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Mental Enslavement in Edward P. Jones's *The Known World*

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Letter of Recommendation

DhrubaPariyar has completed his thesis entitled “Mental Enslavement in Jones's *The Known World*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from August 2017 to April 2018. I hereby recommend his thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Mental Enslavement in Jones’s *The Known World*”
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Mental Enslavement in Jones's *The Known World*

Abstract

This thesis examines unique subject matter of black slave owning practice raised in Edward P. Jones's The Known World. It explores inspiriting factors for the black in slave holding business. Throughout the history of slavery in America, the black suffered from white masters. But in the antebellum South, the time before Civil War, a few of them found practicing two types of slavery: benevolent slavery and commercial slavery. A slave turning to be master stands as contradictory aspects of blacks. White's cultural influence over blacks and black's mimicry of white culture inspires them to practice commercial slavery. Being the black they behave like white. The blacks interring to slavery business connotes the idea that slavery is not only a racial problem rather a Social problem. Black's involvement in slavery tells that slavery is not only a matter of skin but also mentality.

Slavery, commercial slavery, benevolent slavery, mimicry, passing, cultural influence

This thesis explores the black slave owning practice; its compelling factors and impact on African American. Edward P. Jones, an African American writer, in his historical novel *The Known World* based on antebellum South, tells the story about the existence of two distinct worlds: the world of slavery and the world of freedom. Jones shows black's struggle and cruelty at the same time.

This text widens traditional way of representing slavery. Establish way of representing slavery presents buying a slave is only the White Master's business. Buying human is not only for earning money, many blacks buy their relatives from the White Master as a slave, so they can live together. They take it as a means of family reunion. This text shows that some of the White Masters influence black people to buy their one people. Jones presents slavery is not only a racial problem. It

has become a social problem. These things rarely come in traditional way of represent slavery.

Edward P. Jones plays crucial role representing slavery through his fictional representation *The Known World*. Earlier, there used to be practice of representing slavery from certain perspectives known as traditional way of representing slavery. In traditional way of representing slavery, the black is presented as slave and white as master. He brings the new perspectives, practising of slavery by blacks themselves. His new finding widens the horizon of representing slavery. Many literary texts were written representing slavery, but practice of slavery by former black slaves was left out. Before *The Known World*, slavery connotes for extreme repression of the black by the White Master. On the contrary, *The Known World* complicates such traditional literary conventions of representing slavery because slavery is not only a racial problem. Buying a slave by black master themselves was not much talked issue in the field of representing slavery.

Some of the black slaves live contradictory life. Former slave becoming master of their own people stands as contradictory side of the blacks. Such contradictions are given special highlights in this book. These former slaves, when they were in slavery as a slave of the White Master, they attempted to escape from the captivity. They revolt against such inhuman practice. When some of them acquired their freedom, in a very strange manner, few of them owned slave for themselves.

Former slave appearing as master in slavery business troubles to black people. The White Masters treated them no more than an object. Black people were sold like cattle in the American slave market. Many of them lost their lives due to endless work and punishment. But this novel uncovers other aspects of slavery which is practiced by very few former slaves themselves in antebellum South. Former slave's

involvement in slaveholding practices make situation more critical, though these masters were very few in number.

Therefore, this narrative suggests that slavery is not only racial thing but also a particular issue of society. This idea is proved by the black slave owners. Henry Townsend's action stands as a perfect example of it. The entire book revolves around Henry, a black farmer, shoemaker, and former slave. He lives being a slave until the age of eighteen. His adolescence spent in the White Master Robin's guidance. He won his master's heart because of his faithfulness for his master. In those days he learned the White cultural values. Robbins influences him to be cruel. He also taught that buying a slave is a matter of achievement.

Once Henry's whole family lived being slaves of the White Master Robbins. Augustus Townsend, his father did profound struggle to free his whole family. After doing continuous hardship, he got success to free his family including Henry. He buys his son and wife from Robbins. Henry, after being free from slavery he himself enslaves black people. He owns many slaves and land like the White Master. He is not a White but he is a master of his slaves.

Henry is mentally enslaved. Whatever Robbins asked to do, he did without evaluating the consequences, "Once you own them, once you own even one, you will never be alone, Robbins had told Henry after Henry purchased Moses from him" (380). Henry spends his adolescence in loneliness. He does not want to be lonely again. Being afraid with loneliness he gathers slaves. But in reality, he is alienated from family and his own community.

One hand, Edward P. Jones brings unique subject of slavery into the surface. On the other hand, he criticizes all kinds of suppression of the slave. It equally criticizes both the White and black slaveholders. In the narrative, Ellis's frustration

reflects it, “His first hours in the stall were spent thinking how he could kill everyone around him, first everyone on the plantation, then everyone in the county, in Virginia. Colored and white” (38). Elias wants to kill both the White and black masters because he suffered from both black and the White Masters equally.

The main reason black people buy their relatives from the White Masters is to bring them home though they are considered the slaves. This thesis presents compelling factors for the blacks involved in commercial slavery. Black people enter into this business because of overwhelming influence of the White culture. Mimicking the White culture, black people buy their own people. At that time blacks are not given human status so they buy slaves to get human status, to be respected, to meet the Whites social standard, to regain lost identity, and to improve social identity. Good economical condition helped blacks not to be a slave of the Whites Master again. White’s culture taught them that economical success develops social standard. Their desire to live respectful life leads them to imitate the White culture. Cultural influences make them believe slavery as a justifiable institution. Similarly, it deals with concept of passing, mimicry, family conflict, and cultural domination over blacks.

Jones appears strongly into literary field with *Lost in the City*, a short story collection. This book acquires positive response from critics and nominated for a National Book Award. After decade long rest from writing, Jones came again in literary field with his first novel *The Known World* in 2003. It won Reviewer Prize for fiction, National Book Critic Circle Award and Pulitzer Prize for fiction. *The Known World* earned more critical acclaim because of its peculiar subject matter and representation. The issue of black people owning black people as slaves is new subject for readers.

This novel is based on Antebellum South. Antebellum period in American history covers the time generally period before the Civil War and after the World War of 1812. Oxford Dictionary defines Antebellum as, “Connected with the years before a war, specially the American Civil War: the laws of antebellum American South” (55). The word antebellum comes from the Latin phrase ante and bellum literally means “before the war.” In Antebellum South, benevolent slavery is practiced by black. Two types of slaveholding existed: benevolent and commercial slaveholding. Initial practice of slaveholding by black people was not for profit motive. Family members would buy their family members from the White Master to free their relatives from slavery. In an interview Jones remarks “Husband purchased wives and parent purchased children, and so their neighbor may have to come to know the people purchased not a slave as a property but as a family members” (3). This type of act was for family integrity. Many black slaves depended upon their friends and family to be liberated from bondage. Many free Negroes spend their small amount of saving to buy their family members. They owned their relatives for benevolent purpose. This type of act helped to develop family unity. Augustus buying his son and wife from the White Master is an act of benevolent slavery. On the contrary, Henry’s buying Moses and other black slave is the example commercial slavery. Augustus buys his family member for benevolent purpose. But Henry buys slaves to earn money.

This novel begins with Henry's death. Jones describes the difficulty faced by black people because of black master. Black slaves faced difficulties inflicted by black masters:

Moses was the first slave Henry Townsend had brought: \$32 and a bill of sale from William Robbins, a white man. It took Moses more than two weeks t

come to understand that someone wasn't fiddling with him and that indeed a black man, two shades darker than himself owned him and shadow he made. Sleeping in a cabin beside Henry in the first weeks after the sale, Moses had thought that it was already a strange world that made him a slave to a white man, but God had indeed set it twirling and twisting every which way he put black to owning their own kind. Was God even up there attending t business anymore. (4)

It describes helpless situation of black slaves. Earlier they used to be a slave of only the White Master but now they are being enslaved by their own people. Moses, at first could not understand that his own people enslave him. He has not expected to be a slave of black .Moses has not thought that his own people can involve in such inhuman business. This truth is a great surprise for helpless Moses to be a slave of a former slave.

Augustus, a free black man and Henry's father, owns his wife and son Henry as slave from Robbins to liberate them from cage of the White Master. He did not have any other option to liberate them from slavery, if he did not buy his family members as slave; they might have remained as a slave of the White Master's slave forever. The biased law forces him to do this. According to law, former slaves require to leave Commonwealth within twelve months of getting their freedom. Augustus buys his people for benevolent purpose. Augustus endless efforts enabled him to free his family members.

Later Henry became master of his own slaves. A former slave of the White, he already knows the barbaric situation of slavery. However, he takes part in such inhuman activities. It tells the idea that he has not learned the lesson from his past experience of enslavement. Henry stands against his parent will and their conviction.

His parent did not want to fall in sin. Therefore, Henry's action departs him from parent. After Henry's involvement in practicing slavery, they never live together and their relation never recovered again. Henry and Augustus carry opposite schools of thought.

Henry's adolescence was spending in Robbins's guidance. In those days he learns white cultural values. Buying slave, in Robbins's education, he starts to perceive slavery as reasonable business because he grows up seeing people being sold like an animal throughout in his adolescence. He feels that if the White people can buy a slave and they don't have any regret, he should not feel guilt to enslave black. He sees in the White Society where social standard uplifts the more slaves someone buys. He perceives that whatever the White Masters do is reasonable because Henry gets to know whatever his master told him. Robbins always inspires Henry to buy slaves. He perceives owning a slave as a matter of achievement. Robbins inspires him to buy slave. Robbins imposes the White cultural values on Henry. He shapes Henry's mentality. In the contemporary America, holding a slave is family pride. Henry was taught in the same way. That is why he feels slavery is reasonable. Ultimately; he buys his first slave Moses, a young black man from Robbins's. Every decision Henry takes, is the outcome of his relation with Robbins.

Henry looks himself from the perspective of white. Acquiring a slave is matter of pride and progress in the then American society. He also takes it in a similar manner. He longs to be like white in every possible way. He wishes to earn same fame that the White Masters gain collecting the slaves.

Critics and writers have analyzed the text from multiple perspectives. Many of them have concentrates to its unusual subject matter and its representation of contradictory life of the black slave masters. Tobias Anderson states about this text,

“It offers a complex and contradictory view of slavery and the human nature. The novel consists of many of the classical elements of slave narratives and the book about slavery, for example the horror of slavery, the journey from South to North and the concept of passing” (1). Jones examines the complex and contradictory subject of slavery. While representing unusual subject matter of the black slave owning, he also includes trouble and brutality faced by the black slaves because of the White master’s inhuman treatment against helpless black during the period of slavery. He concentrates on the cruel aspects of white masters such as murder, rape, extreme labor, child labor, kidnapping, lynching, hunger, early death, family separation, and inhumanity of white slave master over helpless black slaves. These mentioned things are considered as classical elements of representing slavery. He does not only show the classical elements of slave narrative but also brings the hidden issue of slavery: practices of slaveholding by the freed black masters during antebellum South. Jones's unusual issue of slavery widens the horizon of representing slavery.

Traditional way of representing slavery cannot give the complete reality of slavery. Critic Timothy Ryan asserts about Jones’s narrative “questions and complicates traditional literary conventions for representing slavery” (22). So many literary texts have written representing the black as slaves and white as masters. Therefore, it interrogates and contradicts with the traditional way of representing slavery because Ryan further notes that “slavery was never just black and white” (32). It is because some of former slave themselves enslave their own people.

Critic Shauna Morgan Kirlew perceives this novel's importance as literary historical record of little known history in her article she comments, “No detailed study of antebellum slave ownership exists. Just as slave narratives unearthed history's little-known experiences, the neo-slave narrative - in this Jones's *The Known*

World - serves as a literary record of history” (70). There is not enough historical record and fictional works of black slaveholding exist. Very few historical and fictional text exist, among them Jones's novel plays prominent role to display historical fact about black people owning slave. Similarly she attempts to find out black people's association in slave holding and capitalism. She mentions that Jones's novel uncovers the practices of enslavement and its effect to their community. Black involvement in it complicates the situation; however, it also works as a source of emerging black middle class men and women.

This text is an anomaly in the field of representing slavery. Anomaly refers something that is different from what is usual and that does not fit with usual standard. The word anomaly is suits for this book because it does not follow the usual way of represent slavery. This book is unusual and irregular compare to other slave narrative. That is why this book is an anomaly in the field of representing slavery. Kyle Minor views, “this novel is a meditation upon slavery. This historical anomaly is recorded in the annals of the pre-war South, and Jones uses it as a fulcrum to dislodge the conversation about slavery from its typical racial moorings and reexamines human complexities” (190). Minor considers this text as meditation upon slavery. The major factor that draws her interest about Jones's narrative is Henry Townsend's unusual behavior and action. An ex-slave turning to be master is a not much talked historical fact that comes in his narrative.

Examining human complex nature is another significant issue of this fiction. Usually it is believed that a former slave cannot be a slave's master to dominate own people because he has knowledge about its dark side. Besides that, his past may not allow falling in inhuman task. However, human being is complex by nature. Usual pattern of describing human nature does not lead us to find out true human character.

Every single person consists of unique characteristics that separate from other. This connotes a human complexity. Usual depiction fails to describe human mentality. Jones's writing emphasizes and strengthens this idea of complex and contradictory side of human nature because few of former slaves turns out to be a slave master challenging usual expectation.

Black's involvement in slavery business suggests that slavery is not only a racial issue but also a social problem because it affects whole society T M. Rooney, argues about Jones's text, "Jones removes race from the equation, in the sense that his novel focuses more on the social system of slavery, and less on the physical characteristics of what separates the slave from the master" (8). Jones's text revises the concept of slavery from racial to social problem. It provides new lens to observe slavery. Before *The Known World*, there used to be a trend to look slavery as racial domination over black. It has been presented the black as only a victim. Their involvement in buying slaves for commercial purpose tells slavery as social problem. It has crossed the racial barrier.

However practice of slave owning by the blacks cannot run in same manner because it is built in weak foundation. Carolyn Vellenga Berman points out, "Jones's novel emphasizes both the apparent permanence of slavery and its actual fragility at the same time by focusing on plantation owner who was himself born into slavery" (234). Jones presents the world of slavery where life of slaves is badly affected by captivity. At the same time, he is suggesting such world cannot go smoothly because this world is based on weak foundation. Henry's legacy cannot run for a long time, reason is, he himself once was slave. Henry collects land and slaves with the continuous support of his former white master Robbins. After Henry's death, his

plantation could not go smoothly, though, Caldonia tries her best to run the legacy of slavery in same manner the way Henry he used to handle his slave and plantation.

Many critics and writers focus their analysis to its unconventional subject matter. However, some critics focus their observation to other issues. Tommie L. Jackson analyzes Jones's representation of slave patroller in his text, "Rather of interest to this writer is the following: the catalyst for the formation of the slave patrols and the timeline of formation; the appointment of slave patrols and the legacy of the slave patrols, as depicted in *The Known World*" (162). Jackson is neither persuaded by its uncommon subject, nor the historical accuracy of *The Known World* in relation to number of slaves in Virginia. His analysis concentrates more on the formation of slaves and timeline of formation; the appointment of slave patrols, the rules and regulations of slave patrols; the action and limitations. He closely examines about these subjects in relation with historical document and *The Known World*. His observation tells that Jones's representation about slave patrollers match with historical documents except some issues.

Some critics analyze this text from the perspective of how white ideology comes in declining position for example, David Ikard describes this text with the idea about how white supremacy gets under fire, and white master's declining status; taking the reference from Jones's characters such as Clara Martin, a white widow, Barnum Kinsey, the poorest white man in the Manchester county, William Robbins the richest white man. To show white's declining supremacy, he takes the example of Clara Martin, "the sexually chard relationship that Clara Martin, a white widow, has with her lone slave Ralph ... though she is intensely attracted to Ralph, she goes to mental and social extreme to resist acknowledging her feeling even as she continues to actively peruse him" (64). Clara loves her own slave named Ralph. Though, her

social status does not allow her to such relation with slave. Therefore, her attraction with Ralph is analyzed as her white supremacy under fire. For Ikard, her closeness with Ralph is an indication of her social and emotional degradation. He feels, “Clara’s white crisis is hardly unique in *The Known World*; it is emblematic of a silent pattern of white identity crisis in the novel” (65). White is not supposed to involve in such relation. He adds, the root cause of white crisis is “the ethnical and cultural fabric of antebellum South like second hand smoke, contamination the best of intentions by whites to treat African Americans humanly and even igniting white on white dehumanization and lethal action” (65). He points out some reasons of white crisis. His opinions are not sounding. These arguments are guided by essentialists thinking. In his analysis white crisis is because of cultural and ethnical fabrication. He adds, treating black humanly is another reason of white crisis. Treating people humanly develops human integrity rather than crisis.

This thesis brings the references of Homi J. Bhabha’s “mimicry and man” and concept of “passing” to analyze Jones’s text. Concept of passing is important factor of this text. There are two types of passing: physical passing and metaphorical passing. Wikipedia tells about occurrence of passing, “Racial passing occurs when a person classified as a member of one racial group other than their own.” It further explain about passing “To fully understand how some American pass as white, one must acknowledge the rape of slave woman at the hands of white plantation owners.” Racial passing occurs from decedents of mulatto slave trying to escape from their enslavement.

Some of black people pass as a White either physically or mentally. Some other passes both physically and mentally. These blacks who pass physically, they are accepted as a member of the White cultural group. They assimilate with the White.

The main reason of passing is to get ride from racial segregation and discrimination. Passing provides the opportunity to take public facilities. Being black in the then society was difficult to live as human. During antebellum period passing was an opportunity to escape from slavery. Generally, someone passes in search of better life, to live being human. Passing is not a happy feeling but they pass to be safe from racial domination. In many case, once they got their freedom they go back to their own real identity. Racial passing means leaving behind their primary identity. In the narrative, some of Fern's family members pass as the White:

Fern's family had managed to produce who could easily pass as white. Marry nothing beneath you, her mother always said, meaning no one darker than herself, and Fern had not. Her mother would not have approved of the gambler who lost a leg. Human being should never go back. They should always go forward. Some of Fern's people had gone white, disappearing across the color line and never looking back. (33)

Physical passing needs privilege of white skin color. They need to be alike with the White in terms of appearance. In this novel some of the characters pass not physically but metaphorically. Physically they are black. They do not have white skin. But their mentality matches with the White Masters. They feel higher than their own people. Such passing is metaphorical passing. Henry's passing is metaphorical passing. Physically he is a black but he behaves like the White Master.

Mimicry creates indent crisis. African American try to imitate the living standard set by the society where they live in. They internalize the dominant group's view. While imitating other culture, there occurs internal conflict. The dominant group wants to run the world according to their view points, and their living ways.

This initiates conflict with their earlier identity. Identity is divided into parts rather than unified or single.

In the story, people like Henry, Caldonia, Maude, and Fern: the African American live in a society where they are not considered human. In the process of making themselves worthy, they internalize white people's way of looking the things. Internalization of other's world view creates division in their identity. That does not let them have a unified identity because they are accustomed to observe themselves through white's point of view. At the same time, they cannot hide their African American identity. These two opposite identities cause identity crisis. African American always looking at themselves through the eyes of other because they are constantly being judged on the basis of color and physical appearance, their skills and knowledge are overshadowed.

To improve their present condition, the black started to mimic the White. In some case, their expectations to live respectful life lead them to follow white cultural aspects. White's mistreatment and feeling of inferiority damage the black's self image. White's constant inhuman treatment to the black naturalizes black as inferior one. Negative perception about African American breaks their identity and self-esteem. Internalization of such negative attitude from dominant group: white, shapes their identity and life. Ultimately, it works as source of internal "twoness."

For instance, Henry's life exposes internal "twoness." Physically Henry remains black; mentally he internalizes white slave owning culture. His act of buying slave tells his double consciousness because being a black; he behaves like the White Masters. He carries two opposite identities in parallel manner. Borgen comments about Henry's double vision or his "twoness," "as Henry grows into the role of a slave for purely commercial reasons, he exercises power he ethnically should have denied.

In my reading of this, the ... double vision as Bhabha later calls it, automatically evokes Du Bois and his theory about double consciousness” (21). Many other African American owned slave for benevolent purpose, as a generous task for their friends and family, to take them away from bondage of the White Master. On the contrary, Henry buys black people to gain economic profit, the way the White Masters earn. He imitates other's characteristics as his. He mimics white. Mimicry creates internal “twoness”. Bhabha calls it “the sign of double articulation” (126). Combination of white and black identity can be the example.

Therefore, the concept of “mimic man” holds another important position in this novel. In it we find black characters are mimicking the White cultural values and belief systems. Those who are in power impose their ideology indirectly to divide black people. In the process of practicing and repeating something for a certain time, one internalizes their cultural values without knowing and caring its negative effects on their life. Bhabha recounts about the occurrence of mimicry, “Mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same but not quite” (126). One’s desire to improve existing condition like of people in power inspires them to mimic others. The process of mimicry builds around when someone brings opposite identity together. It is constructed in the environment of simultaneous contradictory attitudes and feelings.

Readers get surprise with the fact that black people owning slave in the White dominated society. And what is the fact that compels them to purchase their own people. To know better about characters of this novel we need explore some historical facts about the black slave owning practice. Bassard reports, “Carter G. Woodson’s 1924 monograph” Free Negro Owners of Slaves in the U.S. in 1830” pioneered the free blacks owned slaves largely for benevolent purposes” (409). Benevolent slavery

was practiced for generous purpose. They buy relatives as slave to make them free from slavery and black masters.

African American buy slaves for holy purpose in the initial days. Ira Berlin notes, about practice of slave owning “many more blacks depended on their friends and relatives to extricate them from bondage. Hundreds of free Negroes used their small savings to purchase and free one, specially their immediate families” (qtd. in Bassard 410). Two types of slave owning existed: benevolent and commercial slaveholding. Many free black families owned their people largely for benevolent purpose. The purpose is to liberate their family members from enslavement, the move to liberate them from the trap of the White Master.

Few of blacks buy slaves for holy motive but later this practice is taken as a source of earning by few of them. Small Goldsmyth narrates about historical fact of black owning black, “Indeed the kindness of free Negroes toward their friends and relatives seeking freedom afforded such an accessible avenue to liberty that those vigilant white citizens who desired to preserve the institution of slavery deemed it necessary to put obstructions in the way” (240). Because of the love and kindness, in the pathetic era of enslavement, free black people owned their relatives, as a means to achieve their snatched freedom again. Their intention was to be united with friends and family. They are guided by holy motives.

In the text, Henry's ambition for power and prosperity leads him to exercise commercial slaveholding. He grows up seeing power of Robbins. He always tries to inherit this quality. Henry a black master shares same kind of attitude with the White Master about their slaves. He only tries to gain economical prosperity from his slaves. Such act of Henry troubles black community.

There exist three types of slaves: field slaves, house slaves and artisan slaves and all of them have different opinion about keeping slaves. In these categories, artisan slaves have more chance to imitate their masters because of their close observation of the White Masters and the white's cultural aspect. Koger narrates about slave work and their perception:

Because of the field slaves' view of slavery as an oppressive system ... field slaves were less likely when manumitted to buy slave for their own benefit. However, this was not the case with the house slaves who were taught to consider themselves superior to the slave working in the fields. This conception of superiority was reinforced by the way they dress, their housing and the food they ate. Many house slaves identified with their owners because of their close interaction with the white Southern Culture. House slaves occasionally saw slavery as a justified institution and accepted the values of their slave owners. Because of this, when manumitted some tried to obtain a prosperous life with the help of slaves. (qtd. in Andersson 13)

Artisan slaves have more chances to imitate their master because of their close interaction with masters. For instance, Henry has fewer chances to buy slave when he was a field slave. As his position improves as artisan slave, his chances of owning slave for economical benefit grows. He begins to believe himself superior to the slave working in the field. He identifies with the White Master rather than slaves and other black people because of his close interaction with Robbins and the White culture. After certain period of times, he regards slavery as a justifiable institution and accepts the culture of slave owning. His observation about the White culture tells him keeping a slave is matter of prestige and means of earning.

Jones presents the contradictory life of Henry Townsend, “a black man of thirty-one years with thirty-three slaves and more than fifty acres of land that sat him high above many others, white and black, in Manchester County, Virginia” (2). Henry, until eighteen years remains Robbins's slave, where he gets to know hellish life of slaves. Subsequently, he turns out to be the master of his own people. He knows all the grief of slaves; unfortunately he overlooks all these aspects of slave's life.

There exist curiosities about inspiring factors to former slave to be master. If we look closely Henry's relationship with Robbins, it makes easy to find out the answer. William Robbins's influence over Henry complicates his character. In Robbins's guidance, he learns to be like the White Master in various ways. Robbins's education makes him act against his own people. If he had not met him, he might have different person.

Thus, cultural influence plays crucial role to shape our personality. In the narrative, Robbins and the White cultural influence shapes Henry's personality. Henry spends his adolescence in Robbins's plantation following his directions. This period plays crucial role of developing his identity. Here, he only gets to learn what Robbins desired. In those crucial years, Henry grows up seeing Robbins. Ultimately, Robbins establishes him as role model for Henry. He tries to gather Robbins's quality as his personality. Thus, Henry can be described as white master's product.

He is projected as “Yes man,” who continuously follows white master's guidance without using his reasoning. Robbins evokes him to buy slave and he does the same, “Once you own even one, you will never be alone” (37). Robbins advises him to own slave for not to be alone. However, in reality, he alienates from his parents and his community forever. Because of white cultural influence he involves in

sinful activities. Robbins's closeness compels Henry to buy his first slave Moses, “When Henry at twenty, brought his first piece of land from Robbins ... he brought from Robbins his first slave Moses” (53). A former slave buying a land and collecting wealth is matter of progress. But buying a slave by former slave is backwardness, an act of going to destruction.

Physically he appears black, but his mentality is governed by the White’s culture. We can sense his internalization of white culture as he says about keeping slaves when his parents show disappointment about his owning slaves. He simply replies “ain’t done nothing that any White man wouldn’t do” (138). He cannot differentiate himself to the White because his ethics is guided by the White culture. In his opinion it is not unethical to buy slaves because the White practices it. It appears that, for him, whatever the White do is reasonable because effect of mimicry normalizes the White cultural values weather it is good or bad. Bhabha argues, “The effect of mimicry on the authority of colonial discourse is profound and disturbing. For it normalizing the colonial state or subject” (126). Effect of mimicry normalizes the White’s notion. For Henry owning slave is just like buying an object. Seeing white people and spending time with the White Master for a long time, he internalizes slave owning as normal phenomenon. Subsequently, it normalizes the discourse of the White people. They naturalize it because of repetitions.

He mimics his master. However, mimicry is not the true way of living. Bhabha argues, “Mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate, however, a difference” (126). Mimicry is not a proper way of living because it lacks originality. One can never find out his true self. In the process of mimicking, he internalizes other but never try to enhance his trueness. In the novel, the impact of mimic is Henry's slave owning for commercial purpose. He is supposed to speak against slavery, he instead practice

slavery. Because of white culture's influence, Henry brought his first slave, the overseer Moses, from William Robbins.

Henry looks the world through Robbins's eyes. He never uses his mental faculty to analyze his involvement of slaveholding. His inability to judge and evaluate the circumstances makes him a "mimic man," who only mimics Robbins and White cultural values without opening his critical eyes. He never realizes the negative consequences to his community created by his practice of slave owning culture. Therefore, he is in mental enslavement. Physically he gets freedom but mentally remains slave. He fails to break mental enslavement. Jones criticizes to those black masters who actually owns slave, "It would be for me like owning my own family, the people in my opinion" (47). It satirizes foolishness of black masters. Henry and other black master never realize that owning black by black is similar of owning family member.

He stayed in the inter-zone of freedom and slavery. He could not open up his critical faculty. He is a slave of the White cultural values that did not let him to see beyond that. In white culture, owning a slave is taken as matter of pride. One's prestige grows the more he own slave, "A woman, specially married one, is nothing without her personal servant" (14). Owning a slave, at that time, was not only for work but also for social standard in their community. Henry takes slavery in similar manner.

Some free black people buy slaves in the process of mimicking white cultural values. To keep a slave thought as a prestigious thing in the then white American community. Along with time, some free black former slaves started to internalize the White cultural practice, and applied practically in their life by owning slaves from their own race, the way the White Master do. Black master owns their own people for so called prestige and economical profit. They forget their own root and show

fascination towards inhuman culture without caring its dark sides. Such stupid activity extends the trouble to African American. Thus, whether there is the White Master or black, it is certain that the one suffers from slavery are black people.

Henry buys slave in the continuous influence of Robbins. He without knowing the White Master's influence accepts their culture. Bhabha contends, “mimicry emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge” (126). Those who are in power impose their ideology indirectly. In the process of repetition, one takes it as natural phenomenon.

Attraction of white life styles, Henry mimics by owning his first slave Moses from Robbins, in the hope of improving his existing social standard. In his observation about white living standard, he finds out that owning a slave uplifts one's social standard and helps economically:

It took Moses more than two weeks to come to understand that someone wasn't fiddling with him and that indeed a black man, two shades darker than himself, owned him and any shadow he made. Sleeping in a cabin beside Henry I the first weeks after the sale, Moses had thought that it was strange world that made him a slave to a white man, but God had indeed set it twisting every which way when he put black to owning their own kind was God even up there attending to business anymore. (4)

Moses' surprising expression about being slave of black people mocks foolish act of “mimic man,” Henry. He is darker than his owned slave Moses. His belongs to the community that he needs to fight against enslavement. Strangely, he buys and sells black people. It surprises Moses because he never expected to be a slave of former slave. No one can expect that the former slave interring in cruel business. Rooney claims that “Henry has internalized the values of this culture of slavery, and he

association freedom with power and dominance; thus constructing his identity accordingly” (3210). Henry does not want to go back again into slavery and he feels that power and wealth can help to sustain his freedom. While trying to be like the White Master by mimicking he becomes the source of pain for his community. This is the great satire for mimic man.

Jones shares the idea about cultural importance shaping personality. He brings the example of Henry and how his identity is constructed, “We absorb and become part what is in the culture. Augustus Townsend, the slave father and former slave in *The Known World*, had strong moral makeup. Unfortunately, he was not there to impart his honesty to his son, Henry, who was raised by someone else” (32). Augustus Townsend, Henry's father a good man and he wanted his son to be honest. However, he could not meet every time because of master. That is why; he could not able to transform his good quality.

Black female counter parts equally mimic the White culture. In *The Known World* some black women try to mimic the social values and ideas of white upper class. Kirlew tells, “It is also arguable that free black women of wealth also attempted to imitate their white counter parts. Caldonia, as the wife and ultimately the widow of plantation owner, demonstrates, to a great extent, the characteristics associated with white women of that class” (77). The mimicry of the White cultural values is not limited only in black male. Caldonia and her mother Maude are no less than the White Master in terms of thought and behavior. Caldonia’s speech after Henry’s death shows some of its glimpses:

Our Henry has left us,” she said to her slaves. Left us for good left us for heaven. Pray for him. Give him all your prayers. He cared about you all, and I have no less care than he did. I have no less love.” She had not considered

beforehand what she would say. Every word was not original, she was part of something she had heard somewhere else, something her father ... I am here and I will not be going anywhere. And you will be with me ... something she read in a book, written by a white man in different time and place. (27)

Caledonia addresses to all her slaves few days after Henry's death. While trying to be like the White Master, she lost her originality. She does not speak her mind. She borrows others worlds. While delivering speech, she only mentions Henry's positive aspects. She seems unaware about cruel aspects of Henry and slavery. Therefore, she wants to take Henry's position. She determines to continue the practice of slavery left by Henry. She is mentally blind because she cannot see the hellish life given by slavery to her own people. She cannot judge about the pain and suffering created by Henry and her action because "the hitter can never be the judge. Only the receiver of the blow can tell you how hard it was, whether it would kill a man or make a baby just yam" (78). The one who gets it can feel its impact. It is not proud legacy for blacks but Caledonia and her mother are romantic about their legacy.

In some extent, Henry is projected as robot, robot of William Robbins and the White culture that follows Robbins's instruction without using his mental faculty. In Robbins's instructions he becomes a cruel master. He does not show any mercy or kindness while punishing and making them work in plantation. In the beginning he was not cruel, and wanted to be better master than any white, "he wanted to be a better master than any white man he had ever know" (28). African American involvement in slavery, simply suggests, jumping into sin. Only senseless person practices enslavement. He always says to be a good master but he seems totally unaware the tragedy he is going to initiate because the word master itself is destructive. He forgets his promise in Robbins's tutorial. He turns out to be no less

than cruel the White Master. In the provocation of former master, he cruelly punishes his slave. He always maintains distance with the slave the way the White do. While mimicking the role of master, he cruelly behaves with slave.

Robbins's instructions established him as barbaric master. He provokes him to be cruel against slave, "Henry, the law will protect you as a master to your slave ... but law expects you to know what is master and what is a slave. And it does not matter if you are not much darker than your slave" (53). Robbins inspires Henry to behave inhumanely because law favors for master. He teaches how to be a good master. Because of Robbins, Henry beats his slave unnecessary. "Henry stepped to him, took the saw and slapped him once more, and when the pain begins to set in on Moses's face, he slapped him again. "Why don't you nerve do what I tell you to do?" (5). Moses gets punishment without any mistakes. Moses only wants to work little more taking the advantage of lights. He feels that Moses does not follow his instruction. His language resembles to white master. He uses self dominated language while scolding slave.

Henry snatches the black's freedom. It reflects the tragedy of black people to ask for freedom from black themselves, "Elias got five miles from the Townsend's place when he began missing his strength. He ate most of the shoe cakes he brought with him, thinking the problem was a body rebellion due to hunger ... At about seven miles he was nearly reduced to crawling and at the eight mile he collapsed" (35). Seeing Elias, Robbins shoots him and he injures badly. The White man shoots into his chest and punches him as hard as he could in the jaw, because escaping was crime. They can be killed in any time. His ear is cut in the name of punishment. This is the danger of escaping. His effort to escape from Henry's control fails. Unfortunately, he is caught and punished barbarically. It is a tragedy for black community because black

people are seeking freedom from former black master, “Henry went to Elias and slapped him, “This is a hurtful disappointment to me. What I am gonan do with you. What in the hell I’m gonna do with you? If you want a hard life, I will oblige?” “I will oblige” was a favorite phrase of French Elston’s during her lesson” (37). Henry beats his own people. Elias is seeking freedom from former slave. For Henry, escaping of Elias is a hurtful disappointment. But Elias disappointment is ignored. How hurtful for Elias to be a slave of black and living in physical and mental turmoil. Henry does not feel the pain and suffering created by his stupidity and cruelty to his innocent people.

Another important object this text raises the concept of “passing” Jones shows some of black people are leaving their identity behind and accepting new identity. He uncovers ample examples of passing. In the fiction, issue of passing occurs time and again when characters like Henry, Caldonia, Maude, and Fern are pretending as belonging to another group than their real community. They forget their past and history gradually. They think and behave like the White Master. These people attempt to pass as the White in order to be accepted and respected like white. They pass in the hope of successfully eligible themselves into a white dominated society. Desire for success equally drives them to pass. But passing causes identity crisis. Neither they fully leave behind black identity nor do they totally accept the White identity. They remain in-between these identities. Some passes physically and some passes mentally. Mental passing is described as “metaphorical passing.”

In the novel some of free black pass as white either physically or mentally. Some other passes both physically and mentally. Those who pass physically, accepted as a member of the White cultural group. They assimilate with the White cultural group, to emancipate from racial separation and discrimination. Such passing provides

them opportunity to take public facilities. Being black in the then society were difficult to live as human. In this process, they leave their primary identity. Black passes as a white for assimilating with white culture values:

Fern's family had managed to produce people who could easily pass for white. "Marry nothing beneath you," her mother always said, meaning no one darker than herself, and Fern had not. Her mother would not have approved of the gambler who lost leg. "Human being should never go back. They should always go forward." Some of the Fern's people had gone white disappearing across the color line and never looking back. (33)

Fern's family member and some of the friend pass as white. For some black, remaining black is matter of backwardness. Moving from the black into white is taken as moving forward. Remaining the black is sign of backwardness. In the name of progressing forward, they left behind their own identity and accept new. Their passing is the result of racial domination. Black people are not considered worthy of respect. Therefore, they pass seeking to live as human. Another important factor of their passing is internalization of the White cultural values through mimicry.

Concept of double consciousness applies on Fern. She unlike her siblings and cousins lives her life as free Negro, "Fern Elston had chosen not to follow her siblings and many of her cousins into a life of being the White. She stayed in Manchester County where everyone knew that she was a free Negro though she was as white as any white person" (56). Fern, a color woman, though her skin resembles to the white. She does not hide her identity like her siblings and cousins. At first she seems proud about her black identity because she does not pass. At the same time, she looks herself through white perspective. She owns slave mimicking White. She neither rejects black identity nor follows the black cultural values. This stands as Fern's double consciousness.

Another woman in Jones's novel *Caledonia* Townsend, Henry's widow behaves like the White following her husband's footsteps. After Henry's death, his so-called legacy comes under her control. She does her best to run plantation and enslavement. Jones depicts Caldonia and her mother no less than white. Her actions and thought resembles with white master though she appears black. Kirlew comments, "In this way the women take on a non-physiological whiteness" (77). Physically they belong to black community; mentally they associate with the White Masters. They physically remains black mentally they are not black. This metaphorical passing occurs as trying to meet the White cultural values set by the White.

Some of African American mentally pass into white, in order to improve social standard by accepting white believe systems. Bassard writes about their mental passing, "while Jones's characters cannot psychologically pass for white (with the expectation of Fern who, to her credit, refuse to pass), they cross a social line of demarcation that nonetheless amount to a metaphoric passing" (408). Physically they seem black mentally more close with the White. This stands as a contradiction between body and mind. Passing from one state to another tells the crossing "power line."

There is endless conflict among the black masters' families in the issue of whether to continue the slavery or not. There exist two opposite forces. Some of the family member strongly opposed slavery. At the same time, some other wanted to continue slavery as a prestigious legacy. Such situation divides family indignity. It works as a source of family unrest. Some of the black masters alienated from both family and community in their greed for power. Some even lost life. Caldonia's father was poisoned by his own wife. She wanted to protect her legacy. He shows disagreement. This act of slaveholding divides family integrity. Caldonia's father's

guilt factor inspires him to stop slave owning, "Father had died a slow death ... Calvin suspected that his mother had poisoned him because his father had been planning to free all their slaves, their legacy, "Sweet Maude, I wanted to go home to God with a clean mind" (29-30). He realizes keeping a slave is against God's will. He desires to liberate from all these guilt by freeing his slaves before dying. Guilt factor develops in him when his young son died in his young age. At that time he realizes that this is the God's way of punish to slave master. But Maude does not agree with him.

Because of Henry's mental enslavement, enslavement of Robbins and the White culture, he cannot find out apparent different between slavery and freedom. Biologically he is black, mentally he relates himself with white cultural aspects. His mental association with white culture does not let him to understand the meaning of his freedom:

About the half way of trip home, the man realized that these had been his son's first days of freedom. He and Mildred had planned a week of celebration, culminating with neighbor coming by next Sunday. Augustus said, "You feeling any difference?" "Bout what?" Henry said. He was holding to mules. "No, sir, I don't reckon I do." He wanted to know if he was supposed to, but he did not know how to ask that. He wondered who was waiting now for Robbins to come riding up on Sir Guilderham. (23)

Henry cannot understand the meaning of freedom. He does not feel any distinctive differences between the world of slavery and the world of freedom. This is the greater disappointment to his parent. Their extreme form of hardship enables to liberate him from enslavement but could not break Henry's mental enslavement. Physically, he is free but mentally he is still Robbins's slave.

Close observation about Henry, displays that the White initiated slavery and white master made the black to follow it because if Henry had not met white man and their culture he might have different person like his father Augustus Townsend. He was educated such a way that he eventually becomes no less than the White. This cultural influence makes a slave master. While mimicking the White he puts on a “white mask” on black face.

Cultural influence shapes our ideology and behaviors. Constant influence of the White culture makes black to regard slaver as justified institution. Henry’s observation about white culture tells him keeping a slave is matter of prestige. In the desire to gain prestige he accepts white culture through mimicry and imitation.

Effect of mimicry normalizes other’s ideology or belief system. Black buys slaves in the process of mimicking the White cultural values. To keep slaves thought as prestigious thing in the then white American culture. Along with time few of black started to internalizes white cultural practice.

African American is not given human status by the White Master; and black’s culture is not perceived worthy to follow. To acquire human status like white impel them to mimic the White. It creates internal conflict because they neither reject nor totally accept the black identity. Jones satires mimic man trough is character Henry. He criticizes the foolish act of mimic man. Henry belongs to the community that needs to fight against slavery, instead he buys and sells slave.

Henry looks the world through Robbins’s eyes. He never uses his mental faculty. His inability to judge and evaluate circumstances makes him a “mimic man.” He gets freedom but mentally remains slave. He fails to break mental enslavement. Jones criticizes such mimic man because physically he appears black but mentally governed by cultural values. He cannot differentiate the White because his ethics is

guided by the White. He lives in the illusion because looking oneself through other's eyes cannot show real you.

Black people pass as white either physically or mentally to improve social standard and to live as human. They are taught to believe that remaining black is matter of backwardness. Passing from black into white is taken as moving forward. Remaining black denotes backwardness. Their passing is the result of racial domination. Black is not regard worthy of respect. Therefore, they pass seeking to live as human and behave like white. While behaving like white they practice commercial slavery.

Slavery should not analyze only from racial perspective. It should be observe as social problem because it is not limited in one race. It has crossed racial boundary. Black's involvement in commercial slavery established slavery as a social problem that strengthens the idea that slavery is not only a matter of skin but also a mentality.

White cultural influence leads to mimicking white's culture. Being the black they behave like white. This exhibits the contradiction between body and mind. Mimicry creates internal "twoness" because of more than two identities that does not let them to have single identity. Jones presets Henry as mimic man who looks himself through the eyes of white that does not give him the real projection about his personality. He lives in the illusion. He mentally assimilates with white but white considered him no more than the other black slaves. He attempts to be white through mimicry. For white collecting a slave is prestigious thing. Henry takes it in similar manner. He acquires others characters as his. Physically he is black but mentally closer with white because of his double consciousness. Physically he gets freedom but mentally remains slave of white culture. In white cultural influence, he becomes no less than white but not a white. This is the duplication of white mindset in black body.

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