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## **Course Title**

### **African American Literary Texts**

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## Introduction

Learning literature at university has always been controversial and questionable. The controversy goes into whether literature should be taught for teaching linguistic and communicative competence or as a cultural package of the Anglo-Saxons texts. Nonetheless, teaching literature fails to achieve both goals perfectly. It is not merely the fault of literature as a subject or the weaknesses of the learners, but rather of approaches, methods and strategies used by teachers and educators to handle the huge bulk of literature.

American Literature has always been a motivating material to teach due to its short period of time (regarding the British one), and because of its balkanization. The latter is summarized in what we call the *ethnic literature*. Ethnic literary traditions of the United States include the African American literature, Native American literature, Chicano and US Latino literature, Asian American literature, as well as emergent literatures such as Indian or Arab American. Analyzing these literatures can lead to a single focus on the comparative aspects with the Anglo-Saxon literature; however, we teach the African American Literature as a tool to develop the students' understanding of literature in general and of the African American literature in particular.

In our course, we rely on two important methods in order to achieve a successful transmission of information and to attain a total understanding of the African American literature, which are *chronology* and *illustration*. We divided the whole package of the African American literature into periods (not movements) and in each single period we illustrate with a text that represents the period with its themes and other literary devices. Furthermore, in each lesson, we present a literary technique in order to involve students into the course and to train them to develop their literary competences by practicing the technique presented at the end of each course.

## Course Objectives

This course aims at:

- ✓ Developing an awareness of the essential elements of African American Literature
- ✓ Analyzing African American literary texts
- ✓ Be skillful in reading and using literary texts critically and empathetically

## Course Description

*African American Literary Texts* is a semi-annual course designed for second year license students of English; though, other learners can use it to learn about African American Literature and literary texts. Most importantly, it is intended to establish a significant method of teaching literary texts that combines between the background of the texts and their literary analysis. This course is to be delivered approximately over a period of fourteen weeks with an average of one session per week, each lasts ninety minutes.

This course relies largely on the reading assignments, so the classroom sessions are mainly devoted to the practical part. The course introduces students to the writings of authors of African descent in America. It is updated according to the changes that were brought about to the history of American literature in the last thirty years. However, the course is not based on the authors themselves, but most of the characteristics of African American literary texts are introduced and found by students themselves throughout the course and by the analysis of the texts chosen for each lesson. The course is divided into five lessons and each lesson has its sections according to the characteristics that are traced in each text. Regardless of the many fictional and non-fictional writings that exist in the African American literature, we have chosen few texts that represent the pre-slavery and the post-slavery era to trace the differences that were brought about to the African American texts throughout history.

# Lesson One: The Literature of Slavery and Freedom (1746/1865)

## Lesson Objectives

At the end of this lesson, the students will be able to:

- ✓ Identify the characteristics of the slavery and freedom era.
- ✓ Discuss the different themes of the era.
- ✓ Analyze a literary or a historical text using rhetorical devices.

### 1.1. Background

African American literature made its appearance as an independent premise since the slavery era. It is inevitably considered as a part of American literature for it represents a huge minority group in North America. It is written by persons who have in a way or another African descent. It is consequently called African American Literature. Its beginning dates back to the slavery era when every African in America was a slave.

By the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, African Diaspora made a remarkable change in the demography of the Northern part of the American continent. African American slaves, being the majority group among American minorities, made the African American writers mostly remarkable in terms of fiction and poetry. Before the American civil war, the main problems that marked the African American's life were race and color tension. The concept of inferiority and distinction between blacks and whites, or more precisely slaves and their masters, made the fixing slave status for black Americans what pushed African Americans writers to pave their way to a more appropriate status within community<sup>i</sup>.

Before the American independence, Lucy Terry wrote *Bars Fight*, a poem that narrates the killing incident of her neighbors by the Indians<sup>ii</sup>. Phillis Wheatley started her writings by a collection of poems entitled *Poems On Various Subjects Religious And Moral* published in

1773, three years before the American Independence. Among the early African writers was Jupiter Hammon, as Terry, he published a collection of poems *An Evening Thought: Salvation by Christ with Penitential Cries* in 1761. *Our Nig* (1859) by Harriet Wilson was the first African American fictional work to be published. It deals with the life of the few free blacks who lived in the north.

Slaves Narratives were writings of African American former slaves who managed to escape and live freely. These slaves' writings appeared in the middle of the 19th century to narrate the details of life in the south. An example is *Aunt Phyllis Cabin* by Marry Henderson Eastman. However, the most notable slave narratives are Frederick Douglass' autobiography and Harriet Jacob's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave's Girl*<sup>iii</sup>.

The abolition of slavery was the major theme in African American literary works during the Antebellum Period. It is the period that takes place during a couple of decades before the civil war when America has known a certain rise of industry. The period witnessed a kind of struggle between abolitionists (those who support the abolition of slavery) and the supporters of slavery, regardless of the race of both sides. During that period, many black slaves focused on the narration of their stories such as Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, and William Well Brown. At that time, literature was one of the tools used to call for the abolition of slavery.

The Antebellum African American literature mainly consists of abolitionists' poems and slaves' narrations which show injustice and oppression of slavery. During this period, many abolitionist newspapers appeared such as The Liberator. Such newspapers were a relief for the slaves to tell their stories. William Lloyd Garrison and Lydia Maria Child appeared as prominent names in newspaper editing.<sup>iv</sup> The Antebellum Period was an altering stage in the American history. It included a population shift from the agricultural south to the industrial north, civil war that ended in the abolition of slavery and the growth of feminist movements.

One of the main important texts during the slavery and the freedom era is Frederick Douglass' speech "What to the slave is the fourth of July." The text represents the shift between slavery and freedom.

### **1.2. Text: Frederick Douglass' "What to the Slave is the fourth of July"**

#### **1.2.1. Frederick Douglass Biography**

Frederick Douglass was an escaped slave who became a prominent activist, author and public speaker. He became a leader in the abolitionist movement, which wanted to end slavery, before and during the Civil War. After that conflict and the Emancipation Proclamation of 1862, he continued to push for equality and human rights until his death in 1895.

Douglass' 1845 autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, described his time as a slave in Maryland. It was one of five autobiographies he penned, along with dozens of noteworthy speeches, despite receiving minimal formal education.

#### **1.2.2. Background of the Text**

At the invitation of the Rochester Ladies Anti-Slavery Society, Frederick Douglass delivered this speech on July 5, 1852, at Corinthian Hall in Rochester, New York. It was reported and reprinted in Northern newspapers and was published and sold as a forty-page pamphlet within weeks of its delivery. People who heard Douglass speak were generally sympathetic to his remarks. A newspaper noted that when he sat down, "there was a universal burst of applause." Nonetheless, many who read his speech would not have been so enthusiastic. Even Northerners who were anti-slavery were not necessarily for abolition. Many were content to let Southerners continue to hold slaves; a right they believed was upheld by the Constitution. They simply did not want to slavery to spread to areas where it did not exist.

### ➤ Critical Thinking Questions

- What does the fourth of July represent in America?
- What is the purpose of Douglass' speech, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"
- What examples of American contradictions and hypocrisy does Frederick Douglass point out in the speech?
- What techniques does Douglass employ to highlight the barbarity of slavery to his audience?
- How can America celebrate the Fourth of July today while also being accountable to the nation's full history?

## 1.3. Rhetoric

### ➤ Definition

Rhetoric is the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, especially the exploitation of figures of speech and other compositional techniques.

### ➤ Rhetorical Devices

Rhetorical devices use words in a different way to convey meaning or to persuade. It is also a technique used to evoke emotions within the reader or audience. Certain types of rhetorical devices are considered figurative language because they depend on a non-literal usage of certain words or phrases. The following are the most notable rhetorical devices:

#### • Alliteration

Alliteration refers to the sameness between the initial consonant sounds in a phrase. The sentence "Betty botter bought a bit of butter" is one example of. Alliteration is often associated with tongue twisters for kids.

#### • Allusion

Allusion is a reference to an event, place, or person. For example, you might say, "I can't get there that quickly, I'm not hero!" Referring to something well known allows the writer to make a point without elaborating in great detail.

- **Amplification**

Amplification is the repetition of a word or expression for emphasis, often using additional adjectives to clarify the meaning. "Work, hard work love, needs patience" is an example of amplification because the author is using the phrase "hard work" to distinguish his feelings from love that is mere infatuation.

- **Analogy**

An analogy explains one thing in terms of another to highlight the ways in which they are alike. "He's as flaky as a snowstorm" would be one example of an analogy. Analogies that are very well known sometimes fall into the categories of idioms or figures of speech.

- **Anaphora**

Anaphora is the repetition of a word or phrase in successive phrases. "So, let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania..." is an example from Martin Luther King's famous speech. The use of anaphora creates parallelism and rhythm, which is why this technique is often associated with music and poetry. However, any form of written work can benefit from this rhetorical device.

- **Antanagoge**

Antanagoge is the use of a criticism and a compliment together to lessen the impact. For example: "The car is not pretty, but it runs great", because you are referring to the vehicle's good performance as a reason to excuse its unattractive appearance.

- **Antimetabole**

Antimetabole is the repetition of words or phrases in reverse order. The famous John F. Kennedy quote, "Ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country" is a well-known example.

- **Antiphrasis**

Antiphrasis uses a word with an opposite meaning for ironic or humorous effect. "We named our chihuahua Goliath" is an example because a chihuahua is a very small dog and Goliath is a giant warrior from the famous Bible story.

- **Antithesis**

Antithesis makes a connection between two things. Neil Armstrong said, "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." This pairs the idea of one man's individual action with the greater implication for humanity as a whole.

- **Appositive**

An appositive places a noun or noun phrase next to another noun for descriptive purposes. An example would be, "Elizabeth, teacher of this class, wrote the questions." In this phrase, "teacher of this class" is the appositive that describes Elizabeth's role.

- **Epanalepsis**

Epanalepsis is the repetition of something from the beginning of a clause or sentence at the end. Consider the Walmart slogan, "Always Low Prices. Always." The repeated words act as bookends, driving the point home.

- **Epithet**

An epithet is a descriptive word or phrase expressing a quality of the person or thing, such as calling Margaret Thatcher "Thatcher the Iron Lady." Contemporary usage often denotes an abusive or derogatory term describing race, gender, sexual orientation, or other characteristics of a minority group.

- **Epizeuxis**

Epizeuxis repeats one word for emphasis. A child who says, "The amusement park was fun, fun, fun" is using epizeuxis to convey what a wonderful time he had at the park.

- **Hyperbole**

Hyperbole refers to an exaggeration. Saying "I have done this a thousand times" to indicate that you're very familiar with a task is an example of hyperbole because it is unlikely you have really performed the task a thousand times.

- **Metaphor**

A metaphor is a type of implied comparison that compares two things by stating one is the other. "Your eyes are the windows of your soul" means you "see" someone's emotional state by looking into their expressive eyes—eyes are not literally windows.

- **Metonymy**

Metonymy is a type of metaphor where something being compared is referred to by something closely associated with it. For example, writers often refer to the "power of the pen" to convey the idea that the written word can inspire, educate, and inform. A pen has no power as an inanimate object, but the writer's words can reach a broad audience.

- **Parallelism**

Parallelism uses words or phrases with a similar structure. "Like father, like son" is an example of a popular phrase demonstrating parallelism. This technique creates symmetry and balance in your writing.

- **Simile**

A simile directly compares one object to another. "He smokes like a chimney" is one example. Similes are often confused with metaphors, but the main difference is that a simile uses "like" or "as" to make a comparison and a metaphor directly states the comparison.

## **1.4. Practice**

- **Part 1**

In the 1850s abolition was not a widely embraced movement in the United States. It was considered radical, extreme, and dangerous. In "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?"

Frederick Douglass sought not only to convince people of the wrongfulness of slavery but also to make abolition more acceptable to Northern whites.

The following are paragraphs 4 and 23 from Douglass' speech. What arguments and rhetorical strategies did Frederick Douglass use to persuade a northern, white audience to oppose slavery and favor abolition?

Paragraph 4-23

4. This, for the purpose of this celebration, is the 4th of July. It is the birthday of your National Independence, and of your political freedom. This, to you, is what the Passover was to the emancipated people of God. It carries your minds back to the day, and to the act of your great deliverance; and to the signs, and to the wonders, associated with that act, and that day. This celebration also marks the beginning of another year of your national life; and reminds you that the Republic of America is now 76 years old. I am glad, fellow-citizens, that your nation is so young. Seventy-six years, though a good old age for a man, is but a mere speck in the life of a nation. Three score years and ten is the allotted time for individual men; but nations number their years by thousands. According to this fact, you are, even now, only in the beginning of your national career, still lingering in the period of childhood. I repeat, I am glad this is so. There is hope in the thought, and hope is much needed, under the dark clouds which lower above the horizon. The eye of the reformer is met with angry flashes, portending disastrous times; but his heart may well beat lighter at the thought that America is young, and that she [America] is still in the impressible stage of her existence. May he not hope that high lessons of wisdom, of justice and of truth, will yet give direction to her destiny? Were the nation older, the patriot's heart might be sadder, and the reformer's brow heavier. Its future might be shrouded in gloom, and the hope of its prophets go out in sorrow. There is consolation in the thought that America is young. Great streams are not easily turned from channels, worn deep in the course of ages. They may sometimes rise in quiet and stately majesty, and inundate the land, refreshing and fertilizing the earth with their mysterious properties. They may also rise in wrath and fury, and bear away, on their angry waves, the accumulated wealth of years of toil and hardship. They, however, gradually flow back to the same old channel, and flow on as serenely as ever. But, while the river may not be turned aside, it may dry up, and

leave nothing behind but the withered branch, and the unsightly rock, to howl in the abyss-sweeping wind, the sad tale of departed glory. As with rivers so with nations.

23. They were peace men; but they preferred revolution to peaceful submission to bondage. They were quiet men; but they did not shrink from agitating against oppression. They showed forbearance; but they knew its limits. They believed in order; but not in the order of tyranny [government rule of absolute power]. With them, nothing was "settled" that was not right. With them, justice, liberty and humanity were "final;" not slavery and oppression. You may well cherish the memory of such men. They were great in their day and generation. Their solid manhood stands out the more as we contrast it with these degenerate times.

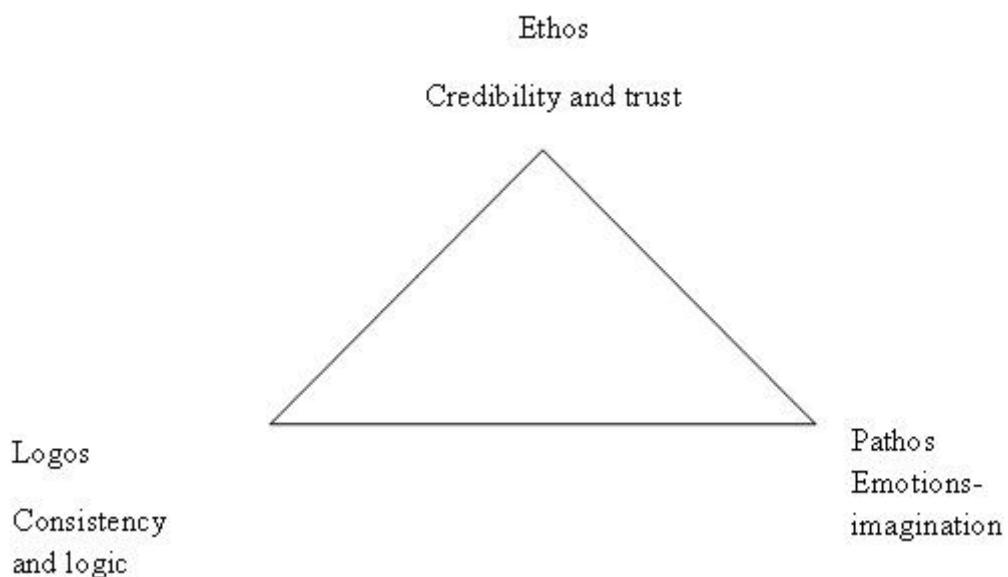
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## ➤ Part two

Aristotle's "modes for persuasion", known as rhetorical appeals, are ethos, pathos, and logos.

They are means of persuading others to believe a particular point of view. They are often used in speech writing and advertising to sway the audience.

Describe these rhetorical devices using the following diagram.



## Lesson Two: Literature of the Reconstruction (1865/ 1919)

### Lesson Objectives

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- ✓ Know and identify the characteristics of the Reconstruction Literature.
- ✓ Learn the history of the successful black people through Booker T. Washington.
- ✓ Recognize the difference between biographies and autobiographies.

### 2.1. Background

After the Civil War, there was a reconstruction period where free black Americans started to emphasize on education for it was the only means to free themselves socially, politically and economically. Since slavery banned education for blacks, they had to establish their own schools to teach kids and adults writing and reading skills.<sup>v</sup> Many African Americans deployed their pens and their voices to defend blacks' political freedom.

Among the most prominent writers of the post-slavery era is W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963), who had a doctorate in philosophy from Harvard University, and was one of the original founders of the NAACP in 1910. At the turn of the century, Du Bois published a highly influential collection of essays entitled *The Souls of Black Folk*. The essays on race were innovative and came from Du Bois's personal experiences to describe how African Americans lived in rural Georgia and in the larger American society.<sup>vi</sup>

Elizabeth Keckley (1818–1907) was also a former slave who catered to the Washington political elite after obtaining her freedom. She published *Behind the Scenes; or, Thirty Years as a Slave and Four Years in the White House*, *Behind the Scenes* detailed her life in slavery, her work for Mary Todd Lincoln and her efforts to obtain her freedom.<sup>vii</sup>

Although Paul Laurence Dunbar wrote in the black dialect, he was the first African-American poet to gain national prominence. His first book of poetry, *Oak and Ivy*, was published in 1893. Much of Dunbar's work, such as *When Malindy Sings* (1906), and *Joggin'*

*Erlong* (1906) provide revealing sights into the lives of rural African Americans of the day. He was a prolific poet, essayist, novelist (among them *The Uncalled*, 1898 and *The Fanatics*, 1901) and short story writer.<sup>viii</sup>

Many literary critics believe that African Americans had to write about their slavery life because, simply, other writers neglect the slavery issue. Taking the example of Jane Austen, the writer has never dealt with the labor struggle or even the issue of slavery despite the fact that all her novels' themes concern her own biographical life in which slaves play an important role in the lives of their masters, about whom she writes. Hence, since slaves go for invisible for many prominent writers, slaves and Africans in general had to write about themselves because type of writing became a necessity.<sup>ix</sup>

Booker T. Washington is one of the writers who choose to do the part of persons like Austen and narrate the story of Africans' life in northern America through his literary works. One of these works is *Up from Slavery* (1901).

## **2.2. Text: *Up from Slavery* by Booker T. Washington**

Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) is an American writer and educationist. He was Born as slave in Virginia, but later educated himself at the Hampton Institute and went on to establish and head the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. *Up From Slavery* (1901) - Booker T. Washington's autobiography details his rise from slavery to the leadership of his race. This is a simple yet dramatic record of Washington's dedication to the education of black Americans.<sup>x</sup>

### ➤ **Pre-reading questions**

- What do you know about the role of Booker T. Washington in the history of U.S education?
- What do you know about slaves' lives before the Civil War?
- Explain the difference between biographies and autobiographies.

### **2.2.1. Autobiography and Biography**

An autobiography is derived from the Greek word autos (self), bios (life) and graphein (to write), it is informally called autobio.<sup>xi</sup> It is the author's retelling of his or her life. It is told in first person point of view, making the author the main character of the story. In *Up From Slavery*, Booker T. Washington retells his life by making himself the protagonist.

A biography is a retelling of someone's life with its events and circumstances written by someone other than that person. Usually, people write biographies about a prominent figure in history or politics. Taking the example of biographies written before, This kind of narration can be written with or without the subject's authorization.

### **2.2.2. *Up from Slavery*: Analysis**

#### **➤ Important Terms**

- **antebellum**

Before the Civil war

- **arbour**

A shady garden alcove created by trees or climbing plants over a wooden framework

- **"Black Belt"**

A region in the southern US characterized by a history of plantation agriculture and a high percentage of African Americans. The rural communities in this area have historically faced poverty, inadequate education, poor health care, and high levels of crime and unemployment. Definitions of its boundaries vary, but it is generally considered to run through the Deep South, from Louisiana to Georgia.

- **"board 'round"**

To board at a succession of different families' homes as part of one's compensation.

- **carpetbagger**

A person from the northern states who went to the South after the Civil War to profit through politics, through a system in which they could hold office after living in any southern state for just one year.

- **cat-hole**

A square opening, common in the south before the Civil War, through which a cat could pass into or out of a cabin or mansion.

- **Cavalier**

A supporter of King Charles I during the 17th-century English Civil War.

- **coal face**

The part of a coalmine where coal is cut from the mountain.

- **colour-bearer**

The person in a military unit assigned to carry the flag.

- **entitles**

A term used by former slaves to describe the names they gave themselves, to which they felt "entitled".

- **franchise**

The right to vote.

- **frolic**

A dance among southern blacks, often characterized by whiskey drinking, shooting, and/or cutting with razors.

- **juror**

One of a group of people who judge a competition.

- **Mars'**

Master

- **New South**

A term coined by orator and journalist Henry Grady, referring to a modernization of society and a rejection of the slavery-based economy and traditions of the antebellum period.

- **normal school**

A school for training high school graduates to be teachers. It is intended to establish teaching standards or norms, leading to its name. Most normal schools are now called teachers' colleges.

- **pallet**

Sheets or blankets placed on the floor for sleeping.

- **patrollers**

Bands of white men who regulated slave's nighttime conduct, such as keeping them from holding meetings or visiting other plantations without a pass.

- **political preferment**

Political advancement or promotion

- **potato-hole**

A large opening covered with boards to store sweet potatoes during the war.

- **Reconstruction**

The period after the Civil War (1865-77) during which the southern states were brought back into the Union.

- **Roundhead**

A supporter of the Parliament of England during the 17th century English Civil War.

- **stump speech**

A speech used by a politician running for office.

- **truckle**

To submit or behave obsequiously.

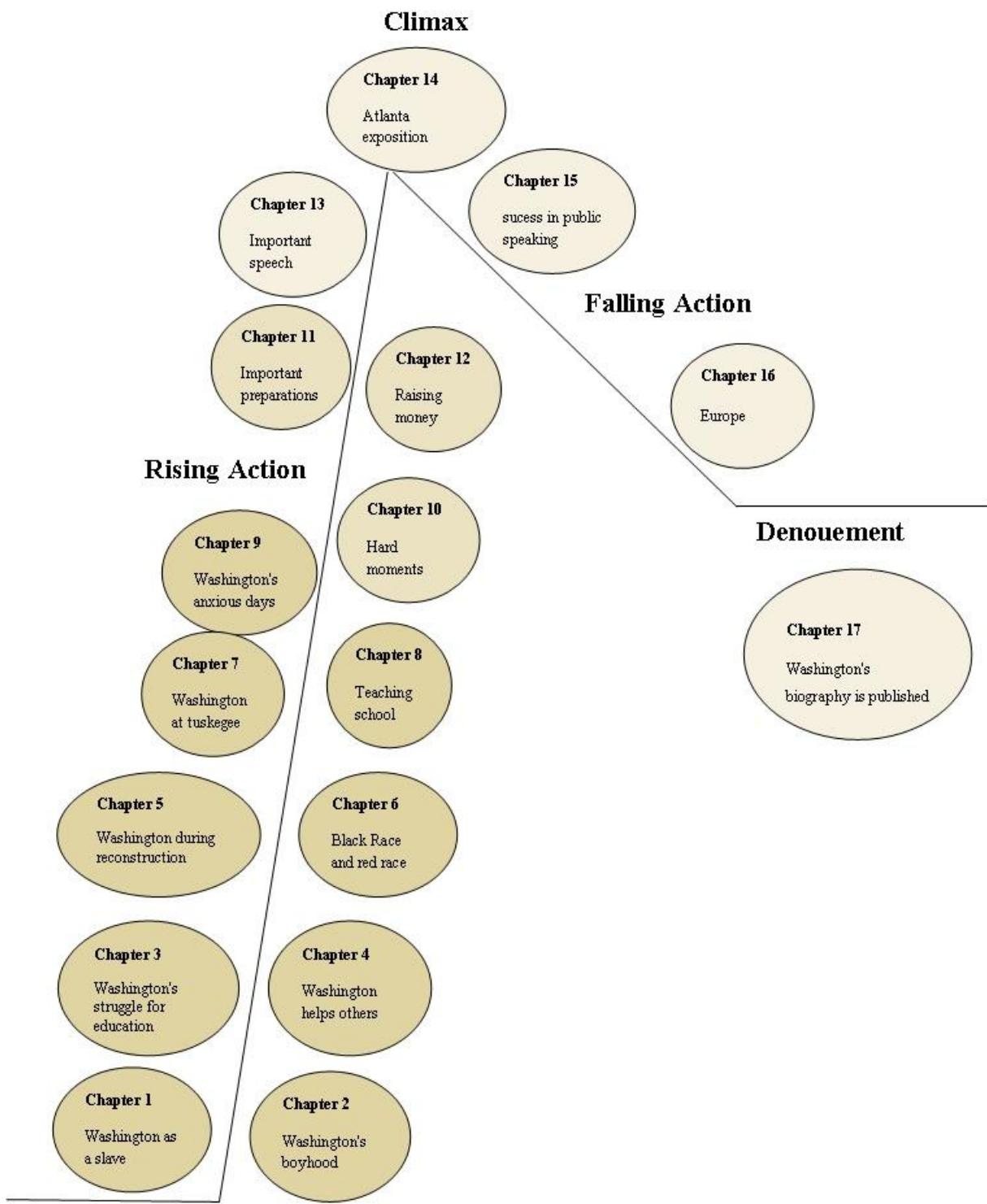
- **Webster's "blue-back"**

A well-known spelling book, first published in 1790, containing the alphabet and syllables, used to teach children to read.

### ➤ **Plot**

*Up from Slavery* is Booker T. Washington's biography in which he narrates more than forty years of his life: from slave to schoolmaster to the face of southern race relations. In his autobiography, Washington climbs the social ladder through hard, manual labor, a decent education, and relationships with great people to reach his ambitions in terms of education and social status.

The following figure depicts Booker T. Washington's journey towards success, in *Up from Slavery*, using Freytag's plot pyramid.



## ➤ Themes

The most common themes agreed upon by many critics and sources *in Up from Slavery* are the following:

- **Education or Vocational Education**

The Reconstruction Period that followed the American Civil War was not a thriving time for free black slaves because black Americans were not taught to live freely. Most of them endured difficult experiences of unemployment. Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery* suggests education as a solution to African Americans to live worthily. He believed profoundly in the importance of education in the development of young people. He believes that African Americans were "crippled" when they were freed by the federal government but had no means by which to educate themselves. He links this lack of education to the failures of the Reconstruction period following the Civil War. After the war, many black people made quick strides into the political and economic spheres, but during Reconstruction African Americans were trying to cope with the new life of freedom.

Booker T. Washington believes that education does not only concern the academic sense of it, but rather all occupational education. He believes that black Americans have to educate themselves in all domains, whether it is scholarly or hand crafts. Black Americans should train themselves to master any given occupation to find jobs and establish professions within society.

- **Self-reliance**

Washington considers self-reliance as a part of the individual's success. He is a strong supporter of independence and believes that merit will bring success regardless of one's race. When he was a child, his mother preferred to make him a cap for school rather than going into

debt to purchase one, something that he really appreciated. At Tuskegee, he insists not only that students learn and practice a trade, but also that they grow their own food, construct their own buildings, and build their own furniture. He criticizes uneconomical expenses and often repeats the idea that people who make themselves useful will be valued in society, no matter the color of their skin.

- **Charity**

Washington recognizes as true the idea that helping other is the key to the determination of success. He believes that a person should focuses on helping others rather than helping himself. Washington practices what he preaches for the first thing he does after graduating is go to his hometown and try to educate his neighbors and family. He also commends his fellow students at Hampton for educating themselves in order to lift up the people in their communities rather than for their own advancement, and he expresses his admiration for the teachers who have given their careers to teach his race.

- **The Dignity of Labor**

After the abolishment of slavery, black people started to avoid being hired in common jobs occupations, like handcrafts, thinking that job represents slavery. Washington believes strongly that there is dignity in labor. He thinks that one of the worst things about slavery was that it made labor seem as a humiliation to one's dignity. He celebrates the fact that the lady principal at Hampton joins him to wash windows and prepare beds, and he does not feel sorry that Tuskegee students do manual labor as part of their education. In this way they can learn to be self-reliant and earn the respect of others who value their work like he does.

- **Fellowship between the Races**

The institution of slavery under which both races lived and adapted themselves into created a tension between Booker T. Washington and many African Americans. Washington's theory suggests that the lasting tension between blacks and whites after the abolishment of

slaver has no sense since both races were obeying the rules of an institution in which blacks are slaves and whites are masters. He believes the way to solve the race problem is to encourage fellowship between the races. In *Up from Slavery*, He admits that he bears no animosity towards his former enslavers, instead assuring them that both races were victims of the institution of slavery. He gives the example of the Ku Klux Klan when the whites defended blacks during a scuffle.

- **Perseverance**

In *Up from Slavery*, Booker T. Washington attempts to illustrate the life of an African American under pressure and hardship but with a lot of perseverance. Although his life was full of barriers, difficulties, and especially racism, he never gave up trying to reach success. First, he tried to get a good education despite the lack of time and opportunity, then he faced the lack of money trying to enter the industrial education when Tuskegee had no money for land, buildings, or materials. He kept trying to make bricks after three failed attempts, and he refused to become discouraged when students complained of the lack of even basic amenities at the school. Washington and the Tuskegee Institute made a great success to become an authentication to what can happen when one perseveres even when faced with seemingly undefeatable challenges.

- **Rags to Riches**

Booker T. Washington's life is an example of "from rags to riches" life. In *Up from Slavery*, he compares his life to the one of the Tuskegee institute. Both began with rags, as he started from the bottom and had to work and study at the same time, while he has his students dig the actual foundations for the buildings at Tuskegee. He often juxtaposes images from either his early life or the early life of the school with those from later on, highlighting the striking development that was made. He actually emphasizes his belief that individual merit

and hard work can allow others of his race to achieve success, despite the barriers of social and political discrimination that stand in the way.

## ➤ **Characters**

- **Booker T. Washington**

Booker T. Washington is the writer and the narrator of the book. In his autobiography, he shares his life story. He narrates his life from childhood to adulthood including all the stages he passes by, from slavery to brilliance, when he becomes the president of the Tuskegee Institute, renowned orator, and spokesman for the black race.

- **Washington's mother**

Although Washington does not praise his mother much in making him the man he becomes, he owes her a lot in supporting his education. She is depicted as a good mother and a good person for adopting another child despite poverty and inability. She raises four kids: Washington, his older brother John, his younger sister Amanda, and the adopted son. Washington's mother was the plantation cook. She somehow landed a Webster spelling book for him to learn his alphabet, and she sewed a cap for him in order to fit in with the children at school. She passed away during one of his summer breaks while he was studying at the Hampton Institute.

- **Mrs. Viola Ruffner**

Viola Ruffner is one of the most important characters in Washington's life. He praises her for giving him the opportunity to study one hour per day during winter and to teaching him how to do housekeeping and behaving properly. She is the wife of General Lewis Ruffner, owner of the salt-furnace and the coalmine where Washington and his brother John worked. She is strict with her servants; however, this fact does not prevent Washington from entering her service. He worked for her at a salary of \$5 per month. Ruffner was supportive of

Washington's education. It was while living with her that he began to compile his first "library."

- **General Samuel C. Armstrong**

General Armstrong is the most supportive character to Washington's education. Being the leader of the Hampton Institute, he dedicated his life to helping students of both races in the south among which is Washington to whom he was the most important mentor. He was a northern white man, respected and praised by his students. He was very influential on Washington's career: he found a donor to defray the cost of his tuition at Hampton, invited him to return to the school to teach and start a night-school, and recommended him to the founders of the Tuskegee Institute. He helped Washington raise funds as well, donating some of his own money and introducing his former student to potential donors in the North. The two were so close that Armstrong spent several months at the end of his life with Washington at Tuskegee.

### **2.3.Practice**

Which of the following characters would be considered as supportive and influential in Booker T. Washington's life?

Characters	Supportive	Influential
Washington's brother John		
Washington's Stepfather		
Olivia D. Davidson		
Miss Fannie N. Smith		
Miss Mary F. Mackie		

### ➤ **Setting**

American South, approximately 1856 - 1901

➤ **Point of View**

Booker T. Washington narrates the book in the first person.

➤ **Conflict**

Washington's story is a rags-to-riches tale of overcoming obstacles in order to achieve success. There are various minor conflict: Man versus circumstances involving Washington's endless search for money: his lack of funds to pay for his education at Hampton, the lack of money for buildings or teaching supplies at Tuskegee, and so on. Man versus man appears in all types of racism and segregation that appear in the book.

➤ **Irony**

There are various examples of irony in *Up from Slavery*. First, Booker T. Washington's last name refers to his stepfather's who was less supportive in making him the man he becomes. It is also ironic, of course, that his stepfather shared a name with the first president of United States, who was in a sense a symbol of freedom.

## **Lesson Three: Harlem Renaissance**

### **Lesson Objectives**

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- ✓ Learn about the Harlem Renaissance.
- ✓ Analyze an African American poem.

#### **3.1. Background**

Harlem, the first American neighborhood famed as a global black metropolis, has stood for a century as this country's largest and most iconic black community. When this once white neighborhood became a black one, African Americans did not achieve a total freedom

of thoughts and acts until the appearance of the Harlem Renaissance. Harlem is the largest American metropolis that encompassed a large number of Africans during the early decades of the twentieth century. The city received a large number of middle class Africans, in the early years of the twentieth century, who wanted to fulfill the empty buildings in the city. Prominent figures, like W. E. B. Du Bois, have led a great migration from the south to the north. The great migration resulted in what we call The Harlem Renaissance. It started as a literary movement to move later on to other arts like music. One of the most important literary figures was Langston Hughes who benefited from the opportunities offered by editors like Charles Spurgeon Johnson. The Harlem Renaissance was a golden age in terms of music, literature and even politics.<sup>xii</sup>

The Harlem Renaissance appeared to be the golden age to the African Americans in terms of literature, music, all arts, and politics from the end of First World War until the Great Depression. Notable writer appeared like Zora Neale Hurston, author of the classic novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937). Although Hurston wrote 14 books (Anthropologies, short stories, and novels), her writings remained unknown for decades. Her work was rediscovered in the 1970s through a 1975 article by Alice Walker, "In Search of Zora Neale Hurston", published in *Ms. magazine*.

While Hurston and Hughes are the two most influential writers to come out of the Harlem Renaissance, a number of other writers became well known during this period as Jean Toomer, the author of *Cane* and a famous collection of stories, poems, and sketches about rural and urban Black life, and Dorothy West, whose novel *The Living is Easy* examined the life of an upper-class Black family. Another popular writer of that period was Cullen. Cullen's books include the poetry collections *Color* (1925), *Copper Sun* (1927), and *The Ballad of the Brown Girl* (1927). Frank Marshall Davis's poetry collections *Black Man's Verse* (1935) and *I am the American Negro* (1937), published by Black Cat Press, earned him critical acclaim.

Author Wallace Thurman also made an impact with his novel *The Blacker the Berry: A Novel of Negro Life* (1929), which focused on intraracial prejudice between lighter-skinned and darker-skinned African Americans.

### **3.2.Text: *Harlem* by Langston Hughes**

#### **3.2.1.Poem**

Here on the edge of hell

Stands Harlem—

Remembering the old lies,

The old kicks in the back,

The old "Be patient"

They told us before.

Sure, we remember.

Now when the man at the corner store

Says sugar's gone up another two cents,

And bread one,

And there's a new tax on cigarettes—

We remember the job we never had,

Never could get,

And can't have now

Because we're colored.

So we stand here

On the edge of hell

in Harlem

And look out on the world

And wonder

What we're gonna do

In the face of what

We remember.

### **3.2.2. *Harlem*: Analysis**

#### **➤ Vocabulary**

Give the definition of each word below in the context of the poem.

- **Harlem:**
- **Deferred:**
- **Fester:**
- **Run:**
- **Load:**
- **Explode:**
- **Form, Meter, & Rhyme Scheme of “Harlem”**

#### **➤ Form**

*Harlem* is a free verse poem and has no set form. Its 11 lines unfold over four stanzas of very different lengths, adding a sense of unpredictability to the poem. Hence, the poem creates its own form, suggesting that those whose dream has been deferred must find their own answer to what will happen to the dream, even if this answer explodes the rules of dominant white society.

The poem uses four stanzas of varying lengths that create a subtle form building towards the poem's ending. The opening line ("What ... deferred?") and the last line ("Or ... explode?") are the only single-line stanzas in the poem, mirroring each other.

A close look at the structure of the whole indented part of the poem (from line 2 to the ending) also reveals a kind of form at work. The first four lines of the second stanza ("Does it dry ... And then run?") create, through their rhyming pattern, a kind of quatrain.

The last three lines of this stanza ("Does it stink ... syrupy sweet?") are similarly clustered through rhyme. Lines 9 to 10 ("Maybe ... load") are visually held together by the couplet they inhabit. Line 11 ("*Or does it explode?*") is then set apart as singular and distinct.

The poem, then, sets up a kind of count-down structure: 4-3-2-1, creating a form that enacts what it describes, as though the speaker is counting down to the explosion.

Finally, the formal elements of "Harlem"—both those that are traditional and those the poem creates—allude to the blues and jazz. These musical forms, which emerged from the black community, use recurring motifs and patterns, but also disrupt these patterns at crucial points to express complex feeling, juxtaposition, and dissonance. "Harlem" creates a similar form, as it explores the dissonant experience of having a dream that is continually oppressed and unfulfilled.

#### ➤ Meter

"Harlem" is a **free verse** poem and has no set meter. However, it does use some metrical elements, and it uses elements of rhythm throughout.

Notably, the opening line of the poem is written in **iambs**, poetic feet in which the first syllable is unstressed and the second **stressed**:

What **happens to a dream deferred?**

Iambs are most famously known as part of iambic pentameter, the metrical form associated with Shakespeare and classical poetry. Here, the speaker asks the poem's primary, opening question in iambic meter, aligning that question, and the poem, with some of the timeless questions of Shakespeare's **sonnets**.

After this moment, the poem shifts into its own rhythms, which enact the rhythms and cadences of jazz music. Jazz, as a form, often takes simple rhythms and interweaves them with complex ones, in which unexpected beats are accented and emphasized. The section of "Harlem" that replies to the opening question—in other words, the whole rest of the poem—does so with jazz rhythm, taking up, and then transforming, the iambs of its opening.

### ➤ Rhyme Scheme

*Harlem* has no set, consistent **rhyme scheme**. Rather, it uses **assonance** and rhyming elements throughout to create patterns and then change these patterns, conveying the feeling and meaning of the poem at the level of its music.

After the first, unrhymed line, which poses the primary question of the poem, the second stanza creates a rhyme scheme as it offers a series of possible answers. The ending of line 3 ("sun") rhymes with the ending of line 5 ("run"). This sets up an ABCB rhyme scheme that might appear in a traditional poem, creating a sense of formal control and resolution.

Importantly, this rhyme scheme appears where the dream is depicted as withering away ("a raisin in the sun") and growing painful and aggravated ("like a sore") for the dreamer, but not impacting anyone in the broader society. In a sense, here, the rhyme scheme suggests that the dreamers are simply enduring the deferral of the dream, and "following the rules," just as the poem "follows the rules" of a conventional rhyme scheme.

Yet the poem goes on to change these rules. After the ABCB pattern opening this second stanza, the poem introduces a group of three lines (“Does it stink … like a syrupy sweet?”) in which only two lines out of the three rhyme: “meat” rhymes with “sweet,” while “over” is left unrhymed. The images continue, here, to convey a deferred dream that is losing its true power and potency (it is going bad “like rotten meat” and becoming sentimental “like a syrupy sweet”) but the shift in the rhyme scheme introduces a sense of instability, of something left unresolved.

Similarly, but differently, “sags” in line 9 is left unrhymed. The end of line 10, “load,” also appears at first to be unrhymed, since it does not rhyme with the first line of its couplet. The rhyme comes unexpectedly in the poem’s closing question, after the space of a stanza break: “*Or does it explode?*” the speaker asks.

Here, for the first time, two rhyming lines appear consecutively, and the way the poem arrives at this rhyme is radically different from those that came before. The rhyme bridges two stanzas.

The last line arrives at a completely different possibility for the dream than those proposed up to this point. Here, the deferred dream is not imagined as withering away, rotting, or sagging. Instead, it is envisioned as bursting outward in its true vitality and power. The final question and rhyme, then, creates an unexpected musical resolution, as the poem suggests that the dream, rather than withering away, will explode outward, demanding to be reckoned with.

### ➤ ***Harlem* Speaker**

The speaker of *Harlem* is anonymous and genderless. There is no “I” in the poem, so the reader’s awareness of the speaker comes through the title and the ways the questions in the poem are posed.

The title, *Harlem*, suggests that the speaker might be someone who lives in Harlem, within this neighborhood and community. At the same time, the questions in the poem are posed with a certain amount of distance. For example, the speaker asks, “What happens to a dream deferred?” This question would resonate differently if the speaker asked, “What happens to *our* dream” or “*my* dream.” The speaker seems to be within Harlem, and, at the same time, outside of it or observing it.

➤ **Tone**

The tone in the poem is musing, almost detached. The speaker makes a series of comparisons in the second stanza but does not explicitly comment on the feeling or meaning of these comparisons.

**3.3. Practice**

Harlem Renaissance workshop

Group work: Consider the themes listed in the table and write about the black and the white communities’ position about each one of them.

Themes	Black Community	White community
Civil rights movement		
American dream		

Anger		
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## Lesson Four: African American Literature from 1940/ 1959

### Lesson Objectives

- ✓ Identify the characteristics of the period.
- ✓ Analyze a literary text by writing an essay.
- ✓ Learn how to write a literary essay.

#### 4.1. Background

After the Harlem Renaissance, the Protest Era came as a result of some activists who wanted to get rid of racism and segregation. Writers suffered from the Great Depression and found difficulties in getting funds and gaining money to support their writing career. Hence, large migration of African Americans began during World War I, hitting its high point during World War II. During this Great Migration, Black people left the racism and lack of opportunities in the American South and settled in northern cities such as Chicago, where they found work in factories and other sectors of the economy.<sup>xiii</sup>

This migration led to the independence of the Black community and contributed to the nourishment of the Black urban culture in Harlem. The migration also allowed the growing Civil Rights Movement, which made a powerful impression on Black writers during the

1940s, '50s and '60s. One of these writers was James Baldwin, whose works addressed issues of race and sexuality. Among these works was *Go Tell It on the Mountain* and other personal stories and essays.

Richard Wright was among the most prominent writers in the protest era. He also was Baldwin's best friend. He considered him as the greatest Black writer in the world. Wright is best known for his novel *Native Son*, which tells the story of Bigger Thomas, a Black man struggling for acceptance in Chicago. Baldwin gave the same title to a collection. Among Wright's other books are the autobiographical novel *Black Boy*, *The Outsider*, and *White Man, Listen!*

The other great novelist of this period is Ralph Ellison, best known for his novel *Invisible Man*, which won the National Book Award in 1953. Even though he did not complete another novel during his lifetime, *Invisible Man* was so influential that it secured his place in literary history. After Ellison's death in 1994, a second novel, *Juneteenth* (1999), was pieced together from the 2,000-plus pages he had written over 40 years.

The Civil Rights time period also saw the rise of female Black poets, most notably Gwendolyn Brooks, who became the first African American to win the Pulitzer Prize when it was awarded for her 1949 book of poetry, *Annie Allen*. Along with Brooks, other female poets who became well known during the 1950s and '60s are Nikki Giovanni and Sonia Sanchez.

Drama was also a remarkable genre to get attention in the protest era. Playwrights like Lorraine Hansberry, whose play *A Raisin in the Sun* focuses on a poor Black family living in Chicago, appeared to be very notable. The play won the 1959 New York Drama Critics' Circle Award. It is also worth noting that a number of important essays and books about human rights were written by the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. One of the leading examples of these is Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail".

## 4.2. Ralph Ellison (sections from *Invisible Man*)

### 4.2.1. Ralph Ellison : Biography

Ralph Waldo Ellison (March 1, 1913<sup>l</sup>– April 16, 1994) was an American novelist, a literary critic, and a scholar best known for his novel *Invisible Man*, which won the National Book Award in 1953. He also wrote *Shadow and Act* (1964), a collection of political, social and critical essays, and *Going to the Territory* (1986). A posthumous novel, *Juneteenth*, was published after being assembled from voluminous notes he left upon his death.<sup>xiv</sup>

### 4.2.2. Sections from *Invisible Man*

- Consider the following sections from *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison to fulfill the next task.

“I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in a circus sideshow, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination—indeed, everything and anything except me.”

“Here are the facts. He was standing and he fell. He fell and he kneeled. He kneeled and he bled. He bled and he died. He fell in a heap like any man and his blood spilled out like any blood; red as any blood, wet as any blood and reflecting the sky and buildings and birds and trees, or your face if you looked into its dulling mirror—and it dried in the sun as blood dries. That’s all. They spilled his blood and he bled. They cut him down and he died; the blood flowed on the walk in a pool, gleamed a while, and, after a while, became dull then dusty, then dried. That’s the story and that’s how it ended. It’s an old story and there’s been too much blood to excite you. Besides, it’s only important when it fills the veins of a living man. Aren’t you tired of such stories? Aren’t you sick of blood? Then why listen? Why don’t you go? It’s hot out here.”

“The trouble is that there is little the dead can do; otherwise they wouldn’t be the dead. No! But on the other hand, it would be a great mistake to assume that the dead are absolutely powerless. They are powerless only to give the full answer to the new questions posed for the living by history. But they try! Whenever they hear the imperious cries of the people in a crisis, the dead respond. Right now in this country, with its many national groups, all the old heroes are being called back to life—Jefferson, Jackson, Pulaski, Garibaldi, Booker T. Washington, Sun Yat-sen, Danny O’Connell, Abraham Lincoln and countless others are being asked to step once again upon the stage of history. I can’t say too emphatically that we stand at a terminal point in history, at a moment of supreme world crisis. Destruction lies ahead unless things are changed. And things must be changed. And changed by the people.”

“I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves or figments of their imagination, indeed, everything and anything except me.”

### **4.3. Writing a Literary Essay**

The purpose of a literary analysis essay is to examine and evaluate a work of literature or an aspect of a work of literature. The task requires you to break the subject down into its component parts. Examining the different elements of a piece of literature leads to the appreciation and the understanding of the work. For instance, an analysis of a poem might deal with the different types of images in a poem or with the relationship between the form and content of the work.

For plays, you may probably analyze the relationship between a subplot and the main plot, or you might analyze the character flaw of the tragic hero by tracing how it is revealed through the acts of the play. For short stories, you might analyze the themes and show how the writer suggests a specific theme through the point of view (which can be analyzed separately). Characters can be analyzed according to their dialogues and actions in the literary text.

Writing a literary essay is somehow similar to writing an ordinary essay, however, it requires more critical thinking. Your objective in writing a literary analysis essay is to convince the person reading your essay that you have supported the idea you are developing. While writing a literary essay, you must stick with great determination to the specific point of development. This kind of writing demands tight organization and control. Therefore, your

essay must have a central idea (thesis), it must have several paragraphs that grow systematically out of the central idea, and everything in it must be directly related to the central idea and must contribute to the reader's understanding of that central idea.<sup>xv</sup>

### ➤ **The Elements of a Good Literary Essay**

In order to write a good literary essay, you have to be precise in showing your thesis statement. It tells your reader what to expect. It should be precise and restricted. The thesis statement is the sentence that states the point you are trying to make.

The following are thesis statements which would work for a 500-750 word literary analysis essay:

- Women play an important role in Booker T. Washington's by being crucial on Washington's development.
- Booker T. Washington turns a passive eye to racial prejudice as many of his critics claim.
- Booker T. Washington has a positive attitude towards the southern whites, an attitude that does not change over the course of his life.
- Booker T. Washington instructs African-Americans to educate themselves in order to advance themselves in society.
- Booker T. Washington rises "Up From Slavery" and escapes poverty through education.
- Religion plays an important role in *Up From Slavery*.

Typically, the thesis statement falls at the end of your introductory paragraph.

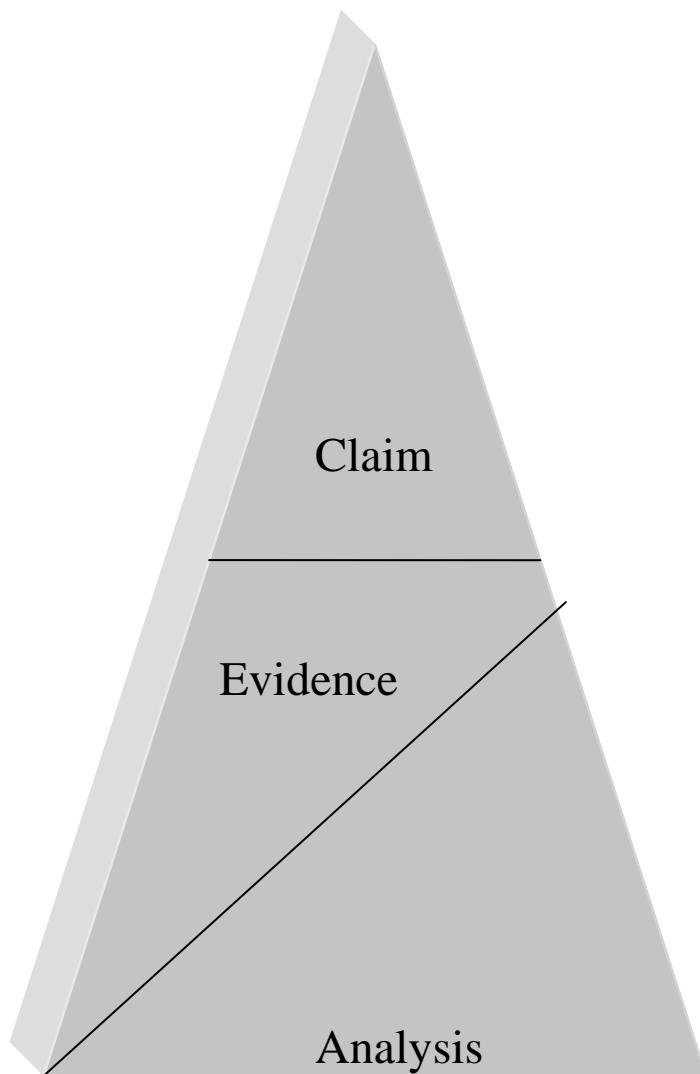
The second element is the introduction. The introduction to your literary analysis essay should stimulate your reader's attention. To bring immediate focus to your subject, you may want to use a quotation, a provocative question, a brief anecdote, a startling statement, or a combination of these. You may also want to include background information relevant to

your thesis and necessary for the reader to understand the position you are taking. In addition, you need to include the title of the work of literature and the name of the author.

The term regularly used for the development of the central idea of a literary analysis essay is the body. In this section, you present the paragraphs (at least 3 paragraphs) that support your thesis statement. Good literary analysis essays contain an explanation of your ideas and evidence from the text (short story, poem, play) that supports those ideas. Textual evidence consists of summary, paraphrase, specific details, and direct quotations. Each paragraph should contain a topic sentence (usually the first sentence of the paragraph) which states one of the topics associated with your thesis, combined with some assertion about how the topic will support the central idea.

Your literary analysis essay should have a concluding paragraph that gives your essay a sense of completeness and lets your readers know that they have come to the end of your paper. Your concluding paragraph might paraphrase the thesis in different words, summarize the main points you have made, or make a relevant comment about the literary work you are analyzing, but from a different perspective.

Your literary essay takes the form of a triangle as in the following example:



#### 4.4.Practice

Consider the techniques of writing a literary essay and your own reading of the sections extracted from Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man. Write an essay about the importance of Ralph Ellison's novel in depicting the protest era.

### Lesson Five: African American Literature since 1975

#### Lesson Objectives

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- ✓ Know the literary background of the era.
- ✓ Define and identify the characteristics of contemporary African American Literature.

- ✓ Compare two literary texts.

## 5.1. Background

It is believed that the beginning of the recent era in African American literature was also the beginning of the worldwide fame of these ethnic writers. Academia started to recognize works of writers from African descents and the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Nationalist Movement, the Student Movement and the Women's Movement were the themes during that time. It was known as "Black Power Movement". During this period, black artists used multiple genres to make change in society. The student movement was the next major social change movement to develop in the 1960s. Many of its early organizers had first become politically active in the early 1960s working alongside with blacks in civil rights protests. The contemporary women's movement began in the late 1960s. Many women who participated in the movement had also worked in earlier movements. Some began to protest these roles and to question the traditional roles for women in U.S. society.

As part of the larger Black Arts Movement, which was inspired by the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, African-American literature began to be defined and analyzed. A number of scholars and writers are generally credited with helping to promote and define African-American literature as a genre during this time period, including fiction writers Toni Morrison and Alice Walker and poet James Emanuel.

James Emanuel took a major step toward defining African-American literature when he co-edited *Dark Symphony: Negro Literature in America* (1968), a collection of black writings released by a major publisher.<sup>xvi</sup> This anthology and Emanuel's work as an educator at the City College of New York heavily influenced the birth of the genre. Other influential African-American anthologies of this time included *Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing*, Amiri Baraka and Larry Neal in 1968; *The Negro Caravan*, co-edited

by Sterling Brown, Arthur P. Davis and Ulysses Lee in 1969; and *We Speak As Liberators: Young Black Poets — An Anthology*, edited by Orde Coombs and published in 1970.

Toni Morrison helped advance Black Literature in the 1960s and '70s when she worked as an editor for Random House. She edited for Toni Cade Bambara and Gayl Jones. Morrison herself would later emerge as one of the most important African-American writers of the 20th century. Her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, was published in 1970. Among her most famous novels is *Beloved*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1988. Another important Morrison novel is *Song of Solomon*, a tale about materialism, unrequited love, and brotherhood. Morrison is the first African American to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.

In the 1970s, novelist and poet Alice Walker wrote a famous essay that brought Zora Neale Hurston and her classic novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* back to the attention of the literary world. In 1982, Walker won both the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award for her novel *The Color Purple*.

## 5.2. Text: *Home*

### ➤ Pre-reading questions

- What do you know about the contemporary African American fiction?
- Is Toni Morrison alive?
- Apart from Up from Slavery, have you ever read an African American novel?

### 5.2.1. Toni Morrison: Biography

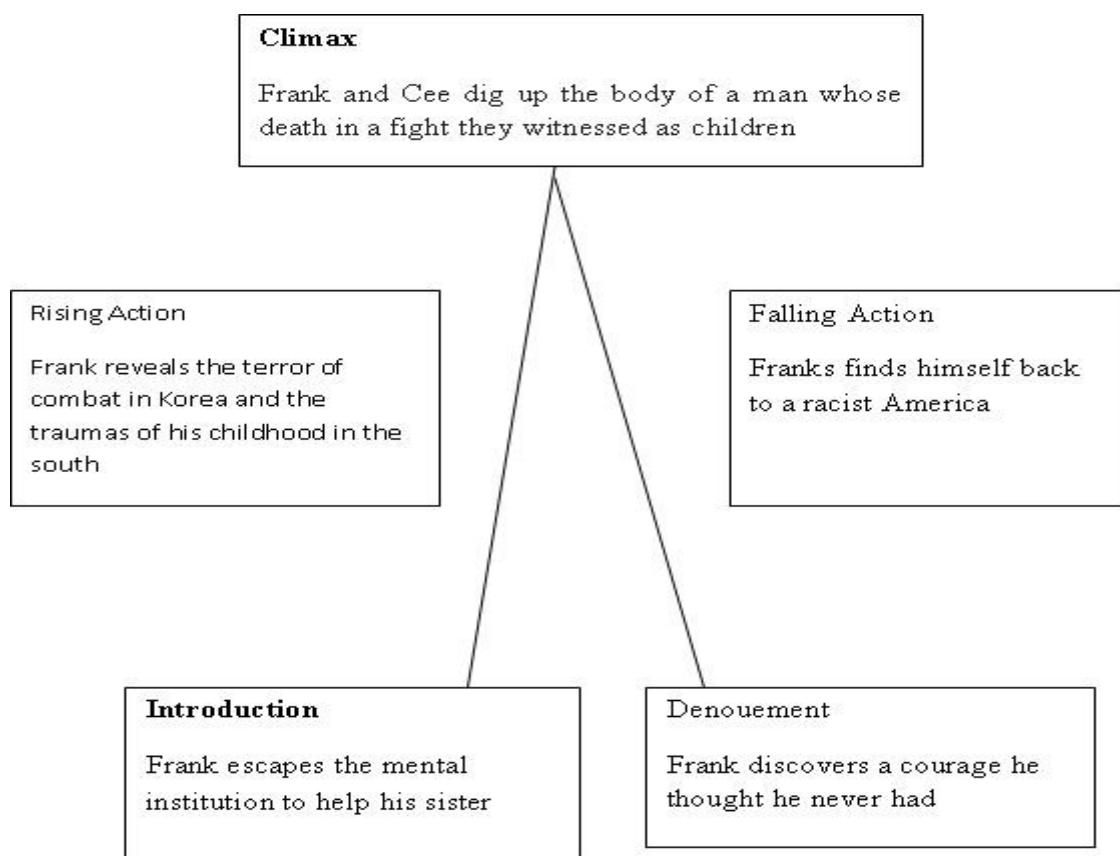
Toni Morrison is the Robert F. Cohen Professor of humanities, writing professor at the university of New York and Princeton. She is noted for her examination of black experience within the black community. She has received the National Book Critics Circle Award, and the Pulitzer prize. In 1993, she was awarded the Nobel prize in literature.

### 5.2.2. *Home*: Analysis

#### ➤ Important Terms

- **bomb happy**: crazy
- **do us**: kill us
- **give him a fourpenny one**: hit him in the jaw
- **mucking about**: wasting time
- **one for his nob**: a blow to his head
- **round the bend**: crazy

#### ➤ *Home*: Plot Pyramid



## ➤ Themes

It is always difficult to pick up one of Toni Morrison's novels for the multiplicity of themes she involves in her works. *Home* is schemed to have a number of different themes; in our course, we have divided the themes into two categories: revealed and concealed. The revealed themes are the following:

### **Revealed Themes**

- **African American Experience in the 1950s**

When Frank returns from serving in an integrated military, he finds out his home is still mired in separation. Most of the characters in the novel share the same common experience of being black in a segregating, racist society. They have low expectations of life in the absence of education and poverty.

Frank at the beginning of the novel is traveling south by train and bus getting money from ministers of black churches. He often has to urinate in the bushes at bus station because the restrooms are for whites only. However, the African American experience is not completely darkly depicted in the novel, Frank and Lilly also seize opportunities when they come along to have a better life. The army for Frank is a chance to go out of Lotus, which limits him in a way. Also, Cee wants to earn money rather than staying home, so she works for Dr. Beauregard.

- **The Eugenics Movement**

The Eugenics movement was a philosophy appeared in the 1950s America. The philosophy believed in the necessity of the manipulation of the black population under the name of science in order to strengthen one ethnicity over another. Dr Beauregard conducts "experiments" on black women claiming that he has an interest in wombs. His real goal is to

remove the uterus from black women so that they are unable to reproduce, especially with white men, which the eugenics movement believes weakens both ethnicities.

- **Facing the Truth**

One of most important reasons behind Frank's and Cee's suffering in life is the avoidance of truth. Both Frank and Cee need to face the ugly truth of their past and present before they are able to stabilize psychologically. They have been greatly touched by their past and in particular, Frank's present is overwhelmed by his experiences in Korea. It is believed that Frank has to be hospitalized in a mental institution because of his post-traumatic stress disorder. It is not until he is able to admit and confront the fact that he was the soldier in question that he is able to move on with his life and become a better person.

Similarly, having been long troubled by the death of a man in a fight that they witnessed as children, Frank and Cee find the man's shallow grave and dig up his body, wrapping it in a quilt that Cee has made as a makeshift coffin, and re-burying him. This mark of respect atones for what they have done with their lives and what they have witnessed.

### **Concealed Themes**

- **Good Versus Evil**

Frank does not only see evil in the war, he commits it himself by killing many people. One of them is a Korean girl. He also continues to drink and fly into rages to do terrible things he cannot even remember. Evil appears in his flashbacks to his dreadful childhood where we can see that evil is not only white people, but also black persons like his parents and grandmother. The good side of Frank appears in Lilly. He makes a good character when he and Lilly are put together. Frank is a good brother to Cee as well.

- **Healing Power of Women**

Miss Ethel Fordham and her friends in Lotus demonstrate the power of women to heal physically. They nurse Cee back to health and nurture her in her time of need. They are really empathetic and rooted in the traditional healing practices. Their methods of healing are shown to be contrasted to those of the medical industry. Lilly and Cee has the power to heal Frank morally and ethically.

- **Haunting Memories**

Nightmares of the massacres of his comrades in Korea and by the atrocities that he and his comrades inflicted in turn, even as civilians including children. He is also haunted by other events from his childhood such as seeing a body being dumped from a wheel barrel into a shallow grave. We assume the buriers were white and the victim was black.

➤ **Characters**

- **Frank**

At the beginning of the novel, Frank is a young veteran. Although he is only 24 years old, he always experiences spells of deep panic. Most of the novel is Frank's journey to Georgia to save his sister. He wants to save her, but he is also overwhelmed by the disorder that she faces, because of their upbringing. He struggles to be healthy so he can help her on her feet.

Toni Morrison depicts Frank as a classic hero in a journey towards change. He leaves home, undergoes horrific trials that test his moral strength and returns home a changed man. Although, he might seem evil in certain circumstances, especially the war, he is full of regret about friends he could not save on the battlefield. When he learns that Cee is in danger, he is glad to be given the chance to save her.

- **Cee**

Cee is Frank's sister. Despite the fact that she suffers a lot from her mother's mistreatment during the early years of her life and from society's mistreatment later in the novel, she represents the good character in the novel. Cee is Frank's sister. She has an issue of menstrual blood that is emaciating her, and she cannot seem to get healthy. Cee has a troubled life, and it has been that way since the beginning. She is protected by Frank, but when he leaves, she falls apart. While seeking treatment, she suffers private mistreatment from the doctors. Frank does not know how to save her or if he can.

- **Dr. Beauregard**

This is Cee's clinician and the Villain in the story. He experiments on Cee who became infertile as the experiment went wrong. Because he is a true villain, shown as a monster, he hides the truth and refuses to give reasonable explanation to Frank.

- **Genre**

Fiction

- **Point of View**

There are two narrators; one is a third person omniscient narrator, the other, Frank Money, first person narrator (italicized in the novel). Frank also converses with the third person narrator towards the end of the novel.

- **Setting**

Georgia, after the war in Korea, It is the time of segregation.

- **Tone and Mood**

The tone is meant to be depressing. It is injustice and oppression but there is also a mood of hope by the end of the novel.

➤ **Conflict**

- **Man versus Man**

There is conflict within Frank as he tries to grapple with his memories of what he witnessed in Korea but at the same time tries not to admit that he was the perpetrator in the most haunting incident.

- **Man versus Society**

Frank, Cee, their family and the whole African American society struggle against the white racist segregating race during the 1950s.

➤ **Irony**

As it is mentioned previously, Frank is meant to be a modern hero seeking change and peace in a journey full of struggle. However, contrarily to other heroes, he does not have enough strength to do so, as he suffers from post-traumatic psychological disorder that leads him to be powerless in a certain extent. Though, he is the only hero who is supposed to save his miserable little sister.

Another irony of circumstances shown in the novel is the one of Frank's mother who blames her own daughter Cee for their misery considering that her birth brought bad luck for the whole family. The last example is the one of Doctor Beauregard who is supposed to be a healer for Cee, while he damages her and causes her an eternal infertility.

### **5.3. Compare and Contrast Literary Texts**

There are many different ways to approach a comparative analysis. The key to figure out what your grounds for comparison are is by asking the following questions:

- Why did you pick these two texts rather than some other texts?

- What are your reasons for comparing?
- What is interesting, significant, or productive about comparing these two texts?
- What do we learn about these texts together not separately?
- When do we compare them to each other?

If you can answer these questions, your comparison will be significant and clear.

The following are some tips to using in literary comparison:

- In the "lens" (or "keyhole") comparison, in which you weight A less heavily than B, you use A as a lens through which to view B. Just as looking through a pair of glasses changes the way you see an object, using A as a framework for understanding B changes the way you see B. Lens comparisons are useful for illuminating, critiquing, or challenging the stability of a thing that, before the analysis, seemed perfectly understood.
- Frame of reference is the context within which you place the two things you plan to compare and contrast. The frame of reference may consist of an idea, theme, question, problem, or theory; a group of similar things from which you extract two for special attention; biographical or historical information.
- The grounds for comparison lets your reader know why your choice is calculated and meaningful, not random. For instance, in a paper asking how two novels' characters are similar, the grounds for comparison are obvious.

#### **5.4. Activity: Comparative analysis between *Up from Slavery* and *Home***

Compare and contrast between *Up from Slavery* and *Home* using the similarities and differences between the main elements of the novel. List the similarities and differences in the following table then write an essay about them.

<b>Text</b>	<i>Up from Slavery</i>	<i>Home</i>
<b>Plot</b>		
<b>Themes</b>		
<b>Characters</b>		
<b>Language</b>		

## Appendix A

### Reading Assignments

Text	Author	Type
“What to the Slave is the Fourth of July”	Frederick Douglass	Speech (Historical, Literary)
<i>Up from Slavery</i>	Booker T. Washington	Novel
<i>Harlem</i>	Langston Hughes	Poem
Sections From <i>Invisible Man</i>	Ralph Ellison	Novel
<i>Home</i>	Toni Morrison	Novel

## Appendix B

### Recommended Readings

Lesson One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1938", <i>American Memory</i>, Library of Congress.</li><li>• "North American Slave Narratives, Beginnings to 1920", <i>Documenting the American South</i>, University of North Carolina.</li><li>• "Slave Narratives: An Online Anthology" – WPA oral histories of former US slaves collected in the 1930s, American Studies, University of Virginia.</li></ul>
Lesson Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>The Soul of America: the Battle for Our Better Angels</i> by Jon Meacham</li><li>• <i>Barracoon: The Story of the Last 'Black Cargo'</i> by Zora Neale Hurston</li><li>• <i>Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution</i> by Eric Foner</li><li>• <i>Black Reconstruction</i> by W.E.B. Dubois</li></ul>
Lesson Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Cane</i> by Jean Toomer.</li><li>• <i>The Fire in the Flint</i> by Walter White.</li><li>• <i>There is Confusion</i> by Jessie Redmon Fauset.</li><li>• <i>Flight</i> by Walter White.</li><li>• <i>Nigger Heaven</i> by Carl Van Vechten.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Tropic Death</i> by Eric Walrond.</li> <li>• <i>Home to Harlem</i> by Claude McKay.</li> <li>• <i>Plum Bun</i> by Jessie Redmon Fauset.</li> </ul>
Lesson Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Native Son</i> by Richard Wright</li> <li>• <i>Invisible Man</i> (whole novel)</li> <li>• <i>Go Tell It On The Mountain</i> by James Baldwin</li> <li>• <i>The Narrows</i> by Ann Petry</li> </ul>
Lesson Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Color Purple</i> by Alice Walker</li> <li>• <i>The Women of Brewster Place</i> by Gloria Naylor</li> <li>• <i>Beloved</i> by Toni Morrison</li> <li>• <i>Devil in a Blue Dress</i> by Walter Mosley</li> </ul>

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