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Didactic Rhetoric in American Slave Narratives

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Abstract

This diploma thesis deals with the didactic rhetoric in the American slave narratives written predominantly in the first half of the nineteenth century. Among other sources for this purpose seven autobiographic books were selected and one literary criticism written by Koválová Karla in 2011. Each of the writings is individually analyzed.

This diploma thesis is focused on revealing the rhetorical techniques and the examples used by authors to influence their readers. The main goal of slave narratives is to get the Northern white population to realize the irrationality of slavery and the importance of abolition.

The introduction consists of the brief development of slavery, explanation what it means to be a slave and impact of these slave narratives on the Northern population.

Anotace

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá didaktickou rétorikou ve vyprávění amerických otroků, napsaných převážně v první polovině 19. století. Pro tento účel bylo vybráno sedm autobiografií a jedna literární kritika napsaná Karlou Koválovou v roce 2011. Každé z děl je jednotlivě rozebráno.

Tato diplomová práce se soustřeďuje na odhalování rétorických technik a příkladů užívaných autory k ovlivňování svých čtenářů. Hlavním cílem vyprávění otroků je přimět severní bělošskou populaci, aby si uvědomila nesmyslnost otroctví a důležitost zrušení otroctví.

Úvod obsahuje stručný vývoj otroctví, vysvětlení co znamená být otrokem a dopad těchto vyprávění otroků na severní populaci.

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1 Introduction

In the United States of America the institution of slavery already existed in the early beginning of colonization but the boom came in the 18th century to the second half of 19th century. First documented slaves were brought to Florida and Virginia, to be accurate to Jamestown colony in 1619 and around the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 almost 4 million slaves existed in the southern United States. The system of slavery had an impact on American history and the evolution of several countries. The Revolutionary War opened the rapid growth of abolitionists in the Northern states and it led to the polarization in the United States of America. Those states were segregated into Free states in the North and slaves states in the South. The border was called Mason-Dixon Line which went between two sections, bordering between Pennsylvania and Maryland. Maryland was a slave state and Pennsylvania a state of liberty. A massive turn came when the Fugitive Slave Act was passed by Congress in 1850. It incensed so many people in the North that they commenced to revolt. It caused a lot of rebellions and in 1861 Civil War broke out. The Civil War lasted from 1861 to 1865, between the Union and Confederacy. The Union ended up winning and that determined the end of slavery. Slavery was abolished by Abraham Lincoln, the American president, in 1863 but that held only in the Union. The complete dissolution was in 1865 all over the United States and slavery was finally illegal.

In the society people are categorized to different social classes. It occurs that proper or wealthy families, often inheriting slaves, while the other less fortune ones remained forever in poverty or slavery. Slavery was the lowest position. One was not considered as a human being but as property and was held in captivity against one's will and compelled to work. At any time one could be bought or sold. For slaves, separation

from the closest members of the family was very common even though it was heartbreaking. They did not know if their family members were healthy or even alive. They did not hold any other alternative so they obligated to deal with it; they only hoped that one day they would see their mothers or siblings once more. Sometimes they endeavored to look for them but very few had any good fortune in finding their relatives and escaping. It depended only on a master's approach or if the bargain was convenient enough for him. Slaveholders helped out each other by renting their slaves out for some period of time. One had to obey the master in every situation and if one did not there were always consequences. Killing a slave by his master was not against the law but when a master killed a slave belonging to another master, he had to compensate the debt so that they were settled. Slaves were actually the master's asset so master could do with them what he desired, even execute them. Some occurrences of the slaves are so unbelievable that one wonders that the slave masters could be considered human beings and not as animals.

A free man or woman could find a job and earned money rather than toiled for the master. Even though most slaves never escaped some of them had very strong will, determination and hope that maybe one day that bondage of enslavement would be somehow broken and they would set free. There were a few opportunities to abscond but not so often. It was very tempting though for any slave who lived in captivity for his or her whole life. Slaves could have confidence in nobody in that manner of telling about a plan to run away. It was too perilous. There were cases that turned well but mostly only their families kept the secret if they were lucky enough to have some family. In these narrative chapters it is also described what their first occupations were, what it was like to be a slave: their eating and sleeping habits, their daily clothes and sometimes even entertainment.

The slaves who escaped from slavery and became free citizens, wanted to spread their experiences among Northern Christian whites in the United States so that they realized how infernal slavery was. Fugitive slaves did not describe every single detail of their lives and usually did not mention joyful moments. They wrote about horrible scenes, punishments from their masters, suffering and anguish. However every each of them wrote their narratives differently though their narratives were the main means of giving an idea about that inhumane institution. There was likelihood that after those confessions it will be some revolt against that system. People from the North progressively began to comprehend the seriousness of the situation and many people joined in the abolitionist's movement.

2 The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 required citizens in the north to catch black runaway slaves and sent them back to their masters to the south. The law did not allow slaves to defend themselves or to have a jury trial. Before that act fugitives slaves were more or less safe in Northern states and nobody could easily take them and drag them back to their owners. After that act it was a different story. Anybody could merely claim to be the owner of the slaves and that evidence was sufficient to sending the slaves back to the hands of their masters. People were even hired to be slave catchers and they constantly searched for runaway blacks in the North. If someone knew fugitive slaves ignored it in any way it was very risky and dangerous. To hide, give money or provide any help to a fugitive slave was illegal and anyone could be arrested or get high penalty. That act triggered a huge disagreement especially in the abolitionist movement and their

followers increased very quickly. Those who were not in the movement directly were also outraged so that many of them revolted and tried to support the fugitive slaves. That disfavor was so strong that in Pennsylvania, in 1851, a gun fight started between the slave catchers and abolitionists. The Fugitive Slave act led to the events that changed so many lives. Almost 15 000 black people succeeded in emigrating to Canada, Africa, or the Caribbean. One of the possible ways to get to safety was the “Underground Railroad” so many fugitive slaves started escaping to Canada. The less fortunate were captured and dragged back to the south to their masters.

3 Devastating effect of slavery on slave owners and slaves

The inhumane slavery system damaged the morality of slave owners and if some good intensions existed, they gradually disappeared. Slave holders turned into callous and evil monsters. They committed unforgivable crimes on their slaves without any shame or regret. When a slave is abused physically it compares to mental torture and the consequences on a slave body and soul could be equally devastating.

Other case was being abused sexually and how protects slave women against predatory white male masters, overseers or other men. Slave women had to do what they were forced to so there was not anything what they could do. It was hopeless situation. When a slave woman got pregnant by a white man, she became a nuisance for her owner because she could not work so much. Her baby is simply a bastard and the father considers him to be a future slave power. That scenario happened on a daily basis. Slave women carried babies of their master’s and to have more than one was not an exception. In majority of the cases masters did not treat their children differently and in addition they have never confessed to their paternity. System of slavery deformed the most fundamental emotion which was the unconditional parental love to a child.

Mental trials included a lack of literacy and general knowledge. Slaves were not educated, they could not read or write and their misconception of the society functioning were inculcated by masters on purpose. Slave holders presented those false stories perfectly and it increased a fear in slaves to run away. They tried to betray slaves by telling them that their life was very decent, under the protection of their masters and could they not live in better conditions anywhere else. They believed them because they did not have different pieces of knowledge than their own immediate surroundings or the same condition of other slaves as theirs. Vision of people in the north was nearly very similar. If they did not read the narratives of fugitive slaves or not be interested in the development of the institution of slavery they mistakenly thought that slaves lived happily and peacefully.

The impact of the slavery on slaveholders was not the only one. Slaves became conscious of the effect of slavery on their own moral growth as well. For example, Linda Brent did not blame the slaves for their illegal actions in slavery, saying that that was not their fault. They were compelled by the system to commit such sins; it was not their natural behavior. The dehumanization became so persuasive for some slaves that they acted like animals without any personalities left. They were only bare bodies trying to survive and be rather invisible for their surroundings. They were used to living under the repression of human rights and completely no legal protection. Violence was ordinary on daily basis.

4 *Fifty Years in Chains* - Charles Ball

Charles Ball was born a slave in Calvert County, Maryland. The exact year of his birth is not known but it is estimated around 1781. The place and year of his decease is not known either. His fascinating slave narrative *Fifty Years in Chains* is confession of his life in slavery, originally published in 1836. He wrote about everyday experiences of slaves and slave owners, brutal treatments and punishments, alienation from his own family and accurate depiction of environment he lived in. Throughout his story, readers also learnt about terrible conditions on ships which transported slaves from Africa to the West, specifically to Charleston, South Carolina. Almost one third of the slaves became regularly victims of that voyage.

As a kid he was not whipped as much but he mainly suffered by lack of food and he had no essence of family during his growing up. His parents were sold to different plantations in his early age and as other fugitive slaves, he described his separation in his narrative. He focused on detailed depiction so his expressions evoked emotions and sympathy in people.

My mother then turned to him and cried, "Oh, master, do not take me from my child!" Without making any reply, he gave her two or three heavy blows on the shoulders with his raw-hide, snatched me from her arms, handed me to my master, and seizing her by one arm, dragged her back towards the place of sale. My master then quickened the pace of his horse; and as we advanced, the cries of my poor parent became more and more indistinct - at length they died away in the distance, and I never again heard the voice of my poor mother. (Ball 1970:11)

Numerous relocations to different plantations or even states were regular in slavery. In 1805 he got married and started a family but in age of thirty was sold to

Georgia where he worked on the cotton plantation. The separation from his family was almost unbearable.

Motif of suicide appeared in Ball's narrative as well as in Roper's narrative. Suicide was more frequent act than was generally known. He confessed to his suicidal thoughts when he believed he had no chance of reuniting with his wife and children again. "If I could have got a rope I should have hanged myself at Lancaster."(Ball 1970:35)

A metaphor can be found in Ball's narrative as a device often repeated for better description of horrid masters and overseers. "Wretched as I was myself, my heart bled for these poor creatures, who had fallen into the hands of a tiger in human form." (Ball 1970:40)

In the following paragraph Ball indirectly explained that fear was an element whose presence was everyday reality for the slaves and complete awareness of their undignified status which remained permanent for the majority of them.

I observed that these poor people did not raise their heads, to look at either the fine coaches and horses then passing, or at us; but kept their faces steadily bent towards the cotton-plants, from among which they were removing weeds. I almost shuddered at the sight, knowing that I myself was doomed to a state of servitude equally cruel and debasing, unless, by some unforeseen occurrence, I might fall into the hands of a master of less inhumanity of temper than the one who had possession of the miserable creatures before me. (Ball 1970:48)

He underwent a march with his fellow slaves when they were chained and in neck irons from Maryland to Columbia, South Carolina. Throughout the time he spent in slavery he managed to run away from his masters a few times. He escaped to Maryland where he settled down near Baltimore. He was able to buy a farm and lived there for several years unnoticed. After death of his first wife he remarried once more. He was

caught eventually and sent back to Georgia. He attempted to run away again and was successful in reaching Pennsylvania. After a lapse of time, he returned to his old cabin in Baltimore but he found only empty house. It was hopeless situation for him.

It was now clear that some slave-dealer had come in my absence and seized my wife and children as slaves, and sold them to such men as I had served in the South. They had now passed into hopeless bondage, and were gone forever beyond my reach. I myself was advertised as a fugitive slave, and was liable to be arrested at each moment, and dragged back to Georgia. I rushed out of my own house in despair and returned to Pennsylvania with a broken heart. (Ball 1970:430)

5 *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* - Linda Brent

Harriet Jacobs was born in 1813 into slavery in Edenton, North Carolina. Harriet Jacobs was the real name of the author and Linda Brent is her pseudonym. She experienced quite a happy childhood living with her mother Delilah and her father Daniel Jacobs. She was light skinned “mulatto”. Her mother died when she was six years old so she was subsequently sent to her mother’s mistress Margaret Horniblow. She was kind to her and taught her how to read and write. Until then Brent was not aware of her status as a slave because she did not come across any violence or rough treatment.

After a few years, her mistress died and for the purpose of fulfilling her last will, twelve-year-old Linda devolved on her mistress’ three years old niece. Linda’s life utterly changed in that moment because she became acquainted with Dr. Flint and fell under his control. After a lapse of time he proved to be aggressor and he began to abuse Linda sexually. When she grew to be a woman, she was afraid of the

possibility of being eventually raped by Dr. Flint. As her strategy and as a kind of protection, she started a romance with Mr. Sands, who was a wealthy white lawyer. She knew that Dr. Flint would be disgusted by her affair. "I thought he would revenge himself by selling me and I was sure my friend Mr. Sands would buy me." (Brent 1987:85) To her disappointment the bargain did not happen and she felt really humiliated for losing her dignity. In the end she has been pregnant twice with Mr. Sands and gave birth to a boy Benny and a girl Ellen. She realized that there was almost no exception to have an unaffected slave holder. Even Mr. Sands, who was kind and had good intentions at first, demonstrated that even selling his own children would not stop him at the time when he could make a profit or advantage from it.

Dr. Flint did not want to sell her and her children under any circumstances and as punishment for resisting his advances he compelled her to work on his plantation as a field hand. She needed to protect herself from the anger of Dr. Flint. Eventually she went into hiding, living in the attic of her grandmother Martha for seven years. She aimed to delude Dr. Flint into thinking she ran away to the North.

During that period her children were put in the jail with Linda's brother William in order to set a trap for Linda. Dr. Flint thought she would come back to save them from misery in the gaol. When nothing changed he sold them to a slave trader who furtively acted for Mr. Sands. William and children were sent to be raised by Aunt Martha, much to Linda's great joy. Throughout the years she could not expose her location or identity to her children and her health condition eventually got much worse. She plucked up the courage to run away and she managed to do so to Philadelphia by boat in 1842, a city in Pennsylvania, a free state.

Meanwhile, Mr. Sands got married and took Ellen to Washington D. C. due to her obligation to take care of his newborn daughter. She also served to Mr. Sands'

cousin Mrs. Hobbs in New York where Ellen conflated with her mother. Mr. Sands did not keep his word about liberating Ellen and Benny from slavery so Linda felt a constant anxiety of her children's possible re-enslavement to Dr. Flint in case he found them. His determination to kidnap her was so severe that Linda was forced to flee to Boston where she was reunited with her children and lived there for a while. Before that she lived in New York and worked as a nursemaid for the Bruce family who treated her very well. She even travelled oversea to England with their daughter where she took care of her. In England, she did not meet with racial prejudice and felt free for the first time in her life. After her return to Boston, she registered an improvement of the situation. Benny and her brother William relocated to California and Ellen got an opportunity to attend boarding school. Widowed Mr. Bruce married once more and the new duty of Linda was to be a nanny to his newborn child. The death of Dr. Flint was a blessing for Linda but she was still legally possessed by his daughter Emily and the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 brought Linda additional difficulties of staying free and not be taken back to the chains of slavery. Ultimately, Mrs. Bruce helped Linda because she paid her freedom to Emily Flint.

Even though she did not fulfill her dream of having her own home in the time of her writing, in her autobiography she did not need to hide anymore and was considered legally a free citizen.

5.1 Rhetorical Strategies of Brent's Narrative

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl was originally published in 1861 and it was written by Harriet Jacobs. In her narrative, Jacobs fictionalized names of actual people in order to protect their identities, including her own as mentioned earlier.

Not so many slave women wrote slave narratives. That shows even the number of slave narratives written by men and by women which I analyze in my diploma thesis. She gave examples of mental tortures which are mainly illustrates in her narrative. Slave women endured different types of mental tortures as men. They had to deal with sexual harassments and their children being taken from them. She stated:

Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women. Superadded to the burden common to all, they have wrongs, and sufferings, and mortifications peculiarly their own. (Brent 1987:119)

Strategies to shock the readers and evoke sympathy or emotion by illustration of the cruelty and brutality of the masters show up in Brent's narrative just as in other narratives.

Brent lived in constant fear of losing her children. Every mother had to comprehend that feeling. The system of slavery treated both adults and children as property. Brent perfectly expressed that through Dr. Flint's statement. "These brats will bring me a handsome sum of money one of these days." It was Brent's strategy to emphasize that fact in order to her readers realized the unceasing panic she felt. The exchange or sale of "property" was a common feature in the slavery so she never could be sure if Dr. Flint would sell or keep her children but she was absolutely positive he intended to keep her. "You are mine; and you shall be mine for life." (Brent 1987:123) That proclamation was supposed to bring her down even more and clarify her status as a slave and suppress the mere thoughts of freedom in her. She sincerely expressed her sorrows:

Pity me, and pardon me, O virtuous reader! You never knew what it is to be a slave; to be entirely unprotected by law or custom; to have the laws reduce you to the condition of a chattel, entirely subject to the will of another. (Brent 1987:86)

Even though, she did not have to last unceasing whippings and demanding physical fieldwork for the most of her life she witnessed many horrible treatments with slaves. She had vivid memories on the cruelest ones. “His piteous groans and his”O, pray don’t, massa,” rang in my ear for months afterwards.” (Brent 1987:23) Slaves were flogged so brutally that the blood was over the whole rooms reaching to the ceiling and walls and “(...) till the blood trickled from every stroke of the lash.” (Brent 1987:22)

Brent revealed her awareness of her maturing “But I now entered on my fifteenth year – a sad epoch in the life of a slave girl.”(Brent 1987:44) Dr. Flint sexually abused her and he made his sexual claim on her. She was startled and she depicted his perversion. “He peopled my young mind with unclean images, such as only a vile monster could think of.” (Brent1987:44) He actually began to build a cabin in the middle of nowhere for his prurient interest. His visions were apparent. He was not interested in being heard by anyone so he could have privacy and do whatever he wanted. Brent could scream, beg, cry or attempt to run but without any chance of being heard or rescued. After all his strategy went unrewarded because Linda suspected his intentions and she hid from him.

As Lucasi claims “(...) Jacob’s *Incidents* documents the many barriers and restrictions on the movements of Linda Brent, culminating in her seven-year escape to a tiny garret.” (Lucasi 2007:525) She maintained that physical torture when she was imprisoned in the attic and could not sit or stand properly. The space was too petite for living so there was no other choice than escape in the future. “The fright I have undergone, the constrained posture, and the dampness of the ground, made me ill for several days.” (Brent 1987:168) That was another of her strategies to prove to her readers her determination and demonstration of her incredible strength.

5.2 Brent's family element in her narrative

Family is one essential factor in Brent's autobiography. It is exceptionally rare in slavery to have actual family and know your children or relatives. System of slavery destroyed the unity of family as Frederick Douglass described in his narrative.

Brent lost her mother and father when she was six years old and although her mistress behaved well to her, she realized that she owned her and she would be treated as a property later. Brent was incredibly lucky to know at least her beloved grandmother, brother and not to be immediately torn away from her children after their birth or in their young age. She suffered their loss eventually for some time but her children were aware who their mother was. Her whole life she attempted to keep her family members safe and to be very protective and affectionate woman. Brent came to conclusion that her family was one of the dearest and the most central things one could have. She hoped for her children's freedom so they have never personally experienced the incidents that happened to her. Brent also emphasized situations which occurred when slaves were forced to select family or their master's demands. The slave had to prefer either familial loyalty or obedience to their masters. For example, by that decision to have the sexual affair with Mr. Sands Linda disgraced her family and ostracized her grandmother or she struggled to leave her children for the purpose of protecting them from Dr. Flint.

6 The Narrative of William W. Brown – *A Fugitive Slave*

A Fugitive Slave is the extraordinary slave narrative of William Wells Brown, who described the first twenty years of his difficult life as a slave living in St. Louis, Missouri and its surroundings. It was published in 1847.

In his narrative he mentioned every master by whom he was ever possessed or hired and overseers as well by name. He introduced them, their families, social status and how many slaves they owned. He did not omit even their characters or physical features. It was clear from his detailed characterizations that not every slaveholder is an evil person. He met some good and kind masters who treated him well. Yet one could imagine those tyrants and hated them from one's soul just as the slaves.

In his life he had a lot of masters, usually very harsh and cruel, and he was sold very often and was working at different locations. At first he worked as a house servant and then as a field hand, where the work was extra hard and exhausting. He also worked on a steamboat on the Mississippi River, where he observed close up the slave trade and other cruelties. In parts of this book he portrays the fate of his family and fellow slaves, as well as his masters or overseers. After his awful experiences and miserable life with ruthless masters, he knew that he had to run off. He constantly dreamt of an escape to Canada, to the land of liberty where fugitive slaves were protected. After several unsuccessful attempts, after which he was imprisoned and punished, his dream came true and he controlled his getaway.

Born in Lexington, Kentucky, William Wells Brown's father was a white man named George Higgins and he was a related to his master. His mother was a slave and

her name was Elizabeth. William was one of seven children but none of them had the same father, but all shared the slave status of his mother.

When William was quite young, his master moved to Missouri and settled thirty miles above St. Charles, where he grew hemp and tobacco. William was a house servant and had better conditions than field hands. William's master moved from a farm to the city of St. Louis in Missouri, a border state. He and his mother were hired out in different places so they were separated. He was hired out to Major Freeland, a Virginian who was a tyrant, gambler and drunkard. Without any reason he gladly played "*Virginia play*". He tied some of his slaves up in the smoke-house, caused a fire to be made of tobacco stems and then whipped them. William ran away from him after several months because he could not withstand this violence anymore and when he tried to complain to his master, nothing was resolved. He stayed in the woods but was found, arrested and taken to the St. Louis jail. When he turned back to Major Freeland he experienced firsthand the "*Virginia play*". Then he was hired as a keeper of the Missouri hotel, to Mr. John Colburn. While he was under the control of Mr. Colburn, his master sold his mother and all his siblings. This part of his life was very unhappy because he was completely alone.

Afterwards William was hired to Mr. Elijah P. Lovejoy who was publisher and editor of the *St. Louis Times*. William performed some printing in his office. It has been the best work for him so far because he learned a lot and he was treated very kindly. Once he was attacked by several sons of slave-holders and was unjustly accused of beating one of them very badly. Samuel McKinney promised him that he would whip him to death. William rather escaped because he knew that Mr. McKinney was very furious and that he would probably kill him. After a few days, he unfortunately met Mr. McKinney on the street and was very badly beaten. His clothes were soiled with blood

and he became very weak. Mr. Lovejoy was a very kind man and sent him home to recover. After few weeks he was replaced by someone else. Poor William was heart-sick when he heard that he could not work as a printer. He really liked that job and was happy there.

After his recovery he worked as a waiter on board the steamboat "*Enterprise*". Here on a boat for the first time it was possible to successfully escape to Canada and he had a strong temptation to do that. However, when these thoughts came to his mind he always began to think about his mother and siblings. He knew that he could not leave them at the mercy of slave masters.

Captain Reynolds, who had hired William, left the boat "*Enterprise*" so William was sent home. After some time, he was hired out to Mr. Walker, a slave trader and with him he travelled from St. Louis to the New Orleans' slave market on the Mississippi River. William was devastated by this fact and he did not believe his master that he had not sold him. His master really kept him because of his near relative relationship but he had to hire him out at least. He had had bad financial problems. William worked at Mr. Walker for one year and saw such dreadful behavior of white people; a victim of how they treat with their slaves so he was glad to be home again. Learning that his sister was sold to one man to Natchez Mississippi, he was dismayed. He also was given the task of finding a new master within one week because the current one had no money. He went to the city jail where his sister was waiting for her master. He had wanted to see her before she left forever. She advised him to escape to Canada also with their mother now if he had a chance. He obeyed her and the soon thereafter at night they were on their way. However their attempt failed when they were caught somewhere about one hundred and fifty miles south of St. Louis. Many hopes were ruined. On the one hand his strength and determination is admirable that he tried it

again after such a disappointment. On the other hand it was not surprising after the life he had.

Right away they transported them back and imprisoned him. The owner of his mother said that he would take her to New Orleans or sell her to a Negro-trader. He was sent home and worked on the field some time where he received a severe whipping.

The last slave master of William, Captain Price treated William very well. Captain Price's mistress even wanted to arrange for William to unite with one of the female slaves. However William had no thoughts of marriage because he had his head full of plans for another escape.

Another opportunity arose when the family made a voyage to New Orleans by boat. William served as a waiter on the boat. When the boat landed, William tried to get lost in the crowd and then he headed for the woods where he remained until night. He travelled only during the night and tried to avoid houses. Later he met a few very kind people who helped him. They were married couple and their name was Quaker. William was even named after one of them. His whole name was William Wells Brown and he has been known by that name ever since. With some help of one very bighearted woman, who gave him something to eat, he finally arrived in Cleveland, Ohio, in the free North, in 1834. There he found employment as a waiter at a Mansion house. He stayed there until spring and then he worked on board a steamboat on Lake Erie. There were many opportunities to help other slaves. He transported them on a boat without charge from Cleveland to Buffalo or Detroit. After a few years he headed to the far North where he subscribed to *The Liberator* which was an abolitionist newspaper. He joined the anti-slavery movement and devoted his life to abolishing slavery.

6.1 The Rhetorical Strategies of Brown's Narrative

Even though William Wells Brown (1814-1884) was born into slavery in Lexington, Kentucky, he eventually managed to save himself and escaped to Cleveland, Ohio and later to Canada. He took advantage of his experiences from slavery and became a much honored lecturer and writer. He is actually considered as the first of African American writers to publish a novel, *Clotel*, published in 1853. He managed to touch many people who were moved by his rare writing style and sincere confession of dreadful events and description of living years in slavery. His style of writing is so distinctive that one may read the book in one sitting, describing situations in detail so that readers know how terrible slavery was. He actually best understood what it meant to be a slave and he hated it from his soul.

Some scenes, especially the torture and whipping of slaves, are described with such ease as something quite common. "I was tied up in the smoke-house, and was very severely whipped. (...) He made a fire of tobacco stems, which soon set me to coughing and sneezing. (Brown 1969:23) The punishments were mainly accompanied with the depiction of desperate screaming, crying, and begging mostly for a bare life or every sound of the whip. He primarily wrote about his feeling at that exact moment of the punishment if he witnessed it. Everybody could therefore identify with him and imagine themselves in his place so it seemed to them they also could be punished that way or feel the same horrible and helpless feeling. It touched so many people and was the awakening for Northern people who read his story and who were blind to the institution of slavery at first. Such horrible treatment with human beings was unbelievable.

He developed strong bonds with his family especially with his mother and sister. It was his strategy to focus on that bond and mentioned his family members in his narrative particularly when the bond was broken and they were separated by force. That woke up the sentiment in people a lot. He had six siblings but his sister Elizabeth was the dearest one to his heart. His loving mother was like an angel for him and her severe whippings caused him to suffer as a child when he heard her screaming. He was drowning in his tears while hearing how she was screaming and he could do nothing to help her.

I could hear every crack of the whip, and every groan and cry of my poor mother. I remained at the door, not daring to venture any farther. The cold chills ran over me, and I wept aloud. After giving her ten lashes, the sound of the whip ceased, and I returned to my bed, and found no consolation but in my tears. It was not yet daylight. (Brown 1969:16)

His mother raised him very well. He was kind, humble and unselfish so when the time of his first attempt to runaway came, he wanted to escape with both of them. He did not think for a moment of leaving them to the mercy of their destiny as slaves. One day he had a conversation with his sister Elizabeth. She said to him:

Brother, you have often declared that you would not end your days in slavery. I see no possible way in which you can escape with us; and now, brother, you are on a steamboat where there is some chance for you to escape to land of liberty. I beseech you not to let us hinder you. If we cannot get our liberty, we do not wish to be the means of keeping you from a land of freedom. (Brown 1969:10-11)

He convinced at least his mother to flee together to Canada. It is obvious that escape by oneself is easier than with more people. Good luck was not on their side and they were caught and both sent to jail. "I found that my opportunity of getting to a land of liberty was gone, at least for the time of being." (Brown 1969:40)

Afterwards the farewell to his sister and mother was heartbreaking. It was the most touching scene in this narrative book when he saw his mother for the last time, begging her for forgiveness and saying goodbye to her. She said:

My child, we must soon part to meet no more this side of the grave. You have ever said that you would not die a slave; that you would be a freeman. Now try to get your liberty! You will soon have no one to look after but yourself. (Brown 1969:35)

That was the point where every reader had to realize how important freedom is. When you were a free man no one could take you from your family and send you miles away to different farm or country.

In 1834 he managed to get to Cleveland, Ohio, a free state. Even if he finally was in a state of liberty, he still had fear that somebody could take him and send him back. That was too frightening for him. He was very careful and did not trust anybody but during that time he found friends and also other slaves. The fear of being taken back was somehow his premonition because in 1850 the situation started to be very critical for fugitive slaves on Northern U.S. states as it is explained in another chapter.

7 Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself

Born in Tuckahoe, in Talbot County, Maryland, Frederick Douglass' mother's name was Harriet Bailey but he barely knew her. She got ill and died when Frederick was only a young boy. He was not sure who his father was. From the rumors it looked like his white master Captain Anthony was his real father. Slaves also were not aware of their age and they only tried to guess how old they were. Douglass describes his childhood and his whole life like many other slaves though compares himself to other slaves. He was not treated differently.

Douglass' first master was a man generally called Captain Anthony who was a very nasty man. He owned only a few slaves and was a clerk for Mr. Colonel Lloyd. At his old master's plantation Douglass witnessed cruel treatment with slaves and even worse on the plantation of his second master Colonel Lloyd. He clearly remembered the exhibition of cruelty when he was a child. It was committed against his aunt Hester and he never forgot that day. Colonel Lloyd was a very wealthy man and above all he was very proud of his large, beautiful garden which everybody admired. Many people came from different places to see it. That garden was considered a kind of temptation for slaves of all ages because of its juicy delicious fruit. Colonel Lloyd tried to protect his garden from the slaves by tarring the fence which surrounded the whole garden, thereby easily detecting who stole his fruit because the person would be masked from the tar.

His master was Colonel Lloyd's clerk and superintendent. He had two sons Andrew and Richard and one daughter Lucretia. His son-in-law was called Captain Thomas Auld. He owned a vessel named after four slaves Peter, Isaac, Rich and Jake. Other slaves thought that those four had an advantage over them so they looked up to

them. Colonel Lloyd had a home plantation where he kept most of his slaves, about four hundred of them, also possessed neighboring farms. At the beginning of the book Douglass described allowance of food for one month and clothing for a year. Monthly food consisted of one bushel of corn meal and eight pounds of pork or fish. Their clothing material was very coarse and cheap. Slaves got one pair of linen trousers, two linen shirts, one pair of trousers for winter, one jacket and one pair of shoes and stockings. Children's allowance of clothing was worse. They did not get any shoes, stockings, trousers or jackets. They wore only linen shirts and yearly had two pairs of them. If those shirts were destroyed, they had to be naked.

When he was about ten years old he experienced a great joy. He found out that he could leave Colonel Lloyd's plantation and was sent to Baltimore, the largest city in Maryland, to Mr. Hugh Auld who was a brother of his old master's son-in-law Captain Thomas Auld. In his family he stayed about seven years. He was keen on living in Baltimore because it was incalculable better than on the farm. In Baltimore Douglass received his beginnings of literacy and education. Thanks to Sophia Auld, Douglass learned the basics of reading. When Mr. Auld found out about Douglass starting to read, he explicitly forbade her to teach him again. He was convinced that slave should not be allowed to be literate. A slave had to respect only his master's will. However Douglass overheard the quarrel about that issue and his determination and desire to learn became stronger. He continued to practise in reading and he did his best to learn more. Shrewdly he made friends of younger white boys in the city who became as one can say his tutors and after some time he succeeded in learning how to read. After that he patiently learned how to write by himself as well. The opportunity came when he worked in Durgin and Baley's shipyard. He observed other ship carpenters carefully how they marked pieces of timber. On those marked timbers were initial letters of words which

represented parts of the ship. That system was not confusing and it made the work easier. That way he remembered a few letters. With that little knowledge he came up with a game in which he tried to learn more letters from white boys. He was bragging that he could write as many words as them. Naturally they wanted to see a proof. He wrote the word which he formed from the few letters he knew. Then he demanded from the boys to beat him. It was only the beginning. He described other techniques:

During this time, my copy-book was board fence, brick wall, and pavement; my pen and ink was a lump of chalk. With these, I learned mainly how to write. I then commenced and continued copying the Italics in Webster's Spelling Book, until I could make them all without looking on the book. (Douglass 1995:57)

When he succeeded in both of those tasks he started to find out about antislavery movements and abolitionists. That was the key point in planning his escape from slavery. He thought about meaning and purpose of slavery a lot.

During the time Douglass lived in Baltimore he ended up in a very uncertain position and it could have entirely changed his life. It was caused by the death of his old master's son Richard and in about three years after that Captain Anthony died as well. It meant that he had to be valued with other property of his old master and there was a chance that he could be sent to Mrs. Lucretia or Mr. Andrew which would have been a worse option. He had to leave Baltimore and in less than one day he found himself near the plantation where he was born. When the valuation began his whole body was tied with fear and agony.

Our fate for life was now to be decided. I suffered more anxiety than most of my fellow slaves. I had known what it was to be kindly treated. They had known nothing of the kind. They had seen little or nothing of the world. (Douglass 1995:59)

That time good fortune was on his side and he fell into Mrs. Lucretia possession. He was sent back to Baltimore to Mr. Hugh Auld. Only one month he was away but his and also a happiness of the family was huge when he came back. Before long Mrs. Lucretia died and in short time period Mr. Andrew's death followed. Mr. Thomas Auld got married again to Rowena Hamilton and they were perfect for each other, because they were both cruel and mean. One day a fight started between two brothers. As revenge Thomas Auld took Douglass from Hugh Auld to live with his family in St. Michael's and it was in March, 1832. He swore that he would never let young Douglass go back to the family of Mr. Hugh Auld. Those turn of events increased in him the desire to run away.

With Mr. Thomas Auld he got know what it meant to be really hungry. It is pure cruelty to starve your own slaves. He and his fellow slaves were forced to steal or beg for food from their neighbors. Douglass lived by Mr. Thomas almost a year. And his master was disappointed in Douglass' behavior because his previous life was in the city and according to Mr. Thomas it influenced him a lot. At some point he could not keep him.

In the month of January in 1833, he was sent to live with an overseer named Mr. Edward Covey for one year. Mr. Covey had very poor reputation among the slaves but he was proud of it. Slaves called him a "nigger-breaker" because living by Mr. Covey was work and work only, suffering and hell. It was the toughest time which he experienced. When he worked he was very slow, clumsy and did a lot of mistakes. He was used to living in the city and not being a field hand. Douglass was often brutally whipped and Covey eventually broke him. Then Douglass lost

completely his desire to run away and he only was able to rest and heal from that terrible condition he was in.

I was broken in body, soul and spirit. My natural elasticity was crushed, my intellect languished, the disposition to read departed, the cheerful spark that lingered about my eye died; the dark night of slavery closed in upon me; and behold a man transformed into a brute! (Douglass 1995:74)

The utter change occurred in one particular moment when Douglass' last strength appeared and he decided that he will not let Covey to beat or whip him. He was ready to defend himself against Covey and he fought back. That was the moment of surprise. Covey did not see it coming and was so shocked by Douglass' move that for a while he lost his concentration. That was the advantage for sixteen year old Douglass. Nevertheless they were fighting for about two hours by which Douglass won. He was never whipped again after that incident. He tried to think of the reason why Mr. Covey did not drag him to the whipping-post and did not denunciate him for assaulting. He figured out that it was only because of Covey's reputation for being a "nigger-breaker". He did not want to ruin it so he acted like nothing ever happened.

Every duty has an expiration date and that commitment to stay by Mr. Covey came to an end on Christmas day, 1833. Then he could leave that horrible place and go back to his master. He did so but he was immediately rented to Mr. William Freeland. He should serve there for two years. Life was much easier and bearable with Mr. Freeland. He was not vicious and mean but a wise man and slaveholder. Douglass did not get flogged at all and even with the food he was satisfied. Other slaves ascertained that he could read and write. They took advantage of that and Douglass started to teach them in a Sabbath school. They always met in one house of free black man on Sundays. Progressively other slaves from neighboring farms

started to join them even though they could have received many punishments for doing that. Douglass got very close with a few slaves there and he confessed that he never loved anyone so deeply as his fellow slaves. They would die for each other. It was very special bond which they had. They actually made a plan to run away together. There were five of them including Douglass. Unfortunately they did not succeed because they did not even have a chance to hit the road. Someone broke the trust and revealed their plan. They were put in jail. That was not the worst scenario for Douglass. The worst moment came when he was separated from his friends. They were taken back to Mr. Freeland's farm and Mr. Thomas Auld decided to send Douglass back to his brother Mr. Hugh Auld living in Baltimore.

There he began to work in the trade of ship caulking. He was under a supervision of Mr. William Gardner and he had to carry out every order he got. There was no time to learn anything for him from the actual trade. Shortly he made enemies with white men who were afraid of losing their job because of many black workers on the shipyard. Later on his white coworkers attacked him so brutally that he had to fight for his own life. He found consolation by the Aulds and even Mrs. Sophia Auld, who had not been so kind anymore, took care of his beaten body. Both of them were furious that it happened but the only thing that they attained was a transfer to different shipyard. That attack had been witnessed only by black workers so their testimony was not valid in court. White man would be foolish to say the truth aloud and could get himself into trouble to no purpose. On a new shipyard he finally learned how to calk ships and he quickly improved his skills. His first salary raised such an indescribable feeling of happiness in him that he tried to earn even more money next time. There was one catch. The money was not his own. He had to hand them over to his master. He did not like that act at all. It was so unfair and it was only

because his master had power over him. During the time he succeeded in getting the permission to hire some spare time so he could find an extra job. He was putting those earned money aside for one particular action- escaping from the chains of slavery.

On the third day of September, 1838 his second attempt of running away worked out and he got to New York safely. He has never described though how he managed to do that. He did it for his or other slaves' safety. His confession could put him or future slaves, who would like to run away, into danger. When he realized he is finally free, he had mixed feelings. In one moment he was beyond excited and in other he felt lonely and lost in big city where he did not know anybody. Luckily for Douglass one kind man named Mr. David Ruggles took him under his wings and gave him food, some place to stay and good advice. He recommended that New Bedford was better and safer city for Douglass and there he will more easily find a job. He got also married to a free illiterate black girl named Anna Murray whom he met in Baltimore before his escape. He wrote her a letter about his successful journey and after receiving that good news she came to New York as well.

Then they carried on travelling on a steamboat together to New Bedford. After their arrival they were headed directly to Mr. Nathan Johnson who was an abolitionist. He gave them a hearty welcome and treated them very well. He helped them in their situation of great need so they were infinitely grateful and they became very good friends. Mr. Johnson actually gave Frederick his last name Douglass. When he lived in chains of slavery his last name was Bailey. In New York Douglass called himself Johnson but there was so many Johnsons in New Bedford that it caused confusion. He worked at various forms of employment before he was

introduced to the abolitionist movement but that was definitely the right place for him. In the course of time he became a respected orator and writer.

He collaborated for instance with John Brown and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Before the Civil War broke out Douglass tried to spread his ideas about using black troops in the Union Army. He was close to Abraham Lincoln, he advised him a lot and he encouraged blacks to do one fundamental thing. They should have be enlisted and fight for the Union. He was so determined that he offered his sons to enlist. Those thoughts he consulted with Lincoln. He is known as one of the most influential recruiters for the Union.

7.1 Rhetorical Strategies of Douglass' Narrative

Frederick Douglass is one of the most extraordinary fugitive slaves who wrote his narrative about living in slavery. Any people looked up to him, because he fought for the racial equality and human rights. He became very good public speaker and had a lot of lectures about the slave dehumanizing system. He met several times with President Lincoln to advise him. He criticized slavery and his former status as a slave added even bigger effect on his passionate speeches about insights of slavery which he openly shared. Like William Wells Brown and others, he touched so many people and changed their view of slavery. Slave narratives aimed didactically to move the audience by sentimental rhetoric about affairs that happened. In the *Narrative of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* he mentioned a lot of experiences during his life as a slave but not much about his life in liberty after his escape from slavery. That part of his life and more than that he presented in his second slave narrative entitled *My Bondage and my Freedom*.

In his narrative, he utilized literary devices such as personification, metaphor, repetition, apostrophe, irony or similes. He used them to demonstrate comparisons or exaggerations of his examples so that the reader could better imagine the particular situation.

In the first chapter he wrote “ By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, (...)” (Douglass 1995:19) because the level as one as human being was so low that he is referring slaves as animals and not human beings. Slaves rarely know their age or the exact year of birth. They could surmise or stay ignorant to it.

The description of their living condition was sometimes expressed by irony because white people could not imagine such situations like they had no property or clothes. “They find less difficulty from the want of beds, then from the want of time to sleep.” (Douglass 1995:10) He repeated some words over again to emphasize the struggle he went through. ” (...) I was kept almost naked – no shoes, no stocking, no jacket, no trousers, nothing on (...). (Douglass 1995:26) Parallelism also occurred in his narrative such as “I suffered much from hunger, but much more from cold.” (Douglass 1995:26)

The white sailed ships symbolized a freedom for him and he used them as metaphors for himself when he lived by Covey. “You are loosed from your moorings, and are free; I am fast in my chains, and am a slave!” (Douglass 1845:64) He was trapped in the slavery and had deep depression from that status. “You move merrily before the gentle gale, and I sadly before the bloody whip.” (Douglass 1995:64) He applied a simile to compare himself to a weight because slavery weighed him down. “When I could stand no longer, I fell, and felt as if held down by an immense weight.” (Douglass 1995:77)

White people grew up in the surroundings of family and it is fully ordinary for them. The powerful bond between mother and her child is not interrupted because the child is raised by her. Slaves rarely could identify that special bond and what the real essence of family means. The essence of strong family in Africa was then destroyed by slavery. Immense numbers of families were separated and individuals dragged to different countries and towns. Douglass depicted his own experience in short sentences to add more emphasize to the fact that he had no notion of having mother. "I never saw my mother, to know her as such, more than four or five times in my life. " (Douglass 1995:20) Douglass maintained that natural affectionate bond between mother and the child should be destroyed as soon as possible. He was taken from her when he was an infant and since that time they were separated.

In the slave culture a song carries distinctive meaning. Slaves were regularly used to singing but white people in the north believe that singing among the slaves is proof of joy and pleasure. When Douglass noticed that illusion he was amazed that they could think that. The reality was completely different. This was noted by musicologists and later designated as "blues" music.

Slaves sing most when they are most unhappy. The songs of the slave represent the sorrows of his heart; and he is relieved by them, only as an aching heart is relieved by its tears. (Douglass 1995:30)

One issue is very remarkable and it distinguished Douglass from other fugitive slaves who were selected to my diploma thesis. When he was in England he decided to write a letter to his old master Thomas Auld. It is evident that the letter meant for Douglass great satisfaction. After all these years of suffering he finally could tell him the truth. He could not express his opinions directly to him while in the chains of slavery before. In that letter he informed Mr. Thomas Auld about his

current living status and about his happiness. He put emphasis on his good feeling that he earned his own money and he did not have to hand over the money to anyone. He also focused on his feelings about ill-treatment and humiliation that he experienced living with Mr. Auld.

Throughout his stay by Mr. Thomas Auld and also his life in captivity he realized that from all slave owners he met, the worst ones were always the most religious ones. They were vicious, heartless men with no mercy. By that statement Douglass did not want to express that he was against religion or Christianity. He was pious man, worshipping all Christian values but it was something he noticed. Mr. Thomas Auld could not treat the slaves properly because he was not a slaveholder from birth, he always was ruthless master but the change in his behavior was significant when he converted. Douglass mentioned shocking situation when Mr. Auld whipped a slave girl and simultaneously “he would quote this passage of Scripture –“He that knoweth his master’s will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.”(Douglass 1995:55)

Prior to his conversion, he relied upon his own depravity to shield and sustain him in his savage barbarity; but after his conversion, he found religious sanction and support for his slaveholding cruelty. He made the greatest pretensions to piety. (...) I have said my master found religious sanction for his cruelty (...) (Douglass 1995:54-55)

He put together words like heavy cowskin, naked shoulders, warm red blood to drip or savage barbarity to emphasize the torture of slave innocent woman to affected readers so they felt the same pain and despair as he felt. If the words were only bare the effect would not be as significant as should be.

As an example I will state one of many facts going to prove the charge. I have seen him tie up a lame young woman, and whip her with a heavy

cowskin upon her naked shoulders, causing the warm red blood to drip
(Douglass 1995:55)

Douglass has two diverse approaches in his narrative. On one hand he presents himself as the protagonist and on the other hand as the narrator. He demonstrates on himself the differences between these two roles. When he was young and uneducated, he acts more naive and ignorant. Then his older self-became more sophisticated and reasonable and at liberty he became an experienced commentator. Also his perception of reality changed. In young age the smaller cities appeared to him bigger but later when he explored the North he considered them small.

Douglass as the protagonist grows and become much stronger. Not entire time he is described as a strong and remarkable one. Sometimes he represents every other American slave and he is described as supporting role or an observer of particular situations where other characters played important role. These scenes are essential to the narrative not because of Douglass' presence, but because it forms an outline of inhumane sides of slavery. To elicit pathos in readers, he mentioned she had stretches all over her body and during her punishment she was naked and she was obligated to stand on her toes. "The louder she screamed, the harder he whipped; and where the blood ran fastest, there he whipped longest." (Douglass 1995:23)

The one important milestone for him was his relocation to Baltimore and it was very influential for his freedom. In Baltimore he got know a new kind of Mistress Sophia Auld. She had never owned a slave before so she treated him very well at first. That woman started to teach young Douglass how to read. Unfortunately for Douglass, after a while her husband warned her that it was not such a good idea to teach a slave to read. He said:

If you teach that nigger how to read, there would be no keeping him. If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. Learning will spoil the best nigger in the world. (Douglass 1995:48)

In that case she obeyed Mr. Hugh Auld and stopped teaching young Douglass. In course of the time she completely changed and she was not the kind-hearted woman anymore. Suddenly she became vicious and without any emotion. He used a contrast to show her transformation. “That angelic face gave place to that of a demon.” (Douglass 1995:33) Douglass attempted to explain how slavery destroyed that good which was inside her so that readers could be aware of the horrible impact of slavery on one’s mind. For that purpose he used personification.

Slavery soon proved its ability to divest her of these heavenly qualities. Under its influence, the tender heart become stone, and the lamblike disposition gave way to one of tiger-like fierceness. (Douglass 1995:52)

Eventually he was forced to stop learning but his passion did not put an end to it. Actually it was only the beginning of educating himself. “While in this state of mind, I was eager to hear any one speak of slavery.” (Douglass 1995:41) His drive and resistance had to be inspiring for the readers. He was very creative in his effort to learn and something like that was not expected behavior from a slave. After big achievement of learning to read and write he was very skeptical and unwilling to get know more for some period of time. He was convinced that he did not have any chance to run away and that feeling was stronger than him.

As I writhed under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It has given me a view of my wretched condition without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. (Douglass 1995:54)

He was so demotivated especially when he lived by Mr. Thomas Auld and by Mr. Covey. He believed that this knowledge were unnecessary and came to nothing when you are in captivity. He managed to do what he always had wished for but when he finally understood and could read about everything it was worse for him.

The other turning point in his life which influenced him a lot was a fight with Mr. Covey. That act was utterly rare because no slave had the courage to do that. The consequences of attacking the master were instant punishment or certain death for a slave but it did not happen to Douglass for some mysterious reason.

That reason was explained in that chapter. Most of the slaves believed in the supernatural or in the West African religion called Voodoo magic. They believed that ancestor spirits could give you some protection over your body and soul if you carried certain object with you. In this narrative there is a mention of Voodoo magic in the chapter where Douglass was afraid to come back to Covey due to being severely whipped. Douglass disbelieved those forms of magic or spirituality because he was a Christian man but he had nothing to lose so he tried it. The root carried a symbolic meaning for traditional African religion.

There was a certain root, which, if I would take some of it with me, carrying it *always on my right side*, would render it impossible for Mr. Covey, or any other white man, to whip me. (Douglass 1995:70)

He did not know why but he felt inside his whole body that something was different. Previously Mr. Covey broke him and he was dragged down during the process. After the fight he gained his self-confidence once more. "I felt as I never felt before (Douglass 1995:82) He was never whipped again and spiritually he was a free

man. Providentially that damage did not have big consequences on his future character. Then he still remained optimistic and determined young man. He proved that in every environment one can educate oneself even though every circumstance stood against him. Other demonstration of his brave character was role of tutor to other slaves in the Sabbath school because he had strong desire to be helpful and make life a little bit easier to his fellow slaves.

As the narrator Douglass wrote his book in a realistic way. He tried to give the readers the critical view of the slave owners but everything was based on the truth and it was not exaggerated. He managed not to be biased against them and detached the slave owners from the system. The slave institution was the reason why they were corrupted. He was able not to select sides and be objective in his judgment. He was not afraid to express very deep emotions and for good purpose he dramatized his moments of despair at some point.

Symbolism is another important part of his narrative. New symbolism corresponds to *The North Star* which was his newspaper published in 1847 and he put great emphasize on that name. The title symbolized one shining star which was followed to the North by runaway slaves. The star was their orientation and represented a hope to reach safely the land of liberty in the North.

Publication of his book provided him more credibility with the audience because of accurate dates and authenticity of his story. Before that his lectures were known but people partially disbelieve in his lectures and had doubts if he was telling the truth.

8 *My Bondage and my Freedom* – Frederick Douglass

In his first autobiography *Narrative of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845) he wrote about experiences which he lived out in the chains of slavery. His second autobiography *My Bondage and my freedom* (1855) is more extensive and he divided his narrative into two sections. In the first one he focused on detailed description of the first two decades of his life in bondage. He extended his narrative of the second section where he recounted his life in freedom though only last four chapters of the whole book are dedicated to that topic. He also changed some parts of the second book. The prefatory notes by William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips were removed, leaving space for an introduction by the black abolitionist Dr. James M'Cune Smith. The appendix contains several extracts from his lectures and a letter to his old master, Thomas Auld.

Douglass place of birth, situated in Tuckahoe, Maryland, and memories of his grandmother Betsey Bailey and his grandfather Isaac Bailey indicates what they meant to him. Before he grew wiser he did not know that he was a slave. His grandparents and their old hut were property of the slaveholder. He lived in blissful ignorance that they were free. Later he saw the true character of that institution and he was told that is common for older children to be taken away from their mothers or grandmothers so the natural bond among the families was destroyed. He said:

The absolute power of this distant “old master” had touched my young spirit with but the point of its cold, cruel iron and left me something to brood over after the play and in moments of repose. Grandmammy was, indeed, at that time, all the world to me; and the thought of being separated from her, on any considerable time, was more than an unwelcome intruder. It was intolerable. (Douglass 1969:39)

When he was around seven years old his grandmother took him to Colonel's Lloyd farm and told him to play with his siblings. He was not happy about that because the slavery caused one specific issue. He and his sibling became estranged to each other. He barely knew them so he had no affection towards them. Meanwhile his beloved grandmother had to leave and they were separated. It had huge influence on him and he realized that as a slave no family, feelings, property and even opinions were allowed. In the first five chapters his description of the death of his mother, the brutal punishment of his aunt Hester and the general cruelty of overseers and constitutes an expansion of his first autobiography. On the plantation of Colonel Lloyd, young Douglass experienced several whippings and punishments but he confessed that there was nothing extremely drastic or cruel. What often worried him was hunger and cold, so when he was really hungry he learned to sing under the windows of Mrs. Lucretia who gave him as a reward a slice of bread so he did not have to starve so often. He considered Mrs. Lucretia as his only friend and he grew fond of her. She was the one who announced him the best news he has ever received in slavery: his departure to Baltimore. It was one of the best moments in his entire life. He left the Great House and Colonel Lloyd's plantation at the age of almost ten years old.

His new home was at a ship carpenter Mr. Hugh Auld and his wife Mrs. Sophia Auld. He was related to Douglass' old master as his son-in law. The comparison of life in the city and in the plantation was quite different for Douglass. He was very happy there especially because of very healthy and good attitude of his both new owners. Mrs. Sophia Auld was kind and lovely lady who had never been a slaveholder. Mrs. Sophia recalled in Douglass precious memories. It was long time ago when Douglass received similar warm treatment from human being and it was from his grandmother. Initially

her character did not become unduly influenced by slavery. He described his relationship to her:

How could I hang down my head, and speak with bated breath, when there was no pride to scorn me, no coldness to repel me, and no hatred to inspire me with fear? I therefore soon learned to regard her as something more akin to a mother, than a slaveholding mistress. (Douglass 1969:42)

His reason for not revealing how he successfully escaped remains the same as in his first autobiography. Other slaves could think of escaping in the same manner in the future. After he realized he was a free man, it was joyful moment for him but after a few hours he started feeling anxious and desolate. By coincidence he met his old acquaintance Jake who was a fugitive slave as well. He found out everything about the possibility to take the fugitive slaves back to slavery and how close it was for Jake that he had a narrow escape. He gave him an advice to trust nobody. He could collide into bad people who easily could sell him to slave catchers and he would be recaptured by his master. He was aware of the fact that it would be impossible to run away again.

One day he had luck on his side and met one very generous sailor who sent Douglass to the secretary of the New York Vigilance Committee Mr. David Ruggles and he was also the officer on the Underground Railroad. He was active in antislavery movement and he welcomed Douglass very dearly. His loneliness was kind of depressing for him so as soon as possible he wrote a letter to his future wife Anna Murray that he got to land of liberty safely and he expected her arrival in New York in a few days. She immediately left Baltimore and came to New York. They got married by Rev. James W. C. Pennington. David Ruggles recommended moving to New Bedford because that town was much safer place for them and he could find there a trade as a calker but he had no luck. At first he did very demanding and dirty work because he

stowed a sloop with a load of oil but he was thrilled about the fact that he did not have to hand over his earnings like he was used to by Mr. Hugh and Thomas Auld. When he finished his first job he changed a lot occupations but he did not mind. He worked where he was needed.

After several months living in New Bedford one young man offered him to be a subscriber for the abolitionist newspaper called the *Liberator* whose editor was William Lloyd Garrison. He liked the concept of the newspaper and he knew that became a subscriber was the right thing to do for him. Personally he met Garrison on abolitionist meeting in Nantucket, Massachusetts, in 1841. There Douglass got the opportunity to tell the audience about his life in slavery. The crowd was so impressed by Douglass narrative skills and by his touching story that Garrison could not let that without noticing. Thanks to William Garrison, Douglass became a member of the American Antislavery Society and their abolitionist speaker. He gave lectures about his life as a slave about a few months and he introduced himself as a fugitive slave in a public. Many of his friend thought that was foolish but he was extraordinary thanks to that. A fugitive slave never spoke in public about the truth of slavery and he was a new attraction for people. Still, he tried to be careful and not to reveal his real name, his master's name and the state which he came from. The main reason why he started writing his 1845 *Narrative* was simple. People did not trust him that he was a slave.

They said I did not talk like a slave, look like a slave, nor act like a slave, and that they believed I had never been south of Mason and Dixon's Line. "He don't tell us where he came from – what his master's name was – how he got away – nor the story of his experience. Besides he is educated, and is, in this, a contradiction of all the facts we have concerning the ignorance of the slaves." (Douglass 1969:362)

While he was giving speeches and began with writing his narrative over the course of about four years, he met many interesting people who became his dear friends. Some of them, especially Mr. Phillips, were against publication of his narrative. Douglass gave actual names of people, dates and places in his autobiography. It was evident that his handwork was a dangerous tool and it could result in his recapture. He knew that Mr. Thomas would be trying to catch him at least. He had to protect himself somehow but even his friend Mr. Garrison and others could not help him. He decided to flee to England because even in a free state he was in danger. One of his friends got him a ticket to the ship the Cambria, of the Cunard line, but he could not travel in the first cabin because of his race. Eventually he travelled in the second cabin and it was better for him because he was surrounded by friendly people. He especially mentioned the Hutchinson family which was very kind to him.

One incident happened during the voyage and the particular cause was Douglass' compliance with delivering a lecture. The crowd was insulted by Douglass' speech full of slave-owners and they threatened to throw him overboard. Fortunately for Douglass, Captain Judkins calmed the angry people down and Douglass safely reached Liverpool. Douglass lectured in England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland. Meanwhile, in Massachusetts, his true friends made efforts to purchase a freedom of Douglass from his former master and in the end they succeeded. After spending almost two years in Great Britain where he succeeded in having a reception speech in London and he formed very good friendships with supporters, he decided to go back to his land of his birth with a plan to start a newspaper. He had lived almost nine years in freedom and he wanted to accomplish something new.

His friends from England were very supportive but his Boston friends were in opposition. They discouraged him from that enterprise and they had more than one

reason. They claimed that colored newspapers would not be successful. There was no need to start a newspaper and last but not least it would be interference to his career as a lecturer. After that disagreement he was unsure if he should do that but thanks to support of his English friends he started to believe in himself and give that enterprise a try. He started to print his newspaper in 1847, *The North Star*. The newspaper had good response from the public: Herman Melville was a subscriber. It successively gained nearly three thousand subscribers. It has been published almost ten years and during the first successful year Douglass moved with his family to Rochester, New York. He managed to fulfill his dream about telling the truth about oppression and the cruel techniques which he had experienced. He finished his last chapter of this narrative with a statement:

Never forgetting my own humble origin, nor refusing, while Heaven lends me ability, to use my voice, my pen, or my vote, to advocate the great and primary work of the universal and unconditional emancipation of my entire race. (Douglass 1969:406)

9 Autobiography of Josiah Henson

An Autobiography of Josiah Henson was originally published in 1869 under the title *An Autobiography of the Reverend Josiah Henson*.

Josiah Henson was born a slave in Charles County, Maryland in 1789. His place of birth was on a farm owned Mr. Francis Newman to whom his father belonged. He had a slave parents. His mother belonged to Dr. Josiah McPherson. One memory which Josiah had about his father from his childhood was not pleasant at all. He remembered his father with an injured head and his back was bloody from being whipped. It was his punishment because he attacked an overseer who had brutally beaten his wife. He only tried to protect her. After these actions, his father was sent to Alabama. Unfortunately Josiah and his mother have never heard about him again. On the positive side, his mother did not have to be hired out to Mr. Newman anymore. She returned back to Dr. McPherson's estate. He was very kind man, treated his slaves so much better than other masters. This particular master gave him the name Josiah Henson. His last name was given to him after Dr. McPherson's uncle.

One day Dr. McPherson was at a social party and other morning was found drowned in near river by two slaves. It was probably an accident. It meant that Josiah, his mother and other siblings would be sold and maybe ripped apart. His brothers and sisters were first sold and his mother afterwards. His mother was sold to Isaac Riley and when she tried to persuade Mr. Riley to buy her son as well, she was violently kicked. Josiah was bought by a very odd man named Robb. Then he lived in horrible conditions with forty other strangers in one room and he got sick very soon. Robb was aware of the

fact that Josiah was a dead weight for him so when he met Riley in town he made a deal with him and Riley bought him very cheaply. From that moment Josiah was possessed by Riley for many years and lived on his farm located in Montgomery County in the State of Maryland. Despite the fact that Riley was an awful man, that bargain was a blessing for Josiah. He could be with his mother again, under her protective wings. He felt safe again and recovered very quickly from the poor conditions in which he had lived. Riley was a cruel man with no habits so the life at his estate was very harsh. As one can tell when a master had bad behavior, his slaves started to act in a similar way.

Josiah turned into a tenacious and hardworking boy so he has gradually improved in every job which was assigned to him. Josiah started his first job as a water carrier carried water to the working slaves. Then he ploughed a corn field, using a horse-plough. When he was older and stronger he could take care of his master's saddle-horse and after a lapse of time he was able to do the same work in the field as the other slaves. The most common food was corn-meal and herrings for a slave. Occasionally, slaves got an allocation of buttermilk or they could grow their own vegetables on the assigned piece of ground. The main clothing material was a tow and their common bottom were pantaloons for men and a gown for women. Slaves lived and slept in log huts with no beds, no furniture and the only things that added to their comfort was a piece of a dirty blanket or rug. Despite the horrible conditions in which Josiah had to live, he grew up as a strong and proficient young man. After some time he proved his loyalty to his master so that he became an overseer of his master's farm and then superintendent.

When he was about eighteen years old his mother convinced him to go and listen to the preacher named John McKenny. He lived in Georgetown which was so convenient because Riley's plantation was not so far from there. After his service,

Josiah was so stunned that he converted to Christianity. His mind was full of new thoughts:

Revolving the things which I had heard in my mind as I went home, I became so excited that I turned aside from the road into the woods, and prayed to God for light and for aid with an earnestness, which, however unenlightened, was at least sincere and heartfelt; and which the subsequent course of my life has led me to imagine was acceptable to Him who heareth prayer. (Henson 1969:25)

In age of twenty Josiah married a slave girl from the neighborhood and from the religious family. They had twelve children together. Mr. Riley got married as well but he married much younger woman. She was eighteen years old a she had younger brother called Francis. Mr. Riley became his guardian to him. In 1825, Mr. Riley had difficulty with his brother-in-law and at the end he fell into a lawsuit with Francis. Mr. Riley was so desperate that he came to Josiah and asked for help. After two or more hours of persuasion, Josiah agreed to fulfill his master's task. He had to take all other Negroes with him to Kentucky to the master's brother Amos Riley otherwise they all would be sold to the south. It meant 18 slaves and in addition Josiah's wife and his two children. Mr. Riley gave Josiah his transport pass so that Josiah could prove he travelled legally. They started their journey in the middle of February in 1825 and arrived at Davis County, Kentucky in April. During that journey Josiah realized what it feels like to be a free man. The other slaves felt it too but Josiah was so determined to keep his word to his master that he did not run. He wrote the same thought down:

Freedom had ever been an object of my ambition, though no other means of obtaining it had occurred to me but purchasing myself. I had never dreamed of running away. I had a sentiment of honor on the subject. I have promised my master to take his property to Kentucky, and deposit it with his brother Amos. (Henson 1969:36)

Josiah and his family stayed three years in Kentucky and there were employed on the farm. Life on the farm in Kentucky was much comfortable than in Maryland. Josiah was very satisfied there and he even managed to save a lot of money. There were more opportunities of visiting preachers and as a result of these opportunities Josiah met a Methodist preacher who visited their neighborhood. They started to be very close and the Methodist preacher influenced Josiah a lot in a way of thinking about buying his freedom and one day he said to him:

You ought to be free. You have too much capacity to be confined to the limited and comparatively useless sphere of a slave, and though it must not be known that I have spoken to you on this subject, yet, if you will obtain Mr. Amos's consent to go to see your old master in Maryland, I will try and put you in a way by which I think you may succeed in buying yourself.
(Henson 1969:41)

The intention of Mr. Riley was to come to Kentucky as well after he had arranged everything necessary. Someday in the spring of 1828 Mr. Riley sent a letter to his brother that he had to remain in Maryland because his wife did not want to go to Kentucky. In that case all his slaves had to be sold except Josiah and his family. After these actions and preacher's advice, Josiah decided to go back to Maryland in September for the purpose of buying his freedom. He negotiated with Mr. Riley and the requirement was to pay him four hundred and fifty dollars for manumission-papers. He had to disburse three hundred and fifty dollars in cash and the rest of the money in a note. Mr. Riley deceived poor Josiah. He sealed the envelope with the certificate in it so that Josiah did not find out that he did not write an amount of hundred dollars but he added an extra zero. The amount of money abruptly changed to one thousand dollars. Josiah did not identify anything about it until Mr. Amos Riley his master's son told him

so. Josiah felt so betrayed that from that moment he realized how much he hated and despised slavery. In his head he tried to come up with a good plan to escape.

Shortly after that an opportunity came along. He had a company a young son of his master and had to help him to transport and sell products from the farm in New Orleans. The main desire of Mr. Amos Riley was to sell Josiah in the deep south. They were travelling by boat. During their journey Josiah could visit one plantation near Vicksburg where his fellow-slaves were sold from Kentucky. It was a very heartbreaking visit because those slaves had a wretched life down there. When he was leaving without them it was the most sorrowful day of his life and bad dreams haunted him for a very long time. Then they continued in their way and Josiah decided to kill everyone on the board so that he could escape even though he was devastated to abandon his family. Either way he would be without them because young man Amos was determined to do what he promised to his father. Josiah tried to convince him many times but it seemed that nothing would shift his mind.

One night o board the steamboat Josiah took an axe and crept into a cabin where the whites slept. When he raised the axe and was ready to commit a crime, suddenly his Christian part of him won and he knew that he could not do such a horrible crime. Fortunately good luck stood by his side because young man Amos got seriously sick in New Orleans. Josiah took care of him and tried to keep him alive the whole way back home. When they arrived back to Kentucky, family of young man Amos almost did not show him any kind of gratitude and it looked like he would be sold out anyway. At that point he definitely knew that he had to escape with his family from the slavery otherwise they would be separated and unhappy forever.

At first it was very hard task to persuade his wife about running away. After she agreed to do that, he invented the way how he could carry his two children on his back

because they were too small to walk. After some time of finishing the last details they could hit the road. The best option of running away was at night and they started their long journey in the middle of September 1830. They headed to Canada which was a very long distance from Kentucky full of danger and wilderness. They had to hide themselves in the woods, travelling by night and as quickly as possible. They were very lucky and after two days they reached Cincinnati Ohio, in a Northern free state. There they had a short break for two weeks to gain strength again at house of Josiah's old friends. Then they continued to north where the land started to be very unknown and horrifying. Fortunately they met a group of Indians who were scared of them at first because they were thinking that they are not human beings. After the main chief of Native Americans saw Josiah and his family, it was clear to him that they were humans. The tribe helped them to refill their food supplies and to find the way through the woods. It took several days of travelling and hiding before they came near a lake. South and west of Sandusky city Josiah came across a group of men who were working on the vessel. One of them was a captain, a very kind man. After a sincere conversation with Josiah, he promised him to take all of them to Buffalo. In Buffalo the kind captain gave a dollar to Josiah for their ferry which took them to Canada, the new land of freedom, although Canada had had slavery earlier in its history.

They landed on 28th of October, 1830. It was the best day of his life. Finally he was a free man and he was so excited to start a new life in Canada. Josiah heard about a rich man Mr. Hibbard who could employ him and maybe provided a place for living so he went immediately to him. Mr. Hibbard agreed and Josiah could move his family to the cabin where pigs used to rest. After the major cleaning the cabin was habitable again and Josiah worked every day on the farm. After some time he met old friend from Maryland who took him to several meetings and convinced him with another people to

prepare a sermon. He could not read and had no education but people actually loved the way Josiah talked to them. His eldest son Tom had an opportunity to attend school because of the good will of Mr. Hibbard. He learned the skills of reading and then he could teach to read his father. He read him from the Bible. It was hard task but eventually Josiah made some progress and could read a little. Later on, these actions resulted in Josiah becoming a Methodist preacher and had lecture tours between Tennessee and Ontario. He preached as an abolitionist and he spoke openly against slavery and his experiences.

So far he was satisfied with their life in Canada but he often thought about the less fortunate ones whose life was a misery in chains of slavery. After one large meeting at Fort Erie where he met a very active man named James Lightfoot. He escaped from slavery but his family remained in Kentucky near the city of Maysville. That story was very moving for Josiah and he decided to do more for those poor people. He undertook several journeys to save those slaves from a miserable life and brought them to Canada. He eventually worked as a conductor for the Underground Railroad to make those trips much easier. Over the time he managed to save about one hundred and eighteen slaves and the number was still increasing.

Free life in Canada was incomparable to life in slavery. Josiah had various options what he could do and he had a pretty colorful life. He was a founder of a community which consisted of former slaves who escaped from slavery. In 1842 he moved with his community and his family to Dawn, Canada and he achieved to buy land where they could start new life. They established Manual Labour School for teaching life and job skills. The main purpose was that everyone could come to learn something; adults and especially their children. Josiah was very kind and warmhearted person so he was able to make a lot of friends and established diplomatic relations like

with Amos Lawrence from Boston, Hiram Wilson from Massachusetts, an Englishman James C. Fuller and others. Their financial resources sometimes came from those wealthy people who were abolitionists and wanted to help their community or they had huge leverage so they could arrange specific things.

They built up a saw mill because the land where they settled was covered with very high quality trees of various kinds. They started to produce black walnut lumber and transport it to the United States and later to the England. Josiah tried to come up with a plan to get black walnut lumber to England. Then he got an idea to exhibit their lumber at the World's Great Fair, in London in 1851. It was the first time he visited London and afterwards he did it another two times. At the World's Great Fair he had an honor to meet the Queen of England, Victoria. Here is an extract from the book and it describes the meeting and that moment was very special to Josiah:

Among others, the Queen of England, Victoria, preceded by her guide, and attended by her cortage, paused to view me as my property. I uncovered my head and saluted her as respectfully as I could, and she was pleased with perfect grace to return my salutation. "Is he indeed a fugitive slave?" I heard her inquire; and the answer was, "He is indeed, and that is his work. (Henson 1969:101-102)

When he visited England for the third time, in that time with his second wife because his first beloved wife had passed away, he was invited to spend some time with her Majesty and it was in 1877. It was incredible experience and honor to meet her Majesty again and it is memorialized in Dresden, Canada.

In 1878 Josiah and his second wife visited his old home in Maryland. Josiah foresaw that Mr. Riley would not be alive and he was right but Mrs. Riley still lived there. She was very surprised that he came back but she was glad to see him. They had a little talk but his main desire was to see his mother's grave. He recalled so many good

memories on his beloved mother and he was happy that he could visit her grave once more and tell her goodbye. After that visit they returned to their home in Dawn and lived there for the rest of their lives. Josiah Henson died in 1883 in Dresden, Canada at the age of 93.

9.1 Josiah Henson's influence on Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel

Harriet Beecher Stowe is an author of a novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published in 1852 and its publication is considered as a major turning point against slavery. Henson described his meeting with Harriet Beecher Stowe in his narrative. She admired him and his narrative which he first published in 1849 and the name was *The Life of Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada*. Harriet Beecher Stowe was inspired by his autobiography to model her main character Tom in her bestselling anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as fugitive who was successful in attaining freedom in Canada; he played an important role in the history of the abolitionist struggle. Although the main character Uncle Tom died in the end of the book unlike Henson, many people saw the resemblance to him. "To his credit, not until he was old and senile did Henson ever unequivocally claim to be Uncle Tom, but he did nothing to stop others from making the claim for him." (Winks 1985:115)

There is a division between slave narratives and Stowe's novel. Only white educated people took notice of slave narratives which were considered as very important historical evidences throughout the time but most of the population read novels for entertainment. Her novel has didactic and entertaining character in the same time. Harriet Beecher Stowe made huge impact on readers when she described the horrendous system of slavery in her novel *Uncle's Tom Cabin*. Writing this book was

the main reason for encouraging people to gain more knowledge of slavery. She had huge success and her readers really began to be interested in slavery and condition of the slaves and increasingly more people joined the abolitionist movement.

Unlike Henson, Stowe wrote often about children and their life in slavery and how it affected their childhood and future life. Perhaps it was because she was a mother of seven children of which four tragically died and only three survived her. The enormous pain she felt when her son died of cholera affected her when she wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* which shows in scene when Eva dies. This terrible experience left a whole and sorrow in her heart. As a consequence she sympathized with parents whose children were taken away from them due to the cruelty of slavery.

Uncle Tom's Cabin tells a story about the slave Tom who was main protagonist and had the best character. Regardless of his kindness and Christianity, the fate was merciless to him. He was sold to the south and after having a few good masters, he was flogged to death by the vicious and degenerate slave owner Simon Legree. The story also follows other characters including Eva, the Shelbys, Eliza, her husband George Harris and others. There are two main themes in her novel which are accompanied throughout the whole book. First of them is the devastating capability of slavery and the second is the power of Christianity to defeat slavery.

Stowe mentioned very unique statement that it is impossible to be a Christian and a slave owner. She clearly illustrated that slavery and Christianity as incompatible. How Christian man could tolerate slavery or even be the slave owner? Eva, the white girl with angelic face and moral values has never comprehended what is the difference between whites and blacks. In contrast to Douglass narrative, Stowe was convinced that Christianity could overpower slavery and her religious characters like Eva or Uncle

Tom despised slavery. Douglass claimed that the most religious people were the most evil ones and they acted like savage monsters to their slaves.

The cabin of Uncle Tom plays a significant role in her novel. It symbolized Uncle's Tom pure faith in God so that his love and loyalty turned out to be an inspiration to other slaves and they were supposed to follow his example. It also became a reminder of Tom's terrible life in slavery. It is a metaphor for willingness of Uncle Tom to rather die than break his Christian values and be rather whipped and executed by Simon Legree in order not have to deceive his slave companions.

10 Paternal role in slave narrative in the essay of Karla Koválová

In her essay "The Bone Deep Longing (...)" Karla Koválová analyses an interesting psychological phenomenon: How did being a father affect black male slaves? She primarily focuses on the novel written by David Anthony Durham, *Walk through Darkness* and also includes points of view of the fugitive slaves Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs for comparison.

Vision of freedom was desire that all the slaves shared together but having a child added a new element into this longing, something that was perhaps even more important and needed than freedom. In Durham's novel, William, a black slave, ran away from his cruel master and his only intention was to get together with his wife Dover and his soon-to-be-born daughter. "[William] wasn't thinking of freedom at all, but only of her [Dover], of an unborn child, of love. He had so many things to set to rights. Freedom wasn't even foremost on his list." (*Durham 2002: 18*)

The desire to see his daughter was so strong he would even endure slavery as long as she was there with him and remained a part of his life. William himself was raised without his father and he did not want for his daughter to share the same experience. Fatherless slave families have become a myth as the families were often destroyed due to commerce, when many of the members got separated. Slave men were even forced to impregnate women to produce more slaves, but they had almost no contact with their children or did not even know they existed. “(...) it is frequently assumed that Black men *father* children but seldom *are* fathers.” (Koválová 2011: 41)

There is a similarity with Jacobs’ narrative where she stated that despite her discomfort while hiding, the fact that she was able to peak through a shingle and see her children in the yard helped her get through it. William equated the same kind of love for his child with her. In comparison with Douglass who believed that he could achieve his freedom through literacy, thus restoring his humanity and freedom, William believed that he would restore his humanity and freedom through family.

Another question that is present throughout the essay is interracial love. William himself is a son of a white man but the story of love between his black mother and his father confused him and he chose not to believe it. Despite the fact that his mother told him wonderful things about his father, he doubted there could ever be a white man loving a black woman and their child. He believed that “His father was a ghoul, and Nan was only trying to shelter him from the shame of it” (Durham 2002:69). In his eyes there was only little hope that he was a child that came out of love and his father was a great loving person but despite his bad family experience he wanted to be with his daughter and be a father to her.

Yes, he yearned to reunite with Dover. Yes, he hungered for freedom, for vengeance. But these paled in comparison to a bone-deep longing that he

couldn't explain, that began and ended and went on forever in the possibility of that child. To look upon that face, to kiss that face and to know that child was he and Dover made immortal, to see that child walk and hear it speak the wisdom of innocence: these were all the things he wanted. He had never known it as completely as he did at that moment. (Durham 2002:116)

William wanted to escape all the cruel things that he was surrounded by, all the violence, blood and death, tears, desperation and injustice. The child allowed him to see a world from a different perspective through the eyes of a small child, immaculate and unaware of all the misery that was happening in the America. "In doing so, it allows for the transformation of a person with an enslaved mind, broken by experiences of bondage, into a man with a new vision and purpose to live." (Koválová 2011: 43)

To better explain the question of interracial love there is a parallel story of William's father Andrew Morrison and his brother Lewis. As the story unfolds it turned out that William's father was really what he thought him to be. One who did not understand how a white man could fall in love with a black woman, especially in the world he lived in where the black people were thought to be an accursed race. It all resulted in raping, a motive that is so frequently seen in all the slave narratives, and Nan being pregnant with William. But it also contains a motive of redemption and transformation. The terrible things Andrew witnessed during his journey to find his son helped him better understand the misery of black people and he finally realized that his brother's attitude and love for black people was the right and moral thing.

What he really wanted was for her to be with him. He wanted the strength to draw her to him, and then to stand with her against the world. He wanted to take the world of men by the neck and throttle it, to beat sense into it, to reorder the universe and make it right. This was a strength he did not have. Not even by half. But his brother did. (Durham 2002: 235)

11 Summary of *Narrative of my Escape from Slavery* - Moses Roper

Moses Roper was born a slave in Caswell County, North Carolina but the year of his birth is not known. His mother was a slave but only half-black. She was actually half Indian and half African. Moses was therefore only one-half black or a “quadroon”. His white father was her master, Mr. Henry H. Roper. Moses looked very much like him. When Moses was a baby, out of jealousy the wife of his white father tried to kill him with a knife but fortunately his black grandmother saved his life. He could not remember that incident so he only knew this history from his mother. After he turned six years old, his mother’s master and his father died and to his misfortune he was forcibly separated from his mother because she was sold to another master.

Roper ended up several hundred miles from his mother when he was sold to a Negro trader named Mr. Mitchell. Moses had very light skin like his father so the trader found out that he would not be able to sell him so easily like the other slaves. Mr. Mitchell attempted to sell him several times but he did not succeed so he left him with Mr. Sneed. Moses stayed with Sneed perhaps over a year and still was not sold so Mr. Mitchell sent his son-in law for him. In the town of Lancaster he sold Moses to Dr. Jones, a Cotton Planter. Subsequently one master after another followed so Moses had to very often move to different places. With Mr. Gooch he worked on a cotton plantation. He lived in Cashaw County, South Carolina. There he had to work very hard on very short allowance of food. When he did not perform his work on time, he was very severely flogged. Moses was only sixteen years old but he had to work like a thirty year old man. He tried to run away but he was always caught by the cruel Mr. Gooch.

In August 1831, there was an unpleasant situation in which some cows ate a lot of corn. All slaves were whipped one by one and Moses heard their wailing. He knew

that he would be coming up next so he decided to run away. He hid himself at the estate of Mr. Crawford, in North Carolina, but he was found by the overseer. He told him his made-up story about bad luck with his cruel master and how he had to get home to see his mother. They believed him and offered him something to eat. He carried on then to the Charlotte City, followed by Chester where he hoped he would find his mother. Along the way he met a six year old slave girl and when he questioned her he ascertained she was his sister Maria. His happiness of learning he had a sister was huge but the reunion with his mother was indescribable. Unfortunately after some time he was arrested by twelve slave-holders and was lodged in the gaol of the Caswell Court-House. Thereafter he never saw any of these beloved relations again.

When his master found out that he had been caught, he immediately sent his son and son-in-law, Mr. Anderson, to retrieve him. He was thinking all the time about another escape before they gave him back to his master. One opportunity arose when they had the final short term break. Moses jumped quickly on a horse and set off. They were behind him right away, called upon him to stop but he did not heed to their warnings so they started shooting at him. It was according to the law that after three calls a person may shoot a run-away slave. After some distance they caught him and dragged him back to Mr. Gooch which was followed by a very long and painful torture. Mr. Gooch, his two sons and son-in law gave him fifty lashes each, and then put two large bars of iron around his feet and heavy long chain on his neck. The next day Mr. Gooch chained him to a slave girl and forced them both to walk round his estate during the night. In the very early morning they had to be fit and ready to work on the fields. They escaped together but it was really difficult because of the chains and irons. They were both caught again by Mr. Crockett who transported Moses to the Lancaster gaol. When Mr. Gooch heard the news, he sent his son-in law, Mr. Anderson after Moses.

Mr. Gooch started to understand that Moses would do anything it takes to get away from him. He sent him to Mr. Britton, a slave dealer. Moses was bought by Mr. Marcus Rowland who kept Moses as a servant. His slaves were treated very well, having enough food and clothes. After that Moses was sold many times to different masters but, thanks to special circumstances, he ended up in the ownership of his new master Mr. Beveridge. He was an owner of three steam boats and Moses travelled with him all summer. It was the best treatment he had ever experienced. He worked as a steward on board *The Versailles* a steamboat. In 1834, Mr. Beveridge's enterprise went bankrupt and all his property was sold.

Moses had a new master named Mr. Register who was very cruel man and lived in Marianna, Florida. One night Mr. Register was very drunk and sleeping very soundly. It was a perfect time for an escape and Moses succeeded. At first his destination was Savannah. Along the way he was very frightened that he would get caught. He learnt his lesson from the previous experiences so he tried to show himself in broad daylight as little as possible. Most of the way he hid himself in the woods and was travelling mainly during the night. He was courageous enough to approach some strangers and to beg them for a little food and sometimes for lodging. He could trust nobody so when he met someone accidentally he asked for opposite direction in case. However he met a few kind people who were very helpful. One of them even wrote him a passport and recommendations because Moses pretended that he lost everything. Later Roper had to provide a new one because that man was not such a skillful writer and that passport looked implausibly.

One day he had to cross one river and on purpose he made the passport wet in front of the group of men who saw him how he struggled through the stream. It was his insurance because they could testify that the passport was wet and thus destroyed. They

sent him to wealthy merchant who wrote him the new passport. It is obvious that he did not reveal information which could hurt him. Those men were uneducated so they were harmless to Moses in the case of their inability to read the letter. In the end he safely got to Savannah and it was not only because he was very smart about his actions but he had good luck as well. There he met Captain Fox who was looking for a new steward on his boat *Fox* so Moses had a chance to sail from Savannah to New York, which was a free state. At first he was very excited because it was his first time at sea but he got seasickness on the very beginning of his journey. Several sailors were upset that he only lay and did not work so they beat him up very brutally. He went through much worse treatment even though he was beaten badly.

When he reached the shore of New York, a free state, he did not describe his actual feelings because in a short time he learned that he could be taken back. It meant that he had no reason to celebrate but he had to take care of himself. His early start in the land of freedom was not easy at all. He had no recommendation for any job so it was significant disadvantage for him. In New York he had a difficult time to find some employment. He tried to find one in the countryside but there he had no luck as well so he travelled further. He went to Poughkeepsie and he started to work in a local inn but after a few days he got sick with cholera. Although he was banished from the inn he fortunately recovered after the medicine which a woman of the young age gave him. He was surviving day by day only on fruit and was much weakened. That was also the reason why he had been infected by cholera so quickly. After he fully recovered he went to Albany, to Vermont and to Massachusetts, where he settled in Boston. In Boston he was not feeling safe because he was always scared that somebody could recognize him and took him back to the south. He actually bought a wig as a cover up not to be so recognizable and he stayed a little farther from Boston by Mr. Perkins for a month. One

family accused him of being a slave because they knew he was wearing a wig. Other families still considered him a white man because he owned one document in which it was written that he had to fulfill a military duty. In the states black or slave man could not be in the army or serve the country. He quickly figured out that he could not stay there and he hid himself in the Green Mountains for a while and then he went back to New York City.

He heard about a ship, *The Napoleon*, sailing to England. He decided to go and on the 29th of November, 1835, he reached Liverpool. He had several recommendations so before anything else he headed straight to the first kind man who could help him and it was Dr. Raffles. The following day he travelled to Manchester where he spent some time and also got to know very interesting and kind people. Besides others he mentioned Mr. Adshead who welcomed Moses very sincerely and became very close to Moses' heart and Mr. Clare who provided him good services by writing him a letter for Antislavery Society. On the 12th December, 1835, he arrived to London and met Rev. Drs. Morrison. Later Moses confessed that he was the most generous man and he never got to know such kindness from one's behavior. He was so touched and grateful because he knew that without help and generosity of those people he would not have made it. He considered them members of his own family. Dr. Morrison was also responsible for sending Moses' letter of recommendation and for writing the letter to the editor of the *Patriot Newspaper*. He shared his personal opinion about Moses and he was aware of the fact that Moses was eager to learn and he had strong desire to become a member of the church. Finally through Dr. Cox, Moses Roper became a member of the church on 31st March, 1836. From that moment he was sure that he was a free man and that he had escaped from slavery for good. Even though he felt blessed that he

achieved his goal to escape, he had mixed feelings. He often thought about his actual family which he had to leave behind and that he would never see them again.

Moses Roper died in Boston, Massachusetts on April 15, 1891 from kidney and heart failure, according to the obituary published in the *New York Times* on the April 16, 1891.

11.1 Rhetorical Strategies of Roper's narrative

This book, *A Narrative of the Escape of Moses Roper*, first published in London in 1837 describes how Roper ran away from the Southern states to England to accomplished publicity. Roper shared what he had to endure as a slave with other people in order to expose the cruel system of slavery and to spread accurate information about it. Later he comments "I have never read nor heard of anything connected with slavery so cruel as what I have myself witnessed" (Andrews 1866:90)

This short powerful narrative contains Moses Roper's observations, thoughts and dreams about being free, independent and having a better life. No description of the positive sides of his life in slavery is included but it only includes the worst moments full of despair, suffering and torture methods. Most of his life in slavery took place in North Carolina and Florida.

Unusual among slave narratives, this book contains a few drawings in the appendix which visually show the techniques of keeping slaves from running away or techniques of punishments. Roper's depictions beg the question how slaves, especially women, managed to work under such terrible conditions. Mostly working on the cotton, tobacco or different plantations where very high temperatures prevailed, they were

regularly flogged and sometimes had irons on their legs. The behavior of overseers was inhumane and brutal.

Suicide plays significant role in his narrative. The suicidal thoughts arose from the misery he experienced in slavery and he seriously struggled not to take his own life several times. Roper's brilliant depiction attested the presence of suicide and a reader could identify with his despair in certain scenes. How desperate he had to be to recourse to that action? The repeated displacements were destroying Roper little by little and affected him a lot. He was torn from his family and slave companions. His relocation to his new very cruel master Mr. Register was so unbearable that he considered killing himself.

(...) I procured a quart bottle of whiskey, for the purpose of so intoxicating myself that I might be able, either to plunge myself into the river, or so enrage my master, that he should dispatch me forthwith. (Roper 2003:29)

Suicide was a frequent act among the slaves so they were used to it. One of the old slaves noticed that Roper was acting odd and he prevented him from committing suicide by "knowing my intention, secretly took the bottle from me." (Roper 2003:29) Roper had a few options. To decide about his own destiny and enslave himself by that action of taking his life, escaping from that bondage or remaining in slavery and suffering to the rest of his life. Neither one of them was easy. Suicide was an extreme device for being in charge of his own enslavement because slaves did not have that alternative to behave liberally on an everyday basis.

Writing about suicidal tendencies was a rhetorical device to induce the Northern population to join the abolitionist movement. Those testimonies unveiled emotions so

deep and serious that one could try to comprehend his mental condition to be able to commit suicide because that act of killing oneself was denounced in society.

Moses Roper had tried several times to escape but was repeatedly caught. He described his severe punishments when he was caught. That illustration was evidence to the cruelty and mercilessness of his masters. These testimonies were shocking that torture of human beings was happening.

He put the fingers of my hands into a vice, and squeezed all my nails off. He then had my feet put up on an anvil, and ordered a man to beat my toes, till he smashed some of my nails off. The marks of this treatment still remain upon me, some of my nails never having grown perfect since. (Roper 2003:23)

The marks on his body were reminders of what he went through. He mentioned the number of lashes for the populace to realize the pain they endured. White people could not imagine being punished such as 500 lashes which were an inconceivable number to bare and remain alive at the same time. After severe treatments when his body was awfully mutilated and his soul drained, Roper still persevered in his aims to run away. These sincere avowals should have impressed white people from the North to make a change and revolt against slavery.

This he did by first tying my wrists together and placing them over the knees, he then put a stick through, under my knees and over my arms, and having thus secured my arms, he proceeded to flog me, and gave me 500 lashes on my bare back, This may appear incredibly, but the marks which they left, at present remain on my body, a standing testimony to the truth of this statement of his severity. (Roper 2003:5-6)

After several attempts in 1833, he successfully escaped to New England where he dedicated himself to the antislavery movement. Eventually, he moved to London and he joined the English abolitionists. This was followed by many lectures so that he became

a popular speaker because he spoke in such a realistic and honest way about his own experience that affected many audiences leading eventually to his narrative.

12 Conclusion

The aim of this diploma thesis was to analyze numerous slave narratives and the rhetorical strategies the authors used to make impact on their readers. The results show that all the narratives are written and use specific expressions to achieve the desired goal to shock the readers and make them think and even change their mind about slavery. I have found that there is one persistent element in all the narratives and that is a very graphic and shocking description of the cruelty and tyranny that the slaves had to endure. Especially when it comes to describing the physical punishments, of which there were many, the authors did not hesitate to go into great detail. To achieve the best results the narrators used rhetorical devices such as metaphors, similes, repetition, irony or exaggeration.

The often usage of such gory descriptions served their purpose as it often gave me chills just imagining how horrendous the suffering must have been. The uneasiness that the narratives give you while reading them makes you wonder, how was it even possible that the slaves survived those conditions.

On the basis of reading individual biographies and other sources I was able to analyze the main topics occurring in the works of individual authors. The former slaves agreed on several aspects of slavery but there were also some divisions. Douglass did not reach an agreement about religion with Harriet Beecher Stowe. As Douglass

claimed the Christianity affected minds and the behavior of slave owners, on the contrary Stowe stated that it is impossible to be Christian and own slaves.

Investigating and writing about this topic opened my eyes to an issue that is perhaps forgotten by some people in our time. However, it is so important in the history of mankind that it should never be forgotten.

13 Resumé

Cílem této diplomové práce bylo zkoumat didaktickou rétoriku ve vyprávění amerických otroků. Tito autoři postupně vytvořili neobyčejné sbírky pamětí, čímž usilovali o rozšíření povědomí o degradujícím systému otroctví, převážně u křesťanů žijících v severních státech Ameriky. Ti měli mnohdy zkreslené představy o životě otroků a chování jejich majitelů. Jejich líčení byla pravdivá, ale místy vyjádřena takovým slovním spojením, které bylo záměrně zveličováno, aby jejich zpověď čtenáře co nejvíce šokovala a donutila je nad smyslem otroctví přemýšlet a postavit se mu na odpor.

Autoři ve svém díle vyprávějí o svém každodenním životě, nucené práci na plantážích a utrpení, které zažívali. K tomu, aby čtenáře dojali a přesvědčili je o svých strašlivých zážitcích, používali rétorické strategie ve formě literárních nástrojů, jakými byly například metafora, personifikace, ironie a další. Zvláště barvitý popis fyzických trestů a mučení měl největší dopad na čtenáře.

Doba, kdy otroctví bylo na jihu Ameriky legální, je považováno dodnes za společenské tabu. Zrušení otroctví je významným milníkem v lidské společnosti a téma otroctví, ač velmi kruté, je velmi zajímavé. Proto mě také daná problematika zaujala a zvolila jsem si ji jako předmět mého zkoumání. I přes to, že toto citlivé téma je pro většinu lidí pohřbeno v minulosti, nemělo by být zapomenuto.

V úvodu své práce se zmiňuji o prvních svědeckých výskytu otroků v Americe, rapidním zvýšení jejich počtu během dvou století a jaký měl systém otroctví dopad na rozdělení amerických států na dvě území – severní a jižní.

Jedna kapitola se zabývá důležitým zákonem, který vyšel v roce 1850, tzv. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Ten znamenal pro uprchlé otroky na severu velký mezník v historii otroctví, jelikož mohli být chyceni a posláni zpět ke svým majitelům.

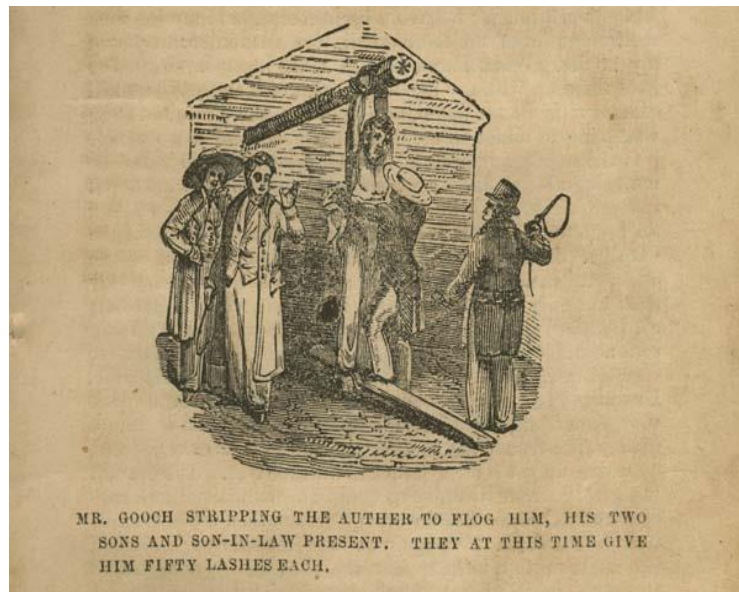
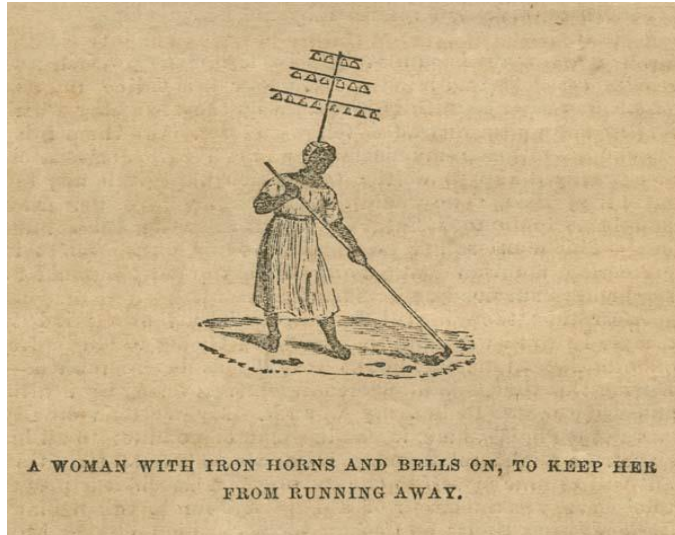
V další kapitole jsem zkoumala vliv otroctví na psychický vývoj a charakter jedince, ať už se jednalo o samotného otroka nebo jeho vlastníka.

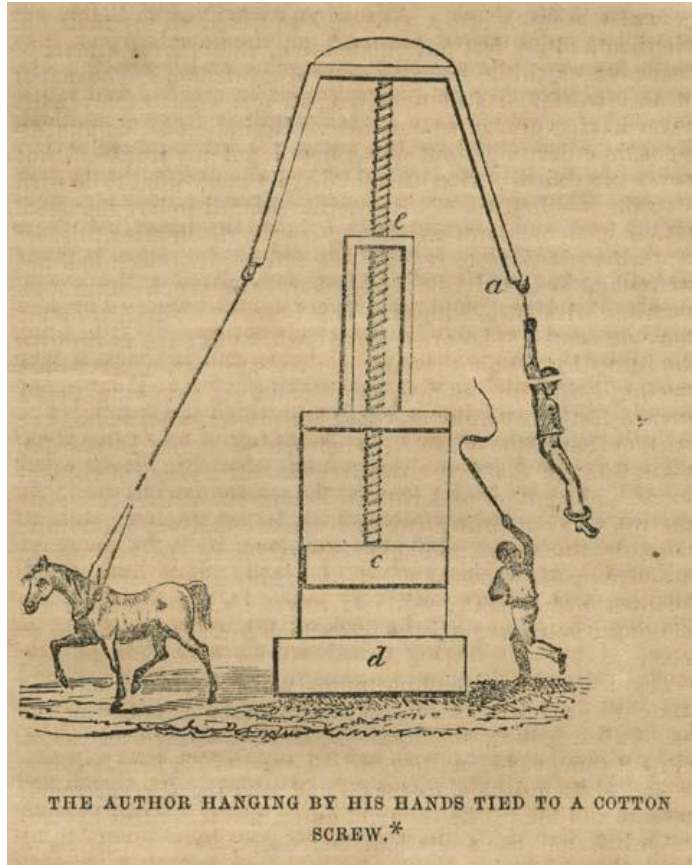
V této diplomové práci jsem v následujících kapitolách provedla analýzu daných děl a jejich stylu. Na základě četby jednotlivých autobiografií a dalších zdrojů jsem uvedla konkrétní případy týraných a často zbídačených otroků. Během analýzy těchto děl jsem zjistila, že autoři používají stejné jazykové prostředky, aby dosáhli požadovaného cíle, ale v určitých klíčových tématech, které rozebírají, se někteří autoři v názorech rozcházejí. Těmito tématy jsou například křesťanství, rodina nebo vzdělání otroků.

Tato práce není rozdělena na teoretickou a praktickou část, ale obě části se navzájem prolínají.

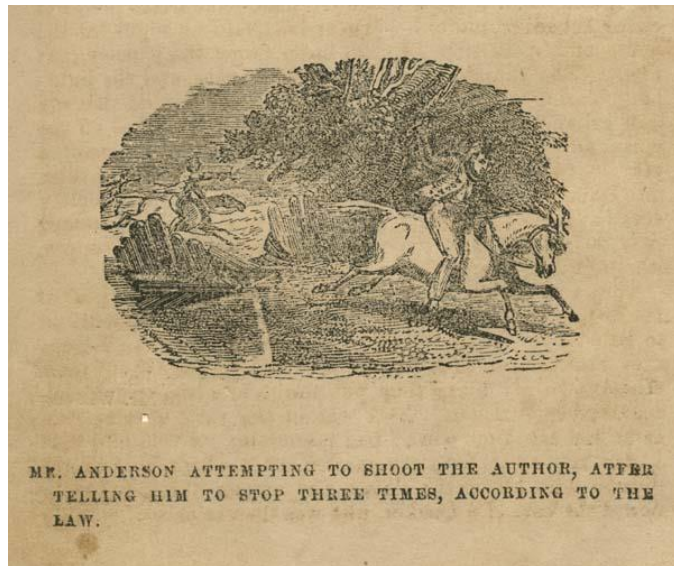
14 Appendix

These pictures are from *Narrative of my Escape from Slavery* by Moses Roper.





THE AUTHOR HANGING BY HIS HANDS TIED TO A COTTON SCREW.*



MR. ANDERSON ATTEMPTING TO SHOOT THE AUTHOR, AFTER TELLING HIM TO STOP THREE TIMES, ACCORDING TO THE LAW.

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