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This paper examines the role an author's ethnicity plays in the depiction of slaves and the portrayal of slavery in historical fiction. In this study, five books by African American authors and five books by white authors published between 1981 and 2001 were subjected to latent content analysis. This study concluded that while authors of both races universally condemn slavery, there is a difference in the ways they write about the institution. African Americans focus on character development as affected by slavery, but white authors focus on the horrific issues surrounding slavery.

Headings:

Historical fiction

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DEPICTIONS OF SLAVES AND SLAVERY IN YOUNG ADULT HISTORICAL
FICTION AS COMPARED BY THE ETHNICITY OF THE AUTHOR: A CONTENT
ANALYSIS

by
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I. Introduction

Historical fiction can serve as an excellent vehicle for exposing young adults to events in history. Through identifying with character and setting, adolescents gain not only a sense of what life was like in the past but also an understanding of how the past affects their present world. Historical fiction is also an effective medium for presenting some of the most difficult to discuss situations and events in history such as the Holocaust, the Vietnam War, and slavery. As Joyce Saricks writes, “Many readers, myself included, derive a great deal of our knowledge of history from historical fiction because we don’t respond to the often-dry style of history textbooks or biographies” (1392). Young adult fiction draws its readers in to the world of its historical characters, making the characters’ situation more real and meaningful to the reader. Therefore, accuracy and attention to detail are of the utmost importance when writing historical fiction. Particularly young readers can accept mistakenly fallacies and stereotypes found in historical fiction as historical fact.

Within the past twenty years we have witnessed a proliferating number of popular books written for young adults about tough, edgy topics. Authors of novels on these subjects have sought to expose readers to these events and dismiss many of the historical misconceptions found in earlier fiction. Books about slavery in particular are finally revealing the horrors of the ‘peculiar institution,’ such as lashings and the sexual abuse of slaves. Speaking for authors of historical fiction about slavery, Lucinda MacKethan, North

Carolina State University professor and author of the novel *Lyddy*, states, “there is a feeling that we do not know the full story and we ought to go back and get it” (Carvajal 1).

Books about American slavery date back to the antebellum period, with such titles as *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and *Maum Guinea*. While many of these novels intended to speak out against slavery and incite public disgust towards the institution, they did little to improve the image of slaves. After studying many antislavery novels written before the Civil War, William Muggleston concluded, “One could hate slavery and also be a racist” (18). David Levy found in his study of antislavery fiction, full-blooded slaves were often stereotyped as “puerile, lazy, blissfully ignorant, and gambling” (265). Five main character stereotypes of slaves have been noted across antebellum fiction: the Sambo, the rebel, the tragic mulatto, the contented slave, and the wretched freeman (Kutenplon and Olmstead, xvii).

Even after slavery had been abolished, antebellum portrayals of slaves continued to influence postwar literature. Even famous white novelists such as Margaret Mitchell and William Styron have been accused of perpetuating the traditional slave characterizations (Schuyler 205). In *Gone with the Wind*, Mitchell shows us a rural Southern town where kind and generous slaveholders strive to reunite slave families at great expense to themselves; however, slaves are shown as inefficient, blundering, and dull-witted. Styron describes slaves in *The Confessions of Nat Turner* as cowardly and degraded people, whom in his main character’s mind, deserve to be sold (Van Deburg 144). During the 1960s and 1970s, novels written by African Americans such as *Roots*, *Jubilee*, and *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* emerged to present what African Americans considered a more accurate and well-rounded presentation of slaves and slavery. This is not to say that all books by black writers were without stereotypes or inaccurate portrayals of slavery; many

critics contested the historical accuracy of the novels by these black writers. William L. Van Deburg found in his studies of slavery novels from the antebellum until 1980 that stereotypes of slavery persisted in novels by both white and African American authors; however, he did find that “blacks and whites have critically different visions of the realities of slave life” (149).

I have found no studies since 1980 that explore changes that have emerged in the portrayals of slaves and slavery, and there has never been a study that has addressed this portrayal in young adult fiction. Since 1980 there have been many more books written about slavery; previously where there were few young adult novels centered around this topic, now we find many. As we move towards an era of cultural awareness, one must wonder if the old stereotypes of slavery have finally been eradicated from literature or if new ones have been created. For young adult authors, explaining such a complex and difficult institution as slavery while attempting to make their novels intriguing for younger readers is no easy task. Such an intense issue as slavery can naturally lead to partisan feelings and biases, which may in turn lead to stereotypes. There may be a tendency to present all white characters as sadistic and greedy while all slaves are loyal, hardworking, and endlessly suffering.

This study is a review of contemporary portrayals of slaves and slavery in young adult literature. This study seeks to determine if stereotypes of slave characters and slave life exist in young adult novels written within the past twenty years. This study compares these findings against the ethnicity of the author to answer the question: “Does the ethnicity of the author affect the depiction of slaves and slavery in young adult historical novels?”

Operational Definitions

Slave—African Americans bound in servitude as the property of a person or household during the 18th and 19th Centuries in the Western Hemisphere.

Slavery—Institution of the 18th and 19th Centuries where slaves were owned in bound servitudes as the property of a household or slaveholder.

Ethnicity—For the purposes of this study, ethnicity is narrowly defined as a distinctive racial group, either African American or White.

Young Adult Literature—Fiction written specially for readers between the ages of 12 and 17.

Stereotype—Lipman defines stereotype as “a fixed impression which conforms very little to the facts it pretends to represent and results from our defining first and observing second” (Katz and Braly, 41).

Historical Fiction—Sarick defines historical fiction as literature that “makes a point of conveying a serious respect for historical accuracy and detail, and its intention, beyond providing reading pleasure, is to enhance the readers’ knowledge of past events, lives, and customs” (1392).

II. Literature Review

No prior studies have been found on the portrayals of slaves and slavery in young adult literature. However, numerous articles have addressed stereotypes in historical fiction for juveniles, and studies have examined the portrayal of African Americans in children's literature. While exploring historical fiction for children, Brunner writes that even "acclaimed texts may harbor insidious stereotypes of prevalent social attitudes." She states that stereotypes "are identified by a lack of individual distinguishing characteristics. Instead they conform to a fixed, oversimplified pattern, as found in many blanket views of blacks, native Americans, and other 'labeled' groups" (124). She found in many popular books African Americans stereotyped as objects rather than individuals and constant sufferers devoid of any accompanying hostile emotion. In analyzing the Newbery award-winning book *The Slave Dancer*, Albert Schwartz similarly found blacks portrayed as "pathetic sufferers" with no individual personality (66). However, Berry found few instances of negatively portrayed African Americans in contemporary children's literature. Analyzing thirty books published during the 1980s and 1990s, she discovered only two with negative portrayals of African Americans and few with any recognizable stereotypes. These findings led her to conclude that authors are more aware of potential biases and are working to combat those biases.

Much has been written about the depiction of slaves and slavery in antebellum literature and how that depiction has influenced postwar portrayals. Foster looked at the

characterization of blacks in American literature and found that prior to the Civil War, African Americans were rarely portrayed in serious literature. When they did appear, they served in minor roles or were minstrels. He discovered five black character types in antebellum literature. The Clown was characterized as happy-go-lucky, musical, loyal, mischievous, and ignorant; this character is often classified as a Sambo character. Loyalty, faithfulness, superstition, and industry defined the Contented Slave. The Victim was often a female mulatto trapped in slavery despite her beauty and superior intellect. The Wretched Freedman was seen as aloof, hungry, and alone in the world. Foster's last stereotype was a composite of the first three character types. Similarly, Sterling Brown found six black stereotyped characters common in early American literature: the fabler, the loyal servant, the buffoon, the tragic octoroon, the noble savage, and the revolter.

David Levy also studied racial stereotypes in antislavery fiction and found that African Americans were often characterized as comical, stupid, lazy, and childish. They usually spoke in dialect, except when quoting the bible, and they always recognized white superiority. However, authors portrayed mulattos very differently; mulattos were tortured and miserable and had a drive for freedom that full-blooded negroes did not share. They were often seen as intelligent and attractive. Levy concluded that white writers, both for and against slavery, presented slaves in the same stereotyped manner.

Historian John Blassingame also looked at slave depictions in early American fiction. He found three main stereotyped characters that he named Sambo, Nat, and Jack. Jack was the faithful slave, while Sambo was docile clown and Nat was the dangerous rebel. However, after studying numerous slave narratives, Blassingame came to the conclusion that slaves were "no different in most ways from most men," and any generalized description of

their personality would be a stereotype (320). He writes, “In the end, the slave’s personality was a composite of the effects on him of cruel and kind owners, of those who demanded ritual deference at all times and of those who demanded it occasionally, and of several other factors” (321).

Stampf looked at slave personality as defined by historical scholars. He found that historians of slavery have been influenced by stereotypes found in slavery novels. In describing the personality of slaves, historians often lumped slaves into two categories: Sambos and Rebels. In his own review of historical documents, Stampf determined that “the personalities of most slaves are less easily classified, because their behavior when observed by whites was usually that of conscious accommodation” (388). Stampf believes that many slaves had a dual, conflicted personality; they had their actual personality that was usually only seen by family and other slaves, and the personality they presented to the white world, which is what we find documented. We have few historical documents that provide a glimpse into the actual personality of slaves. Slave narratives were written for white audiences, so even they are not an accurate picture of slaves’ personalities. Stampf found that many prominent historians failed to take this consideration into account when describing slaves, and thus their descriptions were often stereotypes.

Van Deburg wrote about the differences in the depiction of slaves between black and white authors from the antebellum to 1980; he believes that black writers “recorded different interpretations of slavery than those accepted by white contemporaries” (50). He writes that “while white writers concentrated on slaves’ accommodation to oppressive conditions, black writers catalogued the ways in which people could triumph over bondage” (59). Slavery novels written by African Americans often focused on such liberating themes as strength,

self-direction, and survival. White authors, on the other hand, often characterized slaves as helpless, degraded people.

Finally, University of Wisconsin Professor William Andrews studied the representation of slavery from slave narratives to fiction between 1865 and 1920. Based on slave narratives, he writes that slaves had two very different perceptions of slavery. Slave narratives written during the antebellum, as exhibited by *Narratives of the Life of Fredrick Douglas, American Slave*, “highlighted the brutalizing horrors of slavery in order to justify forcible resistance and escape as the only way a black could preserve his or her humanity” (64). However slave narratives written after the civil war, such as Booker T. Washington’s *Up from Slavery*, showed a different perspective of slavery. As Andrews writes, in the postbellum narrative,

“A slave does not have to fight back to claim a free man’s sense of empowering honor; diligence in his duties and pride in a task well done say as much or more about a black man’s respectability as running away, especially if that black man is also a free man” (67).

Andrews found that these two viewpoints of slavery have influenced how authors of fiction about slavery depict the institution, and thus, fiction today can be very diverse in its portrayal of slavery.

III. Methodology

This study is based on the methodology of content analysis. Thomas F. Carney defines content analysis as “a way of asking a fixed set of questions unfalteringly of all of a predetermined body of writing, in such a way as to produce countable results” (6). As Hosti states the benefit of employing this “systematic method of analysis is that one can compare and generalize about one’s findings” (5). This study utilizes both latent and manifest content analysis, as suggested by Babbie, to study both surface communication and the “underlying meaning” of communication in selected young adult novels (312).

For this study, portrayals of slaves and slavery are analyzed to determine whether or not the author’s racial background influences this depiction. This study examines young adult historical fiction about slavery published between 1981 and 2001. The study observes the characterization of slaves and the depiction of slavery; it then compares these findings based on the ethnicity of the author. For the purposes of analyzing the depiction of slaves and slavery, this study focuses on novels where slavery is actively practiced and slaves are main characters.

I began my research by developing a set of criteria based on my definitions of slaves, slavery, young adults, and historical fiction to limit the number of books included in this study. Each book had to include main characters that were slaves; preferably, the story should be told from the viewpoint of a slave. The books had to be set in an environment

where slavery was practiced, such as a plantation or domestic household. Originally, I had hoped to study only books set in America during the 18th and 19th Centuries; however, this limitation was too restricting for the number of slave novels available. Therefore, I chose to limit research to novels set in the Western Hemisphere; this would include books set in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. Finally, I only wanted to study books written in the past twenty years.

I generated a list of novels, from which ten were ultimately chosen, with the assistance of three major resources. First I searched through several print bibliographies of young adult fiction under the subject heading of slaves or slavery. *American Historical Fiction*, *America as Story*, and *Recreating the Past* helped me produce a short list of books. Next I searched through local library catalog to find books that may have been left out of these recommended bibliographies. Finally, I searched through the electronic databases Follette and WorldCat as well as <http://www.amazon.com> to generate a list of recently published books that might not be available in local libraries and may be too new to be included in print bibliographies.

Through the use of these tools, I was able to create a list of 53 titles; however, few of these works focused on solely slaves or slavery. Many of the novels were told from the viewpoint of white characters helping a slave escape or they were tales of the Underground Railroad. I did not believe that these works would provide enough of a description of slavery to analyze the depiction. Therefore, most of the list was rejected based on my original criteria. In the end, I had just 13 novels to work with. Five of the novels were written by white authors and eight by African Americans. To balance the study, I selected

all of the novels written by the white authors and chose five novels by black authors based on their availability at local libraries.

After selecting the ten novels, I read each book and then filled out a form (Appendix A), which addressed the depiction of both slaves and the institution of slavery. All descriptions of slave characters' physique and personality were recorded as well as descriptions of the institution in which they were working. Based on the literary criticisms noted in my literature review, I looked particularly for some of the common stereotypes found in older fiction.

While reading through the novels, I first searched for instances of character development. I looked for words that described slave characters such as humble, strong, or cunning. I also examined the novels for statements that might provide a glimpse into the slaves' personality; for example, the following passage indicates that the character is fatalistic and defeatist:

“Maybe he was afraid to tell Sally that when he saw her, he felt like a tiny bird hopping from limb to limb...he didn't want to come in from the field one day and feel like a tree chopped down by a double-headed axe when he learned she had been sold away” (Lester 9).

I wrote down both statements and descriptor words on the content analysis form for later scrutiny. The content analysis form also included specific questions directed towards finding any evidence of the main stereotypes discussed in the literature review; for example, to determine if a novel stereotyped slaves as Sambos, I asked if slaves were presented as tricksters or highly musical.

After addressing character development, I went back through the novels to examine the depiction of slavery. Again, I looked for words or statements that would explain to the reader what slavery entailed. I examined the living conditions of slaves to determine if there

was ample food, clothing and shelter. I also searched for issues these novels may discuss such as abuse, miscegenation, and infanticide. I asked pointed questions in the content analysis form to ensure that I would search every book for the same set of issues; these questions were meant to provide an overall picture of the institution of slavery.

Upon completing all of the novels and the content analysis forms, I coded the results. For both character development and slavery, I created a table listing every descriptive term or pointed question with white or African American at the top for the author's ethnicity. I counted and totaled the number of instances for each author, totaled again with ethnicity as a factor and without, and then averaged the number of instances for each category. After I examined the results, I began to analyze them in order to draw conclusions.

Limitations

This study has a few limitations. To begin the sample set is small based on the lack of available materials. Also, the authors' characterizations are described and defined by my personal interpretation; others may interpret the authors' portrayal differently. Finally, I knew the authors' ethnicity before I began reading the novels, so my interpretation and analysis may be subject to personal bias.

IV. Analysis by Title

In this section, each work is examined individually to address character development and the depiction of slavery. A brief synopsis of the novel is provided, along with detailed description of the characterization of slavery and the issues addressed in each work.

***Send One Angel Down*—Virginia Frances Schwartz**

Schwartz's *Send One Angel Down* is told from the perspective of Abram, a young slave living on a southern plantation. Abram's main concern in the novel is protecting his younger cousin, Eliza. A pretty mulatto slave, Eliza stands out on the plantation; everyone knows she is the daughter of Master Turner, though he never acknowledges her. As Eliza grows older, she begins to attract the attention of Turner's daughters and visitors. Perceiving the tension and interest Eliza draws towards his household, Turner decides it's time to sell her to the highest bidder. Fearful that Eliza will be sexually abused, Abram desperately tries to raise money to give a white minister so that he may purchase Eliza's freedom.

This novel addresses the disturbing sexual issues with slavery. Schwartz devotes particular attention to describing breeding cabins; she explains how female slaves had no choice but to mate with the strongest, most able slaves. The novel also displays the miscegenation that took place on many plantations; Master Turner sexually abuses Charity,

Eliza's mother, who is also a mulatto. As she tells Abram, "He ordered me to be his mistress! Don't want no one but me. If he tell me to jump high as the moon, I just got to do it somehow, best I can" (51). After each childbirth, overseers come to take Charity's babies away. Abram states, "Master sold babies away. Boys brought the highest price at auction. Sometimes babies were sold off before they were weaned" (13). Sexual abuse and the pain of losing her children take a heavy psychological toll on Charity; she and Abram vow to protect Eliza from ever having to experience the life her mother has endured.

Schwartz also discusses the physical abuse of slaves. Overseers send Abram and other slaves out in the fields from sun-up till sundown to pick cotton. By the end of the day, slaves have little energy to do much beyond eating. Overseers give slaves lashes with the whip for any wrong doing from arriving late to breaking a cotton branch. Slaves strenuously work either in the field or in the breeding cabins; in return they receive little food, poor clothing, and squalid living conditions. Their only form of release and relaxation is the Saturday dance they enjoy each week.

For all of the abuses the slaves endure, they do nothing to rebel. Slaves hang their heads and accept their position. As Eliza states, "So many troubles on this plantation. Momma just goes along with 'em and sings hymns" (100). Abram explains that he does whatever is required to avoid his master's attention. He explains to Eliza, "We got to have one face to show to Master, another we show to ourselves" (100). The only occasion the slaves act against their repression is to assist the tragic mulatto, Eliza; her beauty and delicate nature prompt the slaves to pull together all of their money and resources to help her. However, their efforts are somewhat in vain as a wealthy, northern abolitionist puts up

his money to buy Eliza's freedom instead. Abram and the rest of the slaves remain obediently on the plantation until the Emancipation Proclamation sets them free.

***Nightjohn*—Gary Paulsen**

In *Nightjohn*, Sarny narrates the story of a strange, new slave who is brought to work on her plantation. Master Waller brings Nightjohn to the plantation, naked and tied to his saddle. Sarny notices that his entire body is covered with the scars from old whippings. After his first day in the fields, Nightjohn asks any slave to give him some tobacco; in exchange, he is willing to teach that slave how to read. Young Sarny takes the offer, and she soon learns that Nightjohn has escaped slavery before only to return to the South on his own accord. He travels to various plantations, secretly offering other slaves his gift of knowledge. Sarny begins learning the alphabet until Master Waller catches her writing on the ground. He tortures her caregiver to find out who has been teaching the girl. After Nightjohn comes forward and is severely punished, he runs away. However, months later he sneaks back on Waller's plantation to continue Sarny's lesson at night.

Paulsen provides the most extreme depiction of slave abuse and degradation. In this novel, slaves are treated as animals. They work in the fields all-day and then come home to a meal that is served out of a trough. Slave drivers beat slaves with whips and clubs in the field, and Waller has his own special whip to control the slaves in the camps. Sarny describes several instances when Waller has brutally beaten or killed slaves. She tells how one slave was attacked after he spent the night with his lover from another plantation: "the master tied him down and cut him like he did the cattle so he wouldn't run to girls no more, but the cut went wrong and Cawley, he laid all night and bled to death" (49). Paulsen also alludes to the sexual abuse of slaves; Sarny mentions Alice, a slave girl who went insane

after she was repeatedly raped in the breeding cabins. Waller beat Alice with a whip and wiped salt in her wounds after she began to wander aimlessly around the plantation.

Paulsen's slaves are a faceless mass of sufferers. Beaten, degraded and ignorant, they silently endure their treatment. Outside of religion, they enjoy no pleasure or recreation; however, they are not allowed to pray. Some try to escape, but they are always caught and viciously killed. The only exception is Nightjohn, who uses his knowledge to transcend his world. He allows himself to repeatedly be beaten so as to have the opportunity to give other slaves his gift. However, Paulsen provides no indication of whether or not literacy improves the lives of his slaves. Nightjohn only explains that the slaves must learn to read and write so that they may document their abuses.

Ajeemah and His Son—James Berry

Slave catchers ambush and kidnap Ajeemah and his son Atu as they are heading to Atu's wedding. The two men are thrown aboard a slave ship heading for Jamaica, where they are sold as slaves on separate plantations. Both men demand freedom from their new masters; Ajeemah says to his master:

“I am unhappy here...I gave no consent to be here. I was not a prisoner taken at war. I broke no law. I did nothing wrong to be made your slave. Massa Fairwothy, sir, my request is that you arrange that I begin to return to my people” (34-35).

However, both masters see their slaves as rightfully acquired property and refuse to release them. Therefore Ajeemah and Atu both plan ways of escape; Ajeemah plans to burn his plantation down and Atu buys a pony that he hopes will one day carry him away from his plantation. Various circumstances cause both plans fail. Atu commits suicide while Ajeemah eventually gives up fighting back. Ajeemah falls in love with another slave on his

plantation and thirty-one years after his kidnapping he, along with all the slaves of Jamaica, is set free. He establishes family in Jamaica and never returns to Africa.

In this short novel, Berry discusses how slaves were unlawfully kidnapped and forced aboard slave ships. Berry describes ill and distraught slaves chained to the foul smelling ship; as the ship departs he writes, “Screams of terror rose up and ripped through the decks and echoed back to land” (16). Slaves labor in Jamaica’s sugar fields, where everyone is expected to work hard for nothing in return. Quaco-Sam, a fellow slave, tells Ajeemah, “this is a life whey (sic) you have no money; you go nowhere; you have nothin’; but you get used to it” (31). However, Berry shows the reader that many slaves such as Atu do not get used to it; many slaves run away from their plantation, but their situation hardly improves. Quaco-Sam explains to Ajeemah that runaways live like hogs in the wood; they are always tired and hungry. Once caught, the runaways are “beaten like a chop-up meat” (29). Ajeemah and Atu never submissively accept their situation, but Ajeemah learns how to live around it until freedom comes.

Letters from a Slave Girl—Mary E. Lyons

In the form of an epistolary novel, Mary E. Lyons recreates the life of Harriet Jacobs. Harriet hopes to inherit her freedom after her mistress dies; however she is saddened to learn that she has been willed to the mistress’s three-year-old niece. She and her brother John must serve as slaves to Doctor Norcom, his wife Maria, and their children. Maria is very cruel to Harriet and John, working them all day and providing little food. As Harriet grows older and more attractive, Doctor Norcom begins to make sexual advances towards her. In hopes of making her his permanent mistress, Norcom intends to build a cottage for Harriet to live alone. Harriet tries to disgust her master by having an affair with a white man and

becoming pregnant; however, this only makes Norcom want to control her even more. She realizes that she must runaway but refuses to abandon her children. She arranges for the children to live with her grandmother, and then she goes into hiding in the attic of her grandmother's house, where she remains for seven years. Eventually Harriet is able to send her children north and find a safe passage for herself.

Lyons' novel, based on the true story, unveils the horrible situation many domestic female slaves had to endure, sexual abuse. Norcom repeatedly reminds Harriet that she is his property and must yield to his wishes; Harriet's only recourse is to go into hiding. An intelligent, literate woman, Harriet is able to outsmart Norcom. She sends Norcom mocking postcards via her relatives in the north; seeing the postmarks, Norcom believes Harriet is in New York or Boston. Every year he travels north to find her, never aware that she is really hiding across the street. Ultimately, Harriet's patience and perseverance reward her with freedom.

***Jump Ship to Freedom*—James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier**

Daniel Arabus and his mother are slaves to Captain Ivers and his wife. Daniel's father Jack was also once a slave to the Iverses, but he obtained his freedom by fighting in the Revolutionary War; once the government pays off his soldier's note, he intends to purchase Daniel's and his wife's freedom as well. However a shipping accident kills Jack, and the Iverses take his soldier's notes. Sensing their freedom slipping away, Daniel and his mother carry out an elaborate plan to steal the notes back. When Captain Ivers realizes what has happened, he forces Daniel aboard a ship bound for the West Indies, where he will sell

the boy. Comprehending Ivers' intentions, Daniel must find a way to escape the ship and return to his mother.

In this novel the Colliers show that slavery not only occurred in the South but also in the northern states; they also explain how slavery came to be abolished in the North. They depict the legal methods through which slaves could gain freedom, such as participation in the Revolutionary War. They also portray some of the important black men in early American history. Daniel's father is based on Jack Arabus who successfully sued the actual Captain Ivers after Ivers refused to grant the former soldier his freedom. Sam Fraunces, war hero and renowned businessman, is another significant black figure featured in the novel.

As Daniel learns the historical significance of his father and meets other black role models, his opinion of himself drastically changes. In the beginning of the story, Daniel is an almost Sambo-like character; he tricks the Ivers, hides from work, and jokes about the ignorance of his race. Daniel states:

“I knew that black folks were supposed to be more stupid than white folks; that's God's way, the minister said. Black folks were meant to do the work, and white folks the thinking. If God had made black folks smart, they'd have got restless about hard work. Although truth to tell, it never seemed to me that I like doing hard work no more than white folks did” (5).

After his adventures and positive encounters with several prominent whites and blacks, Daniel concludes that there is no difference in the intellectual or moral reasoning between whites and blacks. He states, “You take my daddy, and Big Tom and Mr. Ivers and Birdsey and me, and take the skin off of us, and it would be pretty hard to tell which was the white ones and which ones wasn't” (187).

***The Captive*—Joyce Hansen**

On a day of tribal celebration, slave traders kidnap Kofi, the son of an Ashanti chief. After several failed attempts to escape home, Kofi is forced aboard a slave ship heading for America. While at sea, Kofi befriends a white indentured servant named Tim and the ship's slave, Joseph. Tim and Joseph protect Kofi and teach him English; when the ship arrives in Massachusetts, a Puritan couple purchases all three boys. Master and Mistress Browne are strict Christians who force their religion on the boys while demanding hard work. Exasperated by the Browne's rigid demands, Kofi, Tim, and Joseph runaway. Master Browne quickly tracks them down but not before law officials learn he owns illegal slaves. Now the boys depend on the legal system to grant their freedom.

In this work, Hansen contrasts the slavery practiced in Africa to American slavery. Kofi's family owned a slave named Oppong, whom they treated kindly; while Oppong enjoyed many privileges that the Brownes never give Kofi, Kofi comes to understand that slavery on both continents is wrong. He states, "Though my father treated him like a son and not the way Master Browne treated me, Oppong probably hated being a slave." He now understands that "one human being could never own another" (127).

Kofi never loses his sense of pride and demands that the Brownes set him free. However, believing they have done Kofi a great service, the Brownes refuse to release him. Mistress Browne explains, "By the grace of God you were taken out of the jungle so that your heathen soul could be saved. This is your home now" (138). Not accepting her argument, Kofi searches for a way to escape. Instead of violence and rebellion, he learns to read and write. When he stands before a judge, Kofi is able to articulate why he and the other boys should be set free.

***My Name is not Angelica*—Scott O’Dell**

Like Kofi, Raisha is the kidnapped daughter of an African chief; her captors sell her as a domestic slave to a Dutch couple in the West Indies. While her mistress and master are kind to her, Raisha sees the harsh conditions that many of the other slaves on her plantation endure. Work in the sugar fields is grueling and there is a shortage of food and water on the island. Though risking starvation and capture in the woods, many slaves, including Raisha’s boyfriend, chose to flee their plantations. To stop the exodus of slaves, the governor has issued new harsh penalties for slaves who runaway, including severing limbs. These punishments only anger the slaves and provoke them to rebel. Raisha must decide whether or not to join the runaways and revolt.

O’Dell’s novel, based on the historical 1733 slave revolt, is one of two books in this study where slaves violently strike back. However slaves in this novel do not attack until they are pushed beyond their limits. The governor’s new penalties are so severe that they create an environment of constant fear and hate. The torture of slaves by the rack and burning pinchers finally turns slaves against the masters. Many people die in the novel, including most of the runaway slaves, who commit mass suicide. However, the work has a somewhat happy ending; the revolt results in the French government’s decision to emancipate all slaves one year later.

Like Gary Paulsen, O’Dell does not fully develop his slave characters; however, while Paulsen’s slaves are passive, O’Dell’s slaves fight back. Slaves, regardless of their privileges and status on the plantation, are bitter and filled with hatred. Even Raisha, who is treated lovingly, despises her masters. Slave owners believe they treat slaves fairly by offering all the provisions they can spare, but at the same time, they joyfully support the

barbarous punishments for runaways. O'Dell shows owners only view slaves as property and slaves hide their animosity until they are strong enough to fight back. Their violence rewards all West Indies slaves with freedom.

Miles Song—Alice McGill

Miles enjoys the privileged status of a domestic servant in the home of a wealthy plantation owner until one day when he is caught looking at a book. His curiosity causes him to be sent to the breaking grounds, a work camp for unruly slaves. The hard work does not hamper Miles' spirit once he develops a friendship with Elijah, an intelligent, older slave. Elijah teaches the boy to read and write and promises to help Miles escape from his plantation. When Miles is released from the breaking grounds, he returns to his plantation and asks to work in the fields rather than the main house, as Elijah instructed him. He avoids attention and waits patiently for the day Elijah arrives to help him escape.

Miles character undergoes a complete transformation during the course of the novel. At the beginning of the work, he is a contented slave, afraid of losing his treasured position. As he becomes more educated, Miles finds that the benefits he once enjoyed are meaningless without his freedom. He adopts a dualist personality that we find in many of the previous novels. As Miles gains literacy, he makes himself appear less intelligent and able in front of others. He begins to speak in dialect so as to mask his knowledge until he can use it to escape.

In this work, McGill displays the artificial family structure many slaves created for themselves. In eight of the novels read for this study, slaves are sold away from their natural family; they formed new 'families' by connecting themselves to other slaves on their

plantation. For example, Miles never knew his birth mother, but he views the woman who raised him, Mamma Cee, as his real mother. He loves and respects her as he would his own mother. Before he can escape from his plantation, Miles ensures that Mamma Cee can flee with him. Artificial families serve as the stabilizing force in many slaves' lives and help them endure terrible living conditions.

***A Girl Called Boy*—Belinda Hurmence**

Blanche Overtha Yancey, nicknamed Boy, is a pampered, self-centered eleven year-old. She couldn't care less about her family's history as North Carolina slaves, until one day when she, while playing with her father's ancient African charm, is magically transported back in time to 1855. Though confused at first, Boy eventually realizes that she is trapped in a time of slave-owning plantations and she herself is considered a slave. As she searches for a passage back to the modern world, Boy learns a great deal about the past. She befriends several slaves who help her adapt to living in bondage; in return she works diligently and teaches one slave to read. By the end of the novel, Boy has a better understanding of herself and her family's history.

Hurmence uses this time travel technique to help her readers gain a modern perspective on the 'peculiar institution.' In the beginning of the novel, Boy tells her parents that slaves were stupid and deserved their status because of "the way they let themselves be pushed around and never tried to fight back or anything" (4). However, her line of thinking changes dramatically when she finds herself a slave. She comes to understand how slaves see themselves as necessary parts of the local economy. The slaves accept their status and defend their masters because as one slave points out "they got to make a living, don't they,

same as everybody else” (77). Many slaves stay with their masters because the masters treat them well, they have family on the plantation, and because they have no understanding of freedom. The slaves who do runaway, do so in an effort to be reunited with family members sold away. The slaves Boy encounters are humble, hard working, and kind. Far from being stupid, they are just uneducated.

Hurmench bases this novel of slave narratives collected during the 1930s. In these accounts many slaves recall fondly a time in which they had all of their food, clothing, and shelter provided for them. Hurmench’s novel, similar to these narratives, displays owners as not overly generous but conscious of their slaves’ needs. Masters still treat slaves as mindless property, but they do not abuse slaves in the manner other novels in this study describe. Slaves are willing to tolerate their working conditions as long as their families are held together. Boy meets Isaac who is running away along with his father after the mistress of his plantation sells his mother. Far from being angry, he tells Boy that the mistress was a kind owner, “better than most” (53). He explains that it was not her fault that the master died and left her in debt; she has to survive as well. When the family is reunited at the end, they are more joyful of finding each other than gaining their freedom. Boy understands the importance of family to these slaves and appreciates her family even more.

This Strange New Feeling—Julius Lester

This Strange New Feeling is a collection of three vignettes about love and freedom. Lester’s short stories describe how slaves feel when they obtain their first taste of freedom. In the first story, Ras is able to escape his plantation with the assistance of a white man who lives nearby. However, his master is able to track Ras down and bring him back. Ras pretends to be overjoyed in seeing his master, he claims that he was lonely and hungry

before Master Lindsay found him. Hearing this, Lindsay does not punish Ras but returns him to the plantation as a model to other slaves. While Ras carries the face of a contented slave, he secretly helps other slaves flee the plantation. Lindsay discovers the plot and comes after Ras. During a struggle between the two men, Ras's girlfriend Sally shoots and kills Lindsay. Lester ends the story with Ras and Sally ebullient with achieving their freedom from Lindsay.

In the next tale, Maria has been the abused domestic servant of Mistress Phillips her entire life. As a child, Maria was treated kindly by Phillips, but as Phillips began experiencing one miscarriage after another, she became abusive and cruel towards the child. When Phillips dies, her husband allows Maria's fiancé, Forrest, to purchase Maria. Forrest has spent his entire life as a freeman, self-conscious about appearing as a poor black. He buys extravagant horses and carriages to appear as affluent as whites. However, when Forrest is killed in a carriage accident, Maria realizes that he had many debts, which must be repaid. Since Maria was one of his purchased possessions, she must be sold back into slavery. Though saddened to return to slavery, Maria is glad to have experienced the wonderful years of freedom she enjoyed with her husband.

The last story is based on the true escape of William and Ellen Craft. Ellen Craft was a mulatto slave who appeared almost white. She and her husband William are able to devise a plan to escape north by cutting off Ellen's hair and making her look like a man. Ellen poses as a sick, southern gentleman, accompanied by her slave, to see a doctor in Pennsylvania. Their plan works and the two eventually move to Boston where they lecture to abolitionist groups. The couple becomes well known and when the Fugitive Slave Bill is

passed, they are in danger of being sent back into slavery. They must depend on northern whites to protect them when their former masters arrive to reclaim their property.

Unlike Hurmence's novel, there are no kind slave owners in *This Strange New Feeling*. In a scene where Master Lindsay is whipping Ras's uncle, Lester writes, "He tied Uncle Issac from that big oak back of the house, tied him upside down by his ankles, and then whipped the black off him. Blood was dropping off him so fast, it sounded like rain" (27). Slaves are beaten and degraded and therefore justified, from Lester's viewpoint, in running or killing their masters. Freedom above all else, including family and love, is the greatest thing these slaves can possess.

Results from Content Analysis Forms

Are Slaves Hardworking?	Do Slaves Accept Injustices?	Are Slaves Violent?	Are Slaves Tricksters?	Are Slaves Musical?	Are Slaves Religious?	Do Slaves Speak in Dialect	Are Slaves Literate?	Are Slaves Physically Abused?	Are Slaves Sexually Abused	Are Slaves Underfed?	Do Slaves Have Proper Clothing?	Are Slaves Treated Only as Property?	Do Slaves have Positive Contact with Whites?	Are Slave Families Sold Away from Each other?	Books
Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Ajeemah and his Son
Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	The Captive
Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Girl Called Boy
Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Jump Ship to Freedom
Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Letters from a Slave Girl
Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Miles' Song
Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	My Name is not Angelica
Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Nightjohn
Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Send One Angel Down
Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	This Strange New Feeling

V. Analysis of Collected Works

When I pulled these works together to study them as a whole, I first wanted to examine the physical and psychological descriptions of the main character as well as supporting characters (see Table 1 and Graph 1). All of these works feature the main character as a slave. The characters range in age from nine years old to seventy years old. All of the novels describe physical and behavioral traits of the characters, but the adjectives used and the prevalence of these adjectives varied somewhat. African American authors tended to describe the physical and psychological traits of their characters more than white authors; African American authors averaged 5.2 descriptors per novel, while white authors averaged 4.6 descriptors.

The authors as a group most commonly described slaves as proud and fearful. However, there was a difference in the use of these descriptors based on the ethnicity of the author. While seventy percent of the authors in this study used the word to proud describe the main character, only 28.5% of those authors were white. On the other hand, seventy percent of the authors also described the main character as afraid or fearful, but only 28.5% of those authors were African American. Half of the authors in the study portrayed the main character as intelligent. Seventy percent of the novels feature slave characters as literate or learning to read and write; there was little difference between ethnicity on this characterization (see Table 2). While 40% of the authors described the main character as angry, only two of the novels in the study display slaves acting violently. Other common

words to describe the main character were cunning, angry, kind, quiet, and musical. Only one author characterized slaves as overly religious and no author portrayed slaves as lazy or stupid.

Table 1

Characterization of Slaves			
	Black Authors (5)	White Authors (5)	Total (10)
Proud	100%	40%	70%
Fearful	40%	100%	70%
Cunning	60%	40%	50%
Intelligent	40%	60%	50%
Strong	60%	20%	40%
Angry	60%	20%	40%
Quiet	60%	20%	40%
Musical	20%	40%	30%
Kind	60%	0%	30%

Graph 1

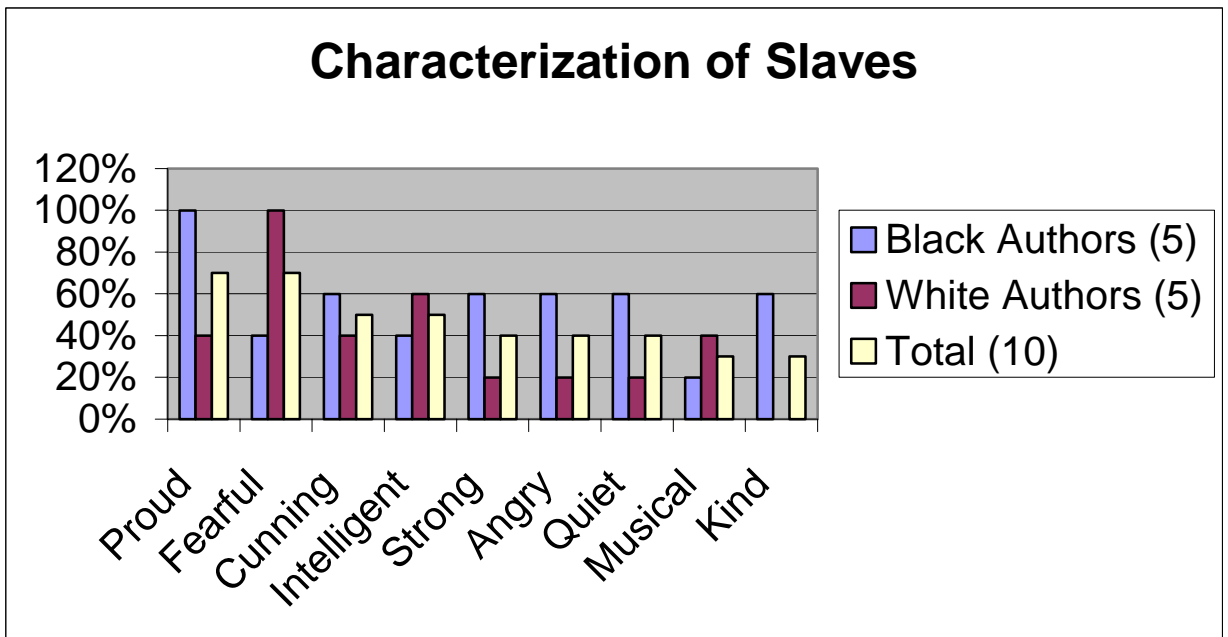


Table 2

Literacy of Slaves			
	Black Authors (5)	White Authors (5)	Total (10)
Literate	20%	40%	30%
Learning to Read	60%	20%	40%
Illiterate	20%	40%	30%

I also wanted to look at the relationship between masters and slaves. Thirty percent of novels showed slaves working in the fields, 30% in domestic households, and 40% in both settings, with little difference based on the ethnicity of the author (see Table 3). Thirty percent of the novels describe slaves as more intelligent than their owners; for example in *Miles' Song*, McGill comments that Miles can read much better than his mistress. Thirty percent of the novels also depict slaves as more civilized than their owners; for example, in *Nightjohn*, slaves look down on Master Turner's constant drinking and violent personality. In *The Captive*, Kofi disapproves that his masters do not wash their hands before eating or show appropriate respect towards elders. In 50% of the novels the main character escapes from slavery during the course of the book (see Table 4). Eighty percent of black authors write that the main character successfully runs away from bondage, while only 20% of white authors allow the main character to escape by the end of the novel. However, 60% of white authors claim that their slave characters were eventually legally freed from slavery, as opposed to 20% of African American authors. In only one novel, by a white writer, do slaves remain in bondage indefinitely.

Table 3

Forms of Slavery Presented in Novels			
	Black Authors (5)	White Authors (5)	Total (10)
Domestic Slavery	20%	40%	30%
Plantation Slavery	20%	40%	30%
Both	60%	20%	40%

Table 4

Outcome for Slaves			
	Black Authors (5)	White Authors (5)	Total (10)
Slaves Run Away	80%	20%	50%
Slaves Eventually Freed	20%	60%	40%
Slaves Remain in Bondage	0%	20%	10%

Next, I wanted to look at the depiction of slavery. First I looked at the living conditions of slaves. I found little difference in the way white and black authors describe the living conditions of slaves (see Table 5). Seventy percent of the authors stated that slaves were not fed enough food; diets in these novels usually consisted of corn pole and greens with a stated deficiency of meat. Forty percent of the authors claimed that slaves wore poor clothing. Forty percent of the authors also depicted their slaves living in inadequate housing; for example, in *This Strange New Feeling*, Ras comments that large holes in the siding of his hut allow freezing cold air into his home. Most novels where slaves are shown as having adequate food, clothing and shelter, depict slaves as domestic servants.

Table 5

Living Conditions of Slaves			
	Black Authors (5)	White Authors (5)	Total (10)
Shortage of Food	60%	80%	70%
Poor Clothing	40%	40%	40%
Inadequate Shelter	40%	20%	40%

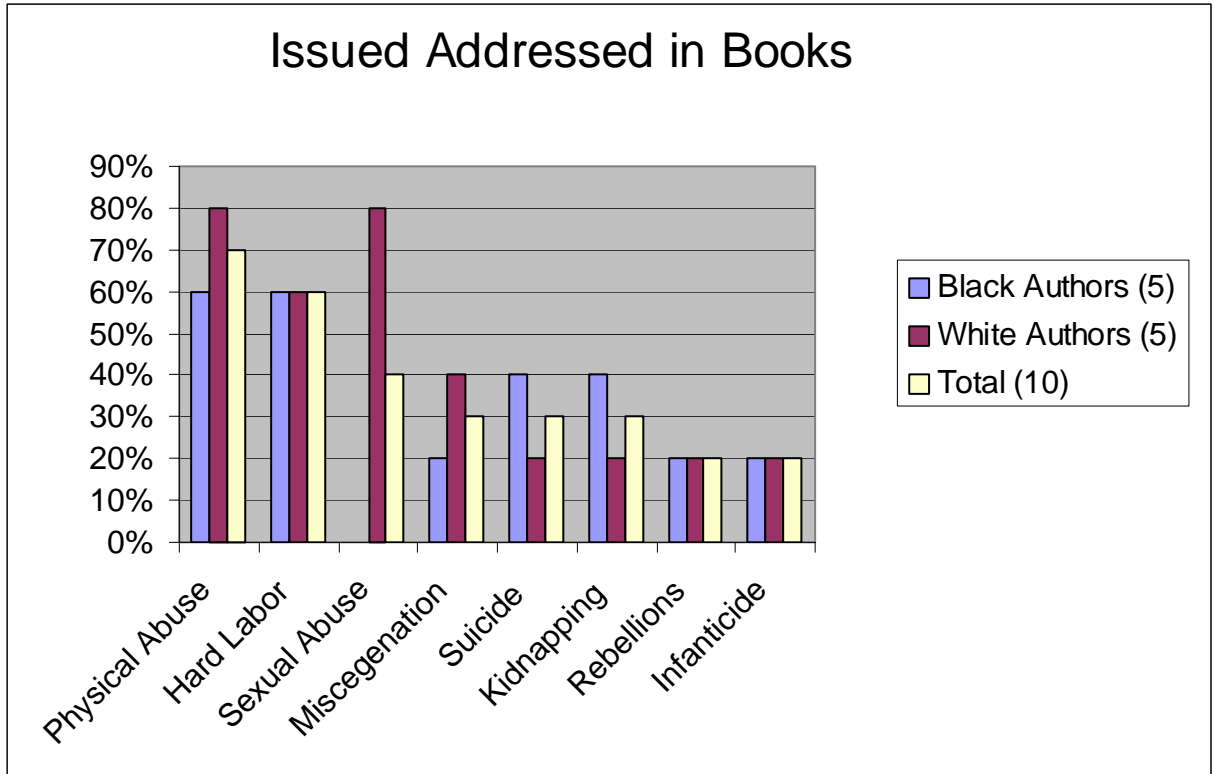
Finally, I wanted to look at the major issues surrounding slavery that these novels address (see table 6 and graph 2). Sixty percent of authors describe slaves performing strenuous physical labor daily, such as picking cotton or scrubbing floors. Seventy percent

of the novels contain scenes where slaves are violently beaten or whipped; another 20% of the novels mention beating or lashings occurring, but not do not depict them as they happened. In 30% of the novels, the main character is unlawfully kidnapped and sold into slavery. In 30% of the novels, characters commit suicide rather than remain as slaves, and in 20% of the books, mothers commit infanticide to stop their children from becoming slaves. Twenty percent of the novels feature a female mulatto slave and discuss issue of miscegenation between masters and slaves. Twenty percent of the novels in the study show slaves killing their masters. There is little difference between white and black authors when describing these issues. However, ethnicity did impact the author's depiction of sexual abuse. Eighty percent of white authors discuss the sexual abuse of female slaves while no African American author wrote about slaves being raped or forced to breed.

Table 6

Issued Addressed in Books			
	Black Authors (5)	White Authors (5)	Total (10)
Physical Abuse	60%	80%	70%
Hard Labor	60%	60%	60%
Sexual Abuse	0%	80%	40%
Miscegenation	20%	40%	30%
Suicide	40%	20%	30%
Kidnapping	40%	20%	30%
Rebellions	20%	20%	20%
Infanticide	20%	20%	20%

Graph 2



VI. Conclusion

Historical fiction about slavery, by both African American and white writers, has developed and matured in the past twenty years. The cultural awareness movement along with the demand for historically accurate characterizations in children's literature has positively influenced novels about slavery. Many of the negative stereotypes of slaves found in older fiction are absent in current novels. Authors of these newer books no longer romanticize the Old South, and they are not afraid to depict the horrific nature of slavery. In this study, authors of both races were positive in their portrayals of slaves and uniform in the condemnation of slavery. However, I found there is a difference in the way whites and blacks write about the 'peculiar institution.'

This study found that authors of both races generally abandoned historical stereotypes of slaves. In only two of the novels in this study were stereotypes of supporting characters detected; these stereotypes matched the description of the tragic mulatto and victim described in the Literature Review section of this paper. More often, authors displayed slaves acting in a stereotypical manner in front of masters and overseers but later behaving in a more individualized and realistic manner with family members and other slaves. This pattern of behavior is very similar to the dual personalities of slaves that Kenneth Stampp found in his research of antebellum documents.

In describing the physical and psychological characteristics of their main characters, African American and white authors differed somewhat. African American authors

employed many of the same adjectives to describe slave characters; words such as strong, kind, angry, and proud appeared across the novels by black writers. White authors did not devote as much attention to describing slaves; most white authors characterized slaves as intelligent yet fearful. With these descriptions in mind, it is not surprising that most slaves in black-authored novels successfully ran away from their masters, while slaves in novels by white authors usually achieved freedom legally.

The shortage of historical documents describing slaves' personality many attribute to the lack of description found in white-authored novels. I believe black authors are more likely to visualize and imagine personalities for slaves. White authors, who probably have not experienced racial discrimination first-hand, may be hesitant to attribute detailed emotions and personality to a black man or woman held in bondage, especially when there is little historical documentation to support their portrayal. Conjecture on the part of white authors of black characters is open to criticism, more so than for black writers. For African Americans, slavery is a part of their history, an ugly truth that has been passed down through their ancestry. They have a personal connection with slavery that whites cannot share. Therefore, black writers may feel more comfortable and confident creating slave characters than white writers, and are less likely to be criticized for doing so.

While black writers focused on the effects of slavery on slave characters, white authors cataloged the disturbing nature of the institution. White authors tended to focus on the repulsive details of slavery, which are well documented. They devoted more attention to recounting the physical and sexual abuses of slaves than their African American counterparts. *Nightjohn* and *Send One Angel Down* display horrific images of abuse and

degradation not found in the novels by black authors. White authors offered these situations as evidence of why slavery was inhumane and dehumanizing.

Regardless of their differences in approaching slavery, both white and African American authors in this study did an excellent job of presenting the institution to young readers in a realistic and interesting manner. They freed their writing of historical misconceptions and stereotypes to provide readers with a clear and accurate portrayal of the lives of slaves. I believe there will always be a difference in the way African American and white authors write about black characters, but this is not necessarily a bad situation. Authors should never be restricted to only portraying characters of their own ethnicity. If authors are able to describe other races free of stereotypes and fallacies, then I believe they offer a fresh and interesting perspective to fictional writing. I hope historical fiction for young adults will continue to provide diverse, honest and intriguing views of our past.

VII. Suggestions for Further Research

There is a great deal of research that can be done both in the areas of fiction about slavery and historical fiction in general. A study of the historical accuracy of young adult novels written about slavery may offer interesting results. Another topic may be to research the differences and similarities between fiction about slavery and slave narratives.

During this study I found a great deal of variation in the language authors used to describe violent or abusive situations. It may be interesting to research the language used by young adult authors to describe disconcerting and uncomfortable situations. It may also be interesting to look at the level of violence in historical fiction. In reading these books, I was surprised to find several highly graphic and disturbing scenes.

Finally, I think it would be interesting to look at the portrayal of African Americans across historical fiction. A study of how these portrayals have changed over the past fifty years would certainly provide interesting results. These studies could also compare findings against the ethnicity of the author to determine if there really is a difference in the way whites see African Americans and the way African Americans see themselves.

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Appendices

Appendix A
Content Analysis Form

Title _____

Author _____ Racial Background _____

Bibliographic Information _____

Summary:

Character Description:

Portrayal of Slaves

Are slaves portrayed as hardworking or lazy?

Do slaves accept their inferior position or injustice?

Are slaves violent in the story?

Do slaves enjoy their status on their plantation?

Do slaves constantly joke and play tricks?

Are slaves portrayed as very religious?

Are slaves portrayed as highly musical?

Do slaves speak in dialect?

Are slaves literate or seeking to be literate?

Portrayal of Slavery

Are slaves whipped, lashed, or physically abused by slaveholder or overseer?

Are slaves sexually abused by slaveholder?

Are slaves underfed?

Do slaves have proper clothing?

Are slaves treated as property instead of individuals?

Do slaves have any positive contact with whites?

Are slave families sold away from each other?

Other descriptors:

Appendix B
Annotated Titles in Alphabetical Order

Berry, James. *Ajeemah and His Son*. New York: Harper Troph, 1991.

Ajeemah and his son Atu are captured by slave traders from their home in Ghana and transported to Jamaica, where they are purchased as slaves. While working on separate plantations, both Ajeemah and Atu demand that owners respect their rights as human beings.

Collier, James Lincoln and Christopher Collier. *Jump Ship to Freedom*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1981.

Daniel Arabus must find a way to escape from the ship he is on after he learns that his master intends to sell him in the West Indies. He must also recover the money his master stole from his deceased father and return to his mother. He hopes to use this money to purchase his and his mother's freedom.

Hansen, Joyce. *The Captive*. New York: Scholastic, 1992.

Kofi, the son of an Ashanti chief, is kidnapped by slave traders in Africa during a raid on his family. He is sent to America, where he is sold as slave along with another African boy and a white British boy. A Puritan couple buys the two African boys as slaves and the white boy as an indentured servant. The three boys become close friends and to decide to escape from their rigid, religious owners.

Hurmence, Belinda. *A Girl Called Boy*. New York: Clarion Books, 1982.

A pampered, young African-American girl is mysteriously transported back in time to 1851, where slavery is actively practiced. Through her encounters with slaves, she comes to learn the harsh realities of slavery and begins to appreciate the privileges she enjoyed in her previous world.

Lester, Julius. *This Strange New Feeling*. New York: Dial Press, 1982.

Three vignettes focus on how slaves, who had been deprived of freedom their entire lives, feel when taste freedom for first time. Most of the book is a love story about men and women whose feelings for one another are able to rise above terrible, stressful situations.

Lyons, Mary E. *Letters from a Slave Girl*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1992.

Told through diary entries, this novel presents the life of Harriet Jacobs, a domestic slave. The story chronicles Harriet's sexual abuse by her slaveholder, and her heroic decision to go into hiding for seven years to escape this abuse.

McGill, Alice. *Miles' Song*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000.

Miles was a proud, pampered house slave until his master caught him looking at a book. As punishment, Mr. Tillery sends twelve-year-old Miles to the breaking ground, where hard work is meant to break a free spirit. However during his time there, Miles meets a friend who teaches him to read and respect himself. The breaking grounds fail to crush Miles' spirit and succeed in sparking his hunger for freedom.

O'Dell, Scott. *My Name is not Angelica*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989.

Slave traders kidnap Raisha and throw her aboard a ship heading to the West Indies. Upon arrival, a plantation-owning Dutch couple quickly purchase Raisha. While she enjoys a comfortable life as a domestic slave, Raisha cannot help but be disturbed by the horrors experienced by the fellow slaves on the plantation. She ultimately decides to join in the 1733 slave revolt.

Paulsen, Gary. *Nightjohn*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1993

Sarny, a young slave, describes the horrors of living on her plantation and the risks associated with slaves becoming literate.

Schwartz, Virginia. *Send One Angel Down*. New York: Holiday House, 2000.

Abram recounts how his mulatto cousin Eliza is different from all of the other slaves on his plantation and how he struggles to protect her from the white men who mean her harm.

