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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Emplotting the Past: Mari Evans, Hayden White and the Satirical-Romantic Hunt in "The Nigger Who Now Is Hunting You"

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Abstract

Currently, interdisciplinary studies necessitate an indispensable urge displaying how various fields stand intimately while exhibiting reciprocity within diverse disciplines. The present investigation employs Hayden White's (1928-2018) meta-historical framework to argue that Evans' polemical poem "The Nigger Who Now Is Hunting You" constitutes a deliberate and radical act of historical narration. Moving beyond thematic analysis, the study demonstrates how Evans strategically deploys White's categories of emplotment and argumentation to dismantle dominant historiography and forge a plausible counter-narrative. The analysis posits that Evans synthesizes a satirical plot, portraying the oppressor's world as absurd and doomed, with a romantic plot, casting the Black subject as a transcendent, heroic agent of inevitable reckoning. This hybrid employment refuses the tragic or comic modes traditionally imposed on Black historical experience, insisting instead on a narrative of immanent, transformative justice. Concurrently, the article examines the poem's Formist argumentation which locates historical causality in the will and radically re-defined identity of the hunter, underpinned by a Mechanist logic of irreversible cause and effect. Through this meta-historical intervention, Evans does not merely document historical oppression but actively writes history as a means of collapsing past injustice, present consciousness and future retribution into a single, imperative narrative moment. This investigation positions Evans as a crucial theorist of history in her own right; one whose poetic craft demands recognition as a form of critical historiography aimed at the annihilation of an oppressive world order and the prophetic enactment of a new one.

Keywords: Argumentation, Emplotment, Hayden White, Historiography, Mari Evans, Signifying

Introduction

The Black Arts Movement was an artistic-nationalistic movement led by Afro-American activists in the 1960s and 70s, who were intent on creating new cultural institutions, while instigating critical thought. The members were intent on furthering the accomplishments of artists who were determined to arouse the Black community into taking heed of a particular awareness through exhibiting distinct works of art, simultaneously questioning centuries of unsolicited condescension by demonstrating Black humiliation. Presently, advocates of the movement highlight the turbulences intrinsic to Black lives, initiating from the past, and they would like to expand horizons for a future without repression or racial discrimination. One such adherent is the poet Mari Evans (1919-2017) who believes that her art can partially disclose the trajectory of Afro-Americans from the commencement of slavery on the shores of the New World, up to the present time, when surprisingly, segregation is still practiced, though verbally abhorred. Her poetry unveils a particular attitude with which she decisively exposes the history of her people, simultaneously elucidating the traumatic incidents that have left permanent scars on the Black collective-historical, consciousness. There are traces, in a considerable proportion of her poetry which exhibit suppression and rejection, whether physical or mental, and stipulate that both have always been an ostensible part of Black history. Considering the principles prominent in historiography and focusing on the causal relationship of occurrences, it seems virtually a beneficial move to study Evans' poetry in order to discover how literature can become a source for collecting historical evidence to further historiographical application and research.

Hayden White (1928-2018), the prominent American historian, with an expertise in the field of literary criticism and historiography, endeavors to redefine, not only history but also the duty of the modernist historian. He maintains that it is the responsibility of the contemporary historian to collect and analyze historical substantiation so as to illuminate facts which aid to reveal how various accounts are recorded from distinct perspectives; while considering the extent to which persuasive explanation about recorded events can be interpreted by different historians (White 1973, pp. 30-31). He also stipulates that historical writing is largely affected by literary writing in considerable ways and shares a specific reciprocity with narrated accounts. Thus, recording history becomes a matter of crafting narratives, as much as assembling facts (White 1966, pp. 132). Furthermore, White argues that relating history should never be regarded as scientific or objective, unaffected by peripheral phenomena. He, moreover, insists on the need for interpretation while dealing with historical narrative, since it is only through interpretation that historians can present what they think was worthwhile and meaningful in the past as occurrences which are related to the present time. Inarguably, it is through interpretative investigation that the convoluted twists of meaning unfurl to disclose a panorama of meaning. White's views on his outlooks are best reflected in his prominent work, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (1973) in which he argues that a historian is basically an artist, and not a scientist, who imbues historical action with aesthetics while pursuing ethical purposes (p. xi). Accordingly, historical facts that are recorded in chronicles and chronological archives merely provide raw material for historians to reconsider accounts, in order to discover whether there exists sufficient validity for historiographical transcription.

It is the main purpose of this research to carry out a study on Mari Evans' poem, "The Nigger Who Now Is Hunting You" from a historiographical outlook proposed by Hayden White so as to illustrate how the poem can act as an example which further sanctifies White's definition of historical narrative in order to form a meta-history. In addition, an attempt shall be made to give substance to White's belief in the intimacy between history and literature. In the process of an in-depth analysis of the poem, a historical truth shall be extracted from the convolutions of the poet's lexicon in order to convey her message. Hopefully, this article will serve to ratify White's theorization made about studying historical narratives on the theoretical axes of emplotment and argumentation, through Evans's artistry, to reveal the existential relationship between events, man and his destiny.

Literature Review

Currently, much attention has been devoted to issues concerning the Black minority and its trajectory and a considerable number of works has been published in this regard. The exploration of post-slavery trauma, as a noteworthy link, presents a profound explanation of the enduring effects of systemic oppression and historical subjugation of Afro-Americans, as elucidated in the following seminal works. "A Psychological, Historical Analysis of Post-Slavery Trauma and Post-Slavery Growth: Are They Viable Constructs?" (2024) by William Cross accentuates the trajectory of slaves and makes a scholarly review of the findings of Du Bois, Frazier and De Gruy. "Intergenerational Pain: From Chattel Slavery to Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome and Beyond in the Americas" (2020) by Winniey Maduro delineates psycho-physiological trauma as the inseparable section in the life experiences of Black individuals, explaining the retaliatory actions reflected in the poem as the cyclic segments of slavery. "The Traumatic Impact of Structural Racism on African Americans" (2020) by Scott- Jones and Kamara, accentuates the notion of structural racism, accompanied by trauma as a side effect. The works of these scholars provide a crucial lexicon for the poem's thematic content and its depiction of the intergenerational pain, typically treating the text as a documentary reflection rather than a formal construction.

Another informative article by Michael Halloran, "African American Health and Posttraumatic Slave Syndrome" (2019), explicates TMT (terror management theory) by illustrating how the effects of a syndrome have affected the Black race throughout their collective history. In her dissertation, *A Critical Analysis of the Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome* (2015), Shari Renée Hicks enhances the comprehension of trauma as a genetic disorder. *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (1903) by William Du Bois, approaches suggest notions contributing to therapeutic recovery. The above-mentioned works serve as pivotal contributions to the discourse surrounding the psychological and socio-cultural ramifications of a legacy, illustrating the multifarious nature of trauma that transcends generations and operates as a catalyst in triggering the occurrence of historical phenomena.

The significance of analyzing Black poetry in the twenty-first century and its relationship to immediate lives cannot be overlooked. Young in an introduction written to an anthology, "Lift Every Voice" (2020), introduced Black poetry as a means of personal expression, and a vehicle for protestation against dominant power. *The Portable Frederick Douglass* (2016) by

Stauffer and Gates serves as a poignant historical touchstone that elucidates the harrowing realities of slavery as reflected and extracted from the initial eight chapters. In *Understanding the New Black Poetry* (1973) by Stephen Henderson, the weight of Black Poetry in comprehending the destiny of the Black minority is evaluated, providing an opportunity for an in-depth reading of Evans' poetry. "Current Criticism on African American Poetry" (2015) by Scheyer, demonstrates the significance of a comprehensive study carried out about African-American poetry, as historical evidence of Black protest. The compiled works procure a comprehensive understanding of the years of rhythm and strife that infuse the African-American verse, particularly observed in Evans' poetry. In addition, they collaboratively underscore the necessity of acknowledging the pervasive influence of historical injustices and societal structures and the role literature can play in the disclosure of historical truth. The mentioned works enrich and enhance comprehension of a human experience, namely slavery, as Afro-American collective historical legacy.

By meticulously analyzing the intricate interplay between individual agency and collective memory, the authors of the mentioned works disclose the profound implications of enslaved individuals' experiences on contemporary identity formation and social dynamics. Furthermore, the presented scholarly works invite a critical reevaluation of the narratives surrounding nature and circulation of viciousness and revenge, ultimately challenging the prevailing paradigms that often obscure the persistent shadows of enslavement in the gamut between enslavement and freedom.

Theoretical Framework

In its interrogation of Mari Evans' strategic narrative construction in the seminal poem "The Nigger Who Is Now Hunting You", this investigation is propelled by a hybrid methodological engine. Moving beyond singular critical paradigms, an integrated approach of satirical-romantic emplotment can be forged. This synthesized lens allows for a dialectical analysis, capturing how Evans' satire systematically dismantles the racist archetypes of the victimized Black subject, while simultaneously tracing the romantic impulse within her work, a deliberate, forward-thrusting narrative energy that emplots the Black protagonist not a prey, but as the active, agenital hunter of a new historical destiny. By interweaving the critical deconstruction of Satire to the generative, future-oriented thrust of Romantic emplotment, this methodology does not merely interpret the text; but rather it illuminates the very mechanism by which Evans engineers a transformative historical consciousness. Through this analysis, the text emerges not as a static artifact of protest literature, but as a dynamic blueprint for historical reclamation, where narrative form becomes the means that hunts down and re-writes a legacy of oppression. In order to trace the history of the Afro-Americans and their trajectory of suppression, marginalization and slavery, this article presumes that Mari Evans, in her selected poem, offers evidence, in the form of a historical narrative, so as to re-tell the account of hardship, repression and traumatic infliction. Evans effortlessly, albeit adroitly, becomes a historian recording historical facts by employing simple and straightforward lexicon in order to develop a meta-historical narrative in her work in order to arouse the collective-historical Black consciousness. In order to put the narrative of deprivation and misfortune, and everything in their wake, into

an imaginable and intelligible framework, the poet artfully employs the mesmerizing power of words and makes artistic use of distinct figures of speech so as to relate events from a specific angle, accentuating that every historical narrative, no matter how “synchronic” or “structural” is emplotted in one way or another (*Metahistory* 8). In the selected sample, “The Nigger Who Now Is Hunting You”, the traumatic experience of slavery and being hunted down is envisioned with the intention of reviving and re-visualizing the horrendous impact of the notion of fugitives and escapees being captured and severely punished. In this regard, the slave, as a victim, assumes not the characteristics of the traditional tragic hero, experiencing a downfall, but becomes the Satirical-Romantic agent who is determined to role play in a meta-historical act that advertently chooses to narrate history from an ideological stance which strives to procure a moral effect.

Hayden White holds highly distinct views, not only on how historiography intersects with various fields of investigatory research areas, specifically literary studies, but also about the impact of compiled historical evidence in the presentation of historical phenomena. In his magnum opus, *Metahistory* (1973), he divulges a novel outlook which states that currently, the study of historiography is no longer a monolithic method of suggesting theories. It is simultaneously an ensemble of the historical recording of events, the actual practice of historians, illustrating historical consciousness and updating the panoply of disciplines while developing particular methodologies. This matter is clearly stipulated in the ensuing statement, As new sources or artifacts come to light, these will need to be incorporated into the historian’s account, but they will not alter the historical reality, only our perception of it. One could conceive of the idea of history as a giant jigsaw puzzle: as each piece falls into place, a clearer picture emerges; historical reality comes into ever sharper focus. (White 2010, pp. xxii).

Ostensibly, White’s methodology for the analysis of historical events proposes a rigorous approach that initiates with the meticulous collection of evidence, which must necessarily undergo stringent testing for validity to establish its reliability. The foundational step is most crucial as it ensures that the historical phenomena under examination are grounded in verifiable facts rather than mere conjecture. Following the phase of validation, White advocates for a process of interpretation. In this second phase and according to White’s terminology, emplotment, occurs since “facts cease to be mere facts once they are interpreted, and once they are transformed into historical discourse” (White 2010, pp. xxvi). The interpretive stage comprises of employing narrative techniques and rhetorical devices to construct a coherent and compelling representation of past events. The interplay between evidence and interpretation is essential for crafting historical narratives, as in the selected poem, that not only convey information but also resonate with broader human experiences.

As previously mentioned, this investigation is propelled by a dual-layered narrative strategy in which satire and romance operate not as discrete modes but as interdependent forces. The Satirical dimension functions as a mode of critical dismantling, employing irony, parody and reversal to subvert and fortify the dominant historical narratives that have cast Black subjects as passive objects or prey. Simultaneously, the Romantic dimension- understood not in the common sense of love, but in the structural sense of quest, transformation and agency,

emplots the counter-narrative of unbounded self-creation, desire and heroic reclamation. In fusion, this approach enables a text to perform a bifurcated act of historical engagement: first to aggressively hunt down and deconstruct the inherited lot of oppression, and second, to romance into being a new plot. Thus, the Satirical-Romantic emplotment provides the precise critical apparatus required to analyze how Evans' text executes this transformative hunt, moving from deconstruction to reconstruction on the level of narrative form.

The Satirical arm of the emplotted strategy is deeply rooted in the African-American literary tradition of turning language and narrative against structures of oppression. It draws theoretically on Louis Gates' concept of signifying, the rhetorical practice of repetition with a critical difference of talking back through ironic revision (*The Signifying Monkey*, 1988). Here satire operates as a mode of historical critique, a deliberate turning of the master's tools against him, subverting the expected narrative of Black victimhood by reversing the roles of hunter and prey. In Evans' poem, satire is not merely mockery but a strategic dismantling of historical methodology, creating the cleared ground necessary for re-imagination. Conversely, the romantic dimension finds its theoretical footing in narrative theories of emplotment and agency. In White's schema of emplotment Romance is fundamentally a drama of triumph, of the hero's transcendence over the world of experience. Evans adapts this romantic employment not as an act of adopting naïve escapism but a strife in order to stipulate a firm statement. The persona yearns to make a new future, and this transforms the protagonist from an object of history into a heroic subject that desires to make his own history in the future.

The synthesis of these two modes into a single framework is crucial. Alone, satire risks leaving history in deconstructed fragments, while romance alone may gloss over the brutal specificity of the past. The Satirical-Romantic emplotment, forms a dialectical narrative engine: the satire demolishes the oppressive historical plot, and the romance rebuilds a liberated one in its place. This hybrid approach allows us to analyze how Evans' text performs an act characterized by irreversibility, hunting down a traumatic past in order to seize and redirect the narrative of days to come.

This narrative reconfiguration is further deepened by what White identifies as the historian's figural interpretation. In Evans' selected poem, *the will to perceive* is the catalyst of the hunt itself. The persona's contemporary crisis is irrevocably correlated with the historical event of slavery and its aftermath; it is its living, psychological figure. Evans' artistry lies in refusing a passive, deterministic correlation. Instead, through a Satirical-Romantic emplotment, she activates the figural relationship. The latter personic figure of the slave does not merely suffer the earlier event's legacy but turns to pursue it, thereby reconfiguring the correlation from one of haunted repetition to one of transformative confrontations. The *hunter* thus becomes a new, insurgent figure fulfilling a latent possibility for agency that the traumatic past attempted to extinguish.

Invariably, not only is the significance of interpretation in the perception of historical events accentuated, but also the fact is disclosed that although history is chronological, it is

figurally anachronistic. This means that “a later event alters the meaning of an earlier event whose

Fulfillment” here is to be understood as the product or effect of a kind of reverse causation, a kind of causation peculiar to historical reality, culture and human consciousness, by which a thing of the past is at once grasped by consciousness, brought into the present by recollection, and redeemed, made new, by being put to a use (White 2010, pp. 270-71).

Figural interpretation assumingly becomes the will to perceive a later event as if it were intrinsically correlated with an earlier event, in the absence of any efficient-causal connection, which actually means that to choose a past is to choose a corresponding present. Thus, it becomes evident how and why the revival of incidents in the past are rendered relative and meaningful to the present. In other words, the enigma of the relationship between historical narratives and the occurrence of present time events is deciphered in a plausible manner. The notion of history as a linear series of occurrences and severed from whatever affects us currently is substituted with a more flexible definition as “the idea of a dynamic system of retrospective correspondences ...” (White 2010, pp. xxxi). It must be maintained that figural relationships define history as a self-replenishing procedure, “inherently political and ideological to the extent it affirms and expresses the self-understanding or self-interpretation of a group or community” (White 2010, pp. xxxi-xxxii) which explains the ““natural” or “commonsensical” attitude toward historical representation” (White 2010, pp. xxii). The maintained fact supports the attention, which is due to evidence presented in historical narratives, such as the selected poem for this research, since the existence of history cannot be denied and so it becomes the historian’s job to uncover the literal truth of events and illustrate the interconnectedness of incidents throughout time.

In summary, the satirical- romantic emplotment, as suggested by Hayden White, allows us to view Evans’ work in the light of a targeted literary-historical intervention. The poem hunts down history by luring in the reader with the familiar, jarring language of oppression, only to subvert it and redirect its trajectory. Through a dual strategy, Evans moves beyond protest to active narrative (re)possession, demonstrating how a literary text can function as both a weapon against a pathological past and a tool for forging a sovereign future.

Discussion

Presently, what necessitates slave narrativity, in which atrocious conditions questioning humanity in general are depicted, can be enumerated to several factors. Slave narratives, as rich sources of evidence collection, were once thought to be only “a kind of ephemeral, politically motivated writing” (Gates 1985, p. xiv). However, they are currently more on demand than ever since according to Gates, “Whereas these narratives initially were the province of historians and then literary critics, now they are of importance to anthropologists and folklorists, historians of art and musicologists, philosophers and legal historians, and economists and theologians” (Gates 1985, p. xiv). Inarguably, slave narratives are a critical part of modern history, shaping social, economic and political structures globally. In its shadow, a deeper perception of present-day inequalities and systemic racism emerges. Literature on slavery issues relates and preserves

authentic accounts of horrendous experiences, stored in the collective cultural memory, fostering an intricate and well-defined sense of empathy while arousing an awareness of distinct impacts. Once individuals are instigated in reflecting upon the legacy of slavery, a better understanding shall be formed about justice, reparations and social responsibilities of community members in addressing moral wrongs. The discourse surrounding slavery contributes to the ongoing dialogue about identity, particularly for marginalized minorities. Individuals that member these groups have undeniable rights in reclaiming their histories and narratives which not only honor the past but also enable individuals to strive for a more equitable future.

The recording and test of authenticity of slave narratives might pose as a challenge. According to Gates: “The fundamental problem confronting anyone interested in studying black views of bondage is that the slaves had few opportunities to tell what it meant to be a chattel” (1985, p. 79). Thus, a major part of collected facts and figures related to slavery have been assembled and presented by white men who, of course, were educated and trusted by the society such as, ministers, lawyers, writers and editors (80). Evidence gathered by white individuals or historians who had the prerogative to include or exclude facts upon their own discretion, may hardly do justice to what slaves experienced in reality. Nevertheless, there is unanimous consensus among all researchers that the account of slavery is one rife with atrocity, grief, misery and horror and the effects of enslavement are present in the form of mental and psychological disorientations among African-Americans to this day. There exist narratives which not only re-tell of the hardship slaves confronted with plantations but reveal the post-traumatic effects bounding the Black historical- collective consciousness. The notion that the traumatic effects of enslavement were transferred to successive generations has been put forward in literature (Akbar, 1996; DeGruy, 2017; Pinderhughes, 1990) and variously labeled as the Residual Effects of Slavery (Akbar, 1996; Wilkins et al., 2013) or post-traumatic slave syndrome (DeGruy, 2017). There are personal narratives and recorded dialogues exhibiting that the African-American meaning of culture, identity and principles, during enslavement, have been distorted and a general feeling of instability and insecurity established, hence orienting the victim towards a specific approach in life. Coarsely speaking, the Black individual’s identity is literally torn asunder from its essence and a new, albeit foreign, one is supplied in a manner that, “not even a separate identity the ego can claim” (Baraka 1963, p. 60) may be attributed to it.

Evans’ selected poem does not merely begin with a title but a declaration of war, a narrative trap sprung into the very first breath. The poem is not a passive reflection but an active operation, a literary field where history is both the quarry and terrain to be conquered. Applying the lens of satirical-romantic emplotment to its verses is akin to tracing the footsteps of a hunter: the deliberate, dual-tracked path is carefully traced where every satirical incision into the flesh of historical oppression creates the necessary opening for a romantic graft of new selfhood. This discussion dissects the given strategic pursuit. It shall be demonstrated how Evans utilizes irony to invert the legacy of the hunt, and then in the cleared emotional and psychological space how the poet-historian emplots a soaring romance of effective agency, transforming the

“Nigger” from a historical object, a noun defined by violence, into an unstoppable grammatical subject, a verb in pursuit of its own future. The text does not just describe liberation; its very structure is the hunt, as every turn is mapped.

In the selected poem, Mari Evans, as a committed artist to the principles of Black Art, has endeavored to revive slavery and the atrocities which are alloyed with this horrific historical event. Hence, she accentuates that the initial step towards healing post-traumatic effects is acknowledging and understanding the injury made by enslavement. Only then, can a resolution be found to address the covert and institutional aspects leading to perpetual, systematic segregation and the scourges that pursue in its wake. As to the theoretical aspect, the chain of causal links that procure such historical phenomena shall be attentively traced and situated in a distinct framework as proposed by White and necessitated by modern historiography.

“The Nigger Who Now Is Hunting You”

In this short poem-narrative, Evans tries to assume the role of a historian-psychologist. She intentionally skips the description of cruelties inflicted on the slave but concentrates on other issues which overlap slavery; namely retribution and trauma. The arduous toil demand of slaves proved too burdensome for some, with the result that exasperated individuals attempted to flee should the opportunity arise. Some, after numerous difficulties, were lucky enough to find their way into states that granted them freedom. Others, who were not so fortunate, would be pursued by white individuals called man-hunters whose responsibility it was to find these fugitives, arrest and punish them severely, as recorded in the first eight chapters of autobiographical writings, belonging to Frederick Douglass (Stauffer & Gates 2016). Douglass’ account not only provides compelling evidence of the systemic dehumanization inherent in the institution of slavery but also underscores the complex social dynamics at play, as individuals were commodified and traded, with the result of being stripped of whatever signified their identity.

The theoretical lens of a Satirical-Romantic emplotment, as suggested by Hayden White, finds its direct and potent application in Evans’ selected poem beginning with the titular declaration itself. The proclamation in the title, which is emphatically echoed in the initial lines, performs a quintessential act of signifying a satirical reversal by appropriating a brutal racial threat, a linguistic artifact of historical prey-status, and violently inverts its narrative logic. The “Nigger” is no longer the hunted object but the subject and the active hunter. This is not mere reclamation but a narrative coup, satirizing the expectation of Black passivity and installing agency as the new premise of the narrative and so the persona declares, “I’m that nigger/ the nigger who now is hunting you” (Evans 2014, pp.85).

In a clever overturn, Evans presents a fictitious situation in which a slave has the choice of prosecuting the very same man-hunter who once prosecuted him and so the poem commences with lines that construct this desirable but imaginary stance. There is firm evidence that explicates the leitmotif of revenge, expressed overtly throughout the entire work. The notion of retaliation moves under the umbrella term legacy of slavery which has been the controversial topic of study by scholars such as Du Bois (1903), Frazier (1939), and currently De Gruy (2017). In the 1930s, studies carried out by Black psychologists, through accurate patient

examination, documented some of the mental disorders, plaguing Black individuals, namely, racial self-hatred, causing irreparable harm to the notion of self-acceptance and the concept of identity-recognition. Contemporary biological and genealogical research has illustrated how trauma can become embedded in DNA structures and transmitted from one generation to another (Cross 2024, pp. 139). These findings aided De Gruy to explain the etiology of many “adaptive survival behaviors” (Scott-Jones 2020, p. 1) in African-American communities. She presented her theories in a prominent work entitled PTSS (Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome) in 2005 and in 2017, claiming that this was a condition existing as a consequence of multigenerational oppression, resulting from years of chattel slavery when the conviction that African-Americans were both inherently and genetically inferior to their White counterparts was extensively propagated (Scott-Jones 2020, p. 1).

The disorder was further recognized as the intergenerational legacy of enslavement, affecting attitude, worldviews, emotions and expectations in social life. De Gruy further maintains in her scholarly work (2005, 2017) that the trauma experienced by ex-slaves reveals itself in bouts of anger or depression, often causing confusion which usually cannot be vented out and so the sufferer is not able to seek any explanation for the source of his aggression. Both Frasier in his Ph D dissertation and De Gruy in hers perceive Black individuals to be suffering from widespread psychological damage that not only interferes with their social welfare but also harms their psychological well-being, leading to a specific lifestyle, one that is rife with a multitude of complexes, orienting towards rebellion and protest. Dr Frasier’s research, based on data collected from former slaves, reveals how disorders are covertly transmitted from one generation to the next, manifesting itself in the form of lack of self-esteem, inexplicable antagonism and the internalization of biased-racist beliefs. Purportedly, African-Americans “sustained a traumatic injury as a direct result of slavery and continued to be injured by traumas caused by the larger society’s policies of inequality, racism and oppression” (Hicks 2015, pp. 91-92). Given facts aid readers in creating a full, life-like image of the “Nigger”, as he encounters his hunter and utters a menacing proclamation.

Sentiments related to anxiety, expressed in the form of a repressed anger are overtly illustrated in the ensuing lines of the poem: “yes/you know me/ I’m the nigger at your heels/ down the chilling corridors/ flee your recollections/ it is my foul breath/ that has you by the neck” (Evans 2014, p. 85). Apparent apprehension communicates, at the most fundamental level of perception, a distinct worldview, providing its believers with a realistic sense of meaning and value, aggravating an existential consternation. Evans successfully conveys the sense of a dramatic, albeit realistic displacement of identity revelation and value acceptance associated with both thoughts and behaviors, leading to menacing consequences. From this stance, the psychological effects of PTSS would undoubtedly procure a lack of meaning of life, in general, display a fragmented identity and compromise for a chaotic set of principles that would sanction otherwise unacceptable behavior such as intimidation (Maier & Seligman, 1976) and observed in the threat pronounced by the persona in Evans’ poem. Further reactions which suggest the existence of PTSS may range from a manifestation of general helplessness to the extreme of self-inefficacy in which the individual believes he has no or very little control

over occurrences; hostile or otherwise (Halloran, 2018, p.53). Disgust, hatred and hostility are common representations of the syndrome which TMT has been unable to curb and an evident instance is read in the following lines, “my/ broken teeth that blind you/ when you turn and I/ will use the tubing on this bony arm/ to transfer my death/ to your fearful eyes” (Evans 2014, p. 85). Agony, due to indescribable suffering, is recreated by the variants “broken teeth”, “bony arm”, “my death” and “fearful eyes”. In this dismal atmosphere, there exists, also, an ambiance of bitter revenge in the threatening claim that the once-hunted slave is ready to transfer his death experiences onto the man-hunter. Inarguably, it becomes manifest how the adroit choice of lexicon plays a crucial role in the creation of atmosphere, conveyance of emotions and the establishment of a particular tone. Readers can readily visualize the scene in which the slave, with repressed feelings has sought the opportunity of retribution. Hence, a vivid picture is created of fear transmission and a distinct type of torment that is inflicted upon the offender. The selected variants circumvent the matrix of violence, with the effect that a suggestive description, inducing horror and menace, resonates with the readers, successfully alluring them into the emotional mesh of the poem. The artistic use of language charged with sensational lexicon helps to structure the intimate bond between the persona and the reader, in effect, sentiments are expressed on the most intimate level. Engaging them into the network of shared emotions, Evans can effectively transport readers into the heart of her theme, recreating a vivid and immersive atmosphere that lingers even long after the poem is read.

The aura of threat becomes more intense as the artist proceeds, “You know me, I’m/ that nigger/ the one whose bluesteel stare/ can stop the white breath in your throat/ whose eyeballs/ say your sentence/ it is me/ who seeks your death” (Evans 2014, p. 86). The given lines further indicate De Gruy’s theorization about the psycho-physiological traumas that originated in the lived experience of the transatlantic slave, was passed on to the future generations and, though latent at times, was never completely forgotten. In research conducted qualitatively and carried out for the purpose of completing a Ph D dissertation (Tanner, 2024), the researcher indicates how the post- traumatic syndrome is handed down through successive generations, providing explanations for anxiety-related conditions, poor health and unacceptable behavior, as observed in distinct generations of the Black community. Looking through history and the cause-effect relationship existent in the occurrence of events, as emphasized in modern historiography, explicates the inherent and long-standing trauma that has continued to plague African-Americans throughout their trajectory.

The intensity and suspense in the poem sharply accelerates to the climax and what has been a covert threat, so far, becomes overt when hatred gushes out from the ominous look of the slave and in the suggestion of an intelligible metaphor, becomes a fatal weapon, with which the breath of life can be taken and an undisguised murder claim is made. The poem continues this murderous tone, “with all the rhythm of my pounding feet/ and with my lethal fingers (Evans 2014, p. 86), introducing the method for taking the man-hunter’s life. There is nothing more disturbing and disconcerting than a man taking the life of his victim with bare hands, indicating violence and hatred in excessive terms. The poem terminates by a refrain from the first stanza, the repetition of which serves the purpose of reminding the reader that the

hypogram of hatred and violence seemingly had no origination or termination in the poem, but moves about as if in a vicious circle, throughout the infinity of the Black man's history.

In alignment with the theoretical axes proposed by Hayden White, this poem is decisively located in the Satirical-Romantic mode of emplotment. The satirical rupture at the commencement, its stark, ironic invocation of the slur, serves not as an endpoint but as the necessary ground-clearing gesture. It deconstructs the mythic, tragic history imposed upon the Black, exposing it as a faulty narrative. From this deconstructed space, the Romantic emplotment of the persona's journey emerges. The protagonist's consciousness moves from a state defined by historical victimization to one of active, pursuing determination, the prey becoming the hunter. This metamorphosis is the Romantic core: a heroic becoming that reclaims authority of one's own destiny. Crucially, Evans' text does not merely describe a shift in power, rather it enacts that shift through its very narrative scheme, using satire to dismantle the old plot and romance to engineer the new. The progression of lines functions as the plotted pathway of liberation, where the voice itself gains agency through declarative assertion, formally performing the emancipation it thematically proclaims.

Evans' selected poem constructs a contextualist historical argumentation through its Satirical-Romantic emplotment, wherein the protagonist's transformation from victim to agent is presented as a necessary narrative outcome of re-framed historical conditions. The artist transforms into a meta-historian in Hayden White's sense – one who consciously selects both a plot structure and a mode of argumentation to explain the past. Evans' poem operates through a contextualist argument, presenting the protagonist's transformation not as an isolated heroic archetype (Formism) or a predetermined historical force (Mechanism) but as an act of agency emerging from and reacting against a specific, oppressive historical context. Evans' satire meticulously deconstructs that context, while her romantic plot argues for the possibility of meaningful, willful change within it. Her artistry lies in this dual formal mastery: she emplots a romance to shape the meaning of the struggle, and she argues contextually to root its necessity and possibility in historical reality.

The poem's reliability as historical evidence is crystallized in its central, volatile symbol, i.e. the "Nigger" assumes the role of an intermediary and so embodies the act of sealing the leaks in a fragmented historical consciousness, of roofing a new narrative structure over the exposed trauma of the past. The "Nigger" encapsulates the poem's evidentiary power: it testifies to the psychological process of moving from the porous, vulnerable identity of *prey* to the active, protective agency of the hunter-builder. The poem, therefore, stands as a primary source for understanding how historical trauma is materially and metaphorically repaired, not through forgetting, but through a willful re-construction of selfhood against the very storms of history.

Ultimately, Evans' persona performs the conclusive act of White's historical narrative. By fusing satirical deconstruction, an attack on racial determinism, with romantic emplotment – an argument for triumphant self-creation, she forges a powerful contextualist argument for historical change. The poem reveals that while the context of oppression is powerfully formative, it is not finally determinative. The hunt is therefore more than a plot; it is Evans'

rigorous historical explanation. Through the relentless pursuit enacted by the persona, Evans demonstrates that reclaiming history which requires both the demolition of its oppressive frameworks and the conscious, artful construction of a new narrative.

Conclusion and Findings

Currently, there has been a notable resurgence of enthusiasm in historical studies, driven in part by innovative approaches championed by modern historiography. One prominent method within this paradigm is to focus on personal narratives which provide invaluable evidence, aiding researchers in evidence collection. By prioritizing these subjective accounts, historians are enabled to uncover the lived experiences of individuals who often remain marginalized in traditional historical recordings. Moreover, the collected data tends to fill out the jigsaw gaps in the breadth of a puzzle-like, historical event. This suggestive methodological shift both enriches the collective historical consciousness of a people and fosters a more inclusive representation of diverse voices, thereby revitalizing the comprehension of historical phenomena. Invariably, this strategy reinforces validity and authenticity check of historical truth since it relies on distinct sources.

Consequentially, in Evans' selected poem, the artist orchestrates a profound historical and narrative rebellion. Through the dual-lens of satirical-romantic emplotment, Evans weaponizes satire to dismantle the inherited plot of Black preyhood and mobilizes romance to re-emplot a destiny of agency and pursuit. The figure of the "Nigger", acting as a mediator emerges as the poem's central argument, a testament to the deliberate, reparative work of sealing a fragmented past and constructing a shelter for a sovereign future. In doing so, Evans operates squarely within White's conception of history as a constructed narrative, yet she radically democratizes it: here, the hunted becomes the historian, and the poem itself becomes the hunt. This analysis ultimately affirms that Evans' artistry offers more than a critique since it provides a narrative methodology for historical reclamation, one that insists the past can be hunted down, confronted and fundamentally rewritten. In the end, the poem does not simply describe liberation; its very structure is an act of liberation, inviting readers to witness and perhaps to join the relentless, necessary hunt for seeking justice.

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