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The Myth of Blacks Emancipation in *Steve McQueen's Twelve Years a Slave* (2013)

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Submitted by

Miss. Nadia Nait El Djoudi

Supervised by

Mr. Mourad Meziani

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Table of content

General Introduction **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Chapter I: Eclipsing Myth: “Traversing the Tapestry of Black History in America”

Introduction.....	10
1 What is Myth?.....	10
2 New-historicism theory.....	12
3 Presentation of Steve McQueen’s movie <i>Twelve Years a Slave (2013)</i>	15
4 The Black condition in USA.....	20
4.1 Historical and Social condition	20
4.2 Cultural condition	24
4.3 Political condition	29
4.3.1 The Denial of the voting right.....	29
5 The Black struggle in USA.....	31
5.1 The Economic struggle	31
5.2 The Political and Social struggle	35
Conclusion	45
References.....	46

Chapter II: “Mythical chains: Unraveling Black Emancipation in Steve McQueen’s *Twelve years a slave (2013)*”

Introduction.....	50
1 Slavery in Steve McQueen’s <i>Twelve years a slave (2013)</i>	50
2 Myth in Steve McQueen’s <i>Twelve years a slave (2013)</i>	57
3 Black’s Emancipation in Steve McQueen’s <i>Twelve Years a Slave (2013)</i>	62
Conclusion	66
REFERENCES	67
General conclusion	69
BIBLIOGRAPHY	72

General introduction

From ancient times to the present day, the enduring tragedy of slavery casts a somber shadow over human history. In the grasp of slavery, individuals forfeit autonomy, as external forces dictate their existence, residence, and means of living. It also constitutes exploitation. One of its unique traits is the notion that a slave is a piece of property, an alien, or a foreigner. They are taught that constraints may be used at will, that a master has entire control over their job, and that they have no right to use their own reproductive systems. A person who is considered property and was made to perform labor under duress is a slave. The western imaginary of the new world plantation slave dominated intellectual and legal discussions about slavery for much of the 20th century. Miers and Kopytoff highlight that the slave is:

“A commodity, to be bought and sold and inherited. He is a chattel, totally in the possession of another person who uses him for private ends. He has no control over his destiny, no choice of occupation or employer, no rights to property or marriage, and no control over the fate of his children. He can be inherited, moved or sold without regard to his feelings, and may be ill-treated, sometimes even killed with impunity”(Miers and Kopytoff 3).

Miers and Kopytoff’s definition of slavery emphasized how the conventional western understanding of slavery revolves around the idea of “property”, and how the slave is characterized by a complete lack of rights and bad treatment. Furthermore, their description structure draws attention to two significant features of conventional definitions of slavery: first, that many scholars and the general public unconsciously gender the slave as male. Second, that many focus on understanding the intrinsic nature of the slave as being rather than slavery as a historical process.

While looking at the definition of slavery, understanding its complexities reveals the diverse forms of these ancient practices, slavery and the slave trade took throughout history, influencing civilizations and leaving a lasting impact on our collective history. Notably, these antiquated traditions unfolded in a variety of ways, making it complex to distinguish them from other forms of forced labor. Their presence persisted throughout history, manifesting in different times and places (Engerman 480).

Transitioning from the constitution of exploitation, there is now a pivot to the institution of slavery, a dark and pivotal chapter that marked the beginning of African American history. Africans were the only group in the British colonies in the New World that had no control over their destinations or fates after the discovery of the New Land and the establishment of the European plantations. There, European settlers started to create colonies and sizable plantations. They initially used locals and indentured servants from Europe to work the crops, but soon they began to look to Africa as a source of cheap labor, which led to the beginning of the slave trade (kawelwa). It is noteworthy that this practice existed before European arrival in Africa in 1482, although it was mostly carried out on a small scale by Swahili traders conducting business on the Red sea (kawelwa).

Transitioning to a pivotal era between 1619 and the 1820s, one delves into the evolution of the African American institution of slavery, witnessing its development into its current form (Talwar 1). It all began when the first black Africans were transported to the North British American colonies as cheap labor to work on the large estates. They

contributed to the growth of cotton and subsequently tobacco crops. Slaves were used more often in the Southern states in 1793 as a result of the introduction of the cotton gin and the rising demand for this commodity in Europe; they eventually constituted the backbone of their economic system. African Americans did not act throughout the period beginning in 1619 and ending with the Emancipation proclamation and the Civil War 1860s; rather, they were acted upon. They were unable to bring anything with them. The American Indians served as servants for European settlers in the 17th century. Africa was the best option for finding inexpensive labor, nonetheless, because to the rising demand for additional labor force. Approximately more than 10 million Africans were forcefully transported to the New world through the gruesome trek known as "The Middle Passage" (Ramesh). African slaves had a hard life since they were not allowed to live in a community that adopted their own African customs. Later, slaves began to rebel against their masters in a variety of ways.

In the historic month of July 1776, the completion and signing of the declaration of independence not only symbolized the formal separation of the British American thirteen colonies from Britain but also articulated a compelling justification for their newfound autonomy. This historic document resonated globally, announcing to the world the birth of a free and sovereign nation. Among the five individuals who contributed to drafting the document was Thomas Jefferson, a visionary figure destined to become a prominent candidate for the presidency in America's future (Pauliuc 1).

Delivering into the emergence of the anti-slavery movement, the late 18th century in the north marks a pivotal chapter dedicated to liberating slaves and advocating their

fundamental human rights. However, the southern states, heavily reliant on slavery from their economies, actively resisted the Northern government's attempts to abolish it.

In a crucial act, President Abraham Lincoln, a republican strongly against slavery, signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, liberating all African American slaves. In the South, there was a prevailing belief that restricting the spread of slavery might ultimately lead to its abolition. Intense debates on the institution of slavery emerged, creating a deep divide between the North and the South. This division reached its highest point in the deadliest American Civil war (1861-1865), ultimately bringing an end to slavery as it was known (welling).

This present work considers the issue of the myth of Blacks' emancipation as articulated and formulated in Steve McQueen's movie *Twelve Years a Slave* (2013). Throughout the investigation, New Historicism is relied upon as a guiding literary theory to elucidate the social as well as the political implications surrounding the issue of emancipation of Blacks as an ethnic and racial group in the American society in general, and in Hollywood movie industry in particular.

Put this way, this work focuses on the historical, political, social and cultural conditions that accompanied the birth and development of Black consciousness around the urgent need for social, economic and political struggle for emancipation. It is also set to shed light into the artistic modes of production mainly literature and movies, which give

visibility to both the struggle for freedom as well as the construction of black identity and character.

Therefore, by myth the primary reference is to the social, cultural, ideological, and political dynamics surrounding past as well as ongoing debates, discourses, memory, and collective imagination evolving the question of blacks' quest for freedom and emancipation from the old shackles of a long blatant American history with slavery and civil rights struggle. In fact, McQueen's movie *Twelve years a slave* (2013) denotes Hollywood's direct artistic involvement with politics and history through its engagement with the reconstruction of Blacks' memory as well as reconstructing the myth of emancipation, social equality and justice for blacks. Richard Slotkin makes the point saying:

“Myth is a way of thinking about and understanding the historical moment in which one lives-not an analytic but a symbol or poetic way of thinking, in which the telling of a story or fable provides an effective way of looking at things. Thus the studio-era Western addressed the beliefs and concerns arising from the nation's obsession with growth, progress, the conquest of nature, and the necessity of violence”(Richard).

Slotkin's words address the concern about violence first as a major constituent element of the American social and political history, but also as a fundamental issue for Hollywood movie industry. The concern participates in the ongoing construction of the American myth around political, social, economic, ideological and even racial issues. As such, one might

wonder why the Afro-American question is still relevant today. One could argue that the race discussion in the United States effectively ended, when an African-American, Barack Obama, was inaugurated as president in 2009. However, this argument holds to be nothing more than a utopian idea. The mere fact that a man of color was elected for president does not necessarily reflect the reality of any society. One must also remember that the United States are a very politically bipolar country, where the political party you represent is more important than the color of your skin. Furthermore, all historical and cultural evidence points to the fact that there still are racial issues in the United States.

Besides, with blacks' emancipation, the reference is to the history of black political struggle for justice, equality and recognition as humans, and as a living racial group within the American social body. African Americans still continue to complain about racism as a factor holding blacks away from full social, economic and political integration. Their history as Afro-Americans still bears witness to a long history of racial discriminations, sufferings and violence. Multiple examples can be provided to testify to the long harsh blacks' experience with physical violence and psychological trauma. There are many problems in black community, but racism remains by far the major and fundamental obstacle to their integration and Emancipation. The persecution, discrimination, incarceration, and demonization of African Americans mitigate efforts to eliminate or reduce racism. Dr. Martin Luther king's famous phrase "*I have a dream*", calls on individual as well as collective engagement towards equality, and justice for all minority groups in general, and blacks in particular. For him, African Americans should have the same civil rights as white men. It is a political text in which he called for racial equality and putting end to discrimination.

The reason for relying on new historicism as a guiding approach is twofold. First, the theory provides the tools that would permit to bridge the gap between two major historical periods engaging with the same major concern of blacks' emancipation. The first period is committed with blacks' struggle for freedom in the light of post-Civil War era. The second rather engages with blacks' emancipation in the light of the first elected Afro-American US President, Barack Obama. Second, the approach provides the opportunity for assessing the role of Hollywood Movie industry in engaging with the issue of slave memory. It also questions the modes of representations (movie) to rehabilitate history, and call on individual as well as collective responsibility and consciousness towards slave sufferings, struggle and long road to freedom.

Many works of great significance have already considered the issue of blacks' emancipation, For example, Jasmine Nichole Cobb (2014), Clare Corbould (2014), Suzi Asiantih (2018), and others. For Cobb, the movie offers "super constancy to scholar's acknowledgement about bondage and the revealing of accuracy's restricted nature as a concern for display representations of slavery. She additionally brought that the movie demanding viewers witness slavery's sadistic theatrics to take part in the subjecting experience" (Cobb 343). Her emphasis on viewers bearing witness to the slavery's sadistic treatments is an appeal to McQueen's success to bring vivid images of the sufferings so that viewers can easily operate a sort of identification with the victims, and arising consciousness around the need to act positively.

As for Clare Corbould, she stresses on the movie's emphasis on slavery's institutionalized practices. For her, slavery is a political act sustained by instilled cultural

practices, and the solution must be a political act of resistance. She says: “ *12 years a slave* depicts a slavery that was as brutal and dehumanizing in the united states as elsewhere in the Americas and the Caribbean. In doing so, it reflects a recent shift in historiography from an emphasis on planter paternalism and a slave culture shaped by resistance” (Corbould 224).

Susi Astiantih offers rather a reading of the movie which is humanistic. Her emphasis on human factors and humanistic matters suggests that the movie primarily goal is the rehabilitation of human dimension and dignity of the blacks through appealing to the viewers moral dignity and responsibility. She says: “ the narrative slave *twelve years a slave* and its adapted movie has many aspects that can be analyzed and this story also can cover a lot of things especially about human rights “ (Astiantih 174).

Strikingly, the three critics though they have all in common the analysis of the portrayal of black long endured slavery and struggle for emancipation, missed the opportunity to analyze the movie in the light of an existing American myth surrounding the issue of slave emancipation. Therefore, the gist of this research paper revolves around the analysis of how the visual representation of slave emancipation in America serves primarily the construction of an enduring American myth through aesthetic forms (movie) whose discourse denotes Hollywood movie industry’s prominent role in sustaining a culture of memory, and resistance.

Therefore, this work opens up with an introduction that highlights the issue at hand which the following two chapters come to elucidate, and sustained by a general conclusion. The review of literature yet provides us significant opinion, perception, and interesting criticism around the movie's treatment, representation and reconstruction of a major historical event of the American history. The first chapter provides significant account of the major theories as well as the conceptual framework of the issue at hand. New Historicism represents a guiding theoretical basis, and a guiding roadmap. Much credit is also given to the major concepts as that of myth, slavery and the issue of emancipation of black Americans all intermingled in a review of the movie's major chronological events. The second chapter, however, addresses the pertinence of myth, slavery, and emancipation of Afro-Americans in Steve McQueen's movie *Twelve Years a Slave* (2013). Again, all intermingled in a significant analysis that aims at presenting the movie's commitment towards the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the memory of slavery as a cornerstone of American history. As for the conclusion, it provides the opportunity to synthesize the major findings of this research paper.

Chapter I: “Eclipsing Myth: Traversing the Tapestry of Black History in America”.

Introduction

The present chapter provides a general overview of the historical, social, political and cultural conditions of African Americans that cleared up their experience with the abolition of slavery and the ongoing of inequality and worse conditions of those African Americans. The study of Blacks’ American conditions made existence of their social, economic and political struggle for emancipation and equality .Furthermore, A presentation on Steve McQueen’s *Twelve years a slave* and a definition of such concept of Myth and Stephan Greenblatt’s new historicism theory will be provided in this chapter.

1 What is Myth?

In the vast tapestry of human experience, myths act as both mirrors and guides, reflecting shared consciousness and lighting the way for cultural evolution. Karen Armstrong observes that “Throughout history, humans have consistently engaged in the art of storytelling” (Gentile 84), recognizing our enduring love for narrative as an essential part of who we are. Adding depth to this perspective, Glen Stater and Dennis Patrick Slatteley propose that “Embracing paradox is essential when delivering into the realm of myth” (Gentile 84). This challenges us to view myths not as straightforward stories but as intricate reflections of the human psyche, filled with complexity and contradiction.

Myth is famously hard to define. There is no definition of myth as G.S.Kirk has said, "No platonic form of a myth against which all actual instances can be measured" (Gentile 84). Myth opposes stable limits and is, at last, an essentially debatable concept. Myth as a term, as a concept, and as a field of study is polyvalent and inexplicit, and like its many narratives holds together dually opposites that improves its study and enliven its discussion. Maybe myth's significant paradox might be that it can mean either truth or falsehood. To begin with some definitions:

Robert Segal says that:

"I propose that to qualify as a myth, a story, which can of course express a conviction, be held tenaciously by adherents. But I leave it open-ended whether the story must in fact be true"(Gentile 86).

Wendy Donigher :

" A myth is a story that is sacred to and shared by a group of people who find their most important meanings in it; it is a story believed to have been composed in the past about an event in the past, or more rarely, in the future, an event that continues to have" meaning in the present because it is remembered; it is a story that is part of a larger group of stories" (Gentile 86).

Karen Armstrong:

"Mythology is an art form that points beyond history to what is timeless in human existence, helping us to get beyond the chaotic flux of random events, and glimpse the core of reality" (Gentile 87).

When referring to the word "myth", it does not necessarily point out to Ancient mythology, but to a set of false ideas implemented into the minds of a society about the identity of a

nation. And what is important to acknowledge about the US nation is its sacralization of certain values, indeed, the US nurtures this idea of the American dream, a prestigious image of a country that prioritizes freedom and equality, however, although this utopist image might be attractive, the reality is different. Archard suggests that although a nation generates some factual precepts, it also dives into falsehood by creating an ideology that shapes its identity (Archard 472). In other words, what makes of a nation what it is, is the idea that it gives itself, and most of the times, these ideas are nothing more than constructed myths. As a means of glorification, the United States claims itself to be a nation that has defeated slavery, but it does not highlight nor praises itself for the economic profit that it had made out of it, for it is simply not politically correct.

Therefore, the term “myth” signifies the established and agreed-upon ideas that make the basis of a nation, and being induced with fallaciousness, they allow to maintain a certain status at the political level.

2 New-historicism Theory

Theory is important in research as a means to detect the things that will be discussed in the statement of the problem. In this research, the theory known as “new historicism” is a literary theory that emerged in the 1980s with Stephan Greenblatt one of its founders. It is set out to find meaning in a text by considering within the framework of the prevailing ideas as well as the social assumptions of its historical era. Literary texts are mainly seen by new historicists as inseparable from their historical context and it is through literature that the cultural and intellectual history could be understood. Warner Berthoff notes that “the intellectual or cultural history could not be penned without a literate reference; neither you

can write it solely on the literate basis” (Wesley 35). Thus, new historicists look to literature in a wider historical context, examining both the writer’s time affected the work and the work reflects the writer’s times, in turn recognizing that current cultural contexts color the critic’s conclusion.

Moreover, new historicists argue that literature is part of the historical process and should be engaged in the political management of reality. Thus, for them, the author’s role in writing the literary document is “hugely determined by historical circumstances” (Bertens 176). New historicism seeks to restore context of time, authorship and culture to learn about the people’s lives as well as socio-political issues. It is useful to note that new historicism has two major theoretical influences.

Michael Foucault is the first well-known French philosopher, who argued that only by those who hold power that the norms of culture are established. The second theoretical influence on new historicism is the Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin who brooders

Foucault’s the assumption by sustaining that every history “consists of resistance to dominant power” (Hoover 356). New historicism also studied how the influence of a literary work by the time this is mainly produced and achieved. It also gives an analysis of the social and personal experiences of a given author. In Tom Louis’s article “the new historicism and Marxism” argues that there is a link between Marxism and new historicism. The latter endeavors to look for ways in which population or masses marginalized, discriminated, and

authorized through a literary work. That's to note that: "the new historicism recommends a widespread show of historical change based upon Karl Marx" (Hoover 359).

Many of new historicism instances are hidden within a piece of literature once it comes out portraying past events. New historicism shows up in movies since history in movies are becoming the hit nowadays. History in movies shows the real drama of the real circumstances in the past. In fact, every critical viewer knows that a movie is not created in a vacuum and usually movies with hidden messages do not mean that the matters are just a couple of hours worth entertainment, but refers something that a viewer can take away from it. when we read books or watch movies, it's important to look deeper to understand the messages they share. Exploring themes like identity, relationships, community, society, morality, and issues related to sexuality and freedom, these artistic expressions serve as profound explorations of the complexities of the human experience. This highlights the transformative power of art and media in addressing and examining fundamental aspects of our lives (Watkins).

Movies and new historicism are proven to be connected to one another, specifically, for movies in which past events are reflected. The selected movie of Steve McQueen twelve years a slave which theory is applied have Emancipation as a theme which is the main concern of the blacks in American society. With this at hand, the new historicism is very much applicable to my study.

3 Presentation of Steve McQueen's Movie *Twelve Years a Slave* (2013)

In examining the profound narrative depicted in the film, it's essential to recognize that *Twelve years a slave* (2013) is a devastating yet remarkable movie about the life of Solomon Northup who was free man but along his path in life, he got abducted and forced into twelve years of slavery. Not only Solomon gets stripped off of his freedom, he was also denied the privilege of keeping his own identity, therefore he was given the name Platt. Solomon also gave reliable descriptions of a great deal of what he saw, did, and heard. Králiková came up Northup's intention which is written in his book in the following excerpt:

“ it is necessary in this narrative, in order to present a full and truthful statement of all the principles events in the history of my life, and to portray the institution of slavery as I have seen and known it, to speak of well-known places, and of many persons who are yet living” (Králiková 47)

Králiková accentuated Northup's intention to deliver a comprehensive and truthful account of his life's pivotal events. Northup aimed to depict the reality of slavery based on his own experiences, necessitating the mention of well-known places and individuals still alive at that time.

The film *Twelve Years a Slave* (2013) was released in cinemas in 2013 as a feature-length motion picture. Based on a biographical book with the identical title, *Twelve years a slave* which is the Memoir's book of Solomon Northup written in 1853. The events associated in the movie took Place between 1841 and 1853 in New Orleans, Louisiana,

USA. During this period, Solomon Northup, a black freeman, was kidnapped and sold as a slave. It is essential to note that in 1968, two American researchers Sue Eakin and Joseph Logsdon posted works in which they verified Solomon Northup's memoirs book.

As such, this book is an excellent resource for anyone curious about what slavery in American culture was like 20 to 10 years before to the Civil War. It gives a thorough account of how slaves were treated, exploited, and managed in the South, even though it only covers the American side of Louisiana forty years after Napoleon and France purchased the Louisiana territory. Furthermore, since this book was released in 1853 and was fairly popular at the time, it gives a broad overview of what the Northern states and their residents may know about the operation of this strange institution in the Southern states. The appendices contain one document: On May 14, 1840, the state of New York passed "An act more effectually to protect the free citizens of this state from being kidnapped, or reduced to slavery." Since Solomon Northup was kidnapped in 1841, the state of New York considers the kidnapping to be a criminal act that knowingly violates a standing law. Such information demonstrates that the North was aware of the horrors of slavery for more than 20 years prior to the American Civil War. There is no way to dispute that (Coulardeau 1).

Steve McQueen film's director, a Britannic Black Artist as well, in an interview accorded to NPR media referred to that after meeting show display screen creator John Ridley, he expressed his intentions to produce a movie over «The slave region in America» with "a character that used to be as prolonged as no longer self-evident in terms of their exchange in slavery». The choice was made after considering Solomon Northup's memoirs

book brought to his consideration by his wife. The motion picture accorded him the benefit to be the first Black director to win the “Oscar Institute Award” for the “Best Picture”. (Gates and McQueen 185)

Solomon Northup had a talent for the violin and an acute awareness of opportunity, despite his rough features. In Saratoga Springs, he met two strangers who introduced themselves as Merrill Brown and Abram Hamilton. These were Joseph Russell and Alexander Merrill's aliases. They informed him that they were looking for a violist to join their touring circus. Russell and Merrill stated that they intended to fund his return and tour as far as New York City. However, those who were pulling off a sophisticated ruse. In Washington, D.C., they were looking for a victim to sell to traffickers in the upper South. (Schermerhorn 2)

In the acclaimed film “*12 years a slave 2013*”, Solomon Northup (played by Ejirofor) takes center stage. Deceived and kidnapped on the streets of Washington, he finds himself sold into slavery, compelled to toil for grueling 12 years on a plantation in New Orleans. He serves three different masters at three separate points over the course. While working, Solomon received a visit from one of his master's friends, a fervent anti-slavery advocate and pro-abolitionist. They shared a conversation, during which he played a pivotal role in assisting his freedom (Sebastine 1).

Few days after his abduction, Northup is shipped and transported to New Orleans along With other captive African-Americans. He is told by the others that he needs to adapt

to the reality of being a slave and not to tell anyone that he is a free man in order to survive in the South. A trader named Theophilus Freeman “Paul Giamatti” offers Northup another identity "Platt", a runaway Slave from Georgia, and sells him to a plantation proprietor named William Ford “Benedict Cumber batch”.

The first proprietor is a Kind hearted man named Ford, the latter develops affection towards Northup and offers him a violin. After some time, Solomon Northup is bought to another plantation proprietor because of his fight with a white-man that endangered his life. Edwin Epps “Michael Fassbender”, in contrast to Ford, is ruthless and sadistic. His captivity in his new owner’s plantation was way worse than the preceding one. Northup meets Patsey “Lupita Byong’o”, a favored slave who can choose out over a day twice a day, twice the usual quota. Whereas being favored by the proprietor, Patsey is mortified and ceaselessly abused by his wife out of envy.

Sometime later, cotton worms destroy Epps's crops. Unable to work his fields, Epps leases his slaves to a judge Tuner’s neighboring plantation for the season. While there, the proprietor allows him to play the fiddle at a neighbor's wedding ceremony anniversary celebration and to preserve his earnings. When Northup returns to Epps, he makes use of the money he earned to pay a plantation employee that would allow him to send a letter to his friends in New York. Unfortunately for him, the latter took the money and betrays him. Northup is narrowly capable to persuade that Epps's worker is lying and hardly escapes death for making an attempt to flee. Northup unfortunately burns the letter to prevent Epps from discovering it.

Many years after, Northup meets a Canadian laborer named Samuel Bass (Brad Pitt), hired by Epps for a construction. During his work period, Bass despises the brutal approaches that Epps uses with his slaves and expresses to him his opposition to slavery, in comes Epps's enmity. Northup overhears the dialog and decides to reveal his kidnapping to Bass and Additionally asks for his help. Although it's risky, Samuel Bass agrees to send Northup's letter to his Family in New York.

One day, the local sheriff arrives accompanied by two men. The sheriff asks Northup a series of questions to affirm that his answers match the facts of his life in New York. Northup acknowledges the sheriff's accomplice as Mr. Parker, a shopkeeper he knew in his hometown, Saratoga Springs. Parker has come to free him. Epps is enraged and furiously protests the circumstances and tries to stop Northup from leaving. Northup gives an emotional goodbye to Patsey and rides off to his Freedom.

After nearly twelve years in bondage, Solomon's dream of freedom finally came true, yet his little hope for deliverance never faded. Solomon often sought to flee throughout these years and only sometimes begged for assistance, but his determination to live was so great that he overcame a number of illnesses and waited for Samuel Bass and Henry B. Northup to save him. After serving twelve years as a slave, he was forced to return to his former life, which had changed drastically (Prakova 64).

Finally, Northup returned to his hometown and family on 20 January 1853, and is overwhelmed by emotion (Helton 79). Everything has changed; his son and daughter have

grown up and, his wife has become older. He meets the new members of the family, his daughter's husband and his grandchild named after him, Solomon Northup Stanton. He cried and asked for forgiveness for his absence. The film's epilogue titles recount that Northup's judicial pursuits against the two men who kidnapped him have been unsuccessful.

4 The Black Condition in the USA

4.1 Historical and Social Conditions

The relevance of black's history is one which is of more prominent significance and awareness as Malcolm X argued that:

"When you deal with the past, you are dealing with history, you're dealing actually with the origin of a thing. When you know the origin, you know the cause. If you don't know the origin, you don't know the reason, you're just cut off, you're left standing in mid-air...It's impossible for you and me to have a balanced mind in this society without going into the past." (Dagbovie 613).

Malcolm X contended that African Americans lacked knowledge of their history , which contributed straightforwardly to their oppression. He defined African American history a being in direct relation to the present.

Looking back at the history of African-Americans, it goes back to the sixteenth century when they came to America as slaves with the greater part of them being caught from Central Africa and West Africa with a few coming from East and South East Africa. As Mary Elliott stated:

"Enslaved black people came from regions and ethnic groups throughout Africa. Though they came empty-handed, they carried with them memories of loved ones and communities, moral values, intellectual insight, artistic talents and cultural practices, religious beliefs and skills. In their new environment, they relied on these memories to create new practices infused with old ones." (Elliot)

This was the time when Slavery was at its pinnacle, and this followed the fact that agriculture was doing well with the presence of more agricultural land; there was a certain kind of appeal for work. During these days, Africans had no rights and the only option they had was not to be killed. Africans lived under this form of oppression for a significant time and the various resistances from the Africans were witnessed as they made effort to secure their freedom (Graham). To reach freedom, most slaves had to run from their masters' controlled zones where they lived in cities forming exclusively African communities. On January 1, 1863, Abraham Lincoln passed an executive order ordinarily known as Emancipation Proclamation, where 3,000,000 slaves had their legal status from "slaves" to "free". This meant that as soon as a slave got away from the confederate government's control by fleeing, the slave turned out to be totally free.

Socially, the African-Americans were exposed to racial segregation. This bears the meaning that Africans couldn't get the similar facilities which were being given to the whites. On a similar sense, Africans and the whites didn't hold similar positions regarding work. This means that Africans would hold lower positions while the whites would hold the higher ones (Horton).

When it comes to schools, the segregation was felt as well. Bobby Scott was one of the congressmen who asked the government Accountability office to assert the case of numerous doubters who rejected that segregation was occurring. The GAO has asserted by saying that:

« Our nation's schools are, in fact, largely segregated by race and class. What's more troubling in their findings is that segregation in public K-12 schools is not getting better, but it is rapidly getting worse. The report shows that more than 20 million students of color now attend racially and socioeconomically isolated public schools. That is up from under 14 million students in 2001. The GAO also confirmed that high-poverty; high-minority schools are under-resourced and over-disciplined. Students attending these schools are less likely to have access to advance coursework and more likely to be suspended or expelled. The GAO found that our nation's public schools are separate, and they are unequal. If our nation is going to close persistent achievement gaps and prepare all students for success in a 21st-century economy, we must seriously address racial and socioeconomic integration at every level in our public schools".(Scott)

This report has effectively examined racial and socioeconomic isolation in k-12 public schools on educational equity and affirmed what researchers have asserted about the nation's public schools which stay segregated by both race and class, producing inequitable access to educational opportunity that has deprived the nation's most frail students from learning gains and later life access. This report isn't just about realities yet in addition it is a call to action.

In different cases, for instance in 1865, issues and racial terrorism arose where a mystery vigilante posse arose, moving to shatter the southern Republican party and significantly terrorizing the black leader. Despite the fact that this group was shattered by 1871, different killing activities were rampant with the number of the blacks' death being impressively high.

At the point when one comes to the general community, the whites would commonly put the blacks on a less privileged status. This signifies that there would be areas which were only intended for the whites while others were intended for the blacks. The vast majority of the places where the blacks settled were poorly evolved economically, and they for the most part needed to fight in a bid to have their economic status enhanced.

However, multiple African slaves attempted to free themselves; the government came up with legislatures to control them. In such sense, the fugitive Slave Act of 1793 permitted any black individual to be announced a runaway except if affirmed on by a white individual on their benefit. This motivated the kidnapping of many of the free black individuals; particularly children who were later sold out into bondage with no hope of rescue (Graham). This act stayed in application but just as anticipated, different parties got out calling for an end to slavery. This legislation was likewise weakened by the expanding number of free blacks, and this gave the slaves the power to rebel significantly more. A genuine example is the revolt of the Haitian slaves who conflicted with their white slave owners. This took place in 1791 and kept going until 1801. This came as the essential source and the fuel towards both the abolitionist and the slaves contending for the freedom for all Africans living in America.

One of the acts which were modified to make the conditions of African-Americans better is the Civil Rights Act of 1866 which was changed to make blacks full U.S. Citizens. To pick up these, the blacks battled for their own emancipation. This came due to the high level of segregation and the fact that in most places blacks were not permitted or were mistreated in the white businesses, schools and in different places, for example, in churches. In a offer to make their lives comfortable and furthermore to improve their conditions, the Africans began setting up their own social sets ups, for instance, churches, schools and businesses.

4.2 Cultural Conditions

What are the main principles that construct the culture of the African American, and consequently, govern African American behavior? Morgan contended that:

"In order to understand African American culture, one must procure more than a superficial understanding of American enslavement of Africans, as slavery was the birthplace of African American culture"(Davis 46).

Also Conrad argued that:

"In many respects, slaveholders and white Americans created what became known as African American Culture"(Davis 46).

Morgan and Conrad insist that those interested in comprehending and addressing the challenges faced by African American communities today must investigate the origin of

those African American communities. This investigation would necessarily begin in the era of African institutional slavery.

Although many researchers implied that African American culture is similar to that of other involuntary American minority subcultures, yet it appears to be that it is not prudent or accurate to see African American culture like other American subcultures. Since when we take into consideration its roots, we find that it was due to bondage that this minority culture was established and created. It was through the migration of blacks in North America that they were capable to pass down their traditional arts to native born citizens. The art tradition included telling stories to every generation in the families of the blacks. The black culture elevated by tradition raised hope to determine their personal freedom to flee from poverty of enslavement and to set up a way of life through tradition. A way of personal freedom was through acquiring a good education that leads to a better foundation and a better way of life. As Author Kenneth Conklin expressed:

"An education system is the reproductive organ of every culture. Education includes both formal schooling and informal transmission of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Individual members of a society grow old and die, while new members are born and grow to maturity. Yet a society's culture is a living entity which transcends all the society's individual members. A society's culture can survive far longer than the lifespan of any of its members, because its educational system passes down the folkways and knowledge of one generation to sub-subsequent generations. A culture changes over time, but has a recognizable continuity of basic values and behavioral patterns that distinguishes it from other cultures. That continuity is provided by the educational system"(Davis 45).

Author Kenneth Conklin appeared to most brilliantly capture the assertion that schools are the essential cultural conduit in any society in his sayings.

All through American history, African Americans have been discriminated against and truckled to racist attitudes. This experience inspired some black writers, at any rate during the early years of African-American literature, to prove they were the equivalents of European-American authors. As Henry Gates, Jr, has stated: "So insistent did these racist allegations prove to be, at least from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, that it is fair to describe the subtext of the history of black letters as this urge to refute the claim that because blacks had no written traditions they were bearers of an inferior culture".(Gates 25).

Gates focuses to the greatest irony of the history of African American literature. Many black writers felt obliged to assume the undertaking of proving that the individuals of African descent were capable of writing as they were, truth be told, in the midst of the act of writing.

By refuting the assertions of the dominant culture, African-Americans writers were additionally endeavoring to subvert the literary and power traditions of the U.S. Some scholars assert that writing had traditionally been viewed as "something defined by the dominant culture as a white male activity". This implies that, in the U.S society, literary acceptance has traditionally been closely connected in with the very power dynamics which perpetrated such wickedness as racial discrimination. By borrowing from and fusing the

non-composed oral traditions and folk life of the African Diaspora. African-American literature broke "the mystique of relevance between literacy authority and patriarchal power". In creating their own literature, African Americans were able to build up their own literary traditions without the white intellectual filter. This perspective of African-American literature as a device in the struggle for Black political and cultural liberation has been expressed for decades, maybe most famously by W. E. B. Du Bois.

African-American culture often developed separately from mainstream American culture as a result of African Americans' desire to exercise their own tradition, as well as the persistence of racial segregation in U.S. Therefore, African American culture has become an important part of American culture but that simultaneously stays as a distinct culture.

From the earliest times of slavery, slave owners sought to exert control over their slaves by endeavoring to strip them of their African culture. The physical isolation and societal marginalization of African slaves and, later, of their free decedents, in any case, really encouraged the maintenance of huge components of traditional culture among Africans in the New World generally, and in the U.S. specifically. Slave owners intentionally attempted to repress the Black's political movement and to deal with the many slave rebellions that occurred in the southern United States, Haiti, Brazil and the Dutch Guyanas.

Thus, African American culture has had a widespread, transformative effect on myriad elements of mainstream American culture, among them language, dance, music,

religion, cuisine, and agriculture. This feasibility of mutual creative exchange is called creolization. Over the long run, African slave's descendents and their culture have been ubiquitous in its effect on not only on the dominant American culture, however on world culture as well.

The Black American neighborhoods are sorts of ethnic enclaves found in many cities in the U.S. The formation of Black American neighborhoods is firmly connected to the history of segregation in the United States, either through formal laws, or as a result of social norms. Regardless of this, African-American neighborhoods have played a significant role in the advancement of almost all aspects of both Black American culture and broader American culture.

In spite of the fact that slavery significantly limited the ability of Africans in America to practice their cultural traditions, many practices, values and convictions remained and have incorporated elements of European American culture through time. There have been certain aspects of African American culture that were brought into existence or made more notable as a result of slavery; an instance of this is how drumming became used as a means of communication and building up a community identity during that period. The outcome is a dynamic, creative culture that has kept on profoundly affecting mainstream American culture and on the world's culture as well. After Emancipation, these particularly African American traditions kept on developing, they flourished into particular traditions in art, music, religion, literature, food, holidays, among others. While for some time sociologists as Gunnar Myrdal and Patrick Moynihan Black Americans had lost most cultural ties with Africa, anthropological domain research by Melville Herskovits and others

showed that there is a continuum of African traditions among Africans in the New world from the West Indies to the U.S. The utmost impact of African cultural practices on European cultures is found beneath the Mason Dixon in the southeastern United States, particularly in the Carolinas among the Gullah people and in Louisiana.

4.3 The Political Condition

The separation of the races as well as the well achievement of supremacy was the concern of white southerners and this was made possible through segregation. This later was also called the Jim Crow system which became common in southern states following the end of the reconstruction in 1877. During the reconstruction, the republican government was mainly run by northerners, some thoughtful Southerners and blacks. The governments of the reconstruction had passed laws opening up political and economic opportunities for blacks. In the Southern states and by 1877, the Democratic Party had acquired control of the government, and these Southern Democrats needed to invert black advances made during the reconstruction. For that reason, they started to pass local and state laws that predetermined certain places colored and others for Whites. Blacks had separate, transportation, schools, parks, and restaurants, a large number of which were poorly funded and inferior compared to those of the whites. Throughout the following 75 years, Jim Crow signs went up to isolate the races in every possible place.

4.3.1 The Denial of Voting Rights

"The right to vote is both fundamental to individual liberty and to the proper functioning of representative democracy. When voting rights are denied, diluted,

or restricted, the ability of government to respond to our challenges and increase our opportunities is impaired, and its legitimacy in doing so is diminished".(Clinton 383)

"One more step could make a big difference. A lasting of Jim Crow era laws legacy is crime disenfranchisement. In the year of 1890s, many of these provisions were instituted, as southern states found paths to make it impossible for Black Americans former slaves to vote."(Clinton 386).

The segregation system additionally included the denial of voting rights which was known as disenfranchisement. Somewhere in the range of 1890 and 1910 all Southern states passed laws imposing requirements for voting that were used to prevent blacks from voting, in spite of the fifteenth Amendment in the U.S.A Constitution which had been intended to protect black voting rights. These requirements included: the reading and writing capacity which precluded the many blacks who had not approached schooling ; property ownership, something few blacks were able to gain; and paying a poll tax, which was too great a burden on most Southern blacks who were exceptionally poor. As a last affront, the few blacks who made it over all these barriers could not vote in the Democratic primaries that picked the candidates since they were open just to whites in most Southern states.

Since blacks could not vote, they were not able to prevent whites from segregating all aspects of Southern life and they could do little to stop the discrimination in public accommodations, education, economic opportunities, or housing. Furthermore, the struggle

ability for equality was even subverted by Jim Crow signs which continually helped blacks to remember their inferior status in Southern society.

The blacks' conditions in Northern states were to some degree better, though up to 1910 just around 10% of the blacks lived in the North, and preceding World War II (1939-1945), very few blacks lived in the West. Blacks were normally allowed to vote in the North, yet there were so few blacks that their voices were scarcely heard. Segregated facilities were not as common in the North, but blacks were typically denied access to the best hotels and restaurants. Schools in New England were typically integrated; however those in the Midwest were definitely not.

Maybe the most difficult part of the Northern life was the economic discrimination that turned out to be intense for the blacks, indeed, they needed to rival with large numbers of recent European immigrants for job opportunities and these latter were quite often lost.

5 The Black Struggle in the USA

5.1 The Economic Struggle

Despite the fact that African Americans have confronted immense oppression in the U.S, prominent leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X have all struggled for black economic and social advancement. Mr. King devoted himself to the fight for the rights of African Americans in the United States. Preceding his death on April fourth , 1968, Mr. King had been demarcating the poor people's campaign march which purposed to dramatize the actuality of joblessness and deprivation by bringing those excluded from the economic

to the doorstep of the country's leaders (Weissmann 1); by sensationalizing the reality, King planned to assist African Americans by getting a decent living through a middle-class income. Following Martin Luther King Jr's goals for the Black American community, Malcolm X (1964) additionally sought to bring light to the inequality of economy in the black community and noted the following:

"The political – The economic philosophy of Black nationalism only means that we have to become involved in a program of reeducation to educate our people into the importance of knowing that when you spend your dollar out of the community in which you live, the community in which you spend your money becomes poorer and poorer. And because these negroes, who have been misled, misguided, are breaking their necks to take their money and spend it with the Man, The Man is becoming richer and richer, and you're becoming poorer and poorer. And then what happens? The community in which you live becomes a slum. It becomes a ghetto. The conditions become run down" (Malcolm X).

The creation of movements and organizations like the Black Panthers additionally helped to voice the economic rights of thousands of African Americans in the U.S. As put forth by the Hoover Archives (n.d), this party was the outline of the Black Power Party sought to accomplish black economic, political, and social equality through mass community and organization based programs (Basgen). With the flounce of African American movements, hundreds of Black Americans were haplessly harassed by government officials and the police. In their ten-point program, The Black Panthers observed the position that the economy played on African Americans and the other way around. In point two, the Black Panthers underscored the need for full employment for the

Black American community, they contended that the federal government was responsible and obliged to ensure full employment for men.

Secondly, the Panthers mentioned that the capitalists have consistently undermined their potential growth, as advanced by Basgen in 2001: "we believe that this racist government has robbed us, and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules were promised ten years ago back as compensation for slave labor and mass murder of black people. We will accept the payment in currency, which will be distributed, to our many communities" (Basgen 1). Despite the fact that movements like these have pushed for African American economic equality, there is still a long way to go as institutional and structural racism just as many other factors have deprived Black Americans of economic opportunity.

It is fundamental that we keep on taking measures to have the voices of African Americans heard and that we keep on addressing the economic and labor market inequality created by embedded racism and discrimination in organizations and institutions. Except if we tackle the class-differentiated system in the U.S, African American economic inequalities will keep on continuing (Darity). As advanced by the Center for Global Policy solutions in 2014: " The sooner we address these issues, the sooner we will become a more economically prosperous nation where all families can reap the rewards for their hard work" (Darity 6).

Although the reconstruction period had played an important role in the reconstruction of the American constitution, and had established a certain truce after the ravages of the Civil War, it had still not afforded a complete and radical judicial equity for the black community. Indeed, discrimination and segregation were still a central issue in the Southern States, especially since these latter were still under the influence of their archaic ideas. Their obsession with white supremacy exercised a violent form of retaliation on the black people. In fact, discrimination and its attributes are undoubtedly considered as a form of violence, and even though slavery became forbidden, this narrow vision of the “black” being inferior was still in vogue amongst the society.

Henceforth, segregation was applied in the United States, for they considered that a perfect co-existence between the two communities was impossible to achieve, and it is this separation between the two races that increased injustice and tyranny.

In a nutshell, the basic civil rights accorded by the government were not enough, and another wave of protests had to be launched. During the mid-50’s, a movement was created and sought to overthrow the white superiority, that is how the Civil Rights Movement was born. The event that lighted the match was Rosa Parks’s refusal to give up on her seat in a bus to a white man, this act being regarded as a violation of the segregation rules triggered the movement (Rosa). Rosa Parks was then viewed as one of the most important figures of the Civil Rights Movement.

5.2 The Political and Social Struggle

Aristotle in the politics noted that:

"An effective government must allow a good man to become a good and decent citizen. Democratic processes, institutions, and practices must strive to provide assurances that public policy are of high quality and in the public interest, which means they are a manifestation of, and embody the values of, a society in a simultaneously reinforcing mutual relationship".(Iheduru 209)

The social and political struggle of African American's history questions the authenticity as well as the rightfulness of the U.S democracy. The Citizens govern a real democracy by voting representatives to local and national government. The American democracy is based on standards that claim that all human beings are created equal and have the privileges of life, freedom, and therefore the quest for happiness. Nonetheless, racist ideologies prohibited African Americans from American democratic involvement well into the mid 1960's. Simply after the victories accomplished during the Civil Rights period of the Negro revolution, the 1964 Civil Rights Act and therefore the 1965 Voting Rights Act, African Americans were permitted to vote representatives into the American democracy. In any case, African Americans did not get away from America's social, economic and political oppression.

Democratic ideologies ensure people's rights and are viewed as being necessary for equivalent human progress. Without a political voice, the social, political and economic concerns could easily be neglected. For a very long time, the United States worked under a racially portioned government that took after an extremist system. The American

government depended on violence to effectively repress African Americans. For example, until the mid 1960's white Americans dominated a democratic nation that prospered monetarily in light of benefits from the rough guideline endured by African Americans. The USA government effectively kept up a complete social and political control over African Americans (Smith). Violence permitted the United States government to keep up racially sectioned networks, legislative issues, industry, and public spaces.

All through the twentieth century, racism served as the impetus for probably the most brutal authoritarian systems. Most of these organizations had the option to offense their power since violence made opposition reluctant to address political approaches. To historically reflect on that, somewhere in the range of 1933 and 1945 the head of the National Socialist Party, Adolf Hitler led Germany and promoted racial supremacist ideologies, which resulted in severe political, social, and economic oppression of the Jewish population. Jews were deprived of their citizenship rights and were placed in concentration camps which looked like the political, social and economic segregation experienced by African Americans from 1800 to the mid 1960's. The Nazi regime used violence to both keep everything under control inside camps and to repress all political resistance. Adolf Hitler felt that violence made "every single one of them [opponents] reconsider to contradict us when he realizes what is anticipating him in the camp"(smith).The powerlessness for successful Jews to overcome administrative violence allowed Hitler to stay in force and permitted the Nazi rough occupation until most recent 12 years.

Another example of a totalitarian regime is that of apartheid in South Africa that used racist ideologies to legitimize the violently held economic, social, and political power.

The system of apartheid was set up to reinforce Dutch power over the economy and social system, and to keep up white control while expanding racial separation."(Butler).Apartheid passed legislation, for example, the 1913 Native's Land Act that apportioned 87% of the South African land to whites (Bulter) which put ethnic restrictions on private areas. Another enactment incorporated a denial of interracial relationships, endorsing of "white just" positions, and that split race into three classifications: white, dark (African), or shaded (or blended respectable). This type of social engineering led to an increased isolation that powerfully dislodged 3.5 million Africans from their local land somewhere in the range of 1960 and 1989. (Bulter) Blacks had their South African citizenship eliminated, were excluded from the South African Parliament, and South Africa required at that time passports for them to enter. The Public Safety Act and the Criminal Law Amendment Act authorized the government to declare states of emergency which increased punishments to protest that led to a 156 state of emergency in 1960 and to 69 deaths and 187 individuals wounded (Butler). The South Africa Parliament's utilization of legislation to sanction violence and racial division permitted whites to direct the state from 1948-1989.

The question that should be raised is whether or not the vote of African Americans intended the removal of the white supremacist democratic state from power in the United States. To guarantee the political force, it is important to improve their racially discolored social and political status. African Americans had to build up a solid political presence in the American Democracy. If America really developed into a democratic nation, the efforts of the new African American residents would have been generally welcomed, yet this was not the case. The American government's response to the New Black Power and Black Panther was one of a totalitarian regime towards potential threats to the authority of predominant elites.

Keeping up power is a key element used by totalitarian regimes to maintain their system. Serious threats to overcome the dominant class should be repressed for a successful reign. Putting the new direction of the Negro revolution in context of past effective African American developments, shows how the new direction represented a threat to the supremacy of white democratic elites. In his book, "We have no leaders: African Americans in the Post-Civil Rights Era", Robert Smith calls attention to two comparable viewpoints found in effective monumental Black movements. The first element was the ability to disrupt American Society and the second was systemic political and social requests.

For past African American movements to be effective, they needed to create a disruption in the American Society. For example, in 1862 Lincoln submitted: "My principle aim in this battle is to save the Union, and isn't either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without liberating any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by liberating all the slave I would"(Smith). Lincoln's fundamental concern was the impact slavery had on the unity of the United States. He didn't end slavery since it was improper or in light of the fact that he felt that African Americans deserved freedom. Slavery ended since the Union violently disagreed about the issue of abolishment. Southern states refusal to end slavery led to the Civil War, however it was ultimately fought about the south that attempted to secede from the Union. (Franklin).

Furthermore, only after protestors in the Civil Rights development adequately created violent disruptions that threatened America's stability where legislation passed

supporting the Civil Rights Movement. The movement got some political support yet most government officials didn't press the issue or show any feeling of urgency. (Goldston). Only after protestors disrupted the American system's stability, by using systemic non-violent sit-ins to conjure non-systemic reactions from their opposition, was there political intervention (Smith). Once more, legislation was not passed due to the validity of the African American cause, just to keep everything under control. Neither one of the successes ought not be considered philanthropic acts by the American Government, rather as obstacles eliminated from the way of the American society.

The Black Panther and the Black Power sections shifted the Negro Revolution to more militant and revolutionary strategies equipped for producing the disruption necessary for political and social change. Black Power stressed Black unity and the formation of a nationalistic self-view (John Bracey). Huey P. Newton, the co-founder of the Black Panther Party explained the position of the Party during an interview with Ebony magazine in 1969 as follows:

"The Black Panther party felt that the present government and its subsidiary institutions were illegitimate because they failed to meet the needs of the people; therefore, they had no right to exist. The party felt that in the interest of the people, new institutions, both political economic, should be established and that the old institutions should disappear". (Harris 164).

Newton stressed that the current values in America were Capitalist values that legitimize the economic and political exploitation of the common people, including blacks, for the benefit of the few. Newton called for a new system in which the production of goods and the

provision of services is based upon the needs of the people and does not function for profit making purposes. According to him, in the Capitalist America, the masses of the people do not participate in the decisions as to what products should be produced, what services are offered, or where either is to be distributed.

Stokely Carmichael, the leader who coined the “Black Power” phrase, encouraged the Blacks to build a strong political, social, and economic base as strong as whites in preparing for harsher struggles to come. Carmichael declared that a Black united front would permit Blacks to "let them (the government) realize that if they touch one person of color... we will disrupt the entire country"(Bracey).Black Power purposed to unit Blacks to allow them to assert their political voice or disrupt the society until their requests are heard.

The Black Panther Party’s essential leadership had envisioned building a radical African American Movement to battle vicious oppression. This Party gained support from the Negro inner city by tackling poor housing, poverty, unequal employment, and different issues that a political voice would present to the government (Goldson).The impact of the Party leader Marxist made them realize that the main reaction towards the violence of the ruling class is the revolutionary violence of the people (Foner). The willingness of Black Panthers to fight back against expected violence taking into consideration the violence acted on non-violent protestors during and after the Civil Rights Movement represented for the cities of America an explosive situation.

However, the abolition and the civil right struggles succeeded since they didn't represent a threat to the structure of the American power (Smith). The struggles' success depended on the fact that requests were mainly systemic, requests that didn't challenge the society's basic values (Smith). For example, during abolition, African American slaves were liberated with the racial hierarchy that America used to justify the inhuman act untouched. African Americans were not legal property, however generally they rose up out disenfranchised, uneducated, and in an ideal condition to remain exploited economically. The slaves' powerlessness to request labor wages or protection from violence acts reflected second-class citizens failure to request a sufficient payment for their work and the governmentally ignored violence. The freedom of African Americans was monumental, yet it didn't change the political, social and economically segmented American government.

Similarly, the reform of the civil rights and the African American vote were also systemic. In a democratic society the right to vote is an essential characteristic of the citizenship. Segregation conflicted with the established American democratic thought that all men were created equal. The civil rights struggle didn't challenge the race based prejudice or privilege implanted in the American society nor did it challenge the power structure dominated by the democratic state that violently barred African Americans. The African American vote and the end of segregation was a move that made the U.S government closer into becoming truly democratic.

Both radical segments of the Negro upset were viewed as a threat since they needed non-systemic changes that would not contradict the current American economic, social and political power hierarchy. To ensure that this new organization addressed the issues of the

community, they surveyed its inhabitants. In view of the consequences of this survey, they started to plan a program to address the issues of the black community. The ten-point platform and program of the party was as follows: 1) Freedom and power to decide the destiny of our African American community; 2) Full employment of the black individuals; 3) An end to the theft by the white man of the African American community; 4) decent accommodating; 5) Education that reveals the real essence of the American society; 6) An exemption from military service of all black men; 7) An end of Police Brutality; 8) The all black men's freedom held in federal, country, state, and city prisons and jails; 9) that Black individuals have the privilege of being tried in courts by juries of their peers individuals from their African American communities as defined by the United State constitution; and 10) the ownership of Land, housing, bread, clothing, education, justice and peace (Harris 165).

The Black Panther Party threatened the U.S power structure by requesting rectification of wrongs that straightforwardly originated from racially motivated political and social segregation and oppression (Foner). The Party encouraged Black Americans to try not to struggle in the military service of a racist government that did not represent nor protect their community. The American war endeavors benefited from African American soldiers who represented 11% of the American power in Vietnam and who suffered as 18% of the casualties (Goldson). The Party addresses the legitimacy of the racist American legal system and demands the release of all Black prisoners on the basis of not acquiring a fair trial. The Party even claimed that the white men, by not giving compensation to slave labor and mass murder of the blacks kept robbing the Black community. By calling to an end of the Black American unconditional loyalty to the racist American government, demanding

power inside Black areas, and questioning the legal system's legitimacy, the Black Panther Party straightforwardly challenged the American Government.

The Black Power principles also confront the social and political power of American arrangement. Carmichael still believed the American government to be an oppressive regime. The Black Power urged the blacks to develop a solid base to sustain the American struggle sufficiently long to accomplish a definitive objective of setting up a socialist Pan-African Black Nation. Carmichael, a self-proclaimed anti-capitalist, just advanced interest in the economy since he recognized the reality that a Negro Revolution would require considerable financial funding. He felt that the blacks shouldn't "work any function from IBM or Wall Street cause your aren't doing anything for us. You are assisting this nation with propagating its falsehoods... « (Bracey). Instead, he encouraged the blacks to work as experts inside their community or setting up cooperatives and use the benefits towards the community. Funding would assist African Americans to build up a political power that Carmichael considered important to "crush any political machine in the nation that's oppressing us and push it to the edge of total collapse" (Bracey).

The response of the American government to the real danger presented by the Black Power and Black Power movements uncover that African Americans had not been completely integrated into the quasi-democracy. The American government's reaction takes after authoritarian regimes approach that depended on governmental violence and other repressive strategies to maintain power.

Although the Black Panther Party made genuine mistakes during its existence, it likewise acquired a considerable conduct of success and made several important new contributions to the Black American society and as well as the struggle for Black freedom. The Black Panther Party turned into a movement within itself. It was the including of all social contradictions between the wealthy and the poor, the included and excluded, the alienated and the privileged. And before their demise, the Party was able to make an enormous effect on America both physically and inspirationally.

In the year of 1966, the Black Panther Party seemed to change the trust of the Black freedom Movement. Defiant young men and women across America rose up against racism and to shatter America's capitalist system. The last judgment of this unique, revolutionary organization in History might show that in its own particular manner, the Black Panther Party added a truly necessary and new component for its time for Black Americans to accomplish real freedom, and that component was armed struggle. The question some thirty years later is, where are these revolutionaries in my generation «generation X", and can my generation learn from the Black panther Party mistakes, and thus, make an organization or movement to fight for the accomplishment of real freedom for Black Americans? A freedom which will consist of political emancipation, economic well being, physical as well as mental wellness, cultural and social integrity, fundamental human rights, and spiritual salvation, all of the characteristics, components, and attributes of freed individuals. (Harris173).

In reality, the history of African American social, economic, and political struggle opens up inconsistencies within the principles of American democracy. What are the other

citizen's characteristics that African American lacked that prevented them from being acknowledged into the American Democracy? Taking into regard that effective uses of governmental violence generally means a regime is more probably to use it later on; the United States government's reaction to the new trend of the Negro Revolution isn't surprising. Black Americans have been violently repressed by the government of America up until the mid 1960's the point at which they were granted vote. However, it is clear from the United States reaction to the Black Power and Black Panther movements that the Negro hadn't completely been incorporated into the American popular government power structure. What is alarming is not only the reality of the government's impulsiveness against the Negro movements, but also the cases not announced in public discourse to legitimize the unforgiving strategies.

Conclusion

This chapter clarified the Blacks' Emancipation by examining the history of Emancipation in the American society through the focus on the Reconstruction Era until the formation and the development of the Black Panther Party. With the passing of the Emancipation proclamation, it seemed that Slavery did not immediately come to an end which gave a rise to all slaves to keep hanging on for just a little bit longer until real change could occur.

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Chapter II: “Mythical Chains: Unraveling Black Emancipation in *Twelve Years a Slave* (2013)”

Introduction

This chapter provides an understanding of Steve McQueen’s movie *Twelve Years a Slave* (2013) in the light of a New-historicist theory. The myth of black emancipation is illustrated mainly through Solomon Northup’s figure and paints a picture of the blacks’ suffering due to their skin color in addition to their long struggle for freedom. Steve McQueen’s movie gives the most authentic and vivid portrayal of slavery in American society.

1 Slavery in Steve McQueen’s *Twelve Years a Slave* (2013)

While a number of films grab one by the throat, Steve McQueen’s *Twelve Years a Slave* (2013) appeals to the heart. That’s how this movie gets its name inside that big and golden envelop. With this harrowing as well as unforgettable drama of the film that does not appear away from the reality of slavery, and in doing so, helps one to fully and truly confront it (Sebastine). McQueen paints a bleak picture of shock and horror while portraying that “peculiar institution” of Slavery (Doherty 357). In the introduction of the movie, it is stated that “This movie is based on a true story” and when observing it, we truly become carriers of Solomon’s memory as a slave. As Mark Kermode suggests: “This is an important story, told with passion, conviction and grace” (Kermode). Slavery in this movie which was illustrated through many figures could clearly be analyzed.

First, slavery has been shown through Eliza. Once Solomon Northup is enslaved, he first encounters Eliza and her children who summarize the loss that so many enslaved women and their children endured through sale (Stevenson 111). Eliza had believed that the sexual relationship that she had with her owner would protect her and her family, because he had promised to free all of them. Rather she and her children were sold apart, and she never saw them again. As Anthony L. Brown and Christopher Davis expressed:

" Black children were separated from their mothers, causing immeasurable human anguish. This suffering would go unheeded, as blacks were viewed by their white captors as both subhuman and as valuable commercial asserts."(Cobb 341).



The sell of Eliza and her children (00:28:16).

Solomon subsequently befriended Eliza and tried to comfort her but observed that there was no soothing her wound. So, in this movie, Eliza becomes the symbol of the devastation that the institution wrought on African American social life and identity. (Stevenson 111). She is the slave whose identity, as such, is portrayed as a full contrast to that of the free man who has been wrongfully enslaved. McQueen deplores Eliza's defeat as

the only response to slavery that this film's protagonist absolutely rejects. Eliza is entirely vanquished, unable to move past her losses to survive long enough for the hopeful day of freedom that Northup is determined to see again, no matter what hardships he has to endure. Directors and screenwriters have effectively employed heart-wrenching scenes of the loss of children as experienced by slave mothers and fathers to convey to their audiences the psychological cruelty of the institution of slavery. (Stevenson 112).

Second, during slavery there was an invective that was mainly used by Caucasians to strengthen and maintain their superiority, and the latter is reappears throughout the movie to emphasize this imbalance between the Caucasians and African-Americans during slavery in the South. For instance, in the opening of the movie, Solomon and his fellow enslaved are taught how to cut and clean straws and in a dialogue, their master refers to them as "niggers" (the invective) and "boys", accentuating the difference between him and his slaves. In this dialogue the master says: "Rush in boys, rush in".(McQueen).

By referring to them as boys, the master degrades his slaves to the point where they are seen as his servants, rather than his equals. Furthermore, he makes use of the invective "niggers" in the same scene when he calls them "fresh niggers" to emphasize their grown African-Americans ready for work profile. On the other hand, when Solomon was a free man people never used this invective to degrade him, but rather referred to him as Mr. Northup and confirmed no indication of differentiation or any form of contempt towards Solomon. This was a groundbreaking moment throughout slavery because he was the only free African-American man in the area, making him the trailblazer of this era.

Third, the movie evidentially illuminates Solomon's experience of slavery through presenting scenes regarding the punishment that the slaves endured when they disobeyed their masters or failed to complete directives. If you were African-American, you could be tied to a tree and whipped by your owner till he was satisfied with the punishment or exhausted by the whipping. On a few occasions though, slaves were hanged.

Fourth, during this era, African-Americans used songs to differentiate themselves from their owners and prayed God in hope of escaping the revolting Caucasian race. In the movie, the song Roll, Jordan, Roll is sung during a funeral at the end of the movie:

“Went down to the river Jordan,

Where John baptized three.

Well I woke the devil in hell,

Saying Jordan ain't baptized me.

I say

Roll, Jordan, roll

Roll, Jordan, roll

My soul arise in heaven, lord

For the year when Jordan roll.

Well some say john was a Baptist,

Some say john was a Jew.

But I say john was a preacher of God

And my bible says so too.

I say

Roll, Jordan, roll

Roll, Jordan, roll

My soul arise in heaven, lord

For the year when Jordan roll. “ (Allen 69).



A mixing of sadness and hope in Solomon’s face during singing (1:33:09).

Through a song such as this one, they created an atmosphere free of oppression, hatred and hierarchy and instead linked with each other as slaves. Slaves have been using the river “Jordan” as a metaphor to point out that they noticed the river as an escape route out of slavery, in hopes of something better and thus prayed to the Lord that their soul would arise in heaven if they did not manage to escape.

On the contrary, owners and overseers sang songs to intimidate their slaves while the slaves were working and occasionally forced them to clap their hands during the singing. This was used to exhibit the power Caucasians had over African-Americans, in particular in the southern parts of the United States.

In the movie, Master Tibbeats forces his slaves to clap their hands as he sings a specific song to them , using the invective “nigger” to solidify the subordination of African-Americans. While the slaves clapped, Tibbeats sang:

“Nigger run, nigger flew
Nigger tore his shirt in two

Run, run, the paddy roller will get you
Run, nigger run, well you better get away

Nigger run, run so fast
Stoved his head in a hornet nest

Run, run, the paddy roller will get you
Run, nigger run, well you better get away

Run nigger, run, the paddy roller will get you
Run, nigger run, well you better get away (...).”(Allen 71).



Master Tibbeats forces his slaves to Clap their hands (00:31:41)



The slaves clapped their hands (00:31:41)

This song demonstrates how owners and overseers used songs to intimidate slaves by citing how paddy rollers would catch them if they tried to escape or steal something from the plantations. Paddy rollers were individuals who traveled the countryside to find runaway slaves. If a slave was caught, the slave used to be brutally beaten, raped or murdered.

This movie is undeniably a representation of slavery in the past and demonstrates how slaves were beaten and the different invectives that were used towards them. So, for this reason it creates a relation to the past through watching a free man being enslaved. Moreover, people apprehend how the past intersects with the present through McQueen's use of invectives that still, in today's society, are used and can be seen as remnants of slavery and suggest that the legacy of slavery is still alive. By experiencing slavery through this movie, people's interpretations of it might result in social change and a reconsideration

of their negative attitudes towards slavery. Some might even attempt to explore their heritage to find out if their predecessors have been slaves during this time or if they lived their lives as free men.

2 Myth in Steve McQueen's *Twelve years a Slave* (2013)

Few decades after the abolition of slavery, America is still filled with magnificent hope and expectations but this era also made evidence of the existence of myth. *Twelve years a slave* (2013) is the movie that succeeded to illustrate the myth surrounding black's emancipation in an American society. This is best illustrated by Alexander Abbott who argues: "This historical horrors show of 12 years a slave movie gave a new outlook to the history of slavery". As he added: "while time has brought an end to slavery, it has not eliminated the shadows that follow those who were enslaved" (Abbott) .Through *Twelve years a slave* (2013) Myth is illustrated through Solomon Northup figure in which it will be clearly analyzed.

Solomon Northup is that black man who had a free life who was born in July 1808 in Essex, New York "12 Years a Slave: How the Guardian Reported on Solomon Northup's Story in 1853". His father " Mintus Northup" was mainly a former slave who had been freed through the will of his master and a farmer who acquired sufficient property to qualify to vote in New York. And despite Mintus' status as a freedman at the time of Solomon's birth, he still regularly shared with his son the sorrow for the degradation of his race and the great love of freedom. Solomon Northup married a free woman Ann Hampton and had three children. His wife provided income as a skilled cook and Solomon supported his family in

many ways, but basically by working as a boatman, hack driver, lumberman, farmer, and musician.

At the age of thirty-three in Saratoga springs in New York, Northup's life was marked by a great change. Two men under the name of "Merrill Brown and Abraham Hamilton" approached Solomon, the free man of color, in order to seduce him into raveling with them to Washington DC as a musician for their "circus act", events that had been part of the elaborate scheme to kidnap and sell him as a slave, Solomon Northup was a literate urbanite, Christian husband and father, with the skills of a farmer, craftsman, and musician.



The white men approach with the free black man

At the beginning of the story, Northup wrote his story by remembering the time when he was rescued from slavery in January 1853, and connected it to his own experience as a slave into narrative slave to provide truthful realities about slavery, racism, and injustices at that time. At first he wrote it by remembering his ancestors and his father and how his father could become a freeman:

"As far as I have been able to ascertain, my ancestor on the paternal side were slaves in Rhode Island. They belonged to a family by the name of Northup, one of whom, removing of New York, settled at Hoosic, in Rensselaer country. He brought with him Mintus Northup, my father. On the death of this gentleman, which must have occurred some fifty years ago, my father become free, having been emancipated by a direction in his will." (Astiantih 172).

The quotation above shows how Solomon's father and Solomon being a freeman. McQueen's film portrays Northup at the beginning of the film as a free, hopeful, and an optimistic person. However, as the film progresses, this hope of being a free man seems to become a Myth. As it was stated:

«This shows a deep contrast between his status the previous day when he was marrying, wining and dining before his two unsuspecting captors. This view show how the life of each actor represented revolved around their freedom". (Sebastine)



Solomon Northup as an optimistic free black man (00:6:00).

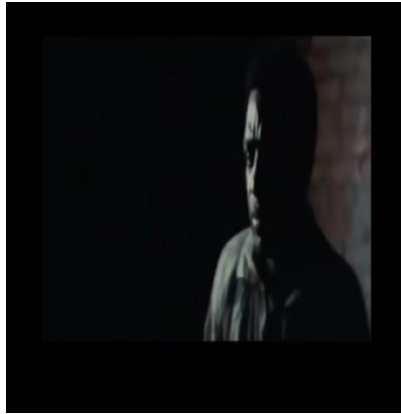
Once in Washington he was forced into the terrifying circumstances that defined one's initiation into a slave's life. He used to be subdued by torturous whipping and being chained up, given a "slave" name "platt", transported as part of the domestic slave trade to the port of Norfolk, then shipped to New Orleans, and subsequently sold to a series of slaveholders-William Fold, John Tibeats, and Edwin Epps. Solomon served most of his time as an enslaved worker on Epps's farm.

He insists that he is indeed a free man and that he has been unlawfully imprisoned, but his protests are met with a savage beating with a paddle until it breaks over his back. Jasmine Nichole Cobb, an assistant professor in the department of communication studies at Northwestern University Sheds light on this:

" Viewers witness Northup's initiation into enslavement by a ruthless beating with a paddle for insisting upon his free status".(Cobb341)

by Anthony L. Brown and Christopher Davis upon their review on the movie they shed light on this:

"Central to the movie's content and focus, however, was the imagery of the mental and physical brutality suffered by enslaved Africans. Imagery shown were of black women being chosen for random rape by white men followed by images of Solomon Northup being beaten on his back by his enslaver with a heavy wooden paddle and then a cat-o-nine-tails until his flesh was shredded and bleeding."
(Brown 227)



Solomon insisted on being a free man (00:11:11).



Solomon received a savage beating (00:11:11).

Similarly, the camera spends some time in numerous scenes on simply observing the face of Northup. In these instances, the movie intends to portray how a free person can be diminished to the point of destruction simply through watching the changes in Northup's facial expressions. This is an interesting parable in regards to myth as a concern. When we first meet Northup in the film, he is a free man, making a living as a farmer and a violinist. We see him walking tall, with his back straight and his head held right. He is a proud man in the beginning of the film, carrying himself with a sense of purpose and dignity. As his

descent into slavery unfolds, he tries to uphold his pride and refuses to enable himself to fall into despair. In one scene, a woman whose children have been separated from her and sold to another plantation is in great distress. She is weeping uncontrollably in sorrow for her children, whom she may additionally never see again. Northup, who has witnessed the actual separation of the mother from her children as well as her predicament now in this desperate state, scorns her for her attitude. He asserts, the importance of staying strong despite the circumstances, for as he says, “you let yourself be overcome via sorrow, you will drown in it”. He keeps himself strong to survive. He suppresses his emotions, rejecting his feelings, and refusing to fall into despair.

While many movies portray American life as an opportunity to work hard and gain much, the truth is often a lot less glamorous, specifically considering the heritage of oppression against African-Americans, which still has lingering repercussions in American society today. This movie reminds us that the American Dream is not properly suited as an account of African-American history.

3 Black’s Emancipation in Steve McQueen’s *Twelve Years a Slave* (2013)

Twelve Years a Slave (2013) is a serious work of art that aspires to be rightly historic and a reference to Black’s emancipation and slavery that is not yet forgotten. The context in which the movie was released and its setting made Steve McQueen’s movie more complex. Therefore, a recur to New Historicist analysis is needed in order to figure out the relationship between the film and the historical circumstances that preceded its release., so as to recognize more about Black’s emancipation and the movie’s purpose, we will attempt to, as Aram Veaser says, explain facts by reference to earlier facts.

In most part of the 19th century, the United States was a slave country and its historical reality has resulted in historical limits on black's emancipation. The seizure of Black bodies by the state and private interests was once a process that did not countenance both respect or equality since the government allowed the practice of slavery in various forms. There have been no checks and balances for the victims of slavery. Before we discuss the director and the movie, it is helpful to put him and his movie in its context and times. 1800s America used to be profoundly shaped by the Civil War both negatively in the fastening tensions and conflicts between the North and the South, but also positively in the war waged for a reconstruction, but the issue of race and slavery still divided the American society even after the Civil War. To explain more, even though the Emancipation proclamation , an executive order issued by President Abraham Lincoln, and the ratification of the thirteenth Amendment in 1865 together legally freed slaves, by the 1800s Reconstruction, the American government format to reunite the nation after the Civil War and integrate freed slaves into society had been pretty much a failure. Today, scholars believe that if the era was tragic, it was not because reconstruction was attempted but because it failed (Foner).

While the thirteenth Amendments of the US Constitution slavery were being abolished, the fourteenth and the fifteenth Amendments of the civil rights to former slaves and the right to vote to the new citizens were granted. These legal adjustments marked the start of the reconstruction period (Foner). This moment represented, for many African American communities, the chance for a true and stable emancipation, the way to full citizenship rights, the moment for the social and racial equality construction, despite the fact that, in most cases, they needed to face racial violence, the sort that would turn out to be structured in the Klux Klux Klan heritage of the slaves hunters.

This era knew a wide range of social and political experiments and possibilities. For the first time in the history USA, the Blacks could vote and get elected in federal, state and local political institutions. The "Union League" was one of the most significant organizations which attempted to bring former slaves and white workers and peasants together. The league advanced several political activities, including schools and building churches, organizing labor strikes and protests besides mentoring black political leaders, setting up armed militias to defend black communities from racist attacks, and assisting to organize and mobilize blacks to run for political office .As Du Bois expressed:

"Was a test of the whole theory of American government. it was a dictatorship backed by the military arm of the united states by which the governments of the southern states were to be coerced into accepting a new form of administration, in which the freedmen and the poor whites were to hold the overwhelming balance of political power. As soon as political power successfully delivered in to the hands of these elements, the ederal government was to withdraw and full democracy ensue."

(Du bois 345).

In Du Bois' perspective, emancipation went through an alternative organization of the lands, a cooperative attitude among black and white peasants and workers attempting to set up an alliance between the northern and the southern lower and working classes.

Soon the Jim Crow Laws had been passed in the South, severely limiting the power of African Americans once again. Also, the number of lynching of black people improved

dramatically, and the white supremacy movement with hate groups such as the Klux Klux Klan (1865) received tremendous support.

The story of the perpetuation of slavery into the 20th century is essential because it unearths the limitations on black freedom determined largely in the South of the United States and in the dark history of the oppressive exploitation of black labor. The result found has not only been the impoverishing of African Americans, but also of the southern region itself. The perpetrators of the physical and material inequalities promoted through the practice of slavery also cultivated the psychology of racial animus that seems to be part of a resentful set of attitudes. Racist views have survived until the 21st century and nowadays are fed by the practicalities of holding on to political power, and through realization that African Americans have survived and some have prospered, despite the heinous nature of the treatment they endured. Their survival and marching forward in every area of American life disproves notions about “racial inferiority”. At the same time, the extension of slavery into the twentieth century explains why racist sentiments survived into the 21st century and how they continue to fuel attitudes that deprive African Americans of access to the resources wished to achieve full freedom.

Twelve years a slave (2013) raises important questions about Black’s Emancipation and the relationship between slavery, history, memory, and identity. Although Solomon Northup is a free African American man who was residing in New York, he was kidnapped into the South and forced to engage in slavery. This movie was made in the United States, but was intended for all countries that have benefited from slavery beyond the Atlantic Ocean, and it is a worrisome reminder that past historic injustices continue to reevaluate it.

There is no doubt that this movie will create a cultural dialogue talking about the relationship between people and this history. Paul Gilroy highlights that “*Twelve Years a Slave* (2013) challenges prevailing notions, refocusing attention on the enduring issues of race and human freedom with sudden impact”. This underscores the film’s significance in addressing and disrupting conventional perspectives (Gilroy).

Twelve years a slave (2013) is no longer just a great movie but a necessary one that serves in confronting a practice that endured in the United States of America for many years. McQueen in his film chooses to let all the actions and inactions convey their own message about black’s emancipation and as the movie ends, there is no barnstorming speech, change promise or fantasy of bloody revenge, just a lingering shot of a man sobbing inconsolably.

Conclusion

Twelve years a slave (2013) gives a candid and truthful statement of facts about emancipation and slavery’s systematic dehumanization in an American society. Steve McQueen’s movie functions as an opportunity to consider new questions about black emancipation today. The myth surrounding the issue of black emancipation in this chapter is explored through the new historicism theory. By doing so, it demonstrates how real is emancipation for afro-Americans and how it could be true for a free black.

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General conclusion

Steve McQueen's *Twelve years a slave* (2013) is a Black movie that focuses on historical drama which conveys that even if Black Americans are free people they still need to prove freedom. The film portrayed the tragic and cruel truth of slaves in 1841. It focus on their mental pain and depression that slaves felt through being stolen their right as a human and treated as a possession for white people.

Throughout my dissertation, and departing from a New Historicist study, I come to the conclusion that the struggle for emancipation in the light of the civil war period and ending with the first elected Afro-American US Barack Obama elected president. To be sure, neither Lincoln nor the people granted the promise of freedom could have envisioned the country led by the first Black president, elected to a second term, just one hundred fifty years after the Emancipation proclamation. We have proven that, Steve McQueen's film is a powerful medium to provide a profound revision in enslaved black humans and raises the questions about black's emancipation in their social realities.

In the years that have gone from Emancipation of Blacks to McQueen's film, a lot of movements have come about in relation to civil rights, which have changed people's minds and views with regards to what is just and what is right. Likewise the Emancipation of Blacks have gone through radical change. Through our evaluation of Steve McQueen's film *Twelve Years a Slave* (2013), some conclusions can be drawn. It is clear that the social

equality that exist nowadays in the U.S for African-Americans is unparalleled to any other period in the nation's history.

Steve McQueen's film reflects freedom in its most sense. When Solomon Northup tried in achieving freedom for himself and his fellow African-Americans, this can refer directly to the emancipation of people who are enslaved. To be free means to not be owned and no longer being viewed as someone's property. By the time of civil rights movement the concept of freedom have changed. Being free now means having rights equal to that of any other American citizen regardless of color and has become a question of equality. It is no longer a struggle to be considered man but a struggle to be considered equal to your fellow, it has end up a question of overcoming inferiority.

Complete legal equality being achieved in the aftermath of the civil rights movement the meaning of the concept of freedom ought to be identical for all Americans, regardless of color. However, the concept still includes certain implications for the African-American population today, which begs the question; does there still exist unequal treatment of people of different color in America today? Recent events suggest that many African Americans in America nowadays still reflect on consideration on their freedom impeached. Even though the American society has gone through a series of civil rights movements, it appears that racial discrimination and injustice are still current issues for the African-American population in the United States today. Today's perception of the idea of freedom in America is above all personal autonomy and person equality amongst all kinds of people, regardless of skin color and religious beliefs. Looking at the United States today, we propose that viewing exchange through the prism of society or even a community has shifted to the

interpersonal and the individual takes core stage. This analysis of McQueen's film reflects a tendency to portray even institutional wrongdoings in this personal manner.

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Abstract

In my thesis on “Myth of Blacks Emancipation in *Steve McQueen’s 12 years a slave (2013)*”, I delve into the concept of myth through New Historicism theory. In the first chapter, “Eclipsing Myth: Traversing the Tapestry of Black history in America.” I analyze Steve McQueen’s cinematic portrayal, exploring historical, social, cultural, and political aspects of Black conditions in the USA, including the denial of voting rights.

The second chapter, “Mythical chains: unraveling Black Emancipation in *Steve McQueen’s 12 years a slave (2013)*” delving into the cinematic representation of slavery, this chapter unravels the nuanced use of myth, contributing to a profound understanding of Black emancipation narratives.

This study not only highlights McQueen’s impactful representation but also challenges the prevailing notion that Black freedom is an unequivocal reality. Instead, it suggests that Black emancipation may persist as a myth.

Key words

Emancipation - Liberation - Myth - Struggle - Realities - Perspectives - Identify - Construct - Historicism - memory – Reconstruction – Abolition – Legacy – Sociopolitical - Semiotics