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Questioning the Official American History in Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years a*

Slave

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Letter of Recommendation

Believe Tamang has completed his research entitled “Questioning the Official American History in Solomon Northup’s *Twelve Years a Slave*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from 2075/11/15 to 2076/04/30 B.S. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Approval Letter

This research entitled “Questioning the Official American History in Solomon Northup’s *Twelve Years a Slave*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Believe Tamang has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Questioning the Official American Historicity in Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years a Slave*

Abstract

*This research analyzes the hidden contradictions in the American official history written by the whites and exercised upon the blacks as reflected in Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years a Slave*. The first person speaker of the narrative rejects all the contradictions and segregations in the officially practiced apartheid policy. This study tries to see the social condition especially racism toward African American slaves in Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years as a Slave*. Besides, it also identifies the forms of struggle of African American Slave against the practice of racism as it was officially approved in the then America. Moreover, this study also relates the racism reflected in the narrative with the real social condition of racism toward African American in nineteenth century. While analyzing the questioning practice of the African-American against the officially approved historical practices of the whites, new historical practice of 'thin descriptions' is minutely analyzed.*

Key words: New Historicism, official history, racism, slavery, historicity and historical practices.

This research questions the white dominated linear history of America as the first person speaker of the text rejects all the white supremacy in the narrative. It is a slave narrative of a black man, who was born free in New York State but kidnapped in Washington, D.C., sold into slavery, and kept in bondage for 12 years in Louisiana. He does not find any legal justice in any place. To support the claim, the researcher draws theoretical insights forwarded by Michael Foucault and Stephen Greenblatt.

This research is interested in American official history of racism and contradictions and its rejection in Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years as a Slave* due to the following reasons. It is a personal narrative which is written based on the personal

experience of the author who does have his own history as well as history of the society. The suffering during being slave inspires him to write it as a literary work. According to McCabe, "personal narrative is a recount of real past experience, while a fictional narrative is either a composition or a recall of previously heard or read story" (43). From this definition, it can be understood that personal narrative has a special sense in the term of its relation with real life and events. Therefore, this narrative is one of interesting literary work that identifies the real condition of racism against African American slave in America. The power structure is functioning along with situatedness of the writer. The history of racism and history of Northup are laden with ideologies as new historical analysis says so.

New historicism, as a critical tool, is originated from Michel Foucault and expanded by Stephen Greenblatt. This critical trend sprouted to reject the traditional definition of history as a "linear progress of events" (Tyson 283). Even the historians, who claim to give the factual and objective analysis of the event also, cannot do so because they have also certain situatedness and ideological bent. As a slave narrative, Solomon Northup's confession is not important only for what it communicates about the African American literature and its historical context, but also because it proclaims the institution of humanity, portraying an impeccable examination of the realities of slavery, which are enlightened throughout the text. "My narrative is at an end. What is in the region of Red River, is truly and faithfully delineated in these pages. This is no fiction, no exaggeration" (217). Through the narrative, Northup attests to the truthfulness of his story. He does so by having a white man authenticate his narrative at the beginning of the book, and ends his book with this quote, assuring the reader that what they have read is work of a fact. Through narrative, he wants to share the horrors of slavery as a narrative of facts. The writer presents his/her

individuality consciously or unconsciously. There are multiple socio- economic and cultural factors of an event for its analysis.

In the official history of America by Zinn Howard presents, the social condition related to racism and slavery of that period. To make it clear he brings the letter of John Little, a formal slave, wrote:

They say slaves are happy, because they laugh, and are merry. I myself and three or four others, have received two hundred lashes in the day, and had our feet in fetters; yet, at night, we would sing and dance, and make others laugh at the rattling of our chains. Happy men we must have been! We did it to keep our hearts from being completely broken: that is true as the gospel! Just look at it, - must not we have been very happy? Yet I have done it myself- I have cut capers in chains. (102)

In contrast with Zinn Howard's official history of America, this research truly questions the official practices of the time. At that time, the African blacks were kept under the apartheid policy. They were abandoned to enjoy the full freedom rather treated brutally and punished for no reason. Their lives had no meaning and purpose. But Northup denies that practice. He does not like to be slave as he was born as a free man. The narrative takes New York as the setting where we can see the grim pictures of slave markets flourishing in the society. It also shows the practice of slavery and unequal treatment done by American white people toward African American Slave. The narrative presents Solomon Northup as the representation of African American family with two children. He lives as a freeman with a great career as a violinist. His music is one of the ways to question the history. One day, Solomon met two men who introduced as Merrill Brown and Abram Hamilton. They offer him to have a free cost of fooding and lodging along with handsome salary during two weeks in Washington.

Unfortunately, Solomon was deceived. He did not get any vacation, but he was sold as a slave. He also was forced to change his name as Platt. During twelve years, he spent his life as a slave.

The first two chapters of *Twelve Years a Slave* relate the Northup family history, Solomon's marriage to Anne, his employment as a rafts man, a farmer, and a fiddle-player, and his abduction. Northup is sold to the notorious Washington-based slave trader James H. Burch, who brutally whips him for protesting that he is a free man. He, as a protestor, goes on to series of huddles in his life. Those ups and downs of his life are caused because of historical slavery system. While in the slave pen, he makes the acquaintance of several other slaves, including Eliza, whose sad history he relates in detail. The slaves are handcuffed and transported together via cars and steamboats to Richmond and then to New Orleans. He is delivered to Theophilus Freeman, a New Orleans slave trader who informs Northup that his new name is Platt.

Northup is purchased by a Baptist preacher named William Ford for whom he is kept to work stacking and chopping logs at Ford's lumber mill. He presents the exploitation of religion in the name of God. Looking through the same medium with his fathers before him, he saw things in the same light. Brought up under other circumstances and other influences, his notions would undoubtedly have been different (57). Ford may be a benevolent and Christian man, but he is still a slaveholder and cannot conceive of a world in which white people cannot own black people. Solomon does not blame him for this, but rather blames the entire system that allows for this paradoxical situation. Children are raised to think that slavery is normal. The Bible is used to justify it. People inherit slaves as property. The law delineates who a slave is and what rights they have. For slave-owners, slaves mean wealth, security and power.

The narrative describes how the racism is a vehicle for human wickedness. Solomon highlights that sometimes, racism doesn't even seem to be about skin colour as much as it's about slave owners feeling justified in their cruelty. Though the racist system is absurd, it is the dominant world view of Southern society at the time, and the evil it leads to is shown most clearly in the character of Epps. Epps uses his slaves as a means to satisfy his own craving for violence and sadistic. According to Crenshaw, "Racism, combined with equal opportunity mythology, provides a rationalization for racial oppression, making it difficult for whites to see the black situation as illegitimate or unnecessary" (56). In short, racism is a treatment of one race who considers his race as superior and other races as inferior.

People, who consider themselves as superior, think that they have special rights among the inferior races. Various kinds of white centric writings claim that African American is one of ethnic groups in the United States. African Americans are people from Africa who live in America. Justifying the official history of America, Lynch states that, "African Americans are largely the descendants-people who were brought from their homelands by force to work in the New World" (77). According to Foner, "7.7 million Africans are transported by the British colonizer to the New World between 1492 and 1820" (78). Furthermore, African American became one of the large ethnic groups in the United State. These people were not treated well. They often became the victim of the practice of racism. Their rights were severely limited, and they were long denied a rightful share in the economic, social and political progress in United States. Moreover, most of them are treated as slaves whose masters are white people.

It was officially approved in the form of apartheid. Racism practice could not be avoided by him, some treatments such as discrimination, prejudice and segregation was experienced by him. As a well-educated person, Solomon never stopped to try to

come out from this slavery. His attempt to come out from the slavery itself is questioning of the then official practice. He tries to write a letter to his family for several times, but he cannot find the way to send it. In the last part of story, a white man who is known as Mr. Bass changes his destiny. Mr. Bass helps Solomon to get his freedom after knowing that Patt is actually free man who still has family. "Some church official come and bring him back to his family" (11). Finally, he can assemble with his family and furthermore write his story in a novel. In America, racism was a historical practice since the migration of whites from Europe and blacks from Africa but Solomon does not like to follow that practices rather tries to questioning it. Racism is one humanity phenomenon occurs among society. Furthermore, according to Damono as cited in Kurniawan, literary work is a reflection of condition, value and social live that influences the author. The author portrays the society in accordance with his view and ideology. Therefore, the relation between literary work and society is mediated by the author. Even though the mediation may be imaginative, basically it still represents the social condition of the time and of his own situatedness too.

Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years as a Slave* is a personal narrative. Through a personal narrative, the relation between story in the novel and the real life is able to be trusted more. The researcher argues that this research is important to be social aspects of the society. Afterwards, this study also concern on first perspectives of sociological literature that is literary work as the social document which reflects the situation when the literary work was produced. This study tries to see the social condition especially racism toward African American Slave in Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years a Slave*. Besides, it also identifies the form of struggle of African American Slave against the practice of racism. Moreover, this study also relates the

racism reflected in the narrative with the real social condition of racism toward African American in nineteenth century.

All historical analysis is unavoidably subjective. Historians must therefore reveal the ways in which they know they have been positioned, by their own cultural experience, to interpret the history. The narrative also carries the history of slavery of the time. The individual text can't be a 'self-sufficient entity' within itself, neither the writer can be truly objective towards the object which he/she describes because both the writer and the text have own situatedness. Every literary or non-literary text shapes and is shaped by the culture in which it is written. So, there is mutual constitutive relationship between the text and context because both overlap and help to form each other. The linear sequence of events and their objective analysis is impossible. The context determines the perspectives towards the event. So, every text is an interpretation and there are various possible ways to interpret an event. That is why a text turns out to be a mere representation of a certain event. So, the text itself cannot be inevitably truthful but a representation. However, Northrup tries to present racism may not be exact as he has described. Racism is a debatable term among people around the world. The emergence of racism often causes the fanaticism of people to their race's member. They will regard their group as superior than other. People who consider themselves as superior, think that they have special rights among the inferior races. This condition is later known as racism. According to Giddens, "racism as a system of domination that operates in social processes and social institutions; others see it as operating in the individual consciousness" (9). In sum, racism is a negative treatment that is given by group that regards their group as the superior which has better condition in many aspects, such as biological, economic and education aspect. Giddens further states that:

racism is not kind of attitude or belief in society. Racism is all about practice, institutions and structure based on strict differentiation. It also can create kind of social order of society, not only theory about human's differentiation. The practice of racism may be done by every person, whether individually or in a group. (99)

There is a big variety among people around the world. The varieties may be in the skin color, culture, language and also ideology. People are disposed to be grouped in some clusters according to their background. This kind of cluster is a term that is commonly known as a race. According to Foner,

race is social construct that artificially divides people into distinct group based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic and political need of a society at a given period of time. (67)

People will always want to be in relation and communication with others, including people outside their race. This condition causes the emergence of race relation.

According to Edwards, "the term race relation refers to those forms of behavior which arise from the contacts and resulting interaction of people with varied physical and cultural characteristics" (23). However, the relation cannot always be done in the positive side. Even though there are some races which are inflicted, the relation cannot be avoided toward humankind. There are two response toward this relation; acceptance and rejection. While the acceptance may be done as assimilation, melting pot, pluralism and multiculturalism, the rejection is done through discrimination, prejudice and segregation. The rejection in race relation is the situation of resistance too. The rejection may be caused by the absence of awareness that difference can be responded positively.

The rejection usually is a result of the consideration of majority group that they are better than other group. They want to be respected as the best group. In this case, minority group often think that they must accept this rejection, because they do not have any power to against it. The form of rejection may be classified in three form; prejudice, discrimination and segregation. In racial relation, prejudice is judgment and negative opinion toward inferior group. It is stated that prejudice is dislike or distrust of person, group, custom that is based on fear or false information rather than on reason or experience, and that influences one's attitude and behavior toward them. Prejudice often caused by the misconception between some ethnic groups. Actually, prejudice may be decreased if there is a good communication between two groups. According to Giddens, "prejudice refers to opinions or attitudes held by members of one group toward another. Prejudice is often based on hearsay rather than on direct evidence, and are resistant to change even in the face of new information" (77). Klineberg has stated that prejudice also "involves any attitude for or against, the ascription of a positive or negative value, an affective, or feeling, component" (54). Prejudice may therefore be defined as an unsubstantiated prejudgment of an individual or group, favorable or unfavorable in character, tending to action in a consonant direction. In sum, prejudice is unfair judgment toward minority which is given by majority group without any without any clarification that mostly done as the reason of cultural difference. It is stated in Horton and Hunt that:

There are five factors that cause prejudice. First is ethnocentrism attitude that is considering own group as the best group and other groups are worse group. Second factor is the existence of the fact that people often give early judgment into unknown people. Third, the generalization that is given to a group based on experience about some individual. Fourth, Stereotype which is given by

some people to support their opinion about how the relation should be interacted. Fifth, the existence of inclination to give prejudice to the rival group. (23)

Racial discrimination occurs when an individual is subjected to unequal treatment because of their actual or perceived race. Foner, argued that "discrimination is the actions or practices carried out by members of superior group, or their representatives, which have a differential and harmful impact on members of subordinate groups" (24). In sum, discrimination is negative treatment with the superior as the doer and inferior group as the victim. According to Giddens, discrimination refers to "an actual behavior toward another group" (9). It can be seen in activities that distribute rewards and benefits unequally based on membership in the dominant ethnic groups. It involves excluding or restricting members of specific groups from opportunities that are available to other group in the name of history and culture. The discrimination distinguishes history and other things unlike new historicism.

In fact, new historicism does not believe in distinct classification between historical and non-historical texts, since all the texts are cultural artifacts. Defining this idea Louis Montrose argues that

the newer historical criticism i.e. New Historicism could claim to be new in refusing unexamined distinctions between 'literature' and 'history' between 'text' and 'context' in resisting a tendency to posit and privilege an autonomous individual-whether an author or a work to be set against a social or literary background. (398)

As this statement claims, new historicism does not accept distinction between literature and history and text and context. Both are incorporated with each other. The literary texts are also colored with certain individual biasness. Both literary and non-

literary writers, “take unusual pains to erase the elements in their works, which reveal their grounding in a particular time and place, their preferences in a controversy- the unavoidable obstacles of their passion” (Foucault 90). Michael Foucault, the pioneer of new historicism as a critical trend as such, opines that the individual writer is also not free from his prejudices. Though the individual tries to erase such biased attitudes from the text consciously, some of the clues are unavoidable and come in the text unconsciously too.

When there is controversial situation, the writer knowingly or unknowingly bows towards a side, which does not allow him/her to be free. Such kind of unavoidable biasness can be seen in Solomon Northup's biographical novel too. Segregation is the spatial and social separation of the superior and inferior groups. Segregation is an institutionalized form of social distance expressed in physical separation. It signifies a convergence of physical and social space and is to be distinguished from other social forms which also structure social distance in spatial terms, as, for example, the elaborate patterns of deference in African societies with sacred kingship or the different levels of seating (reflecting caste status) among Singhalese castes. Systems of segregation vary in the criteria which distinguish the segregated groups, whether biological, cultural, and/or status, and in the situations, or roles, which are segregated. The concept of segregation also allows the separation in the term of public and daily facilities. In short, segregation is the separation that is conducted by the superior group with put themselves in the special and secure condition.

To continue that segregation, violence was created. Violence is a negative treatment which causes an affliction to its victim. Young argued that "violence is probably the most obvious and visible form of oppression. Members of some groups

live with the knowledge that they must fear random, unprovoked attacks on their persons or property" (8). It is practiced in many cultures, societies and countries of the world. At the domestic level, it is used against women, children and other vulnerable members of the family. At the national and international level, it is subjected to poor people, asylum seekers, refugees, Black and minority ethnic, migrant and indigenous people. In short, violence is a form of crime which oppresses person or groups to be inferior and powerless. The same kind of powerlessness is being tried to bring in to the forefront by rejecting the historical practices of violence.

Northup's details about the exploitation he endured provides not only a warning to all generations of the moral costs that slavery demanded from everyone involved, but also a testimony to surviving destination of hope, to the degraded morality. One hand the slaves are made to suffer awful tortments, being disinherited of physical, emotional and spiritual resources. On the other hand, the master is emotionally numb. Lashing them (slaves) about the yard with his long whip just for the pleasure of hearing them screech and scream as the great welts were planted on their backs (40). The slaveowners used violence as means for capturing African Americans to work as slaves. After capture Northup meets James Burch, the man who has bought him, and is going to oversee his transfer to the South where he will be sold to slave owners. When Burch tells him that he is a slave, Northup becomes infuriated and insists that he is a free man. But Burch heats him into his head and also threatens to kill him if he ever mentions his state to anyone. Physical violence occurs when someone uses a part of their body or an object to control a person's action. Physical violence includes using physical force which results pain, discomfort and injury, hitting, pinching, burning, stabbing, pushing, slapping, beating, threatening with a weapon or other objects and others.

Psychological violence occurs when someone uses threats and causes fear in person to gain control. It can be done through threatening to harm person or her or his family if she or he leaves, threats of violence, inappropriately controlling the person's activity, treating a person like a child and others. Based on encyclopedia, throughout American history, African Americans and other minority groups, with and without white allies, have combated racial discrimination using a variety of tactics. Foner also wrote that "slave could not testify in court against a white person, sign contracts or acquire property, own firearms, hold meetings unless a white person was present, or leave the farm or plantation without the permission of their owner" (77). By the 1830s, it was against the law to teach a slave to read or write. Metal shackle was used from around 1850 to shackle the slave as a form of punishment, or to prevent escape when being transported from one place to another. It is also written that over 90 percent of the slave population was illiterate in 1860.

It has been noted previously that this study aims to find the forms of racism against African American slave and their struggles to against these racism as portrayed in Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years as a Slave*. The traditional type of linear history is questioned frequently in the novel. Afterwards, its result is compared to the real society of racism against African American Slave in America in nineteenth century. In Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years as a Slave* racism against African American Slave as depicted in the narrative takes five forms, i.e. discrimination, prejudice, segregation, violence and threat and all of those forms are means to question historicity. All of them are experienced by Solomon Northup as the main character in the novel as he opines, "strange treatment I had received, and threatened, upon my liberation, to have satisfaction for the wrong. He denied that I was free, and with an emphatic oath, declared that I came from Georgia. Again and again I asserted

I was no man's slave, and insisted upon his taking off my chains at once" (43). Solomon who is sold to a slave-dealer which is known as James H. Burch finds himself is not a free man anymore. Burch informs him that he has bought him and will bring him to new-Orleans, where he will work as a slave. His asserting that he is a free man is denied by Burch. Besides, Burch also says that Solomon is a slave from Georgia. The liberty that is owned by Solomon is not trusted by Burch. His voice is also not listened at all. However, Solomon is forced to follow their game. Nothing can be done except receiving the torture from them. This occurrence is the beginning of Solomon's journey as a slave. Afterwards, his name is also forced to be changed.

The discrimination is through the probation of using his original name. Solomon is given a new name that is Platt by Burch. Even though he refuses it, Burch sells him with this name. Therefore, the slave dealer and his next masters call him with this name:

Your name is Platt-you answer my description. Why don't you come forward? He demanded of me, in any angry tone. I informed him that was not my name; that I had never been called by it, but that I had no objection to it as I knew of. Well, I will learn you, your name, said he; and so you won't forget it either, he added. (76)

This quotation shows us that colored people slave may be prohibited to use their name. Solomon is not permitted to choose his own name. He must sincerely become accustomed to his new name. Moreover, slave cannot use their family name. Their last name must be changed to their master's name, "More than once I heard it said that Platt Ford, now Platt Tibbeats – a slave's name changes with his change of master- was – a devil of a nigger" (127). Through this change, the identity of Solomon is harder to be found by his family. Later, this change causes the failure of his struggle by sending

letter to Henry B. Northup. Henry cannot find him because of his indefinite location and identity.

This is evident that discrimination has a harmful impact to its victim. Being slave in plantation field causes Solomon is forced to work hard. His master gives him excessive hour for working:

I was now compelled to labor very hard. From earliest dawn until late night, I was not allowed to be a moment idle. Notwithstanding which, Tibeats was never satisfied. He was continually cursing and complaining. He never spoke to me a kind word. I was his faithful slave, and earned him large wages every day, and yet I went to my cabin nightly, loaded with abuse and stinging epithets. (107)

Solomon's energy is totally squeezed in the plantation. He must do the best work from early morning until late night. He does not get enough time to have a rest. In contrast, he does not receive proper reward from Tibeats as his master at that time. Tibeats often gives him some kinds of cursing and complaining. He never receives approbation for his work. His work is always ended by sadness.

From this, we can see that another kind of discrimination that is experienced by Solomon is accepting bad words from his master for any kinds of his work. The master does not consider the quality of his work, whether it good or bad. This condition is also viewed in another part of Solomon's narrative:

It was not yet sunrise, but Epps was on the piazza as I left the hut, and cried out to me that it was a pretty time of day to be getting up. By extra exertion my row was up when he came out after breakfast. This, however, was no excuse for the offence of oversleeping. Bidding me strip and lie down, he gave me ten or fifteen lashes, at the conclusion of which he inquired if I thought,

after that, I could get up sometime in the morning. I expressed myself quite positively that I could, and, with back stinging with pain, went about my work.

(287)

Solomon is always forced to have a good stamina all the day. He must wake up early morning without any permission to rest. Epps gives him fifteen lashes as the punishment when he catches Solomon Lying down in a strip. During his period of being a slave, Solomon also experiences a condition where he is sick, but his master does not give him any kind of medicine or time for having a rest:

Finally, in September, when the busy season of cotton picking was at hand, I was unable to leave my cabin. Up to this time I had received no medicine, nor any attention from my master or mistress. The old cook visited me occasionally, preparing me corn-coffee, and sometimes boiling a bit of bacon, when I had grown too feeble to accomplish it myself. (177)

Working hard in the plantation gives negative impact to Solomon's health.

Unfortunately, this condition cannot change the treatment that is given by his master. He is not given any medicine and more attention from the master and mistress. The only one who cares about his health is a cook who is also a slave. This condition is one kind of discrimination toward Solomon, because he does not accept any human treatment from white people. In the view of some white people, colored people are not totally same with colored people. Colored slave is regarded as same with inhuman property: "He looked upon a colored man, not as a human being, responsible to his Creator for the small talent entrusted to him, but as a "chattel personal," as mere live property, no better, except in value, than his mule or dog" (183). The quotation above is opinion from Solomon in depicting master Epps. Solomon Northup is not treated like a human being. He is treated like property or animal without any sense of

humanity from his master. Moreover, being transferred to other master is not always brings a better change. Being subjected not better from animal is also experienced by Solomon in his new master's plantation. Epps is not different from Tibetas in the manner of treating his slaves. The next form of discrimination that is experienced by Solomon is prohibition of having reading or writing skill. It is occurred in the plantation of Epps:

Soon after he purchased me, Epps asked me if I could write and read, and on being informed that I had received some instruction in those branches of education, he assured me, with emphasis, if he ever caught me with a book, or with pen and ink, he would give me a hundred lashes. He said he wanted me to understand that he bought "niggers" to work and not to educate. (230)

Knowing that Solomon is able to read and write, Epps give him a threat of punishment if he finds Solomon with book, pen and ink. Solomon will get a hundred lashes if he breaks this rule. Epps sees slave as a labor that does need to be educated. Slave does not have any right of experiencing education along his life. This validity of this treatment is also supported by a conversation between Bass and Epps that is heard by Solomon:

But let that pass. These niggers are human beings. If they don't know as much as their masters, whose fault is it? They are not allowed to know anything. You have books and papers, and can go where you please, and gather intelligence in a thousand ways. But your slaves have no privileges. You'd whip one of them if caught reading a book. They are held in bondage, generation after generation, deprived of mental improvement, and who can expect them to possess much knowledge? If they are not brought down to a level with the brute creation, you slaveholders will never be blamed for it. If

they are baboons, or stand no higher in the scale of intelligence than such animals, you and men like you will have to answer for it. There's a sin, a fearful sin, resting on this nation that will not go unpunished forever. (267)

It can be clearly seen the poor condition of slaves is due to the restriction of facility to support their knowledge. There is a big limit that separates between them and knowledge. They were restricted to acquire knowledge. The opinion that colored people are created as inferior who do not have any wits and skill is totally cannot be accepted. This opinion is only a reason to do any negative treatment toward them. Another form of discrimination toward Solomon is getting a coming of treason from white people. It is occurred in the plantation of Epps:

Well," he continued, "Armsby told me to-day the devil was among my niggers; that I had one that needed close watching or he would run away; and when I axed him why, he said you come over to Shaw's, and waked him up in the night, and wanted him to carry a letter to Marksville. What have you got to say to that, ha? (234)

Armsby is a white person who wants to be an overseer in Epp's plantation. During his presence, he has a good attitude toward Solomon. He pays good attention to him. His good attitude makes Solomon believe in him. He tells his long story of being a slave. Moreover, Solomon asks Armsby to help him sending a letter to his family or friends. Armsby convinces him that he will send it. Unexpectedly, Armsby is a traitor. He tells Epps about Solomon's plan. Knowing it, Epps is becomes anxious. He comes to Solomon and releases his angry. The discrimination toward them is not stopped here.

In the course of suppression, Solomon is also prohibited to choose his work. He is forced to do any kind of work in the plantation without considering his interest and skill. "How do you like tanning?" (251), he exclaimed, as the descended upon my

flesh. "How do you like tanning?" he repeated at every blow (251). In this manner he gave me twenty or thirty lashes, incessantly giving utterance to the word "tanning," in one form of expression or another. When sufficiently "tanned," he allowed me to arise, and with a half-malicious laugh assured me, if I still fancied the business, he would give me further instruction in it whenever I desired. This time, he remarked, he had only given me a short lesson in "tanning"— the next time he would "curry me down" (252). A slave holder which is known as Mr. O'Niel comes to Epps's plantation in order to purchase Solomon. He is a tanner in the vicinity of Big Pine Woods. Hearing this news, Solomon becomes happy and tells to his slave partner that he wants to be transferred to Mr. O'Niel. He wishes Epps will sell him to this master, because he is tired of scrapping cotton. He wants to do another kind of work. Unfortunately, Epps does not grant the appeal from Mr. O'Niel. Moreover, he becomes angry knowing that Solomon has a big interest to work in as a tanner for Mr. O'Niel. He gets lashes from Epps. It means, his pretension of working as a tanner must be deleted.

The White written history of the black is full of prejudices. Prejudice is often given by white people to the colored people. Prejudice is frequently motivated by the hate of white people toward colored people. They may give the prejudice without any reasonable cause. Prejudice is commonly the result of generalization of current group. In fact another form of racism against African American Slave in this narrative is prejudice. It is described as negative state toward other people from different races. The perception of every individual is often seen from the general perception toward his group. The form of prejudice in this narrative can be seen in this following part, "Finding he could not quite me, he flew into a towering passion. With blasphemous oaths, he called me a black liar, a runaway from Georgia, and every other profane and

vulgar epithet that the most indecent fancy could conceive" (44). As a colored person who is kidnapped to be a slave, Solomon is forced to receive his new identity as slave. But, he cannot do it. He asserts that he is no man's slave. He declares that he is a freeman from Saratoga who has a wife and three children who are also free. He also says that his name is actually Solomon Northup, not Platt as they know him. When he tries to give this truth, James H. Burch who is a slave-dealer who has owned him, Burch give him a variety of bad designation toward Solomon. Solomon is regarded as a black liar and may other negative appellations. Furthermore, the appellation as a liar is not given to Solomon once. He often receives this appellation from his master. Another evidence of getting prejudice as a liar is showed as follow, "You are not planning that down enough, said he. It is just even with the line, I replied. You're the liar, he exclaimed passionately" (132). This occurrence happens when Solomon work for master Tibeats. The work of Solomon is never satisfied for Tibeats. When Solomon is asked to work in the field, Tibeats says that Solomon makes a fault in the manner of planning.

The third form of racism against African American slave in Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years as a Slave* is segregation. Segregation refers to some kinds of spatial and public facilities separation. Solomon Northup who is deceived by Merrill Brown and Abram Hamilton finds his self after his unconsciousness in the strange room which is not comfortable at all. Solomon Northup who is actually kidnapped to be a slave is placed in a bad room which is actually is a cell without bed, blanket or any other proper facilities. The two kidnappers do not care about himself who is in the sick condition. Solomon who ought to get a good nursing to recover his sickness does not get it at all. In contrast, he gets a big trouble from that brutal treatment. Furthermore, the bad treatment is not stopped at that cell. Solomon continuously must

stay in bad residents before legitimately sold as slave. He is always forced to be accustomed to stay in the nasty room. It is stated by Solomon as follow, "At night I laid down upon the damp, hard floor, without any pillow or covering whatever" (47). This condition happens in the Washington slave pen when Solomon was transferred to be sold. While waiting someone who will buy him, he is placed in the room with damp and hard floor without any pillow or any cover for his body. Besides, he also does not get any proper foods and drinks. Getting continual hunger and thirsty is a condition that must be experienced as common thing by him.

White people built a great separation between them and the colored people who work for them as their slaves. Colored people who are regarded as inferior are often not given any proper and comfort facilities from their masters. While the masters who are white people family stay in the luxurious house which is commonly mentioned as the great house, the slaves stay in the nasty cabin without any reasonable facilities. The existence of this kind of segregation reflected in the novel as follows,

An iron-bound door led into an adjoining cell, or vault, wholly destitute of windows, or any means of admitting light. The furniture of the room in which I was, consisted of the wooden bench on which I sat, an old-fashioned, dirty box stove, and besides these, in either cell. There was neither bed, nor blanket, nor any other thing whatever. (41)

The suffering of colored people never satisfies white people. The sense of humanity never comes to their mind and heart. When they give those colored man facilities, the facilities are not different from the facilities given for animal. This condition is revealed as follow, "At night, ray, Williams, and the boy, slept in the loft of the shed, while I was locked in the cell. Finally we were each provided with blankets, such as

are used upon horses-the only bedding I was allowed to have for twelve years afterwards" (49). In the slave pen, Solomon is a person who has a potential to break the secret that he is a free man who is kidnapped by Merrill and Abram. Because of this possibility, Solomon is treated more carefully. While other slaves are placed together in shed, Solomon is placed in the cell. In this place, they are still treated in the inhuman way. A day when Solomon and other slaves still in the slave pen, they are supplies blanket as facility for them. Unfortunately, the blanket is not a good one. It is a blanket which is used upon their horse.

The segregated place is not only given to Solomon in the slave pen in Washington. It is also given to him during his time becoming a slave. He and other slaves are placed in the separated place with their master. They are placed in the cabin while their masters stay in their marvelous house which is commonly mentioned as the great house. The following quotation is one of the evidences, "The weaving-house we were erecting stood in the orchard a few rods from the residence of Chapin, or the "great house," as it was called" (108). Through this quotation, Solomon shows us that the master has a residence that is commonly mentioned as the great house. This kind of house is not available for the slave except the cooks or slave houses who are permitted to work in this house. Other slaves who work in the plantation are only able to observe this housed from their cabin or plantation. From this, we can see unfair separation between master and slave that is built by white people. The last kind of racism which is experienced by Solomon Northup is violence.

The first kind of violence which is experienced by Solomon Northup is physical violence. Physical violence refers to the action of causing physical suffering of person as he states:

The pain in my head had subsided in a measure, but I was very faint and weak. I was sitting upon a low bench, made of rough boards, and without coat or hat. I was hand-cuffed. Around my ankles also were a pair of heavy fetters. One end of chain was fastened to a large ring in the floor, the other to the fetters on my ankles. (38)

The first physical violence which is experienced by Solomon Northup is in the kidnapping place. Solomon finds his self in the strange room in the suffer condition. Solomon does not know anything about it. He cannot find Merrill and Brown who bring him to Washington. After getting his consciousness, he starts to understand that he is deceived by those two strangers. He is kidnapped and tortured in that room. He cannot move his body because of some fetters which restrain him. Through this quotation, Solomon shows us that white people may deceive colored people and kidnap them to be slave. White people like Merrill and Brown do not care about the human right that belongs to colored people. They think that they can do whatever they want to do. Solomon who is in the beginning invited by them to play violin does not find any occasion to play. He is only invited to visit some places until he finds his self being imprisoned and realizes that he is deceived. This very realization itself is the foundation on resistance.

Furthermore, physical torture is used by white people to compel Solomon Northup confessing their authority. The torture will not be stopped until he gives his approval of being slave as he further says:

As soon as these formidable whips appeared, I was seized by both of them, and roughly divested of my clothing. My feet, as has been stated, were fastened to the floor. Drawing me over the bench, face downwards, Radburn placed his heavy foot upon the fetters, between my wrists, holding them

painfully to the floor. With the paddle, Burch commenced beating me. Blow after blow was inflicted upon my naked body. When his unrelenting arm grew tired, he stopped and asked if I still insisted I was a free man. I did insist upon it, and then the blows were renewed, faster and more energetically, if possible, than before. When again tired, he would repeat the same question, and receiving the same answer, continue his cruel labor. (44)

In this part, Solomon shows us the incident of getting beating from white people. Solomon is forced to answer that he is a slave. The beating is given crueler when Solomon refuses to do what they ask. It is a physical violence toward Solomon Northup which causes the pain to his naked body. While it is apparent that violence was part of slavery in America, most slaveholders tried to deny this, masking it with such explanations as the slave tried to escape with every chance they got. Violence was a common aspect of slavery, used to achieve capture, punishment, silence and submission in Northup's narrative. The physical violence toward Solomon Northup is not stopped here.

Except physical violence, there are other kinds of violence that are experienced by him. He was tortured too much. He was made the victim of unspeakable violences. One of them is being hung by white people:

I crossed my hands, submitting humbly to whatever disposition they might please to make of me. Thereupon Tibbets tied my wrists, drawing the rope around them with his utmost strength. Then He bound my ankles in the same manner. In the meantime the other two had slipped a cord within my elbows, running it across my back, and tying it firmly. It was utterly impossible to move hand and foot. With a remaining piece of rope Tibbets made an awkward noose, and placed it about my neck. (114)

In this part, Solomon uses the image of anger from white people to slave. It is told that Tibeats wants to punish him, because Tibeats thinks that his work does not comply the target. Therefore, Tibeats and his two partners try to hang him. Hanging is one of common punishments that is given from white people to their slave.

Afterwards, Solomon Northup also accepts lashes from his master as the punishment for him, "Bidding me strip and lie down, he gave me ten or fifteen lashes, at the conclusion of which he inquired if I thought, after that, I could get up sometime in the morning. I expressed myself quite positively that I could, and, with back stinging with pain, went about my work" (287). This punishment is given to Solomon Northup when he overslept. Solomon is very tired after having job to play violin in one of white master's house. However, Epps cannot forgive him. He is not permitted to do a mistake. Therefore, Solomon must accept lashes from him. Moreover, after having pain of getting lashes, Solomon must go to his work without any medicine or other healings.

Another kind of physical violence which is experienced by Solomon Northup is forced to work over the capacity of normal human. He must work from early morning until late night. It has been stated before that violence includes the physical force to do something toward another person, "was now compelled to labor very hard. From earliest dawn until late night, I was not allowed to be a moment idle. Notwithstanding which, Tibeats was never satisfied" (107). The quotation above shows us the coercion toward Solomon Northup to work very hard. Automatically, this force causes negative impact to his body. In contrast, his master never cares about his health. Another part of the narrative shows us the result of this violence. "Finally, in September, when the busy season of cotton picking was at hand, I was unable to leave my cabin. Up to this time I had received no medicine, nor any attention from my

master or mistress" (177). The quotation above shows us the condition of Solomon of getting sick after having exceeds hours of work. As normal human, his body cannot be forced to work continually without any time for resting. As the result, he is sick and cannot leave his cabin to work in plantation. This kind of physical violence is not experienced by Solomon only in Tibeats' plantation. He also experiences it when he has transferred to Epps' plantation, "It was not yet sunrise, but Epps was on the piazza as I left the hut, and cried out to me that it was a pretty time of day to be getting up. By extra exertion my row was up when he came out after breakfast. This, however, was no excuse for the offence of oversleeping" (287). The quotation above shows us the same treatment that is given by Epps to Solomon Northup. Epps is not different with Tibetas in treating him. Solomon Northup is forced to work very hard from early morning without any permission to have idles or rest.

Many kinds of oppression and unfair treatment from white people could never break the spirit of Nortup. There are some struggles that he do against these oppressions. By this struggle, he hopes that he can obtain his liberty back. Therefore, he can meet his friends and family again in order to have a normal life again with them. In this part, the researcher reveals the process of struggle as a form of resistance that is done by Solomon Northup. The first struggle of Solomon Northup is done by him on a boat that will bring him to New Orleans. Knowing that he will be sold to any master in New Orleans, Solomon finds out the way to come out from his problem. In the journey to New Orleans on the boat, Solomon meets Arthur who is also a free colored man who will be sold as a slave. He had long resided in Norfolk. He also has a wife and children. In this boat, Solomon and Arthur are two kidnapped man who try to have a struggle toward the unfair abduction that is done by white people:

Towards evening, on the first day of the calm, Arthur and myself were in the bow of the vessel, seated on the windlass. We were conversing together of the probable destiny that awaited us, and mourning together over our misfortunes. Arthur said, and I agreed with him, that death was far less terrible than the living prospect that was before us. For a long time we talked of our children, our past lives, and of the probabilities of escape. Obtaining possession of the brig was suggested by one of us. We discussed the possibility of our being able, in such an event, to make our way to the harbor of New-York. As difficulty after difficulty arose, some ready conceit was at hand, demonstrating how it could be overcome. (69)

As educated people, Solomon Northup and Arthur are colored people in the boat who think that they are able to come out from the threat to become a slave. They build a plan to fight against white people who oppress them.

They carry out a long conversation that produces a result that they will make a way to the harbor of New York. However, they want to make their plan as mature as possible. Therefore, the conversation between is done more than one time in that night:

While others slept, Arthur and I were maturing our plans. At length, with much caution, Robert was gradually made acquainted with our intentions. He approved of them at once, and entered into the conspiracy with a zealous spirit. There was not another slave we dared to trust. Brought up in fear and ignorance as they are, it can scarcely be conceived how servility they will cringe before a white man's look. It was not safe to deposit so bold a secret with any of them, and finally we three resolved to take upon ourselves alone the fearful responsibility of the attempt. (70)

In this conversation, Robert who is a slave that is selected by the captain to be waiter wants to join their plan. Solomon and Arthur agreed to put him into the conspiracy.

They also resolve to do their attempt without engaging other people outside the three of them. They are not sure that other slaves will have braveness like them. The possibility of the secret leakage is also bigger. Through some information from Robert who is a waiter of the captain, they are success to make a design to hold the room of captain:

Finally our arrangements were all completed. Arthur and I were to steal silently to the captain's cabin, seize the pistols and cutlass, and as quickly as possible dispatch him and the mate. Robert, with a club, was to stand by the door leading from the deck down into the cabin, and, in case of necessity, beat back the sailors, until we could hurry to his assistance . . . I was then to assume the unaccustomed place of pilot, and, steering northward, we trusted that some lucky wind might bear us to the soil of freedom. (71)

The human's plan is not always can be guaranteed without the desire of God. Without any approximation of any people in that boat, Robert suddenly gets ill. Their plan is not able to be operated without his role. After several days, Robert is always getting worse and finally died,

We were all prepared, and impatiently waiting an opportunity of putting our designs into execution, when they were frustrated by a sad and unforeseen event. Robert was taken ill. It was soon announced that he had the small-pox. He continued to grow worse, and four days previous to our arrival in New-Orleans he died. (72)

The death of Robert is really frustrated him. It is not only about losing a best friend, but also the failure of being free from the threat of being slave. Solomon and Arthur

do not continue their plan at all. They are very sad and lose their spirit. Solomon cannot hide the down-hearted expression from his face until a white man in the boat put his intention to Solomon's condition.

As a rebellious hero, the struggle of being free from the slavery is never disappeared from Solomon Northup's heart and mind. This very struggle itself is a sort of questioning of the prevailed trend or official policy of apartheid. He always looks for a way to come out from his long nightmare. One idea that is always dreamed by him is writing a letter to his friends or family in Saratoga. In the position as a slave, writing a letter is not a simple thing. At least, there are two obstacles faced by him. First, a slave is not permitted to have pen, ink and paper, because there are no slaves who are given education of reading and writing from their masters. Second, a slave is not permitted to leave the plantation without any permission from the master. Therefore, Solomon is not able to go to a post office to send the letter.

However, Solomon Northup never loses his desire to come out from the slavery system. That very desire for freedom makes him a rebellion of the then official practices. In his ninth year of being a slave, he gets a chance to write a letter again. This part is the third struggle of Solomon Northup. Once again Solomon uses his wits to wage a struggle of getting his human right. The order for several articles from the mistress is benefitted by him to own a paper to write a letter. Having not ink and pen is not becoming an obstacle for him. He tries to make ink by his own way. He tries some ways to make it. Afterwards, when he has produced ink, he starts to write a letter. Now, there is only one problem that must be solved by him. He must find the way to send the letter. Knowing that he is not able to come out from the plantation without any reasonable permission, he keeps the letter in a hope that there will be a chance from him to send it. To send that letter is a defy of power too.

That dominant power of culture is called 'discipline' by Michel Foucault. Casting the light on the same issue he further argues that, "the individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of an ideological representation of society: but he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called discipline" (204). As Foucault says human being is determined by the society. His/her behavior is shaped by the same society in the name of discipline. The individual has to follow certain norms and values in the name of the society because of which s/he is guided by. He/she cannot exercise full freedom because of the society, in which he/she lives. Foucault further clarifies that, "Discipline "makes" individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individual both as objects and instruments of its exercise" (188). So, in reality the individual cannot get his complete freedom. The society regulates the individual and he/she has to perform certain duties assigned by the society, though the society deceives him/her frequently.

The experience of being deceived by white people make Solomon Northup is extremely cautious to put his credence. In his twelfth year of being a slave, a white man by name Bass comes to Epps' plantation. During his presence in that plantation, Solomon hears his conversation with Epps about the system of slavery. Through the conversation, Solomon knows that Bass is a white man who is disagreed with the system. However, he does not want to be in haste. He cannot directly decide to see Bass as a chance to be free from the slavery. He observes the condition until he is steady to come to Bass.

He starts his introduction with Bass by asking about the country he comes from. Besides, he also tries to ignite his interest by saying that he was in Canada. Through this strategy, Bass is really anxious to know many things about him. As a white man who understands cares about the condition about colored slaves, Bass

understands that Solomon Northup will not easily trust him. Therefore, he promises him that he will not do any unfair treatment to him. Bass really fulfills his promise. He listens Solomon's story in a good attention without leak it to Epps. They secretly have some meeting in the time when all people sleep. Moreover, Bass also accept the demand from Solomon to help him writing letter to his friends and family in Saratoga. The help of Bass really gives a great influence to the destiny of Solomon. The letter is successfully arrived in Saratoga to Parker and Perry. Afterwards, they forward the letter to his wife, Anne. Then, she consults to Henry B. Northup to obtain advice and assistance from him. Finally, Henry B. Northup tries to find the proper way to rescue Solomon. Through the help from the government, Henry B. Northup finds the position of Solomon in New Orleans. Afterwards, Henry B. Northup and the governor come to Epps' plantation to rescue him. Finally, he gets back his liberty and come out from the slavery system defeating the power culture of the time.

Finally, it can be concluded that Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years as a Slave* reflects racism against African American Slave in nineteenth century and that very trend of slavery is questioned time and again by the first person speaker. It is proven by the similarity between the stories in the novel with some phenomenon in that period. There are some African Americans who are kidnapped to be slaves in that period. Afterwards, those kidnapped people experience some racism practice during their journey as slave. Then, there are also some slaves who had struggles to come out from the slavery by rejecting the official domination. Northup as a representative of black community has been successful question the racial discrimination along with officially approved apartheid policy and finally got freedom. His constant rejection of official American history of the time makes him a rebellious figure to maintain his freedom in the end.

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