

## **I. Consequences of Slave Trade in the Narratives of Equiano and Prince**

This thesis examines how the romantic spirit and the core thematic content of slave narratives foster abolitionist campaign which ultimately paves the way for the emancipation of slaves from the bondage of slavery. This issue is examined in relation to the narrative of Olaudah Equiano and Mary Prince. In both slave narratives, the narrators undergo the harsh and harrowing process of enslavement. Olaudah is forcibly kidnapped by white slave hunters in his homeland Eboe. The excruciating sense of agony at being held in captivity is graphically represented.

After being kidnapped, Equiano is subjected to the atrocious process, brutality and dehumanization. Similar is the fate endured by Mary Prince who too is sold with her mother to a white master. Mary prince had to endure the vicious cycle of injustice and atrocity. Through their exposure to slavery, they happen to develop the awareness of injustice. Both Equiano and Mary Prince come to see the prospect of freedom from slavery after going through the long series of trial and tribulation. The romantic sense of adventure and frequent journey from one place to the other shape the innermost liking of both the characters for emancipation.

The prospect of emancipation envisioned by Mary Prince and Equiano is the outcome of tripartite relation amidst romanticism, program of religious reforms (Methodism, Quaker, Shaker and Protestantism) and slave narratives of the narrator's time. Orthodox canonical doctrine of the Bible serves as the ground to justify slave trade. It is the protestant ethics and other emerging religious sects that foster the natural freedom and equality of all the people.

Chiefly, one religious sect Quaker projects the conviction that god is the illumination of spirit inherent in all kinds of people. If God is the inner light inherent in people, it is useless and unbecoming to restrict this inner light in the

name of slave trade and racial superiority. Thus, it is fair to contend that the underlying tenet of Quaker faith sets the stage for the abolition of slavery.

Freedom of soul is the rhetoric intensified by Quaker reformists. The notion of the freedom of soul becomes the concept of individual freedom and the freedom from all the restrictive regimes and institutions. In the romantic discourses and literary documents, the idea of an individual's freedom from regimes and restriction reign sovereign. Unrestrained sense of expression, spontaneous life and blessing resulting from proximity to nature are some of the salient features of discourses on romanticism. These thematic components of romantic discourse lay the groundwork for the emergence and establishment of anti-slavery abolitionist movement.

There is a subtle nexus between religious revivalisms like Methodism, evangelism, and romantic psychology. Methodism is a revivalist movement. Some of the dogmatic influences of Christianity are removed by Methodist. God is redefined in a new way. This newly redefined notion of God didactically instructs its followers to believe the freedom of souls. In this way, Methodist preaching lays the groundwork for the freedom of slave. Romantic psychology is the psychology of natural expression, harmony with inner self and deep faith in integrity. Romantic poets and philosophers believe in the natural freedom of individual beings. Romantic psychology refers to the notion that naturally every individual has an instinctive preference for natural freedom.

This romantic notion of freedom entails gradually the freedom of slaves. In the narrative of Equiano, Equiano's master, Dr. Charles Irving, is a follower of Quaker doctrine. Equiano himself says that of all masters, Dr. Charles Irving is exceptionally beneficial and miraculously merciful. Dr. Irving does not free Equiano initially, he allows Equiano to take part in minor trading. Through the grace and

mercy of Irving, Equiano makes certain bulk of earning with which he ultimately buys his freedom.

Irving's faith in the doctrine of Quaker allows a slave like Equiano to struggle for freedom from slavery. In the narrative of Equiano, the Quaker doctrine and abolitionist movement have made the narrator fairly conscious of a need to buy individual freedom. Thus the Quaker faith appears to be instrumental in the dissemination of the abolitionist movement. Mary prince also faces the same fate. In her narrative account, she recounts indescribable conditions in which she had to live. He is sold several times from one master to the other.

Throughout the period of servitude, she is painfully aware of the fate of losing freedom. Luckily Mary Prince finds a master who buys her from Mr. D. Mr. John is a Quaker who is liberal enough to treat Mary Prince kindly. Through the spiritual preaching of Mr. John, Mary prince gets a golden chance to attend Moravian church. While attending Moravian church, she falls upon the idea of freedom from slavery. In that moment she comes to know that she has the right to freedom, despite her servitude and entrapment in slavery.

Quaker doctrine remains the pivotal force in orientation of both Equiano and Mary Prince towards freedom from slavery. The romantic assumption that no freedom is greater than the natural freedom is also another driving force behind the steady actualization of the goals of the abolitionist movement. Many romanticists like Blake, Cowper, Southey, Coleridge and Wordsworth are critical of any organized and institutionalized forces which clip the wings of individuals. Explicitly or implicitly, they raise their voice against any kind of repressive measure.

Most of the leading romanticists were rebellious. Their rebellious voices assist in increasing the numbers of abolitionists. Both romanticism and

enlightenment helped people to argue and analyze any phenomenon logically and reasonably. Influenced by the ethos of enlightenment, many scholars with liberal mindset raise their voice in favor of reform and liberalization. Wollstonecraft belongs to this school of thinking. She probes the issue of race in relation with gender. The crux of her argument is that it is reasonable for man to subjugate and discriminate woman since both man and woman has the same degree of right to think and act independently.

Nature treats both man and woman equally. It is the inalienable right of woman to be free from the command and control of man. Mobilizing the same level of reasoning, she argues that slaves have also inalienable right to natural freedom. This mode of reasoning and explanation undoubtedly laid the foundation for the rapid success of abolitionist movement. In Equiano's narrative, the narrator begins to argue reasonably about his possibility of emancipation as he begins to make profit increasingly.

The voice expressed in the narrative of Prince is the socially and historically imposed limits on her individual authorial voice. Mary Prince bases her narrative in the discursive world of the vernacular and the community that shaped it. This gives her public account of self a cultural coherence beyond the verbal-ideological coherence of the text as a whole. The use of a modified vernacular that preserves the tone and style of the original is now commonplace in modern Caribbean writing. Even the tone is surcharged with rebellious and dissenting view.

Mary Prince's movement from one sphere of experience to another is a process of growth and development. This development is embodied in a sequence of events. These events simultaneously characterize different aspects of slavery. It also addresses critical periods of interior growth in her life. Each event adds new

dimensions to private and public contexts of her individual story. It also testifies to an increasingly defiant and politically aware Mary Prince. Prince acts independently. She acts on principle in the later part of her life. She does not avoid the moment to redefine herself in the process.

*The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* has drawn the attentions of a large numbers of critics and reviewers. What strikes the readers most in this narrative is the unflinching and unstinting love of a slave for freedom from slavery. He is on the lookout for a moment which sparks the value of freedom from the bondage of servitude and slavery. Concentrating on this aspect of the narrative, Vincent Carretta puts forward his view:

Disinherited as we are from Equiano's referential systems, it is reasonable to question whether we are adequately aware of the scope of his allusions and their part in constituting the fabric of his autobiography. Hence, the ultimate question at issue here will be whether only the text of Equiano's allusion acts upon his book or whether it also imports its own context. If the context is indeed relevant, what are the permissible limits in our bringing that context to bear? How allusive are allusions? And how functional? (79)

Carretta examines the functionality of the pattern of allusion. He is of the opinion that the referential system in the narrative of Equiano is pretty vague. There is symmetry and meaningful cohesion in the bulk of allusions Equiano uses. In one context, different kind of allusions or non-contextual allusions is used. It makes readers ponder seriously to work out any meaningful thematic essence. What is fundamentally important is the way allusions coalesce to generate meaningful rationale.

Kaplan is keenly interested in examining the horrors of the middle passage. There is hardly any slave narrative which is devoid of reference to the pathos and plight of Africans held in captivity. Every slave narrative tends to make reference to the middle passage and hellish conditions in which the captives had to hold in chain. Focusing on this aspect of the narrative, Kaplan makes the following point:

Others, like the former slave Olaudah Equiano, volunteered their services, or else agreed to speak before the bar of the House of Commons. In each case, these witnesses contributed to an ever-increasing pool of information that, in turn, helped to shape popular perceptions of transatlantic slavery. Scenes of depredation on the West Coast of Africa, the unmitigated horrors of the Middle Passage, the brutality and oppression of slavery in the Americas; all of these would become familiar tropes during the late eighteenth century. (2)

The narrative framed by the experiences of Equiano contains some distinct vision of deliverance from the clutch of slavery. The extremely hostile environment is handled by the narrator out of his own sense of maturity. Years long exposure to hatred and hostility, fear of lynching, despair and excruciating agony implant steadily in the narrator power and patience. He decides to face any adverse predicament boldly. At the same time he is unknowingly and unconsciously optimistic about the increasing prospect of buying freedom for himself through the grace of luck and the mercy of abolitionists.

John Oldfield expresses his doubt as to the very authenticity of Equiano's narrative. He warns every reader that slave narrative cannot be reliable wholeheartedly. It is necessary to think seriously about the narrative account and its

proximity with the autobiographical thematic content. Oldfield argues:

Authenticity was another key word associated with slave testimony. We entertain no doubt of the general authenticity of this very intelligent African's interesting story. The quality of the writing itself raised an important related issue. Authenticity and meditation, in relation to both story and style, were central questions in the reception of slave narratives at the time of publication, and ever since. When, in the 1970s, historians of slavery and literary critics began applying narrative analysis to the body of transatlantic slave narratives, they granted them a new and higher status as a literary genre. (5)

Though slave narrative abounds with autobiographical details, its veracity is occasionally questionable. It would be problematical if anyone relies on the narrative account of slave narrative wholeheartedly. But that does not mean Oldfield is highly dismissive of the relevance and significance of slave narrative. Certain degree of autobiographical elements is veiled by the aura of fiction. In the moment of liberation, the narrator tends to express his happiness which can graphically color the reality regarding the horror of the Middle Passage.

Marcus Wood adds that sometimes ethnographic consciousness of the narrator is reflected. The narrators of the majority of slave narratives have the authentic experience of travelling across continents. So in various moods of momentary happiness, the narrators can lose contact the horrifying reality which is communicable by all account. Marcus Wood makes the following remarks regarding to the side of slave narrative:

Slave ship has been more adapted and played with than any other

image generated by Atlantic slavery, and my feeling is that it may be all played out, that it may be on the point of cultural exhaustion. What sort of icon can hold up after such unremitting processes of recirculation? There must come a point when the semiotic well runs dry, when the stuffing is knocked out of it and we cannot see the wood for the trees, or the slaves for the banana boxes, bottles of blood, tar fetishes, animal skulls, excrement or gasoline cans. It is pointless to rock that particular boat any more. Slave ship was simply incapable of bearing the weight of yet another set of borrowed robes.

(172)

Marcus Wood reflects on the cluster of images which are expressive and communicative. Though the actual message cannot be communicated straightforwardly in the image sequence, certain degree of blurred or vague message can easily be perceived. Perspective blurs but the confounding message remains strong enough to appeal and affect readers.

Brychhan Carey treats Olaudah Equiano's narrative as an expression of spiritual voyage. The more he is involved in the journey which he undertakes while working with his masters, the more wisdom he develops. In parallel to the literal journey of Equiano, spiritual journey also begins. With regard to this, Carey makes the following point:

By contrast, Olaudah Equiano's role as an active abolitionist has never been in doubt. His interesting Narrative has been categorized as autobiography, spiritual narrative, voyage literature, and abolitionist polemic, and it is only recently that critics have placed it in the context of contemporary literary works. Equiano subverts

representations of cannibalism in order to expose slavery itself as a form of anthropology, with England as a devourer of Africans. By dislodging cannibalism from the putative realm of the real, Equiano's textual strategies suggest that anthropophagy is primarily a discursive construct and therefore subject to Equiano's own skillful textual manipulations. (5)

As claimed by Carey, Equiano's narrative is a polemical piece. It is subversive of the narrative of cannibalism. Actually, Africans are not cannibalistic. On the contrary, it is the white slave holders whose actions seem to be cannibalistic. The violence and torture to which the white slave holders subject the Black slaves gives the inkling of their cannibalistic intention. The only mindset that drives the white slaveholders is to exploit slaves to the optimum point. Without dehumanizing the slaves, the vindictive ego of the white is not gratified.

Another popular slave narrative, *The History of Mary Prince*, has attracted the attentions of various reviewers and critics. The appealing narrative account and the optimistic tone of the narrator after emancipation are the charming aspects of the text. Sandra Pouchet Paquet examines the text in the light of how the public self-consciousness of the slave narrative and the private self-consciousness of the slave are blended. Paquet briefly gives expression to the following view in regard to this aspect:

While Prince's original language is partially lost in translation from an oral to a written text, what remains is an authorial voice that fuses the public self-consciousness of the slave narrative with the private self-consciousness of the slave. The central focus of her narrative is slavery as a lived historical reality. But Mary Prince is as much the

subject of her narrative as slavery is. The two levels of discourse are woven with rare configurational power. Prince is no neutral passive recorder but rather a creative active shaper of her life story. (12)

Slavery is portrayed as a lived historical reality. To avoid the disinterestedness of the readers of Prince's time, this historical reality is intensified. The strong and undaunted authorial voice exists side by side with the sympathetically motivated language. The narrative's sharp exterior focus on slavery coincides with the personal and the interior. Slavery is the determinant of consciousness and the crucible of conscience in Mary Prince's life.

Douglass Hall is immensely appreciative of Mary Prince's narrative. West Indies is portrayed as the homeland which nourishes Princes' fervent longing for return to homeland. It is this undying sense of returning to one's past that constitutes the core component of narrative. The following throws light on this aspect of Hall's analytical account:

Mary Prince's narrative reveals a profound identification with the West Indies as a territorial cradle. The trope of return to one's native land is fully formed here as a return to the West Indies-past, present, and future. Prince is a West Indian slave born of slaves; her estranged past and necessary future is located geographically and historically in the West Indies. England is a means to an end; it is not the fulfillment of her dream of freedom. (3)

The recurrent sense of identification with territorial cradle drives the narrator forward in her hope of deliverance from slavery. The geographical integrity and historical root are two things that exert profound sense of influence on her. The entire narrative is subtly linked to this possibility of emancipation. The journey of

*Mary Prince* is fraught with the promise and actuality of emancipation.

The theme of self-assertion and longing with reconnection with homeland exist side by side, making the entire narrative a dynamic expression of ex-slave's pride and pathos. Concentrating on this facet of the narrative, Marjorie Pryse adds:

Mary Prince's narrative modulates between an aggressive assertion of self as an uncompromising arbiter of value on behalf of an oppressed community and a longing for reconnection with an ideal Caribbean community. It is an ideal, as Thomas Pringle's *Supplement* informs us that would restore a freedom-loving heart and a broken body to the safety and security of a loving husband in a West Indian landscape. It is charged with the necessity for radical social change. (4)

The tortured self finds instant outlet. The narrator is torn between despair and dignity, commitment and self-abnegation and firm sense of self-consciousness. The narrator wants to be free but she is trapped in the bondage of slavery. The vision of emancipation and the compulsion created by slavery collide drastically. As expected by the narrator, radical change seldom occurs in society which is divided racially. That is why it is necessary for narrator to compromise with the adverse situation.

Sylvia Wynter examines the narrative of *Mary Prince* in the light of its language. She claims that the language of this slave narrative bears dual characteristics. Vernacular and literary nature of language is traceable in the entire narrative. The presence of vernacular does not harm the literary standard of the narrative. Within the periphery this interpretation, Wynter expresses her view:

Mary Prince's speaking voice, transformed into a literate text, prefigures narrational aspects of primary autobiographical texts in

modern Caribbean writing. It stands at the crossroads of the black vernacular and the literate white text, of the spoken and written word, of oral and printed forms of literary discourse. It is a site of resistance and accommodation among different traditions, languages, and cultures, between Europe and Africa in the Caribbean and in Great Britain, and between colony and metropolis. (14)

The slave narrative is not dominated by univocal voice. It contains multifarious voices. The authoritarian voice of slaveholder and subdued voice of slave both exist abundantly in the narrative. Slave narrative has its own literary standard. Its vernacular traits do not detract from its merit. It serves as the common vessel of communication. The common bond of sympathy that engages the polyphonic arrangement of the text is the unmaking of slavery as a legally sanctioned social and economic institution.

Moria Ferguson carefully examines the use of direct speech in the narrative of *Mary Prince*. Ferguson contends that the repeated use of direct speech aims at creating an aura of resistance. The narrative has dialogic structure which offers profound scope for various interpretive possibilities. Ferguson elucidates the point further:

In her narrative, *Mary Prince* uses direct and reported speech to create the background necessary for her own voice. She repeats and refashions the words of resistance that are the legacy of her own community, giving special attention to the words of love and support from her mother, her father, and her husband. Self is crafted in dialogue with the voices of fellow slaves and the voices of the world that opposes it. The dialogic structure of her narrative is closely

intertwined with the performance-oriented, story-telling aspects of her narrative. (16)

The self that the narrator projects in the narrative is embedded in the very language she employs in the narrative. The subjectivity of the narrator is shaped by the language she is compelled to use. She has to consider many things to describe events with the expectation of fostering sense of resistance. The choice of direct speech is instrumental in highlighting the historical sense of urgency to launch resistance. The narrator gives direct speech to her characters to highlight a conflict. Such mode of description gives depth and tone to a character.

Although all these critics and reviewers examined *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah and The History of Mary Prince* from different points of view and then arrived at several findings and conclusions, none of them notice the issue of how romanticism, religious reforms and abolitionist appeal of slave narratives pave the way for the end of slavery. Racism generates various actualities and possibilities of discriminations. These discriminations set the stage for the psychological as well as the cultural injury of the excluded and marginalized groups, chiefly the Black. Both the slave narratives explore how the pervading spirit of romanticism, liberationist program, abolitionist appeal jointly create conducive atmosphere for the emancipation of slaves from the clutch of slavery. Throughout both the slave narratives, the encounter between master and slave continues to grow in the midst of hostility and hatred with sporadic cases of liberal treatment at the hand of some masters. Thus the prospect of emancipation discussed and described in both the narratives bears direct link to the ideology of romanticism.

The researcher makes use of various remarks and viewpoints of romanticists on the subject of reform, liberalization, natural freedom and the power of free mind.

The views of romantic writers, thinkers and poets on the subject of free creative mind, power of imagination, natural freedom contribute to the emergence of the prospect of emancipation from slavery. William Cowper produces various discourses on spiritual growth. He pinpoints that everyone has the potentiality for spiritual growth. According to Cowper, not only the white master but the slave also has the potentiality for spiritual growth. In Cowper's view, both slave and slave holder can exploit their inherent talent for spiritual growth. Spiritual pursuit serves as a means to deflect depression and melancholy. Cowper says "deliverance for adherents of God's ways is celebrated as a process of spiritual salvation/liberation experienced within the calm retreats of domestic bliss far removed from the chaotic world of strife"(72).

This model coincided with the deliverance narratives published by slaves and anticipated the autobiographical conversation genre favored by romantic poets, such as Coleridge and Wordsworth. Cowper argues that many social institutions and other restrictive norms damage brotherhood. He indirectly says that slavery that developed as social institutions damaged brotherhood. In his work entitled *Task*, he elaborates how social regimes and inhuman social organizations destroy the prospect of brotherhood and humanity. In this regard, Cowper adds these remarks:

Since God, he declares never meant that man should scale the heavens by strides of human wisdom, scientific discoveries, philosophical dictums and hypotheses merely function as buckets dropped into empty wells, growing old in drawing nothing up. Furthermore the poet suggests that in their use of elaborate and delusive rhetoric, such investigations insidiously destroy the natural international brotherhood of man. (77)

Cowper is keen on cultivating the prospect of humanity and brotherhood. He holds many bad social practices and institutional barriers responsible for the division of society into slaves and slave holder. Though this vision of Cowper does not end slavery immediately, it surely paves the way for the creation of favorable atmosphere for the abolition of slavery.

Helen Thomas's view on how romanticism contributed to the evolution of the abolitionist movement serves as the methodological basis for this research. Thomas says "In its application of some of the major strands of postcolonial, cultural and post-structural theory, this study relocates the Romantic era within a highly complex period that witnessed both the culmination of England's participation in the slave trade and the emergence of pervasive theories of racial differences"(83). The discourse of romanticism carries many political and nonpolitical voices within its subtexts. Helen Thomas makes the following view in this connection:

The discourse of the spirit employed within a selection of works by the first generation Romantic poets like Coleridge, Wordsworth and Blake suggests that the language of radical dissenting Protestantism played a major role in the development of Romantic poetry.

Together with the radical liberationists demands contained within Mary Wollstonecraft's texts, these works indicate Romanticism's heterogeneous interaction with liberationist and, at times, abolitionist ideology. (84)

Radical sense of dissent assumed by romanticists is undoubtedly contributive to the growing abolitionist voice. Some romanticists were vocal against the oppressive measures. They were critical of tradition, dogmatic norm, and social conformism.

The dissenting voice is directed to many social injustice and oppression that are discussed widely in the majority of romantic discourse.

For both the romanticists and slave narrators, the need to liberalize many oppressive forces and the urgent need to abolish slavery as the worst social institutions go in parallel till the actualization of the emancipations of slaves. Mary Wollstonecraft's contention that woman too has right to natural freedom and every human being has the right to freedom regardless of race, culture and ideology lays the foundation for the anti-abolitionist movement. This view is cited below:

With their emphasis on spiritual discourse, epiphanic moments of divine witness and actual and figural concepts of captivity and emancipation, these texts demonstrate an intricate relationship with the literary framework appropriated by the slave narratives. In a sense, therefore, these seemingly disparate literary movements may be seen as products of the same historical influences. However, whilst the works by the Romantics and the slaves determined an inscription of a self-authorized socio-historical self, they prescribed two very different kinds of literary enterprise and motives, and were intended for radically different audiences. (85)

The language of radical dissenting Protestantism provided the Romantics with convenient tropes of metaphorical captivity and liberation, the narratives by the slaves registered the very real experience of transportation and enslavement and carried with them overt political messages of emancipation.

In *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft equates the condition of women with that of the oppressed slaves. She emphasizes the “morally undesirable effects of sexism/slavery upon slaveholders and husbands”(87). She is

of the view that women may be convenient slaves, but slavery will have its constant effect. It degrades the master and the abject dependent. She admits that the violation of the sacred rights of humanity is effected by women's subordination. She is straightforward in pinpointing the enforced sexual abuse suffered by female slaves at the hands of their phantocratic masters. Her view is presented below:

Is one half of the human species, like the poor African slaves, to be subject to prejudices that brutalize them? Marriage is a form of legal slavery not dissimilar to that endured by Africans in the British West Indies. In legal and sociopolitical terms, a wife could not own property, bring legal suits, or expect guaranteed custody of her own children. (87)

Wollstonecraft's discussion of female subjugation rested basically on the dynamics of emancipatory and abolitionist discourse. Indeed, her account of the condition of women and slaves suggest that any liberationist movement and approach is able to produce change of far reaching proportion.

The leading romantic poet S. T. Coleridge, in his *Lecture on the Slave Trade*, launches a critique of the trade in terms of its creation and maintenance of unnecessary or artificial wants. He defines "the produce of others' labor such as the Sugars, Rum, Cotton, log-wood, cocoa, coffee, pimento, ginger as a major source of the nation's miseries and vices"(91). In the same discourse, Coleridge criticizes government policy concerning the slave trade, highlighting the fact that the import duties of such slave produce contributed a substantial amount to the government's revenue. It was precisely the marketing of such artificial wants which has precipitated the increasing popularity of coffee houses throughout Britain.

In “Rime of the Ancient Mariner” Coleridge describes “a journey of guilt-ridden sailor who seeks forgiveness for his involuntary killing of an albatross, Southey’s Sailor relates the tale of his journeying on board a ‘Guinea-man towards the salve coast, the capture of a cargo of 300 negro slaves and their refusal to ear”(93). In Coleridge’s poem specific identification of the slave trade as a sin is absent. In the following extract revivalist spirit and anti-slavery voice coexist side by side in a piece of romantic creation:

Coleridge’s poetical schema prescribes both a revival and revision of spiritual autobiography established by radical dissenting Protestantism, and reveals the subtle relationship between the emergence of antislavery ideology and the development of the Romantic genre. The discourse of the spirit, with its connotations of liberationist ideology and identity configuration, had a distinct influence upon a body of writing which we have come to know as romantic as well as the body of lesser-known work referred to as the slave narrative. (103)

Romantic poets’ fusion of liberationist and self-authorizing dialogue propound dissenting voice that contributes to the dissemination of rebellion. On several occasions, the dissenting voice remains silenced by other revolutionary ideals. Their attitudes remain vague and ineffectual.

Coleridge’s attitude regarding abolitionism changed, however, during the period beginning around 1808. He criticized his fellow abolitionists as frantic in his discussion with Thomas Pringles, a member of the Abolition Society in England:

I utterly condemn your frantic practice of declaiming about their colonizers Rights to the Blacks. They ought to be forcibly reminded of

the state in which their brethren in Africa still are, and taught to be thankful for the Providence that has placed them within means of grace. It is in no way justifiable. Slaves who are brought to British plantations are happier than those in their homelands is obviously contradictory. (54)

The justification of slavery in terms of Christian discourse as the process of humanization is not without reasons. His estrangement from the anti-slavery ideology became stronger from around 1827 and reached its peak in 1833. Coleridge read many race theories which are intensively published in Europe around the turn of the century.

Coleridge's criticism against the slave trade is primarily a political protest against injustice in society which was seen as a vice that brought about dishonor to the British nation. His sensibility is essentially dissenting: as protester-lecturer in Bristol with a keen sense of public duty he condemned the British government for its slave policy. He is also dissenting in religious terms. As a Unitarian, his anti-slavery campaign is in accord with other religious movements fighting for abolition. The nonconformists such as Quakers, Unitarians and Deists are active in this movement. Denouncing the slave trade as a social vice gives them a rare chance of a well-timed political appeal for dissenters in the late eighteenth century.

Coleridge expects in this context the political and social reaction to his anti-slavery arguments and an enlightening of the British mind by humanistic sensibilities. However, the prospect of achieving the goal of human equality between slaves and white people is for Coleridge unrealistic. His awareness of this prospect stems from the ideological influence of late eighteenth century humanism.

Christian ethics and the intrinsic sense of order in the political and social system are the basic standpoints that sustained the spirit of the British people and

their society in this age. This issue of human equality is again the main point of discussion when the Emancipation Act was passed in 1833. Aside from any theoretical concerns over egalitarianism, people's emotional reactions to this matter of the realization of true equality between white and black were not only unrealistic but undesirable. Coleridge's shift in attitude towards abolitionism between 1795 and 1833 was fundamentally linked to these sensibilities of the white Europeans.

British Romanticism on the whole shared a similar sensibility with the artistic discourses on slavery. The subjects of captivation-emancipation circulate the notions of frustrated freedom, liberty, and equality. William Blake in *The Four Zoas* depicts "the slave grinding at the mill /and the captive in chains. The conflict between captivity and liberty was an important theme of the Romantics, whose artistic duty included the task of emancipating captivated human minds, which was to serve as a precursor to delivering human beings out of captivity and into freedom"(67). Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* is a study of the nature of slavery. Asia asks Demogorgon about the dialectic of mastery and slavery. The basic relationship of human beings in romantic discourse has "the nature of power relationships, such as man and woman, the rich and the poor, the wise and the idiot, and the master and the slave. The ongoing dilemma in its conflict was in fact what sustained the creative energy of the romantic subject" (76). Liberty is an important theme of the Romantics, whose artistic duty included the task of emancipating captivated human minds.

In the anti-slavery British discourse in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries "the limitations of the egalitarian viewpoint came to light when the equality of slaves proved almost impossible in practical terms. Although slave trading ceased in 1807, slavery as a social system persisted in Britain despite the

sizeable number of anti-slavery controversies”(101). Society accepts the system, and race theories accept racial discrimination. “An understanding of the civilized status of black people maintained by anti-slavery campaigners such as Thomas Clarkson and John Newton already exists to counter the compromising trend of British society which accepted slavery”(61). The moral limitations of anti-slavery discourse are not exactly an ideological flaw but rather a matter of historical necessity.

This research has four chapters. The first chapter introduces issue, elaborates hypothesis and quotes the different views of critics and reviewers. Typical characteristics of the author and some of his works are discussed. The first chapter mentions the point of departure and the purpose of the research. The second chapter deals with the proximity between romanticism and anti-slavery movement. The third chapter is concerned with the thorough analysis of two slave narratives, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, and *The History of Mary Prince*. The researcher analyzes both the narratives by adopting the insights of reform and freedom as discussed by liberationists and romanticists. The last chapter projects the conclusive findings of the research.

## II. Slavery and Romantic Imagination in *The History of Mary Prince* and *The Interesting Narrative of The Life of Olaudah Equiano*

### Analysis of *The History of Mary Prince*

Romantic conception of life, freedom, dignity and humanity underscores the struggles of black slaves for freedom from slavery and servitude. The abolitionist voice rings loudly throughout the narrative of Mary Prince. Departing from the eighteenth century slave narrative which is dominated by the religious and spiritual journey of Black slaves, *The History of Mary Prince* projects the growing assertiveness of the Black narrator. Far from enduring every disaster, brutality and dehumanizing activities of white slave holders, Mary prince gives expression to her voice. She does not live in a cowered form no matter how harsh and harrowing the condition of living and working.

*The narrator of The History of Mary Prince* is sold right from her childhood along with her mother. She is witness to not only her suffering but the sufferings of her mother too. At first she is sold to a captain Darrel Williams. While working in the household of Darrel Williams, the narrator comes to know two things which produce profound influence in her life. Mrs. Williams is kind to her slaves. In no way, she scolds and strikes her slaves. But Mr. Williams is dreadful and unpredictably aggressive. It is difficult to surmise when he gets angry and how he reacts. Mrs. Williams' kindness serves as a counterpoint to the unpredictable aggression of her husband. Having seen the economic pressures in the house of Mr. Williams, the narrator had worked as the hired servant in the house of Mrs. Pruden. Mary Prince shares a good rapport not only with her slave friends but with her Mistress like Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Pruden. Years pass swiftly but the swift passage of time brings calamity in the house of Mr. Williams. Mrs. Williams dies, leaving every slave in a

miserable condition. Following her death, Williams sells Mary Prince because he is in need of more money to marry second time. At the fact of being sold to Captain I, she reacts pathetically.

Working for a long time in the house of Mr. Williams and Mrs. Pruden, she is emotionally and sentimentally attached. She works as if her master's house is her own house. But Williams' decision to sell her to Captain I damages her emotional attachment and sentimental urge. This is an evidence of how slavery ruins the emotional and sentimental attachment of slaves to the house and family of their masters and mistresses. In this way, the narrative of Mary Prince portrays how horribly harmful slavery is. The following extract throws light on this issue.

When I reached the house, I went in directly to Miss Betsey. I found her in great distress; and she cried out as soon as she saw me, oh, Mary! My father is going to sell you all to raise money to marry that wicked woman. You are my slaves, and he has no right to sell you; but it is all to please her. She then told me that my mother was living with her father's sister at a house close by and I went there to see her. It was a sorrowful meeting; and we lamented with a great and sore crying our unfortunate situation. Here comes one of my picaninnies! She said, the moment I came in, one of the poor slave-brood who are to be sold tomorrow. (3)

There was good attachment between the narrator and the daughter of her master. Mrs. Pruden has also high regard of the narrator. Though there is a huge racial disparity amongst them, a kind of sentimental bond is forged between the narrator and Pruden. By the same token, there is also a fine intimacy between the daughter of Williams and the narrator. The daughter of Williams does not like to lose Mary Prince. But nobody

can stop the impending fate of Mary Prince. The emotional and sentimental bond is ruptured by slavery. On this basis also, it becomes imperative to think about eliminating slavery from society.

Slavery is represented not as the cause of the dehumanization of black slaves but also the cause of the white slave holder. Miss Betsey is on good terms with Mary Prince. Though Betsey is a white and Prince is black, there is a sort of close bond between them. Friendship and emotional attachment can arise across race and culture. Betsey belongs to the white community whereas Mary Prince comes from African background. She is the relative of Mary's white mistress. Despite the huge gap between them, there is true love and understanding between them. At the time of the parting of Mary Prince, Miss Betsey sheds tears and laments at the condition of being separated from her. The following extract presents the case in a lifelike manner:

The black morning at length came; it came too soon for my poor mother and us. Whilst she was putting on us the new osnaburgs in which we were to be sold, she said, in a sorrowful voice, see, I am shrouding my poor children; what a task for a mother! She then called Miss Betsey to take leave of us. I am going to carry my little chickens to market. Take your last look of them; maybe you will see them no more. Oh, my poor slaves! My own slaves! Said Betsey, you belong to me; and it grieves my heart to part with you. Miss Betsey kissed us all, and when she left us, my mother called the rest of the slaves to bid us good bye. (3)

Slavery is the sole cause of the disintegration of the families of slaves. When Darrel Williams sold Mary Prince to Captain I, she is separated from her mother. Mary Prince and her mother would never get a chance to see each other; meet each other

and share their sufferings and joys each other. The sale of a daughter or mother ruptures permanently the familial bond and affection. Slavery tears the family asunder. For this reason also, slavery is condemned and the narrator wants to make people aware of the harmful effect of slavery. In addition, the warmth and affection that develops between the white mistress and slave like Mary Prince are also destroyed irreparably by slavery. The sale and purchase of a slave puts the families of the slaves in precarious condition. When the families of slaves fall apart, they would suffer from psychological as well as emotional injury.

The separation of children and parents of slave families is the worst effect of slavery. A daughter is sold forcibly by a white slave holder without caring for the emotional loss and shock felt by the mother of the daughter who is sold. At the separation of parents and children, there is heard a heart-rending expression of lamentation, agony and grief. The heart-broken condition of a mother of a sold daughter is indescribable. The following extract is expressive of the heart-rending outburst of Mary Prince's mother:

We followed my mother to the market-place, where she placed us in a row against a large house, with our backs to the wall and our arms folded across our breasts. I, as the eldest, stood first, Hannah next to me, then Dinah; and our mother stood beside, crying over us. My heart throbbed with grief and terror so violently, that I pressed my hands quite tightly across my breast, but I could not keep it still, and it continued to leap as though it would burst out of my body. But who cared for that? Did one of the many bystanders, who were looking at us so carelessly, think of the pain that wrung the hearts of the Negro woman? (4)

The pathetic cry of the divided family members is the most heart-rending voice. Slavery and slave trade are wholly responsible for the disintegration of family. By emphasizing the pathetic outcry of the divided family of slave, Mary Prince tries to mobilize public perception and conscience towards the abolition of slavery. In addition, the slave mother, whose daughter is sold, cannot find any mechanism to cope with her agony and excruciating pain. On after the other, only helplessness and loveless surround slave mothers and fathers whose sons and daughters are sold. They are taken to such a far place that it is virtually impossible to meet them.

Under slavery, the white slaver holders forget that black slaves also have human qualities. They are disdainful of the fact that black slaves have humanity. The white slave holders treat black slaves as though they are no less than animals which can be sold and traded with other things. This sort of perception brings the process of dehumanization. The narrator is steadily aware of the harmful and harrowing effect of slavery. The following extract is illustrative of how slaves are dehumanized:

At length the vendue master, who was to offer us for sale like sheep or cattle, arrived and asked my mother which was the eldest. She said nothing, but pointed to me. He took me by the hand, and let me out into the middle of the street, and turning me slowly round, exposed me to the view of those who attended the vendue. I was soon surrounded by strange men, who examined and handled me in the same manner that a butcher would a calf or a lamb he was about to purchase, and who talked about my shape and size in like words as if I could no more understand their meaning than the dumb beasts. I was then put up to sale. (4)

The harsh and horrible process of dehumanization is clearly reflected in the above-cited extract. The new white master who buys Mary Prince treats her as though he has bought chattel. To the white master, she is none other than a chattel. She is not taken as living human beings. On the contrary, she is held as the private asset of white slave holder. At the condition of being sold and purchased, the narrator loses the sense of being a human being. Her master adds the tag of being a sellable commodity over which he has full control. He can do anything with this commodity. This is an extreme case of dehumanization.

Brutalization is another horror created by slavery. After the narrator is sold to Captain I, she is taken to the home. In Captain I's house, Mary Prince sees horrifying conditions. She finds a female slave named Hetty. Hetty works from the dusk to the dawn without any rest. But still Mrs. I, the wife of the Captain is not satisfied. In one night she is whiplashed by Captain I without any fault of her own. Hetty does lots of household and outside chores. The narrator says "A few minutes after my arrival she came in from milking the cows, and put the sweet-potatoes on for supper. She then fetched home the sheep, and penned them in the fold; drove home the cattle, and staked them about the pond side; fed cow their suppers, prepared the beds and undressed the children and laid them to sleep"(6). Hetty is an example of a hardworking female slave who works from the dawn to the dusk. One night she is whiplashed by the Captain I. Having seen the cruel whiplashing of Hetty by the Captain I, Mary Prince is profoundly shocked and terrified. The following extract is an index to the callous case of the brutalization of slaves by their white masters:

On hearing this, my master started up from his bed, and just as he was, in his shirt, ran down stairs with a long cow-skin in his hand. I heard immediately after, the cracking of the thong, and the house rang to the

shrieks of poor Hetty, who kept crying out, oh Massa! o Massa! Me dead. Massa! Have mercy upon me-do not kill me outright. This was a sad beginning for me. I sat up upon my blanket, trembling with terror, like a frightened hound, and thinking that my turn would come next. At length the house became still, and I forgot for a little while all my sorrows by falling fast asleep. (6)

This cruelty and mercilessness, which Mary Prince saw, compel her to hate slave trade and slavery. Prince does not like to see thousands of slaves losing their lives. She inwardly inculcates the vision of emancipation. She asks several questions to herself about the harsh and horrendous effects of slavery. How can she hope to survive slavery if her master goes berserk at the slightest provocation and beats female slaves terribly? From her childhood, she witnesses this case of harsh whiplashing. That is why she develops abolitionist voice. Inwardly she develops the voice of defiance and disdain. Though she is not in a strong position to oppose the brutality of her master, she makes up her mind to challenge it, appeal people to remove it and create an atmosphere of emancipation.

In the house of Captain I, the narrator's second master, the mistress flogs and then licks the body of Mary Prince. Prince is aware of the puzzling activity of her mistress. At the slightest provocation, the mistress goes to the extent of inflicting harsh and harrowing punishment. Unknowingly, when Prince happens to commit a small error, the mistress goes to the extent of making Prince naked. Her mistress's inhuman and embarrassing style of giving punishment to her slaves for their trivial blunders itself is an evidence of how fallen and senseless she is. The following extract exemplifies this point:

My mistress was not contented with using the whip but often pinched their cheeks and arms in the cruelest manner. My pity for these poor boys was soon transferred to myself; for I was licked, and flogged, and pinched by her pitiless fingers in the neck and arms, exactly as they were. To strip me naked-to hang me up by the wrists and lay my flesh open with the cow-skin, was an ordinary punishment for even a slight offence. My mistress often robbed me too of the hours that belong to sleep. She used to sit up very late, frequently even until morning. (7)

The mistress of the narrator is devoid of sense and sagacity. While punishing slaves, she lost even the slightest trace of humanity. In the course of punishing slaves for their minor lapses, their mistress grew so inhuman that she is insensitivity personified. The natural, normal and morally admissible conscience is all forgotten by her. She only knows one thing that is how to punish slaves. It seems she is mechanical in her relation with her slaves. She is of the impression that the only way to deal with her slaves is by punishing them. Except punishment, there is no way to put them under control. The sentiment, affection and understanding migrate from her mind. She is just the vessel through which her urge, anger and irritation flow.

In the fit of sporadic and unpredictable aggression, some white slave holders killed their slaves too. Captain I often overreacts to a slight lapse of his slave. Once, Hetty inadvertently commits a minor error which incurs unexpected tragedy in her life. Overwhelmed by whims and anger, Captain beats her arrogantly. He inflicts harsh agony in her mercilessly. He makes Hetty naked and whiplashes callously. At that time, Hetty is pregnant. He is too insensitive and satanic in flaunting his aggression towards Hetty. He does not bother to feel that Hetty is pregnant and if she

is beaten and whiplashed, she can abort her child. But Captain I does not think about this side. He inflicts injury and torture on Hetty. Hetty aborts and after a few days she dies. Mary Prince herself witnesses this scene of murderous whiplashing. From this moment onward, the practice of slavery loomed as the most disgraceful and tragic disgrace society. The following extract describes how murderous and violent white slave holders sometimes become:

My master flew into a terrible passion, and ordered the poor creature to be stripped quite naked, notwithstanding her pregnancy, and to be tied up to a tree in the yard. He then flogged her as hard as he could lick, both with the whip and cow-skin, till she was all over streaming with blood. He rested, and then beat her again and again. Her shrieks were terrible. The consequence was that poor Hetty was brought to bed before her time and was delivered after severe labor of a dead child. Ere long her body and limbs swelled to a great size; and she lay on a mat in the kitchen, till the water burst out of her body and she died. (7)

When the narrator comes to see the tragic end of Hetty, she is frightened that the same and similar fate can occur to her. In the course of working in the house of Captain I, she is almost daily treated terribly. Captain always bruises and brutalizes her. She herself says “For five years after this I remained in his house, and almost daily received the same harsh treatment. At length he put me on board a sloop, and to my great joy sent me away to Turk’s island. In this way, Mary Prince tends to evoke the voice of pathos in the narrative.

Having seen the belligerent nature of Captain I, Mary Prince runs away from his home and goes to meet her father and mother. She talks to herself and says that

she will not endure the atrocity and injustice done by the slave holder to her. Her attempt to run away from her master's home is an index to her resistance to the harrowing and horrible effect of slavery. She does not allow herself to be engulfed by the story side of slavery and slave trade. That is why she is vocal and vehement. She seeks liberation which is the ultimate dream of her life. Silently or openly she seeks to defy the sequence of sufferings and agony. Slavery is a hell to her. Her attempt to run away from the bondage of slavery is the spirit of resistance that steadily wells up in her life. The following extract is suggestive of this point:

When we got home, my poor father said to Captain I, sir I am sorry that my child should be forced to run away from her owner; but the treatment she has received is enough to break her heart. The sight of her wounds has nearly broken mine. I entreat you, for the love of God, to forgive her for running away, and that you will be a kind master to her in future. Captain I said I was used as well as I deserved, and that I ought to be punished for running away. I then took courage and said that I could stand the flogging no longer; that I was weary of my life and therefore I had run away to my mother. (9)

The narrator runs away from the home of Captain I. She is not in a position to go against the hard-hearted man like her master. Upon seeing the plight and predicament of Hetty, she decides to eschew the impending tragic fate. That is why she runs away from the home of her master. Though she cannot be free, she at least wants to accept peaceful and secure conditions in which she can work for her master. She is not strong enough to challenge servitude. But she needs secure and peaceful condition. Her escape from the home of Captain can be understood as an attempt to express her

sense of resistance. At the same time, it can also be taken as the expression of her love for freedom.

Physical torture to which the narrator is subjected is the main source of horror. Despite repeated plea and pleading of the slaves, Captain I does not loosen his heart and extend a gesture of excuse and affection. The narrator says “ Nothing could touch his hard heart- neither sighs, nor tears, nor prayers, nor streaming blood; he was deaf to our cries, and careless of our sufferings. Mr. D. has often stripped me naked, hung me up by the wrists and beat me with the cow-skin, with his own hand, till my body was raw with gashes”(10). On the face of such aggression, she hardly hopes to live peacefully even in the home of her master.

Brutality under slavery is exemplified transparently in the case of old Daniel. Old Daniel is a slave of Captain I. Daniel is lame. He cannot work efficiently like other workers. Having seen the miserable condition and physical deformity of Daniel, Captain does not lag behind in inflicting pain in Daniel. He uses rod to beat Daniel. He is solely driven by the proverb ‘spare the rod and spoil a slave’. The following extract describes how the case of Daniel marks as the apex of brutality under slavery:

Mr. D had a slave called old Daniel, whom he used to treat in the cruelest manner. Poor Daniel was lame in the hip, and could not keep up with the rest of the slaves; and our master would order him to be stripped and laid down on the ground, and our master would order him to be stripped and laid down on the ground, and have him beaten with a rod of rough briar till his skin was quite red and raw. He would then call for a bucket of salt, and fling upon the raw flesh till the man writhed on the ground, like a worm, and screamed aloud

with agony. This poor man's wounds ever healed, and I have often seen them full of maggots. (11)

The way Mr. D punishes Daniel marks the apex of brutality, horror and dehumanization. Any person with a trace of humanity is horror-struck at this level of brutalization. With her own eyes, Mary Prince looked at the brutalization of Daniel and Hetty. She is frightened immensely. This direct experience of brutality implants in her an idea of freedom. Under the yoke of slavery, it is very difficult for her to survive like human beings. Before she is also punished severely by her mistress, Mary Prince had already got a glimpse of brutalization to which her slave allies were subjected. This episode marks the beginning of her orientation towards freedom.

In the course of time, Mary Prince comes to work in the home of Mr. John Wood. Antigua is the place where Mr. Wood had a large plantation. Though she is afflicted with rheumatism, she does not hesitate to impress her master by doing maximum numbers of chores. In this condition also she has not abandoned the idea that one day she will be free. From Captain D's house to the house of Mr. John Wood, she feels as though she had experienced the new lease of time, new taste of slight freedom. Crippled by rheumatism, she is reduced to take the support of a stick. Yet she does not lag behind in doing all the household chores and tasks. She says but "I soon fell ill of the rheumatism, and grew so very lame that I was forced to walk with a stick. I got the Saint Anthony's fire, also, in my left leg, and became quite a cripple. No one cared much to come near me, and I was ill a long time; for several months I could not lift the limb. I got rheumatism by catching cold at the pond side" (14). Surrounded by this kind of chronic illness, Mary Prince inculcates the vision that one day she would be free from the clutch of slavery.

Mary Prince gets another idea of freedom by looking at the high-handed manners of a mulatto woman named Mrs. Wolcox. She is driven by the belief that she is a mulatto light-skinned woman who wants to dominate other slaves. She speaks in arrogant tone and wants to control other slaves like the narrator. Mary Prince here makes use of the idea of freedom. She argues with herself and says what right Wolcox has to control me because she is also a slave like me. The following extract illustrates the point:

Mrs. Wood, in the meanwhile, hired a mulatto woman to nurse the child; but she was such a fine lady she wanted to be mistress over me. I thought it very hard for a colored woman to have rule over me because I was a slave and she was free. Her name was Martha Wilcox; she was a saucy woman, very saucy; and she went and complained of me, without cause, to my mistress, and made her angry with me. Mrs. Wood told me that if I did not mind what I was about, she would get my master to strip me and give me fifty lashes. The mulatto woman was rejoiced to have power to keep me down. I was sent by Mrs. Wood to be put in the Cage one night, and was next morning flogged. (15)

If Wilcox acts freely despite her servitude, why cannot I argue and interact assertively. This sort of reasoning arises in the narrator. She is rather ready to be flogged than to submit to an arrogant mulatto like Wilcox. While dealing with Wilcox, the narrator happens to inculcate the idea of freedom. She comes to perceive the fact that freedom from servitude, emancipation from slavery is necessary to live with dignity and pride. This is just the flash of awakening that momentarily occurs in the life of Mary Prince. Though she is not prepared fully to follow the track of

freedom, she at least generates the idea of freedom. In this regard, her implicit liking for freedom is relevant.

This realization of the value of freedom goes parallel to the value of money. The narrator knows that money is necessary to buy freedom. She sees no chance to be free without sufficient money to buy her freedom. Even if she runs away and hides, other slave catchers will hunt after her and then she will be forced to live in harsh conditions. So she decides to follow a safe way to buy her freedom. In the absence of her master and mistress, she works overtime in the ship, in other slave holder's house and makes money. She is hopeful that she will make sufficient money to buy her freedom. It is this hope and the vision of freedom that guide her constantly towards the track of freedom. The following extract elucidates her struggles for money which is a safe way to buy freedom:

The way in which I made my money was this. When my master and mistress went from home, as they sometimes did, and left me to take care of the house and premises, I had a good deal of time to myself, and made the most of it. I took in washing, and sold coffee and yams and other provisions to the captains of ships. I did not sit still idling during the absence of my owners; for I wanted, by all honest means, to earn money to buy my freedom. Sometimes I bought a hog cheap on board ship, and sold it for double the money on shore, and I also earned a good deal by selling coffee. By this means, I by degrees acquired a little cash. A gentleman also lent me some to help to buy my freedom. (16)

Bit by bit, the narrator collects money. She collects money through hard work. She uses only the extra time to make money for freedom. She does not feel exhausted and

tired in her struggles towards making money. Hope of freedom, the possibility of freedom and her devotion to the path of freedom are some of the positive sides of the narrator. These are enough evidences for her undying passion for freedom. In this money making process, she notices a horrifying reality. Some Negroes are even forced to work hard on Sabbath day. Even on the religious day of rest, the Negroes are exploited wrongfully by their masters. The narrator compares her condition with that of other Negroes who are forced to work even on the religious day of leisure. Finally she is happy in that she does not have to face this kind of hellish condition.

Mary Prince's interest in individual freedom and freedom from slavery is intensified by her contact with a slave woman who insists her to go to a Methodist meeting for prayer. The growing religious fervor in the Methodist meeting creates an impression of free life. Even in real life, Methodism didactically instructs that god is a light, inner light, inner power of illumination. Race, color and other socio-cultural barriers do not affect people's rush for freedom. This core belief of Methodist followers paves the way for the creation of freedom-orientated atmosphere. Mary Prince sees many things like the confession, guilt on the part of a black man named Henry for his harsh behaviors towards.

The narrator narrates 'one woman prayed; and then they all sung a hymn; then there was another prayer and another hymn; and then they all spoke by turns of their own grief as sinners. The husband of the woman I went with was a black driver. His name was Henry. He confessed that he had treated the slaves very cruelly'(16). The narrator is profoundly influenced by the confessional tone of the man. He goes on to add that "he was compelled to obey the orders of his master. He prayed them all to forgive him, and he prayed that God would forgive him. He said it was a horrid thing for a ranger to have sometimes to beat his own wife or sister; but he must do so if

ordered by his master”(16). The Methodist aura and atmosphere is orientated towards the freedom of soul. It appeals slaves. That is why the majority of slaves frequented their visit to the Methodist meeting of prayer.

Religious force exerts a creative and transformative power in an individual. The guilty slave who was used by his master to beat poor slaves opines his view in this way:

I felt sorry for my sins also. I cried the whole night, but I was too much ashamed to speak. I prayed God to forgive me. This meeting has a great impression on my mind, and led my spirit to the Moravian church; so that when I got back to town, I went and prayed to have my name put down in the Missionaries' book; and I followed the church earnestly every opportunity. I did not then tell my mistress about it; for I knew that she would not give me leave to go. But I felt I must go. Whenever I carried the children their lunch at school, I ran round and went to hear the teachers. (17)

Methodist gathering is the place where slaves usually feel that they have dignity, self-respect and certain meaning in their lives. It is a kind of oasis for them because they forget temporarily the injury and wounds from which they were lacerated. Attending Methodist gathering has become genuine guidelines for slaves. They think that it is the only place which gives them certain sense of direction, meaning and dignity. In addition, it has produced in them the impression that there is something in life which even slavery cannot end. Optimism and hope arise in those slaves who attend Methodist gatherings for prayer.

Mary Prince develops a strong sense of confidence and determination. She tells to herself that she would be one day able to buy her freedom. She has firm belief

that one day God would liberate her from the shackle of slavery. This confidence and faith in God are very important things in her life. All the fear, horror and dreadful premonition of being brutalized by master at the minor lapse are softened and redressed by the aura and atmosphere of Methodist gathering. Over time, Mary Prince finds a Moravian church. She develops acquaintance with Moravian ladies. They encourage her to get baptized. After getting baptized, she undergoes profound transformation which takes her closer to the freedom from slavery. It is in the Moravian church that she knows how heinous and disgraceful slavery is. The following extract is an evidence for this realization:

Moravian ladies taught me to read in the class; and I got on very fast. In this class there were all sorts of people, old and young, grey headed folks and children; but most of them were free people. After we had done spelling, we tried to read in the Bible. After the reading was over, the missionary gave out a hymn for us to sing. I dearly loved to go to the church; it was so solemn. I never knew rightly that I had much sin till I went there. When I found out that I was a great sinner, I was very sorely grieved, and very much frightened. I used to pray God to pardon my sin for Christ's sake, and forgive me for everything I had done amiss. (17)

Mary Prince feels healed. After she comes in contact with the Christina influence, she undergoes gradual transformation. She learns to read the Bible. Most of the women who come to attend sermons in Moravian church are free. She also says that it is delightful to be in the group of free women. Her interaction with free women makes her aware of the value of being free. Methodism and other revivalist influence of Christianity condemn slavery as the corrupt practice. Religion categorically rejects

slavery. This idea affects her a lot. She learns from Moravian church that slavery does not have any strong religious and legal basis. It enables her to raise abolitionist voice. In exploring the secure avenue of freedom, her gathering in Moravian church is very helpful.

Moravian church practices Quaker belief. Quakerism aims at uprooting slavery from the American soil. In this church, Mary Prince meets Daniel James. Daniel James is interested in her and vice versa. Their friendship grows luxuriantly. James is a free man. Previously he was a slave of Mrs. Baker. Through hard work he had earned money when he was a slave of Mrs. Baker. With that money he bought his freedom. Now he is a free man. Soon the friendship between Daniel James and Mary Prince take the form of love and they marry. For finding her husband who is already a free man, Mary Prince is very grateful to the Moravian church and Moravian ladies who educate her. After her marriage with a free black, Mary's confidence increases. She also decides to get freedom at any cost. The following extract describes how she is affected by the free husband whom she finds in the Moravian church:

Sometime after I began to attend the Moravian church, I met with Daniel James, afterwards my dear husband. He was a carpenter and cooper to his trade; an honest, hard-working, decent black man, and a widower. He had purchased his freedom of his mistress, old Mrs. Baker, with money he had earned whilst a slave. When he asked me to marry him, I took time to consider the matter over with myself, and would not say yes till he went to church with me and joined the Moravians. He was very industrious after he bought his freedom and he had hired a comfortable house, and had convenient things about

him. We were joined in marriage about Christmas 1826, in the  
 Moravian Chapel at Spring Gardens, by the Rev. Mr. Olufsen. (17)

At the Moravian Church Mary Prince meets several free women who encourage her. In the same place, she also meets a free Black slave who himself is an example of how a slave can earn freedom. Prince gets as her husband the man who struggles for his freedom and becomes an example of a free black in the society where slavery has taken an institutionalized form. Impressed by her contact with such free people, Mary Prince develops an undying love for freedom. She too wants to buy liberty at any cost. It is through her relationship with free people of the Moravian church, anti-slavery voices of Quakers that positive change occurs in her life. That is why it is imperative to understand her struggle for freedom in the context of all such things. She not only develops awareness of the role and significance of freedom. She also develops anti-slavery outlook. She begins to view slavery as the institution that pushes society to the ruinous path.

Mary Prince's marriage is not taken in positive light by her master and mistress. On the one hand her marriage to a free black man implanted in a firm sense of love for freedom from slavery. On the other, it incurs threat, unnecessary nuisance and even the possibility of whiplashing. Mary Prince's path to liberty is not easy. Her marriage had produced nice impression in her that one day she would be free. But it incurs extreme threat and hatred for her. The narrator herself says "when Mr. Wood heard of my marriage, he flew into a great rage, and sent for Daniel, who was helping to build a house for his old mistress. Mr. Wood asked him who gave him a right to marry a slave of his. My husband said, sir I am a free man and thought I had a right to choose a wife"(17). In this way, she had to face lots of pressures and obstacles.

Implicitly she had to resist all such hurdles for the sake of continuing her journey towards freedom.

Daniel is a free man but Prince is not free. She is still under slavery. Her master and mistress treated her in abusive way. The harsh treatment of her by her mistress and master made Daniel feel bitter. He cannot tolerate the ill-treatment of his wife. But he too is not in a good position to free her. Without getting the consent of her master and mistress, Mary Prince cannot buy her own freedom. She can manage money anyhow. But without taking the consent of John Wood, it is virtually impossible to buy freedom. Undaunted by all the obstacles that come on her way to buying freedom, Mary continues to proceed. But this time also she is unable to get the approval from John Wood. The following extract exemplifies how her wish to buy her freedom is thwarted:

About this time I asked my master and mistress to let me buy my own freedom. With the help of Mr. Burchell, I could have found the means to pay Mr. Wood; for it was agreed that I should afterwards serve Mr. Burchell a while, for it was agreed that I should afterwards serve Mr. Burchell a while, for the cash he was to advance for me. I was earnest in the request to my owners; but their hearts were hard – too hard to consent. Mrs. Wood was angry-she grew quite outrageous- she called me a black devil, and asked me who had put freedom into my head. To be free is very sweet, I said; but she took good care to keep me a slave. I saw her change color, and I left the room. (18)

Though her efforts to achieve freedom do not yield expected result, Mary Prince does not stop dreaming a dream of freedom. In this condition, it can be deduced that she

has an unflinching faith in the power of freedom. Though situation favors her from every side, it is the hard-hearted disposition of her master and mistress that blocks her quest for individual freedom. They have power to hold Mary in the bondage of slavery. So the poor Prince cannot do anything except to impress them with her work so that they can allow her to buy her freedom. Mary does not tend to react badly to her master's hard-hearted manner. She is not too short-sighted to spoil the conditions that are likely to take her to the intended destination.

From moment to moment the idea of freedom flashes in Mary's mind. In the midst of acute suffering and hopelessness, she does not drop the idea of being free soon. After her plea for freedom is rebuffed by her mistress and master, Mary happens to see another possibility. She hears that her master and mistress are going to England. She is quite hopeful that she can get cure in England. Excited by the idea, she expresses her desire to accompany her master and mistress to England. She again cherishes a hope that after her master and mistress returns from England, they would enable her to buy her freedom. Her husband had also entertained this possibility of getting permission to buy freedom. But soon, it turns out to be a false expectation. She herself confesses this bitter truth. She narrates "About this time my master and mistress were going to England to put their son to school, and bring their daughters home; and they took me with them to take care of the child. I was willing to come to England: I thought that by going there I should probably get cured of my rheumatism"(18). She entertains this sort of fantasy which is fully detached from the ground reality.

Mary hints at the perception of her husband too. She adds "my husband was willing for me to come away, for he had heard that my master would free me, and I also hooped this might prove true; but it was all a false report. But in England, she

has to various hassles. The following extract describes how hard it was for her to work there:

When we drew near to England, the rheumatism seized all my limbs worse than ever, and my body dreadfully swelled. When we landed at the Tower, I showed my flesh to my mistress, but she took no great notice of it. We were obliged to stop at the tavern till my master got a house; and a day or two after, my mistress sent me down into the wash-house to learn to wash in the English way. In the West Indies we wash with cold water- in England with hot. I told my mistress I was afraid that putting my hands first into the hot water and then into the cold, would increase the pain in my limbs. The doctor had told my mistress long before I came from the West Indies, that I was a sickly body and the washing did not agree with me. (19)

One after the other, sufferings, body-ache due to rheumatism and constant scolding weaken Mary completely. But she keeps hope without giving expressing to her voice of dissent. The doctor tells her not to use her hands which had swollen joint. Mrs. Wood and Mr. Wood do not think about curing Mary's rheumatism seriously. They are disinterested in her suffering. Sometimes, the cruel treatment of slaves by their masters takes aggressive forms whereas on other occasion, it takes the form of disinterestedness. There is not strong reason to hold Mary in the bondage of slavery. She is going to pay for her freedom. But still, her mistress prevents her from buying freedom.

In the midst of her growing physical ills and discomforts, Mary meets a woman who helps her a lot. Mary tells her everything she has faced. This lady treats her kindly. In Mary's own words, "The man's wife was very kind to me. I was very

sick, and she boiled nourishing things up for me. She also sent for a doctor to see me and he sent me medicine which did me good, though I was ill for a long time with the rheumatism pains. I lived a good many months with these poor people, and they nursed me, and did all that lay in their power to serve me”(21). This lady not only helps her in recovering her health but took Mary to the Anti-slavery society. In the anti-slavery society, the freedom of slaves is guaranteed. All the provisions and bases for the liberty of a slave is carefully studies and then his or her freedom is declared and then guaranteed. The following extract highlights the condition in which a slave is likely to get freedom:

About this time, a woman of the name of Hill told me of Anti-Slavery Society, and went with me to their office, to inquire if they could do anything to get me my freedom, and send me back to the West Indies. The gentlemen of the Society took me to a lawyer, who examined very strictly into my case; but told me that the laws of England could do nothing to make me free in Antigua. However they did all they could for me: They gave me a little money from time to time to keep me from want; and some of them went to Mr. Wood to try to keep me from want; and some of them went to Mr. (21)

In England, Mary Prince can be happy. She can be free. But she is still with Mr. John and his wife. So it would be troublesome for her to live in England. She can abandon Mr. John and live as a free citizen in England. But her husband lives in Antigua. From England, the Anti-Slavery Society cannot make her free. Several other ladies with whom Mary Prince gets acquainted help her to achieve freedom. But that does not carry importance in her life. Prince needs freedom not in England but in Antigua.

For freedom in Antigua, it is necessary to get the approval of her master and mistress. This worked as the serious obstacle on her way to liberty.

Mary Prince's trust in her possibility of being free from slavery in future is enhanced by her trust in divine providence. In this connection, she reaffirms her faith in the power of divine providence. She reaffirms her faith as such:

I still live in the hope that God will find a way to give me my liberty, and give me back to my husband. I endeavor to keep down my fretting, and to leave all to Him, for he knows what is good for me better than I know myself. Yet, I must confess, I find it a hard and heavy task to do so. I am often much vexed, and I feel great sorrow when I hear some people in this country say, that the slaves are happy. I say, Not so. How can slaves be happy when they have the halter round their neck and the whip upon their back? (23)

Trust in divine providence is the most important factor that guides Mary Prince towards the destination which she has been cherishing for a long time. Religious force and unwavering trust in God jointly implant firm sense of optimism and hope even in the midst of suffering, brutality and horror. Mary Prince builds a firm sense of faith in God so that she could control herself in the midst of chaos and hopelessness. She is inspired by her firm faith in providence. It boosts her capacity to overcome all forms of despair and despondency.

The bleak possibility of freedom makes Mary Prince pessimistic. She searches for noble thoughts. In an exploration of enhancing thoughts, she expresses the pros and cons of her determination and struggles. The reflection on the emerging possibility of freedom gives plenty of energy and inspiration. She says "All slaves want to be free- to be free is very sweet. I will say the truth to English people who

may read this history that my food friend, Miss S is now writing down for me” (23).

Her repeated overtures and endeavors compel the Anti-Slavery Society to grant her manumission. The following extract deals with how finally she gets manumission:

The case having been submitted, by desire of the Anti-Slavery Committee, to the consideration of Dr. Lushinton and Mr. Sergeant Stephen, it was found that there existed no legal means of compelling Mary’s master to grant her manumission; and that if she returned to Antigua, she would inevitably fall again under his power, or that of his attorneys as a slave. It was, however, resolved to try what could be effected for her by amicable negotiation; and with this view Mr. Ravenscroft, a solicitor called upon Mr. Wood, in order to ascertain whether he would consent to Mary manumission on any reasonable terms. (25)

Prince's physical abuse and her experience of pain initially appear devastating. Her body ultimately provides her with the means of creating a new order of experience. She gets a new subject position from which she can speak. Thereby she transcends the brutality that had previously shaped and defined her. She leaves these conditions of extreme hardship and obtains a place of relative safety. Prince begins to refuse to complete her assigned tasks because of her poor physical condition.

To cut the entire matter short, the narrator of *The History of Mary Prince*, gets manumission after she faces long trial and tribulations. The slave's broken down body would normally be construed as a sign of slavery's power to debase, mutilate, and destroy. It ironically serves as a key locus of opposition. It enables her to refuse to capitulate to further demands of servitude. Prince makes meaning and sense out of her suffering through the telling of her story.

### **Analysis of *The Interesting Narrative of The Life of Olaudah Equiano***

The spirit of romanticism, abolitionist voice, belief of Quakers, liberalism cherished by Northerners gradually gives jolt to the stronghold of slavery. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* represents how various liberal schools of thoughts like romantic notion of individual freedom, restriction from the regimes of social institutions and other freedom-oriented thoughts contributed to the rise of anti-slavery movement. *The narrative of Equiano* presents a portrait of slavery that is terrible to notice. The narrator has been separated from his family and taken to Barbados. Barbados is an island famed for its cruelty to Africans. The life expectancy of slaves reached the lowest point of harshness as the captivated are subject to the most savage behavior from their white overseers. Female slaves, including children, were raped.

By representing injustice, atrocity and dehumanization, slave narratives made slaves aware of the value of freedom and liberty. Romanticism propagated the value of liberty and freedom. It fostered the value of critiquing societal regimes. Slave bodies are mutilated and brutalized. Besides these bodily offenses, slaves endured a dearth of respect for their property and possessions. Everything they had was subject to confiscation from whites. They have no legal rights. This treatment does not vary much from island to island; "the history of an island, might serve for the history of the whole" (111). Equiano condemns the effect of slavery on the owners, the white men and women and then affirms an immediate need to abolish it.

By representing the fact that slavery ruins not the life of slaves but the souls of masters also, the narrative of Equiano lays the groundwork for liberty and racial justice. Equiano writes that "such a tendency has the slave-trade to debauch men's minds, and harden them to every feeling of humanity!" (111). Believing that the

superiority of whiteness over blackness is an artificial construct, Equiano argues that it leads men towards an unnatural baseness. He does not believe any man can be born with such avarice, rapacity, cruelty, and viciousness. Hence, if they had not participated in the chattel system, they would no doubt have embraced their better instincts.

In the course of accompanying his masters, Equiano happened to reach new places, new lands, and new geography. When he went to new place where everyone was free, he unconsciously began to think about freedom and liberty. It is the constant exposure to freedom, free world and free mentality that contribute to the ultimate manumission of Equiano. Much of Equiano's time in slavery is spent serving the captains of slave ships and British navy vessels. One of his masters, Henry Pascal, the captain of a British trading vessel, gives Equiano the name Gustavus Vassa. He uses this name throughout his life. In service to Captain Pascal and subsequent merchant masters, Equiano traveled extensively, visiting England, Holland, Scotland, Gibraltar, Nova Scotia, the Caribbean, Pennsylvania, Georgia, and South Carolina. Equiano, who is allowed to engage in his own minor trade exchanges, is able to save enough money to purchase his freedom in 1766. The following extract throws light on the adventurous disposition of Equiano:

Equiano continued to travel, making several voyages aboard trading vessels to Turkey, Portugal, Italy, Jamaica, Grenada, and North America. He also accompanied Irving on a polar expedition in search of a northeast passage from Europe to Asia. Captivating are the events like his native African culture, his enslaved life in service to captains of ships and merchant masters, and the beginnings of his own entrepreneurial ventures. Motivated by Robert King's promise to allow

him to buy his freedom for forty pounds, Equiano views each voyage as an opportunity of getting a sum large enough to purchase his liberty through his own trades. (43)

Some of the slaves got new sense of buying freedom by working overtime or by making profit at the time of accompanying business. Slaves' attraction to mercantile practice contributes to the ultimate emergence from the bondage of slavery. Equiano describes mercantile runs to numerous American ports as well as to the West Indies in addition to his own trade exchanges along the way. He eventually acquires forty-seven pounds. Supported by his captain, he surprises his master with the requisite sum and receives his manumission papers.

Romanticism collectively developed the tendency to respect decency, human dignity and mutual sense of respect. King and the captain implore him to continue working for them. Equiano sails with Captain Farmer as a free man with the intention to make a voyage or two entirely to please these honored patrons. Equiano exercises his new freedom, refusing to be imposed upon and threatening. Harmony not only in the internal world but in the external world is necessary. Equiano and the captain maintain a close relationship. He is deeply affected at the captain's untimely death at sea:

I found that I did not know, till he was gone, the strength of my regard for him. He was to me a friend and a father. Despite his desire to travel to England, he continues to sail on merchant ships throughout the West Indies and Americas under King's newly appointed captain, William Phillips. He describes in detail two shipwrecks in which his ship is damaged by rocks but does not sink, thus avoiding utter disaster and resulting in exploratory adventures to uninhabited islands. (32)

When slaves like Equiano got exposed to the doctrine of Quaker, they begin to realize that they are not fated to live slavish life. Rather, they are politically oppressed by some shrewd people. So, it is necessary to do all the things that can liberate them from the confinement of dehumanization. Equiano believes the catastrophes are divine punishment for his own sins. He views their rescue as a sign of forgiveness or the mercy of God. He makes his way back to the West Indies and then to Savannah, Georgia. But he is faced with new dangers as a free black man. He is persecuted by patrollers who know that he has no master to protect him from abuse. Two white men attempt to kidnap him by claiming that he is a runaway slave. Equiano escapes re-enslavement by calling out this trick. He is left alone.

Patience, hope, vision of liberality and struggle for freedom are some of the progressive values which Equiano abides by. All these virtues are directly or indirectly the impact of romanticism and liberal progressive schools of thoughts. Equiano continues his trading ventures throughout the West Indies under a new captain. His wish to go to England remains firm. He travels to Montserrat to take leave of his former master, Robert King. Equiano books passage on a ship to London. He reunites with his former patrons in England. Finding no employment as a servant, Equiano learns a new trade. He becomes a hair-dresser to Dr. Charles Irving. He finds his wages insufficient and "thought it best, therefore, to try the sea again in quest of more money, as I had been bred to it, and had hitherto found the profession of it successful"(35). Equiano hires out as hair-dresser and steward to the captains of ships sailing to Turkey as well as the West Indies. He describes impressions of the various Mediterranean and West Indian countries and cultures found where his ship docks.

Instinct to survive independently is another legacy of progressive and evolutionary thoughts which ultimately liberates Equiano from the clutch of

slavery. Equiano also joins Dr. Irving on an expedition. He details the unusual arctic landscape and animals as well as a perilous event. His ship becomes trapped in the ice for eleven days. Equiano returns to London with Dr. Irving and remains with him for some time. The near-tragic events of their arctic journey make a lasting impression on my mind, and caused me to reflect deeply on my eternal state. Determined to become a first-rate Christian, Equiano embarks on a “spiritual journey in which he attends multiple churches, closely reads The Bible, and even researches the principles of other faiths. He finds some measure of comfort with mentors who discuss Christian doctrines and guide his religious education, but he suffers a crisis of conscience and struggles to parse the difference between faith and works”(41). His spiritual crisis peaks while working as a steward on a ship traveling to Spain.

It is the firm belief in the divine providence and the grace of God that protects the hundreds of thousands of slaves from the horror and hell of slavery. Biblical faith works as the defense mechanism. Equiano's own life bears testament to how terribly it harms everyone involved. Africans are kidnapped from their homes and separated from their families. The bonds of “mother and child, husband and wife, and brother and sister were destroyed. Slaves were given new names, their identities virtually erased”(76). The following extract is illustrative of how harsh the slave trade is and how intense the kidnapped slaves are for freedom:

Any sense of history, culture, tradition, and were almost obliterated by the dominant society that kept them as chattel. They were subject to the most horrible punishments, delivered for capricious and unjust reasons. The chastity of female slaves was violated. Deleterious behavior resulted from the unnatural elevation of the white man over black. (26)

Even white men are corrupted by the slave trade. It pushes them towards their baser instincts. It turns otherwise decent people into monsters. Different masters show Equiano wildly varying degrees of cruelty or kindness. They are all complicit in its horrors. Equiano distinguishes between the Christianity of white slaveholders and the true Christianity practiced by himself and his Methodist and Quaker friends.

Even in the time of dire crisis, slaves could not ignore their trust in the mystery and miracle of divine providence. Such a firm faith in the mystery of divine beings enables them to fight off slavery. Equiano even touts “the simple faith of his African brethren as being more honest and legitimate, comparing them with the Jews. White Christians involved in the slave trade perverted their faith”(47). Equiano exemplifies the true tenets of Christianity. He “tries to control his pride, relies on God for all things, tries to live by the Commandments, and evinces the virtues of fortitude and patience” (57).

Work ethics is the most sublime quality demonstrated by Equiano. He takes it from the core of his heart. It is only through the virtue of work ethics, which is the heritage of romanticism that sets the stage for the dramatization of Equiano's fantasy of freedom. Equiano continues to labor on behalf of his enslaved brethren. He demonstrates thereby kindness and mercy on their behalf. He is chaste and charitable. Freedom and liberation dominate the forefront of the text. After being mired in slavery for the better part of his youth, Equiano is able to procure his emancipation from Robert King. This physical liberation from slavery turns him from object into subject and from slave into man. He takes control of his own personal and economic affairs. He asserts the sense of self that he has so fitfully pursued during his enslavement.

The role of education, literacy, natural affection which Olaudah Equiano experiences liberation when he learns how to read and write. As a young slave, he pondered how the books talked to people. The following extract shows how he is attracted towards learning and its value:

Learning how to read opened up a new world of knowledge for him, and learning to write allowed him to thrust himself into the very public world of letters to influence the abolitionist movement. Equiano's conversion to Christianity represents liberation from sin; his embrace of God's salvation changes him. (71)

Motivated by the importance and advantages of learning, Equiano devotes his later years to ensuring the physical liberation of the millions of Africans who are still in bondage. Implicitly he argues for the freedom of those who are trapped in the clutch of slavery.

Through business, profit, extra income and additional economic power, he wants to buy freedom. He does not entertain the idea of freedom through revolutionary means. Risk, hazards and unexpected harms can arise from revolutionary path. So many slaves choose evolutionary path. Equiano faces difficulties as a black man. He is able to participate in business. He eventually saves up enough money to purchase his freedom. As a free man, he found myriad ways to support himself. The following extract presents Equiano's passage from bondage to freedom:

He continued trading and got involved in other skill-based industries. He was for the first time able to choose which ships he wanted to work on. Equiano apologizes that he is neither a saint nor a tyrant. He is

merely lucky enough to have been favored by Heaven. He believes has blessed him in all the events of his life. (87)

Equiano hopes that his work will serve the purpose of helping his enslaved brethren. Equiano explains how his memories are bittersweet. He is the youngest son of seven brothers and sisters. He was trained in agriculture and war.

Since Equiano's fate of enslavement, he is always obsessed with the romantic conception of freedom. Sometimes he does not care for the price that he has to pay after escape. He intends to take any way handy to the land of freedom which is the North. Equiano ends up in the hands of a chieftain in a lovely part of the country. He plans to escape from this situation. Unfortunately, his plan is thwarted when he accidentally kills an old slave woman's chicken. The vicious effect of his failed attempt to escape is narrated in the following extract:

For this fault, he has to hide himself for fear of her wrath. Everyone looks for him, but he is perfectly concealed in the dense brush. He is afraid of being stung by poisonous snakes but held out until he is rescued by the very same old woman. Equiano is sold again, and traveled closer to the sea coast. Until he reached the sea, his language was similar enough to those of other tribes. (89)

Equiano is even able to pick up two or three new tongues. By chance, he and his sister are reunited when their masters crossed paths. However, the reunion is short-lived. The second separation brings fresh grief and anxiety to Equiano. Equiano fears they would force him to undergo such alteration. He would have had much more trouble integrating with Europeans.

Acute awareness of injustice, atrocity, cases of dehumanization and oppression marks the inception of the realistic conception of freedom. This sort of

realistic conception of freedom is assisted by romanticism and abolitionism. Equiano see the many black people chained together with expressions of profound sorrow on their faces. He realizes what awaits him, and knows that he would never return to his native country. He suddenly wishes to return to former slavery than to endure this new punishment. He describes the sensation of being put under the decks:

I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life; so that with the loathsomeness of the stench, and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste anything. He feels a little better when he finds people of his own nation. He is convinced that the white men are evil spirits. Similarly, he is amazed by the workings of the ship. Down in the hold, he is assaulted by hot air unfit to breathe because of its loathsome smells. (77)

The philosophy of romanticism and the joy of being immersed in the natural world always drive Equiano to the world of freedom. Many people grow sick and died, "thus falling victims to the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers" (58).

Romantic sense of empathetic understanding is essential to cultivation of freedom. The screams and cries of anguish and terror make the hold like a scene from Hell. Equiano is not put into chains. He has had more freedom to move about. The following extract contains his perception about the white man:

The white men are strange to him, especially in their wastefulness. They capture a large fish and only take a small part from it. They are also remarkably cruel. Three slaves try to jump overboard and end their lives. The ship finally comes in sight of Barbados. All of the slaves are gathered on deck and examined by frightening men. (91)

Equiano is convinced that they desire to eat him. After the examination, the slaves are sent to the merchant's yard. They were crammed together regardless of age or sex. Equiano is in awe of his surroundings, noting that the houses are two stories and made of bricks. He marvels at the men on horseback. Equiano is disturbed by the loudness and frenzy of the buyers.

Equiano's firm faith in the ultimate redemption is basic to freedom. In addition, it is a gateway to the actualization of the hope and dream of final freedom. After a few brief situations with African masters, Equiano is shipped onboard a slave ship bound for the West Indies. His vivid account of the Middle Passage is "heartrending in its evocation of grief, fear, despair, violence, and fetidness. Equiano's utter confusion and terror is highly subjective and emotional"(97). He is able to evoke the feeling of how Africans feel when removed from their home. He is exposed to the gradual introduction to a life of forced labor and a disease-ridden environment.

Discourses on the brutality and immorality of civilization encourage Equiano to envision free life. Equiano seeks to differentiate between the brutality and immorality of the civilized Europeans and their African counterparts. This distinction begins even when he is enslaved by native Africans. His experience varies "wildly depending on the masters. What most marks the white slave-owners is what he observes while at sea. He is astonished at their wastefulness"(107). Their behavior to their captives is avaricious, violent, and depraved.

The more realistic slave narratives flourished, the more the prospect of emancipation increased. Equiano is really lucky enough to enjoy this sort of condition. Slavery corrupts not only the slave but the slave-owner as well. Abolitionists also argued that the Middle Passage is deadly not only for the slaves but

for the crew as well. When the slaves arrive in Barbados after their voyage, they are forced into a merchant's custody. The buyers rush at once into the yard where the slaves are confined. She makes choice of that parcel they like best. The following extract describes the case in point:

Equiano and other slaves remain on Barbados for a few days, but are then shipped off in a sloop to North America. On this journey, they treated better and have more to eat. They land in Virginia country, which they accessed by sailing up a river. They work on a plantation for a rich old gentleman. (113)

The more Equiano watches the increasing numbers of friends who are free, the more his fascination for emancipation. Equiano watches as all of his friends are sold off to traders until he is the only one left on the plantation. He is miserable in his loneliness. He wishes for death, and is terrified of his owner. He also resents that he is given new names.

It is the journey of Equiano to England that takes him closer to the idealized setting of freedom. On this ship, Equiano meets Richard Baker who is a young white man about four or five years older than him. Baker is an educated native of America. He has "a mind superior to prejudice; and who was not ashamed to notice, to associate with, and to be the friend and instructor of one who was ignorant, a stranger, of a different complexion, and a slave!" (45). Equiano adds that he and Baker remained friends until Baker's death.

The more confidentially Equiano internalizes certain norms and values of Methodism, the more he reshuffles a pack of cards. Many impactful events shape Equiano's life. All of them bear repeating. They develop his character in ways that will continue to pay off throughout the narrative. He travels to America and is

purchased by a British Navy lieutenant, Michael Henry Pascal. His familiarity with the lieutenant exemplifies many aspects of horror and premonition of physical assault:

He spends time in England and is brought with Pascal onboard his various vessels while fighting in the Seven Years' War. While in Pascal's service, Equiano witnesses many dramatic sea battles, as well as the activities of the British press-gangs, significant forces during the hostilities. He receives a new name – Gustavus Vassa – by which he will be known for the rest of his life.

(118)

It is the power of literacy that helps Equiano to long for freedom. Literacy is prioritized by romanticism and Methodism too. Equiano develops an interest in reading. He has his legs amputated from sickness. He grows accustomed to his enslavement, so much so that he begins to long for the violence and excitement of an engagement.

To Equiano, England represents the land of freedom. The idea of being a free man goes on motivating him though the current prospect is bleak. Equiano stays in England for between three and four years. He grows accustomed to his situation. He feels little terror from his daily challenges. He speaks English very well and desired to adjust his manners, spirit, and movement to those of the Europeans. He wants to learn how to read and write. He is able to see much of London. Equiano began to notice the ways in which Providence guided the lives of men, and he gives a few examples of what he observed. The following extract gives an account of how his deep faith in providence modifies the direction of his freedom-orientated struggle:

There are many more engagements with the French. What Equiano enjoys most is visiting and wandering the island. However, his curiosity almost gets him into trouble one day. An English sergeant

sees the near-accident and reprimands him harshly. Equiano sees a French horse belonging to some islanders. He decides to ride it back to safety. The fleet remains in this area for a bit, then sailed to Basse-road. (110)

Many more commanders are named and many more battles are fought. Equiano is happy to reunite with the widow and her daughter. Equiano had come to believe that his master Pascal would ultimately grant his freedom.

The assumption that people are by nature free is inherited by Equiano from his journey to England. The Quaker belief that god is light which is inherent in everyone enables him to explore the impossible. Equiano assumes that he had no right to detain me. He always treats me with the greatest kindness. Equiano works under the assumption that he could not be detained any longer than he wished. Further, he had saved some money. The following extract presents the reverse case of reality:

One day, while sailing from Portsmouth to the Thames, the ship cast anchor and Pascal ordered the barge to be manned. Without any warning, he grabbed Equiano and forced him into the barge, telling him that he knew of the slave's plans to escape him. Equiano was shocked at the accusation, but once he gathered his senses, he insisted to Pascal that the law ensured him his freedom. (139)

Even though the crew tries to comfort Equiano from the deck, it is to no avail. Equiano is dragged behind the ship. The Barbados Slave Code became a model for other colonies as they established slavery. Equiano writes that this law was "unmerciful, unjust, and unwise, and would even shock the morality and common sense of a Samaide or a Hottentot" (109). This reference may be unfamiliar to most modern readers.

The strength to overcome bias, hatred and the vindictive sense is the direct impact of firm belief in the biblical doctrine. It is the spiritual belief that enables all the slaves including Equiano to encounter extremes of dehumanization and oppression. It seems clear that Equiano is endeavoring to seem unbiased by using examples of people from the geographical and racial extremes of the globe. Equiano is a witness to these examples of brutality and injustice. He does not suffer too harshly. It is from this example that Equiano shapes his business argument. People work harder when they are well-treated, as he does for King. He notes that he "had the good fortune to please my master in every department in which he employed me" (103). The Quakers put pressure on its members to denounce slavery. Equiano he describes his beliefs more vividly than he yet has. They provide a lens by which to understand both him and his time. He has not given the reader an in-depth picture of his faith. One big event is his acquisition of a Bible. While traveling with King, he first purchases a Bible.

Access to the religious faith is instrumental to the evolution of the romantic conception of freedom not only for life but for the continuance of creative pursuit. The dearth of bibles in the West Indies is probably to keep slaves from reading that text and finding encouragement there. There is a conspicuous debate during the period regarding whether or not Bible reading would spur a revolutionary and rebellious impulse. Equiano's beliefs proved not only comforting but also practical. He is able to bear his situation. He would have died much earlier. He seems quite content with having allowed circumstances to guide his life. The following extract gives a glimpse of how situation turns in the favor of Equiano:

Equiano's life as a sailor serves as something of an equalizer for his struggles with slavery. Because of his abilities, he is able to flourish

under less supervision. He begins to make the money that would later enable his freedom. Equiano - a man is defined by his abilities and usefulness, not by his skin color. Equiano achieves the monumental feat of securing his manumission from King. (123)

Equiano thus accomplished something that almost all slaves found impossible to do. Securing his freedom would have been much more difficult during the first half of the nineteenth century. Few slaves had as benevolent of masters as the Quaker merchant Robert King. This release from slavery is of course one of the most significant events in the narrator's life.

The tenant of work ethics, utmost faith in human dignity and ethics of self-affirmation are crucial contribution of romanticism. These romantic ingredients are milestone in Equiano's struggle for freedom. Equiano has endeavored to craft an identity in the work. This moment suddenly allows the reader to understand that such a work could not exist. This inspiration is an inner light than could be shared with church brethren at meetings. Quakers do not have clergy or church government. They did not believe there was an authority separating a believer from his or her God.

Equiano wants to develop a voice of his own at a time when Africans are invisible and inaudible. He uses the Anglo-American racial discourse to actually undermine and reformulate that culture's notion of slave and African. He uses religious, economic, and political discourses to put himself and his life story at the center of a crucial debate on the merits of the slave trade. He speaks for Africans but legitimate himself as an Englishman. Equiano makes the following remarks about his growing maturity:

He plays both sides with an eye solely on his political purpose. This slavery creates marginalized beings, unlike the African slavery system.

The irony is that his success reveals how much English society wants individuals to join their mainstream. (127)

Equiano's quest directed towards liberation from the clutch of slavery. When Equiano initially comes into contact with white men, he conceives of them in spiritual ideas and themes. He later begins to notice differences among white men.

When Equiano embarks upon his quest for true religion, he visits many places of worship and notes the differences between them. He also distinguishes between the Christianity of white slave-owners and the Christianity of Christ. About the perversion of Christianity by slave trade the following extract serves as a clear proof:

The slave-trading world perverts Christianity. Equiano is clear in his condemnation. Equiano does not tout freedom as a path towards political hegemony. Overall, he proves himself a capable, adventurous, hardy, and ambitious young man. He also harbors a sense of restlessness. (218)

The sea-horses the sailors observe are actually walruses. He even cites the same differences that white noticed in blacks. He is able to look through multiple viewpoints and avoid ideological blindness in regards to race.

Phipps's account is also a bit more optimistic in its conclusion on the expedition's ambiguous success:

There was also most probability, if ever navigation should be practicable to the Pole, of finding the sea open to the Northward after the solstice; the sun having then exerted the full influence of its rays, though there ever was enough of the summer still remaining for the purpose of exploring the seas to the Northward and Westward of Spitsbergen. (101)

Equiano's participation in this voyage is compelling. It affects his inward life.

Equiano comments upon the Turks that "the natives are well-looking and strong made, and treated me always with great civility. In general I believe they are fond of black people" (167). It seems that this comment is ironic, albeit not intentionally.

The slave traders had taken over "four million Africans from Africa and forced them into slavery, all before the European transatlantic slave system had been established"(104). Over three million may have been taken after that latter slave trade ended. The Turks used the terms Frank and Christian interchangeably, as many of the Christian invaders during the Crusade were from France. The Christians were kept separate from the Muslims so that the former would not corrupt the latter. Equiano has witnessed multiples examples of Christian hypocrisy. He does this by affirming his belief in an idealized Christianity. He is keenly aware of the need to establish his Christian credentials.

Equiano is a converted Christian and a Europeanized gentleman. But he is still able to honor his African heritage and culture. He offers strong examples of how the Eboe people were similar to the Jews. The narrator bemuses on the prospect of liberation which is reflected in the following citation:

Liberation is the literal and spiritual focus of his life. It is understandably the lens through which he reads the Bible. During his conversion, he lists more than fifteen biblical passages, most of which deal with captivity. The imprisonment of Peter and John after they healed a lame beggar is included. Equiano utilizes Scripture to make a case for himself. He profoundly demonstrates how central Christianity was to his view on his life and his selfhood. (131)

Equiano comes into regular contact with the natives. Equiano records his observations of the behavior, mores, norms, and culture of the natives. Musquito bears some clarification. Elizabeth Jane Wall Hinds deals with this intersection of trade and religion.

Elizabeth Jane Wall believes that Equiano has “formed a four-fold self, which includes a slave, a merchant, a juridical subject, and a convert to Christianity”(137). His freedom is forged by “marketplace, religious, and legal discursive practices, the last opening a space for his own creation of a juridical self”(138). His sense of freedom seems to be best defined as a freedom to be a true individual, and not one beholden to any strict creed.

In regard to Equiano's life as merchant, it is obvious that he embraced the financial freedom of the marketplace. It is through trade that he purchased his freedom. However, this work places him squarely within the dehumanizing ideology of capitalism's driving slave market. Equiano's conversion to Methodism did not fully preclude the pall of election. The following extract shows how his presence in the market place enables him to earn freedom:

The participation in the marketplace both represented freedom of action. He points out those free blacks deny protection. He has managed to fashion himself a juridical subject, by creating his own legal framework, honored at least within the pages. (139)

Equiano becomes politically involved in abolitionist activities. He explains his views on the economics of abolition. The many people he encounters as a leader of “abolition - the Quakers, the Queen, the government - speaks to how well known he became. The effort to send former and current slaves back to Sierra Leone began with

the efforts of Henry Smeathson”(141). This man spent time in Africa researching termites. He married into the local African rulers' families.

In order to achieve this end, Equiano has to challenge white readers' assumptions that a black man would lack the capacity to reason. He had to silence their impulses to categorize him only by race. He is aware of the ground reality resulting from the imposing of binary categories. The following excerpt represents the hidden nature of exclusionary thought:

Black/white, male/female, master/servant, Christian/heathen, civilization/savagery, freedom/slavery, Equiano is a British cultural insider as a reformer and a powerful public voice, and by exploiting his established role in order to uphold the position of outsiders, he manages to counter the ideological tactics that assign racial subjects essentialist identities. (54)

Equiano defends himself vigorously in this work. He demands that the government acknowledge his role and pay him for his efforts. It is this assertion of selfhood that impresses people. Equiano's transformation from object to subject and from slave to free man is the most vital part of the narrative.

The history of African slaves is intertwined by the blood of slavery and the spirit of freedom. Slavery and freedom have been the central points of reference in America's history, with the common perception that the history of black Americans begins with slavery and the prevalent view that blacks contributed little to American or world civilization. About the repression and erasure of the traces of historical truth of slavery and slavery trade, the following extract illustrates the point:

This, of course, ignores the fact that rich civilizations flourished in Africa while Europe was still in its infancy; that there were black

explorers, conquerors, inventors, mathematicians, doctors, scientists before, during, and after slavery. Black slaves already know the accomplishments and achievements of white Americans. It is in the fabric of the standard history of America, as seen through the eyes of white Americans. (56)

This is not to suggest that the learning of black history would bring a quick and decisive end to racism. But it is a critical pillar in the building of a bridge between the two Americas. It serves as a bridge of knowledge that spans the gulf of ignorance. It symbolizes a bridge of respect that spans the bay of disdain.

Equiano experiences a vision in which "the Lord was pleased to break in upon my soul with his bright beams of heavenly light; and in an instant as it were, removing the veil, and letting light into a dark place"(49). Transformed, Equiano returns to London "rejoiced in spirit, making melody in my heart to the God of all my mercies. Though content to remain in England, Equiano is convinced by friends to again join his ship during its next voyage"(76). He thus continues his travelogue, "describing another minor shipwreck outside of Cadiz and the riches and festivals of Malaga. He reunites with Dr. Irving and travels with him to the West Indies to assist him in establishing a plantation on the Musquito Shore outside of Jamaica, acting as Dr. Irving's overseer and helping to maintain good relations with the Musquito Indians"(79). Eventually, missing Europe and tired of living in this heathenish form, Equiano begs leave of Dr. Irving and attempts to make his way back to England.

Equiano is forced to work for dishonest captains who delay his journey home. He "eventually arrives in England and describes the events after his return as more uniform the incidents of it fewer, than in any other equal number of years preceding"(143). Having grown heartily disgusted with the seafaring life, he is

determined not to return to it and works in service for some time. It is not long before he returns to sea, working on voyages to New York and Philadelphia. Equiano is appointed commissary for the British government's Sierra Leone expedition.

Sierra Leone expedition is an attempt to return members of the country's free African population to a colony on the continent of Africa. Unfortunately, in his capacity as commissary, Equiano witnesses flagrant abuses and government inefficiency. His efforts to remedy these problems not only go without effect, but they cause his dismissal from his post. Equiano remains involved with the plight of Africans, however. He includes in the narrative "a copy of a 1788 petition to the Queen in which he supplicates your Majesty's compassion for millions of my African countrymen, who groan under the lash of tyranny in the West Indies"(149). Equiano's stance on slavery is problematical throughout the text. His criticisms often denounce the abuse of slaves and immoral practices against them rather than the practice of slavery. Equiano closes the narrative with an elaboration of his abolitionist views and the self-effacing hope.

Equiano takes leave of Georgia and sailed for Martinico. He enjoys the island very much and observed that the slaves were treated better there. It was May, and he desired to sail to Montserrat to bid farewell to Mr. King and finally return to England by July. This was easier said than done. His captain has borrowed money from him and was slow in returning it. The money returned and Equiano left for Montserrat. Unfortunately, as a free black man, he needed to advertise his departure from the island by giving notice, but it was getting late and he had difficulty doing this before the vessel departed. Equiano is humiliated and angered by this degrading necessity. He is fortunately able to find some gentlemen to assist him. He is able to board the boat. He soon meets his friends and Mr. King with much gladness in his heart.

Thus, it is safe to conclude that the anti-abolitionist voice rings loudly in the narrative of Olaudah Equiano. After passing through various phases of trials and tribulations, he finally happens to achieve freedom from the bondage of slavery. Dramatization of the horror of slavery and the prospect of freedom coexist dominantly in the narratives of Mary Prince and Equiano.

### **III. Reflection on the Vision of Liberation from Slavery**

Immersion in the doctrine of romanticism lays the groundwork for the emergence of abolitionist movement. This idea is tested and then justified in two slave narratives by two different writers. In *The History of Mary Prince* and *The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano*, both the narrators ponder upon various natural phenomena, landscape, and events then come to develop awareness about individual freedom. In nature, each and every living being are free. They are enjoying freedom. There is no restriction in nature and every living being is totally free. This sort of reflection on nature undertaken by the narrators push them to the destination of freedom and freedom from the yoke of slavery. While going from one place to the other with their respective white master, both Mary Prince and Equiano happen to see various elements and landscape of nature. She comes to interact with several free citizens, their free outlook and reasonable manner as well as self esteem and dignity.

Romanticists argue that the depth of suffering opens a new gaze and glimpse of freedom. This is exactly what happens in lives of both the narrators. Both Mary Prince and Equiano are exposed to indescribable bulk of misery, brutalization, dehumanization and oppression. It is this depth of suffering and brutality that uplift them to reach the glorious peak of freedom from slavery. In slavery, the blacks are dehumanized and deprived of even the basic access to rest, peace, food, water and self-esteem. Female slaves are sexually abused and the males are subjected to backbreaking works on plantation. In the midst of slavery where the chance of freedom bondage of slavery is almost minimal, the enslaved blacks like Mary Prince and Equiano do not hesitate to hope against hope. They give continuity to their tradition.

The romantic theory gives importance to the return to the nomadic and communal life which is close to the life in nature. The narrator of both the narratives turns to the pristine and pure values of communal lives. They return to those ideals and lives, which they had enjoyed prior to their enslavement. The Afro-American culture, history and historical tradition are special to them, though they are trapped in the hell of slavery. The need of labor force on plantation and deep-seated racism compel the white to go to African continent and capture the black people. Those black people who are forcibly captured are dehumanized and tortured harshly. The white often produce the narrative that harsh treatment is necessary for those slaves otherwise their cannibalistic instinct can come out threatening the fabric of society.

The indomitable will of Mary Prince is romantic in nature. She inherited this nature from her practical experiences. Mary Prince and Olaudah are enslaved by the white and brought to the soil of America. Both the narrators are witness to all the atrocities and tortures to which black captives will have to endure. They witness how countless numbers of slaves died in the middle passage. The horrors and cruelties of the exploitation of blacks are written down in so-called slave narratives. Slave narratives offer a striking insight into the reality of being a slave. They appeal to the readers' hearts in order to increase their sympathy for slaves and emphasize the inhumanity of the institution and its followers.

The notion of equality amidst all human beings is marked by romantic gestures. Mary Prince and Equiano are driven by this ideal. The narratives speak for equality between whites and African Americans. Black people are regarded as the true worshippers. Moreover, a certain pattern can be traced in most of these narratives. They commonly depict the slave's growing up, the separation from family and beloved friends, years of cruel treatment, the longing for freedom and the final

escape. The characteristics mentioned above are by and large true for the two slave narratives that ought to be analyzed in the following. In *The History of Mary Prince* and *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, the narrators are born into slavery, separated from their families and treated cruelly as slaves.

Romanticism insists that dogma and orthodoxy should be removed. God should be treated as the inner light. Institutionalized oppressions should be eliminated. This romantic creed creates favorable aura and atmosphere for the liberation of slaves from slavery. The stories also include religious, sentimental, violent and didactic characteristics. They attempt to overcome society's prejudices about black people and to support the struggle against slavery. Prince's *History* is written from a female point of view. In Antigua, Mary Prince had to bear the harsh punishment and brutalization. She has to work to the extent of getting bruised by thorny bushes and brambles. In the midst of extreme sufferings and agony, she does not hesitate to inculcate the dream of liberation from the bondage of slavery and confinement.

Though only bondage and captivity lie in society, black slaves do not hesitate to dream freedom. This activity is typically romantic in nature. In the hell of captivity, she gives continuity to African tradition, culture and ritual. Though her dream of liberation does not come true initially at the easy cost, she finally gets freedom. Freedom is the most precious thing all the black captives give utmost value. Mary Prince and Equiano inwardly assume that only in the state of freedom, an individual freely gets a chance to think who they are and what they are supposed to achieve in their lives. Lives of black slaves are devoid of dignity, security and self-esteem.

Romantic poets and philosophers say that identity and freedom should go side by side. Identity is clear and solid only in the condition of freedom and only the free man has identity. This view underscores the struggles of Mary Prince and Equiano. The question of identity of the black captives does not arise in a full-fledged way. Racism, when takes root in the psyche of people, generates vicious social evils like slavery. If slavery takes an institutionalized form, humanity gets shattered and finally dehumanization takes place at a high scale. In this situation, it would be really tough to deal with this evil. That is why, search for root and identity is a must to come out of the hell of racism and slavery. *The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano* worked as a watershed in the history of how slavery has been depicted in slave narrative and how abolitionist practice. The telling of a long and solid genealogy in fact reverses some of the most enduring stereotypes about black slaves. The narrative provides a counter-hegemonic narration of abolition.

This abolitionist voice validates a rediscovered racial pride in the forgotten and distant Africanness of Equiano's mythical African forefather. He proves a particularly valuable ancestor, who survives slavery without losing his freedom and individuality. He has turned into an example of self-determination, proud racial identity, and a popular mythical forefather to the collective black memory. Equiano's ability to retain memories from his homeland and the family's original name is the central vehicle for a broader self-determination and for the elevation of blacks from a place of provenance to a symbol of liberation. His knowledge of his African origins distinguishes him from the other the oppressors. Blacks are proposed as an authorizing piece of memory.

The question of dignity typifies romantic concern. In both the narratives, this question of dignity is reflected. The legacy of racial dignity and assertiveness are

accordingly passed to future family generations till Equiano's narrative present. In essence the narrative of Equiano and Mary Prince are simply an assertion that freedom from slavery is what brings meaning in their lives. This is because the narratives of the kidnap and enslavement of Equiano from the village marks the beginning of horror and servitude. Various counter assertions have been made that undermine acceptance of the literal truth of the story.

To cut the entire matter short, it is reasonable to deduce that romantic cult and conviction sets the state for the freedom of slaves from clutch of slavery and servitude. The slaves achieve their humanity only after they come out of the shackle of slavery. Dehumanization, slave trade and oppression and prospect of freedom are inseparably joined in both the narratives of Equiano and Mary Prince. It is concluded that the most beautiful aspect of both the narratives is to show how the black captives responded to their oppressions and the prospect of freedom from slavery.

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