

## Chapter One

### Introduction: Slave Narrative

The slave narrative is a literary form that grew out of the written accounts of enslaved Africans in Britain and its colonies, including the later United States, Canada and Caribbean nations. Some six thousand former slaves from North America and the Caribbean gave accounts of their lives during the 18th and 19th centuries, with about 150 narratives published as separate books or pamphlets. In the 1930s in the United States, during the Great Depression, more than 2300 additional oral histories on life during slavery were collected by writers sponsored and published by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration. Most of the 26 audio-recorded interviews are held by the Library of Congress. (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia).

Under the general rubric of slave narrative falls any account of the life, or a major portion of the life, of a fugitive or former slave, either written or orally related by the slave himself or herself. Slave narratives comprise one of the most influential traditions in American literature, shaping the form and themes of some of the most celebrated and controversial writing, in both autobiography and fiction, in the history of the United States. Although the vast majority of American slave narratives were authored by people of African descent, offering a diversity of voices, slave narratives represent an influential tradition in American literature and as well as in British literature.

In 1845 the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, written by himself became an antebellum international best seller. A fugitive from Maryland slavery, Douglass spent four years sharpening his skills as an abolitionist lecturer before setting about the task of writing his autobiography. The genius of Douglass's *Narrative* often considered

the epitome of the slave narrative. Before 1865, was its linkage of the author's adult quest for freedom to his boyhood pursuit of literacy, thereby creating a lasting ideal of the African American hero committed to intellectual achievement and independence as well as physical freedom.

*Black Beauty*, which was published in November 1877, is one of the most popular and enduring works of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The narrator of the novel is a well-bred horse which relates his life's story. He expresses his experiences, his ruins at the hand of a drunken rider and downward journey through the harsh world of London cab-horse where he encounters both kindness and cruelty. The Kindness and cruelty that the narrator of *Black Beauty* experiences are similar to the experiences of the slaves during slavery in America.

Anna Sewell set out nearly on her deathbed to write "what I think may turn out a little book to encourage greater understanding and kindness towards horses." (Chitty 174); although she died in 1878, she may well be the "Creator of the most famous black horse ever to exist in fact or fiction" (Gavin Dark Horse V).

Written at the end of the nineteenth century *Black Beauty* was the first of its kind, written from the point of view of an animal and hence it captured the imagination of the public in a very novel way. It went a long way in ensuring better treatment of horses, hitherto seen as mere beasts of utility and paved the way for humane treatment of all animals, the horse is made domesticated, used and then sold that means it has collected varied kinds of experiences in its life which makes the correspondence with the experiences of antebellum slavery system. Slave narratives give voice to generations of black people who were written off by white southern literature. The use and abuse of the characters in *Black Beauty* in term of the colour and race matches with the notions of Afro- Americanism propounded by Henry Louise Jr. and others.

Black Beauty symbolizes the Afro-American slaves reined and whipped physically and psychologically as they pass their life from one master to another for the sake of survival which tempts the critics of Afro- Americanism.

The very premise of the work- a talking horse relating his life's story- places *Black Beauty* squarely in the realm of the imagination and earns the critical designation of novel; further, the frequent assumption is that the book was written for youth audience. There is no doubt that children in particular have found the book's charm, adventure, and fantasy an irresistible combination and have been its most avid readers; in fact , a 1977 survey confirmed Black Beauty as the favourite book among Britain's ten-year-olds (Dalby 15). However, Sewell did not originally intend Black Beauty as a children's work, nor should it be so regarded today; rather, in the hopes of inciting a better treatment of horses, she directed her attention to stable hands, drivers and grooms' the working class men who handled horses and possessed a functional but limited literacy due to the educational reforms of the day.

Although critics have judged the text as a critical success or failure at different times, Jane Tompkins (1985) sees popular novels with crusading aims such as Sewell's , often disparaged by mainstream critics as "sensational designs" that do " a certain kind of cultural work within a specific historical situation"(100). Gradually, critics have come to examine *Black Beauty* within a more serious context. *Black Beauty* can be studied and interpreted comparing it with other antebellum slave narratives. Like the most popular slave narrative, 1845 *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass*, Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years a Slave*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, etc. In this study, I have explored the relationship of *Black Beauty* with other slave narratives to study and interpret *Black Beauty* as an antebellum slave narrative and not merely a work targeted for the children and nor a mere animal autobiography.

When the relationship between the other slave narratives and *Black Beauty* is explored, it becomes more apparent that the works are interrelated in many ways. One of the most important relations is the use of the first- person narrator. In other slave narratives the ex-slaves tell their own stories and in *Black Beauty* a horse tells his story through the writer. The torture, handlings, experiences, circumstances and the feelings towards the torturers and towards their own fate are similar in both texts. In *Black Beauty* the horse shares the same fate as Douglass does in his narrative.

So I came to believe that Sewell purposefully crafted *Black Beauty* in part to share in the reforming power of the slave narrative, particularly after Gavin's 2004 critical biography revealed Sewell was far more politically informed, activist-minded, and well-read than previously understood, and was someone who had ample interest in and access to former slaves' lectures and narratives. In addition, her book through to completion would have no doubt caused Sewell to utilize a simple and direct narrative structure with which she and her audience were familiar, the ability of which to move people she recognized. To my disappointment, many critics either failed to see this power or did not appreciate the accomplishment of the text- many were dismissive or, worse, condescending – and many critics who did appreciate the work classified it as children's fiction, thereby ignoring much of its inherent power.

Critics of different time have placed *Black Beauty* in different genres. To some it is animal right propaganda, to some it is children's literature or fable. But it is not merely animal rights propaganda, children's literature, or a fable, at the same time it is certainly a novel, it is more than that. Sewell herself called it an autobiography, suggesting on the title page it was "translated from the original equine." While the precision of that claim needs no discussion, Sewell's designation places her work squarely in the genre of animal autobiography, a popular form of Victorian literature in which talking animals narrated their

lives' stories; even so, the critics recognizing *Black Beauty* as exemplary of this genre did not explain the intertextuality of the novels. Comparisons between slave narratives and animal autobiographies have recently been made. In 1994, for example, Moria Ferguson wrote that "Anna Sewell linked slavery to cruelty"(35) and discussed several of the tropes, overtones, and episodes *Black Beauty* and slave narratives have in common.

*Black Beauty* is a novel which has multi- themes. The criticism that it received from several perspectives are its evident. Perhaps nowhere is the disparity of expectation regarding genre as evident assign the critical response to *Black Beauty*. Originally praised for its verisimilitude in depicting the lives of working class animals and men, the narrative has waxed and waned in critical appreciation. Because of its most receptive audience children and its fantastic elements, the work has usually been categorized as children's literature and received little or no critical attention until fairly recently. Late twentieth century critics often fall into the traps of genre –based criticism delineated by Robert Stam (2000).

These critical traps rob the text of its full potential as a work of art. Critics have placed *Black Beauty* recognized as animal autobiography but most often loosely referred to as a novel in various genres, from children's literature to humanitarian propaganda, with disparate results; the work has been judged a critical success or failure many times over based simply upon the critic's generic expectations. The rise and fall of *Black Beauty* in critical estimation can thus be traced in roughly chronological order within these carrying genres. Critics from the mid-1990s forward have begun to see a preciously unrecognized depth and craft to the work; more importantly, in the present day, a more fluid consideration of genre and less generically constrained readings of *Black Beauty* have opened up new areas of appreciation.

Although most critics from the time of its publication have had no difficulty in speaking of *Black Beauty* as a novel, there is an inherent haziness in the definition: the

generic term novel is a relatively recent literary construct- many scholars date the English novel from Robinson Crusoe's 1719 publication and believe the form achieved its apex in the early nineteenth century and incorporates many different forms and sub- genres. In fact, a novel is defined as much by what it is not as what it is: it is not a short story or a novella, and it is not bound by any particular structure, style, or subject matter, indeed for any one attempt at solid definition, several exceptions come to mind. Generally, a novel is a work of fiction (although many contain non –fictive elements) written in prose (even though some are in verse) that includes characters who undergo change (while some do not), and maintains a degree of reality (which some absolutely do not). In 1930s, Mikhail Bakhtin argued of the developing form that “every novel is a hybrid” (366) and said that novels are not so much a genre as “a force”; in other words “a novel can include , ingest , devour other genres and still retain its status, but other genres cannot include novelistic elements without impairing their own identity”(13). The generic term “novel”, then, as used in this study, is an umbrella term to encompass many disparate genres. Thus, seeing *Black Beauty* as a novel does not exclude it from the many other genres into which critics have tried placing it: children's literature, fable, and animal autobiography. While these genres may in many cases overlap for example, some critics consider animal autobiography to be children's literature, while others see it as humanitarian literature they all integrate within the novel form.

The nineteenth century is known as “the golden age of the novel in Britain, contributed such works as *Wuthering Heights* (1874), *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), and *Treasure Island* (1882) to literature. Broadly speaking, novels such as these are rousing adventure tales, full of fantastic elements, compelling mystery, striking characters, and wonderful storytelling. Many critics claim these same elements for *Black Beauty*. A more recent critic Loppa prusty (1996) , says the novel form allowed Sewell “ to exercise her delight in words and the written form” (6) , in addition , both children and adults enjoy and

exciting storyline – and with its midnight gallops to fetch the doctor , barn fires, steam engine encounters, runaway horses, narrow escapes, and thundering hooves, *Black Beauty* provides just that. In this way, such various critics have given multiple colours to the novel but the issue of gender sexuality and feminism is untouched. The gap is fulfilled by the research.

The research probes into the concerns of how the narrative strategies of the text become objective correlative to the theme of domination and what are the misconducts committed by the whites to underdog the blacks. The horses and their life mentioned in the novel are compared with the lives of the slaves. And the living conditions of the animals are compared with the conditions of the slaves. Moreover, the research answers the questions of the motif behind the domination of the blacks by the whites.

The animals in the novel *Black Beauty* are the subjects of colour discrimination and the racial injustice thwarted them since the beginning of the human civilization reducing their subjectivity to the production and material values keeping their sentiments at the bay. The novelist has used horses as her characters in the novel. The horses which are physically and psychologically exploited share the similar experiences that the black slaves had during the time of slavery. So this issue of physical and psychological exploitations upon the blacks opens the door of how the practice of racism and colour discrimination is devoiding them from their fundamental human rights.

This thesis is a library- based research. The research is based on the authentic cites. Guidance from the lecturers and professors is taken as supportive tool. Using the antebellum Black Narrative the research aims to present the text as the replica of the colour discrimination and racial injustice in the name of colour and race. In addition to it the diction and notion of slavery system are taken as the tools in making the application of the novel from the viewpoint of antebellum slave narrative. The different extracts of the novel are taken to prove the hypothesis.

The first chapter of the research discusses about some theoretical aspects of the black narratives and the relationship of *Black Beauty* with the slave narratives. The second chapter is the discussion of the methodology of antebellum slave narratives and the analysis of the novel from the viewpoint of how slaves are victimized and objectified in the hand of masters along with the exploration of revolutionary spirit as shown in the character of the protagonist Black Beauty. The second chapter also discusses the relationship of Black Beauty with other well- known slave narratives like the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, and also how it contains the characteristics of slave narratives identified by Olney and the last chapter concludes the research.



## Chapter Two

### *Black Beauty as a Slave Narrative*

James Olney introduces his article by asking whether the slave narrative should be considered autobiography. He notes that there are “over six thousand” slave narratives, and one would expect to find some variation among the texts (Olney 46). Olney finds that the narratives are very similar to each other, not only in their construction, but in their content. He provides a definition of what autobiography is, “autobiography may be understood as a recollective /narrative act in which the writer, from a certain point in life – the present, looks back over the events of that life and recounts them in such a way as to show how that past history has led to this present state of being” (Olney 47). The author contrasts Augustine’s *Confessions*, where the author’s memory plays an integral role in the text, to the slave narrative. The slave narrative is largely episodic in nature, and typically does not use memory to reflect on the events, but merely to recall the events as fact. Olney makes an interesting analogy between classic autobiography and the slave narratives as autobiography, “the slave narrative, with a few exceptions, tends to exhibit a highly conventional, rigidly fixed form that bears as much the same relationship to autobiography in a full sense as painting by numbers bears to painting as a creative act” (Olney 48). I think this is quite an oversimplification. There are exceptions, and not all slave narratives should be lumped together. However, supporting Olney’s assertion, Anna Sewell’s *Black Beauty* is probably regarded as the finest slave narrative, because it deviates the most from the typical slave narrative.

According to Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (1985) slave narratives are “the written and dictated testimonies of the enslavement of black human beings” (xii). They have been “arbitrarily defined as only those written works published premanumission (1865): “the

nature of the narratives, and their total rhetorical strategies and import, changed once slavery no longer existed (xiii). For Robert Stepto (1985), slave narratives embody the “acquisition of a voice” by a former slave that “is quite possibly his only permanent achievement once he escapes” (225). The genre, according to Sterling Lecator Bland, Jr. (2000) is one of the most significant in U.S. American Literature.

At a time when American Writers like James Fenimore Cooper, William Gilmore Simms, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Walt Whitman were struggling to find a form of literary expression that could be seen as distinctly “American”, fugitive slave narrators, in writing their stories created literature that was itself uniquely “American” (162).

The argument of this thesis is that the rhetorical, formal, thematic, and social dimensions of the genre known as the slave narrative also characterize some animal autobiographies, in particular *Black Beauty*, the first full length (Prusty 9), the most powerful (Lundin 280), and the most famous and enduring example (Hunt 421) of animal autobiography, one whose complexity transcends other examples of the genre (Dolivers 143). The slave narrative that is the focus of the comparison of this chapter is the 1845 *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, the best known of the published slave narratives, “a remarkable achievement” (Stepto 237) the one most frequently used as “the model for critical studies” (Heglar 32) and “at once the best example, the supreme exceptional case, and the supreme achievement” (Olney 156). In 1985, James Olney argued that “conventions for slave narratives were so early and so firmly established” that one could create a “master outline” of the form, based upon the “great” slave narratives (152). Olney’s outline of the characteristics of the narrative which forms the organization of this chapter corresponds remarkably to the literary conventions of Anna Sewell’s *Black Beauty*, of the twelve conventions that Olney lists, the 1845 *Narrative of Frederick Douglass* contains eleven; *Black Beauty* contains ten.

*Black Beauty* spent his young life with his mother on Farmer Grey's farm. Farmer Grey was a good, kind man and the horses had a good life. His mother told him that not all people were good and she gave him some advices: "Always be good so people will love you. Always work hard and do your best." *Black Beauty* tried to follow this advice all his life. The advice given by his mother seems to be similar to the experiences of the slaves. The slaves had to be good and faithful to the masters to be loved. This means they had to tolerate everything and they shouldn't have to revolt against the will of the masters. First, he went to live at Birtwick Park with Mr. Gordon and his family, who treated their horses well. He became friend with two other horses, Merry legs and Ginger. He was cared for by a groom called John Manly, who never used a whip. John Manly is the example of some of the slave owners who were good to their slaves. It was at Manly's where he obtained his name as *Black Beauty* from Manly's wife. The naming of *Black Beauty* resembles the naming of the slaves. The slaves used to be named by their masters.

According to Olney, slave narratives open with two important characteristics: first, the narrator states, "I was born" and specifies "a place but not date of birth"; then the narrator provides "a sketchy account of parentage, often involving a white father" 153). In Sewell's novel, *Black Beauty* does not open with "I was born," but instead with a pastoral scene from his youth on an English farm.

The first place that I can well remember was a large pleasant meadow with a pond of clear water in it. Some shady trees leaned over it, and rushes and water- lilies grew at the deep end. Over the hedge on one side we looked into ploughed fields, and on the other we looked over a gate at our master's house, which stood by the roadside ; at the bottom a running brook overhung by a steep bank.(2)

Though *Black Beauty* doesn't open with "I was born", the place the protagonist of the novel, Black Beauty, refers to is obviously his birth place. He doesn't mention the date as Olney has argued. He remembers and explains that place as far as he can remember. To remember and tell the memories of the past is also one of the characteristics of the slave narratives. In most of the slave narratives the first person narrator tells his past which can be helpful to understand not only the life story of the slave but also the history of slavery.

Beauty's "sketchy account" of his parentage notes that his sire and grandsire were famous racehorses and establishes that his mother, Duchess, is a favourite broodmare of the Master, who "often called her Pet" (4). Given farmer Grey's possession and complete control over Duchess's reproduction, Moira Ferguson (1994) suggests a "scarcely veiled sexual dimension" (37) to the relationship between the master and Duchess. Farmer Grey also assumes the role of father and master to Beauty and his siblings, presumably deciding to castrate Beauty because he believed a gelding would be far more tractable, and therefore a more fitting harness mate for the mare Ginger, as well as a proper mount for Mrs. Gordon and, later Lady Anne. This shows the sexual abuse of the white masters to the black slave women. They had sex with the slave women and the born children were their slaves. Unlike Douglass's relations with his mother, Beauty's relationship with his mother lasts about four years and is very close. Beauty lives off her milk for many months" Duchess works in the field during the day, coming back so that "at night I lay down close by her" (2). When Beauty later learns that Rob Roy one of Square Gordon's horses who had been maimed in a hunting accident and had to be destroyed was his brother, he understands his mother's pain and reflects, "It seems that horses have no relations; at least, they never know each other after they are sold" (50). Beauty never knows how many brothers and sisters he may have. He does not spend considerable time with his mother, even trotting beside her in a double harness on occasion; and Duchess gives Beauty the most important advice of his life:"A horse never

knows who may buy him do your best wherever it is , and keep your good name” (17). This implies in the life of the slaves too. A slave never knows who may buy him. He had to be bought and sold according to the will of the masters. The fate of a slave was determined by the masters not by himself.

Most slave narratives as Olney indicates in his ‘master outline,’ offer valuable information about life under slavery: a “description of the amounts and kinds of food and clothing given to slaves , the work required of them, the pattern of a day, a week, a year” (153). Douglass’s narrative, for example, describes the “troughs” (271) the slave children eat from, the lack of blankets and beds, and the “monthly allowance of food” and “yearly supply of clothing” for adults and children (260). He explains the ways in which plantations and farms are structured and the difference between “born” slaveholder and “adopted” slaveholders (286). He is careful to distinguish between the work of house slaves and field hands; the opportunities available to slaves whose time is hired out; and the advantages of being a slave in the city “almost a freeman” as opposed to a slave on a remote plantation because “a sense of shame” protects the slaves in the city whose condition is observed by “Non slave holding neighbours” (275). He identifies several ways in which slave owners control their slaves, ranging from his description of the way in which the slave owner uses holidays as “conducts , or safety- valves , to carry off the rebellious spirit of enslaved humanity” (300) and his lengthy account of his own life with a “negro – breaker” (299).

*Black Beauty* gives information about the living conditions and structure of a Victorian Horse. The character Black Beauty gives a commentary on his care, feeding, the way he was handled and trained. He describes the types of food and its amount he and his stable-mates were given. Further he describes the types of harnesses, brindles, and saddles they wear; and the varying types of work he was expected to perform in his various positions. He often talks about the handling of the reins in tender mouths, proper driving techniques,

when and how much water to give to a horse, or even a humane way to end a horse's life. Beauty also establishes a hierarchy among horses, privileging his own beginnings as a carriage horse for an aristocratic family and as his master's personal saddle horse. At that point in his life, he essentially defines himself as the equine equivalent of the house slave, given proper attention and care. However, when he is "ruined" by a drunken groom, he is sold and re-sold into subsequently worsening situations, until he winds up a cart horse in a position comparable to that of a plantation field hand whose sole purpose is to give the maximum amount of physical labour possible until he drops dead of exhaustion. The proper balance between work and rest is a recurring theme in *Black Beauty*. Beauty explains the amount of work needed to keep horses healthy: too much and they become worn and jaded; too little and they are likely to be as full of spirit as to be unmanageable. As a cab horse in London, Beauty and his companions do not have scheduled yearly holidays as do the slaves in Douglass's narrative. In fact, says Beauty, the holiday time of year is particularly trying; with all the balls, parties, and dances, "the work is hard and often late"(422). On several occasions Beauty is turned out to pasture to rest; he particularly enjoys a "rare treat" of an afternoon in a country pasture during his time as a cab horse.

When my harness was taken off, I did not know what I should do first- whether to eat the grass, or roll over on my back or lie down and rest, or have a gallop across the meadow out of sheer spirits at being free; so I did all by turns.(342)

The quality of life Beauty and his companions experience depends upon the humans with whom they come in contact, based not upon social or economic status but upon how the humans treat animals. At the second horse fair, Beauty says, while some buyers treat him roughly in their examination of him, some are "poor and shabby, but kind and human, with voices that I could trust."(436).

One of the characteristics of slave narrative that Olney identifies is the cruelty of the slaveholder, Resistance, and Escape. The slave narrative revolves around the cruelty of slaveholders. Slave narratives normally offer descriptions "of a cruel master, mistress, or overseer, details of first observed whipping and numerous subsequent whippings, with women very frequently the victims" (153). They often describe "a 'Christian' slaveholder and the accompanying claim that 'Christian' slaveholders are invariably worse than those professing no religion" and include "an account of one extraordinarily strong, hardworking slave often 'pure African' who, because there is no reason for it, refuses to be whipped"(153). In addition , Olney notes that a "description of successful attempts to escape, lying by during the day, travelling by night guided by the North Star, reception in a free state by Quakers who offer a lavish breakfast and much genial thee/thou conversation" are customary in slave narratives. Sterling Lecaster Bland (2000) argues that "[t]he tension generated in the fugitive slave narratives usually centers on the method of escape" since "the very existence of the narrative" means "the narrator had escaped."(12)

A slave narrative would commonly describe, in vivid detail, scenes of rape, murder, family separation, beating, and starvation, especially of women and children. Before he is two years old Beauty's introduction to cruelty occurs when he hears the "shriek" of the hare at the end of a hunt(10), followed shortly afterwards by a "loud bang and a dreadful shriek"(12), when a horse injured during the hunt is put down. Like in other slave narratives the slaves never forget cruel childhood scenes, Beauty notes that he has "never forgotten" (8) this event. During his life Beauty himself experiences mistreatment caused by ignorance or human vice, neglect, and finally downright physical abuse. At Birtwick Park, a country estate, Beauty becomes violently ill when improperly stabled after running himself to exhaustion because his young groom does not know to walk him until he cools. At Earlshall, the drunken head groom gallops him over gravel and causes him to fall, laming him, permanently scarring his

knees , and ruining him for use as a “gentleman’s horse”(234). Then he suffers painful sores when owner of the suburban livery where he is rented out does not check that his harness has been properly fitted. His first experiences with serious cruelty, however, occur in the city: as a draft animal on the streets of London, Beauty is repeatedly beaten and whipped when he becomes unable to pull the heavy loads required of him. Although Beauty himself does not comment upon the effect of Christianity on those who own slaves, he does relate the words of one of his first grooms:

Cruelty was the devil’s own trademark, and if we saw anyone who took pleasure in cruelty , we might know who he belonged to .On the other hand , where we saw people who loved their neighbours, and were kind of beast, we might know that was God’s mark, for “God is Love.”(114)

Another of the characteristics of slave narrative as identified by Olney is a description of a "Christian" slaveholder (often of one such dying in terror) and the accompanying claim that "Christian" slaveholders are invariably worse than those professing no religion. Jerry Barker, one of Beauty’s owners, also notes that cab-men and their families cannot attend church because church-goers will not walk a few blocks to church on Sunday, a comment that recalls Douglass’s observation that Christian slave holders often refuse to allow their slaves to observe the Sabbath or to attend a Sabbath school. The degree and regularity of the cruelty in *Black Beauty* is underlined by the allegorical names of several of the characters. Black Beauty identifies a Mr. Flicher, who steals the horses’ oats to sell, and Nicholas Skinner, who would work the horses “as long as they’d go, and then sell ‘em for what they’ll fetch, at the knacker’s or elsewhere” (432). Like in other slave narratives the characters in *Black Beauty* are also strong, hardworking and faithful. The main characters are Black Beauty and Ginger. These strong and hardworking characters have to resist the cruelty of their masters. In *Frederic Douglass's Narrative*, driven by days of pain and despair at Covey’s and facing



the refusal of his owner help him, Douglass resolves to fight, seizing “Covey hard by the throat” (298). He tells Covey that he had been used “like a brute for six months” and was “determined” that the treatment must stop. After almost two hours of fighting, Covey and Douglass reach an unspoken truce: Covey never whips Douglass again and Douglass has fed a “few expiring embers of freedom”, and restored “a sense of his own manhood” (298). Both Beauty and Ginger experience the same fate as Douglass does in Sewell's novel *Black Beauty*. Beauty tolerates the brutalities with better experiences but Ginger fights against the master's cruelty.

Beauty’s carriage mate, the beautiful Ginger, whom he admires for her ‘honest’ efforts and hard work as his “partner in double harness” (40), has experienced a very different life from Beauty’s. Ginger tells Beauty, “I never had any one, horse or man, that was kind to me, or that I cared to please.”(50). He accounts of her “breaking in” are couched in the language of a slave woman’s attempt to resist a rape:

Several men came to catch me, and when at last they closed me in ..... One caught me by the forelock, another caught me by the nose and held it so tight I could hardly draw my breath; then another took my under jaw in his hard hand and wrenched my mouth open, and so by force they got on the halter and the bar into my mouth; then one dragged me along by the halter, another flogging behind, and this was the first experience I had of men’s kindness; it was all force. (52)

This shows how even the strongly determined slave women were sexually exploited during slavery. If they were not ready to have sex relations with the whites they were forcefully raped. The slave owners showed their extreme cruelty and forced the slave women to have sex with them. It reveals the cruelest picture of slavery during that time. The women were forced to have this kind of sexual relation and were forced to have children. This is why in most of the slave narratives the slaves reveal that their masters were their fathers.

The ‘high bred’ Ginger, with her “great deal of spirit” (52) does not appreciate being “horseflesh” (54) and reacts with volatility when she feels abused. She tells Beauty about her treatment of so-called “Samson” Ryder, who had “a hard voice, a hard eye, a hard hand.”

I felt my whole spirit set against him, and I began to kick, and plunge, and rear as I had never done before, and we had a regular fight; for a long time he stuck to the saddle and punished me cruelly with his whip and spurs, but my blood was thoroughly up, and I cared for nothing he could do if only I could get him off. At last, after a terrible struggle; I threw him off to the Sother end of the field. (33)

This experience expressed by Ginger reveals the cruelty of the master and the revolt of the slaves when tolerance exceeds its level. It shows the most inhuman picture of the slave owners. When torture exceeds, the victims can no longer tolerate it and turn against the torturer. The struggle and revolt of Ginger is similar to the revolt of the black slaves against their masters.

On one occasion, when Lady W. demand that York “get those horses’ heads up” (192) by greatly shortening the bearing reins, even though she has ordered others- Ginger begins “plunging, rearing, and kicking in a most desperate manner,” accidentally injuring Beauty (194). Ginger is, of course, beaten and badly bruised for her behavior and never draws the carriage again. Given to the “hard rider” Lord George to become a hunter, the spiritual Ginger exerts herself “to the utmost” in a steeplechase and is “ruined”: “her wind was touched” and “her back was straight” by Lord George’s weight (234). She shares the spirit of many rebellious slaves; but her rebellious periods do not have the results of Douglass’s: she never recovers from the strain of the steeplechase, because a cab horse, with every step excruciatingly painful, and loses hope. When Beauty says to her, “You used to stand up for yourself if you were ill-used.” Ginger replies, “Men are strongest, and if they are cruel and

have no feeling, there is nothing that we can do, but just bear it – bear it on and on to the end. I wish the end was come, I wish I was dead.” (364)

This is the bitterest feeling that Ginger expresses about slave holders. They are strongest in the sense that they have the political, economic and structural power. When they become cruel to the slaves the slaves have no option more than tolerance. The slaves can only tolerate. They have to bear all the injustices and inhumanities ascribed to them. A short time later Beauty sees a cart with a dead horse and hopes the “dreadful” sight is Ginger so “her troubles would be over”(366).

There are no escapes described in Douglass’s narrative, even though Douglass writes that “on the third day of September, 1838, I left my chains and succeeded in reaching New York without the slightest interruption of any kind” (319). He says it would give him “great pleasure” to explain “the facts pertaining to his most fortunate escape” but fears that “others would thereby be involved in the most embarrassing difficulties” and such an account “would most undoubtedly induce greater vigilance on the part of slaveholders” (315).

Likewise, there is no escape in *Black Beauty* unless one agrees with Beauty’s thinking that death for Ginger has been an escape similar to Douglass’s reflection that his mother escaped “hardships and sufferings”(256) through death. Beauty himself is rather passive and tolerant in his behavior. Ferguson writes that as long as he is treated well, “a rather sophistic Black Beauty judges the world a happy place” (42). Keeping in mind his mother’s advice to “do his best” to keep his good name,” Beauty works to his full capacity for his respective masters, up to and including the driver who whips him unceasingly, and “would even whip me under the belly, and flip the lash out at my head. Indignities like these took the heart out of me terribly, but still I did my best and never hung back” (428)

Beauty's form of "escape" is good fortune of being purchased-when he is about thirteen or fourteen and in the company of "old broken-down horses"(436) by Mr. Thoroughgood and his grandson Willie, whose "kind words and caresses" as well as "(t)he perfect rest, the good food, the soft turf, and gentle exercise" (442) restore him. Beauty ends his days with Joe Green, a former groom at Squire Gordon's, and three spinster sisters. He fancies some mornings, before he is "quite awake," that he is "still in the orchard at Birtwick , standing with (his) old friends under apple- trees"(452).

An "account of a slave auction, of families being separated and destroyed, of distraught mothers clinging to their children as they are torn from them, of slave coffles being driven south" (153) is another convention that Olney believes has characterized slave narratives from the beginning. Douglass does not describe a slave auction in his narrative. However , after Captain Anthony's death, he describes the disposal of his old master's estate, noting that "horses and men , cattle and women, pigs and children" were all "subjected to the same narrow inspection" for valuation and then divided between Master Andrew and his sister, Mrs. Lucretia (282). He is between the ages of ten and eleven as he realizes, our fate for life was now to be decided. We had no more voice in that decision than brutes among which we were ranked. A single word from the white men was enough against all our wishes, prayers, and entreaties to sunder forever the dearest friends, dearest kindred, and strongest ties known to human beings (282). As the slaves are divided, Douglass believes he suffers "more anxiety" than many of his fellow- slaves because he has known kind treatment. He thinks " a kind providence" that he is given to Mrs. Lucretia and sent back once again to live with Master Hugh Auld in Baltimore (283).

In *Black Beauty*, there are scenes and incidents of auctions similar to the slave narratives. Beauty is bought, exploited and sold as the slaves were used to be bought and sold during slavery. Beauty finds himself in one situation in which as estate is divided and two

auctions. At the disposal of property, he loses his happiest home because Squire Gordon is forced to move for the sake of his wife's health. Within a matter of days, the Squire's estate is dissolved, including the stable of horses sold to various owners. Beauty and his equine family, complexly social herd animals, scarcely have a chance to bid one another goodbye. At an auction or horses fair a few years later, Beauty reflects, "No doubt a horse fair is a very amusing place to those who have nothing to lose; at any rate, there is plenty to see"(278). He describes the variety of horses represented: young horses fresh from the country, ponies, cart horses, fancy saddle horses, and " in the background a number of poor old things, sadly broken down with hard work and some very dejected -looking old horses" (279-80). Beauty, the one who is supposed to be judged by buyers, says he is the one judging the buyers "by their manners" (280). Like Douglass, Beauty has known kind treatment and reports that he is "dreadfully afraid" that "a hard-faced, loud -voiced man"(282) will purchase him.

At Beauty's second auction, he is older and has been handed badly. As a result he is with the old broken-down horses, undergoing evaluation "to be sold to anybody who'd give twenty dollars"(434). He relates that he is poked, prodded, handled roughly, cursed, and humiliated by would- be purchasers as he optimistically searches the crowd in hope of finding a benevolent face to purchase him. For Douglass, the property disposal had ended well; for Beauty, the estate disposal and horse fairs both end well: in each case he finds a happy home. Olney argues that a "record of the barriers raised against slave literacy and the overwhelming difficulties encountered in learning to read and write" is a usual convention of the slave narrative as well as the former slave's "taking of a new last name to accord with new social identity as a free man, but retention of first name as a mark of continuity of individual identity" (153).

During slavery the slaves received love and more attention by the masters when they were young and were able to do more physical work for the masters. But when they became

older, they received more hatred. The old slaves were hated, unwanted and they were not properly cared. Similarly, Beauty also has to undergo the same fate. When he was young, was physically strong and could do a lot of work, he was given much attention but when he grew older, became physically weak and could not do as much work as desired by the master, he was valueless. He was not chosen by the rich owners. In slave narratives the type of slaves a master bought, determined his economic level. Similarly in *Black Beauty*, the master who bought and sold him also determined their economic condition.

Another of the characteristics of slave narratives as identified by Olney is record of the barriers raised against slave literacy and the overwhelming difficulties encountered in learning to read and write. In other slave narratives like *Douglass's Narrative* have this characteristic too. In most of the slave narratives, the slaves at sometime of their life understand the importance of literacy and they attempt to read and write but the owners don't let them do so because they know that literacy makes the slaves aware of their condition and they may revolt against them.

The issue of literacy, of course, does not arise in *Black Beauty*; but names are important in both works, with Douglass fulfilling Olney's description exactly. Although his mother named him Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, Douglass himself disposes of the two middle names in slavery is generally known as Frederick Bailey, sometimes as Fred. He calls himself Stanley during his escape and changes his last name to Johnson in New York. Later, he bestows on Mr. Johnson, a Northern abolitionist, the "privilege" of choosing his last name, but insists he will not change his first name: "I must hold on to that, to preserve a sense of my identity" (322). The abolitionist, "who had been reading "Lady of the Lake," suggests "Douglass" as a last name and Douglass writes, "From that time until now I have been called "Frederick Douglass" (322).

Beauty cannot control what he is called and undergoes several name changes in his autobiography, the changes in names reflecting changes in his status. Farmer Grey calls him simply "my little Darkie"; at Birtwick Park, his aristocratic home, he is first called "Black Beauty"; to lady Anne his is "Black Auster". As his status and condition deteriorate, he is simply called "Jack" by the cab-man Jerry and "Blackie" by cruel Jakes, the carter. In all of these stages, however, Beauty does follow his mother's advice to keep his "good name." As Ruth Padel(1980) writes, "Beauty loses his name through his experiences" but keeps his "good name" by his own actions, until in the last chapter, where he is recognized by a former groom and called by the name with which he has always self- identified, Black Beauty.

One of the first critics to give another identity to *Black Beauty* was Ruth Padel in 1980, who argues the work reads "almost as one of the greatest feminist texts"(48) in shape and themes. Padel declares *Black Beauty* to be "anti-porn," that is, written to defy "the pornographer's favorite cliché: that the object used had no identity except a spirit whose curbing confirms the male user in enjoyment of his mastery"(51). While she says beauty follows the advice of his mother, "whose assumptions linger today behind the advice of Cosmopolitan," to always do his best to "please (his) man," she calls Ginger "the Antigone of Birtwick Hall," who is "the indignant feminist"(52) raging against the system that ultimately kills her.

In 1994, Moira Ferguson argued that Sewell was able to "weave a horizontal text about a horse with a vertical text" (49) of social commentary. Ferguson believes Sewell creates several others in Beauty when she linked slavery to cruelty, and helped reconstitute the definition of Englishness along gendered lines; she also stirred in a subterranean attack on the aristocracy, casting benign, and ruling-class male protagonists in the role of enslavers.

Thus, Ferguson identifies the horses in the novel with women, the working class, and even more importantly, slaves; in fact, she points out several slave tropes in *Black Beauty* and goes so far as to describe several scenes in the novel that would resonate with readers of slave narratives.

The final convention of the slave narrative that Olney describes "reflections on slavery" (153) is, of course, important in both Douglass's narrative and *Black Beauty*. Douglass's descriptions of slavery throughout his narrative are powerful: from the description of himself as a child observing Aunt Hester's beating to his discovery of how owning slaves can change a kind-hearted mistress in Baltimore to his account of the brutal year he spends with the slave-breaker Covey. At times he makes direct assertions of the nature of slavery: it is "hell" (258), "dehumanizing," "soul-killing" (263), and as "injurious" to the slaveholder as it is to the slave (277), with "robes christened with the blood of millions" (306). Douglass also reminds the reader that "real sympathy" for the slave can "only come through an imaginative leap into the total situation of the fugitive and the world of the slave" (Andrews 138).

*Black Beauty* is described as a fairly passive victim by most critics who emphasize his fidelity to his mother's advice, but despite his accepting temperament he has a number of powerful passages that reflect on how it feels to lose one's freedom and that recoil at the cruelty of human to animal. Early in his experience as a carriage horse, Beauty laments:

No doubt year and year, I must stand up in a stable night and day  
except when I am wanted, and then I must be just as steady and quiet  
as any old horse who has worked twenty years but I am not  
complaining for I know that it must be so. (27)

Beauty urges all of us to use imagination to identify with the condition of all driven or ridden horses, more particularly with the mistreated animals. Beauty comes to realize that



even he has not realized the suffering of some of his companions until he finds himself in a similar situation. When he becomes a cab horse, he reflects:

I have heard men say, that seeing is believing ; but I should say that feeling is believing ; for as much as I had seen before, I never knew till now the absolute misery of a cab horse's life.(426)

Since Olney's 1985 list of characteristics of the slave narrative, many critics have examined more and more slave narratives and identified other conventions usual in many, if not most, of the slave narratives. Many of those conventions also appear in *Black Beauty*. An area of particular interest has been the role of the narrator and the relationship between the narrator and reader. Other areas have included the narrator's discovery and realization of his or her condition, the literary structure of the narrative, and portrayal of gender issues and communal interactions. A number of critics, especially Robert Stepto, have focused upon the authenticating documents proof of the actual existence of the author and of the author's literacy that Olney identified: portraits, testimonials, prefaces and introductions at the beginning of the narratives and documentary appendices at the conclusion. Emphasis upon the authenticated authorial voice as both observer and participant permeates the Douglass narrative, with statements like "I was doomed to be a witness and participant"(258); " I shall never forget is whilst I remember anything"(258); "I saw more clearly than ever" the evils of the system (282); and " I have an abundance of such illustrations drawn from my own observation"(301).

*Black Beauty* comments both as himself-"I shall never forget "(22); "Some of the sights I saw make me sad even now"(260) and for his companions "This was the sort of experience we endured"(248). He also offers authentication through the words of other horses

who give him accounts of their experiences: "How could I forget?" (Justin 74); "I saw horses shot down men fall wounded heard the groans of the dying"(Captain 302).

Stephens suggests a similar tone of voice among the first-person slave narrators, arguing that "the strident, moral voice of the former slaves is the single most impressive feature of a slave narrative"(225). Douglass, of course, comments upon slavery but also upon other human failings, such as alcoholism. Beauty too presents a strong moral voice in his narrative, not simply about the mistreatment of horses but about prejudicial class distinctions, especially those affecting working men and London cab-drivers, and drinking even in moderation.

Andrews discusses the degree to which slave narratives depend upon metaphor the effects of that metaphor: the transforming of a piece of property and object into a narrator, a subjective human being (24). Ironically, too, the speaker of the narrative was not allowed to speak in the world of the narrative he is recounting. As Douglass regularly reminds the readers, "I was not allowed to make inquiries of my master"(255); "we had no more voice [at the breakup of his master's estate] than the brutes with which we were ranked"(282). Beauty is, of course, an even more dramatic example of property becoming a narrator of a narrative world in which he has no voice. He too laments his lack of voice. When his driver tries to cross a washed-out bridge, Beauty says, "Of course I could not tell him, but I knew very well the bridge was not safe"(104);he is unable to explain that a stone in his foot has made him lame (247); and when a groom is shorting his food rations, " I could not complain, nor make known my wants"(266). The possibilities of communication between human and animal are eloquently described by Beauty, who says of John Manley, that although he didn't always know what John said, he knew what he meant:"He had his own ways of making me understand by the tone of his voice or the touch of the rein. If he was serious, I always knew it"(46). It shows that the slaves had to understand the language of the masters. The masters never used to try to understand the language of the slaves. They used different symbols to make the slaves

understand their commands. At last they knew the language their masters spoke. Sometimes they have to understand the wills of the masters by their facial expressions too.

In both *Black Beauty* and *Douglass's Narrative* readers are invited to cross the "gulf of dissimilarity" between narrator and reader- to accept the metaphor that allows "imaginative self-projection" into a text (Andrews 137) with a narrator "who does not necessarily meet a single one of our expectations" (Collins 19), but becomes aware of his situation over a period of time and then reveals the condition of slavery through a range of possible literary structures. Of special interest in slave narratives, I believe, is the moment when the slave becomes aware of his or her position of servitude. Douglass, of course, first realizes he is a slave and also what being a slave means when he sees his Aunt Hester beaten. In *Black Beauty* the significant description of a horse being broken in is Ginger's, discussed in the section under cruelty above. Exactly what the horror of servitude can be, however, dawns later in an incident of despair, suggested by Andrews, that seems to occur in many slave narratives and results in physical and psychological collapse. In Douglass the scene occurs on "one of the hottest days of the month of August, "when Douglass collapses in the field from overwork. He describes his "helplessness in the face of evil," his collapse into despair (Andrews8):

I broke down; my strength failed me; I was seized with a violent aching of the head, attended with extreme dizziness; I trembled in every limb I nerved myself up, feeling it would never do to stop work. I stood as long as I could. When I stand no longer, I fell, and felt as if held down by some weight. (294-95)

In Sewell's *Black Beauty*, Beauty's cruelest treatment, utter misery, is at the hands of Skinner. In a scene Beauty recounts how in the "heat of summer", he is beaten on his back,

under his belly, even upon his head, with a "cruel whip with something so sharp at the end that sometimes it drew blood"(428). Overworked and overloaded, he collapses on a steep hill, wishing he would die:

I was struggling to keep on, goaded by the constant chucks of the rein and use of whip, when, in a single moment I cannot tell how my feet slipped from under me, and I fell heavily to the ground on my side; the suddenness and the force with which I fell, seemed to beat all the breath out of my body. I lay perfectly still, indeed, I had no power to move, and I thought now I was going to die. (431-32)

The description of the slave condition may take a number of structural forms. Marion Wilson Starling (1988) asserts that "adventure is the dominant characteristic of slave narratives"(311), and certainly this description would fit both Douglass's narrative and *Black Beauty*. Andrews speculates that there is a journey or quest motif in both the spiritual autobiography and physical bondage to freedom in the slave narrative (7). This journey pattern can be found in both Douglass's narrative and *Black Beauty* for example, Douglass moves from house slave to field slave, *Beauty* from carriage horse to cab horse to cart horse but Douglass's freedom at the end of his narrative is by his own initiative whereas *Beauty*'s comfortable situation results from the coincidence of his rescue by a doting grandfather and compassionate grandson and his discovery by the former groom of Squire Gordon. A difference I note in the narratives is that Douglass prefers the city to the country during his enslavement; *Beauty* usually experiences something of a pastoral idyll in the country and abuse in the city. A similarity between the texts is that ultimately Douglass is "free" and *Beauty* is comfortable because they have been purchased, Douglass from his legal American owner by British Sympathizers. Whatever the structural conventions of a particular slave narrative, the text focus upon issues of human rights, including the dehumanizing and

desexualizing of individuals, and the destruction of community relationships. Elizabeth Ann Beaulieu (1999) and Joanne M. Braxton (1986) suggest customary ways in which women are portrayed in slave narratives that are relevant to both Douglass's and Sewell's narratives. Beaulieu argues that women in slave narratives are essentially powerless: "Slave masters denied their enslaved females the privilege of having a gender identity by co-opting their reproductive capabilities" (4). They are essentially breeders without "mothering" or "nurturing" qualities (12). Braxton argues instead that the mothers are "outraged": they do the best they can to care for their children and embody the values of "sacrifice, nurturance, and personal courage" (14). Both of these positions can be supported in a consideration of Douglass's mother and grandmother and of Beauty's mother. The powerlessness of the female in *Black Beauty* can also be dramatically supported by two non-mothers: Ginger, who is controlled and abused in a manner suggestive of rape, and an unnamed mare whose "long beautiful tail" is cut off "through the flesh and through the bone" in the interest of "Fashion" (256).

Charles Heglar (2001) points to the desexualization of slaves in slave narratives, with Beaulieu arguing that slaves are essentially "genderless" because "having a gender identity is a privilege that stems directly from one's race" (13). Douglass himself writes, "Manhood is lost in chattel hood" (143). The descriptions of Ginger's beating and fights with owners have overtones of rape and sexual abuse, but Sewell avoids all reference to sex in relation to Beauty, a striking and massively powerful animal whose castration is never mentioned in the narrative. Heglar's suggestion that community is important to the slave and that descriptions of communal relationships are an important convention of the genre is clear in both Douglass and *Black Beauty*. On the one hand, Douglass notes that the slave's child is usually removed from his mother before his twelfth month (256) thus eliminating any relationship "from our memories" (272) and allowing the child, as Douglass did when he was seven, to leave one

home for another “without a regret” (272). He also, however, describes the relationship that develops between the slaves and hired men at Mr. Freeland’s, “We were linked and interlinked with one another. I believe we would have lived and died for one another” (305). The friends’ greatest fear is that they will be separated from each other. Beauty, who speaks of his closeness both to his mother and to Ginger, does not experience pain when he leaves his mother: he is four years old and off to adventure. But over the years he expresses significant pain when separated from his companions, especially Ginger. He notes that the horses did not have time to say good bye to each other after their sale by Square Gordon; and when Beauty is later sold by Lord W, he reports again that “there was no leave taking”(234). He has a halter slipped over his head and is led away, even as Ginger runs the fence and whinnies after him. While they had been recuperating in the pasture, Ginger had proven prophetic, saying to Beauty, “they will soon take you away, and I shall lose the only friend I have, and most likely we shall never see each other again. ‘Tis a hard world!”(236). Later on the work the usually understated Beauty expresses deep pain when a stable- mate is killed in an accident , quietly writing , “ I felt it very much”(398). In the closing scene, back at Birtwick, he reminisces about his friends at Birtwick in his early years. William Andrew asserts that the purpose of the slave narrative was “to enlighten white readers about both the realities of slavery as an institution and the humanity of black people as individuals deserving of full human rights”. I believe that this study of many of the conventions of slave narrative found both in Douglass’s narrative and *Black Beauty* speaks for Anna Sewell: to enlighten human readers about both the realities of animal mistreatment and the intelligence and sensitivity of animals as beings deserving significant individual and communal rights. The nature of the literature of social reform varied greatly during the century, with social reformers like Carlyle, Benjamin Disraeli, or John Stuart Mill penning well reasoned, thought provoking essays. But the significant areas of literature with larger audiences were the first-

person narratives, some of which are considered sentimental today. Peter Stonely (1999) argues that for sentimental authors, politics is largely a matter of what makes someone “feel right”, thus, “private sentiment becomes the power that will reform public institution” (17).

Jane Tompkins believes that many nineteenth-century works that have been dismissed as sentimental “offer powerful examples of the way a culture thinks about itself, articulating and proposing solutions for the problems that shape a particular historical moment” (xi). The sentimental becomes a set of cultural conventions that evoke sympathy in the reader. In discussing *Black Beauty*, Bruss would argue that the work remains a “literary act” without a genre until it is “recognizable” within “a particular community of readers and writers” (5), “participating in symbolic systems making up literature and culture” (6), at which time it becomes part of “an intelligible series or a history” (5). From the brief discussion above, of the nineteenth-century literary context in which *Black Beauty* appeared, she would no doubt be comfortable with the work as an example of first –person narration, animal autobiography, and social-reform literature. I believe she would not consider the work to be sentimental and would be very interested in considering *Black Beauty* within the symbolic system of the slave narrative.

The conditions of Anna Sewell’s life suggest that she would have been familiar with the rights movements and literature of the day. In fact, her interests and activities indicate that she, like many women in nineteenth-century England, would have been very involved with cultural issues and reform. Moira Ferguson (1994) remarks on the involvement of women in the “political arena”(35) speaking , petitioning, organizing , and writing pamphlets, tracts, poems, fables, songs, essays, novels, and animal autobiographies. Although Sewell was long considered to have lived very limited life as a single woman and invalid Adrienne E. Gavin’s 2004 biography reveals her to have been a very remarkable woman with a lifetime of intellectual activity and periods of years in which she was physically and culturally active.

Strongly influenced in her early years by the moral and religious values of the Society of Friends, she was clearly aware of ongoing social and cultural dialogues in England's changing world and not reluctant to participate.

Gavin describes Sewell's attending lectures and meetings, traveling by rail to visit family, "almost certainly" attending the Great Exhibition and attendant London sights (Dark Horse 114), visiting museums and art galleries. As a member of the Anti-Slavery Association, she probably heard some ex-slaves speak since "a black American speaker preferably a former slave became an essential part of any respectable antislavery gathering" in the British Isles during that time (Ripley xvi).

The Great Exhibition of 1851 also included an abolitionist display with William and Mary Craft, William Wells Brown, Jasia Henson, and Box Brown. But even Sewell's periods of declining health, rather than limiting her world, actually expanded it: she travelled throughout Europe to various spas in Germany, Spain, and Brussels as well as throughout England, to places like Leamington, Merienbad, Bath, and Malvern. It was at Malvern that Sewell met Tennyson, with whom she spent a good amount of time and, Gavin posits, likely "fenced conversationally" (Gavin Dark Horse 104).

In periods of relatively good health Sewell was an avid horsewoman, riding every opportunity she had; as her health declined, she became more dependent upon her pony and cart. Whether moaned or driving, Sewell was an excellent horsewoman: "free temporarily from lameness and dependence; she was strong, powerful, fast, and untouchable" (Gavin dark horses 131). Mary Bayly, a friend of the Sewell family, reports that even in the pouring rain, Sewell was "in perfect understanding" with her horse: Anna seemed simply to hold the reins in her hand, trusting to her voice to give all the needed directions to her horse "Now thee shouldn't walk up this hill see how it rains?" "Now thee must go a little faster thee would be sorry for us to be late at the station." (Chitty 151)



Her nieces and others who had occasion to drive with Sewell gave similar accounts. During periods of good health Sewell was active with her mother in many activities supported by religious and social-reforms groups: Chartism, abolitionism, anti-vivisectionist, and temperance. The two joined in establishing soup-kitchens, providing clothing to paupers, opening reading rooms for working men as an alternative to the pub, setting up reading libraries, and organizing fund-raisers for various charitable societies; however, "teaching was the cornerstone of Anna's charitable endeavors" (Gavin Dark Horse 55). Sewell taught literacy to a wide variety of pupils at various times: working-class men, women, and children, as well as the poor, often driving her pony and cart "quite fearlessly" great distances at night in order to reach her destination. But at all times Sewell was a person with keen and restless intellect, surrounded by a family that was intellectual, activist, and literary. Her aunt, mother, and cousin were all published authors; and several of her family members were respected social reformers. Gavin's biography "challenges us to see Sewell's integrity as a radical thinker; a freethinker who could defy religious conformity; a philanthropist and reformer; and a writer whose sensibilities were shaped by a literary family" (Lundin 283). Her relationship with her mother was especially important, with Anna Sewell editing her mother's writing and her mother assisting in the writing of *Black Beauty*. Gavin quotes Anna's niece, Margaret: formed a mutual admiration society, and were, indeed, singularly adapted to supplement each other. My aunt's appreciation of her mother's gifts was profound. Anna, on the other hand, was practical, critical, and far-seeing. No one recognized this better or as well, as her mother, who was aware how much she owed to her daughter. (Gavin Dark Horse 163). In many ways, Gavin notes, Mary and Anna Sewell were one another's foil: the two women offset and complemented one another. In addition, notes Margaret Sewell, the daughter was a through editor of her mother's writing, and in the writing of *Black Beauty* "Mary is unlikely to have been as critical as Anna was herself" (Dark Horse 180).

In such an environment, Sewell's reading was extensive. It included religious tracts like Hunnah Whitehall Smith's *The God of All Comfort*, romantic poets (particularly Tennyson), Samuel Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, and biographies of figures like Martin Luther and Charles Kingsley, as well as popular authors such as Charles Dickens. Gavin mentions that at one point Sewell and her mother were "so engrossed in Thomas Carlyle's *Past and Present* that they stayed up long into the night drinking coffee to stave off sleep so they would continue with it." (Gavin Dark Horse 123). In addition, Sewell was interested in current events and social commentary from the newspapers of the day and read Florence Nightingale's works, Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth*, John Seeley's *Ecce Homo*, and "undoubtedly" Hattiet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Gavin Dark Horse 119). Thus, in writing *Black Beauty*, Sewell was clearly responding to and exploring much of the world that surrounded her; she certainly was not writing "in isolation or against the common grain" (Bruss 166). Intentionality was significant in the kind of life she lived and in the decision she made when she began *Black Beauty*, choosing its "social and literary conventions" (Bruss 6), embracing the meaning and force of social reform literature. While the previous sections describe the literary and personal context in which Sewell wrote *Black Beauty*, Bruss's concept of illocutionary force also requires a careful examination of authorial intentions: the purpose or intent of the author and the culturally -defined genre the author chooses are interlinked, as are the text the author creates and the works with which he or she wants it connected. In March 1871, Sewell became homebound, with her doctor giving her just eighteen months to live. Although her mother continued with her charitable work, Sewell's "active activism" was effectively at an end. Still, she harbored reformation impulses, as evidenced in one of her final philanthropic acts: that summer, "when it became wrenchingly clear that she would never ride or drive again, she gave her pony and chaise to the Buxton Reformatory" (Gavin Dark Horse 168), signaling that her contact with horses was also at an end. Late that year ,

Sewell made a passing mention to her "life of a horse", which her mother says she had worked on "from time to time" (Gavin Dark Horse 168); however, it was not until 1876 that Sewell said, "I am getting on with my little book, *Black Beauty*" (Chitty 184). Sewell wrote because she could not act, wrote to improve the conditions of horses and humans, and wrote to have their voices heard. An entry in her journal makes that clear:

I have for six years been confined to the house and to my sofa, and have from time to time, as I was able, been writing what I think will turn out a little book, its special aim being to induce kindness, sympathy, and an understanding treatment of horses (Chitty 184).

In addition, she explained, "In thinking of Cab-horses, I have been led to think of Cabmen, I am anxious, if I can, to present their true conditions, and their great difficulties, in a correct and telling manner" (Collins 12). In her desire and intention to give voice to the voiceless, this activist in an Abolitionist family turned to a genre whose authors had had similar intentions, thus enjoying the meaning and force of the antebellum slave narrative. Henry Louis Gates (1985) says of genre that "relations of form are not only implicitly ideological, but also shared of 'collective' despite the intentions or conscious desires of an author" (xx). In Sewell's case, the intention to share the reforming ideology and culture of the slave narratives was explicit, no doubt influenced by living in a cultural saturated with the written and oral accounts of ex-slaves. She could not turn to the animal autobiography for several reasons: the genre was considered children's literature; she wished to include the subjects of temperance, unions, and electioneering, none of which were of interest to or suitable for children; and she wanted to write for a working class audience with its modest but functional literacy. Thus, she turned to a simple structure, short and episodic; a narrative form rather than a tract or pamphlet so she could "exercise her delight in words" (Prusty 6), her skill as "a vivid storyteller" (Lundin 218); and made

the "happy decision to let the horse speak for itself"(Critic 305). With her title page announcing "The Autobiography of a Horse" and the insistence that she is merely translating "From the Equine," Sewell signaled her intention to adopt the genre of the slave narrative.

The slave narrative, like *Black Beauty*, has often been categorized under a number of genres. According to Gates the genre of the slave narratives "does share resemblances to other narratives, especially the picaresque, the sentimental novel, and the spiritual autobiography (vi); he further compares slave narratives to detective novels "that turn upon the resolution of a mystery"(vx).Olney (1985) asks, "are they history or literature or autobiography or polemical writing?"(148); William Andrews (1986) suggests the slave narrative mediates "between historical, rhetorical, and topological truth"(18). Thus, Sewell chose a genre characterized by fluidity as well as a genre whose literary accomplishment is often questioned or ignored. In a dismissive description sometimes applied to animal autobiography, Marion Wilson Starling (1988) explains, "the rush market for slaves" stories as abolitionist propaganda militated against the development of literary excellence of the slave narrative"(294).

The experiences of Black Beauty and his horse friends in Sewell's *Black Beauty* tackle the major issues of being a slave in America before emancipation. Abuse, overwork, boredom, destruction of the family unit and more are all experienced by both animals and slaves. Worse yet, just as there are benevolent masters and malevolent masters of slaves, so too are there benevolent and malevolent animal masters. "I hope you will fall into good hands;" Black Beauty's mother explains to him, "but a horse never knows who may buy him, or who may drive him; it is all a chance for us, but still I say, do your best wherever it is, and keep up your good name".

Clearly, Sewell's intent was not to use an animal autobiography as a structure of the slave narrative to discuss cruelty to animals. The distinction of intent is subtle, perhaps, but one that must be made in order to accurately judge whether or not the work was successful in its purpose. The assumption by critics and readers that Sewell's animal protagonists are somehow simply a screens for other concerns is perhaps due to her success in having human readers identify with them, which, Tess Cosslett says, "invites various analogies between animals and types of classes of humans: slaves, women, children, servants, workers" ("Animal Autobiography"). If Sewell's intentions were in fact to make these analogies, then readers can agree with critics like Ferguson, who find the work disappointing. Ferguson writes that while Sewell did raise many issues regarding Victorian society, bringing these plural messages to a tidy closure is impossible since "real" solutions on a grand scale are beyond Sewell's grasp.

However, if Sewell's intentions were with the latter to a recognized form of protest literature to further her cause against animal cruelty in general the novel is an unequivocal success. Chitty comments that while "Anna Sewell was neither the first not the last campaigner in the field her appeal reached the largest and most impressionable section of the public"(229). The RSPCA in Britain and George Angell's organization in the United States both credited the work with an increased awareness of an improvement in the horse's lot in general; and as Blount allows, the work succeeds if for no other reason than that it accomplishes Sewell's goal that "any human reading *Black Beauty* will be kinder to horses"(252).

Anna Sewell located a source of power in her determination to write *Black Beauty*; in fact, it was as if she chose to live to complete her work: "Her eighteen months came and went..... She stopped bothering with doctor's visits altogether; there was no point. But she lived another eighteen months, and another eighteen, and another still"(Collins 7), and died

five months after her "little book" went to press. In choosing the genre of the slave narrative, Sewell also found a source of power in which to contextualize her work and the inter-textually she hoped to define, inspire, and encourage between *Black Beauty* and the slave narratives. Her decision reflected her social and literary contexts as well as her personal interests and intentions, all elements of the work's illocutionary force. In so many ways, a horse and a text, creature and creation, are analogous. In either case, while beautiful in and of itself, each must submit to some type of control in order to perform work. For the horse, tack the bridles, bits, harnesses, and saddles is the means of control and also the outward sign of the type of work for which the horse has been trained; for the text, the tack is genre.

Even before an author such as Anna Sewell begins to create her text, she envisions what job that text will perform and chooses the genre with which to control her creation accordingly; before that, the work her text will perform influences the text she even conceives of creating. She is Farmer Grey: she knows, for example, that if she wants a text suitable to convey the weight of meaning she intends-about nobility, about humanity, about compassion- on its back, she has to breed an appropriate creation, just as Farmer Grey has to carefully breed Beauty to get a supple thoroughbred creature of lovely confirmation and sound disposition. Along the way, she shapes her text into its generic expectations, much the way Farmer Grey shapes Beauty, breaking him in without breaking his spirit, teaching him to accept the constraints he must have if he is to do the work he has been bred to do. In addition, she may shape her creation to fit more than one type of tack, just as Beauty learns to accept the harness in addition to saddle because "master disliked a horse that could do only one thing." (Sewell 78). The author then has the choices of texts to which she wishes to harness her creation in order to join in their power as well. Beauty is

harnessed to his mother in much the same way texts are linked to their literary parents to learn from them.

If there is cruelty in the process, a villain in the story, it comes in the form of the critic. These users of a text who see it simply as an object may purposefully disregard the tack the author has selected for her creation, choosing instead to substitute their own harness, which may be too tight or too loose, or even the wrong tack altogether. The horses serve as testimonies to critical violence: Ginger's mistreatment by men provides an analogy for the violence critics have done to female authored texts; and Beauty, like Black Beauty, has undergone such categorical violence that it may be said critics have taken this noble thoroughbred and tried to make him a Shetland pony, suitable only for children's birthday parties. The difficulty for the sympathetic critic, then, becomes how or even if to establish any genre at all for the text. On the one hand, is genre study a matter of "force", in Flower's terms, seeking to impose rigid guidelines onto the literature that places scholars in a theoretical position similar to the coachman ramming a steel bar into a resistant mouth? Do the conventions of genre, like a bearing rein, and perhaps responding to critical "fashion", function as an apparatus that constrains and reduces the usefulness of the entity subjected to it? Worse still, is genre "force" as Ginger understood it: a reduction of the text to powerlessness in order to "master" it? In my reading of Black Beauty, I seek to use genre study as a "force" in Bruss's terms: to understand the structures, themes, the contexts, and the intentions that a text demonstrates i.e.; the illocutionary force as a way to explore and capitalize upon the strength that the text holds. Placing Black Beauty in the genre of the antebellum slave narrative allows a greater insight into the tack Sewell has chosen for her creation, in fact, the very creation she has chosen to create.

Further, Sewell's "harnessing" of powerful slave narratives and the call to abolition they embody to Black Beauty's power maximizes the potential the texts have to work

together, making them fit harness-mates. My reading of *Black Beauty* seeks to do all that to understand the tack Sewell wished to use, loosen the creation from its previous bearing-rein, and allow it the freedom to use its neck, and properly harness it to other powerful works, in other words, to control the unwieldy creation without breaking its spirit.



## Chapter Three

### Slave Narrative as the Generic Designation

The previous chapters discuss the many rhetorical, formal, and thematic dimensions *Black Beauty* shares with the genre of the slave narrative. However, a consideration of Elizabeth W. Bruss's emphasis upon implicit contextual conditions surrounding texts suggest even more similarities between *Black Beauty* and slave narrative. Bruss discusses the importance of the illocutionary dimension in autobiographical acts and defines an "illocutionary act" as "an association between a piece of language and certain context, conditions and intentions" (5), areas that contribute to generate determination. Thus this chapter will examine the literary contexts of rights literatures like human right, woman right, animal right and also the slave narrative; the authorial conditions under which *Black Beauty* was written; the intentions of the author in writing; and the resulting intertextuality of *Black Beauty* and the slave narratives, supporting the concept of genre fluidity and designation of *Black Beauty* as a slave narrative amid a multitude of other generic designations.

According to Bruss the social reality language creates exists within a specific context. Informing, expressing or commiserating, illocutionary language depends upon a context of conventions for meaning and force. The illocutionary act of the author within that context is driven by the intention and recognized by a hearer or reader sharing the social context. Nineteenth century England was a period immensely characterized by many social changes and it was the period of the examination of the many writers of emerging changes.

Regardless of the genre it assumed, the first- person narrative came to have a distinct role in British literature. Such forms were dramatic monologue, semi-autobiographical novel, travelogue, memoir, journal, confessional poetry or autobiography. This was the

period of self –scrutiny and self- expression. Critics like Carlyle call it as the autobiographical time.

One of the important forms of first-person rights literature in Great Britain was the slave narrative. Although slavery was abolished in England in 1833, British activists turned their resources toward supporting the anti-slavery movement in the United States, so much so rights C. Peter Ripley (1985), “Black appeals to the British helped keep the American anti-slavery movement solvent and active” (XVI). Because of fugitive slave act in the United States and the need for fund raising, many former runaways eventually found themselves in England where they wrote and spoke extensively. “In the decade before the civil war, one dozen major and minor narratives had been published in London” ( Blakett 198) by authors such as Samuel Ringgold Ward, Moses Roper, Moses Grandy, William Craft, John Brown, John Anderson, and J.W.C. Pennington. During the time when Anna Sewell wrote *Black Beauty* many other writers were also involved in writing rights literature.

The popularity of this works does not depend only upon the humanitarian impulse of the audience. Audrey Fisch (2000) suggests that “[u]nder the politically acceptable mantle of abolitionism, the slave narrative offered Victorian readers the excitement for which they were eager: graphic scenes of torture, murder, sexual violence, and the thrill of escape” (70). The narrators become nothing more than characters in the novel. In fact, an 1855 essay in *Athenaeum*, the arbitrator of middle-class tastes in literature, complained about the way “the narratives participate in and help to construct a literary market place based not on morality but on the demands of the readers” (Fisch 76) and Sniffed, “there is too little variety in these slave – narratives to render their multiplication necessary” (Fisch 75). More recently, Bell Hooks and Cornel West (1991) have said that the narratives were “co modified and consumed

almost as completely in literary context as the narrators were physically consumed as slaves” (87).

While “the project of animal autobiography is nearly always to argue for the better treatment of animals by humans”( Cosslett *Talking Animals* 63) by asking readers to project themselves into the text the animal narrators also recount lives of adventure, cruelty, excitement, and brutality. As in the slave narrative, the first-person narrator in the animal autobiography seeks to create “empathy between the narrator and reader, across a gulf of dissimilarity” (Cosslett *Talking Animals* 80).

The parallels between the slave narrative and *Black Beauty*'s narrative are abundant. For instance, Black Beauty and his companions are bought and sold at will, without any care to the emotional well-being of the animal with regard to family and friends – real connections that these animals form amongst their kind. Just as slaves were bought and sold as work animals without feelings of loss and detachment and separation that would emotionally cripple them, so too are these animals treated merely as tools than as living, feeling beings. When *Black Beauty* meets the horse Ginger, her tale of abusive masters confronts another side of the narrative of the slave. “I never had anyone, horse or man, that was kind to me, or that I cared to please, for in the first place I was taken from my mother as soon as I was weaned” (50). Again, Ginger was forcefully removed from her mother, her provider, just as she was becoming attached to her tender love and care. Likewise slaves were removed from their parents at the auction block. They were objects in the eyes of their white masters, and they would therefore treat the slaves as slaves.