexism-based beliefs lead to harmful trends in many types of families. The feminist movement wants to affirm the importance of family life because family ties are the only way for abused and oppressed people to get long-term help. Family life is often seen as less necessary in a feminist debate, which shows how class-based the movement is. Feminists want to free the family so that it can be a positive, encouraging system of connection that doesn't have any repressive parts based on sexuality, gender, etc. The government has a reason to spread the idea that the feminist movement will ruin family life. When feminist writers like Franz Fanon, Albert Memmi, Paulo Freire, and Aime Cesaire write, they often don't talk about gender oppression. Instead, they define freedom in ways that make it sound like only oppressed "men" need it. A lot of political writing about the revolutionary fight and the deeds of men who support revolutionary politics support female oppression, which hurts all freedom struggles.

1. Feminism:

Feminist theory has significantly impacted the minds of black women and the feminist movement. However, it is essential to be aware of and question the dominant rhetoric in order to support a more open and accepting way of understanding and fighting male domination. Finally, the fight between feminist theory and white feminists is still a hot topic. A lot of black

women don't want to join the women's movement because they're afraid of racism. In the minds of many white women, racist ideas about the firm, superhuman black woman are operative myths that keep them from realizing how much black women are likely to be victimized in this society and how white women may contribute to that victimization. White feminists often act like black women didn't know they were being oppressed because of their gender until they spoke out about their feelings. The people in charge think they are giving black women "the" analysis and "the program for liberation." However, these women often learn about male politics through their own experiences, which is how they devise ways to fight back. When white feminists talk about male power and women's abuse, black women often see it as a "new" discovery and don't think it has much of an effect on their lives. There is no reason why black women haven't organized around "feminism" issues or why they haven't had access to the power structures that would let them share their gender theories or analyses with the American public. This would also put them in a position of dependence on white and non-white feminists who speak to a larger audience.

Jacqueline Jones talks about and explains the complexity of the law and the white Americans' expression of blacks. In America, slavery was a way for white people to get as much work as possible from black people by forcing them to work. The work that slave women did daily can be broken down into three separate tasks: making things and providing services for different people and groups, doing work that directly helped their families, and working for their owners. In the South before the Civil War, the female constitution was often attacked for how gently it graded women's hands based on strength and toughness. Most women were thought to have three-quarters hands, but some, like Virginian Susan Mabry, could pick 400 to 500 pounds of cotton daily. This meant that Anglo-Saxon ideas about the kinds of work women

should do were thrown out, leading to many "dreary scenes" like the one Frederick Law Olmsted wrote about.

Her article is a source and resource for learning more about the struggles of being a female slave. There are many journal articles about the context and reference to the point. There are many people who are interested in the living of black female slaves like me, but the source is enriched yet limited. For example, except for the slave narratives and historians' expressions, who can identify the real story of slave lives, She refers to Angela Davis in her work, stating the significant difference between the work that slave women were forced to do for a master and the work they did around the house for their own families. Her focus on the political effects of raising children while they were slaves, on the other hand, has not been given the careful thought it deserves. Researchers in secondary sources have looked at bondwomen or female slaves without having wage roles as loyal wives and moms, strong fieldworkers, and disobedient slaves. In his work, Herbert G. Gutman showed how strong family ties were among slaves, and her reference to Eugene D. Genovese helped us learn more about how black and white male and female slaves interacted with each other on antebellum plantations. Although most scholars still use the word "slave" to refer to anyone, regardless of gender, and believe that race is more important than sex. This raises questions about how work was divided between men and women during slavery and how jobs in the fields, the "Big House," and the slave rooms affected the lives of black women. Most of the time, privileged feminists haven't been able to talk to, with, or for different groups of women because they don't fully understand how sex, race, and class injustice are connected or don't want to take this connection seriously. When black women don't have an organized "other" that they can discriminate against, use, or abuse, their lives often directly question the racist, sexist, and classist social structure and

philosophy that goes along with it. For the feminist movement to continue, black women must understand the unique high point their marginalization gives them and use it to criticize the racist, classist, and sexist hegemony that is currently in place and to imagine and build a counter-hegemony.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902) was a key figure in American social reform groups in the 1800s, especially in the fights to end slavery and give women the right to vote. Stanton grew up in a well-known family and heard a lot about politics and the law. This made her interested in justice and unfairness. The law library her father had for her to use let her read legal books and taught her about the limits on women's rights. Stanton learned about the wrongs of slavery at a young age as well. Because of her father's job, she was exposed to court cases involving slavery and heard firsthand stories of the horrible things slaves went through. In the early 1800s, the abolitionist movement was growing, and Stanton's early introduction to these ideas had a big impact on how she saw the world. Stanton married Henry Brewster Stanton, an abolitionist leader, in the 1830s. On their honeymoon, they went to London in 1840 for the World Anti-Slavery Convention. At this conference, women participants, including Elizabeth, were not allowed to talk or vote. This made her deep link between the fights to end slavery and the fights for women's rights even clearer. She thought that the mistreatment of women and the enslavement of African Americans were two related wrongs that needed to be fixed at the same time.

Stanton became more involved in abolitionism at the same time that her feminist ideas became clearer. During the 1840s and 1850s, she worked closely with other abolitionist leaders to plan meetings and petition drives against slavery. In 1866, she also helped start the American Equal Rights Association (AERA), a group that fought for civil rights for African Americans and women's right to vote. But after the Civil War, Stanton and other female abolitionists had to deal with new problems. The 14th and 15th Amendments, which gave African American men citizenship and the right to vote but not women, caused a split in the abolitionist movement. Stanton worked to end slavery and give women the right to vote, but her work was also critical of systems of power and dominance in general. In her famous speech, "The Solitude of Self," she said that women and African Americans were not given all the rights that come with being a citizen, such as the right to choose for themselves and be independent.

The another example of righteous humans who hold the torch to fight for women are the Grimké Sisters who were born into a family in South Carolina that owned slaves. They became strong opponents of slavery and became famous across the country for their writing and speaking. They were Quakers and read the Bible, which shaped their beliefs about ending slavery and being a feminist. This went against the idea that women were only involved in the abolitionist movement. The sisters broke the stereotypes by speaking out against slavery in public in front of big groups of men and women in the 1830s. Because they had owned slaves in the past, believed that God could work through women, and made links between the abolition movement and the women's rights movement, their tireless work in the anti-slavery movement changed the roles of women in the United States.

Sarah and Angelina were born in Charleston, South Carolina, to a rich family who ran a northern farm. They had a father named John Grimké who was the Chief Justice of the South Carolina Supreme Court. A lot of his wife's family was interested in politics. Mary Grimké was Sarah's mother. She was a lead member of the Charleston Ladies Benevolent Society and a devoted Episcopalian. As kids, Sarah and Angelina went to school and had to learn how to be polite and behave like women of their social class. Judge Grimké still thought it was important for his kids to work hard, so even his girls were told to do physical work and schoolwork. Sarah reached a turning point when she agreed with the values her family had been trying to teach her since she was a child. At the time, it was against the law for slaves to read and write, so she taught her own slave in secret. This was done because slaves might find radical ideas in the Bible.

Through their Quaker faith and Bible reading, the Grimké sisters were very important to the fight against slavery. They broke down stereotypes and fought for women's rights. Women and abolitionists of today and tomorrow will continue to be inspired and educated by their work. During the 1830s, Sarah and Angelina Grimké were very important to the fight to end slavery. The Grimke family and their slaves went to the local Episcopal church every Sunday because the Grimke mother was a pious Episcopalian. But Sarah left the Episcopal Church and joined the Quaker Society of Friends. This group had some unusual rules, like letting women lead service and be preachers. There was no reason for the Grimké sisters' gender to stop them from being leaders for a cause. They thought that God could use women in leadership roles in the Church. In an essay called *Appeal to the Christian Women of the South*, they tried to persuade white southern women of the importance God gave them as women and the way

they could help end slavery. Angelina got white southern women to do something by using Bible stories about women leaders that she knew they would recognize.

The Grimke's were used to the Quaker belief that women have equal rights before God and the Church in the Society of Friends. They thought they had the right to speak to anyone, regardless of gender. Sarah also wrote a letter to the pastors in the South, highlighting how morally wrong it was for the Church to do nothing about slavery. Many abolitionists who spoke out against slavery were kicked out of southern churches at the time, and Sarah's letter caused a stir because it was written by a woman and addressed men in church leadership roles as "fellow professors."

Sarah and Angelina Grimké thought that slavery was the work of the devil and that a church that preached a message of love but made members go back to their home countries where men, women, and children were held captive and forced to work for the members was helping the devil's work, not the Lord's. By becoming Quakers, they found religious support for their cause. Even though Angelina and Sarah were kicked out of the church, their time in the Society of Friends gave them strength, helped them become better public speakers, and gave them faith support for women in leadership roles. As women in the abolitionist movement, they were able to do more because of their faith. They were sure that God had given them the strength as women to encourage Christians of all genders to speak out against slavery.

Sarah and Angelina Grimke, also known as the Grimké sisters, were very important to the fight to end slavery in the United States. Being Quakers and owning slaves gave them a unique perspective that helped them see important links between freeing slaves and women's

rights. They said that the restrictions on women in the U.S. were like the restrictions on slaves and that anyone who backed the freedom of slaves but not the women's liberation movement was lying. In the 1800s, Angelina and her sister Sarah Grimké were leaders in the fight against slavery. They were known for giving strong and emotional talks. They took a plea against slavery to the Massachusetts Legislature and said that everyone should have the same rights and be treated equally by the law. Their speech was printed in several Boston papers and the abolitionist paper *The Liberator*. Some Boston papers praised her speech, while others made fun of her cause.

What the Grimke sisters did to go from being against abortion to being for it set the example for other women to follow. Their determination in their fights to end slavery gave women a voice in society. They went from being activists to feminist leaders, pushing women to do things that society had always said they couldn't do. They set an example for women who would later lead the movements to end slavery and get women the right to vote. There were other feminists in the US besides Sarah and Angelina Grimké, but their work was important because it linked the fight against slavery to women's rights. The 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, which was led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, was a key event in the first wave of women's rights. Angelina and Sarah were the first women to use an anti-slavery stage to say they were chained like slaves in public and talk about the role of women in society. Because of their unusual story, they went from owning slaves to being leaders in the fight to end slavery, and their religious training made it possible for women to be leaders in the church. The Grimké sisters changed the roles of women in the fight to end slavery. They also

opened the way for other women who would change the course of female action and feminism in the United States.

When Stanton wrote this speech, she had yet to put her ideas about women's freedom into the theory of the labor movement. She focused on the basic concepts of labor reform, which was very different from her past as an upper-class woman and her training as an activist. She viewed poverty as a social issue instead of something that happened in the natural world. This was very different from what she used to think: these unfair situations were just as in line with God's rules as the sun's orbit. In her speech, she recognized the main differences between property and wage slavery and supported strikes. These points set her new political views apart from those she had just rejected, which most other middle-class liberals still believed in. How she dealt with the buildup of wealth showed that she understood the labor theory of value that organizers from the working class had created. It didn't take long for the National Labor Union and suffragists to break up because their shared desire to change the way reform forces worked wasn't strong enough to get past their sexual and class differences. Men in the National Labor Union couldn't agree with the suffragists' feminism, and they especially didn't agree with their main goal, which was for women to have the right to vote. Suffragists, on the other hand, couldn't get past their group of middle-class women supporters.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton said that the same concept that supported slavery also supported low-class work. Making a guy a slave was mainly done to get a factor for free from his work. They are both worth the same amount of money, and the owner of one type of work is not more moral than the other because they are both motivated by a similar objective. In order to improve

the lives of the majority, the first step in converting the majority is to make people more religious and aware of how bad these big differences between people are. In all of life's relationships, faith in abstract ideas is much more important than morals. For example, faith in the core of Godhead and what lies beyond the doorway of the unknown is seen as more important than living a life dedicated to making the race's material conditions better.

In 1870, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a famous supporter of free love, she gave a speech that changed her views in a big way. She thought that marriage and divorce were about more than just fairness in society. She thought they were also about making society better. Stanton said that marriage was a legally binding agreement that would last forever, which was different from the kind of natural and free changes that love would make on its own. She understood that recognizing that women and men are equal was the first step toward social freedom and happiness.

Stanton thought that people wanted more than just the right to vote and civic rights. They also wanted freedom from all unnecessary ties and obligations that lead to impossibilities, the freedom to fix mistakes, the freedom to express the many sides of our personalities, and the freedom to move on to higher levels of development. This freedom includes the annoying ideology of "Free Love," the right to get a divorce at any time, the right to start new relationships with other people, and the freedom to love someone more than marriage. She thought that deep down, we are all "Free lovers", even if we don't think that way. She thought that when man and woman are good and smart, they will have become "a law unto themselves," and there will be no need for an outside law of force. Stanton thought that free love would

happen whenever there was no longer any force or restriction, whether it came from the government or an overbearing public opinion. It's just as much free love if each man chooses one woman and each woman chooses one man, and they live together forever as the only people who can be with each other.

In the end, Stanton's speech shows how important social growth is and how important it is to have freedom in marriage and divorce. She says that the fight for freedom and equality isn't just about making society fair; it's also about encouraging love and equality between people where women who refused to be married and lived publicly as the woman of her choice, showed that free love is an important part of real life. The smartest and nicest people want freedom, and if some people use it to do bad things, that's just how things work, and the bad investment goes up and down in the business of growth. It's been discussed whether freedom of emotions is safe and sound for the world right now or whether it should be put off until the world has learned how to be smart and good without this freedom. This is the same question as whether slaves should be freed immediately or over time.

2. Orientalism:

As Edward W. Said described, Orientalism is the complicated and often troublesome ways that the West has seen and talked about the East, especially the Islamic world. This idea includes many types of physical, political, and cultural information that have been shaped by the way people in Europe think and talk. Since ancient times, the Orient has been shown as a faraway, strange, and often dangerous "other," very different from the smart and clear West. Said looks at how this difference has been emphasized in literature and theater, like in the works of Aeschylus and Euripides, where the East is shown to be a place of chaos and excess, and Europe is shown to be the winner. This made-up geography has been around for hundreds of years and has affected Western research and cultural stories about the East. According to Said, Since the time of Chateaubriand and Nerval, Orientalism has been a common way of thinking about society and ideas in Europe. It's a way to deal with the East, which is an important part of European culture and material society. The Orient is not only next to Europe, but it was also the site of its largest and richest colonies. It is also where its cultures and languages came from, a cultural rival, and one of its most deeply held ideas of the Other. Orientalism is a way of talking about and representing this part of culture and ideology. It has its own institutions, language, research, images, beliefs, and even colonial organizations and styles. In contrast, the way Americans think about the Orient may seem a lot less complicated.

Orientalist ideas have often looked down on and simplified Eastern cultures, seeing them as less advanced or needing help from the West. This has created a history of stereotypes and false ideas about the East that still affect how people today think about it. Said's analysis shows how important it is to understand these processes in order to question and break down the dominant stories that have generally left out Eastern opinions and experiences. Orientalism is not just a study of the East; it is also a critical look at how Western ideas about Eastern cultures have formed and often skewed reality, creating a complicated web of power, image, and identity that is still important today. The author has been attacked for writing about the TV show *Wonders of the African World* by Skip Gates. Africanist thinkers like Edward Said have also criticized the show. Africanist scholars have talked about the idea of "black Orientalism," which includes cultural snobbery, protective paternalism, and a hidden preference for non-Western cultures in Asia, "the Middle East," and Africa. The writer wonders if the TV show marks the start of a new Black worldview that includes cultural shaming, possessive paternalism, and implicit bias against non-Western societies in Asia, "the Middle East," and Africa. Orientalism is a set of interconnected ways of thinking and acting that are usually thought of as academic.

Orientalists are people who teach, write, or do study on the Orient. This term is most popular in university settings. A lot of writers, like poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have used this difference as the basis for their complex ideas, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts about the Orient, its people, customs, "mind," destiny, and other things. During the time after the Enlightenment, Orientalism lets European culture control and shape the Orient in ways that are political, social, military, intellectual, scientific, and creative. Orientalism is so important that anyone writing, thinking, or acting on the Orient could not do so without taking into account the rules that Orientalism sets for thought and action. As Edward Said put it, "orientalism" is a way of criticizing European cultural and intellectual views of the East as parts of Western colonial identity and power. But these days, the idea is often used as a shorthand for bad Western ideas about all Asians, throughout history and across a large area that includes Turkey and Hawaii. After World War II, American social science took European Orientalism and turned it into area studies. This is when American Orientalism began. In the area of Asian American studies, there is an older Orientalism that includes more than just one-time culture images. More and more research has looked at how racial development works as cultural symbols, assumptions, legal structures, and examples of cheap labor. Orientalist ideas like "China as despotic" and "Asia as heathen, servile, clannish, and inscrutable" play a big role in these ideas and in how Asian American groups are pushed to the edges.

The links between Orientalism and slavery in the Americas stereotypes, classes, and the dominance of non-Western people created both slavery itself and the social structures that

kept it going. Edward Said's theory of Orientalism looks at how Western powers made an "Other" to justify their control over the East. This theory has a lot to do with American slavery, where the racialization of Africans, Native Americans, and other non-Western groups was used to justify their control. Orientalism is an idea that grew during the time when, from the end of the Renaissance to now. Westerners could study and think about the Orient during this time without losing their relative advantage. This idea comes from the idea of Europe, which is a group idea that separates "us" Europeans from "those" non-Europeans. The idea that European identity is better than the identities of all other peoples and countries is a big part of European culture. This fluid sense of power is what Orientalism is based on. It lets the West have a lot of different connections with the Orient without ever losing the upper hand. However, it is important to consider whether what counts in Orientalism is the big group of ideas that dominate the material or the much more varied work that almost infinitely many individual writers have done about the Orient.

Orientalism and slavery in the United States are two separate events in history. Orientalism is how the West shows and romanticizes the East. At the same time, slavery in the United States was widely used for racial abuse, forced labor, and dehumanization of African people and their offspring. Both ideas have much in common with how people in the Western world thought about power, race, and being other. In Edward Said's book *Orientalism*, the West compares itself to a foreign, backward, and often lesser East. This is a form of cultural imperialism where African people were seen as racially weaker, morally corrupt, and "other" from European Americans. This perception of superiority and making them others was at the heart of American slavery. Asian American studies gives us new information about how US

imperialism worked. It reframes the colonization of the Philippines and US economic and military projects in Asia and the Pacific during the 20th century as important places for building Asian America and America's sense of itself as a modern nation. This work both brings back the experiences of Asian Americans and helps us understand important themes in American history and society. This book, *New York before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776–1882*, by John Kuo Wei Tchen, is very helpful because it finds more subtle patterns in U.S. history that show how changes in Americans' attitudes toward Asians from the late 1700s to the late 1800s occurred simultaneously with changes in the country's political, economic, and social systems. At the same time, Tchen says that both positive and negative Orientalist images helped create a modern "white" identity.

Orientalism and slavery in the United States are two separate events in history, but they have a lot in common with how people in the West think about power, race, and otherness. As a form of cultural imperialism, orientalism pits the West against an unfamiliar, backward, and often less important East. African people were seen as racially weaker, morally corrupt, and in general "other" from European Americans. This sense of superiority and "othering" was at the heart of American slavery. Orientalism and slavery are both ways of dehumanizing people that are used to keep the world in a social order and excuse abuse. Africa was seen as the "other" to white Europeans during slavery in the United States. They were called wild, uncivilized, and naturally less valuable to excuse their enslavement. This idea of African Americans as "the other" was written down in laws, social norms, and popular culture, and it changed how most people saw them. In both situations, creating the "other" was a way to justify dominance and keep control over groups that were on the outside.

One important way that Orientalism and slavery were alike was that they both used culture and fake science reasons to make it okay to treat non-white people less like people. Orientalists saw the East as less moral and culturally advanced. Similarly, people who supported slavery in the United States used racial science, religion, and cultural stereotypes to see Africans as less human, which made their enslavement seem not only okay but also important for progress. Orientalism wasn't just a thing that happened in Europe; it had an effect on America too. The same cultural and academic models that were used to justify empire in the East were also used to keep racial divisions in place in the US. A lot of people in the American South believed in Orientalist ideas to help defend slavery. Intellectuals and slaveholders often used romanticized images of African and Eastern societies to say that African people were better suited to being enslaved.

Some Western feminists know that some of the strongest supporters of female circumcision in Africa are women. The author also questions the link between Black Orientalism and rites of passage and circumcision practices. People must be persuaded, taught, and set a good example for cultural change to happen. Insults and cheap statements are not very helpful. The author talks about how Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president, may have affected the idea that Africa is a meeting place of three nations. Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race was written by Edward Blyden and came out before Nkrumah. When it comes to faith and Black Orientalism, the author says that Skip Gates' view is not "the Muslim-American Perspective." As a member of the OAU Group of Eminent Persons on Reparations for Black

Enslavement, he thinks about how to get the Western world to pay for the unfair treatment of Black people as slaves and poor. Lower Manhattan in New York Harbor in the early 1800s was a busy and mostly free international "contact zone" where free blacks, Irish, and Chinese people lived in the lower classes. There was inequality and strife in the social setting, but different ways of doing things like food, language, dance, performance, and daily life mixed to create a unique popular culture. By the late 1850s, Chinese men dating Irish women were being made fun of in the penny press and in shows on the Bowery. This was part of a growing commercial repertoire of colored images made for a public eager to enjoy the sight of difference. The sexualization of Eastern women is a big part of Orientalism. Women from the East were often portrayed in Orientalist art and writing as strange and sexualized characters who only existed to make Western men happy. These pictures both fetishized and dehumanized Eastern women by showing them as things to desire instead of fully developed people. The sexualization of non-white women was used as a tool of power in both cases. To show their physical and mental power over Eastern and African women, white men would treat them like sexual objects. Dehumanizing people was a big part of both Orientalism and American slavery. It helped spread the idea that people who were not white were fundamentally different and less valuable.

Both Orientalism and American slavery had deep roots in the political, intellectual, and cultural norms of their times. Both systems used the idea of "otherness" to justify taking advantage of and dehumanizing groups of people who were not white. Western powers were able to keep systems of dominance that helped them economically, culturally, and politically by making Africans, Easterners, and other non-European peoples seem naturally less important. Stories about slaves, like *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) by Harriet

Jacobs and *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845) by Frederick Douglass, had a big impact on how people felt about slavery in the United States. These stories gave slaves a human side and questioned the images that were used to defend their abuse. They also gave a strong critique of the Orientalist framework that tried to degrade people who were not white.

Orientalism and Black feminism are two important educational concepts that look at how race, gender, empire, and power all affect each other. Edward Said coined the term "orientalism" in 1978 to describe how people in the West see Eastern cultures as outdated, strange, and less important, with strong links to colonial power structures. This manufactured picture continues to have an effect on politics and relationships between cultures around the world where Black feminism, on the other hand, focuses on the unique problems Black women face, especially how they are left out because of their race and their gender. This movement has criticized the civil rights movement for its gender biases and criticized standard feminist discussions for ignoring racial oppression. Both theories aim to break down systems that abuse people and emphasize fighting dehumanization, standing up for honor, and promoting justice for everyone. Orientalism is a very political idea that supports colonial rule by making the "Orient" seem less intelligent, strange, and in need of Western control or "civilization." The West built a picture of the East that supported its global goals. It did this by reducing the rich variety of Eastern cultures to a small set of stereotypes. This created an ordered system in which being white was valued more than non-Western identities.

When it comes to Western cultures, especially the US, Black feminism is all about the particular methods that Black women are oppressed. In contrast to Black freedom groups, which were mostly led by men and didn't focus on gender problems, traditional feminism emphasized the experiences of white women. Kimberlé Crenshaw came up with the word "intersectionality," which means how different kinds of oppression, like racism, sexism, classism, and more, affect and make each other worse. *Ain't I a Woman?* by Sojourner Truth is one of the most important books in Black feminism because it shows how white women and Black women were treated differently. "Ain't I a woman?" is a strong question that Truth asks to challenge the racist and sexist ideas that Black women were not human or feminine as can be another important figure in Black feminism, Bella Hooks stresses that Black women's exclusion is rooted in a history of slavery, economic exploitation, and social exclusion. She also says that Black women have been deliberately kept from benefiting from the feminist and civil rights movements.

Orientalism and Black feminism are both movements that fight against oppressive systems that treat disadvantaged groups like less than human and take advantage of them. They come from different times and places in history. Orientalism comes from criticizing Western colonialism, while Black feminism comes from fighting racism and sexism in the West. Both groups want a more open and multifaceted approach to justice, which recognizes how various types of injustice are linked. In the end, the fights of Orientalism and Black feminism are connected to a bigger fight for global justice. They tell us that the fight against injustice is not limited to one group or area, but needs support from all movements and identities. The task now is to keep bringing these groups together and making sure that everyone's voice is heard and treated with respect and honor.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

In this thesis, important people like Mary Prince and Elizabeth Keckley are used to show the different parts of Black feminism in the 1800s in the United States. The study shows that during this time, Black women were abused in many ways, including being forced to work as slaves and being treated badly because of their race, class, or gender. Early Black feminist ideas came from their own lives, thoughts, and strength in the face of these linked systems of oppression. Feminist groups in the 20th and 21st centuries would be influenced by and follow this idea. Looked at books, like *Behind the Scenes* and *The History of Mary Prince*, are about Black women who must deal with strong racial and gender roles. These texts show how Black women were abused, made to feel like things, and not like people. But they also showed that they could fight back and change the stories that were told about them. When we looked at these works through the lens of Black feminism, we saw both the structural injustices these women had to deal with and their own stories of how they fought back and got through it.

It was a brave act of resistance for Prince to write her memoirs and tell her story in her own words. It gave her back her identity, respect, and place in history. Because she wants to end slavery, she writes to make people more aware of the problem. Keckley's book *Behind the Scenes* is another work that tries to find a place for Black women in history. She had a special view of politics during the Civil War because she was friends with Mary Todd Lincoln. This was a rare chance for her to see how Black women worked in politics, even if they were just on the edges. Two Black women who lived in the 1800s, Mary Prince and Elizabeth Keckley, had an impact on early Black feminist ideas. This thesis looks at how they did this. To understand intersectional feminism, you need to look at their personal stories and how they spoke out against slavery and racial abuse of women. You also need to look at how they insisted on telling their own stories. Feminist thinkers like Kimberlé Crenshaw and bell hooks made the idea of intersectionality official in the 20th century where both women paved the way for feminist thinkers who came after them.

Prince and Keckley both write about how important it is to think about how their gender, race, and class affect their lives. By telling true stories of abuse and strength, they set an example for later feminist groups to follow. Black feminist writers still use these women's writings to show where Black feminist ideas come from historically. As we try to solve the problems that women of colour still have today, it is important for current feminism to know what Black women went through in the 1800s. There is still discrimination against black women in the United States and around the world, even though slavery isn't legal anymore. Movements today, like Black Lives Matter, have a lot to do with the lives of women like Prince and Keckley. They tell us that the fight for justice is still going on and that the struggles of Black women are still linked to bigger movements for equal rights for women

and men. We should give history's unheard opinions a chance to be heard, and feminism needs to keep growing. The works of Black women in the 1800s remind us of this.

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