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Racial Injustice in Olaudah Equiano's

The Life of Olaudah Equiano

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By

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This thesis entitled "Racial Injustice in Olaudah Equiano's *The Life of Olaudah Equiano*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Kumar Gurung has been approved by the undersigned members of the thesis committee.

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Abstract

Olaudah Equiano's *The Life of Olaudah Equiano* reveals that racial injustice, domination, discrimination, oppression, and violence inflicted upon the blacks by the whites in racist societies of African Continents, America, and Europe in 18th century. This autobiography exposes the whites' supremacist racial ideology, that is enacted in social and cultural practices through different organizations, agencies, institutions like church, court, law, institutions, media, police and army, market and others that serve to the ruling racial group. Despite their resistance and protest the blacks being gripped with the racial ideology fail to avoid racial imposition and injustice of the whites, but Equiano in individual level succeeds in his resistance because he understands the subject position and material conditions.

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I. Introduction

The present research work in Olaudah Equiano's an autobiography, *The Life of Olaudah Equiano*, deliberates on the racial injustice, prejudice, and discrimination. The study analyses how the supremacist racial ideology functions through different social, cultural, and political agencies, organizations, and institutions.

Equiano experiences and witnesses different types of cruelty, injustice, discrimination, and violence inflicted upon the blacks by the whites simply because they are "blacks". In the text, division between human beings arises from the discriminatory attitude of the whites on the basis of race and color. "Discriminatory attitude" or discrimination denotes to the denial of "equality" "freedom" and "justice". This shows that racial injustice and discrimination is based on prejudice and stereotypes created by a group usually using false or incomplete information. Such ideas can be formed without any knowledge of others. This false notion of racism functions through different social and political organizations and institutions such as education, police, army, church, market, court (law) and others. These institutions legitimize the biased ideas of ruling or specific group of people. Their functions are to make the designated groups the subjects to the dominating idea. In this autobiography also, the narrator and other black people suffer both physically and mentally because of these agencies of ruling ideology. The false belief about one's racial superiority is the major cause of the blacks' suffering. It is a cluster of false beliefs that makes blacks deprived of their rights of equality, freedom, and independence. Thus, the objective of this research is to study the reflection of ideology of racism and its consequences.

This research work has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents general discussion of the writer and his autobiography. The second chapter tries to briefly explain the theoretical modality applied in this research work. It discusses racism and its functions in the society. On the basis of methodology outlined in the second chapter, the third chapter will analyze the text. It will analyze the racial injustice, prejudice, and discrimination the writer and other blacks experience. The fourth chapter is the conclusion of this research. On the basis of textual analysis in the third chapter, it concludes the explanation and arguments put forward in the preceding chapter.

Slave Narrative

Slave narrative is a literary genre consisting of slave memories of daily plantation life, slave speech, social existence, and sensibility, including the sufferings and humiliations borne and the eventual escape to freedom. The narrative contains humorous anecdotes of the deception and pretenses that the slave was forced to practice, expressions of religious fervor and superstition, and above all, a pervasive longing for freedom, dignity, and self-respect.

The narratives exhibit typical traits, some common to slave experience. Many believed that slaves were incapable of acquiring the skills necessary for writing a narrative, slavery proponents were eager to prove damaging eyewitness stories false, and in some instances, narratives were falsified or fictionalized. It is the fact that the narratives were indeed slaves telling the plain truth, when the slaves did not have the skills to write their own stories, their accounts were presented as "told to" a respectable amanuensis. The works actually composed and written down by literate slaves always appended the words "written by himself" or "written by herself." A key element in slave narratives was a discourse on the slave's struggle, either before or

after escape, to become educated and mentally equipped to meet the challenges of the freedom. Some narratives risked employing a complex 'Symbolism' in order to lay claim to a broader range of powers beyond physical freedom. The most carefully designed of these narratives stress self-creation and self-knowledge by correlating three achievements: successful journey to North, achievement of literary, and conversion to true Christianity. In writing these narratives slaves could assert their humanity, make themselves masters of their fate by mastering the words, and exercise self-actualizing power of perfection and interpretation.

Olaudah Equiano and His Slave Narrative

Born around 1745 in the village of Essaka, in the interior of modern-day eastern Nigeria, Olaudah Equiano grew up among the Ibo People before he was kidnapped at the age of eleven with his sister and was sold to other Africans. His memories of Ibo life are almost unreservedly positive, stressing the simplicity of his people's manner, the justice of their moral values and harmony of their society. After he was kidnapped, he was separated from his sister at the same time, and he was to be hunted the rest of his life by his inability to save her and by his fears about her fate. Over six-month period, he served several masters, finally he arrived on the shore of a large river, probably the Niger, which took him to a sea port where he was sold to the white slave traders bound for the West Indies.

Equiano, then, was shipped across the Atlantic or 'Middle Passage' to Barbados as slave. He was taken on to Virginia and bought by a British naval officer, Henry Pascal who renamed him 'Gustavas Vassa' after the 16th century Swedish King, and later appointed him as a ship's steward. During campaigns in the Mediterranean and off the coast of France, the slave youth made the most of his maritime opportunities. Expecting from his master's assurance to be freed after six years of

good service, Equiano was instead sold to a West Indian trader in 1762, and was again sold to Robert King, a Philadelphia Quaker and merchant. Working for King, Equiano, by that time a well-trained sea-man, learnt a good deal about seagoing commercial practices, so that by 1766, at the age of twenty one, the aspiring black man was not only able to buy his freedom but also launch his business career. He then became a sailor, traveled all over the world. In 1773, he took part in an expedition to try to discover the North West Passage. After the voyages to ports as far off as Central America and Turkey, Equiano settled in England in 1777. In London, he became involved in the movement to abolish slavery, which led to publication in 1789 of his book, *The Interesting Narrative of Life of Olaudah Equiano*. After the publication of his autobiography, Equiano traveled extensively in England and Ireland promoting his book. He married an English woman, Susana Cullen in 1792 and died in London on March 31, 1797.

Equiano was not the first African-born slave to recount his experiences in bondage and freedom. But he was the first to write the story of his life himself without the aid or direction of white ghost-writers or editors, such as his predecessors in their slave narrative relied on. Equiano's independence in this regard may be one reason why his story places much more emphasis on the atrocities of Slavery and pleads more insistently for its total immediate abolition than any previous slave narratives. Most slave narrators of that era impressed their white sponsors with their piety and their willingness to forgive those who had once oppressed and exploited them. Although Equiano made much of his conversion to Christianity, he made clear his dedication to social change by venting his moral outrage toward slavery and by structuring his story that freedom, not the consolation of religion, emerges as the priority of his life in slavery. *The Life of Olaudah Equiano* suggests that Christianity

and abolitionism, the pursuit of individual and social perfection, go hand in hand. This mating of the spiritual and the secular in *The Life of Olaudah Equiano* was prophetic of the ideological orientation of the nineteenth century African American Protest literature.

The Life of Olaudah Equiano reveals in unforgettable ways the atrocity that was the Middle Passage. Equiano's *Life* bequeaths to modern African American Literature a prescient and provocative example of what W.E.B Dubois would call "double consciousness"- the African American's fateful sense of "twoness" born of a bicultural identification with both an African heritage and a European education.

Commentary on *The Life of Olaudah Equiano*

The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano is widely regarded as the slave narrative, a form of autobiography that in the early 19th century gained a wide international readership because of its compelling first hand testimony against "slavery". It tells a richly detailed story of seagoing adventure, spiritual enlightenment, and economic success in England and the Americas. Equiano's autobiography was the most influential work of English prose by an African American in the eighteenth century. With Philip Wheatley's *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious, and Moral* (1773), *The Life of Olaudah Equiano* verified the claim, much disputed during the Enlightenment that blacks could represent themselves effectively through writing.

Since its publication, it has received different interpretations. Different critics have viewed the book from their own different critical view points. The critics have applied post-colonial, Marxist, multicultural angles to analyze the book.

Carl Plasa takes Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative* as colonial mimicry. He regards Equiano's re-creating the self in writing as his assimilation of traits that make

up an essentialized whiteness-civilization, Christianity, nobility, Justice, industry, intellect, truth. Plasa writes:

Writing for Equiano is not just a means of self-inscription, but a concrete political act which is also a form of mimicry: by affirming himself as a writing subject, Equiano suggests that he too possesses those qualities of 'reason' and 'humanity' which the Enlightenment would like to preserve as purely white. (16)

With postcolonial glass another critic, Frank Kelleter sees Equiano's autobiography as an example of cultural hybridity in the age of colonialism. But, his idea is hybridity itself is a weapon for the resistance to Eurocentric cultural and political imposition. He states:

According to the post-colonial model, indigenous, displaced persons, African slaves, and other marginalized groups are no longer seen as helpless and mainly passive objects of an inevitable historical process but as alert agents in a reciprocal dynamics of dispossession and appropriation. (2)

According to this critic cultural identity is always the result of complex processes of exchange. Cultural and political assimilation are exploitative, but western modernity itself is "hybrid phenomenon". So, this critic sees Equiano's hybrid position-Olaudah Equiano (African identity) and Gustavus Vassa (English name) as resistance to colonial exploitation.

Similarly attributing the *Life* of Equiano with dislocated position, Terry S. Bozeman views this autobiography from the multicultural perspective. He writes:

Published over a century before W.E.B Dubois articulated the notion of a 'double consciousness'; Equiano's narrative explores the notion of

a hybrid existence [. . .]. He comes to be viewed instead, as inhabiting an interstitial landscape caught between an identity to which he can never fully return and one in which he will be allowed to fully take part. (61)

Bozeman means that Olaudah Equiano has awareness of his "Africaness", but carries his identity as a 'Briton'. Thus, his role lies within these two.

Historical themes in general require of writer an aptitude for coping with the inexplicable and unpredictable reserves of meaning that comprise non-legendary experience. Douglas Andersen comments Equiano's narrative of his experience as:

The concessions that Equiano makes are largely those evocations of providential oversight and intercession appropriate to the religious "legend" within which he casts his experience. In the Isle of Wight episode, however, below the surface abruptly produce a "transported" boy, "about my own size" whose evocative presence promptly threatens the simplicity of Equiano's story. (457)

The policy and project the autobiography carries with John Saillant writes that "*The Interesting Narrative* is not solely an act of self-representation. It also participates in a far larger political project, especially designed, as it is, to further the campaign for the abolition of the slave trade, just formally commencing in both public and parliamentary spheres at the time when the text was first published and finally succeeding in 1807, ten years after Equiano's death" (105). Further, he writes:

It is equally apparent, however, that *The Interesting Narrative* stands in an acute and disruptive tension with the taxonomies of racial difference outlined above. It the driving concern of Equiano's politicized

autobiography is to help bring about the demise of the slave trade.

(102)

In this critic's view this autobiography is self-representation, but above this is political in implicit level.

Similarly, Thomas Doherty also makes his opinion about this book. He opines that "Equiano's literary Journey about the globe parallels his metaphorical progress political (from slavery to freedom), spiritual (from ignorance to knowledge)" (2). Doherty relates Equiano's literal achievement with human consciousness, acknowledgment of interior depth and intellectual faculty in the brute.

Another scholar and critic, Samantha Manchester Earley has commented this book as the movement of the self of the narrator from "marginal" to "central status" with the use of multiple discursive and rhetorical strategies. He writes:

His point of view on issues could and did vary; often it is British [. . .].

It allowed Equiano, an African born ex-slave living among European cultures and societies to move himself both literally and culturally from the dominant European cultural "margin" to a culturally "central position. (2)

Equiano's, as this critic means, achievement of literacy and his adoption of English rhetorical strategies, and his authoritative voice of religious conversion (his tendency to Christianity) shifted his marginal African position to the central heart of Englishness.

Very different, but relevant to the twentieth century "capitalism" idea about the *Life* comes from Elizabeth Jana Hall Hinds who studies *The Life of Oludah Equiano* under the framework of free-market capitalism wherein spiritual and economic values coalesce under financial policies and practices. According to her, the *Life* demonstrates one extreme of Enlightenment individualism forged by an expanding

capitalist market place in the half of 18th century, and in her view it is narrative of capital gain she states:

As a merchant Equiano enters imaginatively into a public, free-market "structure of feeling", a market place and legalistic psychology through which the individual becomes an actor in a public spectacle of exchange relation, and consequently exchanges in relation, and consequently exchanges individual subjectivity for a perceived market object status designed to ensure success. (635)

In her above lines what she means that Equiano's identity is diminished to a free actor by the mechanism of rampaging mid-eighteenth century capitalism in free-market place.

This analysis explicates on prejudice, discrimination, violence, and injustice occurred among racial groups because of the ideological concept about the 'inferior' and 'superior' race. Division among human kind in terms of race, color, and origin is made by those who have political, social, and economic power in hand. Racist ideology is the cause of racial injustice inflicted upon the designated inferior racial group. This thesis is to explicate on racial injustice, prejudice and victimization that ultimately resulted from false notion of racism.

II. Race and Racism

Race, as 20th century theorists defined is not biological categorization; rather it is a concept that is socially or politically motivated system of classification. It is a social and cultural construct. Nowadays, a number of voices have been raised claiming that “race” is not biological, rather social and cultural trait. Today, natural sciences argue that race does not exist; it is a pertinent criterion of classification.

Guillaumin defines race as:

Race is a political and cultural move which can never be neutral, given the facts. Race is a social category of exclusion and murder. It continues to provide the backbone of some ferocious system of domination [. . .]. The idea, the notion of race is a technical mean; a machine, for committing murder. And its effectiveness is not in doubt. It is a way of rationalizing and organizing by murderous violence the domination of powerful social group over other groups reduced to powerlessness. (361-362)

Similarly, Goldberg also defines race as the creation of ruling group in the society. Racial inferiority and superiority on the basis of biological difference has no scientific truth. Such misconception is the social and cultural products that the social groups who handle the socio-economical and political power regulate as natural fact to rationalize their superiority. He writes that "race is nothing other than recourse to social consideration and relation. Race and racial relations is ghost like. Lacking a determining or motivational force of its own, race is a mystification, a form of false consciousness or misleading ideology" (367).

Regarding the race as social ideology Miles brings the ideas of Jacques Barzun in his *Race, A Study in Modern Superstition (1938)*, and of Ruth Benedict in her *Race and Racism*. Benedict defined race as "race-thinking is . . . a form of erroneous thinking that can be charged with a dozen of ulterior motives", and "racism is temporarily and geographically specific phenomenon. Race is a creation of our time, of high European civilization" (qtd. 346). Race is the construction of the whites that bears other vicious motives i.e. to perpetuate their racial superiority over the target racial group. Race is not natural, but later constructed belief. Philipsen also asserts his idea of race as "race was developed by the English long after the introduction of various forms of forced labors, worst among them the enslavement of Africans [. . .]. Race does not exist in human biology, but rather was invented as a concept by human beings" (194-195).

Thus, the racists regard race as the biological and genetical identity, but 20th century thinkers attribute race with social and cultural identity. In this sense, racial inferiority and superiority is not inherited trait, rather it is imposed by the racists who circulate the baseless and false beliefs about race. The term "race" is merely the discriminatory attitude of ruling group, which they bring into practices through different ideological agents, which disseminate their racist ideology among the racially inferior groups.

Social Functions of Racism as Ideology and Its Consequences

The term "ideology" has a whole range of meanings. No definition of this term provides a single and unambiguous meaning. However, what nearly all commentators agree upon is that the present-day usage of the term refers to a system of ideas that represents the interest of the dominant social or political or economical class or power as a distorted and illusionary body of ideas. In this regard, the term "ideology" is

defined as a body of ideas characteristics of a particular social group or class, or a cluster of ideas of false ideas, which help to legitimate a dominant political power, or as forms of thought motivated by social interests, as socially necessary illusion.

Ideology is a pejorative term, "usually identifying someone who wishes to impose an abstract, extremist, intellectual, political obsession on a moderate mainstream political system" (Kavanagh 306).

Terry Eagleton in his book *Ideology: Introduction* suggests definitions of the term as "ideas and beliefs (whether true or false) which symbolize the conditions and life experience of a specific, socially significant group or class; the promotion and legitimating of the interests of such social groups in the face of opposing interests of a ruling group or class specifically by distortion and dissimulation" (29-30). Alvin Goulder in his *The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology* writes, "Ideology is the mind-inflating realm of the doctrine, the dogmatic, the impassioned, the dehumanizing, the false, the irrational, and of course the extremist consciousness" (qtd. in Eagleton 4). So, he defines ideology as consisting of ambivalence. Similarly, Terry Eagleton quotes the idea of John B. Thompson about ideology that "to study ideology is to study the ways in which meaning (or significance) serves to sustain relation of domination" (4). Thompson views it in term of its relation of domination. The process of legitimating seems to involve at different strategies. A dominant power may legitimate itself by promoting beliefs and values congenial to it. It tries to universalize and naturalize them to render themselves-evident and apparently inevitable. The dominant power excludes the rival forms of thought and obscures social reality. So, the legitimating theory of ideology concerns the nature of power. Michael Foucault replaces ideology with the more spacious "discourse."

According to Marxist usage of the term “ideology”, an ideology reflects the ideas, living conditions, or interests of a particular social class and group. Karl Marx and Engels in their book *The German Ideology* defines that "Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously; it is true but with a false consciousness. The real motive forces impelling him remained unknown to him; otherwise it simply would not be an ideology process" (qtd. in Hawthorn 164). So, *The German Ideology* sees ideology as from of false consciousness.

The word “ideology” has something of a bad name: the 'crude' Marxist notion of ideology is as "false consciousness", "the system of ideas and representation which dominate the mind of man or a social group" (Althusser 122). The Marx's notion of ideology is "an imaginary assemblage”, a pure dream, empty and vain, constituted by the "day's residues" from the only full and positive reality, that of the concrete history of concrete material individuals materially producing their existence. Ideology as Althusser says "represents relationship of individuals to the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (123). For him, ideology is an imagined representation of reality: it is false, distorted by definition. Ideology is Terry Eagleton remarks, “set of doctrines, rather, it signifies the way men live out their roles in class society, the values, ideas and images which tie them by their social functions and so prevent them from a true knowledge of society as a whole" (16-17).

Ideology is false consciousness or "false beliefs that conceal real social relations and services to decide others. Ideologies are beliefs others have; ideologies presuppose the socially or politically self-serving nature of the definition of truth and falsity" (Dijk 21). The critical element of the notion of ideology in this tradition is usually associated with various notions of power and domination. Following Marx/Engels, ideologies were first of all defined as the prevailing ideas of an age.

According to the political economy of these philosophers, these dominant ideas were associated with those of the ruling class or group that controls the means of production, including the means of the reproduction of ideas- most notably these of politics, the media, literature and education- they are also able to make their ideologies more or less accepted by the ruled or marginalized or inferior ones as the undisputed knowledge in natural ways things are. But with Gramsci, these relations between ideology and society were conceptualized in terms of "hegemony". Thus, instead of the imposition of dominant ideology by a ruling class or specific superior group or race, hegemony more subtly works through the management of the mind of the citizens, for example by persuasively constructing a consensus about the social order.

The function of ideology is to reproduce ideologies themselves through different social practices, institutions or social forces that more or less, directly or indirectly represent the ideology of the state or ruling group or race. Those institutions or forces are as Althusser called "Ideological State Apparatuses" (11). Through these agents the ruling ideologies or beliefs and ideas disseminated are transmitted to the minorities, and make them subjects to ruling class. So the function of ideology is to reproduce the subjection to the ruling idea. Thus, reproducing ideologies through these social practices and institutions ideology help the superior group or ruling class to continue its control and dominance. So, ideology is associated with power and domination.

About the ideological functions for the social agents Kavanagh writes:

We live in a society with a constantly changing variety of social apparatuses which have heavily ideological functions: the family, churches, schools, sports, network TV, public TV, cable . . . various

literally genres. Most of these institutions make very effort emphatically to disavow "politics", to avoid thinking about who should control the power of the state, and it would be silly to treat them as if they were indistinguishable from those institutions that do direct address explicitly political questions. (313)

For Louis Althusser the ideas of ruling class are imposed by means of force and also through the imposition of those ideas on to those ruled or dominated. In German Ideology, Karl Marx and Engels remark the function of ideology as:

[. . .] the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that, generally speaking; the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it.

(qtd. in Hawthorn 165)

According to Marxist theory, those who control economic power in hand control the consciousness of ruled ones. The consciousness of the under privileged people is controlled by the ideas and beliefs of ruling group.

In the Althusserian meaning, "man is ideological animal by nature" (129). Or ideology is bound up with the constitution of the subject. The people constitute or define themselves as humans through ideology. He argues that "the category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology only in so far as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of constituting concrete individuals as subjects" (129). Subjects—people – make their own ideology at the same time as ideology makes them subjects. Ideology makes our reality in constituting us as subjects. Ideology, as Althusser

argues, "hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects" (130); it calls us or calls to us as subjects and we recognize ourselves as subjects in our response to this call. To become human, to identify oneself as a subject, then, is an effect of ideology.

The state or the government or the administration is explicitly as Paris Commune and Lenin said on *State and Revolution* a repressive apparatus, and it is the machine of repression, which enables the ruling classes to ensure their domination over the working class, inferior and marginalized groups i.e. blacks. Exploitation, discrimination, injustice, segregation and prejudice are maintained by the ruling group of people employing different social as well as political and cultural forces. The administration has legal practices- the police, army, church, court, school, mass-media, literature, art that directly or indirectly are representing the belief- system or ideology of ruling class, and intervene as a supplementary repressive force in the last instance. By state apparatus Althusser means "the force of repressive execution and intervention in the interests of ruling classes" (107). And ideological state apparatuses are according to Althusser, "a certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions" (110). The institutions include churches, different public or private schools, family, administrative forces like army, police, court, political system including the different parties, trade union (the powerful merchant's and bankers' guilds and journeyman's association etc), means of communication and cultural and literary works whose functions are to reproduce and transmit the ideologies of specific class or group, and perpetuate the domination of ruling class over poor, inferior and marginalized groups. But, these institutions function both by repression and ideology, but both are not purely repressive and ideological. For example, the army and police also function by both

ideology and repression to ensure their own cohesion and reproduction, and in the 'values' they propound externally though they are primarily repressive. Similarly, schools and Churches function massively and predominantly by ideology but they function secondarily by repression also. They use suitable methods of punishment, expulsion and selection. So, these ideological institutions have double functioning. The role of ruling ideology is heavily concentrated on the interests of the ruling class or group, which holds the social, political, economic and cultural power, and expand the exploitation, discrimination, injustice, and infliction through the different institutions.

The Ideological representation of ruling class or group is in general political because it is motivated with the intention of domination and exploitation. In the school, the children who are vulnerable are taught "know-how" (Althusser 118) wrapped in the ruling ideology. Similarly, the same kind of values, virtues, beliefs and ideas are taught in the family to the children who in adulthood and manhood stage also are occupied with the same false beliefs. As Althusser says the children are taught to internalize the ruling ideology in the family and school.

Regarding Church, it was the dominant and the most powerful agent to rule over the people during Middle Ages, "which concentrated within it not only religious functions, but also educational ones" (Althusser 115). Media is probably, "more pervasive and influential agent for ideological production and reproduction" (Dijk 187). In news gathering, such ideological concerns, monitors assignment, beats, interviews, press conferences, press release, selection and decision procedures are governed by the ruling group. Events and institutional arrangements in news making are biased towards the reproduction of a limited set of dominant, elite ideologies. This is not only true for news production, but also for current affairs programmes,

documentaries, shows and other categories of media discourse. The political apparatuses (the Estate General, the *parlement*, the different political factions and Leagues, the ancestors of the modern political parties or the whole political system of society) function by “subjecting individuals to the Political State Ideology, the "indirect" (parliamentary) or "direct" (Plebiscitary or Fascist), "democratic" ideology” (Althusser 117).

Thus, ideologies are just the *clusters* of beliefs in our mind. The notion of ideology is system of ideas such as feminism, socialism, gender, racism, anti-racism, environmentalism.

Racism is ideology of racial domination based on beliefs that designated group is either biologically or culturally inferior and the use of such beliefs to determine or prescribe its social position. Racism is an ideology in a sense that it is a beliefs system or a set of implicit assumptions that is socially construct about the superiority of one's racial group or ethnic group over other. *Encyclopedia of Psychology* defines racism as:

Racism is a policy typically associated with the development of ideologies that justify them. Thus, although the belief that race is biologically construct is fundamental to racism; race is actually a social construct that permits the exploitation of one group over another with the development of the ideology that justifies it. (Kazdin 499)

Racism is an active or passive response to the specious belief that genetically transmitted traits are linked to social characteristic. But the definitions of racism have under major revisions in the latter 20th century. Now, race and racism is viewed as social and cultural, rather that biological concept. But, racism is conceptualized on the basis of inherited biological difference. A.J. Krailsheimer writes:

Racism is the doctrine that one group of men is morally or mentally superior to another and that his superiority arises out of inherited biological differences. The distinction between groups of mankind is held to be based on the common biological heredity of the members of each group. (58)

In the same sense, Bill Aschroft defined racism as, "a way of thinking that consider a group's unchangeable physical characteristics, and which on this basis distinguishes 'superior' and 'inferior' racial group" (199). So it is a kind of discrimination made by a group of people on the basis of race, color, religion or culture and the discrimination itself is product of prejudice and stereotypical mode of thoughts or assumptions that "attempts to classify humanity according to the idea that 'races' embodied a package of fixed physical and mental traits" (Bulmer and Solomos 8). Banton also defines racism as "the doctrine that a man's behavior is determined by stable inherited characters deriving from separate racial stocks having distinctive attributes and usually considered to stand one another in relation of superiority and inferiority" (qtd. in Miles 348).

Gretchen Gerzina relates the racism as "the notion of exclusion and inclusion based on perceived loss of political, economic or social power" (125). Racial ideology is nothing than the justification of relegation of people of color or inferior race to a permanent status of inferiority. The placing or categorization of people under certain group is all false notions because race is socially construct concept rather than an inherently meaningful category. "Race was developed by the English long after the introduction of various enslavement of Africans. It is American obsession" (Philipsen 193).

Racism in general sense is understood as the decisions and policies of one racial group for the purpose of subordinating other and maintaining control over that group. Marxist theory also takes racism as a function of class struggle, not as the independent variable itself. It views racism as hindrance to the benevolence of 'minority'. It just encourages discrimination against blacks arguing for their inferiority. The discrimination is imposed upon the workers by the capitalist class to divide them along racial lines and reduce their capacity to struggle against the system. Thus, racism emerges when one believes in one's racial superiority over other. It encompasses the beliefs, attitudes, behaviors and practices that define people on racial basis. It involves a generalized lack of knowledge or experiences as it implies to negative beliefs and attitudes.

Human groups are not only discriminated in physical and biological traits, but also their morality, intellect, intelligence and creativity are linked to their physical characteristics. It is claimed that some are "better", "stronger", "higher" or "more creative" than other physically, intellectually or morally. And the higher race or races have a moral right to dominate, to enslave or even to eradicate the lower race or races. It is also believed or claimed that higher and lower races shouldn't intermarry. Race mixture or "mongrelization" is against nature. Racism makes biological differences as measuring rod to evaluate the standard of mental capacity and intelligence, but, such parameter isn't fact based and scientific. The very concept of race as applied to groups of human being is false. In the very vast number of its traits mankind is "one".

Krailsheimer argues:

Racists correlate the physical differences with difference in innate inheritable mental characteristics [. . .]. It isn't possible to devise a satisfactory test to determine whether there are biological differences

in intelligence. In most cases, the available methods of classifying by ancestry are quite fallible. (59)

So, it is merely myth that race determines mental aptitude, temperament or social habits.

Two analytical points arise about racism. First, the original concept of racism presupposed the existence of a discourse “race” because it was defined to refer to 19th century beliefs that the human species consisted of a number of different races, and those races were ranked in lopsided position of superiority and inferiority. And second, the act of labeling the “race-thinking” of 19th century as racism was scientific error. Miles, thus, concludes racism as "a falsification of the scientific knowledge about human biology. Racism falsely claims that there is scientific basis for arranging groups hierarchically in terms of psychological and cultural characteristics that are immutable and innate" (348).

Racism doesn't take the same ideological form for long time. With the interference of social, political and cultural institutions in course of time, instead of following singularity it prefers diverse scholarly ideas shaped by several power politics. In contrast to "old fashioned racism", "aversive racism", a subtle, often unintentional form of bias represents those racists who possess strong egalitarian values. Aversive racists though not openly and directly so that they can be attributed to racism, "but because of negative feelings towards blacks they discriminate unintentionally" (Kadzin 498). Similarly, 'symbolic racism' is as Kadzin writes "negative feeling's towards black whites acquire early in life persist into adulthood but are expressed indirectly and symbolically" (498).

"New-racism" sees race not as biological issue or heredity, but as cultural product. Though in surface level it doesn't believe the superiority of one race, but its

main ethos is to segregate the other than the people of one's own race. "The New-racism is primarily concerned with the mechanism of exclusion or inclusion" (Gilroy 250). It has not diminished the gap between the meanings used in past centuries to present century. Thus, "racist ideologies and practice have distinct meanings bounded by historical circumstances and determined in struggle" (Gilroy 248).

Racism takes place both in manifest and latent level. The discrimination made on a direct or open mode of behaviors is the manifest or explicit racism which is also known as "overt" racism whereas latent racism is subtle, but occurs more often than former, and is hidden mode of discriminatory acts. Latent racism which is also known as implicit or "covert" racism expresses ideas of racism in disguised form; sometimes covert racism expresses ideas of racism in disguised form; sometimes covert racist isn't aware of the fact that he is racist. Racism, it is asserted, is no longer blatant: people nowadays are reluctant to express openly their dislike of and contempt for minorities indeed are not prepared to express publicly a sentiment that could be interpreted as racist. Racism is subtle; it is disguised; kept out of sight. The notion is that consciously or unconsciously racial discrimination is taking place in the social world. "Racial prejudice and racism are the result of motivations to restore status, or support a social hierarchy that favors one's group" (Kazdin 498).

Racism has basically three forms: individual racism, institutional racism and cultural racism. Individual racism is an individual's belief that an entire racial group is inferior or superior on the basis of physical features linked with intellectual and moral characteristics. Gerzina states "racism at the individual level involves misguided personal beliefs that an entire racial group is deficient or superior because of a set of moral, intellectual, or cultural traits that are thought to be indicated by the group's biological origins" (125).

If these personal characteristics get connected with cultural institutions like religion, education and military institutions to exclude or include not a person but also an entire group, it is institutional racism. "Cultural racism is closely aligned with ethnicity, in which race is in itself presumed to indicate cultural norms and in which cultural norms are presumed to indicate racial affiliation" (Gerzina 126). "It involves not only the preference for one group's culture, heritage, and values but also the imposition of his culture on other groups" (Kazdin 499). Idea of indoctrination, i.e. blacks are inferior and the discrimination or the feeling of superiority over "the other" on the basis of color, and shape skin, eye, hair, lips etc are the dominant tendency of racism.

Racism is the cultural and social idea that human kind is composed of racial group that are biologically distinct. The concept of 'races' sharply delineates groups that are in reality nebulous with indistinct boundaries. This reality seriously undermines and discredits the whole enterprise of race. The creation of race therefore is a human cultural activity that bears little or no relationship with actual human biological diversity. Thus, "biologically distinct racial groups are entirely cultural and arbitrary, so racism is essentially a faith-based belief. Racism . . . enacts and perpetuates the false and dehumanizing notions. It does so as a deliberate exercise of social power that is designed to exclusively benefit one racial group or as a means to discriminate against a selected racial groups" (Hawk and Zimmerman 473). Racism represents the co-ordinate interaction of particular types of stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination.

Racism doesn't involve not only negative attitudes and beliefs but also "the social power that enables to translate those attitudes and beliefs into practices offering unique advantages to one's race at the expense of other" (Jones 256). Racism is more

than a matter of individual prejudice and scattered episode of discrimination; it involves a widely accepted racist ideology and the power to deny other racial groups the "dignity", "opportunity", "freedom", and "rewards" that are available to one's own group through a socially organized set of ideas, attitudes, and politics.

Racism is a set of ideologies that have a prominent role in the reproduction of ethnic or racial inequality in society. Racism is understood in a broad, political sense, and involves group prejudice and discrimination against ethnic or 'racial' minority group, anti-Semitism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and so on. Racism comprises the discriminatory practices being enacted on the basis of racist ideologies, as well as the social structure of institution involved in the reproduction of racism, such as political parties, education and the media. In other words, "racism is a complex system of domination, which needs to be analyzed at various levels and domains of society, including those cognition, discourse, group relation, organization and culture" (Dizk 138). Racial ideology is functioning in individuals, institutional and social and cultural practices. All those practices reflect the ruling ideology, and are motivated to dominate and control the ruled. Eagleton says:

A racist is usually someone in the grip of fear, hatred and insecurity, rather than someone who has dispassionately arrived at certain intellectual judgments on other races, but even if his feelings are not motivated by such judgments, they are likely to be entwined with them; and these judgment that certain races are inferior to other, for example, are plainly false. (21)

Racist ideology is fueled by two concepts- inclusion and exclusion. Racist ideologies and practices basically aim at keeping others down and especially out: of 'our' country, 'our' city, 'our' neighbor, 'our' street, 'our' family, and 'our' group. It implies

that we, Our Group are self-assigned a better or higher position and that such a position is deserved and can hence be justified.

Racism is associated with the practices of power abuse, domination and oppression. Thus, the possession and exercise of power of one group usually implies limitation of freedom for the other group. The power of one specific group is exercised through different institutional forces (police, military). The role of those forces is the reproduction of power and dominance. Thus, ideologies are developed and applied as *legitimizing* for the abuse of power and its resulting social inequality. Racism is generally known as the predication of decision and policies on consideration of race for the purpose of subordination racially different group and maintaining control over that group. It is a prejudice conditioned by perceptions. Thus, practices as such are seen in two levels- individual and communal. In the communal level in Althusser's words "Ideological State Apparatuses" are actively or passively in the pursuit of imposing racial ideology among people. But ultimate victims of this ideology are designated those who are racially inferior. The attitude is that "whites are better than blacks; therefore blacks should be subordinated to whites" (Du Bois 45). The concept is that the whites are "right" and the blacks are "wrong".

Because of false concepts of race, and institutionalization of such concepts blacks become victims of racial injustice in the hands of the agents that represent the interests and beliefs of superior group of race. Racial injustice refers to unfair social behavior, attitude and belief, and treatment towards the target racial group that involves denying "individual or groups of people equality of treatment which they may wish" (Kazdin 497). Discrimination, prejudice and stereotypical images towards the designated racial group are by-products of racist ideology. Racial prejudice is an unfavorable and negative towards a colored group or its individual members. It is

characterized by stereotyped beliefs. Racial prejudice can be defined as an attitude of generalized hostility or aversion against a group of human beings who possess different color. Racial prejudice invites different social problems such as disintegration, wars, killing and other criminal activities.

As racism is false beliefs about the 'superior' and 'inferior' racial group, social, political and cultural practices (institutions) disseminate such beliefs so that the legacy of superior race could be justified and continue the domination over the target racially inferior group. The dignity of blacks is not admitted and his respect is denied by whites because blacks are said to be racially dirty and inferior. The black children are segregated in the school. Even the school teachers have biased attitudes towards the black students. Children are encouraged to internalize the racial prejudice and bias in the school and family, who in any time can expose his internalized racial discriminatory attitudes to blacks. Similarly, they are deprived of public facilities, and are compelled to do unskilled job like as miner and garbage collector. Blacks suffer more in police brutality giving physical and mental torture and snatching their private property. Similarly, blacks aren't allowed to keep their private property. Instead, they are encouraged to live on wage or as slave. The court also has the same kind of discriminatory belief that does not register the blacks' complaint testimonials. The church itself carries the racial prejudice and ideology. It doesn't admit to conduct marriage rituals for blacks in the church. Likewise, the priest doesn't give required rituals in a black's funeral act since blacks are racially inferior, and church itself is the agent to represent the belief and ideas of superior racial group i.e. whites. Literary genre, means of communication etc. also communicate the ideas and beliefs of ruling class because as Marxist point of view, human consciousness is determined by the economic conditions, which are controlled by the interests of ruling class.

Slavery, imperialism and colonialism are some of the examples of racial injustice because they occurred in the name of racial inferiority and superiority. Colonists in 17th century finding Africans were cheap and relatively immune to tropical diseases rationalized slavery on grounds that blacks are racially inferior. "Slavery is an extreme form of domination and exploitation characterized by a parasitic relationship between the dominant whites and the enslaved blacks. This is a two way relationship of dependence, even though one party holds power of life or death over the other" (Bulmer and Solomos 58). Slavery became legalized institution by state itself during 17th and 18th century. The 'slavery system' was the extreme point of blacks' suffering because it destroyed the happy family world of blacks separating the family members from each others.

The term 'race' became more bitter during colonial period when the people of different places came into contact with each other. The division of human society in the name of 'race' is inextricable from the need of colonialist power to establish dominance over dominated ones, and justify the imperial legacy. It gave impetus to draw binary distinction between 'civilized' and 'primitive'. It later became one of imperialism's most supportive ideas to perpetuate their imperial mission: dominance and enlightenment. Racial discrimination began with the emergence of the concept of 'race'. Then, human beings received different treatment in terms of their racial identity, hence developed binary view to mankind. So-called racial inferior group faced with unfair treatments, discrimination and attitude from superior racial group. Racial prejudice is a part of racism.

Conclusively, the supremacist racial ideology that divides human kind –white and black- is the cause of un-healthy social structure. Racism as set of beliefs and ideas that advocate the superiority of whites is disseminated among the mass through the social organizations, institutions or state forces creating certain structure in the society that always stood in favor of the groups that grasped the social, political and

economical position. Racist ideology is related to the discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes that bring injustice, violence and conflict among racial groups.

III. Textual Analysis

Racial Injustice under Ideological Agencies

Racism is reflected in individual as well as social, cultural, and institutional practices. These practices occur under the ideological organizations, forces, institutions, and agencies that serve to the interests or ideas of those who have ruling power or who are powerful and superior in social, cultural, political, and economical positions. The socially and culturally constructed concept of racial inferiority and superiority is disseminated to the mass through these social or political forces and agencies that are controlled by specific group of people. The binary is drawn between the white and the black because of the concept that the blacks are racially inferior. So, racism is established in the society as an ideology that is represented among other racial groups through different ideological agencies resulting racial injustice, prejudice, and discrimination. These agencies or organizations include like institutions, political parties, government, court and law, market, church, education or administrative forces like police and army.

The Life of Olaudah Equiano also presents domination, extortion, discrimination, injustice, and brutality imposed upon the blacks by the whites. But my research here aims to analyze how the racial ideology is reflected in individual, social, cultural and institutional practices, and functioning in the society constructing unhealthy lopsided social structure where blacks are dominated and victimized. This book also presents that racist ideology is functioning through different social, cultural political, and institutional organizations, forces and agencies making the blacks the subjects to the ruling idea i.e. racism. Thus, the blacks' sufferings result from the ideology of racism. Its outcome is unbalanced social structure wherein exist racial injustice, bias, prejudice, and discrimination.

Slavery system got rationalized on the grounds that the blacks are racially inferior. Slavery became legalized institution during 16th and 17th century that served the interests of the whites proving it as the extreme form of the blacks' exploitation and sufferings by the whites. Thus, slavery became a functional agent to promote injustice among racial groups. Separation of family members discarding the value of family bondage is the foremost injustice resulted to the blacks from slavery. The narrator, Olaudah Equiano is kidnapped with his sister in his 11 from Essaka, village of Nigeria and sold to slavery and carried to Barbados by British slavers through "Middle Passage". Traditionally the slave-ship sets out first from a home port bound for the Atlantic coast of America. After exchanging their cargoes of various goods for slaves, they depart for the West Indies or another destination on the American Continents- so called middle passage, or second leg of the voyage- where the human cargo is stored on board in the most inhuman conditions imaginable. His only one consolation of his grief- his sister-is also separated from him. The narrator says:

They make them tie me faster and stop my mouth; they then put me into a large sack. They also stopped my sister's mouth, and tied her hands [. . .]. And the only comfort we had was in being in one another's arms all that night, and bathing each other with tears. But alas! We were soon deprived of even the small comfort of weeping together.

The next day proved one of greater sorrow than I had yet experienced; for my sister and I were then separated. (24)

Once again the luck makes Equiano and his sister unite together in one evening in an English master's house. As soon as she sees him she gives a loud shriek, and runs into his arms. He is quite overpowered: neither of them could speak, but for a considerable time clung to each other in mutual embraces nor able to do anything, but weep. They

hold one another by the hands across his breast; and thus for a while they forget their misfortunes in the joy of being together. But the fate of the blacks is drawn by the whites. Even that "small comfort is soon to have an end, for scarcely had the fatal morning appeared, when she was again torn from me for ever! I was now more miserable than before" (28). The small relief which her presence gave him also is gone, and the wretchedness of his situation is redoubled by his anxiety after her fate.

Equiano's horrible days begin in the slave-ship. His hope of returning to his native country or even the least glimpse of gaining the shore disappears. His slavish life begins now. He is put into the deck, but;

With the loathsome of the stench, and with my crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the last desire to taste anything. I now wished for the last friend death to relieve me; but soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me eatables; and, on my refusal to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands, and laid me across, I think the windlass, and tied my feet, while the other flogged me severely. (2)

The turbulence of emotions and horror runs through the narrator's blood and chills him to the heart. He reproaches his own fate, and wishes he had never been born. He is not sure where his fate carries him to. He keeps his swimming eyes upon the land in a state of intolerable grief, not knowing what to do, and despairing how to help himself. He imagines his forthcoming life in unknown place where

No eye to mark their suffering with a tear;
 No friend to comfort, and no hope to cheer:
 Then, like the dull unpitied brutes, repair
 To stalls as wretched, and as coarse a fare;

Thank heaven one day of misery was over,

Then sink to sleep, and wish to wake no more (89)

Enslavement of "negroes" flourished under the racist ideology that neither respected the meaning of tear the slaves shed in disparity nor valued the family bondage and individual responsibilities. The tears and misery of slaves in the ship do not touch the heart of masters since their hearts have been hardened with the racist views to the blacks.

The situation of the slaves in the ship is not less miserable and pathetic. The round of ship looks like "a large furnace of copper boiling and a multitude of black people, of every description chained together, everyone of their countenance expressing dejection and sorrow . . . and quite overpowered with horror and anguish" (31). Being overcome by their slave life, the blacks desire for their last friend "death". Depicting the suffocating and annoying situation in the slave ship Equiano says that:

The whole ship's cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, being so crowd that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspiration, so that the air became soon unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice. (33)

The deplorable situation is again aggravated by the galling of the chains becomes insupportable, and the filth of necessary tubs, into which the children often fall are almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women and the groans of the dying render the situation of ship more horrible and inconceivable.

Racial bias divides human beings in lopsided structure. Racial superior groups put the designated group in the position of non-human. Institution of slavery degraded the position of the blacks to the animals' that can be sold and bought in exchange. Such biased concept gave birth to the "slave- trade" to debauch men's minds, and harden them to every feeling of humanity. It corrupts the human kindness. Surely the human traffic is not good, which spreads like a pestilence, and taints what it touches. It violates that first natural right of mankind, "equality" and "independence", and gives one man a dominion over his fellows which God could never intend. "When you make slaves, you deprive them of half their virtue, you set them in your own conduct; an example of fraud, rapine, and cruelty; and compel them to live with you in a state of war" (80). Slavery represented the ideas that demoted the blacks as animals which are the objects of the white sellers and buyers. Equiano says that "we were conducted immediately to the merchant's yard, where we were all pent up together like so many sheep in a fold, without regard to sex or age" (35). He further says:

On a signal given, such as the beat of drum, the buyers rush at once into the yard where the slaves are confined, and make choice of that parcel they like best. The noise and clamor . . . the eagerness visible in the countenances of the buyers [. . .]. In this manner, without scruple, are relations and friends separated, most of them never to see each other again. I remember in the vessel in which I was brought over in, in the man's apartment, there were several brothers, who, in the sale, were sold in different lots; and it was very moving on this occasion to see their distress and hear their cries at parting. (36)

The parents lose their children, brother their sister or husbands their wives. This is a new refinement in cruelty, which, thus aggravates distress, and adds fresh horrors even to the wretchedness of slavery.

Slavery is the most active catalyst for racial discrimination and domination. It reproduces the idea that the blacks are anyhow to be dominated, beaten, yoked in work, punished and confined in chain like animals. It gave the false consciousness that dominated is always to be dominated. Freedom, humanity, independence and family hood are not to be experienced by the blacks. Low payment, overworking, risk of black women' chastity, danger of liberty of free black etc. are the out-comes that institution of slavery produced. Blacks' sufferings, brutality, exploitation, punishment all are the consequences of racism. In Virginia County, North America, Equiano sees the same kind of physical torture given to a black woman slave. He sees her "who was cooking the dinner, and the poor creature was cruelly loaded with various kinds of iron machines; she had one particularly on her head, which locked her mouth so fast that she could scarcely speak and could not eat or drink" (38). Slaves are sometimes, by half-feeding, half-clothing, over-working, and stripes, reduced so low, that they are turned out as unfit for service, and left to perish in the woods, or to on a dunghill. In the slavery system, there is always question mark on the chastity of the female slaves. The white masters gratify their brutal passion with black females. In Montserrat, Olaudah Equiano sees "a negro-man staked to the ground, and cut most shockingly, and then his ears cut off, bit by bit, because he had been connected with a white woman, who was a common prostitute! As if it were no crime in the whites to rob an innocent African girl of her virtue" (74). It is the institution of slavery that promotes the physical and psychological exploitation of blacks, and undermines the virginity of the black females.

Racism is a blind beliefs-system or ideas that devalue even family bondage, sense of nationhood, brotherhood, and more emphatically humanity. The iron-muzzles, thump-screw, hot stake are applied for the slightest faults of "negro" slaves. They are beaten till some of his bones are broken, for only letting a pot boil over. Besides, it is common that after a flogging they are made go on their knees. The narrator sees many of the slaves who used to go several miles to their wives, and late in the night after having been wearied with a hard day's labor. He quarries why they go so far for wives, and don't take them of their own master's negro-women, and particularly those who lived together as household slaves. He finds their answer that "because when the master or mistress choose to punish the women, they make the husbands flog their own wives, and that we could not bear to do" (47). The slaves do not get the payment as much as they deserve. Besides, their masters don't feed them well enough according to the work they do. The narrator says:

Many times have I seen these unfortunate wretches beaten for asking for their pay; and often severely flogged by their owners if they did not bring them their daily or weekly money exactly to the time; though the poor creatures were obliged to wait on the gentlemen they had worked for.... In particular, I knew a countryman of mine, who once did not bring the weekly money directly that it was earned; and though he brought it the same day to his master, yet he was staked to the ground for his pretended negligence, and was just going to receive a hundred lashes, but for a gentlemen who begged him off fifty. (72)

These above lines show the white authority's inhumane consideration to the blacks' labor and their achievement and the whites' parasitic nature. The government itself disowns the property that belongs to the blacks. A poor but industrious by his

frugality has saved money, and owns a boat, unknown to his master. But knowing this to be the boat of a "negro man" the governor seizes it for himself. He complains about it with his master but instead, he gets answer, "how dared any of my negroes to have a boat" (72).

Racial binary always sees the white as free and the black as slave. It, thus, endangers always the liberty of free black. Equiano buys his freedom in 1766 from later master, Robert King, but he lives in constant alarm of his liberty which is but nominal when he is in voyages to different places. "While I was in this place; for, one day, being a little way out of the town of Savannah (West-Indies), I was beset by two white men, who meant to play their usual trick with me in the way of kidnapping. As soon as these men accosted me, one of them said to other that this was the very fellow we were looking for, that you had lost: and the other swore immediately that I was the identical person" (118-119). A free mulatto, Joseph Clipson is not able to secure his liberty because he is seen as subordinate and slave always in the eyes of the whites.

. . . but he was very soon undeceived, his men laying violent hands on him; and although he shewed a certificate of his born free in St. Kitt's, and most people on board knew that he served his time to boat-building and always passed for a free man, yet he was forcibly taken out of vessel [. . .]. The next day, without giving the man any hearing ashore, or suffering him even to his wife or child, he was carried away, and probably doomed never more in this world to seen them again.

(89)

The liberty of the free black is always in the dangling state, which in any time can be stolen, and again be confined into the cell of captivity. Likewise, one who does his attempts to escape his master gets severe punishment. "One Mr. D_, cut-off a negro

man's leg for running away. I asked him if the man had died in the operation, how he, as a Christian, could answer, for the horrid act, before God. And he told me, answering was a thing of another world; that he thought and did were policy" (75).

Law is the consciousness of certain group of people that holds the socio-political and economic power, which they regulate among others in appropriation to their interest of domination and power. It is also the machine of repression, exploitation, segregation and prejudice that enables the whites to ensure their domination over the blacks whereas lawyer and court are the agents who conduct that machine to implement the law which represents the ideology of ruling class or specific racial group. It, thus, carries the legacy of power and domination.

The law itself has preserved the brutality and cruelty of masters to their slaves. It is vain to keep hope of justice from the court because "no black man's testimony is admitted, on any occasion, in the court against any white person whatever" (121). One Sunday, in Georgia, Equiano is with some "negroes", in their master's yard in the town of Savannah, their master, Doctor Perkins, very cruel and severe man comes in drunk and seeing other "negro" in his yard strikes him with the first weapon in handy. He beats and mangles him in a shameful manner leaving him nearly dead. Early morning he is taken to the jail. With the help of his captain, Thomas Farmer, he gets out of jail. They go to the entire lawyer in the town for their advice, but they tell him "they could do nothing for me as I was a Negro" (96). Similarly, in Montserrat, there is a free black man, a carpenter who asks the money he earned with gentleman, but he is put into the geol. He is charged with false accusations, of an intention to set the gentleman's house on fire, and run away with his slaves.

The law itself puts biasness, prejudice and discrimination towards the blacks since as an agent it carries the discriminatory legacy of white people. In the town of

Savannah, Equiano takes lodge in his friend, Mosa's house who is a black man. They after supper make chat until between nine and ten O'clock. About that time the watch or patrol come by, and discerning a light in the house, they knock the door and put threats to Equiano to go watch house with them. Because the law there is "all negroes, who had a light in their houses after nine O'clock were to be taken into custody, and either pay some dollars or be flogged" (118).

Equiano himself is well aware about the indifferent view of law to black's exploitation and suffering. He sees no other alternatives except being silence in whites' brutality because the whites' law itself is racially prejudiced and biased. When he objects the owner of the boat who intends to sell him despite the fact that he is free-man, and puts forwards the claim of his liberty,

Thus, I hung without any crime committed, and without judge or jury, merely because I was a freeman, and could not by the law get any redress from a white person in those parts of the world. I was in great pain from my situation, and cried and begged very hard for some mercy, but all in vain. My tyrant, in a rage, brought a musket out of the cabin, and loaded it before me and the crew, and swore that he would shoot me if I cried any time. I had now no alternative; I therefore remained silent, seeing not one white man on board who said a word in my behalf. I hung in that manner from between ten and eleven O'clock at night till about one in the morning. (162)

Neither the law gives justice indiscriminately without racial prejudice, nor can it guarantee the liberty of free-black. Nor it compensates for the loss that blacks suffer in the hands of whites. Law, so, as construct of whites ideology gives damn care to the blacks' justice and welfare.

It is believed or claimed that higher and lower races should not intermarry. Racism regards that race mixture or "mongrelization" is against nature. Racists take race mixture as the greatest crime. The same idea is reflected in the practices the priests do. The church, the sacred institution, admits and transmits such false ideology to people. The clergy man seems the representation of God in human form but has racial bias at heart, While Equiano is in St. Kitt's, a very curious imposition on human nature takes place that "a white man wanted to marry in the church, a free black woman that had land and slaves in Montserrat: but the clergy man told him it was against the law of the place to marry a white and a black in the church" (87). Such sacred institution also promotes the false and biased social and cultural practices that ultimately victimize the blacks. The church also subjects the racially inferior groups to the ruling idea. The same biased and discriminatory attitude Equiano experiences with church in Georgia that "a black woman, who had a child lying dead , being very tenacious of the church-burial service, and not able to get white parson to perform it"(119), begs him for that purpose and give the service over the dead.

State administrative forces-army and police- also function either by ideology or repression to ensure their own cohesion and affiliation to the prevailing practices or white authority. Very generous master to Equiano, Navy Captain Pascal exposes his conceptualized racial prejudice to him. Though he baptized the narrator with English name as Gustavus Vassa after 16th century Swedish king, he mistreats him as others do snatching 'his wages' and 'prize money' and sells him to another master. Once the narrator and his black fellow make their voyage to Santa Cruz to sell fruits, but two whites take their three bags from them. Then, they go to the police commanding officer of the fort to write down the complaints how they have been served by his people, but he "saw we were strangers as well as slaves" (89), and "we obtained not

the least redress. He answered our complains only by a volley of imprecations against us, and immediately took a horse-whip in order to chastise us; so that we were obliged to turn out much faster than we came in" (86).

The dignity of the blacks and the rights of the blacks are denied in the teaching and learning process. Racists believe that in the dark races of man the anterior and superior portion of head are depressed, so they have narrow mind and aptitude. Such segregational attitude in the educational system is not anything more than racist ideology. Once a white asserts to Equiano in Montserrat:

Blacks are incapable of learning; that their minds are such a barren soil of moor that culture would be lost on them; and they came from a climate, where nature though prodigal of her bounties in a degree unknown to yourselves, has left man alone scant and unfinished, and incapable of enjoying the treasures she has poured out for him. (80)

Equiano's captain, Thomas Farmer teaches him some parts of Navigation himself. But some whites of their passengers, and others, seeing this fault he did to the narrator say that "it was a very dangerous things to let a negro know Navigation" (90).

The Marxists believe that market is the place where Capitalist Ideology is transmitted to the customers. Of course, market place also represents implicitly or explicitly the ideological domination and the prejudice of ruling class over ruled. In such place black sellers or buyers are unnecessarily imposed with bargaining and tortures of whites. Hence, racial concept is reflected in the dealings between whites and blacks in exchange. Equiano tells his reader why he plans to remain on land upon his return to England in 1777: "I had suffered so many impositions in my commercial transaction in different parts of the world, that I became heartily disgusted with the sea-faring life, and was determined not to return it, at least for some time" (166). His

statement suggests his trouble in business dealing with the whites. In April 1771 Equiano sails from London for Madeira, Barbados and Grenades. At this last place he sells his goods with his former kind of West- India customers.

A white man, an islander, bought some goods of me to the amount of some pounds, and made me many fair promises, as usual, but without any intention of paying me. . . and near sailing, this honest buyer discovered no intention of sign of paying for any thing he had bought of us; but, on the contrary, when I asked him for my money , he threatened me and another black man he had bought goods of , so that we found we were like to get more blows than payment. (128)

On this they go to complain Mr. Mac Intosh, a justice of the peace with the hope of being redressed against that man's villainous tricks, but being "negroes", though freeman, they don't get any remedy. Equiano in December 1771 also becomes victim of such ideological market in Jamaica. Mr. Smith deals his goods at 25 pound sterling, but when "I demanded payment from him; he was each time going to beat me, and threatened to put me in geol" (139). In Charlestown, they see the town illuminated, the guns are fired, and bonfires and other demonstration of joy shown, on account of the repeal of the stamp-act. There, he disposes of some goods on his account; "the white men buying them with smooth promises and fair words, giving me, however, but very indifferent payment. There was one gentleman particularly who bought a puncheon of rum of me, and gave me a great deal of trouble" (94). Wherever he goes in course of business transaction the whites take advantage of him being a "negroman", and oblige him to put up with those or none though he objects to them. One day, in Charlestown, he is trying to pass the whites in the market, he is abused for

offering to bad coin, and though he shows them the man he has got them from, he is within one minute tied up and flogged without either judge or jury.

The whites also suspect of blacks' activities and are jealous of their advancement and improvement. The whites view them as incapable creature for their up-gradation since they always put forward the same logic that the blacks are racially inferior. Equiano with great deal of toil and incessant labor collects enough money to buy his freedom, but;

When I went in I made my obeisance to my master, and with my money in my hand, and many fears in my heart, I prayed him to be as good as his offer to me, when he was pleased to promise me my freedom as soon as I could purchase it. This speech seemed to confound him; he began to recoil; and my heart that instant sunk within me. 'What,' said he, 'give you your freedom? Why, where did you get the money? Have you got forty pounds sterling?' 'Yes, sir,' I replied. 'How did you get it?' replied he. (101)

Thus, racists put question marks on the blacks' ability, skill and forwardness. They want them to be degraded and inferior in all levels and positions.

It is not justifiable to state that the media is aloof from the racist ideology. The blacks' exploitation is in media sector as well. It exposes the racial discrimination in explicit or implicit manner. As Althusser says media is the most pervasive means of promoting the prevailing practices. Though Equiano is freeman, he is compelled to advertise as a slave in the media. An incident occurs on him in Montserrat that before entering to the island he is imposed to advertise himself. He opposes it:

but he insists it was necessary, and otherwise he said he would not take me. This reduced me to great perplexity; for if I should be compelled

to submit to this degrading necessity, which every black freeman is under of advertising himself like a slave, when leaves an island, and which I thought a good imposition upon any freeman. (121)

In racist society, it is misfortunate for blacks that blacks' humiliation becomes entertainment for whites. "Negroes" are with no cause abused and beaten in helpless manner; especially "they were tied up, and kept hanging by the wrist at some distance from the ground, and then some half-hundred weights were fixed to his ankles, in which posture they were flogged mercilessly" (129). "Negroes" are not only the target of whites' racial bias but also they are imposed with "business to flog slaves" (129), thus underestimating their respect for their fellowship.

This autobiography, thus, gives the account of black suffering, injustice, violence, discrimination, prejudice, punishment that the narrator Equiano experienced himself and saw inflicted upon other black fellows. Racism is functioning not only in individual level, but also in social, cultural and institutional level victimizing poor sable blacks who are believed to be inferior and subordinate to whites. Racial ideology functions through different social and cultural organizations reproducing the subjections to the ruling idea. The narrator himself and other black fellows that he includes in his autobiography suffer physically as well as mentally in the hands of whites in all individual, social, cultural, political, economical and institutional practices.

Racial Resistance

Where there is repression there is resistance in general cases. But the matter is of its success. Repression and resistance go side by side, but difference is that it may be implicit or explicit. Resistance can be either physical or verbal, or both, in individual or in communal level. Resistance suggests one's awareness of domination

or injustice that is brought to him. In racial context, blacks' resistance is basically for their 'identity', 'freedom' and 'equality' which are denied by whites or to avoid white brutality, cruelty or domination.

The *Life* also includes some account of racial resistance the black characters including the narrator himself did against whites' domination, but their resistance seems not so violent, active, and fruitful. Most of the blacks in this book resist the whites in individual level. Besides, their resistance is pessimistic in goal because they deny their life itself to avoid the brutality and cruelty of racism (slavery). They prefer death to slavery; they choose the world of death that guarantees the equality and justice instead of living in slavish and hellish world of slavery.

One day, when we had a smooth sea and moderate wind, two of my wearied countrymen who were chained together (I was near them at the time), preferring death to such a life of misery, some how made through the netting and jumped into the sea: immediately another quite dejected fellow, who on account of his illness was suffered to be out of iron also followed their example. (34)

They could squeeze their throat themselves, but could not bear the violation of their rights befalling him. However, "two of the wretches were drowned; but they got the other and afterward flogged him unmercifully for thus attempting to prefer death to slavery" (34). The narrator himself thinks of his pessimistic resistance calling own death as:

My former slavery now rose in dreadful review to mind, and displayed nothing but misery, stripes, and chain; and in the first paroxysm of my grief, I called upon God's thunder, and his avenging power, to direct

the stoke of death to me, rather than permit me to become a slave, and to be sold from lord to lord. (69)

In Montserrat, Equiano sees a "negro man", Emmanuel Sankey who endeavored to escape from his miserable bondage by concealing himself on board of London ship. But, fate doesn't favor the poor oppressed man. He is immediately discovered and "his Christian master immediately pinned the wretch to the ground, at each wrist and ankle, and then took some sticks of sealing wax, lighted them, and dropped it all over this black" (76).

The narrator's violent fight with a white boy in the ship symbolically refers to the black's aggression, violence, and extreme hatred towards the whites' world that is repressive and discriminatory. "This was the first time I ever fought with a white boy; and I never had a bloody nose before. This made me fight most desperately" (44). The white boy is a representation of white people, and his fight with the boy is his fight with the racial ideology that the boy internalized in family and school, and that he could expose on blacks in any time. The red blood, here, symbolizes the flood of the blacks' anger and hatred against the whites that can sweep the white world away in any time. When the exploitation is excess the tolerance also breaks out. Equiano also exposes his extreme hatred and anger in physical violence to white who gives him more trouble stealing his bags of fruits in Grenades. He does not get justice against that man, which increases his anger, and:

I took him out of a house and threatened him with vengeance; on which finding he was likely to be handled roughly, the rogue offered each of us some small allowance, but nothing near; and our demands. This exasperated us much more; and some were for cutting his ears off;

but he begged hard for mercy, which was at last granted him, after we had entirely stripped him. (128)

Equiano and his fellows' physical violence on the white cheat is in implicit level the blacks' challenge to the whole white world where they are the sufferers. Similarly, in Jamaica a "negro man" poisons a white overseer in return to his violence on him. The more the repression the whites impose the more the blacks are conscious of their position and rights, and resist the whites' imposition.

Equiano also makes verbal protest against the whites' injustice and cruelty. In Georgia, Doctor Perkins puts him into the jail with no cause. Later, the narrator "swearing he would be revenged of him, and challenged him to fight" (96). But cowardice is ever the companion of cruelty, and the doctor refused. In the slavery system the free black is always in constant fear of losing his liberty. Equiano is also tricked many times by whites to kidnap him, but he is well conscious of the fact that "freedom" is his individual right. He has the sense of resistance that "I determined to resist the first man that should attempt to lay violent hands on me, or basely use me without a trial; for I would sooner die like a free man than suffer myself to be scourged by the hands of ruffians, and my blood drawn like a slave" (104).

The voice of resistance is reflected in Equiano's counter question, "what will you do with me?" (118), to threatening of the watch or patrol. The same tone he implies in his interaction with his Captain Thomas Farmer in Jamaica, who intends to sell him. In reaction Equiano says, "what right he had he had to sell me?" (162). He believes that one should consume his rights not at the cost of others' rights. But his words simply exasperate him, and without any other word, he make some of his people tie ropes round each of his ankles and also each wrist, and another rope round his body and hoist him up, without letting his feet touch or rest upon any thing.

The most important example of protest against the racial injustice, violence, prejudice, and discrimination in this book is narrator's participation in the British Abolitionist Movement after his arrival in England in 1777. His belief is that the inhuman traffic of slavery is to be taken into the consideration of the British Legislature. He has the honor of presenting the Queen with the petition on behalf of all African blacks which includes the statements:

The abolition of slavery will glorify to God in the highest; on earth and good-will men. Glory, honor, peace etc. to every soul of man that worketh good; to the Britons first, and also to nations. Those that honor their Maker have mercy on the poor. It is righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people; destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity, and the wicked shall fall by their own wickedness.

(177)

It is apparent that *The Interesting Narrative* stands in an acute and disruptive tension with the taxonomies of racial differences. If the driving concern strategy through which it seeks to accomplish such an aim entails persuading the “candid”-that is white-reader of the text that the one who narrates it is fully capable of particularly on that reader’s humanity of being, at least metaphorically, white also. In adopting such a strategy Equiano thus manages to counter the ideological tactics, which assign racial subjects essentialist identities.

Tortures, murder and every other barbarity and iniquity, are practices open the poor slaves with impunity. Equiano hopes the slave trade will be abolished. The abolition of slavery will give impetus to the renovation of liberty, humanity, justice and freedom, and it will be in reality an universal good.

Despite Equiano's best effort and the 1772 Mansfield Judgment (which declared that slaves could not be removed from England against their will), Annis's finds himself taken by force from London to the West Indies by his former master in 1774 and tortured to death. "When the poor man arrived at st. Kitt's, he has, according to custom, staked to the ground with four pins through a cord, two on his wrist, and two on his ankles, was cut and flogged most unmercifully, and afterwards loaded cruelly with irons about his neck" (181). Even if Equiano is unable to avert his friend's suffering, he offers resistance in another form: by symbolically converting Annis into a kind of black Christ, he continues to critique the reduction of the black subject to the corporeality above which a spiritually imbued whiteness elevates itself. Equiano's spiritual conversion also involves a racial crossing, 'removing the veil' between white and black.

Similarly, a critic Frank Keller sees Equiano's appropriation of traits that make up an essentialized whiteness- civilization, Christianity, nobility, justice, industry, intellect, truth as colonial mimicry.

Assimilation is best described as a subtle strategy by colonial power to achieve cultural hegemony. There can be little doubt, of course, that the practical results of assimilationist politics are frequently exploitive, but once we grant that western modernity is itself a hybrid, we should be ready to acknowledge that it is able to produce genuine forms of resistance to colonial exploitation. Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* can serve as a prime example here, because this text shows Western modes of writing and traveling endows the colonial process of intercultural encounter with an emancipatory potential. (20)

He sees his cultural hybridity as a weapon for the resistance to Eurocentric cultural, political, and racial imposition. He sees Equiano's hybrid position – Olaudah Equiano (African black name) and Gustavus Vassa (English name) as resistance to colonial exploitation that is enacted in terms of race and color. Equiano's conversion of Christianity and his preference and assimilation of European cultures and customs imply his implicit campaign to erase the cultural difference that exist between white and black. Moreover, his appeal to encourage for intermarries between black and white denotes his subtle resistance and disagreement with the racial discrimination and injustice. Equiano does not intend to create utopia for blacks but he asks all blacks and whites to form the world of harmony rupturing the racial gap between whites and blacks.

The autobiography in a sense is a political writing as it protests the social evil i.e. slavery and advocates for justice and equality for blacks. Politically or socially and culturally or symbolically, he, by structuring his story, shows his moral outrage towards slavery and racial discrimination. His overall emphasis is that freedom, justice, humanity and equality are not the consolation of religion, but emerge as the priority of the life.

Thus, the narrator along with the other blacks undergo the racial injustice, prejudice, discrimination, domination, and mental and physical tortures in all social and cultural activities in racist societies that are in the grip of racist ideology, which is disseminated to them through the ideological agencies. The characters are equally conscious of the whites' such unfair treatment to them, and they resist implicitly or explicitly, physically or verbally, but they are made suffered more because the belief that dominated is to be dominated and the blacks are subordinate to the whites has trapped the society under the net of such misleading category of classification which the suffered find hard to escape.

IV. Conclusion

The misconception of racism establishes as pervasive ideology in the society with its imposition on the mass through the social, cultural, and political organizations, forces or institutions by the specific ruling group of people or race. The division of human beings under the line of racial superiority and inferiority is the whites' false legacy to relegate people of color to a permanent status of inferiority. The whites put forward their logic of racial discrimination and domination in terms of biological difference, but it is their cultural and political motivation to continue their domination and power over the designated racial group. The racist ideas is merely myth, but become effective in the society through different social and cultural practices, for that the ruling class or race employ appropriate organizations and institutions as agents to disseminate their ideology of racism. Thus the target racial groups are victimized from individual to communal level in social and cultural practices under such agencies.

Racial domination, brutality, injustice, slavery, discrimination, and the blacks' strong beliefs to such false racist myth including the narrator's strong belief about the abolition of slavery and appeal to encourage for intermarry between white and black for the world of social harmony make up the content of the autobiography in the whole. The narrator and the other blacks suffer both physically and mentally with the racial injustice and discrimination based on prejudice and stereotypes created by the whites. In all sectors they are victimized or biased since the white authority has employed their agents or institutions to hold the blacks in the grip of their ruling ideology of racism. The rationalization of institution of slavery by racist ideology legalized the human trafficking, and lowered the position of the blacks to the animals' that could be bargained upon in the market place. Equiano in his 11 is enslaved with

his sister, and with other blacks is carried to different parts of America from lord to lord as a slave. His separation from his sister whose condition is unknown to him till his death renders his situation more miserable and heart-breaking. Cruelty, punishment both physical and mental, separation of family members, overworking with low pay, risk of the chastity of the black females and liberty of the free black man proved slavery as an extreme form of the blacks' exploitation, that get flourished under the ideology of racism. The false beliefs the whites internalized that blacks have narrow aptitude promoted the racial segregation in teaching and learning process since their belief is that the blacks are incapable of receiving the complexities of education. Equiano's white friends remark the Captain's tendency to teach Equiano the Navigation as danger to themselves. Similarly, in the racist societies the market place also carries the legacy of racial ideology. Equiano is imposed with unnecessary bargaining and sometimes threatening without pay to his business transactions with the whites simply because he is a "negro".

The racist society has torn the blacks asunder as if they are beasts. The blacks find themselves imprisoned in the narrow cells of law. Equiano's testimony in the court is not registered. The law neither gives justice to the narrator and other blacks nor guarantees the liberty of the free black man. The lawyer and judge of peace reject to undertake the case of the narrator against the villainous services of the local whites in Georgia simply because they are "negroes". Similarly the blacks' dignity and respect of being human is denied in the racist society. The white parson's refusal to give burial-ritual to a dead child reflects the church's biased and prejudiced racial attitudes. Besides, the same church denies performing the marriage-ritual to a white man who is marrying a black woman. It is the racial prejudice that race mixture or "mongelization" is against the nature. The Police or Army also exposes the racial biasness either by repression or ideology. Equiano can not escape from either of them.

Refusal of police commander to write down the complaints of Equiano, exposition of his conceptualized racial prejudice snatching the narrator's wage money and selling him to another master by his generous master, Captain Pascal of Navy Army etc. reflect their adherence to the ruling white authority. It is misfortune of the blacks in racist society that blacks' humiliation becomes entertainment to the whites as Equiano's compulsion of acting as a slave in the media though he is a freeman.

Racial segregation and domination certainly foster resistance that either advocates for "equality", "justice", "freedom", and "responsibility", or avoids the whites' domination denying own life. Some slaves prefer their "death" to avoid the whites' cruelty and injustice in slavery. Thus, their rejection of slavery is their resistance, but in pessimistic form. Equiano's physical fight with a white boy, his physical violence on a white thief implies his fight with the internalized cultural and social bias in terms of race and color. Besides, Equiano's counter reactions to the whites in the tone of protest explicitly denotes to the blacks' extreme hatred, anger, and protest against the whites' domination. The narrator's participation on the British Abolition Movement of Slavery and his appeal to encourage for intermarries between white and black imply his disagreement with the racial discrimination and inequality, and his intention of creating not the utopia for the blacks but the world of social harmony.

Thus almost all black characters including the narrator himself suffer in the whites' domination, discrimination, injustice, and prejudice in either individual or communal level under either of social and cultural institutions, organizations, or forces. The power of the ruling race is imposed on the racially inferior group through these agencies. This research, thus, comes to the conclusion that the whites' supremacist racial ideology is reflected in all social, cultural, and institutional practices, and functions through different ideological agencies rendering the blacks its ultimate victim.

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