

**The Racial Double-Standards of
American policy Towards the
Freedom of Afro-American Blacks in
The Underground Railroads By Colson
Whitehead**

**ازدواجية المعايير العنصرية للسياسة الامريكية
تجاه حرية الزنوج الامريكين في رواية (الممرات
السرية) للكاتب الامريكي (كولسن وايتهد)**

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الملخص

تتبع الدراسة , ومن خلال الرواية (الممرات السرية) للكاتب الأمريكي (وايتهيد), طبيعة السياسة الأمريكية تجاه حرية السود الأمريكيين . تحاول الدراسة إثبات أن ازدواجية المعايير العنصرية هي السمة البارزة في النهج الأمريكي. وبالتالي تستكشف الى ان عمل وايتهيد يضع مصداقية السياسة الأمريكية على المحك وذلك من خلال الادعاء الأمريكي الزائف تجاه مفهوم الحرية . الرواية هي دعوة للمجتمع الزنجي الى تبني مشروع تحرري لاناس لطالما عانوا من قيود فرضتها السياسة الأمريكية المضللة على مستوى الممارسة والشعار. المشروع يمنح الزوج الحرية من ازمة مزمنة تدعى عقدة العبودية والتي لازمت ذاكرة اللاوعي. فاصبحت بطللة الرواية (كورا) هي التي تحمل شعلة الحرية بدلا من نصب الحرية الشهير في امريكا. (كورا) صوت الحرية المدوي الذي يدعوا مجتمع الزوج الى التحرر من عقدهم اولا , ثم التحرر من الثقافة العنصرية الأمريكية في بلد يرفع شعار الحرية جزافا . تستنتج الدراسة بانه لايمكن الوثوق بالسياسة الأمريكية . بل السعي الى الحرية لانها ليست هبة وانماهي حق مسلوب يسترجع بالقوة.

الكلمات المفتاحية

المعايير المزدوجة, الحرية, العبودية, الراسمالية, السيادة, الشعار

Abstract

The study, via Underground Railroads, tackles the nature of American policy towards the freedom of American blacks. It attempts to prove that racial double-standards is a salient feature with American approach. It explores that Whitehead's work puts to the test the American credibility through the false American claim of freedom. The work actually invites black people to plan for liberation; it is for those who are suffering a lot from this kind of policy. It is about a project which grants the blacks the free-

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The Underground Railroads is a resounding voice of those who are striving for true liberty. It is the voice that not only reflects Cora's generation, but also mirrors the subsequent generations. The narrative stirs around the tale of Cora's grandmother Ajarry, who had endured greatly. She was kidnapped in Africa, sold several times, and eventually became a slave in America. She, like her people, departed the world without having a feeling of being a free human being. Whitehead's Cora is, in fact, the present voice who may succeed where the predecessors failed. Whitehead's novel is about Cora's adventures that illuminate the path of real freedom for coming generations. Freedom is what drives American blacks to seek human rights: freedom,

dom from chronic crisis called slavery-complex that has been living in their unconsciousness. Cora, the heroine, replaces the Freedom Status of Bartholdi, to hold the torch instead. She is the black's voice, who is calling her own people first to liberate themselves, from their unconsciousness, then from the racist culture in American geography. The study concludes that American policy is not to be trusted since the freedom is never granted freely, it is achieved forcefully.

Keywords:

Double-standards, freedom, slavery, capitalism, policy, slogan

the hypothetical issue of how far the freedom slogan is trustworthy in American politics. It focuses on Whitehead's work as the appropriate area where an accurate and equal answer may be obtained, which is the study's objective. Since the paper attempts to analyze the text from a political standpoint, it takes a Marxist method for deep analysis. As a literary approach, Marxism has a core premise regarding each book to be evaluated. It is concerned with what is known as subtext.

When discussing freedom, the text introduces two crucial concepts: slavery and capitalism. It has been argued that freedom cannot be considered outside of these two ideas. Slavery has remained a major topic in the minds of American intellectuals, particularly black

justice, equality, and identity. Cora's adventure allows readers to have a better image of the ostensibly free American past. In fact, it depicts humiliation, dread, daily brutality, frightening power, and white dominance. During the American Revolution (1715-1783), the freedom slogan was raised to emphasize that all American people, without exception, are free. The Underground Railroads, on the other hand, tells us the opposite. Yet, the paper attempts to assess the credibility of American policies toward the notion of freedom. It attempts to demonstrate that there is a gap between the slogan and its application in the pursuit of freedom, in other words, there is a racial double-standards policy practiced by American administration .it attempts also to address



anti-freedom are two sides of the same coin. His work illustrates how black Americans have been exploited. The first thing that has been taken from them is their freedom. They have been the commodity sold wherever and whenever capitalists want it.

Finally, the paper concludes that the double-standards are a syndromic approach in American policy, where freedom has been utilized to conceal America's brutal reality. Whitehead questions the concept of freedom in American states. He argues that while freedom is a right that American blacks should practice, it cannot be obtained until they resist.

The roadmap of freedom

Freedom is a basic human value since it is inextricably tied to the self and existence. Freedom , according to Web-

Americans. It always piques their interest as well as their memory to write about it. One of the writers that connects this topic to American slavery is Colson Whitehead. His *The Underground Railroads* is a realization of an enslaved people's dream of liberation. If their dream cannot be realized consciously, it may exist in their unconsciousness.

Whitehead believes that capitalism and slavery have achieved the same goal: the lack of freedom. The enslaved people (those robbed of freedom) are used by American capitalists to sustain capitalism as a very profitable system. The people who live in *The Underground Railroads* society are largely hired slaves working hard for pitiful earnings. Whitehead seeks to convey to readers that capitalism and

out a feeling of being a free human being. Whitehead's Cora is the present voice who may succeed where the predecessors failed. Cora's adventure in Whitehead's novel shows the route to the true freedom for future generations. Freedom is what drives American blacks to seek human rights: freedom, justice, equality, and identity. Cora's journey allows readers to have a better picture of the ostensibly more free American past. Actually, it depicts humiliation, dread, daily brutality, frightening power, and white dominance.

The Underground Railroads is viewed as a road plan for liberating slaves from their masters—the whites. Cora and her buddy Caesar, who taught her about the Underground Railroads, resolve to go on a perilous journey to the north. Their

ster definition, is opposed of tyranny and hegemony. Therefore American blacks, in particular, have discovered that a human being without freedom equals death since freedom and life have been synonymous from birth; to be more specific, it is a heavenly gift provided to every man without regard to race, color, descent, or national or ethnic background. The Underground Railroads is a resounding voice of those who desperate for true liberty. It is the voice that not only reflects Cora's generation, but also subsequent generations. The narrative begins with the tale of Cora's grandmother Ajarry, who had endured greatly. Ajarry was kidnapped in Africa, sold several times, and eventually became a slave in America. She, like her age, departed the world with-



result, he has questions about the American flag of liberty's dependability.

Politicians have raised a brilliant slogan of freedom since the founding of what is now known as the United States of America, to the degree that the Statue of Liberty has become one of America's most renowned names for freedom. Regrettably, the Blacks have discovered the freedom is nothing more than political propaganda to promote and polish the American face. Yet, in order to comprehend "what this nation [USA] is, you have to look at it from the outside," and you will find true face of America. It was a joke" (Whitehead: 215). However , numerous academics, notably in art, such as Albert Boime (1998) and Maurice Agulhon (1981), point out the contradiction be-

adventure begins in Georgia, where Cora works on a cotton plantation. Cora is forced to murder a white man who is attempting to kidnap her. Their first trip is in South Carolina, where everyone mistakenly believes that it is as beautiful as the rest of America. They soon find the reality about this metropolis. It's actually worse than they realize. Ridgeway, the slave catcher, follows them. Their tenacity propels them to depart once more, going through numerous states in search of ultimate freedom. So , Whitehead thinks that his own people are not as free as whites. Only after death did the negro become a human being. Only then was he equal to the white guy (p.116). It makes no sense to deny someone this gift (liberty) under any pretense or explanation. As a

paper, wrote an editorial in the Cleveland Gazette criticizing Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi's torch (the Statue of Liberty sculpture). He recommends the following:

“ the torch of the Bartholdi statue should not be lighted until this country becomes a free one in reality. ‘Liberty enlightening the world,’ indeed! The expression makes us sick. This government is a howling farce. It cannot or rather does not protect its citizens within its own borders. Shove the Bartholdi statue, torch and all, into the ocean until the ‘liberty’ of this country is such as to make it possible for an industrious and inoffensive colored man in the South to earn a respectable living for himself and family.” (Cleveland Gazette, 1886)

tween the Statue's content and shape. Some believe that “the staid visage of the Statue of Liberty” has nothing to do with the concept of freedom, even in the history of the French Revolution (Agulhon, 1981). Similarly, Whitehead illustrates this façade with a really cute illustration. To him, freedom is a “shifted” scene that changes depending on the viewer's location. The independence is like “ a forest [which] is dense with trees up close but from outside”. As it is the “empty meadow,” you can find the “true limits” of freedom while you are inside it (p.149). It appears that Whitehead's negative attitude about American liberty is not a slander. African-American journalists had backed up his assertion. Harry Clay Smith (1886), who owned and operated a weekly news-

ly in connection to liberty and autonomy. Notwithstanding, the terms of freedom and liberty are sometimes used interchangeably, Whitehead, who may be influenced by Wendy H. K. Chun, distinguishes between the two. He argues that freedom entails having the power to do what you want. To be liberated means to be free of (repressive) limitations and to do anything you choose. As a result, Cbun institutionalizes liberty while making freedom a private action. In other words, he associates liberty with political parties or governmental entities. Additionally, Cbun maintains that these two ideas cannot always be acquired simultaneously. He states:

“ To have liberty is to be liberated from something; to be free is to be self-determining, autonomous. Freedom can or

Slavery: The false standard of freedom

Freedom, according to Merriam Webster dictionary, is the state of “ liberation from slavery or restraint or from the power of another : independence “. Webster’s 2022. Yet, Whitehead examines freedom within a political context in his book *The Underground Railroads*. His work, in fact, investigates the dependability of American political discourse on a contentious topic such as freedom. He asks the American regime how freedom can be realized in a society ruled by slavery, capitalism, and racism. The term “freedom” has been raised all throughout the United States, but American politicians have been caught in contradiction and have therefore lost trust with this slogan. Yet, freedom is addressed political-

in American politics, in his *Slavery and Freedom in Theory and Practice*. As a result, Whitehead highlights the dichotomy in American policy over the genuine meaning of freedom. During the eighteenth century, there has been the rise of independence. The United States has prioritized freedom among human rights while remaining mute on the practice of enslavement. Therefore, the majority of the characters in Whitehead's novel saw the railroad as the only means to obtain their freedom. Cora and Caesar represent thousands of enslaved Africans forced to work on a plantation. They decide, however, to use the train to reach freedom. Whitehead allows his characters to halt in some states to warn his readers that racism and maltreatment cannot be isolated to a specific

cannot exist within a state of liberty: one can be liberated yet "unfree," or "free" yet enslaved." (Cbun, 2016, p. 12)

It is challenging to talk about freedom while ignoring slavery in the American ideology. As a result, we may conclude that slavery has always been present in the minds of thinkers and all stakeholders, particularly in politics, sociology, economics, and literature. According to Whitehead, freedom is intimately tied to slavery since the latter reflects a glorious picture of a free individual. As a result, slavery has assumed primary importance in his conception of freedom. In this context, David J. Watkins (2016) exposes the striking reality of the extreme discrepancy between theory and practice, particularly with regard to the notion of freedom



location. Cora's adventure begins in Georgia and continues through the Carolinas, Tennessee, and Indiana. Cora and her people faced challenges and hazards in each state as they sought independence.

It's hardly unexpected that Whitehead placed his work around 1850. It is the year of the Fugitive Slave Act, which allows the South to get a new federal statute to catch runaway slaves who have fled to the North. Notwithstanding US government enforcement, the Northern fought this prohibition by demonstrating sympathy and continuing to rescue caught runaway slaves (David C.W.A, 1924). To a certain extent, the North underwent a long process of liberation that, some 20 years after the revolution, had already resulted in the abolition of slavery. Hence,

according to Whitehead, North Carolina is like a fortress where slavery is prohibited, and blacks may obtain protection. As a result, the United States of America is divided into two halves: south and north. While the South favors the Fugitive Slave Act, the North opposes it. This means that the opposition to freedom manifests itself not just on a policy level, but also geographically. Despite the majority of Americans believe in slavery, few whites feel that blacks deserve to be free.

The Underground Railroad leads us to the true source of liberation, which is found with enslavers. They truly have enormous influence over blacks, particularly black women. The heroine, Cora, is portrayed as an enslaved woman attempting to liberate herself from suffering and abuse. Also,

she tries to prevent her illegitimate kid (if raped) from being sold into slavery. From a feminist standpoint, Whitehead is arguably one of the most active writers who highlights the topic of American black women who frequently face abuse, harassment, and rape. As a black, she always looks for independence. She is often terrified and under threat, even if she manages to keep herself secure from enslavers. In fact, Whitehead tackles American policies by claiming that freedom is merely a ruse in American speech. His novel's characters discover nothing similar to what is referred to as freedom in their country. He addressed probably the writer of created equal. This remark was created by Thomas Jefferson, the third president, in his Declaration of American Independ-

ence. He is the politician who frequently preached liberty to American citizens, particularly blacks. To Whitehead, the Declaration of Independence "is like a map. You trust that it's right but you only know by going out and testing it yourself." The map that should securely guide every American citizen in the proper direction, but blacks are lost everywhere they walk. Cora, the heroine, has a long and difficult path to freedom. "She was a stray after all. A stray not only in its plantation meaning-orphaned, with no one to look after her but in every other sphere as well". Whitehead (2016) (pg. 121-197) He might be referring to the Declaration's classic phrase of freedom, equality, and happiness:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men

are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”

(The Declaration of Independence, 1776)

An aristocratic individual cannot be expected to promote the notion of excellence in the society he lives. Consequently , the freedom should be granted to those who are affected. Merriam (2022) states that Jefferson doesn't believe in “ absolute quality”. He believed that society should be divided into two groups, “gentlemen” and “simplemen,” or that there should be a master and a slave. Merriam-C.E., 2022, pp. 30-31. Yet, Jefferson does not represent the misleading facade of American politics in the second part of the eight-

eenth century, which sought to promote hypocritically the notion of freedom and establish an anti-slavery culture. In quite a while, Jefferson expresses a strong interest in enslavement in his correspondence. In 1811, he wrote to John Lynch, saying that the United States may “undertake to create a settlement on the coast of Africa.” Furthermore, he denigrates African blacks (slaves) by thinking that they are not autonomous citizens as free as whites. Jefferson tells Edward Coles not to sell his slaves because they will be “pests in society” if they are free. Slaves, says Jefferson, are “ incapable as children of taking care of themselves” . In letters to Virginia in 1782, Jefferson writes that blacks often felt inferior to whites “since the former were ignorant and lacked lit-

erary ability.” Jefferson (1818), pp. 57-64. Jefferson’s hideous face is revealed by Finkelman (2012). . In his article The Monster of Monticello, he criticizes the assumptions about Jefferson’s brilliant reality made by both journalist Jon Meacham and independent historian Henry Wiencek. Some writers attempt to portray Jefferson as a “fallen angel” sent to free the slaves. Jefferson, on the other hand, is described as a “creepy, brutal hypocrite” by Finkelman. However , Jefferson’s conundrum eloquently demonstrates the absurdity of American policy toward blacks. Finkelman contends that many historians frequently exploit Jefferson’s declaration that all American citizens, blacks and whites alike, enjoy freedom because they have been created equal as a crutch to dismiss

Jefferson’s negative attitudes against blacks. While drafting the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson possessed “approximately 175 slaves,” according to Finkelman. Jefferson’s genuine trade is that of a slave dealer. He sold 85 slaves in 10 years to live a life of luxury. Finkelman (2012).

Throughout Cora, Whitehead gives us extremely vivid testimonials that disprove the notion of freedom in American sensibility. Whitehead vividly depicts the stark difference between slavery and so-called freedom. Simply said, Whitehead’s novel is a journey toward liberation. It tells the story of Cora, a slave who flees the slaved south for the free north. Cora discovers, when moving , that the servitude is the same, just in new shapes. As a result, she has no choice but to pro-



ceed. Her escape has a quiet history and unspoken repercussions of racial injustice in the United States. The novelist skillfully allows the reader to see that Cora's idea of emancipation is not personal. Many African men and women share their hopes and goals with Cora. They are all waiting at the station for their liberty. Of course, they have a lot to tell the young generation about how much they had to sacrifice to achieve genuine freedom.

Though the general ideological principles of US policy seek to promote the concept of freedom and spread an anti-slavery culture that was discovered in the second half of the eighteenth century, there is no doubt that the battle for official emancipation was a long and difficult battle, particularly in some areas. The Underground

Railroads moves us back to the American Revolution (1715–1783). The tale depicts how difficult it was to abolish a practice that had been legislated by states and churches for centuries and culminated in the British acknowledgment of the United States of America's independence. The narrative of Whitehead may depict the people of The Thirteen Colonies. They were British colonies established in North America to stand against the American Revolutionary War. Actually, it was Whitehead's ancestors who were subjected to a harsh slavery system. It was an uneven freedom marked by many types of discrimination (former slaves were deprived of civil rights, and therefore they were doing hard work for a small wage). The situation was significantly different in the

Hanubi states, which had both old and contemporary slavery regulations. Within the same political structure, there are two opposing judicial worlds: one that is legally legalized, and the other that is either forbidden or on its way to prohibition. By halting the movement of slave heroes in the name of federal unity, the revolution pushed the northern states toward emancipation, increasing the prestige between the two sides of the state: the independence movement was accompanied by slave emancipation only in the north (as would happen in Latin America in the nineteenth century), while the two processes remained separate in the south. (Rodriquez, 2007)

Capitalism: the brutal standards

Because “more slaves led

in more cotton, which led to more money to buy more land to farm more cotton.” (U.R: P-135), Whitehead addresses a fundamental issue: the antagonistic link between freedom and capitalism. Whitehead claims that, since its inception, capitalism has relied on the exploitation of society’s weaker members. As a result, it has been intimately associated with slavery, racism, and prejudice. Slaves were exposed to the most terrible exploitation by the bourgeoisie who held the means of production at the start of the Industrial Revolution. The purpose was to keep production costs low, resulting in a higher profit margin. Milton Friedman’s ideology of capitalism may be refuted by Whitehead. Friedman frequently associates capitalism with liberty. He believes that

capitalism is founded on individual liberty (Fiedman, 2002). In this context, Silvia Federici, an Italian-American writer and lecturer, writes in (2004) about the history of women's subjection, colonial exploitation, and enslavement of blacks and indigenous peoples as a method of consolidating and reinforcing the capitalist system. "During the Industrial Revolution, the capitalist system became in need of additional employees, so it started hiring women and children as well, because they are cheaper than males, and if the worker previously sold his time and his own labor, he was selling his wife and children as well. The capitalist system has been cruel and demeaning to women. Silvia, a feminist who exposes the actual face of capitalism, backs Whitehead's Cora, who "knew individ-

uals being sold as property" (U.R: P. 81). Therefore , Cora, her mother, and all black women exist inside the capitalist system. Silvia Federici (2004) asserts that the freedom (of slaves) never matches the capitalist system. To her, slaves are unquestionably employed as a productive force and cheap paid labor that allows capitalism to perpetuate a productive force. She states:

" For capitalism must justify and mystify the contradictions built into its social relations—the promise of freedom vs. the reality of widespread coercion, and the promise of prosperity vs. the reality of widespread penury—by denigrating the "nature" of those exploits: women, colonial subjects, the descendants of African slaves, the immigrants displaced by globalization." (

Federici: 2004 p.17)

Cora's people find no evidence of "equal, liberty, and happiness" in her existence. They are equal to whites since they are American citizens, but they are viewed as a commodity that may be sold whenever and wherever it is possible. They lack a true feeling of humanity because they discover that "in America, the quirk was that people were things.... If you were a thing—a cart or a horse or a slave—your value determined your possibilities" (U.R. P:10). To live in such a capitalist society, or even a state, freedom is never granted. There is a significant agreement between Whitehead's and certain historians' perspectives on the link between persons deprived of their freedom (slaves) and capitalism.

"When black blood was money, the savvy businessman knew to open the vein," writes Whitehead. (U.R: p.25). To capitalists, the slave is simply a tool to be exploited. Certain historians, such as Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman, typically explain the biological link between slavery and capitalism symbolically. They are truly in the belief that "American slavery is necessarily imprinted on the DNA of American capitalism,". For this reason, slavery is the true wellspring of American prosperity. Cotton and other items were cultivated on American soil, then plucked by enslaved people; those individuals were in no way able to improve the American economy. Yet, the American paradox arises from the following opposing binaries: barbarism/modernity, cruelty/lawfulness,

poverty/prosperity, and totalitarianism/democracy (Desmond.2019).

Conclusion

Whitehead's *The Underground Railroads* denounces the immorality and the double standards of American policy towards the blacks' rights, especially freedom. It is, by no means, puts America's freedom policy to the test. It demonstrates unmistakably that there is an American paradox, or the birth of a republic that values freedom and equality but remains silent about the presence of slaves within its borders: this was a problem that emancipatory history removed for so long that it resorted to the fragility of the state to justify the choices of its founders. That demonstrates how tough it is to eradicate a practice that has

been legislated by legislatures and officials for centuries and may yet exist in such sections of America today. It really incites American blacks to reject this fabricated motto and seek their independence by force. Whitehead is as if to call his people to follow what Martin Luther King says "Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed"

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