"Slavery's legacies: An investigation of trauma, attachment, parent-child relations, survival and resistance during African-American enslavement as understood through two female slave narratives"

by

DeShaunta Johnson

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Doctor of Philosophy

_____	_____
Date	Diana Diamond, Ph.D. Chair of Examining Committee
_____	_____
Date	Maureen O'Connor, Ph.D Executive Officer

Elliot Jurist, Ph.D, Ph.D

Diana Punales, Ph.D

Lissa Weinstein, Ph.D

Dori Laub, MD

Supervising Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

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Advisor: Diana Diamond, PhD

In this dissertation I put forth that slavery has been under-theorized in psychodynamic literature as a potent cultural and historical traumatogen, the effects of which still reverberate through the process of transgenerational trauma transmission. In making this case, I will critically discuss the narratives of two female slaves; Harriet Jacobs memoir entitled *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), and Annie Burton's *Memories of Childhood Slavery Days* (1909). These narratives are used to illuminate the nature of trauma, the role of attachment relationships in trauma transmission, and to investigate the conditions of parenting, caregiving, resistance and attachment during slavery. Psychodynamic perspective prove powerful in elucidating inter and intra-racial tensions related to narcissistic rage, trauma, aggression, and forms of resistance to multiple oppressions.

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Dedication

This dissertation was written in honor of my ancestors, whose suffering and pain I do not forget. Thank you for the opportunity to amplify your voices; I hope I have done you justice.

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Chapter1: Introduction

"There is properly no history, only biography"
Ralph Waldo Emerson,
Representative Men

Several African-American theorists have hypothesized that there remains a unique psychological residue of slavery in the everyday lived experience of African-Americans that punctuates every cultural, artistic, political and familial form that emerges from our community (Bassey, 2007; Gates, 1989, DeGruy Leary, 2005; hooks, 1981). The pervasive impact of slavery should not be surprising considering that for three centuries, African-Americans were subjected to brutal and destructive treatment and relentless physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Although we triumphantly continued to exist during this time and thereafter, our legal emancipation by no means equaled freedom. Soon after slavery followed the cruel bonds of peonage, the Black Codes of 1865, nearly seven decades of Jim Crow laws, and many other legal forms of dehumanization and humiliation. Lynching, disenfranchisement, convict leasing, medical racism, housing and educational segregation and many other post-slavery insults continued to traumatize African-Americans. Thus the African-American experience is replete with episodes of massive public trauma, often followed by humiliation and shaming.

Yet it is all too convenient to consider the events of slavery simply as history, an easily distanced tale of long-ago events. However we must remember that African-Americans have spent more time as slaves in this country than as free people, and for many of us this history is none too far away. Current African-Americans are but a few

generations removed from the lived experience of slavery and may remain intimately ensconced in its psychological sediment through the process of transgenerational trauma transmission.

My great-grandmother Dara Dews, who raised my mother until she was eight years old, was the daughter of a slave name Attica. My mother was raised in the south in an African-American neighborhood of small cape houses raised up on stilts. These homes were once slave cabins on a larger plantation that were remodeled with love and reclaimed by a vibrant African American community comprised of factory workers, doctors, teachers, musicians and domestics. In her early experience, slavery was alive in her physical surroundings and was embodied in the foods she ate, the lessons so carefully taught her by her grandmother, the language surrounding her and in the prevailing Jim Crow laws that sought to truncate her opportunity and deny her humanity. Generationally, slavery remains near history for many African Americans.

Psychoanalysis recognizes that trauma can distort sequential psychological progression; it has the power to freeze elements of the self at the moment of trauma, or to hasten one's development in the service of self or other preservation. It has little respect for time, and when not tended to can consciously and unconsciously sift down through subsequent generations, begging to be announced, mourned, and reckoned with. This is the process described as transgenerational trauma transmission and it involves an intrapsychic warping of time, where what has been lived by others remains unmetabolized by all in the present.

Trauma's disregard for temporal location is particularly salient in considering the African-American experience of slavery. The word "experience" is used here instead of

"history" quite purposely, as the premise of this dissertation is that slavery *continues to be experienced* by African-Americans (and it most certainly can be argued that the experience continues among Whites) even though the legal ownership of African-Americans ended in 1865. Considering the potentially transgenerational nature of silenced trauma, African-Americans today may be experiencing a continued state of unresolved trauma regarding slavery, which coupled with present racial traumas may host simmering feelings of rage, hostility, and sadness.

Traumatic experiences of this degree inevitably involve the shaming and humiliation of the subjugated group by its oppressors. The rage that develops in the traumatized community requires that mourning take place so that the experience can be illuminated and reflected upon, rather than constrained and silenced. Silence is a key component in the transmission of trauma to subsequent generations, as it leaves experience unresolved and unmourned. In the absence of attempts at resolution, residual feelings of injury, shame, and humiliation may remain to fester, unrequited and split-off from the original insult.

So where has all of the rage of the grand injury of slavery gone? It has created fertile ground for the transmission of attitudes, dispositions, coping styles and other cultural and personal mutations of the trauma that are then transmitted through generations but de-contextualized and therefore sometimes confounding to those of who have inherited them. This may have created pervasive anxieties not linked to present objects but to past injustices.

I argue that African-American slavery was a massive cultural trauma so vast as to be almost unrecognizable, and needs to be recognized as such. In this theoretical-

qualitative dissertation I put forth that slavery has been under-theorized in psychodynamic literature as a potent cultural and historical traumatogen, the effects of which still simmer. The psychodynamic perspective can prove powerful in elucidating inter and intra-racial tensions related to narcissistic rage, trauma, aggression, and forms of resistance to multiple oppressions.

The Slave Narrative

In making this case, I will critically discuss the narratives of two female slaves. These narratives are used to illuminate the nature of the traumas endured and investigate how attachment relationships are implicated in trauma transmission. Attachment relationships and familial bonds as a vessel for the transmission of traumatic material will be significantly examined.

An aim of this dissertation is to honor and give new platform to the powerful voices represented in the slave narratives. Between the years 1619, when the first enslaved Africans touched the shores of Virginia, until the mid-1970's when the last enslaved African-American perished, approximately six thousand slavery narratives were penned. Some were written by slaves themselves, others were transcribed or ghost written by white abolitionists and used as texts to support their cause. Of these written accounts, as many as one hundred fifty narratives were published as autonomous texts that survive today. Many were self-published, usually by former slaves. Indeed the slavery narrative became a popular and distinct literary genre during the nineteenth century, widely read as harrowing adventure novels or salacious accounts of the sexual improprieties of white males on plantations. They also garnered international attention as documentation of the American atrocities involved in perpetuating the peculiar institution. Wildly popular in the decades leading up to the Civil War and sought after by publishing houses, narratives

provided a means of financial support for the mostly runaway slaves who wrote them, then residing in Canada, England or the American territories.

Narratives are utilized here for their historic significance and their vivid, visceral descriptions of trauma and resistance. Additionally, because psychoanalysis recognizes the necessity of telling the coherent story of one's trauma in an effort to gain control over a potentially defeating event, the narrative itself is understood here as a device for reckoning.

The slavery narrative was (and remains) a counter narrative, designed to oppose, defy and counteract dominant dialogues concerning American chattel slavery. These narratives are understood here as politically and socially transgressive texts that sought to upend popular understandings of the peculiar institution and recast slaves as empowered agents of their own story. Narratives were active documents of resistance, allowing blacks to participate in an abolitionist movement largely dominated by whites. They challenged the notion that slavery had benefited Africans by saving them from a pagan, uncivilized life, a pro-slavery belief supported by the notion that the otherwise base and unintelligent African needed whites to provide them with the guidance of religion and an occupation that he could not otherwise find. The narratives countered these racist images and painted slavery as a brutal institution. They also humanized the enslaved, providing a platform for a wholly subjective account of experience.

The mission of the slave narrative can be described as an attempt to resist racist oppression by offering documents that dispel and dismiss as ridiculous many of the justifications for slavery. The narrative is not simply the expression of a yearning to chronicle one's story as it occurred; it is the materialization of the desire to reclaim lost

power and reposition the writer as the individual in charge of her history. It also compels the reader to identify with the sufferings and experiences of slavery and recasts the slave as hero. In doing this the subject ceases to be a voiceless victim in an historical account and instead emerges at the center as the story. Through narrative, agency is reclaimed and the historical record diversified.

Broadly, narrative can be employed as an instrument for political, social and psychological transformation. It is an "alive" document that seeks to "accomplish instrumental political work through the power of suggestion and emotional identification, framing political issues in ways that foster collective political responses" (Davis, 2002, cited by Wholly, 2006, p. 295). The goal of the slave narrative is not only to reveal truth, assert agency and act as historical document, but to function as an invitation and incitement to political action on the behalf of the narrator.

In this dissertation I have chosen to undertake a qualitative coding of two slave narratives in addition to engaging psychoanalytic, sociological and historical theory to create a more nuanced, multi-disciplined discussion of the legacy of slavery trauma. This dissertation can best be described as a theoretical-qualitative dissertation that seeks to place several theoretical frameworks, attachment theory, traumatology, African-American history, and African-American literary history in conversation with each other to seek new perspectives on slavery, trauma transmission, and African-American psychology.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted by the past."

Karl Marx

Cultural Trauma

In Maurice Apprey's elegant formulation, the African-American experience of slavery constituted "a cut, a gap, a rupture, lost ancestry, and the wound of an absence in African-American lineage" that dislocated a people from their history and set the stage for trauma to be filtered down through generations. Events like American chattel slavery occur on such a scale of devastation and horror that it would seem impossible to survive them without bearing markers of trauma.

Massive traumatic events that befall specific ethnic, racial, or political minorities are named political traumas by Weingarten (2004) or cultural traumas by Eyerman (2004). They and are often global in nature and organized around themes of conquer and subjugation. Eyerman distinguishes physical or psychological trauma from cultural trauma in that cultural trauma describes not only great suffering but a marked loss of meaning and identity on the part of the subject group as an entity. Cultural trauma is "a tear in the social fabric" that disrupts a previous sense of cultural continuity, presumably compelling the group to reorganize and reformulate an identity at the core of which lays the traumatic event (Eyerman, 2004, p.160). In this way the trauma (and the subsequent oppressions that follow) can become one of the defining attributes of the group. To Eyerman, cultural trauma describes an injury experienced at the group level that is comprised of "the fact of historical injury" and provides "a constant reminder" for all

members in the group of the dehumanizing motivations behind the original transgression against them (Eyerman, 2004, p. 135). Eyerman and Apprey both agree that the traumatizing event can come to define the community from within and without.

The postulate that societal events occurring within one generation may have consequences for later generations is not new. In *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud described an emerging theoretical hypothesis that individuals may live with the residual intrapsychic material of generations come before. In this late work, he laid the groundwork for us to consider trauma as an ancestrally inherited phenomenon, rather than limited to the lived experience of a single individual. He wrote that "when I speak of an old tradition still alive in a people, of the formation of a national character, it is such an inherited tradition, and not one carried on by word of mouth that I have in mind…. If we accept the continued existence of such memory traces in our archaic inheritance, then we have bridged that gap between individual and mass psychology" (Freud, 1939, p.158). Psychoanalysis, he seemed to believe, could be a potent instrument in divining these residues, the shadows of memory that persist in our unconscious despite never having been explicitly transmitted. Indeed, Freud thought that the future of psychoanalysis may well move in the direction of not only analyzing patient's "dispositions, but also ideational contents, memory traces of former generation" (Freud, 1939, p.157).

What Freud had begun to describe here is what literary and cultural theorist have now termed "collective memory". Eyerman quotes Sing in defining this as "the combined discourses of the self: sexual, racial, historical, regional, ethnic, cultural, national, familial, which intersect in the individual" (Eyerman, 2004, p. 7). He goes on to write that these factors form a net of language, "a meta-narrative, which a community shares

and within which individual biographies are oriented…. From this perspective, [the past] if not collectively experienced, [is a] temporal reference point, which forms an individual" (Ibid).

Although Freud seems unclear about what psychical mechanism could be responsible for the transmission of this unspoken material, he understood that the power of what's inherited lies in its ability to typify the "character" of a group and to create an unconscious bridge of traumatic memory that unites the unconscious minds of all of its subjects.

Prager (2003) identifies that "massive trauma has an amorphous presence not defined by time and lacking a beginning, middle or end, and that it shapes the internal response of reality of several generations, becoming an unconscious organizing principle passed on by parents and internalized by their children" (p. 177). This shaping of an "internal response to reality" is what gets handed down and manifests itself, Prager states, through shaping one's ability to test "self" against reality in all aspects of life. The "self" becomes organized around this raw, painful space while remaining outside of conscious awareness. In this formulation, slavery is the trauma and the "self" the African-American people; the internalization of racism is that "unconscious organizing principle" (p.177) that functions as a haunting, subconscious presence of the traumatic event.

And so it is not a conceptual leap to think of slavery as a massive trauma endured by those who experienced it. Much African-American scholarly work has linked that lived experience to prevailing attitudes, beliefs and behaviors in modern African-America. Psychologists in Black Studies speak of a particular African-American psychology, a specific characterological make-up associated with and caused by the

unique experience of slavery and racism in America[1]. In writing about African-American coping styles, Daly, et al. (1995) describe not only the unique adaptive strengths of this population but also the psychological deformations resulting from existing in a continually prone and defensive position as an African-American, regardless of individual generational location. In concert with many other theorists, they posit that surviving racist oppression necessitates a contiguous psychology.

In their clinical practices, African-American clinical psychologists Vontress and Epps see the transgenerational manifestations of this history emerging as "a volatile triad of emotions and behaviors, dominated by hostility and hopelessness," that they name "historical hostility", a normative reaction to the abnormal circumstance of the continual oppression against African-Americans that began with slavery in this country (1997, p. 35). Brave Heart in discussing her clinical interactions with young males black males involved in the criminal justice system implicates observes rage and hopelessness as well, stating that these men "become frustrated and lose hope and resort to alternative means, including criminal activities and violence, to get their needs met" (2005, p. 43). Thus, based on Brave Heart's thinking, African-American male violence is only one of many symptoms of transgenerational trauma resulting from oppression

Social Worker Joy DeGruy Leary (2005) agrees with Vontress and Epps and Brave Heart in perceiving a likeness between the diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and the expression of historic rage. DeGruy Leary makes use of this observation to develop diagnostic criteria exclusively for African-Americans that she titles "Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS)", a categorization meant to encapsulate the symptoms

[1] For an introduction to this literature see Na'im Akbar's *Breaking the Chains of African Slavery,* and Ron Eyerman's *Slavery and the Formation of African-American Identity*

of prolonged trauma in African-Americans rooted in slavery. DeGruy Leary argues that slaves themselves endured many of the stressors necessary to receive a DMS-IV diagnosis for PTSD including experiencing or witnessing events involving actual or threatened death or injury, feeling intense terror and helplessness, and enduring events like rape, physical abuse, or torture. As DeGruy Leary maintains, slaves were exposed to "a lifetime of traumas" and continual retraumatization (p. 118).

In *Forms of Black Consciousness*, Sudhi Rajiv (1992) writes that "Black Consciousness grew out of the unrelieved suffering and psychological trauma of a group of people who were subjected to overt and covert racism in the United States of America [and the world] for about four centuries." Rajiv defines consciousness as I might describe identity here, as "a total configuration in any given individual which makes up his whole perception of reality, his whole world view… a body of attitudes, sentiments, and beliefs which serve to unify its members…. [Consciousness] gives blacks an understanding of their predicament, of the social order of which they are a part and their place in relation to it… which cannot be separated from their long history of suffering" (p.103). At the core of African-American identity then is a racialized history of traumatic oppression which forms a commonality of experience, building a specifically African-American group identity.

To further this point Magnus Bassey (2007), in writing about African-American group consciousness employs existentialist philosophy to state that the development of an explicit group consciousness is a familiar phenomenon in oppressed populations, resulting from the "isolation, alienation, and powerlessness" that typify the experience of cultural trauma. He quotes Sartre in describing a "serial collective", a "human group

which is defined solely by a common product or object situated outside of itself. To be recognized by the Other is to be an object for the Other" (p. 38). While it would be overstated to imply that African-Americans are "defined solely" by their subject positions in relation to whites, or that the totality of a common African-American experience is defined only by slavery, Rajiv, Freud, Sartre and others agree that cultural trauma can unify, structure and solidify consciousness.

Daly et al. (1995) employ Jung to posit that much of this slavery trauma has not been symbolized, remaining outside of conscious awareness and becoming an ingredient in personality. In this analytic interpretation, the unconscious filtrate of slavery is repressed and then expressed as concrete, obvious pathological symptomatology "reminiscent of the conversion hysterics of Freud's Victorian age of sexual repression" (p, 256). They attribute much of the intra-racial violence, substance abuse and crime in the black community to an expression of the percolating, defended-against historical rage that has been deprived of viable outlets in modern society. Repression is seen here as a means of coping with conflict, tucking away material so horrific that even its seemingly intolerable effects, the traumatic symptoms, are more easily confronted and spoken of.

These constructs explicitly implicate slavery and the subsequent oppressions as playing a fundamental role in shaping African-American collective psychology. Daly et al. (2005) quote Houston in stating that "Because of the many covert, subliminal, nonverbal, and otherwise similarly innocuous means of culturally transmitting and conditioning personality from parent to offspring, it is possible that personality represents the most profound and intense of all African survivals" (p. 241). Thus Daly could be

read as stating that personality itself becomes the very site of transmitting traumatic history as well as coping styles.

Slavery can be thought of as giving rise to massive psychological ruptures of a cataclysmic scale, where the development of autonomy and a coherent sense of self were surely deformed by the infantilizing nature of the event. African-American's today may be experiencing a continual state of unresolved trauma regarding slavery, coupled with present racial traumas, that may be giving rise to feelings of rage and hostility as a result of a consistent inability to regain lost pride and esteem (Vontress and Epps, 1997; Johnson,1989). At present, there is little talk of reparations and no talk of large scale attempts at redemption through avenging the degradation. So where has the rage of the humiliation gone?

In the case of slavery (and perhaps most cultural traumas), what is repressed is not what has been forgotten. Slavery, while not spoken of and perhaps not thought of often by African-Americans today, is hardly repressed as a de facto historical event. It is not the historical event of slavery in its entirety that has been forgotten, repressed and symbolized. In fact that history remains concretely, recognizably present. Rather it is the pain, shame and subsequent rage of the event that remains too difficult for African-Americans (and whites) to cope with and metabolize.

Transgenerational Trauma Transmission

As Caruth writes, psychological trauma is "not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that… is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the … repetitive actions of the survivor." While

Caruth (1996) underestimates the connection between the grievous physical abuse that sometimes gives rise to psychological trauma (certainly the torture slavery involved was too depraved to be described as a "simple, healable event) her statement supports the way in which the effects of trauma reverberate and repeat in the actions of survivors. Just as Natan proposed that individuals can experience intense emotions born of trauma while having little conscious recollection of the event, African-Americans may well be acting out slavery trauma without the conscious awareness of slavery as a traumatogen. Natan (2007) continues that traumatic events can become dislodged from "their source and take on a life of their own" (p.34). Mortgenstern (1996) describes this phenomenon poetically, stating that "the trauma sufferer is 'haunted' or 'possessed' by an image or event that she or he has missed as experience" (p. 121). I'd like to extend Caruth, Natan, and Mortgenstern's descriptions to state that traumatic events do have a repetitive nature that resonates across generations. Furthermore, the argument here is that the primary mechanisms for trauma transmission are familial interactions and pattern of parent –child attachment.

The process of transmitting trauma material generationally is named "intergenerational transmission of trauma", "multi-generational legacy of trauma", and "vertical transmission of intergenerational trauma" in various literatures (Danieli, 1998; Volkan, 2001; Prager, 2005, respectively). For the purposes of this paper, the term "transgenerational transmission of trauma" will be employed to describe this process as it speaks most precisely and succinctly to how trauma material is passed down across generations. In the African-American experience, the trauma of slavery has become a

psychologically embedded legacy, transmitted perhaps because of the general silence in America around the historic institution.

Theories of transgenerational trauma transmission all hold that the totality of a traumatic event is not limited to the experience of the survivor, but extends far beyond the critical event to influence those who come after. Trauma residue is transmitted throughout generations, becoming divorced from the original traumatic experience but remaining evident in the behaviors and beliefs of subsequent generations. Moreover in many situations those affected by the residue of the original insult may have no awareness of the presence of a major traumatic event shaping their individual psychology.

Trauma studies compel one to consider what is meant by the transmission of cultural attitudes, beliefs, and coping mechanisms. It is argued here that the traumatic material transmitted begins to comprise and congeal character. Silence appears to be crucial in the transmission of these messages.

Weingarten (1998) evokes trauma theorist Danieli in writing, “We are accustomed to think of silence as an absence of sound but it functions in families in much more complex and confusing ways. Silence can communicate a wealth of meanings. It is its own map: Don't go there; don't say that; don't touch; too much; too little; this hurts; this doesn't. But why the territory is as it is cannot be read from the map of silence (p. 12).” “As the skeleton in the closet, the ghost in the attic, the family secret is preserved in its very unutterability”, literary theorist Naomi Morgenstern writes in her reading of Freud’s work on the compulsion to revisit traumatic experience (2003). On silence,

psychologists Schiff, Noy and Cohler (2001) write, “silence became a rule of survival for the (Holocaust) survivors. In effect, they had two psychological choices after the war: either to stay in a form of psychological death filled with Holocaust memories or to forget them with the aim of living again. Building a new life and transmitting their past history were incompatible with each other” (p.162).

It is *the not speaking* of traumatic events that ensures the wounds are never healed. A paradox, as *the not speaking* can also be seen as an attempt to cope with events so horrific they can only be symbolized in an intensely primitive, preverbal way in an effort to protect the self.

Danieli (1985) and McCann (1999) describe children of culturally traumatized individuals who are complicit in not discussing what happened to their parents in an effort to avoid awakening the parents’ feelings of aggression or humiliation. It is a parentified stance in which the child tacitly, sometimes unconsciously, agrees to remain silent in order to preserve the parent or gain their approval. Without direct accounts from their parents concerning what happened, these children are left to develop frightening, fantasied associations about the trauma. Here it is the refusal to acknowledge events in an attempt to maintain harmony and preserve relationships that becomes the agent of passing down cultural trauma. In the absence of fact or narrative, these children become affected and shaped by an event they can only imagine.

Trauma, in its perpetuation, can demand that all involved be silent about the event and its aftermath. Indeed, in this formulation, it is the silence that drives the fact of the event underground and allows its unconscious, fantasy-based underpinnings to grow stronger. Murphy (2008) quotes postcolonial political theorist Ranjana Khanna in stating

that there remains a palpable sadness in the citizens of the postcolony, perhaps derived from the "transgenerationally transmitted signifier of repression [that] originates in trauma or a repressed secret" (p. 54). Khanna seems to be stating that this signifier, if verbal, is coded in the language of trauma and fantasy but never made explicit. Despite this, the presence of the trauma announces itself without words.

So while slavery as a historical fact is no secret our nation, it is the affective and personal story of slavery as a tragedy that is begged silent. Gay (1998) writes that "When African-Americans speak directly to their experiences, the dominant culture tends to take a pseudo-victims' stance, asking why African-Americans insist on living in the past. In essence, this is requesting silence and perpetuating the secret in the service of protecting the secret and the offender. To yield to the desire to see, hear and speak no evil is to take the side of the perpetrator (p. 8)". I read Gay here also to mean that when African-Americans speak of slavery in multi-racial, public settings and do so with contiguous affect, it is perceived as intolerable and silence is enforced.

In insisting that America is in no way a post-racist society, these leaders are often met with resistance and anger, told that America can't move past this history because they won't let it be. That it is somehow their fault that inequalities persist, because they continue to revive the discussion about it rather than move on. To this point, social workers and educators Mims et.al (2011) write, "Both the descendants of the masters and the descendants of the slaves avoid the discussion. I believe it is because both the magnitude and the realization of the atrocities are too horrific to conceptualize in any spiritual value system currently known."

There have been large and effective movements in this country that address the legal, social, and political injustices African-American have faced since Jim Crow. Great strides have been made through the Civil Rights, Black Power, and Voting Rights movements that revolutionized freedoms for the black community. These were times of vibrant national discussion about race and racism. Even now the national conversation on *racism* is lively and engaged. After the shooting of Trayvon Martin, the nation saw images of people of all races outraged and mobilized to march against institutional brutality against young black men. The election of our nation's first black president can broadly be thought of as emblematic of increased pathways to success for African-Americans in addition to an easing of racism amongst the electorate.

It is not my contention that racism is absent from the national conversation; on the contrary, we seem quite obsessed with racism, injustice, fairness, and racial difference. However *slavery as the discreet and horrific historical fact that is the basis for all permutations of racism against African-Americans in this country is the essential circumstance we choose not to address.* Again, because every American is somehow implicated in the story of slavery, as we all benefit from the fruit of the labor of slaves', there remains fear that the discussion of slavery will devolve into blaming and shaming. It could also reveal the long twisted, interracial genealogies that slavery produced, throwing into conflict our every notion of racial categorization on a national, and perhaps even more mortifying, personal level.

As Eyerman (2004) suggests, there is an inherent double-bind for oppressed groups in seeking to publicize transgressions, as having access to outlets to announce an agenda requires power that traumatized groups may not have. The fact of representation

is crucial to the understanding of trauma transmission. This notion necessarily assumes that the trauma of an event was not directly experienced by those currently living, and thus the trauma is recollected rather than strictly remembered. How that trauma is recollected and reproduced is a matter of power. He writes, "There is power involved here as well, the power of political elites for example, of mass media in selecting what will be represented, thus affecting what will be forgotten as well as remembered… Where there are winners and losers, the losers may never get their side told, or they may have to wait, sometimes even generations." (p.163). Subjugated groups seek to transform the traumatic fact of their histories through powerful self-reinvention (Apprey, 1999). Here, group agency is reclaimed by gaining control over how the story of their suffering will be told. A space is created or forced open within larger culture where the traumatized group's experience is announced, recognized and to some degree, repaired.

As Volkan (2001) and Apprey (1999) discuss, a necessary aspect in healing cultural trauma is that the public must recognize the occurrence of the atrocity and accept a historical formulation of it that allows the subject culture to emerge on the right side of history. What is crucial in this representation is the participation of all cultures involved in acknowledging what happened, followed by a giant mea culpa from those who perpetrated violence or observed it without intervening.

Traumatic experiences of this scale inevitably involve the shaming and humiliation of the subjugated group by its oppressors. The rage that develops in the traumatized community requires that mourning take place so that the experience can be illuminated and reflected upon, rather than constrained. Volkan (2001) and others suggest that a key component in the transmission of trauma to subsequent generations is that the

trauma remains unresolved and unmourned. Volkan states the "the large group's (*subject group's*) failure to reverse shaming injury and humiliation inflicted by another large group" precipitates the transmission of trauma (p.87). This material is passed on to the next generation through an unconscious wish that they will be able to bear it; if they cannot, they it is passed on to the following generation.

Thus central to furthering its cultural identity is recognition by all parties that unspeakable things have happened. Having recognition as "the grossly wronged group" (Volkan, 2001) within the discourse of larger society assists the subjugated group on its path toward future identity re-integration. A space is created or forced open within larger culture where the traumatized group's experience is announced, recognized and to some degree, repaired.

Chapter 3: Attachment, slavery, and trauma

Human bondage is the most egregious form of abuse of another, and if thought of in terms of what is known about transgenerational vulnerabilities of abused children, it's clear that such abhorrent conditions have psychological affects that are transmitted and sometimes replicated in subsequent generations (Walker, 1999). Indeed abuse is often thought of as cyclical, and some research finds associations between developing in an abusive environment and abusing one's own children (Dutton, 2005). This is not to say that slaves, because they were continually abused, abused their own children and existed in aberrant family systems; a statement as such only serves to pathologize an entire population while making simplistic correlations about how complex psychological processes occur[2]. To the contrary, after much scholarly debate, it seems that the slave family actually remained fairly intact (nuclear, with generally monogamous pairings) when not subject to paternalistic separations during slavery and for a period thereafter[3].

The effects of trauma on subsequent generations aren't necessarily characterized by physical abuse, but by disrupted or distorted attachment relationships, neglect (benign or otherwise) or an inability to care for or connect emotionally with one's child due to resulting difficulties of unresolved trauma (Walker, 2007). Survivors of trauma can experience depression, anxiety, feelings of distance in interpersonal relationships, blunted affect, violent outbursts, excessive fear and a host of other

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[2] See Gutman's *Black Family in Slavery and Freedom* for a complex discussion of the many variables that must be considered when attempting to avoid a static or monolithic conversation about slave existence. [2]

[3] As stated, there is much debate about this. For a review of the major work of Blassingame, Steckel, Crawford and Gutman, see *Ensuring Inequality: The Structural Transformation of the African-American Family.*

symptoms that can make relating to others difficult (Herman, 1997). Danieli, a leading researcher on trauma's effect on children writes that the distinction between primary and secondary trauma is largely academic, as his research indicates that the children of the traumatized experience symptoms much like those of their parents. Marianne Hirsch (2001), in writing about the persistent sadness experienced by children of Holocaust survivors terms this phenomenon "postmemory", an apt way of describing the living-out of events never experienced. Although markedly different from the slavery experience in significant ways (particularly in its temporal relationship to the present) post-Holocaust literature concerning the experience of transgenerational trauma transmission is notable in its theorizing that survivors feel burdened by the necessity to continually remember, memorialize, and repair an event that happened before them.

Danieli and McCann, in writing about the mechanisms of trauma transference do acknowledge however that the extent and severity of the trauma experience does affect the measure of transmission. The degree to which the parents have "integrated" the traumatogen and the extent to which the "individual's schema" has remained intact affects how much of the residual, unresolved trauma the children inherit. Trauma transmission does not have to occur in a simplistic linear fashion, where what is experienced by parents is directly duplicated by children; indeed the symptoms of direct trauma and indirect trauma may or may not vary greatly in their expression (Baronowsky, et al., 2007).

Thus trauma isn't only revealed by facts, but also by how the person experienced the event. Much of traumatic expression, it appears, is phenomenological. It is well known that individuals can have myriad responses to any particular traumatizing event,

and there appears to be some individual difference in ability to handle traumatic situations. This is to say that regardless of the nature of the trauma, each individual experiences the traumatic event differently based on preexisting personality traits, levels of resilience, prior traumas, and other factors. But as Herman (1997) points out in agreement with Danieli (1990) and McCann (1985), there is a stable association between the gravity of the atrocity survived and the severity of the psychological correlates. The conditions of slavery were certainly severe.

Attachment theory illustrates that an insufficient attachment relationship with a parental figure is traumatizing to children and impacts an individual's ability to form attachments as an adult, specifically to their own children. Attachment theory focuses on the development of affective bonds in human relationships and how they are fostered, disturbed or destroyed. It also seeks to describe how secure or insecure attachment relationships are formed, and theorizes about the effects of separation from or loss of an individual to whom one is deeply attached. Attachment theory, with an emphasis on caregiving systems, will be briefly summarized here to create a foundation for emphasizing the role of attachment relationships in trauma transmission.

Attachment theory stresses that people develop internal working models (Bowlby's term), or mental representations of the affective ties developed in their primary attachment relationships that affect their ability to adjust to emotional and social situations well after childhood. These mental representations serve as maps for subsequent relationships with the self, the world and later significant others (Barnett et al, 1999; Bowlby, 1973). Attachment theory holds that these representations of our earliest

experiences of receiving care when we are infants become the heuristic maps upon which later relationships are formed.

The quality of the attachment relationship is dependent on the quality and consistency of the care the child received, which is influenced by the parent's prior experience of being cared for as a child. Van IJzendoorn's (1995) oft quoted meta-analysis of early findings of the Adult Attachment Interview demonstrated that the level of security of a child's attachment to a caregiver could be predicted based on the level of security in the caregiver's narrative about their own experience of receiving care as a child in about 75% of the dyads studied. The level of a parent's attachment security or insecurity appears to have predictive power in suggesting the behavior of that parent toward their children (Bar-on, et al, 1998). Likewise, there appears to be a consistent relationship between the quality of infant attachment and the mother's mental representations of her own attachment relationship with her primary caregiver. In this "assimilation model", the quality of attachment relationships is understood to be generationally transmitted, with maternal sensitivity to an infant's needs being the instrument through which attachment is translated (George and Solomon, 1999, p. 655).

As George and Solomon (1999) remind us, Bowlby's theories of attachment were informed by ethology and evolutionary biology, among other disciplines; these sciences played a large role in inspiring Bowlby's concepts of how human behavior is affected and organized by behavioral systems. Behavioral systems, according to ethology are identified by several descriptive principles, including but not limited to "behavior that is coordinated to achieve a specific goal and adaptive function" (Ibid, 650). They are also "activated and terminated by endogenous and environmental cues", "guided at the

biological level by a feedback system that monitors internal cues", "related to and interacting with other behavioral systems" and are "believed to be organized and integrated by specific cognitive control systems, or mental representations" (Ibid, 651).

Principally, the caregiving system here is understood as involving the behavioral and biological responses called into play in the service of protecting one's young children; ultimately it can be described as all of the behaviors employed by parents to keep their children alive and healthful. Jude Cassidy (1999) suggests that its definition be limited to "only those behaviors designed to promote proximity and comfort when the parent perceives that the child is in real or potential danger. He continues, "The predictable outcome of activation of the caregiving system is parent-child proximity, and the biological function is protection of the child" (p. 10). Feeney and Collins (2004) define the purpose of the caregiving system much more broadly, staying close to ever-popular and resonant attachment constructs of the mother as a "safe haven" and a "secure base". They state that the caregiving system works throughout our lives in various attachment relations to provide "a *safe haven* for the attached person by meeting his or her needs for security (e.g. by soothing and problem solving in stressful situations)" also through "providing a *secure base* for the attached person by supporting his or her autonomy and exploration in the environment" (p. 303). Establishing and maintaining proximity appears to be crucial in both definitions here, as all attachment and caregiving behaviors can be seen as a desire to maximize the proximity of children and attachment figures. The caregiving system has this as its aim, as proximity is necessary for parent oversight, which is necessary for keeping children safe and alive.

In Bowlby's view, attachment relationships provide security for infants and children in fearful, threatening, anxious or arousing situations. The child attachment system can been seem as interacting with and activating parental caregiving systems. When children behave in ways that trigger adult responses, the parent's caregiving system is activated to investigate or soothe this distress through increasing their proximity to the child. When a baby cries out or is perceived to be in danger, the caregiving behavioral system is activated, compelling the parent to soothe the child or help create safety for them. The disregulation that occurs due to separation from attachment figures appears to continue through our lives, and can be evidenced in adult romantic relationships.

Child attachment classifications

Attachment styles are measured using Ainsworth and Wittig's (1970) "Strange Situation", a progressively stressful set of departures and reunions with the caregiver designed to activate the child's attachment system. The child's ability to explore a novel environment with or without the caregiver and the child's behavior upon reunion are evaluated. The subsequent designations of secure, anxious-avoidant, anxious-ambivalent, and anxious-disorganized and then rendered. Briefly, secure children are well able to explore their environment when their mothers are present and are generally wary of strangers if she is not present. To again use the oft-mentioned description of secure children's' behavior, they are able to use their mothers as "safe havens" to increase a sense of "felt security". Anxious-avoidant infants fail to explore, can show little preference for their parent over strangers, and may ignore their parents or show aggression toward them upon reunion. Likewise, anxious-ambivalent children do little to explore their environment and appear fearful. They display great distress when separated

from mom, but upon reunion may tantrum, be aggressive or resist the mother's attempts to exhibit affection. Finally, disorganized attachment, what Main and Hesse popularly described as "fright without solution" (1990), is marked by the lack of a coherent approach for coping with stressful situations that activate the attachment system. These children may display distress when their mothers leave, and exhibit a host of incoherent responses upon her return. Some children may appear to dissociate, may seem stunned and confused, or vacillate between approaching and retreating from their mother.

Attachment bonds are formed under complex circumstances; the myriad factors that contribute to and influence the development of certain attachment styles remains the continual subject of theorizing. There is compelling data however, that the experience of maltreatment and neglect as an infant plays a role in shaping the child's internal working models, attachment classification, and subsequently, adult attachments (Baer & Martinez, 2006; Lyons Ruth, & Jacobvitz, 1999). It follows then that there is an abundance of research and theory coupling the development of disorganized attachment to maltreatment and neglect. "The incidence of disorganized attachment classifications in infancy has ranged from 13% to 82%, depending on the presence and type of family risk factors. Serious family risk factors, including child maltreatment, parental major depressive disorder, parental bipolar disorder, and parental alcohol intake have been associated with significant increases in the incidence of disorganized attachment patterns in infancy. In both middle and low income samples, maltreatment has been associated with disorganization in infancy" (Lyons Ruth, Jacobvitz, 1999, p.525).

The evidence linking childhood trauma resulting from maltreatment to the development of disorganized attachment is consistent and strong, the principal causal

factor being confusing and inconsistent parental behavior. Mary Main (1990), who developed the category, observed that disorganized children experienced their parents as frightening and unpredictable. This is especially distressing as the child often has no choice but to seek comfort from this same frightening individual. Furthermore, George and Solomon (1999) write that "In contrast to these mothers (mothers of avoidant, ambivalent and secure infants who are considered by the authors to be adequate parents), the mothers of infants classified as disorganized may properly be labeled as 'disabled' as caregivers, because they intermittently or persistently abdicate their protective role "We believe that our view is supported indirectly, however, by accumulating evidence that disorganized attachment, in contrast to the organized secure, avoidant and ambivalent patterns, is associated with pathological risk" (p. 654). In this formulation, these caregivers can be seen as responding to the imperatives of their own caregiving systems with mixed and frightening strategies that fail to provide adequate care for their kids. Baer and Martinez (2006) summarize their findings to state that "Maltreating caregivers create disorganized attachment because they confront the infant with a pervasive paradox where the parent/caregiver is the only source of comfort while at the same time he or she frightens the child through unpredictable abusive behavior" (p. 198). The risk to the child's emotional development is considered great, as the child's internal working models, his guide to further relationships and concepts of self in relation to others, may later experience people as unpredictable with their affection and caregiving, frightening or confusing.

A review of disorganized attachment and adult attachment literature is important in this work as there appear to be consistent and significant correlations linking

expressions of unresolved loss and trauma in parents to the presentation of disorganized attachment in their children. According to this strong evidence, a parent's representations and related discourse concerning early attachment relationships is significantly associated with a child's attachment classification (Hesse 1999; Lyons-Ruth and Jacobvitz 1999), substantiating a transgenerational aspect of attachment styles.

Adult attachment measurement

Attachment in adults is measured by the Adult Attachment Interview, a protocol that involves querying a participant about his early attachment relationships, trauma and loss, and quality of parenting. Scoring is complicated and involves assessing how coherent and collaborative the participant was in reporting their experience. De Hass, Bakermans-Kranenburg &Van IJzendoorn (1994), et al describe the scoring system as follows, "First, the system contains rating scales for judging if, and to what extent, childhood experiences were probably characterized by parental love, rejection, neglect, pressure to achieve, and role reversal. Second, the representation of experiences is assessed by nine rating scales that discriminate between the autonomous, preoccupied, and dismissing AAI classifications (Main & Goldwyn, 1985; Main & Goldwyn, 1991). Examples of such state-of-mind scales are the extent to which parents are idealized, the extent of anger toward the parents, and the coherence of the interview. The AAI classifications primarily reflect state of mind with respect to attachment" (p.472).

Scores are made on the basis of patterns of subscales concerning the quality of parenting received. Measures of how loving, rejecting, pressuring, etc. the parent was experienced to be in conjunction with state-of-mind scales measuring factors such as coherence and meta-cognitive monitoring contribute to scoring. Several categories are

then used to describe the attachment status of the respondents, including secure, dismissing, preoccupied, and unresolved/disorganized.

Secure adults display the skill of metacognitive monitoring, or the ability to actively observe one's own thinking while delivering narrative material. Steele and Steele (2008) state that the secure individual has the ability to demonstrate a "steady and developing flow of ideas regarding attachment" (p. 53). "The speaker seems at ease with the topic, and his or her thinking has a quality of freshness" and demonstrates "an ability to examine the evidence afresh, even while the interview is in progress" (Hesse, 1996, p 402). Importantly, Hesse posits that this ability to meta-think and maintain flexible attention may be a hallmark of sensitive, attentive caregiving. These qualities are essential to meaningful narrative production, and are salient to the later discussion of narrative form.

The Adult Attachment Interview, which strives to capture an individual's narrative evaluation of early attachment relationships, values dialogic coherence as a sign of cognitive flexibility, heightened reflection and thoughtfulness (Hesse, 1999; Hesse 1996). Coherence involves generating and reflecting on memories of early attachments while maintaining a comprehensible dialogue with the examiner. Roisman, Padrón, Sroufe, & Egeland, (2002) conclude in their study of earned secure attachment that "the major premise of the instrument [the AAI] is not the content of early memories but rather the coherence with which they are described that provides an accurate depiction of states of mind indicative of earlier supportive and malevolent childhood experiences" (p. 42).

These psychoanalytic ideas of coherence in dialogue are based in part on the maxims of linguistic philosopher Grice (1975), who sated that in order for a narrative to

be competent, it had to adhere to the following principles: (1) quality: it must be truthful, and the narrator should provide evidence to support statements; (2) quantity: what is produced should not be overly verbose, yet it should be complete; (3) relation/relevance: the material should be relevant to the conversation at hand; (4) manner: it should be clear, brief and logical (Beijersbergen, et al., 2006). These ideas are further operationalized on the AAI, where secure attachment is describes as follows: "Coherent, collaborative discourse. Valuing of attachment, but seems objective regarding any particular event/relationship. Description and evaluation of attachment-related experiences is consistent, whether experiences are favorable or unfavorable. Discourse does not notably violate any of Grice's maxims" (Main, Kaplan, and Cassidy 1985; Main and Goldwyn 1984, 1998, as cited in Cassidy and Shaver, 1999). Slade (1999) describes a coherent sample as follows, "a coherent interview is both believable and true to the listener; in a coherent interview, the events and affects intrinsic to early relationships are conveyed without distortion, contradiction or derailment of discourse. The subject collaborates with the interviewer, clarifying his or her meaning, and working to make sure he or she is understood. Such a subject is thinking as the interview proceeds, and is aware of thinking with and communicating to another; thus coherence and collaboration are inherently inter-twined and interrelated" (p. 580).

Again, this dissertation does not seek to posthumously classify the authors of the narratives according to AAI categories, but will make use of the AAI's focus on the importance of coherence in narrative construction. The AAI can be seen as a tool for linguistic analysis, a field of study examining the unconscious rules and processes humans use to create spoken or written language. The construction of a narrative,

according to linguistic, dialogic, contextual narrative analysis (Peterson and Langellier, 1997; Barwell, 2009), can yield clues as to the state of mind of the author. Thus, extending these ideas of narrative coherence in relation to childhood trauma, we can state that the level of coherence in any given narrative may provide clues about the state of mind (as regards trauma) of the narrator.

The category of 'unresolved/disorganized' is an attachment style typified by "local disorganization surrounding discussions of potentially traumatic events, or failure to maintain an organized discourse strategy across the interview" (Hesse, Cassidy and Shaver, 1999, p.398). During a reasoning lapse, the "speaker seems to briefly exhibit ideas inconsonant with our usual ideas of physical causality or space/time relations, and fails to correct or comment on them. This suggests a brief alteration in normal state of mind or 'consciousness" (Ibid). Unresolved adults may show signs of disorientation and lapses of metacognitive monitoring in the relaying of traumatic events. They may fall silent, fail to complete sentences, or their accounts may reveal irrationalities.

Dismissing Adults

Bowlby (1973, 1982) wrote that the impact of early attachment relationships had far reaching implications for the ways in which adults regulate distress, hold mental representations of themselves and others, and create individual differences in interpersonal cognitions and behavior. Thus child attachment classification has important implications for adult mental health and interpersonal function. Connors, (2011) who writes about the adult correlates of child attachment classification states, "The avoidant infants described earlier are called *detached* or *dismissing* adults" (p. 361). These individuals dismiss or minimize relationships as being of little value or concern, and they attempt to limit the impact of relationships in their lives in a variety of ways. Detached

adults have little access to memories of unpleasant childhood experiences and tend to report idealized global impressions of their "normal" or "happy" childhoods., Main (1985) also found that dismissing adults who do manage to produce memories often relate events that are inconsistent with their overall portrayals of happy childhoods, meaning that they relate episodes of attachment distress while simultaneously maintaining an idealized view of their caregivers.

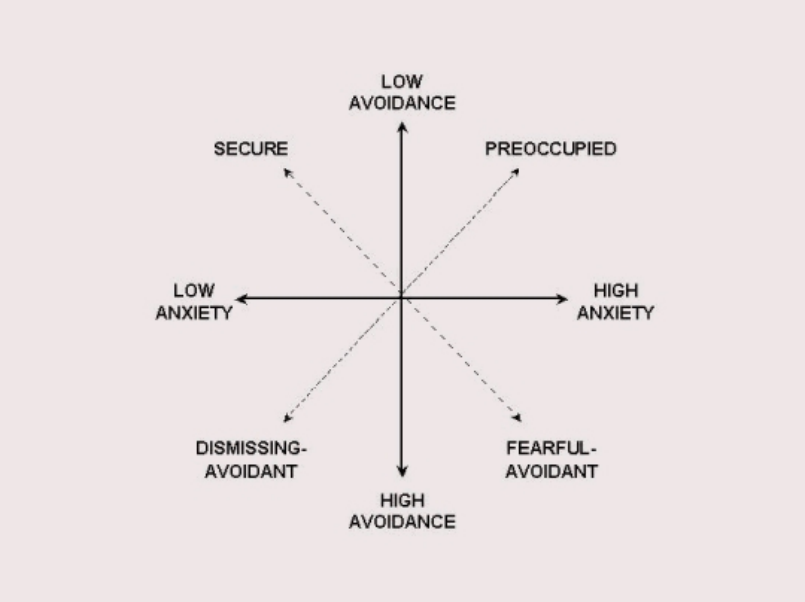
Later studies of adult attachment have contributed the variables of avoidance and anxiety to further describe how dismissing adults function in adult attachment relationships. Occurring on a continuum, they provide a method to operationalize attachment-related distress in adults. This data is gathered from self-report measures given by adults, rather than observation. Some measures include the Experiences of Close Relationships (ECR), constructed by Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998) and Fraley, Waller, and Brennan's ECR-R, the revised version. These measures yield scores on the two dimensions of attachment-related anxiety and avoidance discussed below. Wei (2007) describes the measure's instructions; "The ECR instructions state, in part, "We are interested in how you generally experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship" (Brennan et al., 1998, p. 65). Thus, the scale is designed to assess a general pattern of adult attachment as independently as possible from idiosyncratic influences of respondents' current circumstances. These instructions also allow respondents who are not currently in a close romantic relationship to provide valid responses" (p. 188).

The variable of attachment-related avoidance describes the extent to which individuals express wariness about the benevolence of partners, striving instead to

maintain behavioral independence and emotional distance in relationships. Individuals on the high end of this spectrum may rely on regulatory or defensive strategies like denial of attachment needs and desires or sublimation of attachment-related cognitions or feelings (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). Connor (2011) writes, "Main and Goldwyn (1984) proposed that these adults maintain their mental organization through a defensive avoidance of attachment, the devaluing of relationships, and minimization of the harmful effects of mistreatment in important relationships" (p. 351).

Individuals with attachment-related anxiety evidence concern that partners are unreliable. The distress this causes hyperactivates attachment and emotion-regulation strategies in an effort to minimize stress and draw partners closer. It can be understood as a counterphobic response born of an early history of unreliable attachment figures. Again, both variables are

Ein-Dor, (2010) in his study of PTSD in POW's puts forth that, "attachment security is located in the region of the two-dimensional space where both anxiety and avoidance are low; it is characterized by comfort with closeness and trust in the availability, responsiveness, and supportiveness of relationship partners" (p.3). The following diagram illustrates how these variables relate to attachment style:



Ein –Dor (2010) posits that the poor adaptive strategies of adults in this category predispose them to the development of PTSD when confronted with situations of prolonged trauma. “Attachment insecurities may keep people who are exposed to traumatic events from calling upon either inner representations of security or external sources of support and comfort, thus making it more difficult to regulate distress. This regulatory failure may initiate a cascade of psychological processes, including strong feelings of loneliness and rejection; negative working models of self and others; intensification of distress; and reliance on less effective (i.e., anxious or avoidant) strategies of affect regulation, which prevent resolution of the trauma and enhance the likelihood of prolonged PTSD” (p. 319). As Main found, dismissing adults are most likely to be parents of avoidant children (1985), Connors (2011) found that avoidant children often become dismissive adults. This would appear to describe a cycle of attachment related vulnerabilities. The implication here for transgenerational trauma transmissions would appear to be that trauma, when remaining unresolved or unprocessed into a coherent event in one’s personal narrative, affects the quality of caregiving the next

generation receives. In this way trauma corrupts attachment relationships and distorts the ways in which parents respond to their caregiving systems, thereby shaping the attachment styles and internal working models of their children. Bar-on et al. (1998) in writing about attachment patterns in Holocaust survivors' children note that "parents seem to repeat their childhood attachment experiences in relating to their own children, thus stimulating the transmission of (secure and insecure) attachment across generations" (p. 319).

Paradoxically, some individuals who are able to discuss their early experiences with texture, nuance and reflection have had primary attachment relationships that were troubled or poor. Termed "earned secure" individuals (Pearson, Cohn, Cowan & Cowan, 1994), these individuals appear to parent effectively despite negative childhood experiences. Pearson et al. found that as parents, said earned secure individuals were assessed to be "no less sensitive and responsive to their children than those with apparently more favorable early attachment experiences" (p. 362). These finding gave rise to "an implicit assumption…that they had actually overcome malevolent childhood experiences— either insecure attachments in infancy that changed over time or harsh parenting that might be otherwise associated with insecurity in childhood and/or adolescence" (Roisman, Padron, Sroufe & Egeland, 2002). Furthermore, Roisman et al (2002) found that many of the earned insecure individuals they studied had robust adult relationships and successful romantic companionships, perhaps demonstrating that these early trauma experiences did not prohibit the formation of later attachments to other adults. Resilience research has demonstrated that some people who develop in vulnerable

and difficult circumstances appear to develop normally and do not display gross markers of clinical distress or psychopathology (Mastern, Best, & Garmezy, 1990)

Slave Families

Even the most conservative estimates suggest that upwards of twenty-five million Africans suffered the middle passage and up to half as many perished during various stages of the journey. The survivors were brought not only to America but to Brazil, the Caribbean and parts of the Spanish empire by French, British, Spanish, Portuguese and American slave traders. Compounding the physical violence, rape and torture they endured during the passage, Africans suffered the loss of their cultural and familial milieus in addition to their own individual histories, identities, professional affiliations and the many external factors that help to construct and buttress identity. They also lost their very names. Fossion (2003) speaks of the importance of a defined cultural legacy in providing a frame around a given people that supports group identity cohesion. Described by rituals, traditions, stories, and actual objects of transmission like photographs, these articles define a cultural legacy that tells the story of who that people are. One of the great insults of the enslavement of African-Americans was the erasure of all artifacts, practices, languages and vestiges of Africa in an attempt to disturb identity and dislocate a people from culture.

After arrival, most slaves lived with continued threats of harm being done to them, their loved ones and their children. Certainly the lives of most slaves were fraught with violence and brutality. They endured the repeated separations of their families in the name of commerce, and individual and familial autonomy was severely compromised.

They witnessed or were subjected to inhumane physical violence and murder, and did so with little viable means of insurgency. Expressions of outrage or protest were met with increased dispensations of physical violence and threat.

Generally, the literature discussing familial relationships and slavery presents a diverse picture of the enslaved family under such conditions. There appears to still be much historical contention about what slave family and plantation life may have been like, essentially because slavery was in no way a monolithic institution. It varied greatly depending on plantation size, region, time, and other factors.

There are several distinct types of slavery historiographies that approach the study of slave families with various specific lenses. As examples, Kenneth Stampp's 1956 masterwork, *The Peculiar Institution,* depicted slave family life as one in which parents had little influence or involvement in the rearing of their children. Children were cared for by several transient caregivers and primary attachments were few. Also in Stampp's work, the plantation slave family served as a vessel for the production of more slaves. The view of slave families here is through the lens of the plantation owner.

Herbert G. Gutman's (1976) later work described slave families that aspired to intact, nuclear formations despite the attempts of the institution to destroy them. In his historiography, slave marriages endured when possible and most slave children lived in two parent households. Moreover, he highlighted the importance of slave affiliative and caregiving systems as broad and composed not only of biological relatives but extended to others who served important kinship roles. These family units were seen as sustaining to slaves, and as the container for handing down cultural information.

Later sociological work in this area emphasized that a matriarchal family structure may have been the most dominant form of slave family at the time. These scholars argue that men were often not present in the family systems as they were most often hired away from the plantation or lived apart from the family for other reasons. Through this lens, men were deprived of the traditional role of providing material support for families, and thus women took charge to form matrifocal families. Feminist revisionists argue that these female headed families were the most protective, stable and adaptive family form for slaves. An example of this work comes from black feminist theorist Erlene Stetson (1982), who surmises that slave children were theoretically in competition with their similarly enslaved parents for the limited resources available to slaves. In her reading of the effect of plantation economies on slave families, Stetson sees the plantation as a white male dominated caste system where the surplus of the masters wealth was left to be fought for equally by the remaining individuals, be they men women or children. While the implications of this premise could be read to mean the destruction of the hierarchical parent-child relationship in favor of the disparate individualism of each person for themselves, Stetson's argument is that matrifocal slave families railed against this by finding transgressive means to provide for their families.

What appears to be relatively consistent among most revisionist texts written since the 1960's is a rejection of the image of the plantation as a closed unit in which slaves extracted some basic rights from owners in exchange for labor and submission. In this view, the plantation is seen as a somewhat enmeshed, paternalistic domestic unit where all members received benefits relative to their positions[4]. More recent depictions of the institution swing in the other direction, seeking to emphasize the ultimately

[4] See Eugene D. Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 1974

supreme power of the master to govern all relationships in a system that conferred no benefit to the enslaved.

This is not to say that slave families were paralyzed to find spaces of autonomy and resistance in slave life; to the contrary, slave narratives are filled with descriptions of psychological and physical resistance to bondage in addition to details of myriad concrete and emotional coping mechanisms that allowed slaves to survive. Rather, as historian Morton (1996) quotes historian Parish as eloquently writing, "slavery is rife with "contradictions and paradoxes... [as] a growing, changing, mobile, flexible, and variable institution…. Slavery was a system of many systems, with numerous exceptions to every rule" (p. 6).

Forced Separations

The negative implications of slavery on caregiver-child interactions at the time must have been great, and the historical records are packed with examples. The narratives read for this dissertation contain many disturbing depictions of families torn apart, and the subsequent feelings of loss and longing that resulted. This is of considerable importance to this work, as attachment theory holds that the loss of an attachment figure, as an adult or a child, can be traumatizing. Likewise the loss of a central caregiver can be traumatic.

Slave Solomon Northrup described a painful forced separation of a mother whose two mulatto children were sold away from her (perhaps by their biological father, the slave master). Northrup wrote, he'd "never seen such an exhibition of intense unmeasured, and unbounded grief", compounded by the slave trader's remark that he would earn a great deal of money from the girl, who due to her light skin could be sold as a prostitute on the New Orleans market (King, 1998, p.104). A former slave quoted by

DeGruy-Leary (2005) discussing the pain of possibly losing his child to slave trading wrote, “Little Francis was a pretty child; she was quiet, playful, bright and interesting. But I could never look upon the dear child without being filled with sorrow and apprehensions of being separated by slave holders, because she was a slave, regarded as property. And unfortunately for me, I am the father of a slave….When I remember that my daughter, my only child is still there, destined to share the fate of all these calamities, it is too much to bear” (p.114).

Themes of separation traumas pervade slavery narratives. A former slave cited in Gutman (1976) portrays this pain eloquently: “That is what has grieved me a good deal. I can’t tell my age to save my life. You know when children are separated from their parents early, they don’t know how old they are” (p. 29). What is spoken of here is the power of the trauma of separation to distort one’s sense of time and temporal location. One’s age confers information regarding generational and historical place; to be without that is to lack an important and orienting anchor. This man “lost” his age at the point of trauma’s impact; a permanent separation from his parents that dislodged him from his family and deleted an important reference of himself.

Indeed the fact of slavery for blacks in this country initially involved being uprooted or ripped away from one’s clan, one’s continent, and one’s culture. Once in America the threats of disconnection continued, as families were separated to create profit for owners. The literature on life during slavery generally suggests that slaves sought strength, support, comfort and joy in their families, and this fact may have made slaves even more vulnerable to separation by masters seeking to be in command of slave behavior (Franklin 1974, Frazier 1966, King 1995.)

Ultimately the master had the supreme power to beat, castigate or sell a child who was troublesome. Some parents, in an effort to ensure appropriate behavior from their children and keep them out of the way of the driver's whip, had to resort to what might be considered an extreme, authoritarian parenting style (DeGruy-Leary, 2005). Whipping a slave's child was a tactic used to get compliance from a willful slave parent, compelling a parent to acquiesce to the master's demands in order to save a child from further harm. Gutman (1976) quotes former slave Cornelius Garner as testifying that the master would "Pick out de family dat got de mos' chillum an say, "Fo' God, nigger, I'm going to sell all dem chillum o' your'n lessen you keep 'em quiet'. Dat threat was worsen prospects of a lickin'. Ev'body sho keep quiet arter dat" (p.149). Schwartz (2010), in the introduction to her book about plantation life quotes slave Caroline Hunter as remembering that, "During slavery it seemed lak yo' chillum b'long to ev'ybody but you" (p.1). She speaks to slavery's role in usurping and upending a parent's desire to be a primary figure in raising one's child. The master became a malevolent third party in the caregiving system. Due to the obvious power imbalances inherent during slavery, the slave parent's role was at times a truncated one.

Caroline Hunter also remembered "many a day my ole mama has stood by an watched massa beat her chillum till dey bled an' she couldn' open her mouf" (Schwartz, 1). Slaves witnessed the gross physical and sexual abuse of their children with little power to intervene on their behalf.

Throughout the narratives read for this dissertation, New Year's Day was described as a most lamentable day, the day when slaves were most likely to be sold away from their families and on to new owners. Children were sold apart from parents,

whose only recourse was attempting to raise the several hundred dollars necessary to purchase their children to take them off the slave market. This was of course rare, although some slaves managed to do so by earning money from jobs done while "hired out" to others in exchange for a split of the wages.

King (1995) asserts that the interstate traffic of slaves increased after the importation of slaves from Africa was outlawed in the 1808, creating a greater need for the movement of slaves among plantations to fill labor needs. Families were separated at a greater rate than before; with children around the age of ten being most likely to be sold separate from their families. Attachment disruptions here were literal, and family systems were destroyed. These disruptions could certainly have caused individuals to experience protracted grieving and unresolved loss.

The ability to protect a family from physical harm or forced separations wasn't consistent. Marriage between slaves was a spiritually and culturally binding event, but never a legal one. It did not afford parents any legal powers to protect their children from harm, abuse, or separation (Gay, 1999).While some states prohibited the separate sale (without a parent) of children under the age of ten, these sales were still an integral part of the American slave trade (King, 1995). As a slave child in the Upper South between 1820 and 1860, the possibility of being sold without parents was approximately thirty percent (Ibid). This created the awareness that, as a child approached ten, the likelihood that he would be sold increased greatly. Any insolence or, conversely evidence of industriousness on the part of the child could increase those chances. Living with the continued threat of imperiled attachment must have engendered great fear in slave parents

and forced them to craftily discover ways to decrease the likelihood their children would be sold.

DeGruy-Leary (2005) speculates that in order to decrease the value of the slave child in the owner's eyes, a parent might attempt to belittle or degrade a child's worth, so as to diminish the chances of the child being sold. If a master praised a child's abilities, the mother might respond by portraying the child as lazy and dull-witted. This was a difficult part to play, as youths perceived to have incorrigible behavioral problems were also more likely to be sold. Despite the possibly sustaining nature of slave relationships, slave families were necessarily drawn into triangular relationships with the master where he was the most powerful member, followed by the parents and then children.

Enslaved childre*n*

Some children of field slaves on larger plantations passed their days in outsized nurseries generally tended to by elderly or infirm slaves while their mothers labored (King, 1997). Breastfeeding was encouraged on the plantation because it was cost effective, but also because breastfed infants had a greater chance of survival. Finger-feeding or bottle-feeding infants was dangerous due to life threatening bacteria commonly found in bottles and on hands (although people at the time were unsure why bottle fed babies suffered higher rates of mortality as compared to breastfed babies). Plantation owners expressed a monetary interest in ensuring the health of enslaved infants as each slave was a marker of the plantation's wealth; providing for the survival of future field labor was an insurance policy for future wealth. Interest in the survival of enslaved babies wasn't perhaps solely monetary, as historian Jenkins Schwartz (2000) puts forth, "Providing time for mothers to care for their infants also benefited masters and mistresses in non-pecuniary ways. Fostering the maternal care of infants enabled owners to think of

themselves as humane and enlightened managers, or even parental figures, rather than as cruel and despotic" (p. 242).

Owners were very interested in maintaining the productivity of their nursing mothers, and were advised to keep nursing infants nearby mothers in order to reduce the amount of time mothers would spend traveling between the field and their infants. In order to accomplish this, some plantations were designed with the quarters close to the fields; others would simply move the assignments of nursing mothers for the first six months to a year of their child's life to accomplish this[5]. Some plantation owners even required that nursing infants be brought to the field with their mothers, presumably in slings, even in the most severe weather. Jenkins Schwartz (2000) cites the *The Southern Cultivators* "Rules of the Plantation" as advising that breastfeeding moms of infants be allowed to "visit their children, morning, noon, and evening until they are eight months old, and twice a day from thence until they are twelve months old" (p. 23).[6] In this way, the plantation owners were able to extract as much labor as possible from the nursing moms while also protecting a valuable asset, the nursling. It may also have played a protective factor in preserving mother child attachment, as proximity between an infant and mother is widely held to be a necessary factor in preserving attachments and maintaining caregiving relationships.

Attachment is a behavioral system that works in conjunction with the systems of affiliation and caregiving, all systems activated and strained under abusive conditions

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[5] According to Jenkins Schwartz's research regarding breastfeeding relationships and slavery, it appears from infant mortality data kept on plantations in Alabama that the rigor of a nursing woman's work was in no way lessened to accommodate the physical or time related burdens of nursing. According to her data, September and October were the deadliest months for enslaved infants, the height of cotton harvesting season

[6] It should be noted here, that while infant breastfeeding patterns do vary across cultures, three daylight feedings would be considered *very* unsatisfactory sustenance for a young infant, especially one who received no supplementation until age two.

such as slavery. Although these moments of togetherness were truncated events throughout the day, perhaps they were better than total separation. The caregiving literature also points toward consistent, accurate maternal sensitivity as a hallmark of secure attachment. For mothers who were allowed to keep their infants at their breast or by their sides, distress could be responded to immediately, further fortifying attachment bonds and hopefully providing mom with the peace of mind of knowing that her children were safe and guaranteeing some gratifying moments of loving mother-child interaction to break up the toil and monotony of the forced labor.

It appears that since circumstances varied greatly during slavery, the implications for infant attachment also vary. Some infants were left alone all day in cabins, ministered to only on the three or four occasions daily when their mothers were allowed to return to them. Others were placed under the shade of trees in the care of other children under ten who were charged with bringing the babies to their mothers when they needed to nurse. Frazier (1996) engages a narrative account written by a female slave in which she states "they (young children) carry them (breastfeeding infants) during the day to be suckled, and for the rest of the time leave them to crawl and kick in the filthy cabins or on the broiling sand which surrounds them" (p. 38).

Some accounts suggest that house slaves were able to watch their children while they labored indoors and therefore possibly spent more time with them, all while trying to complete their tasks (King, 1998). Frazier suggests that the labor demands of plantations did not allowed mothers to minister to their children as regularly as they may have otherwise, as slaves were limited in interacting with their children when working. Again, attachment theory contributes that attachment is developed in part through the

prolonged proximity of the caregiver and infant, and by caregivers regularly meeting the needs of infants in distress. Slavery may have limited the amount of daily interaction between slave mothers and infants, influencing the development of attachments. It is likely that some mother infant dyads were disturbed by this forced inconsistency of contact and therefore may have made attachment disruptions more possible.

When not under the supervision of their mothers, slave infants and children were primarily nurtured by other slaves. This may have had an insulating effect against the racism and overt brutality of owners while providing additional benign or benevolent attachment figures for the child to develop additional affective ties with. This perhaps influenced the child's internal working models toward more positive associations that served to fortify the child in the future in adult relationships.

The narratives also provide evidence that enslaved children were exposed to violent threats to their parents' safety. As stated above in reference to Danieli's work, there can be ostensibly little difference in the felt experiences of primary and secondary trauma. For a child to be exposed to such violence while being fundamentally unable to intervene on his parent's behalf must have had a far reaching emotional impact and implications for attachment systems. In her narrative, Caroline Hunter (in King, 1998) recalled the horror of witnessing her mother strapped "to a bench or box an' beat…wid a wooden paddle while she was naked" on several occasions. Children were placed in the terribly insecure position of considering that if their caregivers were unable to ensure their own safety, surely the child's safety was not guaranteed. What's more, the child came to understand that his caregivers were somewhat powerless to protect him. Indeed Jenkins Schwartz (2000) garners from the narratives that some enslaved children may

have been unaware of their status as slaves until they were confronted with a situation in which they needed their parents to intervene on their behalf and found that they were powerless to do so. Also, since it wasn't until age five that children were put to work on the plantation, children may have been shielded before then from the more vicious realities of slave life, making the brutality of the field more shocking.

We can speculate that rage must have been experienced concerning the parent's impotence, and shame may have been felt in viewing and recalling the parent's public humiliation. Enslaved children may also have experienced fear concerning their own corporeal safety when witnessing this brutality against their parents. Kobak, Cassidy, and Zir's (2004) contention that "Because children's survival is often dependent on their parents' availability and protection, it is not uncommon for appraised threats of rejection, abandonment, and loss to be simultaneously perceived as a threat to survival" (p. 391).

Certainly there is little evidence to detail the reactions individuals had under these circumstances, but witnessing trauma can illicit similar reactions as experiencing trauma directly (Weingarten, 2004). So witnessing the traumatic abuse of loved family members could presumably have an impact the entire family system. Former slave James C.W. Pennington, in recalling the fifteen to twenty terrible lashings his father endured in front of him, lamented that the event created in his family an "open rupture" where "each member felt the deep insult" and his family was altered (Danieli, 1998, p. 10). What Pennington describes is the black hole of trauma around which the family structure becomes organized, where the unspeakable fury of powerlessness and humiliation causes impairment in relationships.

Regardless of how strong the attachment bonds in a slave family may have been, at times the best efforts to protect a child from fearful situations failed, and these experiences surely wove themselves into the way slave children thought and felt about themselves, others, and later, their own children and loved ones.

Parenting and resilience

A spectrum of maternal behaviors is represented in literature about slave family life, and there is considerably less discussion of the role of fathers. E.F. Frazier (1996) observes that, due to the forced limitations on slaves, maternal instincts were denied expression, perhaps increasing the risk of poor mother child bonding. In his review he rejects what he states is the dominant stereotype of the slave mother, one who had no regard for her own children but doted on the master's white children. Rather he believed that the conditions of slavery made consistent parenting rather impossible. Blassingame (1972) and King (1998) favor the image of the slave mother who fought hardily for her children and endured brutalities in order to keep them safe. Their accounts depict mothers whose children could only be removed from them when mothers were so savagely beaten or restrained that they were rendered impotent to intervene in their children's removal,

What is noticeable from a review of literature about slave family life and parenting is an absence of discussion concerning spaces in which slaves established affirmative ways to parent beyond the bounds of their enslavement. Surely in an institution that spanned nearly five centuries, slaves must have developed methods of parenting that sustained and fortified the emotional and physical development of their families. Revisionist historians of slavery acknowledge that earlier sociological work on slavery all but ignored the positive and protective factors social relationships conferred on slaves in favor of a focus on the etiology of pathological processes (Yetman 1970;

DeGruy-Leary, 2005).[7] Any work on the psychological effects of slavery would be incomplete without a discussion of the resilient and positive adaptive behaviors developed by slaves that allowed them to endure such strife.

Resilience research describes how individuals react to and interact with their environments during times of adversity or peril. It seeks to identify the protective coping strategies employed to mitigate these terrible circumstances. Protective factors can involve either internal resources in individuals or describe the strengths of larger external systems in which the individual grows and develops (Mastern, Best, & Garmezy, 1990; Milton 2009). DeGruy-Leary (2005) states that the most enduring protective factors for slaves were attachment relationships developed in extended family networks and faith communities that consisted of adults caring for and protecting other adults[8]. This care came in the form of concrete and emotional support, and fostered the development of caregiving networks that consisted of relatives and close relations.[9].

Women in Slavery

The conditions of slavery also encompassed particular traumas for women. Already the physical property of men and considered one fourth a human being, women endured much sexual exploitations at the hands of owners and other whites. Without legal protections to shield them, they were considerably defenseless against the untoward

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[7] Moynihan's well intentioned *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (1965) is perhaps the most frequently cited example of sociological work that emphasized an aberrant view of black family systems post slavery.

[8] Weiss's work on adult attachment underscores the sustaining function of adult attachment relationships in stating that "attachment relationships appear to be of special importance for the maintenance of feelings of security; an attachment relationship buffers what could otherwise be devastating events. In adults as well as in children, attachments appear to be relationships critical to continuing security and to the maintenance of emotional stability (1991, p. 75)"

[9] Themes of resilience emerge throughout the narrative analysis. Thus a more detailed discussion of resilience, resistance and coping strategies will appear during a discussion of the coded narratives.

advances of powerful white males. The most enduring images in film and literature illustrating this remains that of the auction block, where female slave bodies were paraded for sale to whites, their physical attributes used to describe them as fit for hard labor, housekeeping or breeding and to justify their pricing.

Even before their forced departure from continental Africa, women and men were required to strip naked by their capturers who then subjected them to physical examinations that included the inspection of genitalia. These examinations were done in the open, in mixed gender groups where modesty and sexual privacy were certainly never respected. After passing inspection and a brutal hot-iron branding, they were loaded often naked onto ships where women were routinely raped by male enslavers, often within clear sight of their husbands, brothers, and children (Gay, 1999).

Once in the Americas, enslaved women were again raped and sexually exploited, as substantiated by the narratives reviewed for this piece. Michael Rocque (2008), a strain theorist, discusses the diaries of slave owner James Henry Hammond who owned many female salves and wrote that he indeed felt entitled to engage in sexual acts with them, even very young female slaves. Rocque describes how Hammond purchased an eighteen year-old woman named Sally and her one year-old daughter Louisa at auction in 1839. He went on to father several children with Sally, and when her young daughter Louisa turned twelve, he began engaging in sexual acts with her and fathered even more children, all of whom were legally his property. They all worked as slaves on his estate. Likewise, as Gay (1998) points out, Sally Hemmings was fifteen years-old when she gave birth to the first of her children fathered by Thomas Jefferson. Gay writes that "Jefferson has never been described as a child molester" but Hemmings was certainly

very young when their affair began. As Mistress Sarah Gayle wrote of an acquaintance in her diary in the 1820's, "His children and his son's children are their slaves, and probably, nay I think I heard, that his child and his grandchild have one mother? Those fathers whose beastly passions hurry to the bed of the slave do they feel no compunction when they see their blood sold, basely bartered like their horses? This sin is the leprosy of the earth." (Genovese, 1988, p.9).

Slavery, as per its most crude definitions, involves the ownership of one's body and all it produces. In the case of women, this meant not only owning their labor, but owning the fruit of their wombs and the very milk used to sustain their children. Slave owners, as alluded to before, scheduled an infant's access to the breast and dictated when, how often, and where mother could feed her child. In some cases, women weren't allowed to feed their children at all as they were used as designated wet nurses to feed white babies instead of their own. In all matters of the body, it seems, the master had power to intervene.

Thus slave women suffered a unique form of "double jeopardy" (Beal, 2008) during that time, expected to labor hard beside their male counterparts while also enduring the expectation that their wombs would be exploited for the propagation of the peculiar institution that enchained them. Histographer Morton (1996) quotes historian Clinton as writing that "In a biracial slave society where 'racial purity' was a defining characteristic of the master class, total control of the reproductive females was of paramount concern for elite males… slavery exaggerated the pattern of subjugation that patriarchy had established (p. 7)." Slavery ensured this by making it law that children automatically followed the legal status of their mothers. This meant that although many

slaves were born to white fathers who were not slaves, the children would necessarily be enslaved. Furthermore, it meant that after the importation of slaves from Africa was outlawed in 1808, the only legal way to renew the slave labor force was through the impregnation of female slaves to produce new slaves. Women became sought after as breeders and were invested in as the sole sight for the propagation of the institution. In this way, not only was it legal for an owner to rape or engage in sexual relations with a slave, but it increased his wealth and the size of his estate.

Representational propaganda was also used during Slavery to justify the ownership of African female bodies by white males. Mammy, one of the most enduring physical images of black female sexuality, long outlived slavery due to the continued role of black female workers as domestics in white homes. Mammy was the rotund house slave who was loved by the family and cherished them above her own children and family (Bogle, 1994). She was naturally nurturing, devoted, stern and self-sacrificing. Mammy was an ultimate receptacle for projection, as she was asexual, ahistoric, and entirely imagined for the benefit of a racist patriarchy that needed to justify the forced labor of blacks. She did not exist without her master and charges, and was therefore whatever her master imagined her to be; she was without her own desires and existed to happily care for whites. She continues to be primarily depicted as an overweight, thick-lipped, dark-skinned, bandana-clad woman, all features that are considered particularly unattractive in white social contexts. It was important that Mammy was felt to be so unattractive; therefore she could not be considered desirable to white males and was not a threat to the white mistress who so often appeared to view female slaves as ribald sexual rivals. Mammy was further desexualized so she couldn't be seen as seductive to the

young white males often left in her charge. This sexual propaganda was widely available during slavery in the form or cartoons and literature, and thereafter in film, minstrels, and other racist cultural products.

Quite contrary to Mammy was Jezebel, the aggressively sexual, amoral, debased African-American female seductress imagined to justify the rape of enslaved women. In her creation, much attention was paid to her physicality, as she was hypersexualized and hypersexualizing. With wide hips and large breasts, she carried the exaggerated sexual features then thought to be consistent with heightened sexual interest. This stereotype evolved during American chattel slavery to justify the sexual subjugation and rape of African-American female slaves by white men. If black women could be depicted as sexual aggressors who desired and sought out sexual contact with white men, then the rampant rape and abuse that occurred during the time could be attributed to their naturally hypersexulaizing nature.

In order to enforce and cement their sexual power over enslaved females, slave owners utilized not only the force of law and propaganda but again, the force of silence. As Gay (1998) writes, “To speak of the offenses was always punished; slaves could either go silently to the grave or go to the grave for breaking silence” regarding sexual transgressions (p. 64).

It was a crime in Antebellum south for slave women to speak out loud the name of her child’s father, to protect the many masters who fathered their own slaves (even though most slave owners gave all slaves born on their plantations or in their households their own last name). This silence was employed to reinforce male power and the submissive position of the slave, but the power of the secret was quite literally written on

the faces and bodies of many slaves on these estates. Skin color and facial features were easily read by others to signify the mixed race of the children and announce the rape of the mother, literally embodying the history of these sexual transgressions in the people of the race. Indeed, in some markets such as New Orleans, Octoroons and Quadroons were bred specifically for the sexual slavery market. Octoroons, or female slaves who were one-eighth black, often fetched very high prices at auction as their light skin was thought to be particularly alluring to white male buyers seeking concubines.

While there was silence, they may have been (and remain) few secrets; trauma wasn't the only thing handed down.

Indeed during slavery, unquestioned patriarchy and slavery necessarily functioned together. Gerda Lerner (1983), Elizabeth Fox Genovese (1988), DoVeanna S. Fulton (2006) and others have described the intertwining strands of oppressive rhetoric that simultaneously enforced sexism and patriarchy in maintaining slavery. The Cult of True Womanhood (Welter, 1966), or the Cult of Domesticity, as popularized in white women's magazines, newspapers, and religious teachings of the time embodied a set of values understood to be most desired in a white southern woman. They included piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness, describing white women as fragile creatures who had to be coddled, pampered and protected from strenuous work and ideas. Feminist historiography has argued that this depiction of the antebellum white woman was in part a construction used not only to defend continued patriarchy but the need to maintain white male dominance of black male bodies and black sexuality. Slavery was justified as the means of suppressing black male sexuality, which was thought to have aims toward the rape and defiling of white woman and therefore the theft of her purity. It also sought

to moderate black female sexuality, seen as overly libidinous and in direct opposition to the quiet, controlled sexuality desired of white women. Slavery was necessary to the genesis of these ideas and structures, and slavery was necessary to maintain them.

Plantations in the south functioned not only as small, brutal economies but as social microcosms that served to reinforce the dominance of white males over all and of white women over black men and women. A functional caste system was reproduced on the plantation through a language of domination and power that was spoken through intimate and enmeshed relationships between the slaves and their owners. Plantation life could be quite isolating for all involved, thus possibly predisposing inhabitants to unexpected emotional entanglement. Mary Kendall, a plantation mistress originally from the North wrote her sister concerning plantation life: "I seldom see any person aside from our own family, and those employed upon the plantation (*slaves*). For about three weeks I did not have the pleasure of seeing one white female face, there being no other white family except our own upon the plantation" (Fox Genovese, 1988, p. 17). As house servants, blacks often lived in the homes of their masters. As field slaves, they lived on the master's estate in slave quarters. As will be discussed in later chapters in relationship to the analyzed narratives, the institution of slavery in America involved blacks and whites existing very close to one another. Blacks and whites literally lived side by side in the south, their daily lives linked by the bonds of servitude and of blood and family ties.

Chapter 4: Methods

The following chapter seeks to describe the process through which two narratives will be interrogated for the purpose of drawing conclusions about trauma and slavery. In this dissertation I have chosen to undertake a qualitative coding of two slave narratives in addition to engaging psychoanalytic, sociological and historical theory to create a more nuanced, multi-disciplinary discussion of the legacy of slavery trauma. The following frameworks have been chosen in an effort to best punctuate the claim that slavery was indeed a massive trauma, the effects of which continue on.

Inclusion Criteria

Although dozens of narratives were found for this project, seven narratives were initially identified as being relevant for the purposes of this research[10]. Many narratives appear to have been oral reports ghost written by white abolitionist in the service of helping to publicize the evils of slavery. Because of this, I could not be sure what material from those narratives might have been excluded, reworded or otherwise tampered with to this end (it is not the aim of this piece to tease out the multi-vocal nature of many of these suspect narratives). Narratives described as being told to amanuensis or otherwise dictated could not be afforded the same discursive weight as the self-penned narratives, severely limiting the titles available to code. Thus only narratives proven to have been written entirely by slaves themselves were included.

[10] Of the dozens first identified, only narratives authenticated as written by a slave were included.

Narratives coded for this dissertation were vetted by historians as having been fully penned by the slave him or herself. Each included a preamble stating that the original publisher knew the narrative to have been written by the slave alone. To the publishers of the time, offering a clear statement to this effect appeared necessary Jacobs' because slaves were not widely thought to be literate or intelligent enough to produce a written work.

Additionally, as slavery spanned four hundred years, it seemed necessary to limit the narratives used to those written within a definitive time period. Slavery was a fluid institution in which laws changed frequently to sustain it. Thus it stood to reason that the experience of a given generational cohort would vary from the next. In seeking to bookend a time period, it became clear that the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 seemed to be a change point in the lives of blacks in the south, as it cemented the notion that a slave was a slave wherever she traveled in the US and its territories. Prior to this, the identity of "slave" was dependent upon being confined in a slave state. Fleeing to a free state thus erased slave status and one instantly became free. The advent of this act foreclosed upon this opportunity for freedom, turning blacks into the hunted even if they managed to reach the north. As this theme revealed itself in the narratives, it seemed an important potential distinction. Thus narratives included here detail experiences spanning from 1793, the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law, through Emancipation in 1865.

While coding several of these works, it quickly became apparent that the narratives penned by women were the richest in terms of detailing the trauma of slavery. Rife with themes of familial separation and sexual and physical trauma, female slave narratives are painfully explicit and evocative in describing the horrors of the time.

Because of this I chose instead to do a close reading of narrative texts by women only in order to best emphasize and explore these themes.

Deciding upon the above criteria meant that only two of the many narratives gathered for this project would be subject to close reading and analysis. There are far many more authenticated narratives penned by men. However only two narratives by women are known to fulfill these pervious criteria, and they are presented here for analysis. Thus the following chapters will discuss the narrative of Harriet Jacobs, entitled *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) and Annie Burton's *Memories of Childhood Slavery Days* (1909) in creating discourse concerning slavery trauma[11].

Narratives Chosen

Born a slave in 1813 in North Carolina, Harriet Jacobs remains the most widely read female autobiographer of slave experience. Her work continues to be salient not only because it is painfully evocative and well written, but also because it details specifically the complicated experiences of the female slave with respect to sexuality and maternal and familial attachments. Jacobs' mother and father both died when she was a young child, leaving her in the care of her maternal grandmother to whom she was especially endeared. Jacobs' grandmother was owned by the Horniblow/Flint family, under whose guidance Harriet learned to read and write. However when the female head of the Horniblow family passed when Jacobs was an adolescent, she was sold to a physician she pseudonames Dr. Flint who sexually intimidated and physically abused her until she was

[11] However in making this choice I did not want to fully exclude the other voices unearthed for this project; quotes and anecdotes from many narratives are woven throughout this text in an effort to provide further context, strengthen arguments, and honor the voices of suffering and triumph of the ancestors presented here.

compelled to flee his household. In the years that followed, Dr. Flint continued to hunt for Jacobs, seemingly obsessed with reclaiming her as sexual chattel.

After hiding in several places, she was eventually sequestered in an attic crawlspace in her grandmother's cabin for seven long years, all in a successful effort to avoid being sexually exploited and have her children sold away. Her crawl space was not large enough for her to stretch her legs or stand, and lacked heating or proper ventilation. However from this space, Jacobs could glimpse and overhear the goings on in the street before the home and monitor her children's progress. The children were wholly unaware that their mother remained in the same home in which they resided.

In 1842, Jacobs was able to take advantage of an opportunity to flee north and successfully made it to New York City, where she reunited with her children. In Rochester she was persuaded by white abolitionists to whom she had shared her story to pen a narrative. She wrote *Incidents* under the pseudonym Linda Brent. Long thought to be a fictive account penned by a white abolitionist, it was officially authenticated by scholars in African-American literature in 1981 and remains one of the most read and highly regarded slave narratives.

By contrast, Annie L. Burton's narrative is shorter and less detailed. Written in part in antebellum south, her work was chosen for this project in part because of its focus on the importance of her early relationships and continued attachments despite ritual separations. Born in 1858 on a plantation in Alabama, she was fathered by a white planter she had regular contact with who never acknowledged her as his child. Her mother was a field slave who was beaten so badly on one occasion that she fled the plantation, leaving her children for years and vowing that no person would ever raise a hand to her again. In

her mother's absence Burton was reared by her white mistress alongside the mistresses' better fed and clothed children. She permitted the education of slaves on her plantation and taught Burton to read, an endowment Burton remained grateful for.

Burton's mother returned to reunite with her children after emancipation, and the family was hired by their former master as household help. After her mother's passing, Burton left her old plantation with her younger siblings and moved to several cities before settling in Boston where she ran a boarding house with her husband. While enrolled in night school to get a formal education, a teacher discovered her talent for writing and producing social commentary in the form of essay and encouraged her to envision herself as a writer. She went on to generate several published works. In addition to writing her memoir, she wrote a biography of Abraham Lincoln and several essays about issues of race in post-slavery America.

In her narrative Burton describes the fraught dynamics of power and dependence between the black servants and their white employers post-emancipation. Embedded in her story are conflicts of re-envisioning the role of blacks in post-slavery America and grappling with emerging concepts of blackness. Issues of attachment and caregiving in interracial familial systems and gendered ideas of labor also figure prominently. Trauma themes are also at the heart of the story. What makes Burton's memoir in part so ripe for psychoanalytically-informed inquiry is her insistence that she remembers her childhood fondly, despite barraging the reader in the first chapter with tale after tale of broken attachments and witnessed tortures.

Qualitative Analysis Technique

Grounded Theory

In approaching the study of slave narratives, I have embraced modified themes of grounded theory to inform the coding of the works. Grounded theory is a method of qualitative inquiry developed by the sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967). Glaser and Strauss most simply define grounded theory as the attempt to divine a new theory from data rather than a priori hypotheses; the theory is grounded in observation. It can work to place primacy on honoring and amplifying the original voices of participants by letting their thoughts, feelings, and concerns shape the direction of inquiry so that the point of view of the participant is captured authentically. Grounded theory seeks to form more resilient theories that other researchers can build upon, with the assumption being that well harvested data is a more durable foundation for inquiry than hypothesis. Grounded theory appears to be most effective when researchers are able to directly observe the phenomenon in question and subsequently develop codes, concepts and categories based on the resulting live data. The emergent theory can be enhanced or amended based upon subsequently collected live data. In this way the theories that emerge from this method remain current and reflective of contemporary conditions (Allan, 2003).

Cathy Charmaz (2006) stresses that modern grounded theory is best thought of as "a set of principles and practices" rather than "prescriptions or packages". She emphasizes proceeding with "flexible guide-lines, not methodological rules, recipes, and requirements" (2006, p.11). She offers this approach in response to a traditional grounded theory method which offers a more or less specified series of steps used to evaluate data. She also deemphasizes Glaser and Strauss's early goal of discovering dense theory

through the process of grounded theory, moving toward a more post-modern emphasis on the interaction of the investigator with the data. Rather than discovering theory, theory emerges from the data in part due to the investigator's particular and individual lens. Charmaz writes that grounded theory can be used to present the researcher's "interpretative portrayal" of the observed circumstances, arrived at through systematic and pragmatic attempts to interrogate data.

Many aspects of the grounded theory process were extraordinarily helpful in approaching, organizing and reflecting on the data. The amount of data available in two lengthy narratives was at first overwhelming, but the reductive process of refining my search criteria as themes emerged proved helpful in focusing the coding process. Furthermore, grounded theory seeks to honor the voice and intent of the subject and Jacobs and Burton were horribly oppressed and voiceless women. In this method, their voices are the data, which honors their sentiments in a way that is unique. In using their words as data, the raw affect of the slavery experience is not removed, making sure the material remains experience-near and amplified. In writing this I felt to be in collaboration with the authors in a bridge across time, seeking to remain as close to their voices and experiences as possible, attempting to first hear their voices as distinct from mine before merging the three in the interpretative portrayal Charmaz speaks of.

Charmaz's (2004, 2006) view perhaps best captures the efforts of this work, as the goal of this dissertation is not to create a conceptually dense theory but rather to pull several schools of thought together into a conversation to yield original contributions and insights. Although I did not employ unadulterated techniques of grounded theory in the

style of Glaser and Strauss (1967), a more modern, hybridized approach appeared to be the best fit for this endeavor.

Dialogic and Contextual Narrative Analysis

While grounded theory was the initial approach used to analyze the narratives, it soon became obvious that additional frameworks could contribute and amplify my understanding of narrative production under the circumstances of slavery. Thus ideas of contextual and dialogic narrative analysis were employed to enrich my thinking of the role of history, circumstance and "double-voicedness" in narrative production. The contextual approach to narrative analysis, developed by Peterson and Langellier (1997) emphasizes the necessity of understanding the contextual factors that lead up to the production of any given narrative. Wholly (2006) emphasizes that "the role that context plays in the production of narratives cannot be reduced" and suggests that narratives must be read as embedded in their historical moment. He continues that a nuanced consideration of historical position and "social structure is relevant in [reading narratives] for systems of inequality like race, gender, and class [because] larger collective political struggles affect the content of narratives indirectly by changing the context of experience (p. 298)". Contextual narrative analysis sees the narrative as irrevocably implanted in and interacting with the milieu of its production. It holds that in order to best understand the aims and content of a narrative, the social, cultural and political conflicts present at the time of its genesis must be held in mind throughout the analysis. This emphasis on context inspired the review of historical conditions presented in the literature review of this dissertation.

Furthermore, in this relativistic approach, the socio-cultural and historical contexts of a narrative affect the actual production of the narrative, creating another

dimension to consider when approaching analysis. Contextual narrative analysis is relevant in this study as the slave narrative is a statement of a specific historical time that cannot be divorced from a reading of the work. As our discussion of slavery trauma can be seen as a conversation between two distinct cultural, sociopolitical moments, contextual narrative analysis is an apt way of acknowledging the forces present during the production of the text and the analysis of it.

Similarly, in dialogic narrative analysis (Handler, 1985; Wholley, 2006) the text is read in an attempt to parse out the tacit and relativistic understandings of the author. These notions are seen as embedded in a sociopolitical space that the author is not necessarily fully aware of when producing the text. This method of reading is aware of a contextually embedded dialogue between subject and audience, in which the narrator is conscious of attempting to convey a message. At times the message of a narrative is not intended for the entirely of the readership, but is encoded in such a way as to incite only portions of the anticipated audience. The authors of both narratives chosen for primary investigation in this work evidenced an awareness of their audience and a desire for their words to become vehicles of change in the lives of other blacks in America. At times I couldn't help but to feel the authors were speaking to me, a future bearer of their legacy. I tried to read the tacit and explicit messages they seemed to be sending to inform me about how to struggle and how to live.

In describing this, Powell Wolfe (2008) writes that Harriet Jacobs' "double voicedness enables her to encode her memoir with clear instructions for her black brethren in the North in such a way that white readers will not find her message obvious or offensive (518)." Labeled "double voicedness" (Fulton, 2000; Gates, 1989; Powell

Wolfe, 2008) or "signifyin(g)" (Gates, 1989 & 2009; Gates & Anozie, 1984), this literary technique is found throughout both narratives as a mechanism of contextual communication necessary to deliver messages to a divided population. Sometimes the authors find a way to doubly encode a message that will read differently to each side of a divided population. For instance, when Harriet Jacobs' uncle Benjamin escapes the plantation to the then free north, he has a difficult time making a living and feeding himself. When he is seen by another member of the family (a slave) who has traveled north temporarily in a trip, the family member returns home and decides not to tell Benjamin's mother how gaunt, frail and sick he appeared and instead only reveals that Benjamin is alive. Jacobs' takes the opportunity in this anecdote to detail Benjamin's struggles in the north for the benefit of two audiences. She encodes a message to other enslaved blacks in the south that suffering may await them in the north as well, complicating what may have been prevailing notions about opportunities and freedoms in the north that many slaves escaped to seek. She also encoded a message to white northern citizens and abolitionist that the "free" north was still a difficult place for blacks to survive, attempting to compel them to better racial and economic conditions for blacks there. For the purposes of this study, instances of "double-voicedness" were captured in memos that were attached to quotations from each text.

Psychoanalytically-informed narrative analysis of the AAI would appear to agree with dialogic and contextual narrative analysis that in order to be successful in its aim, a narrative must be a "functionally coherent representation of sequences of events" (Barwell, 2009, p. 50). Narrative is defined by a "particular way of organizing events into

an intelligible whole"; meaning that the way a narrative is assembled by the author has an "explanatory force peculiar" to narrative itself (Vellman, cited in Barwell, 2009, p. 56).

All autobiographical work involves at least two vantage points; one being that of the narrator who tells the story to the reader as it happened, and the other being that of the protagonist, the character who is involved in the story as it happens. The two voices are that of the same person, one embedded in the action and the other with the wisdom of hindsight. This observation is important here as both authors wrote their autobiographies many years after their slavery experience and had escaped the social condition that characterized their work. Thus their works dually describe thoughts, feelings and perspectives each had about slavery during the traumatic event and many years thereafter. This likens to the aims of the AAI, where participants are asked to reconstruct and convey emotionally charged events of the past.

Narrative Coherence

The Adult Attachment Interview, which strives to capture an individual's narrative evaluation of early attachment relationships, values dialogic coherence as a sign of cognitive flexibility, heightened reflection and thoughtfulness (Hesse, 1996). Coherence involves generating and reflecting on memories of early attachments while maintaining a comprehensible dialogue with the examiner. Roisman et al. (2002) conclude in their study of earned secure attachment that "the major premise of the instrument [the AAI] is not the content of early memories but rather the coherence with which they are described that provides an accurate depiction of states of mind indicative of earlier supportive and malevolent childhood experiences".

These psychoanalytic ideas of coherence in dialogue are based in part on the maxims of linguistic philosopher Grice (1975), who sated that in order for a narrative to

be competent, it had to adhere to the following principles: (1) quality: it must be truthful, and the narrator should provide evidence to support statements; (2) quantity: what is produced should not be overly verbose, yet it should be complete; (3) relation/relevance: the material should be relevant to the conversation at hand; (4) manner: it should be clear, brief and logical (Beijersbergen, et al., 2006). Again, this dissertation does not seek to posthumously classify the authors of the narratives according to AAI categories, but will make use of the psychoanalytic narrative evaluation methods to focus on the importance of coherence in narrative construction. Thus, extending these ideas of narrative coherence in relation to childhood trauma, we can state that the level of coherence in any given narrative may provide clues about the state of mind (as regards trauma) of the narrator.

Data Analysis and Procedures

The initial "generative question" guiding this coding process concerned the impact of slavery upon African-Americans and what form the memory of that trauma takes in current society. It then evolved to also consider the ways in which trauma information may be transmitted through familial attachment bonds.

In brief, the first step of data analysis involved a broad, open coding of the two narratives, using theoretically informed grounded theory. Large quotations served as the initial coding unit. Short, slightly abstracted descriptions, or codes, were applied to each quote. The narratives were then reviewed several times to mine for additionally relevant codes. This data was then reviewed and regrouped based on the following theoretical understandings: first a psychodynamic/ attachment perspective was used; then a dialogic/contextual view; then thoughts on coherence were applied. My memo-ed reflections and perspectives on the transgenerational legacy of the material captured in the codes are also included in the discussion chapters.

Coding

E-book versions of the narratives were found and loaded in Atlas Ti6. Using this software, an open coding took place with the purpose of gathering data to illuminate the research question. The narratives were subjected to several close readings in what Borkan (1999) describes as immersion. The initial level of data interrogation involved coding the texts for themes related to family, interpersonal relationships and trauma to find potential units of meaning, sequences, or concepts in the data related to themes of attachment and trauma. The narratives were reviewed and coded twice during this process with the purpose of focusing, labeling and refining the data as it emerged. At this level of coding, codes emerged strictly from the narratives. No specific codes were initially preconceived or superimposed on the data but emerged as themes regarding the slavery experience and history revealed themselves.

The initial coding units were intact passages taken from the data that could stand alone and reveal a complete story (see Table 1). These large quotes were reviewed by this researcher's committee for relevance; then short, slightly abstracted labeling codes were applied to the data. As early code categories emerged, texts were continually revisited to mine for additional related codes.

The next level of coding, focused coding, involved a final read of the text to further focus the nascent code categories. This level of coding served to link early code categories together to form meaningful relationships. Once this researcher was satisfied that a level of thematic saturation had been reached as regards themes of trauma and attachment, the axial level of coding was begun. At this level of analysis, categories were

solidified, and code families were developed. The data was then imported into a spreadsheet constructed in Microsoft Word for easier viewing, and the final stage of analysis begun; the development of the thematic concepts that compose the findings of this study.

Conclusion

In this dissertation I first analyze two female slave narratives for themes of trauma and attachment using the above strategies. Second, I critically discuss the coded narratives employing dynamic concepts of trauma, transgenerational trauma transmission, and familial attachment.

The slave narratives provide a place to begin theorizing about continued traumatization. When woven together with psychoanalytic thinking in trauma and trauma transmission, and sociological and historical perspectives on cultural trauma and the restoration of cultures after traumatic events, they are the departure point from which to discuss the continued trauma of slavery.

Table 1: Example of Coding Process:

Narrative Excerpt	Open Codes	Axial Codes	Thematic Concepts
As the months passed on, my boy improved in health. When he was a year old, they called him beautiful. The little vine was taking deep root in my	Describes development of loving, attached feelings to	Loving enslaved child was painful	Developing attachment bonds with enslaved child was emotionally

Table ,Table1 Continued

existence, though its clinging fondness excited a mixture of love and pain. When I was most sorely oppressed I found a solace in his smiles. I loved to watch his infant slumbers; but always there was a dark cloud over my enjoyment. I could never forget that he was a slave. Sometimes I wished that he might die in infancy. God tried me. My darling became very ill. The bright eyes grew dull, and the little feet and hands were so icy cold that I thought death had already touched them. I had prayed for his death, but never so earnestly as I now prayed for his life; and my prayer was heard. Alas, what mockery it is for a slave mother to try to pray back her dying child to life! Death is	child Relationship with infant son provided solace against slavery's oppression Expresses ambivalence about deeply loving feelings for son Social status of child interferes with mothers ability to enjoy him	Slavery infiltrates mother infant attachment Slavery creates ambivalence in mother-infant attachment Asking God for deliverance from slavery through death	precarious as parents knew the difficult fate that awaited children. Relationships as comforting and protective factors against oppression

Table 1, Continued

better than slavery.	Sometimes wished son dead rather than enslaved Prayed to God to deliver child from slavery through death Prayed to God that son would recover from malady Better to be dead than enslaved		

Theoretical note: Evidence of double voicedness-she repeats wish for child to die, seemingly to make her point that death was better than slavery. Shock value of this notion is powerful and most likely as much a desire to document the anguish of parenting a child

whose fate seems doomed as a call to white Northerners about the desperate fact of this situation.

Chapter 5: Narrative Findings

Early female slave narratives were employed to investigate the conditions of parenting, caregiving, and attachment during slavery. Both narratives, while revealing starkly diverse circumstances, provided the following data about the role of trauma and familial attachment.

The data is organized into domains with subheadings used to explore the most relevant themes.

Domain A: Childhood experience of receiving care

Description of Fathers

Burton and Jacobs had very different experiences of their fathers. Jacobs was removed from her home at the age of six and sent to serve her mistress, but prior to this she resided with her married slave parents. She describes her father as an "intelligent", "skillful" man who encouraged his children to live lives of "dignity" and valued freedom. He worked as a carpenter and hired out his own labor, an unusual circumstance for an enslaved man that allowed him to pursue work, keep a portion of his wage, and function with relative autonomy. In describing how this circumstance shaped her father, Jacobs writes, "My father, by his nature, as well as by the habit of transacting business as a skillful mechanic, had more of the feelings of a freeman than is common among slaves." He requested on several occasions to purchase freedom for his two children from their master, Mr. Flint, but was refused.

The following vignette illustrates Mr. Jacobs' philosophy about parenting as a slave: "My brother was a spirited boy; and being brought up under such influences, he

early detested the name of master and mistress. One day, when his father and his mistress both happened to call him at the same time, he hesitated between the two; being perplexed to know which had the strongest claim upon his obedience. He finally concluded to go to his mistress. When my father reproved him for it, he said, 'You both called me, and I didn't know which I ought to go to first.' 'You are *my* child,' replied our father, 'and when I call you, you should come immediately, if you have to pass through fire and water." Here Mr. Jacobs demonstrated his insistence on asserting custody of and primary affiliation with his children, demanding a singular place in their lives as a parental authority. He desired for his children to identify as his child before identifying as slaves, positioning the family as more central to identity than slave status. He affirmed that their humanity preceded their position as slaves.

Jacobs' father died when she was between ten and twelve years-old, and in her description of that moment she again related her father's assertion that his children were human beings before they were slaves. On the day of his burial, the mistress forbade Jacobs from attending the service, requesting instead that she collect wildflowers to brighten the big house. "I spent the day gathering flowers and weaving them into festoons, while the dead body of my father was lying within a mile of me. What cared my owners for that? He was merely a piece of property. Moreover, they thought he had spoiled his children, by teaching them to feel that they were human beings." Jacobs hints here that the Flints not only conceived of them as chattel without regard to family affiliations, but that they resented her father for resisting the dehumanization of his children.

She appeared to know her father well as a child, and after his passing called on the lessons he taught her about valuing the pursuit of freedom. Upon fleeing her plantation as a young adult, she stopped by her father's grave to pray for strength. She states she heard his voice, imploring her to go on; "I seemed to hear my father's voice come from it, bidding me not to tarry till I reached freedom or the grave. I rushed on with renovated hopes. My trust in God had been strengthened by that prayer among the graves."

Burton's father however, eschewed any custody of her. "I never spoke to him, and cannot remember that he ever noticed me, or in any way acknowledged me to be his child." A white English farmer from a neighboring plantation, he refused to acknowledge her as his child, even though it appeared to have been common knowledge that he fathered her. "She writes I never knew my father, who was a white man…. My mistress often told me that my father was a planter who owned a plantation about two miles from ours. He was a white man, born in Liverpool, England. He died in Lewisville, Alabama, in the year 1875".

She recalled she may have seen him roughly a dozen times in her life, all before the age of four. On the occasion of his travel by the plantation where she was enslaved, Burton's mistress would call attention to him to try and shame him into acknowledging his daughter; "Stop there, I say! Don't you want to see and speak to and caress your darling child? She often speaks of you and wants to embrace her dear father." Burton's mistress goes on to upbraid the father by describing Burton as "a perfect picture of yourself", meaning that Burton may have favored her father.

From this descriptive passage we learn that Burton spoke about her father to her mistress and may have longed for his presence in her life. She does not detail her thoughts or feelings about how his absence affected her. After this brief section of the narrative her father is never mentioned again. Moreover, the reader is given no information concerning the relationship between Burton's mother and the white man, and Burton does not mention whether she ever spoke to her mother about her father.

Description of mother

In both narratives, description of the birth mother is lacking. Both mothers are mentioned, but portrayals of them are flat and unelaborated. As stated above, Jacobs' mother died when she was six, and her life became considerably more difficult thereafter. Yet Jacobs offers the reader no specific memories of her. We are told that her mother served as a waiting maid for Mrs. Flint, the mistress Jacobs would later go on to serve. "My mother's mistress was the daughter of my grandmother's mistress. She was the foster sister of my mother; they were both nourished at my grandmother's breast. In fact, my mother had been weaned at three months old, that the babe of the mistress might obtain sufficient food. They played together as children;"

As a child Jacobs overhears others describing her mother 'as a slave merely in name, but in nature… noble and womanly' and a 'faithful servant'. For physical description we are told her mother is a "mulatto" but nothing else. We are not told who her father may have been or why she has such light skin.

Although Jacobs' narrative is lacking descriptive material regarding her mother, her grandmother is richly portrayed. This contrast will be detailed in the discussion but may hint at the devalued memory of a mother whose death meant abandonment and the

beginning of an enslaved life, in favor of an idealized depiction of a faithful, living grandmother who offered solace from slavery's ills.

From Burton, whose mother was alive and part of her life until middle age, we receive no physical description or discussion about the nature of their relationship. We are told that Burton's mother was a cook and head of house on the plantation where they were enslaved, and that she was raised beside her white mistress from birth, just as Jacobs'' mother was. She revealed that her mother "works hard" and was "grateful" to white people that they continued to employ her. Burton quotes her mother as stating, "The white folks are good to me. They give me work, and I know, with God's help, I can get along." This is the only place in the narrative where we are allowed to hear Burton's mother's voice.

Described in a peculiar entry in the middle of the narrative, Burton's mother died while she was living in the south and her mother was in an undisclosed state. Of this she writes "my mother died in Clayton, and I had to take the three smallest children into my care." We aren't told how her mother died or who these children are. Her death is relayed in a purely factual manner, and nothing is made of it. It is unclear how Burton felt about her mother at this time, and it is unclear if they were living near each other or even in contact. The lack of affective detail or descriptive emotional response regarding such an event is shocking to the reader.

Indeed, the most salient piece of data here lies in the omission of descriptive content of their mothers in both narratives. During the process of coding these narratives, an "O" code was initially applied to denote what were felt to be omissions, lapses of information that were remarkable. Later these "O" codes were turned into memos. While

reading Jacobs' memoir for the first time, I memoed, "feels like she didn't know her mother at all" and later, "did they never speak of her mom in the family? Feels like she's disappeared altogether." And "grandmother has replaced mother entirely in terms of maternal role." Memos referencing Burton's mother include "this memoir is difficult to read, in part because Annie seems unemotional about these events. there is a stony and unelaborated quality to her telling of these events that distances me. seems to be defensive".

Early loss of mother

In addition to experiencing the dire and insufficient circumstances of an enslaved childhood, Burton's mother abandoned her, fleeing the plantation after suffering a horrific beating from her mistress. Burton's memoir is written in a very factual manner, almost entirely devoid of affective description or evidence of emotional response. Thus the manner in which the reader learns her mother abandons her is abrupt and jarring. "One morning when master had gone to Eufaula, my mother and my mistress got into an argument, the consequence of which was that my mother was whipped, for the first time in her life. Whereupon, my mother refused to do any more work, and ran away from the plantation. For three years we did not see her again" The author is four when her mother flees, and beyond the above statement she says nothing else about this event. The reader is left to surmise what impact this may have had on her, and she provided no reflections upon this incident later in the narrative. After he mother abandoned her, Burton was cared for in an abysmal fashion by her mistress, as will be detailed below.

Harriet Jacobs was six years old when her mother died from undisclosed circumstances. Prior to this she had been living in what she describes as fortunate circumstances for slaves, in an intact family with both parents with relative autonomy

from their masters (this will be explored more in later sections). Shortly after her mother died, Jacobs was bequeathed to a white mistress, and her conscious experience of enslavement begins. Jacobs writes; "When I was six years-old, my mother died; and then, for the first time, I learned, by the talk around me, that I was a slave." Thus the death of her mother greatly impacted Jacobs, as it heralded her entrée into a life of servitude and uncertainty. Her mother's death caused the dissolution of her nuclear family, and as will be described in detail below, after a brief stay with a caring mistress Jacobs moved into the big house where she suffered horrific physical and emotion abuse at the hands of her master and mistress.

Raised by black and white female caregivers

Burton lived with her mother until the age of four, and Jacobs with hers until age six. Jacobs also enjoyed the strong maternal presence of a benevolent and powerful grandmother who lived with the family and functioned as its matriarch. Thus both women experienced the early presence of black female caregivers. However at ages four and six, their white mistresses assumed their care.

Upon Jacob's mother's passing, Jacobs was briefly bequeathed to a white mistress she described as "so kind to me that I was always glad to do her bidding, and proud to labor for her as much as my young years would permit." This mistress taught Jacobs to read, which she described as a "great privilege" not allowed many slaves. She described her time with this mistress as "happy days".

When this woman died Jacobs is then willed to a less kind mistress, despite her first mistress's promise to leave Jacobs free. Jacobs wrote that this kindly mistress had promised her mother that Jacobs would not suffer under slavery's yolk; "She had

promised my dying mother that her children should never suffer for any thing; and when I remembered that, and recalled her many proofs of attachment to me, I could not help having some hopes that she had left me free." Unfortunately, this mistress betrayed this promise and willed Jacobs to another mistress who is less compassionate.

Of her first mistress's failure to make good on her promise to Jacobs' mother, Jacobs writes, "the will of my mistress was read, and we learned that she had bequeathed me to her sister's daughter, a child of five years-old. So vanished our hopes. My mistress had taught me the precepts of God's Word: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.' But I was her slave, and I suppose she did not recognize me as her neighbor. I would give much to blot out from my memory that one great wrong. As a child, I loved my mistress; and, looking back on the happy days I spent with her, I try to think with less bitterness of this act of injustice." Jacobs appears to minimize this horrific betrayal in favor of kind memories of this mistress. Perhaps because Jacobs' experience with her subsequent owners was so appalling, she was careful in her recollections not to malign her first mistress and recounted her instead in a fairly idealized fashion.

Jacobs described her second mistress, Mrs. Flint, as "jealous", "hateful" and "cruel", and faulted her for not defending her against sexual abuse from her husband. Jacobs was an adolescent girl when Mr. Flint's licentious propositions begin, and Jacobs' expected some protection from this mistress who was nursed by her grandmother. Instead Jacobs writes, "I was an object of her jealousy, and, consequently, of her hatred; and I knew I could not expect kindness or confidence from her." Later Jacobs expressed fear for her young life, wondering if she would die first by the hands of her rejected master or

her jealous mistress "At last, I began to be fearful for my life. It had been often threatened; and you can imagine, better than I can describe, what an unpleasant sensation it must produce to wake up in the dead of night and find a jealous woman bending over you. Terrible as this experience was, I had fears that it would give place to one more terrible."

Despite the abuse she suffered from Ms. Flint during her enslavement, she is clear that she desired her mistress's goodwill, perhaps even craved a display of maternal, protective feeling from her. Of this time she related the following fantasy of maternal response from her mistress; "I had imagined if I died, or was laid up for some time, that my mistress would feel a twinge of remorse that she had so hated 'the little imp,' as she styled me. It was my ignorance of that mistress that gave rise to such extravagant imaginings." In a later reflection she wrote, "I never wronged her, or wished to wrong her, and one word of kindness from her would have brought me to her feet." Jacobs desired a positive relationship with this mistress who persecuted her, and still longed for this many years later.

Furthermore, she articulated some sympathy towards her mistress's position, humanizing the experience of an individual who abused her. In describing her understanding of her mistresses plight, she writes, "I had entered my sixteenth year, and every day it became more apparent that my presence was intolerable to Mrs. Flint. Angry words frequently passed between her and her husband… in her angry moods, no terms were too vile for her to bestow upon me. Yet I, whom she detested so bitterly, had far more pity for her than he had, whose duty it was to make her life happy." She felt that her masters lust for her corrupted his marriage and caused strife between him and his wife;

she knew how difficult it must have been for her mistress to have her residing in her house and understood her jealous, irate sentiments. She writes on several occasions that slavery deformed the moral character of blacks and whites, in large part due to the widespread rape of female slaves by white enslavers. “I can testify, from my own experience and observation, that slavery is a curse to the whites as well as to the blacks. It makes white fathers cruel and sensual; the sons violent and licentious; it contaminates the daughters, and makes the wives wretched. And as for the colored race, it needs an abler pen than mine to describe the extremity of their sufferings, the depth of their degradation. Yet few slaveholders seem to be aware of the widespread moral ruin occasioned by this wicked system.” Despite the brutality she faced, she maintained an empathic view of her tormenters.

Burton’s frenzied memoir describes of a string of white mistresses, some of whom hired her out to others to profit from her wages. While it was confusing to know whom she was enslaved to at certain times during her depiction of her childhood, (this will be discussed in the following chapter), it appears she had a mix of kind and benign caregivers, with a few exceptions.

Her first mistress appeared to be abusive and neglectful (she will be discussed further below). Burton describes how this mistress whipped her for falling asleep while churning butter, and barely provided enough provisions to fend off starvation. Her early circumstances seemed quite horrific.

A later mistress, Mis’ Mary, functioned like a surrogate parent, taking it upon herself to oversee the moral and intellectual development of young Burton, teaching her to read and guiding her through adolescence. Upon learning that fourteen year-old Burton

had a suitor, “Mis' Mary… objected to the young man's coming to the house to call, because she did not think I was old enough to have a sweetheart. I owe a great deal to Mis' Mary for her good training of me, in honesty, uprightness and truthfulness.” When this young man asks for Burton’s hand, Mis’ Mary and Burton’s birth mother consult before agreeing. The memo written in response to the initial reading of this material reads “as if author has two moms”.

Of Mistress Campbell, who saw to it that Burton attended high school, she writes “But I always considered Mrs. Campbell's my home.” It is unclear how old Burton was when she resided with Campbell, but she was older than fifteen.

Burton’s descriptions of her white caregivers give the impression that she mostly experienced them as decent individuals who sought to better her and endow her with skills and godly moral leanings, but again, her descriptions of others are thin and idealized. Jacobs’ two experiences appear extreme and quite opposite. Her first mistress while kind and gracious, reneged on her promise to free Jacobs upon her death. Her second mistress was truly abusive. Both experiences are related with nuance, insight and rich emotional expression.

Domain B: Early experiences

Carefree early memories:

Both women revealed fond memories of their early enslavement experiences. Burton uses the word “happy” repeatedly to describe her early experience. The first line of her narrative, and perhaps the one most often cited due to its shockingly ironic quality is “The memory of my happy, care-free childhood days on the plantation, with my little white and black companions, is often with me.” Indeed she seems worried throughout the narrative that a happy way of life will be forgotten post emancipation, and laments “what

would become of my good times all over the old plantation. Oh, the harvesting times, the great hog-killing times when several hundred hogs were killed, and we children watched and got our share of the slaughter in pig's liver roasted on a bed of coals, eaten ashes and all. Then came the great sugar-cane grinding time, when they were making the molasses, and we children would be hanging round, drinking the sugar-cane juice, and awaiting the moment to help ourselves to everything good... Not only were the slave children there, but the little white children from Massa's house would join us and have a jolly time." The above recollection was not contrasted with her description of the horrific poverty and physical abuse she also suffered, leaving the reader to attempt to reconcile these "care-free" recollections with the abuse and neglect she also describes in the same chapter. Her descriptions, pages later, of starvation and neglect appear isolated from the idealized global impressions she reveals above. It would appear that Burton's writing again evidences the employment of defensive idealization.

Likewise Jacobs benefited initially from being owned by a benevolent mistress, who by Jacobs' description treated her kindly and sympathetically. This woman also owned Jacobs' mother, and the two were said to have been raised together as friends. Of her mistress Jacobs writes, "I would sit by her side for hours, sewing diligently, with a heart as free from care as that of any free-born white child. When she thought I was tired, she would send me out to run and jump; and away I bounded, to gather berries or flowers to decorate her room. Those were happy days—too happy to last. The slave child had no thought for the morrow;" Jacobs later describes how, despite promises by this mistress to free her upon her death, she does not, and Jacobs is sold into less fortunate circumstances.

This betrayal is discussed above (see ‘Raised by black and white female caregivers’) and is revisited in the discussion

Presence of Childhood Trauma

These narratives are defined in part by the difficult early experiences of the women. At the center of Jacobs’ narrative is the psychological and sexual abuse she suffered at the hands of her master, Dr. Flint. His repeated threats of rape and beatings began when she was perhaps ten years-years-old and continued well into her adult life. She described this abuse as a common experience for enslaved girls; “Even the little child, who is accustomed to wait on her mistress and her children, will learn, before she is twelve years-old, why it is that her mistress hates such and such a one among the slaves. Perhaps the child's own mother is among those hated ones. She listens to violent outbreaks of jealous passion, and cannot help understanding what is the cause. She will become prematurely knowing in evil things. Soon she will learn to tremble when she hears her master's footfall. She will be compelled to realize that she is no longer a child. If God has bestowed beauty upon her, it will prove her greatest curse. That which commands admiration in the white woman only hastens the degradation of the female slave.” Jacobs experienced frequent threats of rape and physical assault and a torrent of emotional abuse that began in childhood.

Dr. Flint frequently threatened her young life for not submitting to become his concubine. When she was perhaps eleven years old, he told her, "Do you know that I have a right to do as I like with you,--that I can kill you, if I please?" Later he tried to convince her that he was a kind master and she was lucky he had not already killed her for her refusals; “Many masters would have killed you on the spot.” He then threatened to

have her jailed her for her “insolence”. In all, she recounts eight instances in which Dr. Flint threatened to kill her.

The abuse she suffered isolated her from her loved ones, in part because Dr. Flint vowed to kill her if she besmirched his name with public accusations of abuse. Fearing her grandmother’s response to her situation, the abuse seems to have estranged her from her grandmother in particular. She wrote, “I would have given the world to have laid my head on my grandmother's faithful bosom, and told her all my troubles. But Dr. Flint swore he would kill me, if I was not as silent as the grave.”

Jacobs also feared that revealing her abusive circumstances would make her seem unchaste or impure; “although my grandmother was all in all to me, I feared her as well as loved her. I had been accustomed to look up to her with a respect bordering upon awe. I was very young, and felt shamefaced about telling her such impure things, especially as I knew her to be very strict.” She felt that her experience of abuse had sullied her, by making her “prematurely knowing, concerning the evil ways of the world.” She lamented lacking a “confident” with whom she could share her experience, and appeared to have become isolated and lonely.

Towards the end of her narrative Jacobs frankly revealed the impact of sexual abuse on slave girls, and reflected on the impact abuse had on her; “I know that some are too much brutalized by slavery to feel the humiliation of their position; but many slaves feel it most acutely, and shrink from the memory of it. I cannot tell how much I suffered in the presence of these wrongs, nor how I am still pained by the retrospect.”

Annie Burton describes a childhood of serious neglect, in which she was deprived of basic material and nutritional provisions: “We children had no supper, and only a little

piece of bread or something of the kind in the morning. Our dishes consisted of one wooden bowl, and oyster shells were our spoons. This bowl served for about fifteen children, and often the dogs and the ducks and the peafowl had a dip in it. Sometimes we had buttermilk and bread in our bowl, sometimes greens or bones. Our clothes were little homespun cotton slips, with short sleeves. I never knew what shoes were until I got big enough to earn them myself." The conditions of abject poverty and material deprivation she described were horrifying and were certainly abusive. She was perhaps four years-old at the time of the above recollection.

She also described incidents of physical punishment. Her mother abandoned her at age four, and the only adult who appeared to be charged with her survival was her mistress, who was a frightening, unpredictable and neglectful caregiver. Burtons describes receiving a beating while falling asleep doing work, "One day mistress sent me out to do some churning under a tree. I went to sleep and jerked the churn over on top of me, and consequently got a whipping." Her early experiences were punctuated by neglect, abuse and abandonment.

Domain C: Experiences of Childrearing

Giving care to children

The narratives were imbalanced in their description of caregiving of children. Burton mentions assuming care of three young children after her mother's death. The ages of these children and their relationship to her or her mother are not stated. The solitary mention in Burton's narratives of active care giving comes when she describes defending her nephew against a perceived threat. She describes responding with haste to the boy's distress: "The cook, in her anger, chased the boy with a broom, and threatened

to give him a good whipping at all costs. Hearing the noise, I came out into the yard, and when Lawrence saw me he ran to me for protection. I interceded for him, and promised he should get into no more trouble. We went at once to a neighbor's house for the night."

The above describes Burton engaging in protective behaviors toward a child in her care, and hints at the child's attachment to her a caring figure. Although she informs the reader that she cared for several children in her life, she does not detail this experience. Jacobs work however abounds with descriptions of her ministering to the needs of her own two children and her lamentations when she cannot do so. Indeed she was frequently restrained from attending to her children's needs by the confines of slavery, as she wrote here: "I longed to be entirely free to act a mother's part towards my children. "Her distress is further depicted here, "My boy was ill, and I left him behind. I had many sad thoughts as the old wagon jolted on. Hitherto, I had suffered alone; now, my little one was to be treated as a slave" and here, "Ellen was left below in the kitchen. It was a change for her, who had always been so carefully tended." In these passages she lamented her transition from ministering to her children in her grandmother's home to being a more traditional house slave who endured long hours away from her children, leaving them in less optimal caregiving circumstances. In this case, six year old Ellen was left to wander the grounds of the plantation alone.

After Jacobs was sequestered in an attempt to flee her enslavement, she described her desire to remain active in the children's care, "Christmas was approaching. Grandmother brought me materials, and I busied myself making some new garments and little playthings for my children….Even slave mothers try to gladden the hearts of their little ones on that occasion. Benny and Ellen had their Christmas stockings filled".

In the following passage she revealed taking the only warm item of clothing she owned to fashion one for her daughter, whom at the time was enslaved by a neglectful, abusive, alcoholic mistress who was in fact her white paternal aunt: “She came to me clad in very thin garments, all outgrown, and with a school satchel on her arm, containing a few articles. It was late in October, and I knew the child must suffer… I took off my own flannel skirt and converted it into one for her”

All can be sacrificed and endured in an effort for enslaved children to be free

The central event of Harriet Jacobs’ narrative is the awful seven years she spent interned in a cramped roof garret to protect her children from the plight of slavery. Her quarters were so small she could not stand, and her shelter from the elements so lacking that she was subjected to all weather and unprotected from vermin and stinging red ants. “My friends feared I should become a cripple for life; and I was so weary of my long imprisonment that, had it not been for the hope of serving my children, I should have been thankful to die; but, for their sakes, I was willing to bear on.” She endured many illnesses there, and almost died several times.

It is remarkable that she survived such a sequestering. She attributed her perseverance to her ability keep tabs on her children while interned, as she could hear their voices from her hiding place. She was also able to communicate her wishes for her kids to her family during conversations carried on through the thin walls. Jacobs described the comfort of having her children nearby here; “The air was stifling; the darkness total. A bed had been spread on the floor. I could sleep quite comfortably on one side; but the slope was so sudden that I could not turn on the other without hitting the roof. The rats and mice ran over my bed; but I was weary, and I slept such sleep as the wretched may, when a tempest has passed over them…for in my small den day and night

were all the same. I suffered for air even more than for light. But I was not comfortless. I heard the voices of my children." She later described the depression she suffered there; "Dark thoughts passed through my mind as I lay there day after day. I tried to be thankful for my little cell, dismal as it was, and even to love it, as part of the price I had paid for the redemption of my children." Her hopes for her children's freedom, and her ability to remain an active caregiver helped sustain her. It's notable that even in such dire conditions, she maintained enough awareness of her emotional states to attempt to utilize some thoughtful coping strategies.

She endured this sequestering not only to flee her master's threats of rape but because she knew if she fled, the master would let her grandmother or their father purchase her children. They would be raised as free people by their grandmother, ending a cycle of inherited enslaved status in the Jacobs family. Jacobs knew her grandmother would offer loving support and attention, satisfaction of all material needs and protection from hard labor on the Flint's plantation. But being unable to truly leave her young children and seeking to maintain proximity to them, she retreated to the roof garret where she could watch her children and advise her grandmother of her wishes for them. They would receive the love and care she knew they needed, while escaping the hardships of plantation life, and she could maintain a role in their care.

Later, once the children's safety was reasonably ensured the author's heart rested, despite the reality that she remained a hunted individual as a runaway slave. Of this she wrote, "I heard of the old doctor's threats, but they no longer had the same power to trouble me. The darkest cloud that hung over my life had rolled away. Whatever slavery

might do to me, it could not shackle my children. If I fell a sacrifice, my little ones were saved."

Jacob's narrative was characterized by themes of sacrifice for children, but no such data arose from Burton's narrative. This may be in part due to the fact that Burton had no children of her own. Although she apparently cared for children, this experience is not detailed. There is no data present in this category from Burton's narrative.

Forced Separations/ Estrangement

Both Burton and Jacobs experienced long periods of estrangement from family members. Burton moves numerous times during the course of her narrative, and it isn't always clear who is with her. She moves away from her sister in pursuit of work, and appeared to see her rarely. None of her other siblings were mentioned beyond the first few pages of the memoir, and her mother is also a distant figure in her adulthood.

Burton gives little hint as to the nature or quality of her relationships with others. Her narrative appears to give much more weight to detailing her work experience, enslaved and then free, than it does to the role of others in her life. This made Burton feel isolated and unmoored, and her work transmits a rather sad tone of loss, estrangement, and longing.

The primary estrangement that characterized her early life is maternal abandonment at age four. Again, Burton reveals nothing to inform the reader of the impact this forced separation, and her subsequent care by an abusive neglectful mistress, had on her.

Again the narratives were very imbalanced in the quantity of content presented in this category. While Burton's narrative was characterized by a feeling of emptiness and

devalued relationships, Jacobs richly detailed the impact of separations in her life and in the lives of those around her.

Jacobs was isolated in a small roof garret in her grandmother's home in an effort to protect her children. While there she remained estranged from all but an uncle and her grandmother who made sure she was fed and provided her with some company. While she was able to observe her children through small openings in the garret, she could not chance any interaction with them for fear of being discovered, captured and killed. This separation pained her immensely, and she longed to be an active parent to them. When Ellen is called away to serve as a waiting maid for her paternal relatives, she writes "Ellen was made ready for the journey. O, how it tried my heart to send her away, so young, alone, among strangers! Without a mother's love to shelter her from the storms of life; almost without memory of a mother! I doubted whether she and Benny would have for me the natural affection that children feel for a parent. I thought to myself that I might perhaps never see my daughter again" She clearly agonized about the impact such a lengthy separation would have upon her relationship with her children, and was troubled to think that their love for her would wane because she was not present to carry out the instrumental, daily tasks of loving ministration to their needs. She believed a mother's love had protective qualities, and longed to confer that protection upon her children. She remained estranged from her children for most of the time she was sequestered, but did later reunite with them in the north.

The theme of estrangement is central to this narrative not only as a lived experience but as a witnessed one. Here Jacobs describes the experience of a neighbor who lost all of her children to a slave trader, "On one of these sale days, I saw this mother

lead seven children to the auction-block. She knew that some of them would be taken from her; but they took _all_ (sic). The children were sold to a slave-trader, and their mother was brought by a man in our own town. Before night her children were all far away. She begged the trader to tell her where he intended to take them; this he refused to do. How could he, when he knew he would sell them, one by one, wherever he could command the highest price? I met that mother in the street, and her wild, haggard face lives to-day in my mind. She wrung her hands in anguish, and exclaimed, "Gone! All gone! Why don't God kill me?" I had no words wherewith to comfort her. Instances of this kind are of daily, yea, of hourly occurrence."

Later she related the story of the woman she fled North with, who ran out of grief after all seven of her children were sold to different plantations as she watched, shackled, "Above all, she dwelt on the agony of separation from all her children on that dreadful auction day. She could scarcely credit me, when I told her of the place where I had passed nearly seven years. "We have the same sorrows," said I. "No," replied she, "you are going to see your children soon, and there is no hope that I shall ever even hear from mine."

A beloved uncle was incarcerated for attempting to run away. Here she described the suffering her grandmother experienced upon this event, "Could you have seen that mother clinging to her child, when they fastened the irons upon his wrists; could you have heard her heart-rending groans, and seen her bloodshot eyes wander wildly from face to face, vainly pleading for mercy; could you have witnessed that scene as I saw it, you would exclaim, _Slavery is damnable_! Benjamin, her youngest, her pet, was forever gone! She could not realize it."

Even when Jacobs was present in her children's lives she was often forced to separate from them due to her enslavement. She was required to work many hours each day, and as a function of this spent much time away from her children and not in control of their care. As written above, when she was toiling in the fields on in the master's home, her children were left to wander on their own about the plantation. "Ellen broke down under the trials of her life. Separated from me, with no one to look after her, she wandered about, and in a few days cried herself sick. One day, she sat under the window where I was at work, crying that weary cry which makes a mother's heart bleed. I was obliged to steel myself to bear it. After a while it ceased. I looked out, and she was gone." She described how wrenching it was for her to hear her daughter's distress cries, and goes on to state that she wished the child dead rather than experience the continued agony of separation "As I held her in my arms, I thought how well it would be for her if she never waked up; and I uttered my thought aloud"

Domain D: Resilience

Achieving personal or internal freedom through work

Jacobs mother and father, with whom she was very close, were enslaved by the Flint family but also sought paid work as independent contractors from whites, much as any free person would. As is later detailed, Jacobs' grandmother also had her own business. The family had a relatively high degree of autonomy as compared to other enslaved persons.

Indeed, one of the dominant themes of Burton's memoir was maintaining autonomy through labor. While her memoir had a frenetic pace, in part due to her frequent work-related relocations, she insisted on working and keeping at least a part of

her wages. Like Jacobs' father and grandmother, Burton negotiated the circumstances of her work as well: "now as I grew up to young womanhood, I thought I would like a little money of my own. Accordingly, Mis' Mary began to pay me four dollars a month, besides giving me my board and clothes. For two summers she "let me out" while she was away, and I got five dollars a month." Although this excerpt demonstrates that Burton was continually exploited (being "let-out" meant the owner kept a portion of the slaves wage), she was able to carve out an agreement for personal monetary gain within an abjectly oppressive system. Later she asserts, "[I would] just do what I was employed to do, and if I wasn't satisfied, to go elsewhere." She then goes on to be an entrepreneur, owning several successful businesses.

Necessity of beneficial relationships with whites

As stated, Burton appeared to value entrepreneurship greatly, and frequently seemed to either be working for whites or establishing businesses which engaged white clientele, like laundry and housekeeping services. She maintained good relationships with whites who helped make her businesses successful. A memo I wrote regarding this states, "She is moving and changing jobs every year or so. also strange that she finds so many whites who are willing to help her and expect little to nothing in exchange."

She was even able to find whites to assist her when she is requesting services from them. Upon moving to a new (an undisclosed) state after emancipation, she described a harrowing experience renting living quarters from a white family. "The next day I got a room in the yard of a house belonging to some white people. Here we stayed two weeks. The only return I was asked to make for the room was to weed the garden. Lawrence and I dug out some weeds and burned them, but came so near setting fire to the place that we were told we need not dig any more weeds, but that we might have the use

of the room so long as we cared to stay." Even after coming close to destroying the home of her white landlords, they seemingly invited her stay on indefinitely, for free.

Harriet Jacobs benefitted from the rare circumstance of being born into an intact family headed by her powerful grandmother, a pious woman respected by blacks and whites alike. Harriet's grandmother, who remained unnamed, had been born a slave into the Flint family, and had raised and nursed Mrs. Flint, her mistress, and mistress's children. She was beloved and feared by the Flints, as she was a woman of unshaken faith in a Christian god and high moral certitude- she apparently didn't suffer fools or foolish impropriety.

Although enslaved by the Flint family, the grandmother was allowed her own home away from the Flint compound. As she advanced in years the family allowed her a de facto retirement, freeing her to pursue her own small business endeavors, selling baked goods to whites. As this was her private business, she was able to keep the profits from her labor, and in this way lived like a free woman. Again, these close relationships with whites afforded the family financial comforts that most slaves were not allowed. Of this the author commented, "To this good grandmother I was indebted for many comforts. My brother Willie and I often received portions of the crackers, cakes, and preserves, she made to sell; and after we ceased to be children we were indebted to her for many more important services. Such were the unusually fortunate circumstances of my early childhood."

Belief in one's own abilities at cunning

In the Jacobs family, wit and intellect were methods of resistance employed against oppression suffered. Harriet describes the "gleam of satisfaction" she felt when she fled the plantation, initially seeking refuge at the home of a white woman with whom

Dr. Flint was friendly. Sequestered in a secret room under the floor, she could hear him speaking of his search for her and enjoyed feeling as though she had outfoxed him. She wrote, “Thus far I had outwitted him, and I triumphed over it. Who can blame slaves for being cunning? They are constantly compelled to resort to it. It is the only weapon of the weak and oppressed against the strength of their tyrants.”

The narrative is replete with examples of members of the Jacobs family embracing skillful cunning to evade slave masters, seek freedom, and acquire goods and services. When Dr. Flint relentlessly sexually pursued Jacobs, she credited her intellect in helping her deflect his advances. He promised her that upon submission she would gain protection and a privileged position on the plantation. She did not to trust him however, and doubted he would deliver on his promise. She stated, “I had not lived fourteen years in slavery for nothing. I had felt, seen, and heard enough, to read the characters, and question the motives, of those around me.”

This ability was also manifested by her children. She heard of an incident in which Dr. Flint tried to bribe the children to reveal information about their runaway mother’s whereabouts. When offered silver and sweets, her children responded as follows, “Ellen shrank away from him, and would not speak; but Benny spoke up, and said, ‘Dr. Flint, I don't know where my mother is. I guess she's in New York; and when you go there again, I wish you'd ask her to come home, for I want to see her; but if you put her in jail, or tell her you'll cut her head off, I'll tell her to go right back’”. In this confrontation Benny displayed courage, cunning, pride, and a deep love and protective instinct toward his mother. That Ellen, who is probably seven here, is not seduced by Dr.

Flint's treats shows precocious control and a premature awareness of the danger that surrounds her mother.

Later, her son found out that his mother was hidden in the roof garret for several years and told no one that he knew, apparently fearing that harm would come to her. Upon making contact with her at the age of 12, he told her he frequently played and brought his sister to the side of the house that his mother had the best view of, as he knew it would greatly lift her spirits to see them. He also reported coming up with clever schemes to avert the attention of the police if ever they were in the vicinity of the home. Of this she writes, "Such prudence may seem extraordinary in a boy of twelve years, but slaves, being surrounded by mysteries, deceptions, and dangers, early learn to be suspicious and watchful, and prematurely cautious and cunning". These behaviors are precocious and somewhat parentified, and illustrate that the Jacobs' valued using sharp wit and cunning to resist oppression.

There is no data to present in this category from Burton's narrative.

Chapter 6: Discussion

Post-traumatic stress literature indicates that traumatic events, and the unmanageable rage responses they incur, work to deteriorate relationships as individuals struggle to modulate their anger, guilt and shame. Frequently individuals withdraw from one another and relationships are damaged (Herman, 1997; Johnson, 2002; Liotti, 2004). The transgenerational trauma literature and its relevance to attachment theory begs the question of how African-Americans managed to parent, love, and develop sustaining

attachments under such horrific circumstances, and what attachment styles may have arisen as a result of those conditions. Since the transgenerational transmission of trauma describes material that is passed down, the family as the unit for trauma communication will be explored.

While this dissertation in no way seeks to classify individuals in terms of the Adult Attachment Interview, it is informed by AAI concepts and the importance the method places on narrative coherence and psycholinguistics, the psychology of language. This dissertation is informed by the AAI as a method of discourse analysis that is used to discern the footprints and marker of early experience through the examination of narrative structure and word choice.

The findings are discussed and summarized here by domain, in addition to thoughts on the form, voice and coherence of each narrative. Thoughts on personal countertransferential responses, limitations of the project, and clinical implications are also considered.

Domain A: Childhood Experience of Receiving Care

Effects of lack of consistent caregiving for Burton

For Annie Burton, the absence of early sustaining relationships and the experience of inconsistent caregiving may have led her to devalue relationships and situational consistency as an adult. After her mother fled the plantation, Annie's primary caregivers were her mistresses. Unfortunately for Burton, with the exception of Mis' Mary, these primary caregivers proved inconsistent, often frightening and very unpredictable. Her early attachment history was characterized by maternal abandonment, physical abuse, and neglect.

The effects of this difficult history potentially explain a great deal about the content and feel of her narrative in several ways. In Burton's depiction of her post-adolescent life, there are few exterior characters, and none are enlivened for the reader in any way. Annie never describes friends or family members, and all characters mentioned remain entirely unelaborated. While she did have several brothers and sisters she appears to have been raised with (it is unclear how many siblings she had), they are unnamed and only marginally mentioned. In the entirety of the narrative, the only person who is given any physical detail is her mistress, whom we are told is blond.

Moreover, Burton states that she marries in the following excerpt, "In 1888, I was married, at 27 Pemberton Street, to Samuel H. Burton, by Dr. O. P. Gifford." This is the only mention she makes of her husband in the whole of the narrative, leaving no information about the nature of their relationship or the length of their marriage. In the end of her narrative she writes "On that lone shore loud moans the sea. But none, alas, shall mourn for me", alluding to the possibility that she died alone. She was childless and does not mention having any relationship with her nephew or the other three children she cared for in their adulthood. She mentions the nephew's name once, Lawrence.

Also, throughout the narrative the author seemed quite detached from others and devaluing of relationships (this writer produced four memos lamenting how lonely she seemed). As an adult, Burton married a man whom she does not name, had no children of her own and only fleetingly mentions a nephew whom she helped raise. She seemed to maintain a relationship with a sister and her mother until their deaths, but there is no mention of the quality or consistency of their interactions. She seemed to have been incredibly isolated.

Lastly, the narrative has an aspect of frenzy that is related to her constant motion in the service of work. As detailed above, she moved a great deal, setting up businesses and chasing opportunities to maintain a vigorous work life. She seemed enormously comfortable with chaos and unpredictability, again mirroring her early life.

Burton's description of her life is a rambling one, in which she moves many, many times in search of better employment opportunities. At narratives end, she is still relocating and there is no sense that she ever settles. Many of her moves seem nonsensical, such as when she abandoned her successful restaurant in Providence to open one in Florida before winter came, and then abandons that restaurant when the summer proves to hot. She moves so much post-emancipation that she appears to be leading an almost nomadic life, eschewing connections to people, places and objects. Hazan and Shaver (1990) put forth that individuals classified as avoidant tended to privilege vocational success over love. They were more likely than secure adults to report that work life influenced happiness more than relationships. When asked to choose between success in work or relationships, they more often choose work. Burton's life seems consistent with this finding.

The findings suggest that the source of Burton's apparently rudderless existence was located in a childhood devoid of safe, consistent or loving caregivers and suitable material circumstance. She had no experience of stability and no one to stay in one place for. Her experience of slavery and trauma cut her off form others and fostered a dismissive and defensive attitude toward engagement with others. Her devaluing of interpersonal closeness is reminiscent of the dismissing or avoidant adult.

Mother (slave) and mistress (owner) have conflated caregiving roles.

I assume that due to the neglectful, unpredictable care-giving described above, coupled with the unpredictable and brutal beating suffered at the hands of her mistress, Annie Burton was probably quite afraid of her first mistress. Sadly, her mistress appeared to be the only caregiver available to her, leaving Burton to idealize her mistress and devalue her mother. As stated, in Burton's narrative all figures are static and lack dimension, however her mistress is offered empathy for the difficult position slavery has placed her in. Indeed, Burton expresses sympathy for all slave owners upon Emancipation, as she fears that whites who've been raised to be cared for by slaves will not fare well. That she worries about slave owners at all rather than savoring her impending freedom speaks to how identified she is with her owners (and their children). Slave owners are humanized for her, as she expresses concern, even sympathy for what they will endure. She writes, "It was a terrible blow to the owners of plantations and slaves, and their children would feel it more than they, for they had been reared to be waited upon by willing or unwilling slaves." Abandoned by her mother, it may have behooved her to seek identification with her mistress as a maternal figure.

Burton, apparently being adaptive, actively enlisted her mistresses to be parental figures, fitting them into traditional roles of nurturer, teacher and role model. Despite being enslaved, she describes being "grateful" to Mis' Mary for teaching her to read, write and sew and overseeing her moral development. Perhaps the absence of family caregivers or parental figures early on, and the receipt of primary caregiving by her enslaver informed Burton's overwhelmingly empathic stance toward her enslavers.

Later in the narrative when the author's mother dies, it is mentioned in a fleeting, unelaborated way as part of a larger rambling paragraph is which she details several work-related moves she made over an eight year span of time. The dismissive manner in which this is revealed, devoid of affect or any hint as to her mental state, speaks to her unresolved and repressed feelings of rage and abandonment. Her remoteness, characterized by the aloof, unemotional feel of the narrative is reminiscent of the dismissive avoidant classification described in Farley's diagram. Burton seems to express little anxiety about her isolation or interpersonal losses, which reads as a minimization of the value of interpersonal relationships and an avoidance of meaningful attachments. Her mother abandoned her and her mistress treated her poorly, but in a classically dismissing stance, she minimizes the impact it had on her in favor of a more neutral depiction of events.

Jacobs also experienced a complicated relationship with her first white mistress, the woman who betrayed Jacob's mother's trust and did not free Jacobs upon her death. On reflecting on this turn, she writes "as a child, I loved my mistress; and, looking back on the happy days I spent with her, I try to think with less bitterness of this act of injustice. Her decision to revise this history seems an effort to preserve and isolate her loving feelings for this early caregiver away from the dastardly, ugly duplicity that was then carried out. Moreover, Jacobs seemed to believe that this mistress had genuine "attachment" and love for her; that she might have more likely viewed her as a tradable asset would be too painful to bear. That this woman she loved condemned her to an enslaved life may have proved intolerable, prompting this defensive idealization and

minimization. Her ability to bracket this event and move forward may have contributed to the fierce independence and autonomy she evidences through the narrative,

Strong early attachment relationships with loving, consistent caregivers were strongest protective factor for Harriet Jacobs.

"We lived together in a comfortable home; and, though we were all slaves, I was so fondly shielded that I never dreamed I was a piece of merchandise, trusted to them for safe keeping, and liable to be demanded of them at any moment." In this quote, Jacobs illustrates the intention of her many caregivers to protect her from the reality of her condition by providing a strong and close family base. Raised in an intact family consisting of her grandmother as a strong matriarch, an uncle, mother, father and siblings, Jacobs expresses deep love for and a compassionate understanding of each member of her family. She describes them with tremendous nuance and affection, creating an image of a warm and loving family.

Each individual member of her family is richly drawn and described, allowing the reader a window into her complex affections for each of them. For instance, Ben, her uncle, is described as a very light skin young man who could pass for white but refuses to, as he is a fiercely proud black man. He is strong willed and quick-tongued, a trait the author purports to admire and fear simultaneously. Her ability to describe each member of her family so fully supports the presence of durable early attachments.

In particular the strong early attachment relationship with her grandmother may have provided Ms. Jacobs with robust and overwhelmingly positive mental representations of a loving, comforting other that she was able to conjure throughout her life. Her conscious awareness of this and her ability to articulate it speaks to the quality

of early caregiving received. She was then able to transmit this to her own much loved, much defended children. In eloquently describing this attachment phenomenon, she writes, "It has been painful to me, in many ways, to recall the dreary years I passed in bondage. I would gladly forget them if I could. Yet the retrospection is not altogether without solace; for with those gloomy recollections come tender memories of my good old grandmother, like light, fleecy clouds floating over a dark and troubled sea." Her ability to hold her terrible experiences alongside the excellent caregiving she received is remarkable, as the comforting mental representation of her grandmother assisted her in navigating terrible circumstance. Her words elucidate the powerful protective quality of strong early attachments in helping individuals mediate traumatic experience.

It appears that the positive mental representations, the secure working models of loving attachment acquired through sustaining early relations greatly assisted her in surviving her horrible sequesterment. As Ein Dor (2010) and others have stated, secure individuals are often equipped with greater internal resources to manage stress and deprivation, setting the stage for greater resilience during traumatic events. It appears Jacobs and her grandmother were able to transmit this security to her children, who despite not seeing her for years, imagined her, loved her, and refused to forget her. They fought for her in her absence and displayed enormous resilience and fight in unspeakably difficult situations.

Domain B: Early Experience:

"The Happy Darkie"- Childhood memories on the plantation are happy ones; an ambivalent, defensive stance against the horror of her conditions.

Annie Burton's depictions of the abuse she suffered as a child reveal a deep south that she idealized, where the slaves were joyous and worked happily in the service of

their masters. As stated above, Main (1985) found that individuals who are classically dismissing present idealized or sanitized versions of their childhood, and tend to state their early experiences were pleasant, normal or unremarkable. However the specific memories they offer present a contrasting picture that reveals the presence of distress. Burton clearly gives us this dichotomy when within the same chapter she describes her "happy, care-free" childhood and then relates brief memories of beatings, maternal abandonment, and gross, inhumane caregiving by her mistress.

In her childhood recollections, instead of living in brutal conditions on a plantation she lived in the "proud Sunny South". She begins her tome, "The memory of my happy, care-free childhood days on the plantation, with my little white and black companions, is often with me." This excerpt reveals her ability to compartmentalize her abuse and the reality of her enslaved status. I understand this to be an adaptive and defensive response to trauma.

Furthering this notion of compartmentalization is the lack of nuance and affect in her descriptions, creating the sense that her recollections are fantastic and idealized. Remarkably, the one passage in her narrative that details any affective display is another idealized reflection on the slave south of her childhood, "I grew very homesick for the South, and would often look in the direction of my old home and cry."

Burton appears to be yearning for the familiar circumstances in which she was reared, regardless of how reprehensible they were. In describing her own feelings about life after emancipation she writes, "but I thought to myself, what would become of my good times all over the old plantation", reflecting ambivalence at slavery's end. While slavery was certainly a brutal system, it was a four hundred year-old institution with

prescribed castes and their attendant mores. Roles were more or less predictable, and she may have been deeply unsure of what awaited her off the plantation.

In reading Burton's narrative, the overwhelming omission of affect furthers the feeling that much of the rage, demoralization and dislocation of the traumatic events she experienced must have been repressed. I put forth that her ability to repress the enraged affect associated with these traumatic childhood events appears enormously adaptive. While these memories seem to be split-off and not-integrated into her assessment of herself, disavowing that rage may have helped her to become the generative person she was. Idealization and repression appear to be adaptive ways for Burton to preserve ego function and energy and stem the destabilization of overwhelming rage and sadness.

Absence of reflection point to Burton's unresolved response to early traumas.

The defining event of Burton's narrative occurred early in her childhood when her mother escaped enslavement, leaving behind Burton and her brothers and sisters. Burton's description of her mother's desertion is three sentences long and remains wholly unelaborated. She mentions her mother's abandonment once in the narrative. One must speculate as to Burton's mother's state of mind upon undertaking such a dramatic flight and leaving several children to the fate she sought to escape. Moreover, Burton's writing is devoid of any discussion of the impact this desertion had on her or her family. These voids describe one of the most conspicuous features of Burton's narrative; the omissions of material regarding the author's state of mind regarding overwhelmingly traumatic events. These failures of reflection and elaboration pervade the narrative, pointing to the presence of unresolved feelings regarding early attachment figures and the multiple traumas of abandonment and brutalization.

Just as dismissive-avoidant adults can evidence a defensive constriction when discussing material that triggers attachment related content, the glaring omission of affect presented feels defensive, an attempt to distance herself from her own experience of traumatic attachment. The death of her husband and mother and the story of her mother's abandonment are delivered in one sentence, devoid of detail and without explanation as to their impact. This may have been a deactivating emotion-regulation strategy but it shuts the reader out and devalues our desire to express empathic response toward her. We are left with no space to relate to her, which makes her feel more isolated and static. This unapproachability, coupled with Burton's refusal to engage her reader in a relationship is very reminiscent of the dismissive avoidant strategy of regulating attachment closeness and related distress by distancing and undervaluing others.

Domain C: Childrearing

All can be sacrificed and endured in an effort for enslaved children to be free.

When Jacobs was sequestered in the roof garret, her quarters were so small she could not stand, and her shelter from the elements so lacking that she was subjected to all weather and unprotected from vermin. She did this not only to flee her master's threats of rape but because she knew if she fled, he would let her grandmother raise her children away from the plantation, having no need for them. This would mean loving support and attention, satisfaction of all material needs and protection from hard labor on the Flint's plantation.

Again, even while enduring the most miserable conditions, her attachments to her children and grandmother gave her the strength and motivation to continue her resistance.

After living in her garret for seven years and later escaping to the North, the author worked tirelessly to secure better conditions for her children.

Echoed throughout Jacobs' narrative are other family members' voices encouraging her to fight for her children's freedom. Her grandmother, upon learning that her son had fled north and was alive, rejoiced that he was free, even though she knew she would never see him again. Upon learning of her sequestering, she writes that her aunt "sent me word never to yield. She said if I persevered I might, perhaps, gain the freedom of my children; and even if I perished in doing it, that was better than to leave them to groan under the same persecutions that had blighted my own life." Her grandmother assured her she was doing the right thing by stating, "Stand by your own children, and suffer with them till death. Nobody respects a mother who forsakes her children; and if you leave them, you will never have a happy moment." The Jacobs family valued freedom, and caregivers made tremendous sacrifices so that the next generation could be experience some measure of freedom. Sacrifice so that those who come later may be free seems to have been a family value that was transmitted across generations.

Domain D: Resilience

Strong maternal figure of grandmother served to protect Jacobs' family from some hardships by building beneficial relationships with whites.

Harriet Jacobs' grandmother was a black slave, and yet she achieved a position of prominence in her community that was unique to the Jacobs' narrative. Being a figure of such high moral standing conferred protection upon her family, as those in the

community feared falling out of her good graces. Her business endeavors allowed her contact with whites in a less restricted fashion via commerce, and seemed to more fully humanize her for them. Whites respected and even feared her, and were occasionally protective of her. It is curious why the Flint family allowed a slave to achieve such a rare level of autonomy and influence. It's clear there was much interrelatedness between the clans; the Flint family owned the Jacobs clan for generations, and several examples were given of the deeply intertwined nature of their relationships. For example, Mrs. Flint, Harriet Jacobs' mistress, had been raised alongside Harriet's mother as a "foster-sister" by Harriet's grandmother. Jacobs writes "they were both nourished at my grandmother's breast. In fact, my mother had been weaned at three months old, that the babe of the mistress might obtain sufficient food. They played together as children; and, when they became women, my mother was a...servant to her whiter foster sister." Furthermore, Jacobs's maternal aunt serves as a wet nurse for all six Flint children.

One can only assume that complicated dynamics propelled the Flints to consent to such a situation, dynamics that may be ascertained by creating inferences from the material left out of the narrative. For instance, Jacobs' stated that her uncle Ben was around her age and was light-skinned enough to pass for white. Her grandmother was his mom, but we are not told who his father was. One might assume that his father was Mr. Flint, or more likely Mr. Flint's father, meaning that a Flint male may have engaged in some sort of sexual relationships with Jacobs' grandmother. Perhaps this compelled the Flints to offer the grandmother some autonomy in exchange for silence. Furthermore, Mr. Flint appeared easily shamed and humbled by the grandmother, suggested that some sort

of emotionally charged relationship existed between the two that Jacobs' choose not to mention in her memoir.

The valuable relationships and good will Jacobs' grandmother enjoyed with white people allowed for unusual protections for the family. How she achieved such standing and social power is unclear; however this fact was quite important in mitigating the traumatic incidents Harriet suffered as a young enslaved girl.

The benefits of Harriet Jacobs' unusually privileged position offered considerable protection from the inhumane and grotesque conditions of slavery suffered by fellow slaves. As she lived with her grandmother who, along with Jacobs' mother and father, provided the family with all necessary material provisions through paid work for whites, Jacobs had the clothing, food, and safe sleeping conditions so sought after by other slaves in less extraordinary position. Moreover, because her family was intact and had an autonomous home, young Harriet did not have to endure separation from her primary attachment figures, a prominent theme in other narratives researched here. In this way, this family's beneficial connections to whites helped them to preserve the boundaries of their family.

The most detailed and oft discussed example of this protection and privilege involves Jacobs efforts to circumvent Dr. Flints attempts to rape her and make her his concubine. She openly resisted his entreaties, insisting that even though enslaved she had a right to maintain her chastity. She was able to assert this to her master because she held the threat of revealing his improper actions to her grandmother, therefor shaming him within his family and community.

This is illustrated here, in Jacobs description of her continued attempts to ward of his advances; “the state of things grew worse and worse daily. In desperation I told him that I must and would apply to my grandmother for protection. He threatened me with death, and worse than death, if I made any complaint to her.” Her grandmother’s power to protect her is echoed here, and met with grave threats of harm from Dr. Flint who clearly fears and takes seriously her threats to reveal him.

Inevitably, the master’s entreaties become violent in an episode in which the grandmother’s protective power in the author’s life is explicit; “He gave me the blow that would have fallen upon Rose (Dr. Flint’s house slave whom he made eat dog food and sleep outside) if she had still been his slave. My grandmother's attention had been attracted by loud voices, and she entered in time to see a second blow dealt. She was not a woman to let such an outrage, in her own house, go unrebuked. The doctor undertook to explain that I had been insolent. Her indignant feelings rose higher and higher, and finally boiled over in words. ‘Get out of my house!’ she exclaimed. ‘Go home, and take care of your wife and children, and you will have enough to do, without watching my family’." Here the author’s grandmother, an enslaved woman, was able to chase her master out of her home without retribution, upending power dynamics inherent in master- slave relationships. She commanded fear and respect from her master, even his obedience, and employed it to protect her grandchild from the sexual molestation that was the fate of many other enslaved female youth.

The above describes a rare circumstance, which the author acknowledges. She wrote that her predicament, while undeniably dire, was somewhat better than that of young slave girls who lacked such a protective figure; “The lash and the foul talk of her

master and his sons are her teachers. When she is fourteen or fifteen, her owner, or his sons, or the overseer, or perhaps all of them, begin to bribe her with presents. If these fail to accomplish their purpose, she is whipped or starved into submission to their will. She may have had religious principles inculcated by some pious mother or grandmother, or some good mistress; she may have a lover, whose good opinion and peace of mind are dear to her heart; or the profligate men who have power over her may be exceedingly odious to her. But resistance is hopeless." However Jacobs had a means of resistance to this sexual violence in the form of affiliation to her grandmother.

Achieving personal or internal freedom through work

Jacobs' mother and father sought paid work as independent contractors from whites, much as any free person would. Of this the author seemed tremendously proud, as it demonstrated a means of resisting the enslaved position by owning one's labor. This insistence on autonomy seemed to combat the demoralization of enslaved status while simultaneously placing value on continued resistance to it.

The author and her family sought spaces of "freedom", choice, and autonomy within slavery. These efforts elevated the family financially and gained them the respect of others in the community.

This family ethic read that despite one's enslaved status, pockets of personal and individual resistance could be attained. This morality, which Jacobs' is clear was handed down to her, strongly depicts the transgenerational transmission of coping and resistance mechanisms to combat demoralization and maintain.

Both narratives present images of independent female entrepreneurs, who were also enslaved. The historical literature I reviewed for this dissertation did not mention the

existence of this class of black women during slavery, which leads me to believe there is archival work to be done to unearth more of these stories. Jacobs, Jacobs' grandmother and Burton powerfully state to women that despite their status, their labor and their bodies must not be owned.

Furthermore both narratives could be read as a testament to the role of work in mediating the traumatic effects of the enslaved experience. Both women took tremendous pride in their labors, and stated their beliefs in working hard to achieve respect and autonomy. They announce these ideas quietly but clearly, entering into a dialogue with future generations in which they insist that black women own their labor and take pride in it.

Combatting Demoralization through Pride in Race

Jacobs maintains a concept of herself outside of her enslaved position that seems connected to her family's insistence that as a small child, she remain so "fondly shielded" from her status, allowing her to develop a concept of self separate from her deeply compromised circumstance. She has certainty that she is entitled to be treated humanely, despite prevailing laws and societal opinions that clearly differ from these feelings. She regularly offers active resistance to her oppression, as described during a trip on a train in which she insisted on being seated in the dining car after several refusals. Prevailing in her requests, she reflects, "finding I was resolved to stand up for my rights, they concluded to treat me well. Let every colored man and woman do this, and eventually we shall cease to be trampled under foot by our oppressors."

This point is illustrated throughout the narrative, amplified again when the author's elderly relative offers money to purchase her freedom. The author rejects these

efforts, as she feels that if she is bought by anyone, she is confirming that she is chattel. “in my own mind I resolved that not another cent of her hard earnings should be spent to pay rapacious slaveholders for what they called their property. And even if I had not been unwilling to buy what I had already a right to possess, common humanity would have prevented me from accepting the generous offer, at the expense of turning my aged relative out of house and home, when she was trembling on the brink of the grave.”

What was transmitted across generations here seems to be a belief in one’s essential human value despite circumstance, and the primacy of familial relations in sustaining individuals through large scale trauma. Harriet Jacobs had been taught through the examples and instruction of her family that an enslaved life need not be one without dignity.

Jacobs was intelligent black woman, and clearly thought of herself this way. She was able to careful consider the motives and desires of those around her to make immediate decisions concerning who she could trust and who she could address certain entreaties to. As making an incorrect evaluation could cost her life, possessing this skill conferred advantage.

She valued her ability to thoroughly contemplate options and cultivate creative interventions for herself. This capacity allowed her feel effective in what could be considered the most impossible conditions, therefore enabling her to feel vital and effective. This seemed to serve to combat her demoralization.

As well her uncle Ben, who is depicted as a light-skinned African-American male, displays pride in his blackness when he refuses to be seen as a white male. And yet Ben,

whose life is in danger, refused to 'pass' as white by consenting to blend into white society, a choice which would give him considerably heighted comfort, safety, privilege, and ease. It appears that in addition to an emphasis on autonomy, a racial pride was transmitted to Ben through his very close relationship to his mother. His refusal to abandon his blackness reads to me as a refusal to abandon his mother, family and culture in an act of proud racial identity.

Coherence

Revisiting Grice's (1975) maxims that a successful and competent narrative should evidence attention to the quality of information delivered, the quantity of wordage, the relevance of the material to the matter at hand, and finally, the manner and appropriateness of delivery, it can be stated that Burton's narrative is unsuccessful in each way. The narrative is tersely written, with repeated important omissions that leave the reader to assume or invent circumstances that stitch together the disparate pieces until a linear story takes shape. It lacks coherence and internal consistency. Her writing, while eloquent, has a stony, unreflective, and unelaborated quality that distances the reader. As an author, she's also remarkably unaware of her audience; this characteristic simultaneously distances and confuses the reader.

Reading Annie Burton's narrative is a disconcerting, dislocating experience, as the work is characterized by its lack of integration and focus. Her recollections were inconsistent, somewhat scattered memories delivered in dislocated fragments, broken from each other rather than creating an engaged, contiguous conversation. While the narrative is organized in a linear fashion, apparently beginning when the author is four years of age, it fails to deliver content in an organized fashion, leaving the reader little

sense of how old Burton is, where she is or whom she is with. This disorganized discourse is consistent with a dismissive/avoidant attachment style in which a subject exhibits “ideas inconsistent with our usual ideas of physical causality or space/time relations, and fails to correct or comment on them”. Her memoir is replete with what the AAI would describe as a “reasoning lapses”, or failures of orientation and metacognitive monitoring that often involve inconsistencies in detailing space, time, and causation. These lapses suggest slight alterations of consciousness thought to be caused by the experience of trauma.

The sense of temporal dislocation is marked, as the reader must struggle to figure out how much time has elapsed between passages and what the author may be feeling at a given time. That the reader is left to surmise what Burton may have been feeling, or what may have motivated her actions, speaks to the lack of affective display and reflection offered in the work. The reader must apply effort to make Burton’s narrative complete, as she reveal little about her internal life

Jacobs’ narrative is successful on all levels. It is remarkably coherent, considering the extent of the trauma described. She manages to generate accurate memories and relay them in a way that holds her many audiences in mind. She produces generous data without being verbose. Jacobs does not minimize the affective content of the material, and doesn’t appear overwhelmed by it.

I can surmise that her narrative, which displays self-audience awareness, cognitive flexibility and rational thought points to the presence of early, secure attachments that enabled her to survive traumatizing circumstance without experiencing traumatic fragmentation. Her strong, intact, resourceful family appears to have been the

central protective factor allowing Jacobs to triumph in her circumstance and later produce a reflective, empathic, and insightful narrative.

Context, Dialogue, Doublevoicedness, and Racial Identity

Read contextually, Burton and Jacobs' ability to work for themselves during a time in which, as Angela Davis wrote "the tautological definition of black people as servants is indeed one of the essential props of racist ideology" is worthy of examination (Davis, 1981). While both women engaged in service work to whites, they were not wholly passive agents in a system that existed to exploit them for the benefit of whites. Burton, who takes many jobs during the course of her narrative, is careful to relate how much she is paid for each endeavor, signaling that she feels worth of a salary. Moreover as she ages and assumes custody of her nephew, she never again returns to a service position, instead opting for the truly agentic role of entrepreneur. She own restaurants and rooming houses through the end of the narrative, communicating that the goal for black women must be to own one's labor to secure a measure of freedom from the bind that Davis describes above. She rejects this narrow role of servant, at a time when dominant roles available to black woman were that of slave, laborer, or concubine. Her narrative is encoded with a call for entrepreneurship as a form of resistance for black women.

Additionally, at a historical moment when teaching blacks to read was illegal, when all slaves were considered to be illiterate and incapable of learning to read, the choice to produce a written testament with marked, coded messages to other blacks is a choice that transmits the authors' knowledge that other slaves would find ways to obtain their books, read them and decipher the coded messages. They relate that despite dominant themes depicting black women as lazy, slovenly, hypersexual and stupid, "You

are competent, smart, literate and agentic". It is an open rejection of racist notions diminishing their aptitude and an embrace of black intellectualism. The narratives sought to inspire and counteract dominant themes that worked to degrade us, then and now.

Jacobs was an eloquent and purposeful writer who seemed to seize an opportunity to document the enslaved experience while also producing an abolitionist work meant to enrage and compel to action its white readers. The entire narrative is self-aware, fraught with evidence that she was continually educating her white audience. At times this voice was explicit, unambiguous, direct and preaching, seeking to chastise its white audience and forbid them to hide: "In view of these things, why are ye silent, ye free men and women of the north? Why do your tongues falter in maintenance of the right? Would that I had more ability! But my heart is so full, and my pen is so weak!" She is pleading with the white audience to use its power and privilege to end slavery, and provides many examples of its deformations on black and white character to coerce outrage.

She sought to inform whites of the ways in which they were degraded by their own peculiar institution, their morals decayed and their families troubled by the wonton access of white men to enslaved black women; "I can testify, from my own experience and observation, that slavery is a curse to the whites as well as to the blacks. It makes white fathers cruel and sensual; the sons violent and licentious; it contaminates the daughters, and makes the wives wretched. And as for the colored race, it needs an abler pen than mine to describe the extremity of their sufferings, the depth of their degradation. Yet few slaveholders seem to be aware of the widespread moral ruin occasioned by this wicked system. Their talk is of blighted cotton crops--not of the blight on their children's souls." This composition was a bold one for a free woman to write and publish while

slavery was still in practice. It was not a crime to take a black life at this time, and this invitation to action (and attempt to shame whites) seems particularly dangerous.

Similarly, she had much to say to her African-American readers regarding the continued fight for basic human rights. Her lengthy descriptions of the racism and maltreatment she experienced in the free North can be seen as an encoded warning to black readers to be prepared to experience continued oppression after fleeing North. She beseeches blacks to insist on humane treatment by whites through actively resisting oppression.

Burton and Jacobs' narratives embody pride in race and insistence on individual humanity. They were proud black women who did not seek to distance themselves from the causes of their people or the racial issues of their time. They advocated leading lives of dignity in work and family, and resisting the internalization of racist notions. These are transgressive sentiments, then and now.

Limitations of research

This endeavor was constrained by the small sample size of narratives. As stated in the methods section, interrogating female slave narratives to focus on the experience of parenting and caregiving during slavery seemed wise, as the narratives reviewed for this project penned by women seemed rich with these themes. However placing subsequent constraints upon the time period from which the works could emerge and limiting titles to self-penned works left a sample too limited to reach broader conclusions. Because these criteria left only two narratives to evaluate, the resulting data is too narrow in parts, often specific to one narrative, but without relevance to the other. Entire categories of data emerged from the Jacobs' narrative in particular that had no echoes in Burtons work. This

was less frequently the case in the reverse, as Burton's narrative delivered less content and affective material to work with. While many of Burton findings concern this dearth of data, it created a study that at times felt like two narratives coded side-by-side that were a challenge to integrate. I think a future paper could involve writing separate qualitative and theoretical works about each piece, allowing each woman's story to deliver its own meaning without the shadow of the other's content. Likewise, a study that removed the constraint of historical location may yield more generalizable results

While the qualitative study of these works was engaging, there remains another paper for me to write here, one amplifying my reflections on my affective responses to the narratives. While some of this content is presented below, an autobiographical psychoanalytically informed paper relating specific instances in which I personally came to see more clearly the way transgenerational slavery trauma affects me could make for a rich, although highly personal paper.

Additionally, the two narratives gathered for this study were coded and analyzed by only one investigator, thus no inter-rater reliability was achieved. Although achieving this form of reliability was not the aim of this work, additional estimations of narrative content might have yielded supplementary views and a broader analysis.

Personal Countertransferential Reactions

McCann (1990), Birck (2001), and others write about the secondary traumatization or vicarious traumatization that can occur in people working on issues of torture and genocide, noting that even writing about trauma can be traumatizing. However McCann and Birck do not describe my experience here. I was disturbed, exhausted, depleted, enraged and deeply saddened by the accounts of torture, rape, abuse,

cruelty, defilement and debasement I read, but not traumatized. Perhaps the label of 'trauma' can be applied too generally and may best be reserved for individuals and groups expressing acute traumatic stress.

Yet the process of writing this dissertation was deeply personal. After completing my proposal I moved from a very racially diverse, progressive community to a white, moderate community. I experience a many-fold increase in the racist slights and comments directed at me, and was greatly put off-balance by the behaviors I was witnessing from whites. But writing this dissertation actually helped me combat demoralization by providing an ever present intellectual backdrop for my observations. Jacobs' suggestion that slavery sickens whites and blacks provided much solace and a means of accessing sympathy for the ignorance and nastiness I was suddenly experiencing on a regular basis. Burton and Jacobs became companions in this pain and guides to my understanding of the continuum of racist oppression in America. Moreover, Burton and Jacobs were at times the only black women I held any communion with, placing me in an internal dialogue with them that helped sustain me through a challenging transition.

Part of the joy of creating this dissertation has been the privilege of reading so deeply into the history of African-American experience. This pursuit is not only academic; it is deeply personal and was at times painful and enraging. As someone who has always been exquisitely aware of the functions of racism in my own life, I grew even more aware at given moments of the historical nature of my rage and discomfort. Likewise, I feel this work has sharpened my attention to the racist conflicts my black

patient's experience, situating their expressions of racist insults on a continuum beginning with slavery.

Echoes in Clinical Practice:

Slaves experienced multiple traumas during slavery and after Emancipation[12]. These traumas, left unresolved due to the culturally enforced silencing of affect and testimony, gave rise to slavery related conflicts that are still alive today and often activated in therapy with African-Americans. The following vignettes from my own clinical work are presented to illustrate the ways in which slavery trauma arises in the language and content of African-Americans in therapy.

Mark

While on internship I had the experience of treating Mark, a 33 year-old AA male from the north who had moved south several years prior to be near close family. A basketball prodigy in high school, Mark was tall and athletically built. Most likely of above average intelligence, Mark's accounts of his life were descriptive and vivid; he was engaged and engaging. He grew up in a matrifocal family of five in a small, exceedingly violent city in which he observed murders, beatings and crimes of retribution from a young age. Despite a pronounced limp, he walked with dignity and a touch of menace. Mark was brought in by his mother, who was concerned that Mark was waking screaming each night due to nightmares and had been observed "spaced out", entering mildly dissociative states in which he would shake and sweat.

While south, Mark worked as a drug runner; he was also an honor student engaged in training for a medical certificate. Many members of Mark's family appeared

[12] Of course there were no studies done examining the mental health of Emancipation-era African-Americans, so inferences can only be made based on what we now know about the effects of trauma on attachment relationships and individual and community psychology

to have been involved in the drug trade and he ran drugs with his cousins. His brother, several years his junior, was in prison for shooting a man at point blank range in the head while robbing drug dealers.

Eight months prior to entering treatment, Mark was shot ten times at close range by friends. He was hospitalized for several months before returning north to his mother's home to recover.

Our first months of treatment were spent familiarizing Mark with the symptoms of his PTSD, educating him about his diagnosis and walking him through coping techniques. Once he began to experience some relief, he revealed that he was again selling drugs, running a "small hustle" because he felt pressure from his girlfriend, who was gainfully employed, to provide better for her and her daughter. Soon he was engaged in various disputes in the neighborhood, some defending his brother who had just been released from prison, and others related to his hustle. After one scuffle at a bodega he related feeling prepared to die if someone "came at him wrong". He would not tolerate being made to feel humiliation from anyone. "That's the way shit goes down sometimes" he would say often, feeling resigned to become a statistic on black male homicide. He refused to relinquish his honor, even if that meant dying.

Mark also revealed that while selling drugs in the south, he had murdered several people prior to his own attempted murder. He related this to me quietly and ambivalently, giving enough information for me to understand the content without ever actually saying the word "killed". He teared when attempting to discuss his evils, but defended his belief that it was either "them or me".

Upon my exit from internship, Mark never returned to therapy. His transfer clinician was a white female whom he had no interest in seeing, stating. “There’s no way she could understand the kind of life I have to live. She’d probably call the cops first chance she got.”

Mark was proud of his “hustle’, a sentiment I have heard echoed in therapy with African-Americans before. There is an extensive tradition of doing hair, “making dinners”, detailing cars, selling pies, etc., on the side to supplement meager incomes. Selling small amounts of drugs has also become a hustle, a vibrant yet illegal shadow economy. These ways of supplementing income so that individuals and families can better provide for themselves has a long tradition in the community, and is illustrated by Burton’s and Jacobs’ proud detailing of the many “hustles” they used to better life for their families. Jacobs’ took in laundry, cared for children, helped her aunt bake goodies, and Burton did laundry, ironing, cooking, childcare, housekeeping and more. Jacobs’ grandmother perhaps best evidences this, as her hustle allowed her live almost independent of the oppressive powers of the plantation. In a culture in which black personhood is so diminished and black life so devalued, Mark’s hustle gave him the ability to provide nice things for his family so that they at least did not appear to be impoverished and lacking. He wore $600 custom sneakers to sessions, and despite having a suspended license due to being on parole, he drove an impressive car. Mark lived in poverty, but that impression could not be gathered from his presentation. Moreover work and the ability to have a “hot” hustle was a source of pride for him, and helped to combat his general demoralization.

Clinically, Mark's sense of a foreshortened future, his heighted rage responses, and his fixation with never being made to feel weak again could easily be understood within the context of a normative presentation of PTSD. However his murderous history could also be seen as proof of sociopathy. Mark was an oppressed, disenfranchised and hunted being, who responded to this terror by engaging in anti-social and murderous behaviors. And yet I struggled with how the ugly things he had done were in-line with the mandates of his cultural milieu and generational zeitgeist. There are pockets of African-American society so traumatized and truncated by the daily demoralizations of poverty and racist assault that some individuals within them seem to exist in a heightened state of continual rage response. This subculture sometimes announces its post-traumatic slave burden through violence. When with Mark I acutely felt the sickness that was slavery had become the sickness of a racist society that so openly allowed so many black men to suffer and perish.

And yet with Mark, his 'adaptive sociopathy', a sick response to a sick and reprehensible life circumstance, left me unsure of an approach to my countertransference. I was not his priest, and therapy is not confession, so what to do with his murderous confessions? I never figured this out, and yet I think Mark appreciated that I grappled with the nuances of this and didn't reject him for his unthinkable transgressions.

He was never a monster to me. Indeed, I had great sympathy for him and mourned the loss of his potential. Such an intelligent, insightful, charismatic person could have pursued a much different path if placed in different circumstances with different expectations. Throughout the treatment I vacillated between these many understandings and never arrived at an integrated way to view his experiences.

Mark lived in a micro-culture of trigger-happy individuals willing to die to be respected. The transactional currency of these relationships was respect, the desire to be seen and treated with the dignity that was hard for them to come by that they fought for in every interaction. For these men, whose ancestors were so demoralized and degraded by slavery, the Black Codes, Jim Crow, etc., they craved respect more than they cared to live. His presentation must be considered in a sociocultural and historical frame that incorporates his existence within a traumatized community and family.

The angry swagger that was central to his presentation and worn like amour melted a bit when he sat down across from me. As an African-American clinician, he felt I understood and maybe even lived similar struggles, and felt safe enough to lay down his sword and shield for fifty minutes each week. At times I saw his kill-or-be-killed philosophy as an expression of the internalized and festering rage of an entire people without outlet for the furies of daily indignities suffered, and the refusal to be continually castrated by a culture that does not acknowledge ones humanity. I saw the continual exertion of his manhood as a way of railing against the humiliating castrations of black males during slavery. His hyper masculinization, his existence in a continual state of war, was an exertion of maleness and personhood that shouted "My circumstances must be confronted!", and "I am not a diminished man!" By necessity, these sentiments sometimes turned deadly. What he failed to see was that in taking the life of other black males, he was also devaluing their humanity in an act of internalized rage and hatred.

I had no doubt that for Mark, these expressions were not platitudes or the puffy-chested inanities of someone attempting to seem brave in the face of paralyzing fear, but instead as the yearnings of someone who longed to live a life with dignity. What was not

conscious for Mark, in my clinical estimation, were the ways in which this mammoth history of African-American oppression served to create the circumstances he struggled in each day, and made respect such a hard won, rare commodity. What he searched for without awareness was the Holy Grail for oppressed individuals and communities, a recognition that grievous wrong has been done, followed by a recognition that the traumatic circumstances endured were not the consequence of inherent inferiority, but the failings of brutal oppressors or entrenched oppressive systems. The hope is that renewed respect and recognition of humanity follows.

In discussing Mark's desires for expensive clothing and his impeccable appearance, he revealed that "proud black people don't look like trash. You see white dudes, beat up sneakers, dirty clothes, just looking busted, but it doesn't matter to them. You see a black dude like that you think he's a junkie or he doesn't have a hot hustle." We unpacked this in very explicit terms, communicating that neither of us was afraid to discuss the vicissitudes of blackness, poverty, or black rage. We arrived at the idea that black people often feel so degraded, that pride in appearance takes on elevated importance. From this larger, hypothetical place, we moved to discuss the ways in which this idea impacted Mark. We measured the importance of transmitting pride and having a "hot hustle" against the dangerous illegality of his money-making activities. Mark was clear that he would do whatever necessary not to appear powerless and downtrodden. I saw this as a direct response to the deprivation of slavery, Jim Crow and subsequent racisms: a statement that we cannot be so dishonored again.

Mark's rage at his diminished circumstances seemed clear in treatment, and yet their roots in the debasing experience of slavery, the experience that gave rise to

entrenched black poverty, limited opportunity, the defilement of black bodies, and the seemingly intractable racism that deforms his life chances may have operated outside of his conscious awareness. The historical circumstance that served to create the conditions he suffered in begins with slavery, but he was only marginally aware of this.

During our work I continually tried to validate Mark's view of his world as one in which violence, oppression, poverty, and truncated life chances were realities that informed the choices all around him. While we were allied in our shared view of the reality of black oppression, we differed in our optimism regarding our circumstances, making me careful to gently trouble his fatalism by challenging him to imagine a life free from violence and illegality. I continually encouraged him to resume studies toward his certificate in order to create options for legal, non-lethal means of having a hustle.

We spoke of politics and news in our sessions, of recent events in the small city and the conditions black people there were living in. Because Mark's life appeared to be in such imminent peril, as is this case for many poor, urban black males, we kept the treatment mostly in the here-and now, echoing the sense of urgency around keeping him alive and helping him make life-sustaining choices each day. I related to him that while we had arrived at the meaning behind his hustle and his violence, I was nonetheless troubled by his actions personally and ethically.

This difference in worldview enabled us to critically explore our conceptions of black maleness and black community violence. Larger conversations about the oppressions and hegemony we both acknowledged suffering under provided fertile and safe surrounds for us to continue the conversation about keeping Mark safe and out of prison. I was able to acknowledge the necessity of Mark's need to appear strong and be

ready for a fight, and we explored non-traditional ways Mark could express his strength without risking his life. I invited him to use his considerable cunning and resilience to save his own life. To this end I also introduced him to a director and staff psychiatrist on my unit, both tall, athletically-built very masculine black males whom I hoped would provide models of powerful but non-violent black manhood that would validate his need to display personal strength while illustrating ways to be responsible and provide in a safe way. I also felt that as a man who excelled in school, these thoroughly academic men would appeal to his desire to grow and develop his intellect. Mark eventually began seeing the psychiatrist regularly, and began a successful course of pharmacotherapy.

Qaunisha

Qaunisha, a receptionist and student, was a young mother whose own mother lost custody of her at the age of three. She was the fourth generation of children in her family not be raised by their biological parents, which she attributed to "interference from the system". My task was to relay to DCF, the Department of Children and Families, my impression of her mental wellness and ability to parent her own children, an eight year-old girl with enuresis, and a five year old boy of apparently normal developmental trajectory. DCF was moving to take away her children if she did not attend weekly psychotherapy, twice weekly parenting groups, and weekly family therapy. The reason for the initial referral was unclear, but I suspected Quanisha was borderline with narcissistic and histrionic features. Qaunisha, who did not have a car and lived in a suburban area (because she felt the schools were better), had a hard time making her appointments. DCF felt she was noncompliant. Qaunisha spoke openly about the long history of estrangement and reunion with mothers and children in her family, assessing

that after four generations "DCF is the f+#*ing problem. Maybe if they got out of our lives, and let us work it out we could be OK. *But it's like living in the big house waiting for the master to tell your kids they gotta go to the field."*

For some African-Americans, the indignities of involvement in the child welfare system mimic the indignities of slavery. This comparison is often and openly addressed in our community. In Qaunisha's estimation, DCF, like slavery, is a paternalistic organization that functions to remove the right of black people to raise their own children and disrupt black family process. She felt her life and family were not her own, subject to the supervision of state systems that she understood largely as nouveau oppressors.

In her statement Quanisha compared the cotton fields of the 1800's to the current foster care system. I read her to imagine that in both theatres, mothers lose all agency in their children's lives, their parental roles usurped by an institution and their power to influence the trajectory of their children's lives overwhelmed or abolished. I also hear her referencing her personal history in the context of a larger American history of separations of black children from their families. While young field slaves were more likely to be sold away from their mothers while young because their labor was so valuable (field slaves were generally not expected to live past the age of 25), black children are largely over-represented in foster care populations and more likely to be removed from their homes to be raised in group homes than white children (who are also adopted at higher rates). Indeed adoption agencies frequently charge five to ten thousand dollars less for black babies than white, because African-American babies are less frequently sought out for adoption.

Qaunisha's history included several generations of broken, traumatic attachments and mother-child separations under the purview of DCF. In this way the child welfare system was seen as the new auction block, the site of traumatic family separation dictated by white institutions. Quanisha, her mother and several aunts and uncles were shuffled back and forth between their families of origins and foster homes, group homes, and detention facilities. Her own experience, and the one she feared for her children, was that of being raised in turns by DCF (white) and her family (African-American). This racialized split in caregiving and the subsequent conflation of caregiving roles between white systems and black caregivers has its origins in slavery, is a resonant theme in the narratives above, and is consciously framed as such by many African-Americans.

Quanisha's words, uttered during my initial meeting with her, felt like an effective use of heartfelt, affect-laden imagery to describe her situation and an attempt to feel union with me through shared historic oppression. I readily acknowledged her metaphor, and offered that many African Americans feel similarly returned to master-slave dynamics when engaged in power relationships with white societal forces. Her language was visceral, and I was certain to let her know that it resonated with me.

Curiously, she positions her family as "*living in the big house*", which seemed to represent an acknowledgement of privilege within difficult circumstances. She was speaking to the much improved quality of life post-slavery for African-Americans while simultaneously emphasizing the continued constrains of institutionalized racism and subsequent racialized traumas. These continued traumas truncate access to individual freedoms and liberties; for her this meant the right to raise her own children as she saw fit. She rightly positioned this conflict within the context of post-slavery oppression.

The details of DCF's generations-old involvement in this family were unclear, but DCF felt she was unfit to provide her children with an adequate material or emotional environment. She worked, and from case conferences I ascertained she was very involved in her children's education. She also held numerous certificates from parenting skills classes that DCF had ordered her to attend. However she rarely attended therapy sessions, perhaps feeling therapy to be another mandate of an oppressive system imposed on her in disregard of her will.

Quanisha's circumstances involved the probable loss of her family and as such work with her involved more than creating a strong alliance in which a sustaining transference coupled with empathic listening would help her illuminate conflicts. Her situation begged for a more active approach from me, one that sought to validate and recognize the systemic factors that functioned in her life. In this was I worked closely with the many other players in her life, including her children's teachers, her welfare and DCF workers, and her physicians. She was immediately referred for psychiatric evaluation to help me illuminate her diagnosis and determine if adjunctive mediation was needed. In addition to this, I sought counsel from a compassionate clinician of color at a local Dialectical Behavioral Therapy clinic nearby. I also located more skilled clinicians to treat her enuretic child. Our time together was spent coordinating her services and reviewing the concrete challenges she faced during the week in what I hope she experienced as a supportive place of understanding. She needed a community of caregivers to support and scaffold her, to provide the structure, ego strength, mood stability, and parenting support she would need to succeed as a parent.

If she had remained in treatment and we had worked more consistently on her Axis II difficulties, we may have eventually unpacked and named more historic rage, and divined outlets of expression that weren't destructive to herself or her family. She needed help in finding the cunning and resilience necessary to navigate an oppressive system without harming herself. Her own history of traumatic separation and estrangement may have impacted her own parenting choices in ways that were unwise. Likewise her open rage and contempt at the master/slave dynamic she felt DCF placed her in seemed to echo historic insult and injury she was unsure how to cope with. This rage potentially overwhelmed her, leading her to act out against the system in ways that caused her to eventually loose custody of her children.

Danielle

Danielle, a young woman attending a prominent college and a member of a women of color support group laughed, "white guys like me cause I'm light bright and almost white". She voiced her resentment at the attention she received from white men whom she felt were "looking for that experience". Yet she dated them, relating, "When you're a woman you date your oppressor anyway. You give birth to your f*$%ing oppressor, right? So why not f%$ that stupid white guy and let his money finance your first novel. He's the one who thinks he's getting over 'cause he thinks you're gonna be swinging from damn banana trees in bed!"

Most obviously, Danielle felt that her logic upended common gendered and racial stereotypes concerning interracial relationships- that the individual of the dominant race is a fetishist and the partner from the oppressed group is either lucky to marry up or carrying out a grand enactment of racialized self-hatred. Danielle, clearly thoughtful

about the interplay of racism and sexism in her life, made use of available racial and gendered tropes to seek an ingenious space to use her objectified sexuality for personal gain. Danielle's discourse was characterized by her anger and contempt for the men she felt chose her because her light skin made her more attractive to those preferring a Eurocentric beauty ideal – more Halle Berry than Hottentot Venus- but craved to know if black women truly are different in bed. This dynamic is clearly historic and clearly imbedded in slavery, as was her anger. She was aware of being fetishization and seemed disgusted yet intrigued by it, knowing that their desire for her was in itself an expression of their disdain for black female bodies. She was speaking directly to the colorist valuation of black bodies during slavery in which 'quadroons' and 'octoroons' fetched higher prices as concubines than did darker- skinned black women. These colorist notions live on today. As she spoke these words, slavery was again actively in the room.

The group laughed raucously in response Danielle's words, as they were almost performed in order to garner nods and chuckles. Several women agreed that in their privileged environment, interactions with white males appeared charged with sex and power.

Danielle fancied herself to be a cunning individual, able to subjugate her feelings about these circumstances long enough to garner needed financial support. Like Burton and Jacobs, Danielle was practical and felt that beneficial relationships with whites were advantageous to her. And yet she felt she was making a fool of these white males by mocking their explicitly racist desire for her while exploiting them for their access to money and contacts.

And yet I felt that her use of her black female sexuality for gain distressed her. What she presented was an empowered self who was willing to exploit her light-skin for gain, but I gathered she was conflicted, demoralized and angered about this. She knew what these men were communicating desire to sleep with a black woman who looked more like them, but could not recognize the beauty in those who could not pass. Her light skin was exotic without being as threatening as that of darker females.

Like Ben, Jacobs' brother who insisted on his blackness despite his white appearance, I wanted her to assert that she was just as black as those of us with darker skin. I felt my own discomfort, which I later identified as my desire for her to reject the privilege of her light skin outright in an act of solidarity with me. And yet I knew that as an African-American, one must look for spaces of leverage and use them to the utmost, as windows quickly close and opportunities may be few.

Chapter 7: Summary

Recognition is necessary in the transition from persecuted group to acknowledged and redeemed group. Clinically it is understood that social support and empathic response can be mutative factors in recovering from trauma. Indeed, an accepted general treatment for trauma recovery is the development of a narrative account of what has happened in the presence of a believing other. These types of healing interventions are required to address slavery trauma and cannot occur in the midst of silence. At present the American people are largely silent in openly discussing the atrocity of slavery and refuse to acknowledge its present day reverberations in their culture and psyche..

Racism against African-Americans in this country is the present day reverberation of the doctrines of white supremacy and dominance that made slavery possible. While this county struggles to engage in (sometimes successful) conversations about race and racism, slavery acts as an unannounced subtext in many of our national debates. Indeed there are times when conversations about race happen quite openly (such as during the election of Barak Obama as president) however, left out of the national conversation is the recognition of the historical construct of slavery that lay at the root of American racism. While many popular art forms seek to grapple openly with the complexities of living in a racist society, slavery itself is rarely a media subject. We have Kara Walker's powerful, sickening images of the abuse of women and children in slavery, but why aren't there more graphic, affect laden depictions of this event?

For an event that served to shape the course of American history like perhaps few others, there is a deficiency of large scale cultural products examining the effect and reverberation of the event on present society. As Yuval Taylor (1999) writes, "(Slavery) was an established fact long before the birth of our nation; it caused out greatest war; it

has shadowed every struggle, defeat, and victory of our land… *blacks still resent it* and we are all still oppressed by its legacy (p. xv)." Unlike other genocides, American chattel slavery is one in which we are all implicated; every American has some relationship to this event, whether our ancestors were present at the time or not. We all benefit each day from the physical and technological progress this country was able to make as a result of four centuries of free and forced labor. Perhaps because we all bear a personal relationship to the tragedy, as a culture we flee from national conversations about slavery for fear that they will devolve into name calling, accusations and calls for reparations. The fact that all Americans are implicated in slavery and its legacies proves too painful for us to bear, consider, and discuss; thus the mammoth impact of this event remains unmetabolized.

In the case of American slavery, this has not happened. While notable African-American art forms keep slavery alive through representation, as a culture America is silent about what occurred. African-American intellectuals[13], writers like Morrison and Johnson[14], musicians, painters[15], choreographers[16], and myriad black artist have produced various works about slavery, ensuring that is isn't completely erased from America's collective conscious. As important as the reformulation of identity, recognition is necessary in the transition from persecuted group to recognized and redeemed group. Central to the new cultural identity is recognition by the larger society that unspeakable things have happened to this group and that they are on the right side of

[13] Henry Louis Gates, E. Franklin Frazier, Wilma King, Joy DeGruy Leary, among many.
[14] See Beloved and Middle Passage, respectively
[15] Jacob Lawrence, Johnnie M. Mayberry Gilbert, and John W. Jones are notable
[16] See Ailey's "Revelations", and the body of work by Ralph Lemmon, Ron Brown, and Garth Fagan

history. Trauma must be "understood, explained, and made coherent through public representation and discourse." (Eyerman, 2004, p.160)[17].

For African-Americans to deal with this legacy of trauma, the historical injustices of slavery must be remembered and recognized as traumatic events that continue to shape identities and familial and cultural structures in the present.

[17] Eyerman uses this definition of cultural trauma from Neil Smelser: "A memory accepted and publicly given credence by a relevant membership group and evoking an event or situation which is (a) laden with negative affect, (b) represented as indelible, and (c) regarded as threatening a society's [or group's] existence or violating one or more of its fundamental cultural presuppositions." (Eyerman citing Neil Smelser, p 161)

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