

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and scientific Research
Frères Mentouri University/Constantine 1
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of Letters and the English Language

Module: Literary Texts
Lesson Title: African American Literature
Target Students: Second Year students/ License
Semester: 2
Teacher: Dr. Amira Halim

Course Objectives

This course aims at:

1. Knowing the essential elements of African American Literature
2. Analyzing African American literary texts
3. Developing students' skills in reading and using literary texts critically and empathetically

Introduction

This 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 chapter. The course is divided into chapters and each chapter has subchapters or sections according to the characteristics that are traced in each text for each text is considered as a chapter. Regardless of the many fictional and non-fictional writings that exist in the African American literature, we have chosen two 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.

Chapter One: Slavery era

African Literature 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 an 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. It can

briefly be divided into two main periods: the Slavery era and Post-Slavery era where the civil war can be a shifting event to the African Americans.

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 in 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 communityⁱ.

Before the American independence, Lucy Terry wrote *Bars Fight*, a poem that narrates the killing incident of her neighbors by the Indiansⁱⁱ. 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 Phillis 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*ⁱⁱⁱ.

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.^{iv} The Antebellum Period was an altering stage in the American history. It included a population shift from the agricultural south to the industrial north, a Civil War that ended in the abolition of slavery and the growth of feminist movements.

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.^v Many African Americans deployed their pens and their voices to defend blacks' political freedom.

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 this type of writing became a necessity.^{vi} Booker T. Washington is one of the writers who do the part of persons like Austen and narrated the story of Africans' life in northern America through his literary works. One of these works is *Up from Slavery* (1901).

***Up from Slavery* by Booker T. Washington**

Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) is an American writer and educationist. He was born a slave in Virginia, but later he 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.^{vii}

1. Pre-Reading Questions

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

2. Autobiography and Biography

An autobiography is derived from the Greek word *autos* (self), *bios* (life) and *graphein* (to write), it is informally called *autobio*.^{viii} 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..

3. Up from Slavery: 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

4. Assignment

Read *Up from Slavery* by Booker T. Washington

5. *Up from Slavery* Analysis**a. 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.

Climax

Chapter 14

Atlanta exposition

Chapter 13

Important speech

Chapter 15

success in public speaking

Falling Action

Chapter 16

Europe

Chapter 11

Important preparations

Chapter 12

Raising money

Chapter 9

Washington's anxious days

Chapter 10

Hard moments

Chapter 7

Washington at tuskegee

Chapter 8

Teaching school

Chapter 5

Washington during reconstruction

Chapter 6

Black Race and red race

Rising Action

Chapter 3

Washington's struggle for education

Chapter 4

Washington helps others

Chapter 2

Washington's boyhood

Introduction

Chapter 1

Washington as a slave

Denouement

Chapter 17

Washington's biography is published

b. 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 appreciates. 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 others is the key to the determination of success. He believes that a person should focus 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, 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 slavery 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.

c. 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, the 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.

- **Activity**

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		

e. Setting

American South, approximately 1856 - 1901

f. Point of View

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

g. Conflict

Washington's story is a rags-to-riches tale of overcoming obstacles in order to achieve success. There are various minor conflicts: 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.

h. Language

Booker T. Washington is somehow subdued in his use of language. In *Up from Slavery*, language is mostly conversational and simple. His main purpose is to tell the story in the simplest way possible with no embellishment.

i. 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.

- **Activity**

Regarding the elements you have seen previously, analyze the tone and mood in *Up from Slavery*.

Chapter 2: Post-Slavery Era

In our course, the Reconstruction Period is considered as a part of the Slavery era. 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.^{ix}

The Harlem Renaissance appeared to be the golden age to the African Americans in terms of literature, music, all arts, and politics (Civil Rights

Movement) from the end of the end of First World War until the Great Depression. 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. The issue of racism continued to the Second World War due to the segregation between black and white soldiers.

The Contemporary Era includes two important periods. The black aesthetic period was marked by the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Nationalist Movement and the Women's Movement. 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.

African American literature has marked some literary movements as the African American Realism, Naturalism, Modernism, and Neorealism.

***Home* by Toni Morrison**

1. Pre-reading questions

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

2. 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.

3. *Home*: 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

4. *Home* Analysis

a. Plot Pyramid

Climax

Frank rescues Cee from Dr. Beauregard's house

Rising Action

Frank reveals the terror of combat in Korea and the traumas of his childhood in the south

Falling Action

Cee is nursed back to health and absorbs some of her healers' common sense and hardiness

Introduction

Frank escapes the mental institution to help his sister

Denouement

Frank and Cee dig up the body of a man whose death in a fight they witnessed as children

c. 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 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 in 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 it 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 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.

d. 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. 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 doesn't 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. The experiment went wrong, consequently, Cee becomes infertile. Because he is a true villain, shown as a monster, Dr. Beauregard hides the truth and refuses to give reasonable explanation to Frank.

- **Exercise**

1. How well did Toni Morrison do in creating the character of Lily in the novel? Use illustrations.
2. Is it believable that there could be characters like Lenore in the novel? Why?

e. Genre

Fiction

f. 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.

g. Setting

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

h. 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.

i. 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, he 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.

j. Language

Toni Morrison's writing style is easily apparent. Her novels are easy to read, and she incorporates many different styles into her writing, such as switching the voice of narration throughout her stories for a change of perspective.

k. 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 Beaugard who is supposed to be a healer for Cee, while he damages her and causes her an eternal infertility.

- **Activity: Comparative analysis between *Up from Slavery* and *Home***

African American Literature has made its success through the commitment of its writers, the strength of its themes, the simplicity of its language and the authenticity of plot. It is difficult to grasp all of its oeuvres, however, we have selected two texts that could be representatives of this ethnic group.

Regarding the texts handled in this course, what similarities and differences you may find between them in terms of plot, themes, characters, and language.

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

ⁱ Bruce, Dickson D. *The Origins of African American Literature, 1680-1865*. Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2001.

ⁱⁱ Adams, Catherine; Pleck, Elizabeth (2010). *Love of Freedom: Black Women in Colonial and Revolutionary New England*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. Kindle Location 1289. ISBN 978-0-19-538909-8.

ⁱⁱⁱ "The Slave Route: Who was Frederick Douglass?". *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*. Retrieved November 7, 2018.

^{iv} Jones, Gayl. *Liberating Voices: Oral Tradition in African American Literature*. U.S.A: Harvard University Press, 1991.

^v Worth, Richard. *Slavery in the Americas: African Americans during Reconstruction*. New York: InfoBase publishing, 2006.

^{vi} Mikkelsen, Nina. "Insiders, Outsiders, and the Question of Authenticity: Who Shall Write for African American Children?" *African American Review* 32.1 (1998): 33-49.

^{vii} Washington, Booker T. *Booker T. Washington-Up from Slavery: Autobiography*. epubli, 2019.

^{viii} "autobio." *Dictionary.com*. 7 February 2020.

^{ix} Smith, Rochelle and Jones, Sharon L. *The Prentice Hall Anthology of African American Literature*. U.S.A: Prentice Hall, 2000.