

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF - M'SILA

FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
N°:



DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGES
STREAM: ENGLISH LANGUAGE
OPTION: LITERATURE & CIVILIZATION

**The Impact of the African American Female
Leadership on the American Society: the Case
of Oprah Winfrey**

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master**

Candidates
Miss. Benyounes Malika
Miss. Djennane Djihane

Board of Examiners

Mrs. Amirouche Nassima	University of M'sila	Chairperson
Mrs. Laaouidji Karima	University of M'sila	Supervisor
Mr. Benna Youcef	University of M'sila	Examiner

2017 /2018

Abstract

The African American's history was full of difficulties. The African Americans lived a long while in the United States as slaves. So, they had to fight in order to be as equal as the whites. Consequently, they could achieve this goal. So as long as this thesis is focusing on the impact of the African American female Leadership on the American Society, Oprah Winfrey is the best example of the strong independent African American Leader to be given. Oprah was not born with a golden spoon in her mouth, but she suffered a lot in her early life. She had to work hard to reach the pursuit of happiness; so, she is an iconic symbol of success. As a result, this Analytical work that is based on the case study method, aims to shed the lights on the role that the Afro American woman plays in the American society, and how effective she can be in the society. In addition, Oprah is among the best motivators and influencers that may affect and motivate the people that they are able to achieve their dreams and goals no matter what.

Key words: African American, Slaves, Female Leadership, Oprah Winfrey

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our supervisor Mrs Laaouidji Karima, for her continuous help and valuable pieces of advice.

Besides our advisor, I would like to thank Mr. Bennaoui Youcef, for the great help that he provided me whenever I needed it in my research.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Snoussi Mohamed, he was always there to answer our questions. And Mr. Kahloula Mohamed Amine who supported and helped us all the time.

We would like to thank the members of our jury, who have devoted much of their time and knowledge for assessing the effectiveness and the credibility of the research.

Dedication

Above all, I would like to praise Allah, for the patience and the will that he provided me with during my career to finish my studies and reach this level. All praise for him.

To my family with a great love for their concrete and psychological support that they provided me with during my entire career: my dear parents, my sisters and my brother

To my tandem Djennane Djihane, it's been a great pleasure to work with you on this thesis, thanks for the motivation that you provided me with motivation during all the working process

To my close friends: Ikrame and Wafa, who always keep me motivated and are there next to me whenever I need help, you make every minute of my life special so thank you

To Imane, and Ahlam my dear best friends who brought joy to my life

To my class mates Daça Zine dinne and Bouchibi Mohamed Lokmane who is always there whenever I need whether a concrete or psychological help thank you for this...

To all of the mentioned in this dedication, words cannot describe my love to you, I praise Allah for having you in my life...

Benyounes Malika

Dedication:

I am dedicating this work to my parents who were always there whenever I needed them. Mom, words cannot thank you enough. Your love, douaa and support are the source of my strength. Thank you for believing in me when I was weak and exhausted to believe in myself. I love you.

To my grandmother, your body has left us but your soul is always between us. I will never forget you. May Allah bless you and grant you paradise.

Special thanks and sincere gratitude to my lovely brothers Salim and Abdeslem, the ones that I never felt neither lost nor fear with. You always have my back.

My deepest and most intimate gratitude is reserved for my best friend "Malika"; no one has ever been given more loving and unconditional support than I have been given by you. Thank you for being here whenever I need you.

"A friend is someone who knows you and loves you just the same". Much love and respect to my dear friends: Ikrame and Wafa, thank you for all the support, help and love. Thank you for being in my life.

To my second mother; Naima and Razika. To my all and only Ibtihel, Ikhlas, Insaf, Nour and Hanna. You are much more than cousins, and to my dear uncles

Special thanks to Rania, Fulla, Bouthaina and Safaa, thank you for your understanding and encouragement in many moments of crisis. , I cannot list all the names here, but you are always in my mind.

Finally and without hesitation, I would like to extend my thanks to the one who has always believed in me, helped me and encouraged me to go on every adventure, "Abdenour". Thank you for being a rock of stability throughout my life. Thank you for always being closest to me even when we were in separate time zones and separate stages of life.

Djennane Djehane

List of Abbreviations:

NAACP: The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

SCLC: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference

MFDP: Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party

JSD: Juridical Science Doctor

WDL: Workers' Defense League

PCSW: President's Commission on the Status of Women Committee

YMCA: Young Men's Christian Association

YWCA: Young Women's Christian Association

WVOL: Radio Station Broadcasting an Urban Oldies format

Publisher's AAP: Association of American Publishers

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General

Introduction

General Introduction

African American history was full of complexities. America was a mixture of Africans and Europeans. At first, Africans were slaves and considered as non human beings. However, over time, with the assistance of noted strong-willed African-Americans and the more liberal white American citizens, African Americans began to realize their value and intellect. Which brought a change to their situation; here they realized their real value. They had a new frame of mind. Leadership in the African American society witnessed an emergence especially in the fields of education, business, entertainment, politics and arts. The African American Leadership has developed through time, until it reached the point that a black African American woman can be a leader who accomplishes a great success and has a big influence on the whole society. Oprah Winfrey is the best example to be given.

Oprah Winfrey had an abused childhood, she suffered a lot in her life, as a result she left her mother moving to her biological father who encouraged her to do well in school which resulted her winning to a speech contest that she could get in university because of, and that paved the way to her great success.

Oprah Winfrey made an influential shows, books, speeches and magazines... that because of them she became the American society's idol and influencer. In addition, she is described as the most powerful and influential woman in the world for many years.

She started her career in the media as a news anchor in Nashville. Then, in 1983, she moved to Chicago where she accomplished a huge success with her host in the AM Chicago, the morning talk show that was the highest rated talk show in Chicago within months. This success led to the creation of Oprah Winfrey Show. Oprah is the kind of celebrity who uses her power in media to change public's opinion in the politics and the society's movement.

Talking about her influence, she was involved in the 2008 presidential campaign. Moreover, she is an activist. She uses her power to help the others, and she helps to convict child Abusers. In addition, she made a charity to support the education of women in the United States and around the world. She set up the leadership Academy for Girls near Johannesburg to provide educational and leadership opportunities or academically gifted girls from impoverished backgrounds in South Africa who exhibited leadership qualities to make a difference in the world. In 1999, Time magazine

included Winfrey on its inaugural list of the 100 most influential people in the world, besides; she appeared six times on the Time 100 list more often than any other individual did.

After searching about this topic and having a profound knowledge about the impact of the African American leadership in the American Society and especially the female African American leadership on society. The present extended thesis throws the following central question:

African Americans fought for their rights and became leaders in the Society not only men, but women also. So to what extent is Oprah Winfrey an influencer and a leader in the American society especially for being an Afro American woman?

The Selection of this topic: “The Impact of the African American Female Leadership on Society. Case Study: Oprah Winfrey” has come into existence due to some reasons, some are objective and some are subjective motivations. One of the reasons that make this paper significant is the fact that it shows generally the value of the human being, and specifically of the African Americans in a racist world, and how they started to realize their value and believe in themselves to make a better world, whether male or female. Moreover, to show the power of women on society, like the power of Oprah Winfrey who could influence the society and become its leader, and gain the people’s love.

Thus, the objectives of this study are first, to show how much African American women suffered in the Pre-civil War Era, and how harsh slavery was for them. Second, to highlight the role that the Afro American women played during the Civil War era. Moreover, to show the level of equality that the black women had to fight in order to achieve during the civil rights movement. Moreover, to reveal Oprah’s suffering that did not break her down but motivated her to achieve her goals. Finally, to show Oprah’s influence and leadership on the American society.

Conducting this research will acquire the use of Books, articles, newspapers, magazines, videos. Like the books of *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass*, and *Bitter Fruit* by Maureen Honey. And the book of *Oprah Winfrey: A Biography* written by Helen-S. Garson; concerning the case study. In order to analyze the events that happened in those eras and the events that happened in Oprah Winfrey’s life that led her to be the society’s leader.

This thesis requires the use of the collecting data and the case study methods, since it deals with a cultural subject. As a result, the approach that should be utilized is the Qualitative Approach. In addition, it requires the use of the critical race theory.

The present extended thesis is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is entitled: “Historical Background, African Americans, from Slaves to Leaders.” describes first the era of the Pre-Civil War, where African Americans were slaves and treated horribly. Then, it scrutinizes how harsher slavery was for women, and the torture that they were receiving from their masters. Secondly, it discusses how slaves rebel against that treatment and made a Civil War in order to free themselves from slavery. It tackles also the important role that Slave Women played during that time to help their men. After that, it portrays the Racism and the Segregation that Blacks received after gaining their freedom, and how they protested against it in the civil rights movement; not only black men participated in it, but black women too. Last but not least, it describes how African Americans efforts to reach equality were not in vain; also, how they became equal as the whites and effective members as well. Moreover, leaders in their community not only black men, but black women too. Finally, the chapter concludes by giving a hint about what the next chapter will tackle.

Chapter Two is entitled: “Oprah Winfrey, Society’s Leader”. It will tackle at first Oprah’s early life, and how she lived her childhood as a biography. Then it will give information about her education career. After that, it will tackle her job career and the obstacles that she had to face and that would lead her to change her job and move to Chicago to host her famous show: “*the Oprah Winfrey Show*”. The Show changed her life radically, and because of it, she became the society’s influencer and leader. Moreover, it will discuss her social and political influence on America and how she is the society’s leader and influencer, and how she influences people, not only in America, but also in many countries in the world.

Chapter one

**“Historical Background,
African Americans, from
slaves to leaders”.**

Slavery in America started in 1619. When a Dutch ship brought about 20 African slaves to Jamestown, Virginia. They were brought in order to work mainly on the tobacco, rice and indigo plantations of the southern coast. Ever since, Africans were considered as non-humans, and treated with a bad manner that was full of torture and pain. Not only slave men, but slave women and children too. Slavery was cruel for men and far crueler for women

1.1. America's Sin

African Slaves were brought to America during the 18th and 19th centuries, they were treated as sub-humans, or much more non- humans, they were brought to work in the fields of the whites. The whites had the idea that using violence with the blacks, would make them work harder. In addition, they made sure to keep their slaves ignorant and illiterate and put an idea in their heads that they are blacks because they are cursed by God, and that the whites are superior than they are. Thus, slaves would lose their self confidence and believe that they are with no value, and accept their fate that they were created and born to be slaves. According to Harriet: "They seem to satisfy their consciences with the doctrine that God created the Africans to be slaves."¹ Also that they are weak creatures, whites are stronger than they are, better than they are, and superior than they are. "The words of the *Declaration of independence* "that all men are created equal" were far from true. They were black and they were slaves."²

Slaves were deprived from many rights like the right of getting education, the right of voting and the right to own properties. Moreover, they were humiliated and servile, they were given low quality goods, rough clothes, and old leather made shoes. According to Frederick: "Their yearly clothing consisted of two coarse linen shirts, one pair of linen trousers, like the shirts, one jacket, one pair of trousers for winter, made of coarse negro cloth, one pair of stockings, and one pair of shoes; the whole of which could not have cost more than seven dollars."³

Slaves were not only deprived from going to school, it was forbidden for them to learn and get some education. The whites made sure to keep their slaves illiterate because if they study and learn they would use this education, as a weapon and they would be aware of their rights and duties, as a result, they would rebel and no more obey the whites. According to Frederick:

¹ Harriet Jacobs. *Incidents in The Life of A Slave Girl*.43

² Bryn O'Callaghan. *An Illustrated History of The USA*, 44

³ Frederick Douglass. *Narrative of The Life of Fredrick Douglass*.23

A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master, to do as he is told to do. Learning would spoil the best nigger in the world. Now,” said he, “if you teach that nigger (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master. As to himself, it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm.⁴

Slaves were punished for whatever kind of reasons by whipping or beating harshly with no mercy. “If a slave was convicted of any high misdemeanor, became unmanageable, or evinced a determination to run away, he was brought immediately here, severely whipped, put on board the sloop, carried to Baltimore, and sold to Austin Woolfolk, or some other slave-trader, as a warning to the slaves remaining.”⁵ Slaves were deprived from the simplest means of living like beds, livable rooms, food, medicines, clothes... According to Frederick: “children from seven to ten years old, of both sexes, almost naked, might be seen at all seasons of the year.”⁶

1.2.1. Slavery Is Harsh for Men, but Harsher for Women

Not only slave men that were treated in a bad manner but slave women also. “Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women. Superadded to the burden common to all, they have wrongs, and sufferings, and mortifications peculiarly their own.”⁷ they were whipped by their masters harshly. Slave masters found a pleasure in torturing slaves, they used to whip them to make them scream, and whip them to make them hush as well:

I have often been awakened at the dawn of day by the most heart-rending shrieks of an own aunt of mine, whom he used to tie up to a joist, and whip upon her naked back till she was literally covered with blood. No words, no tears, no prayers, from his gory victim, seemed to move his iron heart from its bloody purpose. The louder she screamed, the harder he whipped; and where the blood ran fastest, there he whipped longest.⁸

⁴ Ibid, P.40

⁵ Ibid, p.23

⁶ Ibid, p.23

⁷ Harriet Jacobs *Incidents in The Life of A Slave Gir.*73

⁸ Frederick Douglass. *Narrative of The Life of Fredrick Douglass.*20

According to Harriet Ann Jacobs: “for if there happened to be a dish not to his liking, he would either order her to be whipped”⁹

As long as slave women were considered as properties for the whites and not human beings, whites used to rape them. And when a woman gets pregnant from her white master, the kid would be considered as a slave also no matter what skin color has his father, or from what gender he is. As long as he is carrying a black skin, he is a slave, and his father would not even acknowledge him as his son because he is ashamed of his skin color. That is why most of the slaves are from unknown fathers. Also, it is the case of Mr. Fredrick Douglass. He had that thought that his master might be his father: “the whisper that my master was true or false, may or may not be true; and true or false, it is of but little consequence to my purpose whilst the fact remains, in all its glaring odiousness, that slaveholders have ordained, and by law established, that the children of slave women shall in all cases follow the condition of their mothers.”¹⁰

Slaveholders used slave woman as means to have fun and pleasure. They enjoyed doing whatever they want to them. Slave women were used as toys to fulfill the desires of their white masters, and to please them. The slaveholders could whip them, beat them, burn them, abuse them, rape them... but if something happens for them, it is not their problem, and not their business, it is only they who handle the responsibility of themselves and handle the suffer as well.

Not only this, slave women were separated from their kids as well; “My mother and I were separated when I was but an infant. It is a common custom, in the part of Maryland from which I ran away, to part children from their mothers at a very early age.”¹¹ Also, According to Harriet:

Pity me, and pardon me, O virtuous reader! You never knew what it is like to be a slave; to be entirely unprotected by law or custom; to have the laws reduce you to the condition of a chattel, entirely subject to the will of another. You never exhausted your ingenuity in avoiding the snares, and eluding the power of a hated tyrant; you never shuddered at the sound of his footsteps, and trembled within hearing of his voice.¹²

Annie also claimed in her Article that the cruelty experienced on black girls and women by their white masters, who vindicated their inhuman treatment by seeing them as “sexual savages,” as a

⁹ Ibid, p.13

¹⁰ Frederick Douglass. *Narrative of The Life of Fredrick Douglass*, p.18

¹¹ Ibid, p.17

¹² Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in The Life of A Slave Girl*, P.53

fact of the life of slavery. Beaten, raped and forced to breed more slaves, black women's anguish was a double of that of the slave man because of their sexual sensibility.

1.2. The American Civil War (1861-1865)

American Civil war, or also named the war between the states, lasted four years from 1861 till 1865 between the eleven Southern states that broke with the Union and formed the confederate states of America and the United States because of the long standing conflict over slavery. The Americans were fighting each other, Southern States versus Northern states. A big number of soldiers were killed during this war. Jefferson Davis said that he tried too hard in order to prevent this war but he failed. He added that the north was mad and blind, they were authoritatively governing them. Therefore, their struggle went deeper than strive for slavery but they were seeking their independence and freedom. "We are not fighting for slavery. We are fighting for independence." Jefferson Davis said.¹³

When Abraham Lincoln won the elections in 1861 as the first republican president who promised to end slavery over the territories, seven slave south states seceded and formed a new nation, which are the Confederate States of America. Most of the northern people refused this dividing which they considered as illegitimate. They were afraid to destroy the unity of the United States and to harm the good reputation of the Democracy. Abraham Lincoln assured that this would not last more but the states should be united in order to have a well-built country. He vowed to do not allow them divide the United States by seceding. "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall. But I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other." Said Lincoln.¹⁴

The Southern States did not consider Abraham's words. Twelve Confederates started shooting fire on Fort Sumter, a fortress in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. These shots were the beginning of the Civil War.¹⁵

Lincoln tried hard to save the Union. He called 75,000 men to fight. Jefferson Davis, the newly elected president of the Confederate States, called for men in order to fight for the Confederacy. It was too difficult to some people to decide which one they stand by because their decision led them to other

¹³ "We Are Fighting for Independence, Not Slavery," *Teaching American History.Org*,

¹⁴ "House Divided Speech," Abraham Lincoln Speech

¹⁵ Bryn O'Callaghan, *An Illustrated History of the USA*, p.50.

problems and difficulties like family separation. Two general brothers were fighting in opposite sides; a Confederacy Commander's son was died while fighting in a ship of the Union.

The economic division between the North and the South was one of the significant issues that lead to the war. The South was agricultural. They got their crops from farming cotton and tobacco using slave labor. Meanwhile, the North saw that slavery was inappropriate. The anti slavery reformers, the Abolitionists, saw the slavery as an evil that should be stopped; they were against slavery expansion which left the south feel uncomfortable and threatened. "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong." Abraham said.¹⁶

The Union warship prevented the South from getting foreign supplies and even from selling the cotton abroad by blockading their ports. The North was stronger than the South; their population is higher which means more fighting men. They also had better tools and capacities to provide those men with weapons, food, clothing and other needs.

The war lasted until 1865. The North won the war after a huge loss of lives in both sides. It was not easy to defeat them; so, they directly invaded the South and occupied them. ¹⁷

1.2.1. Behind Every Great Man, a Greater Woman

Most of people think that men were the only participants in the Civil War but they miss the fact that even African American women took an active role in having a strong built military. They were strong just like men. They sacrificed their lives for the sake of their families. Many noble women lost their lives just as men did. They were able to offer a great support for men. Susie King Taylor who was a strong active participant during the Civil War showed in her words how women were fighting bravely putting away any kind of fear. Shell or shot was never an issue for them. They played the role of nurses caring for the ill and for those who died. They did multiple activities that only men were supposed to do. They camped and fared. Susie King Taylor could write her words authoritatively because she experienced the struggle of the war. She documented in her memoir the painful moments she lived during the Civil War, which represents the strength of women during the most important periods of the African American community. ¹⁸

African Americans were suffering from Slavery as a center issue. They considered the Civil War as a chance to take their freedom and become full citizens in the United States. African

¹⁶ "Letter to Albert G. Hodges," *Abraham Lincoln Online*.

¹⁷ Bryn O'Callaghan, *An Illustrated History of the USA*, p.50

¹⁸ Ella Forbes, *African American Women During The Civil War*. (New York & London, 1998), p.14

Americans knew that this would never happen without their own struggle and efforts. They had to depend on themselves in order to prove their existence. Despite the short period that the war has taken, it really affected their history being a sequent battle full of struggle, suffering and efforts. It was a remarkable period in the African American history. ¹⁹

African American women offered all what they could to the Civil War just as men did. African American men were most of the time away from their families. They were conscripted as soldiers or laborers. African American women were obliged to take care of themselves and their families. They worked as nurses, laundresses, cooks and manual laborers. They worked in the farms and the plantations that were left by slave owners and they provided soldiers with food and goods. They participated in the war in a direct way being cooks, scouts, spies, nurses, camp workers, cooks, organizers and seamstresses. In a less direct way being engaging in the resistance activities such as sabotage and strikes; in an indirect way by taking care of families while waiting for soldiers to return. Others stood beside their husbands in danger. They made a great black female charity, "Activism and Resistance." "Our most worthy and industrious chaplain, H.M. Turner, came along with his little wife by his side, who by the way, appears to be a noble woman, goes with us everywhere in cold or heat, battle or sickness." ²⁰

African American women played a great role in military activities and died as noble women. They were courage in doing things without any fear. They took a huge part in fighting as heroes, wearing uniforms and carrying guns.

Harriet Tubman, one of the most courageous women that played an important role during the Civil War. She was a Union Spy that helped as a nurse and a cook. She was employed by Union officers in order to establish a network of spies in South Carolina for previous slaves. She freed more than 750 slaves. ²¹

Harriet Tubman was an effective individual who made efficient achievements in the society. She built a washhouse from her money for the freedwomen and taught them how to wash for the soldiers. She also was part of the interracial women's suffrage movement that tended to achieve the women's vote. She made natural medicines in order to help the soldiers and cure their wounds. ²²

¹⁹ Ibid, p.15

²⁰ Ella Forbes, *African American Women During The Civil War*. (New York & London, 1998), p.55

²¹ Women Spies of the Civil War, SmothSonian.com Magazine,

²² Ibid, pp.50-61-63;p.67

Susie King Taylor whose role was depicted in being a nurse and laundress. She did her best to serve and provide comfort for men, she also taught them reading: "I was on hand to assist whenever needed I was enrolled as company laundress, but I did very little of it, because I was always busy doing other things through camp, and was employed all the time doing something for the officers and comrades." She said.²³

Mary Elizabeth Bowser, the freed woman who worked as a Union Spy in Richmond. She was an Abolitionist that supported the Union. Elizabeth Van Lew who established the elaborate spying system asked Mary to help her in managing the system. She was nicknamed "Crazy Bet", acted as a crazy woman in order to do not show her contribution in helping the Union. She wrote the information that she gathered in cipher code, hid the messages in the soles of shoes or hollowed eggshells, then relayed the notes to Union Officials through other agents. She also helped escaping prisoners by hiding them in a secret room in her mansion. Maggie²⁴

African American women faced the same conditions that men faced since they were working in camps. They suffered from racism and inequality but none of these stopped them from practicing their jobs. They did their best and offered all their skills in order to keep themselves and their families safe.²⁵

The role of African American Women during that time extended from just cooking, sewing, and laundering to the entrepreneurial skills. Consequently, this enhanced the view of some whites about the blacks. Other women were beyond expectations. They were attending a school in which they showed extra skills. They were motivated to learn. "These women who have learned the use of the sewing machine in this school, have been able, with some assistance from the school, to purchase machines, and are now working them, and doing a good business for themselves." They were able to make their clothes and their children's clothes. Sallie Daffm, another woman who helped educating wounded soldiers in order to write and read.²⁶

1.3. African Americans after the Civil War

In 1865, the American civil war ended. Africans got their freedom, and went out celebrating it in the streets. Finally, they started enjoying rights as the whites, such as: the right to vote, the right to

²³ Ibid, pp.50-51;p.67

²⁴ Maggie MacLean, "Mary Elizabeth Browser," *civil war women*,

²⁵ Ella Forbes, *African American Women During The Civil War*. (New York & London, 1998), p.71

²⁶ Ibid, p.61

education, the right to own properties.... They got three amendments designated for them, the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments that were about abolishing slavery, granting black civil rights and the black suffrage. However, these were not good news to the White Southerners. They could not accept the idea that Blacks are equal to them, because they used to be their masters one day and now they are as equal, enjoying all most all the rights as they do.

1.3.1. Racism

As long as the whites could not accept the idea that the slaves who they owned one day are no longer their properties; moreover, they are as equal as they are, they started to cause them problems, like the group of Ku Klux Klan and the Jim Crow Laws. i.e.: after the problem of slavery, Blacks faced the problem of Racism, because White Southerners always thought that Blacks are inferior to them: “Although slavery had been abolished, many whites at this time believed that nonwhites were inherently inferior and to support this belief sought rationalizations through religion and science.”²⁷

The Jim Crow Laws did only worsen the situation for Black Americans: Blacks could not go to schools that the whites go to; they could not shake hands with the whites. They were not supposed to eat together, and if that happened, whites are to be served first. In addition, Blacks had to present themselves to the whites, not the whites to present themselves to the Blacks. Whites did not call the Blacks using courtesy titles of respect, but when it comes to blacks, they had to use them.

Whites had some kind of rules against the Blacks, such as blacks should never admit that a white person is lying. Should not have dishonorable intentions for the whites, never say that a white person is from an inferior class, also never claim to be super knowledgeable or intelligent, never laugh at a white person or curse him, and never give complements to a white female. ²⁸

Even though the Blacks gained their freedom, they still were suffering from discrimination, most of blacks during reconstruction and the Jim Crow laws era were low-wage farmers, servants and factory workers, i.e.: they were not given better paying jobs. Moreover, they faced racial segregation even while performing the military services for their country. Until June 25, 1941 President Franklin D. Roosevelt made a law that opened national defense jobs to all Americans, regardless of their race or color or even national origin:

²⁷L. Louis Ronald, “Jim Crow Laws,” *Scholastic Magazine*,

²⁸David Pilgrim, “What was Jim Crow,” *Ferris State University*,

Despite the numbers they faced racial discrimination: prior to the war the military maintained a racially segregated force. In studies by the military, blacks were often classified as unfit for combat and were not allowed on the front lines. They were mostly given support duties, and were not allowed in units with white soldiers.²⁹

1.3.2. The Reason behind the Racial Segregation

Black people during that time had a big problem concerning their race and skin color. People at that time had the notion that beauty meant having a white skin and colored eyes like blue or green, blond hair.... Nevertheless, a Black with a curly hair was seen ugly.

“How should we punish Hitler?” a reporter asked a young American black girl towards the end of the Second World War. “Paint him black and bring him over here,” was her bitter reply. It was the result of being treated as a second-class human being- of being told no, you can’t attend this school, have this job, live in this house, sit on this park bench. And the reason? Because your skin is black.³⁰

That notion was put in the heads of the people because of the magazines, TV shows, and even toys. Kids and since their childhood wanted to seem like dolls that are having blond hair, blue eyes and a white skin. Kids love those dolls and dream to look like them. However, not all kids like them. According to Morrison: “the other dolls which were supposed to bring me great pleasure succeeded in doing the opposite...but apparently only me. Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window signs, all the world had agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child treasured”.³¹

Beauty at that time had conditioned standards, a white with a blond hair and blue or green eyes means beauty, but ugliness meant having a black skin and a curly hair. In addition, Blackness meant that the person holding it was, unwanted in that society, no matter how a productive person he is, or a

²⁹ “African-American Soldiers in World War II Helped Pave Way for Integration of US Military,”

³⁰ Bryn O’Callaghan. *An Illustrated History of The US*, p.112

³¹ Tony Morrison. *The Bluest Eye*, p.20

good person he is, appearances were what mattered during that time. As a result, Black People lost their self-confidence. Their obsession was to be like the whites. So, they started applying whitening cream on their skins, not only in America but even in their hometown: "...but they always went for a girl with an Ambi-lightened skin and head covered with a wig made in imitation of European or Indian hair, she simply accepted the contradiction and applied herself to Ambi with a vengeance. She had to rub out her black shame."³²

In the quotation, blackness was a shame for African Americans and even Africans in their countries.

Africans became obsessed of having a lighter skin and a straight hair even nowadays instead of accepting themselves as they are and loving themselves. Because, if they accept themselves as they are and have self-confidence, the world would accept them as well. However, even nowadays, most of the black Afro-American celebrities like Sammy Sosa and many others are still trying to look perfect. Perfection for them means straightening their hair and changing its color to blond; use skin bleaching to look lighter and put eye lenses with blue or green color, to they would look beautiful. Instead, Blacks were described as Oreo, Black from the outside but white from the inside: "For clarification, Oreo is what I was called because I was a black girl, who was "white" on the inside"³³

1.3.3. African Americans during World War II

Blacks of both genders served the country well during the era of the World War II, despite the segregation and the discrimination they faced in the army. Also African American women served the country very well by replacing men in the factories, but unfortunately they had to face the Racism imposed on them by the White American Women, also they had to bear the hard work that they were obliged to work for few sums. Instead of being honored for the services they presented to the country, they were expelled from their jobs when the war ended. According to Maureen: "When black people did get hired, they often were forced to use separate restrooms and to perform the lowest paid, most difficult work."³⁴

Black people were mistreated during the Jim Crow Laws era. Their lives was not important that they were killed for whatever kind of reason, like the black man who was killed just because he sat in

³²Ngugi Thiong'O. *Minutes of Glory*, p.4

³³Sherlyn Assam; "But You're Not like Other Black people, You're An oreo," *LAPP Magazine*,

³⁴Maureen Honey, "African American Women In World War II," *History Now*,

the section of the white people in the bus, as if sitting in a chair of a white person was a crime for the black people. White people dealt with the black people as if they were animal or disgusting people, they did not want to rub with them, Blacks were despised in the eyes of the white people, that is why they had to be separate from them, each in a way. “ ... the shooting of a soldier by white police when he sat in the white section of a bus in Beaumont, Texas, or the killing of another soldier in Durham, North Carolina, by a white bus driver.”³⁵.

1.4. The Civil Rights Movement

As a response to the segregation and racism, blacks protested and made a Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s. The movement aimed at ending segregation and discrimination. Also, giving equality to colored people concerning voting, education, housing.... This movement started because of the murder of teenage kid in 1955, named Emmett Till. Till was a fourteen year old kid, he was abducted and tortured to death because he flirted with a white woman. Her husband and her brother-in-law kidnapped Till from his uncle’s house and hit him harshly, when he refused to grovel they killed him. According to Jennifer: “Deep south was still a dangerous place to be black. Till’s mother, Mamie Till Mobley, who had grown up in a rural county, warned him of the risks. She told him to be very careful... to humble himself to the extent of getting down on his knees”.³⁶

What aches more is that the men who brutally murdered Till were found not guilty. Moreover, they were protected by the Double Jeopardy. According to New York Times Magazine: “The Bryant brothers were found not guilty. After the acquittal, they kissed their wives, lit cigars and posed for pictures. And later, protected from double jeopardy, they boasted about how they had murdered Till.”³⁷

Emmett Till is unforgettable for the Americans and the American History. His death changed America and launched the Civil Rights movement, because he was not the first to be oppressed and murdered. However, the way he died was harsh, because he was tortured brutally; his body was not recognized only by a ring on his hand. Moreover, because his murderers were found not guilty, the American people were outraged because of the state’s decision. Therefore, they protested and made a civil rights movement to end this oppression.

³⁵Maureen Honey. *Bitter Fruit*, p.127

³⁶Jennifer Laston, “How Emmett Till’s Murder Changed The World,” *Time*,

³⁷Darold Cuba, “Emmett Till, Whose Martyrdom Launched the Civil Rights Movement,” *The New York Times*,

The movement started in the mid twentieth century. it started by the campaign of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) that was against lynching and then the NAACP³⁸'s legal campaign against the segregated education. Then it exceeded to end segregation in the domains of jobs, health care, reform of the police and criminal justice system, education and the vote

1.4.1. Male Leaders of the Civil Rights Movement

Martin Luther King, Jr: He is one of the most inspirational and influential leaders of the African-American leaders in history. He was a Baptist minister and a civil-rights Activist. He led the Civil Rights Movement in the United States from the 1950s until his assassination in the 1968. Martin fought against racism and segregation and considered it an offense to God's will.

Martin Luther has many achievements. First, he organized civil rights groups, labor and religious organizations a march on Washington to gain civil and economic equality for African-Americans where he made his famous speech: "I Have a Dream" that was designated to end slavery. Second, Luther led the Montgomery bus boycott that lasted over a year, because on the same day, a woman named Rosa Parks was arrested for the reason that she refused to give up her seat on a bus for a white person. This boycott was a political and a social protest against racial segregation. Despite the fact that he was arrested for leading this protest, King never stopped fighting against racism.

After this event, King was served as the first president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). At first, it focused on buses, then, it expanded to end all kinds of segregation. Moreover, with the SCLC³⁹, King made series of marches and sit-ins and even though protests turned violent with Birmingham police in order to control protestors, the campaign accomplished a success and King's reputation was enhanced, Jim Crow Laws ended and restaurants and public businesses became more open to African-American patrons. In addition, Luther was honored with a distinguished award in 1964, which was a Nobel Peace Prize for his peaceful campaigns and historic triumphs. He was 35 years old when he received the prize and by this, he was the youngest man to ever receive The Nobel Peace Prize.⁴⁰

³⁸ National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

³⁹ Southern Christian Leadership Conference

⁴⁰Top 5 martin Luther King Jr. Achievements, *Videtteonline*,

Medgar Evers: was an African-American civil rights Activist. He served the country in the World War II. He lived a life full of racism and segregation, but he did not accept to live in discrimination. Therefore, he fought for change by getting involved in the NAACP⁴¹ while he was still a college student. Then, he embarked a campaign to raise awareness and almost double statewide membership in the organization.

Evers encouraged Mississippi youth to involve with the NAACP and the civil rights actions. In addition, he helped James Meredith to integrate in the University of Mississippi to be the first African American to attend the University of Mississippi, thanks to the help that Evers presented. Moreover, he, as the State's NAACP Leader, joined the struggle to bring Emmett Till's killers to justice. He also helped in organizing the sit-ins of Woolworth. When the sit-ins turned violent, a downtown business boycott arose; Evers was among the boycotters and was arrested for this reason.

Medgar also joined the Biloxi Wade-Ins, because in Biloxi, the beaches were reserved for whites only. The wade-in that became historic was known as "Bloody Sunday". Blacks were beaten after descending to the beach by counter protesters, but Evers encouraged protesters to carry on fighting as long as they would receive beating anyway, whether they done something, or done nothing. In 1963, Evers was shot to death by a white supremacist Byron De La Beckwith and protesters put black flags in the sand for his memory.⁴²

1.4.2. Female Leaders of the Civil Rights Movement

The list of the activists of the Civil Rights Movement is full of male names. However, that does not mean that women did not participate in the civil rights movement, in contrast, they participated and played an important role in it like:

Fannie Lou Hamer: She was a voting rights activist and a desegregationist. She played an important role in organizing the Freedom Summer Voting Campaign in Mississippi. She fought for the right to vote in 1962, and fought against pervasive poverty in the Afro-American community. Fannie is a co-founder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and a vice chair of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP).

Hamer gave a speech on the national television that challenged the anti-civil rights stance of many white Mississippi delegates; and thanks to her powerful speeches, she became an in-demand

⁴¹ National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

⁴² linnea Crowther, "Civil Rights History: Five of Medgar Evers' Achievements," *Legacy.Com*,

speaker. She promoted economic assistance for Afro-Americans, and she had a project that name was “Freedom Farms Cooperation”, According to an article written by Susan: “Ms. Hamer organized this recovery project to provide homes for low-income and those to whom she refers as the “no-income families”.⁴³

She ran for congress but she failed because the prevailing party did not let her name to be placed on the ballots.⁴⁴

Pauli Murray: She fought for both Civil Rights and Women’s Rights. Also, she was the co-founder of the National Organization for Women in 1966, and became the first black female Episcopal priest in 1977. Among her many achievements, she was the first African American women to earn a doctorate of juridical science from Yale Law School, and by 1965, she earned her JSD⁴⁵ from Yale Law School.

In 1940, she was arrested because she sat in the whites section in the bus, and refused to move to the back to let a white man sit as a protest to the segregation. After her arrest, she worked with Workers’ Defense League (WDL) and Eleanor Roosevelt for the Rights of Odell Waller. She became California’s first black attorney general and she was named “woman of the year” by the National Council of Negro Women and Mademoiselle magazine. She published States’ Laws on Race Color, a work that influences the NAACP⁴⁶’s arguments in the Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka.

The president John F. Kennedy appointed her to the President’s Commission on the Status of Women Committee (PCSW). She also worked with Civil Rights leaders like: A. Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin, and Martin Luther King, Jr.⁴⁷

Dorothy Height: An advocate for both Civil Rights and Women’s Rights. She was active for both social and political movements, besides, she worked in the height coordinated integration efforts at the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), she was the president of the National Council of Negro Women from 1957 to 1997 as well (YWCA)⁴⁸.

Moreover, she was the co-founder of the Center for Racial Justice in 1965 that combats racism. She was one of the organizers of the famous March on Washington and stood with Martin Luther King

⁴³ Susan Johnson, “Fannie Lou Hamer: Mississippi Grassroots Organizer,” *National Black Law Journal*,

⁴⁴ Gale. Female Leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. February 22, 2017

⁴⁵ Juridical Science Doctor

⁴⁶ National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

⁴⁷ Female Leaders of the Civil Rights Movement ,*Gale*,

⁴⁸ Young Women’s Christian Association

when he made his famous speech “I Have A Dream”. She created the Women’s Center for Education. Her activism focused on getting women involved in the civil rights movement. ⁴⁹

The Civil Rights Movement influenced the birth of many movements like the Black Feminist Movement to end the discrimination imposed on African American women. Thanks to those movements, African Americans are enjoying their full rights as human beings with no segregation...

1.5. Black Feminism

Black Feminism has started in the 1970s. After the Civil Rights Movement, Black Women made organizations to defend women’s rights and offend the women’s oppression in the terms of: Racism, Sexism, Social Class, Ethnicity... But Feminism in the Black Community did not start in the 1970s only, it was traced back in the 1800. Free Black Women joined the Abolitionists like Maria Stewart, Frances E. W. Harper and Sojourner Truth who spoke out about women’s rights and made speeches about that, like the speech of Sojourner: “Ain’t I a woman”. Because black woman at that time was not only Marginalized, like when they were excluded from the voting right when the fifteenth amendment came out and was addressed for males only, but they were Exploited and Oppressed as well. ⁵⁰

The most general statement of our politics at the present time would be that we are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression, and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking. The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives. As Black women we see Black feminism as the logical political movement to combat the manifold and simultaneous oppressions that all women of color face⁵¹.

The National Association of Colored Women was formed in 1896, and brought together many black women’s clubs as well. Among the leaders of these clubs: Josephine ST. Pierre Ruffin, Mary Church Terrell, and Anna Julia Cooper. These leaders, even though they did not call themselves feminists, they spoke about the needs of the black women. ⁵²

African American women fought hard to end their sufferance. They worked hard to prove their existence. Especially that they are human beings as any others who deserve to enjoy full rights.

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Erzuli Danto, “Black Feminism and rasta,” *Rastafari Speaks Archive*,

⁵¹ Sharon Smith, “Black Feminism and Intersectionality,” *International Socialist Review*

⁵² Erzuli Danto, “Black Feminism and rasta,” *Rastafari Speaks Archive*,

Therefore, they did not only enjoy the rights given to them, but they are also effective and productive human beings who could benefit their country even nowadays. Moreover, they became leaders who could influence their communities as well, such as:

First, **Condoleezza Rice**, who is the first black woman to serve as the United States' national security adviser, and the first black woman to serve as United States Secretary of State. Also she is the first African American to serve as provost of Stanford University. In 1989, she became director of Soviet and East European affairs with the National Security Council, and special assistant to President George H. W. Bush during the dissolution of the Soviet Union and German reunification.⁵³

Second, **Michelle Obama** who is the wife of the United States' President Barack Obama, and the first lady of the United States. She was a lawyer, and Chicago city administrator and community-outreach worker. She focused her attention on current social issues, such as poverty, healthy living and education.

Her career is full of high accomplishments. She was an assistant to Mayor Richard Daley, and the assistant commissioner of planning and development for the City of Chicago. In 1993, she became an executive director for the Chicago office of Public Allies. In 1996, she joined the University of Chicago as associate dean of student services. In 2005, she was appointed as a vice president for community and external affairs at the University of Chicago Medical Center. As long as, behind every great man, a great woman, she supported her husband in his campaigns in 2009 and 2012 when she traveled the country giving talks and speeches.⁵⁴

Slavery was difficult for all of the African Americans. They could not even own themselves; but their dignity did not just accept it, so they rebel, gained their freedom, and ended their segregation. In addition, Afro American women played an important role in that, they fought for their rights and became as equal as everyone. Nowadays they are holding important positions, and they are the society's leaders and influencers like Michelle Obama and Oprah Winfrey.

⁵³Condoleezza Rice, *Biography.Com*,

⁵⁴Michelle Obama, *Biography.com*

Chapter Two

“Oprah Winfrey, Society’s Leader”

Oprah's life was full of difficulties. She was not born with a golden spoon on her mouth. But, she faced a really tough childhood, but those difficulties did not put her down. In contrast, she was strong in facing them, and used those obstacles to create her motivation in order to reach the pursuit of happiness.

2.1. Biography

Oprah Gail Winfrey, her name was "Oprah". She was named so after a girl in the Bible, but people misspelled it to "Oprah" and that how her name became Oprah. She is the illegitimate child of Vernita Lee and Vernon Winfrey, she was born on January 29, 1954 in Kosciusko, Mississippi.

She lived with her maternal grandparents there because her mother had to go and search for a job. Her life with her grandparents was strict, and she lived in an extreme poverty there : Hattie Mae was strict, and not afraid to hit Winfrey with a stick if she talked back or misbehaved. The family was also very poor, with the young girl often wearing clothes made from potato sacks. Despite the family's extreme poverty, Winfrey sensed at an early age that she "was destined for greatness," as she said in an interview.⁵⁵

Hence, they supported her love to books and they taught her how to read at the age of 03, she started by reading the Bible: "Oprah's grandmother encouraged her love of books by teaching her how to read at the age of 3. She started by reading the Bible and soon began speaking at her church. Later, she would recite memorized verses to her grandmother's friends"⁵⁶

Oprah said that books shaped her universe; she said that when she was a little girl in Mississippi, she started to like books, besides they set her apart. She also claimed that books were her pass to her personal freedom. She added that she learned how to read at the age of three, and soon, she realized that there was a whole world to prevail that was beyond the farm that she used to live in, in Mississippi.⁵⁷

At the age of six, she went to live with her mother and half sister Patricia, because her grandmother became sick. Unfortunately, her mother's job kept her busy all the time, so she didn't

⁵⁵ Colin Dodds, "Oprah Winfrey: Early Life and Education," *Investopedia*,

⁵⁶ Elizabeth Fry, "A Childhood Biography of Oprah Winfrey," *ThoughtCo*,

⁵⁷ Colin Dodds, "Oprah Winfrey: Early Life and Education," *Investopedia*,

take a good care of her children, especially Oprah: “Her job kept her very busy, and what little free time she did have with her children was mostly spent with Patricia.”⁵⁸

The difficult circumstances that she was living in with her mother, Oprah went to live with her father Vernon, and Stepmother Velma, in Nashville, Tennessee. They were happy to have the little Oprah with them, because they had no Children. But she didn't stay there for a long while and went back to live with her mother in Milwaukee. During this time, her mother gave birth to a baby boy named Jeffery. From then on, Oprah's time in Milwaukee was not easy at all: While living with her mother in Milwaukee in 1963, Oprah was raped by a cousin and victimized by other sexual predators. In 1968, she received a scholarship to attend Nicolet High School in Milwaukee. Her mother sent her back to Nashville, where she gave birth to a son at the age of 14, who died shortly afterwards.⁵⁹

Later another family member raped Oprah at the age of 9 years old. Winfrey reportedly said, adding that she attempted to conceal her pregnancy at 14 because she felt so much hurt, “pain and shame.”⁶⁰

Winfrey said that she was anxious that her career would be ruined if people found out about the pregnancy: I imagined that every person on the street was going to point their finger at me and scream, ‘Pregnant at 14, you wicked girl ... expelled! And I soon realized that having the secret out was liberating,” she wrote in 2007. “What I learned for sure was that holding the shame was the greatest burden of all.”⁶¹

2.1.1 Oprah's Education

Oprah attended East Nashville High School where she joined the National Forensics league, the honor society, and the student council. She was selected as the most popular girl of the senior class and she was a representative to a White House Conference.⁶² “Vernon was a strict but fair and encouraging father. Under his care, Oprah blossomed, becoming an honors student and winning a host of school awards, including Most Popular Girl, as well as the Miss Black Tennessee beauty pageant.

⁵⁸ Elizabeth Fry, “A Childhood Biography of Oprah Winfrey,” *ThoughtCo*,

⁵⁹ Helen Garson, *Oprah Winfrey: A Biography*.(Connecticut. London: Greenwood Press, 2004), Timeline.

⁶⁰ Aurlie Corinthios, “Oprah Winfrey Reveals the Name She Chose for the Premature Baby Boy She Lost at Age 14”, *People Tv Watch*,

⁶¹ Aurlie Corinthios, “Oprah Winfrey Reveals the Name She Chose for the Premature Baby Boy She Lost at Age 14”, *People Tv Watch*,

⁶² Helen Garson, *Oprah Winfrey: A Biography*.(Connecticut. London: Greenwood Press, 2004), Timeline.

Winfrey also led the East Nashville High School speech team to second place in a national dramatic interpretation contest.”⁶³

While representing Nashville Station WVOL In 1970, Oprah won the contest for Miss Fire Prevention and “she was selected as first Miss Black Tennessee. (Garson, 2004. Timeline.)⁶⁴. When she was still a high school student, she started to explore broadcasting as a work, getting a job in WVOL, a local black radio station in Nashville, the station appointed Winfrey on a part time basis to read the news during her senior year of high school. Oprah’s proficiencies as a speaker made her win a full scholarship to Tennessee State University, where she studied communications.⁶⁵

She did not finish her studies at college in order to accept a job in Baltimore, at station WJZ-TV. She worked as a reporter and a co-anchor of evening news program.⁶⁶

Winfrey was given the evening program and was co-hosting the morning show *People Are Talking at WJZ-TV*. After that, in 1984, she moved to Chicago.⁶⁷

2.2 The Emergence of Oprah Winfrey

Oprah Winfrey believes that if the person believes in himself he would achieve anything he wants, and that is the case of her: “The biggest adventure you can take is to live the life of your dreams.” **Oprah Winfrey**

2.2.1 Oprah The News Anchor

Oprah started her job career by working on a Nashville radio station reading the news; she was the youngest and the first black female in the station’s history: “She moved to Baltimore to work for WJZ-TV as a news reporter and co-anchor of the six o’clock news. It was not a success. “People resented the fact that Jerry [Turner, veteran anchor] had been given a co-anchor, and it was a young, African-American woman,” remembers she.”⁶⁸

However, she left working as a co-anchor because it became a sensation for her as she said. He also added that the word that he would use to describe her is compassionate. One of the causes that Oprah did not carry on news anchoring and went into a talk show is that whenever she told a story of

⁶³ Colin Dodds, “Oprah Winfrey: Early Life and Education,” *Investopedia*,

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ Helen Garson, *Oprah Winfrey: A Biography*.(Connecticut. London: Greenwood Press, 2004), Timeline.

⁶⁸ Emine Saner, “Oprah Winfrey: From Poverty to America’s First Black Billionaire...to #Oprah2020,” *The Guardian*,

children murdered in a fire, or kids killed or abused, she would cry. She would try to not be subjective and remain strong, and people like that about her.⁶⁹

2.2.2. Oprah the Co-Host

In 1976, she moved to Baltimore and later hosted the TV chat show *People Are Talking* that was suffering from low ratings, but with the coming of Winfrey, the show became the top rated talk show: “Winfrey was an instant success as a talk show host. In a few short months after taking over, her show surpassed then-reigning talk-show king “Donahue” to become the top-rated talk show in Chicago”.⁷⁰

Oprah said that not all of her memories in Baltimore were fond ones. First, she met Jerry Turner, who showed her his hostility. Oprah said that he always wanted to be alone, and that if he wanted a co host, he would not like to be with someone like her. He eventually did not hide his animosity to Oprah. He would try to embarrass her at every chance he could get, like to make her feel bad about where she went to school. Winfrey says. “That’s when I first learned that, oh, where you went to school is an important thing, because he’d go, ‘Where’d you go to school again? What little college or university?’ So I would have to say my memories of Jerry Turner are not fond ones.”⁷¹

Also, she was sexually harassed there. She states that she was treated with less respect comparing to her male mates because she was a woman. But she neither wanted to sue those who harassed her, because she was worried that her career would be damaged, nor wanted to name those who harassed her, because she was scared that they would sue her. Therefore, in both cases, her career would be damaged: “But I knew if I complained or spoke too loudly or, for God’s sake, filed a suit, that would be the end of my career. And it just wasn’t worth it to me, because I came into Baltimore knowing I would not stay. I never even learned the streets.”⁷²

Moreover, the environment that she used to work in was not a suitable one, people there were impolite, they curse all the time. She was a church girl, so it would not be good to her hear such words: “So, that’s also where I learned to curse, in the newsroom,” she says. “When I came to JZ, I was churchgoing and never cursed.”⁷³

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Colin Dodds, “Oprah Winfrey: Early Life and Education,” *Investopedia*,

⁷¹ David, Zurawik, “From Sun Magazine: Oprah—Built in Baltimore,” *Sun Magazine*,

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ David, Zurawik, “From Sun Magazine: Oprah—Built in Baltimore,” *Sun Magazine*,

“The language in here is very disturbing. The way these people talk to each other. But after a couple of months, you're in there, too, doing it.”⁷⁴

In addition to those reasons that made Winfrey quite the job in Baltimore, there were deeper issues as well. She claimed that she was a good speaker but a terrible writer. It would take from her much time to sit down and write the scripts, this is why she decided that she is more suited in some line of media work that was not strictly journalism.

Also she said that the main reason for her to leave working in Baltimore is that because the host working with her was getting more money than she gets, and they were doing the same job and sitting on the same chair. Therefore, she went to her boss and asked him to that she wanted to be paid same as her mate, so her boss told her that he, unlike her, is married and has children and a house and he has to pay money for college, that is why he was getting paid more than her. She did not say anything then and simply left the job!⁷⁵

2.2.3. The Oprah Winfrey Show

“1984 Relocates to Chicago to host her own morning show AM Chicago, which was renamed The Oprah Winfrey Show a year later.”⁷⁶

After that she left working in Baltimore as a co-host, she moved to Chicago to present WLS-TV's A.M. Chicago, her own morning show, the famous one, that its duration was half an hour. The show was suffering from low ratings, but Oprah was its turning point same as it is her turning point that changed her life radically...

“My first day in Chicago, September 4, 1983. I set foot in this city, and just walking down the street, it was like roots, like the motherland. I knew I belonged here," she would later say.”⁷⁷

Oprah was a successful talk show host. In a small period after starting the job, her show exceeded the top ranked talk show. Other Chicago stars noticed the emerging luminary among them. Including nationally renowned film critic Roger Ebert, who helped Oprah land her first agreement to host nationally syndicated talk show.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ Stanford Graduate School of Business. “Oprah Winfrey on Career, Life, and Leadership”. Filmed [April 2014]. Youtube video, 1:04:03. Posted [april 2014]. <https://youtu.be/6DlrqeWrczs>

⁷⁶ Rachel Ward, “Oprah Winfrey: A Career Timeline,” *Telegraph*,

⁷⁷ Colin Dodds, “Oprah Winfrey: Success Story,” *Investopedia*,

⁷⁸ Ibid

Her show was broadcast nationwide and renamed *The Oprah Winfrey Show* in 1986 that was placed on 120 channels. And in 1988, she launched Harpo Productions that is Oprah spelt backwards, that would expand later on to include Harpo Films, Harpo Radio, and Harpo Print

By the early 1990s, Oprah got bored of the content and the format of her program, besides, it was considered as a “tabloid talk show” in its beginning. Hence, she transmitted her fame into a strong financial power, and made sure to stay creative meanwhile, "I'm sick of people sitting in chairs stating their problems. Then we roll the videotape... then we have our experts on the topic... I'm in the 'What's next?' phase of my career," she said.⁷⁹

She started to shift the focus on deeper topics like health issues and world politics, by the mid 90s when her show was still on the top ranked talk shows. When she hosted famous people, her concentration was always on the social and the charitable causes that they were involved in. “Winfrey’s audience followed along with the change in focus. By the late ‘90s, her show had millions of daily viewers. And she had become a business in her own right. During this period, Harpo Productions took in roughly \$150 million in annual revenues annual and supported about 200 employees in its Chicago headquarters. By 1998, Winfrey’s net worth was estimated at \$98 million.”⁸⁰

2.2.4. Oprah’s Acting Career

Oprah started her acting career in 1985 when she was 32 years old, she acted in the film of “*The Color Purple*”. She played the role of Sofia, it is Steven Spielberg adaption of Alice Walker’s Pulitzer –and National Book Award. It won a masterpiece. Oprah’s appearance was iconic that she was nominated for both Golden Globe and an Academy Award for best supporting actress.⁸¹

Oprah shines in the ABC TV ministeries as a star in the women of brester place: “She started in it as Mattie and she was praised for her performance with the *LA Times TV* that described it as “her most serious role since *The Color Purple*.”⁸²

⁷⁹ Ibid

⁸⁰ Colin Dodds, “Oprah Winfrey: Success Story,” *Investopedia*,

⁸¹ Bim Adewunmi, “How Oprah Got Her Acting Groov eBack,” *Buzzfeed.com*,

⁸² Ibid

In 1993 she played the role of Lajoe Rivers in “*There Are No Children Here*”. In 1997, she acted as Miss Zora in *Before Women Had Wings*. She played the role of Sethe in the movie that is titled “*Beloved*”. Moreover, she played the role of Lee Cooper, the civil rights activist, in *Selma*, in 2014/ 2015. And in 2016, she acted in *Greenleaf* as Mavis McCready, that was about an African American Southern church-rooted family and its many secrets. In 2017, she was a star as: Deborah Lacks in *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* and Marie Carter in *Untitled Richard Pryor Biopic*.⁸³

Oprah did not only act in movies, but she was the voice of many characters like: Coretta Scott King in *Our Friend, Martin*, Gussy the Goose in *Charlotte’s web*, and Judge Bumbleton in *Bee Movie*. Also, she played the voice of Eudora in *The Princess and the Frog*, and Gloria Gaines in Lee Daniels’ *The Butler*. And Deborah in *The Star*. And in 2018, she is The star in *A Wrinkle in Time* as Mrs. Which.⁸⁴

2.3 The Oprah Bill

Oprah took her childhood’s abusive personal story all the way to Capital Hill, assisting before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Backing the National Child Protection Act that defends the incorporation of a national database of condemned child abusers in 1991: “I am speaking out on behalf of the children who wish to be heard, but whose cries, wishes and hopes often, I believe, fall upon deaf or inattentive ears,” she said. The U.S. Senate heard her moving plea loud and clear. With Winfrey’s support, the Act was signed into law by Bill Clinton in 1993 and dubbed the Oprah Bill.”⁸⁵

“1994 President Clinton signs the “Oprah Bill”, creating a nationwide database of convicted child abusers (Winfrey was abused as a child)”⁸⁶

2.4 Oprah’s Achievements

Oprah’s career is full of achievements. In 1998, she received her seventh Emmy for her show, and was the protagonist in the film *Beloved* that is based on the novel of Toni Morrison. Moreover, she is one of the 100 most influential people of the 20th century according to Time magazine.⁸⁷

In 1999, she co-founded Oxygen Media, a company that is designed for producing cable and internet programming for women. And in 2000, she launched her magazine *O*; that is approved as the

⁸³ Adewunmi, “How Oprah Got Her Acting Groov eBack,” *Buzzfeed.com*,

⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁵ Alyssa, Fetini, “Top 10 Oprah Moments,” *Time Magazine*,

⁸⁶ Rachel Ward, “Oprah Winfrey: A Career Timeline,” *Telegraph*,

⁸⁷ Rachel Ward, “Oprah Winfrey: A Career Timeline,” *Telegraph*,

most successful magazine launch in recent history. In 2003, she created a Book Club, that is the largest book club in the world and she gets the Honors Award of the Association of American Publishers' AAP. In 2005, she was ranked as number one on Forbes' Power Celebrity list. And in 2007 she campaigned for Barack Obama so that people elect him as a president for the U.S.A. in 2010 her show started its 25th and final season. And in 2011, she launched OWN (Oprah Winfrey Network) on New Year's Day.

2.5 Oprah Winfrey's Social Influence

Oprah Winfrey has a great social influence; she has a standing position in the American society

2.5.1 The Power To Speak Your Truth

It is a big courage from an abused woman to tell her personal story, to tell how much pain she conveys inside her. Oprah Winfrey could easily stay silent and bury her pain, fear and grieve. But, she decided to show up and tell the world her story, to face the truth and to fight for a better future. She decided to speak out the truth of the world's ugliness, how women were oppressed and had never to face men or reveal their thoughts. "What I know for sure is that speaking your truth is the most powerful tool we all have," Oprah Winfrey said⁸⁸

Oprah turned to be one of the most influential, rich and powerful people around the world. The one who could fulfill her dreams and improve her existence. She kept telling people to speak up and tell their stories because they might make a difference too. At the golden globes, Oprah expressed how much she is proud by those who could share their stories and leave their touch on people. "We've lived in a culture brokered by brutally powerful men. For too long, women have not been heard or believed if they dared to speak their truth to the power of those men. But their time is up," Winfrey said. "I just hope that Recy Taylor died knowing that her truth, like the truth of so many other women who were tormented in those years and even now, goes marching on," Winfrey added.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Danny Clemens, "Oprah Winfrey: 'Speaking your truth is the most powerful tool we all have'," Art & entertainment, January 06, 2018,

⁸⁹ Ibid

Oprah is the best example of how people can reach their goals no matter where do they come from, or where do they start. She did never take her bad conditions as weakness, but rather as strength and a beginning to create a better future. She says: “Challenges are gifts that force us to search for a new center of gravity. Don’t fight them. Just find a new way to stand.”⁹⁰

Winfrey suffered from the humiliation of sexual abuse. She was raped at the age of nine. However, she took this accident to change her life and to show how much she is powerful moving from a poor, neglected girl to one of the most influential people in the world. She also says: “The great courageous act that we must all do, is to have the courage to step out of our history and past so that we can live our dreams.”⁹¹

Winfrey motivates people to believe in themselves and to challenge life in order to make a positive progress, as she says “You don’t become what you want, you become what you believe.”⁹²

2.5.2 From a Little Speaker to a TV Show Host

Oprah used to be an admirable speaker at church when she was young than she turned out to be a very famous TV show host. Winfrey used her show as a tool to make her voice and other’s voice heard. Her hosts were too comfortable sharing their personal stories, thoughts and feelings. Anish Menon said that he knows Oprah as a connector. He grew up isolated from media and internet till Oprah involved him to a new world of sharing ideas and inspiration through her discussions with minority groups talking about their issues, lives and rights also her interviews with famous and inspirational people. Anish is inspired by her values and her strength to keep her on TV along whole 20 years. As someone said that she is ordinary and extraordinary at the same time. He considers her as a source of inspiration especially her life story.⁹³

2.5.3 Oprah’s Contribution in Literature

One of Oprah Winfrey’s interests is to read and write books. As a result, she encourages people to read because she considers reading as something important. Reading can change the person’s life. It

⁹⁰ Goalcast, “Top 20 Inspiring Oprah Winfrey Quotes That Will Empower You,” Goalcast,.

⁹¹ Ibid

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ Tanvi Dubey, “Why Oprah Winfrey Continues to Inspire People Across The Globe,” YourStory.com,

gives a vision about other's experiences and thoughts and motivates people to achieve their goals. "Reading gives you the ability to reach higher ground"⁹⁴. Oprah says.

Oprah wrote many books that influenced people, among those, "*What I know for sure*", "*Food health and happiness*" and "*The wisdom of Sundays*". Later, she created a book club which is a discussion club. It highlights books chosen by host Oprah in her talk show. Books that were discussed in the club turned to be very popular bestsellers. "The best novel I've read in a long, long, long, long time...a literary feast of a book," Winfrey gushed on her show, saying it deserved to enter the cannon alongside works by John Steinbeck and Harper Lee."⁹⁵

2.5.4 Oprah Appreciates the Small Joys

Oprah cares about her happiness and appreciating the small thing and moments in her life much more than how successful or rich she would become. Most of the time, Oprah is cheerful, happy and funny. Her way to deal with things and people is flexible. Winfrey chose to move on rather than to stick to her painful past. She knew well how to transform her sadness into happiness and her pain into strength. It is up to the person to decide the way he lives. Oprah writes:

What I know for sure is that every day brings a chance for you to draw in a breath, kick off your shoes, and step out and dance – to live free of regret and filled with as much joy, fun, and laughter as you can stand. You can either waltz boldly onto the stage of life and live the way you know your spirit is nudging you to, or you can sit quietly by the wall, receding into the shadows of fear and self-doubt.⁹⁶

2.5.5 Oprah Gives unconditionally

Oprah never hesitates to provide a charity after charity. She aims at making people happy and drawing smiles on their faces, as she says: "you get from the world what you give to the world". Through her career she cared about poor people trying to give them Christmas gifts. She founded the Academy School Leadership for Girls in order to provide those who come from impoverished background appropriate circumstances of education. Oprah gave 300 people from her audience \$1000 in order to supply a charity of their choice. She spent million dollars on organizations like The Angel

⁹⁴ Winfrey Oprah, "What I know for sure," *Oprah.com*,

⁹⁵ Pickert Kate, "Oprah's book club," *Time Magazine*,

⁹⁶ Oprah, Winfrey, "What Oprah Learnt From Tina Turner," *O, The Oprah Magazine*,

Network which is a public charity formed in 1998; it aims at encouraging people around the world to make a difference in other's lives. Oprah's vision is to give opportunities to women and children to rise their abilities and improve their lives. This organization has built many schools in many countries. It provided them with different school supplies.⁹⁷

2.5.6 The Power of Speech

Oprah Winfrey knows well how to choose her words during her speeches. She grabs the audience's attention from her first to her last word. Most Oprah's speeches tackle the social aspects; she uses real stories and real persons. She never hesitates to talk about her sufferings during her life. Winfrey talks eloquently and passionately about the abuse and assault that women are facing in everyday life. She encourages women to stand up and reveal their feelings, to stand up and face men, to stand up and prove themselves in society. She encourages poor children to challenge their circumstances and reach their dreams whatever they are. Oprah stands out among many persons on her ability to understand and feel other's pain she inspires and helps them to get through their rough times. All these characteristics make Oprah a great role model to listen to and follow.

Oprah delivered a great and powerful speech at the golden globe awards. The audience showed a remarkable solidarity with Oprah's words. She started her speech by recalling her childhood then she talked about some influential people and how they could make a change in her. Oprah Winfrey closed her speech with a call for unity by saying:

I want all the girls watching to know a new day is on the horizon. And when that new day finally dawns, it will be because of a lot of magnificent women, many of whom are right here in this room tonight, and some pretty phenomenal men, fighting hard to make sure they are the leaders to take us to the time where nobody has to say 'me too' again.⁹⁸

Oprah rocked the stage when she talked about Recy Taylor who lived too many years in a culture full of men's brutality. She said that women were not allowed to speak the truth to the power of those men but "their time is up" she said and repeated the same sentence "their time is up".⁹⁹

⁹⁷ "Oprah's Angel Network Fact Sheet," *oprah.com*,

⁹⁸ Ruth, Kinane, "Oprah Winfrey Calls Out Sexual Harassers in Powerful Globes Speech: 'Their Time is Up'," *Entertainment*,

⁹⁹ *Ibid*

2.6 Oprah Winfrey leadership Academy for Girls

Oprah Winfrey has celebrated so many achievements especially as a philanthropist and a humanitarian but one of those accomplishments that is closer to her heart is founding the Oprah Winfrey leadership Academy for Girls in South Africa. This charity was not like the other ones. It was done with much love. Oprah felt that it was part of her and that she was closer to people she tried to help. "When I first started making a lot of money, I really became frustrated with the fact that all I did was write cheque after cheque to this or that charity without really feeling like it was a part of me," she told America's Newsweek magazine. "At a certain point, you want to feel that connection," she added.¹⁰⁰

Oprah Winfrey leadership Academy for Girls is a female boarding school founded in January 2007 and located in Johannesburg, South Africa. Its aim is to provide an opportunity to girls from impoverished background an appropriate education and leadership. It provides students in grades 8 to 12 with an opportunity to develop their full social, intellectual, and leadership potential.¹⁰¹

The school cost a lot of money to be built. It selects girls that their family's income is less than \$700, those who has abilities and show outstanding promise but their families are not able to support their families. Oprah herself interviewed many of the South African girls who applied for the first 150 place at the school. She was present in every single moment. She wanted to be involved in their lives and know their details. Oprah could easily feel their pain and weakness..¹⁰²

The school aimed at providing communication technology that allows Oprah to communicate and teach girls from Chicago. She wanted to be present even if the distance is too far. Oprah said that she has overseen even the smallest details of the construction of the school, jointly funded by the Gauteng Department of Education. . The academy also provides advanced education techniques. The academy aims at teaching girls to be leader, self confident, independent and the best person they ever dreamed to be. She said: "The school will teach girls to be the best human beings they can ever be; it

¹⁰⁰ Oprah Opens School in S Africa, *BBC NEWS*,

¹⁰¹ Call for Application: 2018 Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls – South Africa, *OFA*,

¹⁰² Oprah Opens School in S Africa, *BBC NEWS*,

will train them to become decision-makers and leaders; it will be a model school for the rest of the world."¹⁰³

The \$40 million Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls which Oprah vows to make it the best school in the world is spread over 52 acres outside Johannesburg. It contains computer-filled classrooms and residence halls; there are indoor and outdoor theaters, original works of art, a yoga studio and a beauty salon which Oprah considers it as something essential to help girls feel comfortable. The aim here is not to train girls to be cosmetologists, but rather to be confident future leaders.¹⁰⁴

Oprah Winfrey was thinking of her best Christmas she ever had, she was 12 years old, her mother called her to say that they will not be having neither Christmas nor Santa that year. Oprah was embarrassed and ashamed. It was her first time to face reality that they were not like the other kids because they were poor. Later, some people brought a basket of food and they brought toys for her and her brother and sister. Oprah was so happy not because they brought them toys but because somebody remembered that they existed, and somebody cared enough at midnight to come to a house with food and toys. Oprah was thinking of how she could make that possible for somebody else, what she could do to create the same kind of experience for other children. She created Christmas kindness, which is using her personality to serve the energy of herself. They went from village to village offering toys, clothes and food to children who never experienced Christmas before. She knew that they may not remember what they got in the box but they will remember that somebody remembered them, they will remember the experience. Oprah says: "I want to have that same kind of effect, that you were remembered, that you were valued, you were important, on other kids." So, while doing this experience, she was invited to Nelson Mandela's house while they were going village to village bringing gifts to children. Oprah and Mandela were having a conversation about how to really make a difference in the world. Mandela said that changing poverty is the way to change the world. Oprah said that he cannot change poverty unless he educates people, and that's the way to. Then, she added that she wanted to build a school for South Africa one day and she meant by one day when she retire or something. However Mandela did not think or hesitate, he directly said: 'you want to build a school!'

¹⁰³ Ellen Delisio and Gary Hopkins, "Oprah Winfrey Opens New School in Africa," *Education World*,

¹⁰⁴ Robin Givhan, "In Opra's South African School, Girls Will Get a Beatiful Education," *Washingtonpost*,

he stood up or as she said, he jumped up, took his phone and called the Minister of Education and set her up on the phone with him to be told to come over the house in order to start the project.

The other thing that pushed Oprah to found the school is that she had tried other things and failed. When she moved to Chicago, She tried to create her own Big Sisters program. She tried to help so many people and to give them a new chance to change their lives but she failed at the end. Winfrey knew that education is the starting point to help and change people. “What I recognized with all of my failed projects is that unless you change the way people think, you don’t change them. You have to start at the core of how they think. So that’s why education is so important to me.” She said.¹⁰⁵

Oprah Winfrey wanted to empower those girls, to change how people see women and how women see themselves, to change their way of thinking and to open the door for them to release their energy, ideas and creativity. She believed that they can change the world and improve themselves through contributing to society and making financial independence. She wanted to give them a better future as she said:

I wasn't just trying to make a school that would develop political leaders, the talk show host told the British Broadcasting Corp. I'm looking for the opportunity to change the paradigm, to change the way not only these girls think ... but to also change the way a culture feels about what women can do. She added: I think the reason not just Africa but the world is in the state that it is because of a lack of leadership on all levels of government ... and particularly in regard to schools and schooling for poor children.¹⁰⁶

Children have hidden capacities. They lack the motivation and tools that can take out the best from them. They miss the opportunities to push them to reveal their power. "The best way to effect change long term is to ... give children exposure and opportunity and nurture them to understand their own power and possibility." Oprah said.¹⁰⁷

Oprah Winfrey used to wear luxurious clothes and jewelries. In the celebration of the opening of the academy she wore a bright pink gown and twinkling diamond earrings. When she was interviewed in Good morning America, she said that she did that in order to let the girls know the significance of the event and how much it is important for her.

¹⁰⁵ Marianne Schnall, “Exclusive: Interview With Oprah About Her School for Girls,” *Huffpost*,

¹⁰⁶ The Associated Press, “Winfrey Says She Wants to Nurture Kids,” *Washingtonpost*,

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*

Winfrey was there not just as a television self, but also as her successful philanthropist self. She looked fabulous in order to inspire those around her. Her deeds refer to the philanthropist Brooke Astor who was asked why she wears fancy suits, a hat and jewels to visit the poor. She said: "People expect to see Mrs. Astor, not some dowdy old lady, and I don't intend to disappoint them,".¹⁰⁸

To feel beautiful leads you to build your self-confidence and inspires you so far. When a girl look at the mirror and see her beauty, she can easily go out the door and face the world. For Oprah, Having a beauty salon in the school was so important for her; she knew what it means to feel beauty and to hear people talk about yours. It easily inspires girls and boosts them to be stronger and to be more comfortable. For Winfrey: "making sure that the girls look pretty -- or more accurately, feel pretty -- is an important part of that mission."¹⁰⁹

2.6.1 Oprah Goes to School

The 500 finalists were interviewed by Oprah herself without knowing that they will meet her. They were really surprised to see her. Some interviews were funny, one of the girls has opened the door, looked at her and said: "you are so skinny in person!", another one said: "Do you spend \$500 to get your eyebrows done?" Oprah laughed and admitted her to the school. But other interviews were serious. A girl called Somber came after losing her mother because of AIDS. Oprah directly took her to a room and gave her a special care. Oprah was trying to be strong and control her emotions. "If I didn't find a way to separate my feelings, I'd have been crying the entire month I was in Africa," she says. Oprah saw herself in those girls. She felt every pain, every struggle and every tear they went through.

Buddy Gayle King; Oprah's partner; was always beside her, helping Oprah and giving her advice. She realized why the girls have admired the school. "When I watched Oprah with those girls," she says, "I kept thinking she was meant to be a mother, and it would happen one way or another." She added. Oprah uses "my girls" with her students, she really feels and means that. Oprah escorted the girls to the bus after finishing interviewing them; she gave each girl a big hug. One of the girls whispered to her: "We are your daughters now."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Robin Givhan, "In Opra's South African School, Girls Will Get a Beatiful Education," *Washingtonpost*,

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ Allison ,Samuels, "Oprah Goes To School," *Newsweek*,

Oprah aims at building a house in the school grounds and spends her time within the girls sharing them the same dishes, curtains and sheets. . "I want to be near my girls and be in a position to see how they're doing," Oprah says. "I want to have a presence they can sense and feel comfortable with." ¹¹¹

Some criticisms saw that building such a school in such poor country is an extravagant and lavish. Oprah did not care, her aim was to support those girls and to make them feel their power and beauty which was absent in their daily life. "These girls deserve to be surrounded by beauty, and beauty does inspire," she says. Winfrey wanted the girls to be proud of the school and to be a place of honor. She knows well that the girls were treated harshly and never with kindness. "They've never been told they are pretty or have wonderful dimples. I wanted to hear those things as a child." She says. ¹¹²

Oprah made sure to make a comfortable school. She chose the uniform by herself. She checked each bed by sprawling on them to check for comfort. She made sure to make the rooms very large even though the girls have limited stuffs. "People asked me why it was important to have closet space, and it's because they *will* have something," she says. Her plan was to give the girls a chance to get money in order to buy things. That was her way to really teach them how to appreciate things. "From the very beginning, the developers sent me plans for the school that resembled a chicken coop," she says. "It was clear that the attitude was 'These are poor African girls. Why spend all this on them?' It was unbelievably upsetting." She adds. ¹¹³

Even the South African government did not give a hand to Oprah, it's clear that such a school is too expensive for such a poor country. A South African School official who wanted not to be involved in order not to offend Oprah, said that it was hard for him to not see that others are seeing that what Oprah is doing is too much. Therefore, Winfrey responded that she understands that many people feel that she is doing too much, but that is what she wanted to reach. She wanted to give the girls an opportunity to make a difference in the world. "I'd like to think I have as much good sense as I have money, so that's a lot of good sense." She says. ¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Ibid

¹¹² Celean Jacobson, "Oprah Winfrey to open School for Girls in AS," *Mail And Guardian*,

¹¹³ Ibid

¹¹⁴ Allison ,Samuels, "Oprah Goes To School," *Newsweek*,

Other people were complaining that this charity should start in America than moves to South Africa even though Oprah has spent a lot of money to help educating children in United States especially through her Oprah Winfrey scholars program. Oprah knew that African people are in need much more than those in America. African students lacked what American students already had. "Say what you will about the American educational system it does work, if you are a child in the United States, you can get an education." She says. The American students do not appreciate the small things they have because they already have more. Oprah said that she stopped visiting inner city school in America simply because they lack the sense the person need to learn. "If you ask the kids what they want or need, they will say an iPod or some sneakers. In South Africa, they don't ask for money or toys. They ask for uniforms so they can go to school." she says.¹¹⁵

2.6.2. Oprah's vision about [Africans emerging leaders in 2020](#)

Oprah Winfrey is still working on making a better school and providing a better education for girls. She believes that those girls can make a change one day, girls with hidden and non supported capacities. Oprah tends to use her previous experience as a support for change to provide education for more girls who have suffered from poverty, and give opportunities to others from other countries in order to bring up a female leadership and entrepreneurship. Oprah says:

You want to change the world; you change a girl's life. "What I intend to do now is ... take that model and to use it in the world to change the lives of 250 million girls around the world who can't get an education, who don't have any asset other than their bodies to use, and therefore they're sold for dowries, they're sold off into slavery, they're married at 11 and 12 years old."¹¹⁶

Oprah Winfrey believed in those girls, she believed that education is the only way to raise powerful, ambitious and confident girls. She says that education helps all girls to raise their aspirations. She encouraged them to rich their dreams, accomplish their visions and to make the impossible possible. Education is a powerful tool to overcome obstacles. Oprah said that at the beginning teachers were having an idea that those girls are coming to the school disadvantaged. So, she eliminated that word directly because disadvantaged would make the others see them as if they

¹¹⁵ Allison ,Samuels, "Oprah Goes To School," *Newsweek*,

¹¹⁶ Robin Curnow and Teo Kermeliotis, "Oprah a 'Proud Momma' as first Academy Students Graduate," *CNN.Com*,

were having some kind of disease, with limited expectations of what you can do or be. "Nobody has a disadvantaged brain. Nobody is here with a disadvantaged mind. Nobody has a disadvantaged spirit." She says. It's a new beginning, a new chance and a new world. Girl's capacities are endless. "You were born in the year that apartheid ended in this country," Winfrey tells her school's students. "That means that you are a child of freedom. There is no bar." ¹¹⁷

2.7 Oprah Winfrey's Political Views

Oprah Winfrey has a great influence on people. When she speaks, millions listen. When she likes something, millions adore it. Much more when she endorses a politician, millions vote for him. Oprah's leadership has extended deeper to politics.

Oprah Winfrey came out in politics when she endorsed Barack Obama; the president of the United State in 2008; for presidency in 2018. Oprah considered herself apolitical but her support to Barrack Obama is something very personal:

I don't consider myself political, and I seldom interview politicians," [she said during a 2008 interview](#) with then-presidential candidate Barack Obama, whom she provided with an endorsement and support on the campaign trail. So when I decided to talk with you, people around me were like, 'What's happened to you?'" she continued. "I said, 'I think this is beyond and above politics.' It feels like something new"¹¹⁸

During the 2008 election cycle, Oprah's endorsement was responsible for about 1 million additional votes for Barack Obama. She also contributed with \$2,300 to his campaign which is a kind of support to the man who she wanted to be a president:¹¹⁹ "We estimated that her endorsement of Obama amounted to approximately a million additional votes in the 2008 Democratic primary," said Craig Garthwaite, a Northwestern University professor who studied Oprah's effect on the election. "Given how tight that election was, it had a really meaningful impact. She has an ability to influence people."¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Ibid

¹¹⁸ . Allan Smith, "Oprah Says She Doesn't Consider Herself 'Political'-But here's Where She's Staked out Positions on Political Issues," *Businessinsider*.

¹¹⁹ Tarini Parti, "The 'Oprah Effect:' Winfrey's Influence Extence Deep Into Politics," *opensecrets.org*,

¹²⁰ Caitlin Mcdevitt, "Oprah's New 'Favorite thing': Politics," *Politico*,

Some humors said that Oprah runs for the presidency in 2020 especially after receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom, people then were no more surprised about her political involvement. Oprah's words and messages are always motivational ones, she tells people that they can be; they can grow and they can be better. That's why she is one of the best influencers in the world: "Oprah has a golden trumpet," says author Kitty Kelley, who wrote an unauthorized best-selling biography of Winfrey. "And no one knows how to blow it better than she does."¹²¹

Mr. Trump has also praised Oprah even though she is his 2020 competitor. He said that he would choose her as a vice president if he ever ran. "I'll tell you, she's really a great woman. She's a terrific woman. She's somebody that's very special Mr Trump told Larry King in 1999. He also said at an event "we would be a very formidable team".¹²²

People believe that Oprah would be an exceptional president; she would make a change just like she did before. People saw that Oprah is non materialistic because she is closer to people and they would elect her because they feel she cares more about their interest rather than money , her career made people feel confident about her leadership.

Donald Trump built buildings. Oprah has built our shared values and humanity through the scaffolding of her voice and the architecture of her moral leadership. Donald Trump made money. Oprah made a difference. And in Oprah we see the quality that we should always look for in our political leaders -- someone interested in using her time and talents to help others. Whatever your party, whatever your beliefs, the people we elect should work for our interests and not their own. And Oprah has already demonstrated as much. While she has certainly made quite a bit of money, she has done so through lifting up others.¹²³

At a political event; the Golden Globes; Oprah presented a political speech. She praised Sidney Poitier seeing her winning an Oscar and Recy Taylor; the brave African American women who launched her voice after she was abducted and raped by six white men Oprah says: "She lived, as we all have lived, too many years in a culture broken by brutally powerful men. For too long women have not been heard or believed if they dared to speak their truth to the power of those men. But their time is

¹²¹ *ibid*

¹²² Emily Shugerman, "Oprah Winfrey: Who is She and What Are Her Political Beliefs?," *Independent*.

¹²³ Sally Kohn, "Oprah Would Make an Exceptional President," CNN.COM,

up, Their time is up.” “I want all the girls watching, she said, voice rising, to know “that a new day is on the horizon.” She added¹²⁴

The strength of her words could make them stand up and give her big hands. “She launched a rocket tonight. I want her to run for president,”¹²⁵ Meryl Streep told the Washington Post. Oprah’s partner; Stedman Graham; was asked if Oprah would ran to the office, he said: “It’s up to the people. She would absolutely do it.” In the other hand Oprah said to her friend Gayle King in 2015: “Not in this lifetime.” Which gives a vision that Oprah would do it.¹²⁶

Oprah Gail Winfrey has captured the hearts of millions of people. She turned to be a friend to the old and the young. Her support for women has broken down many invisible barriers. She helped poor children to shape a better future and a better world. Oprah did not surrender to her abused and difficult childhood, but she turned it to be her source of strength. Oprah reached her dreams; she became one of the most influential and successful leaders in the world.

¹²⁴ Peter Martinez, “Oprah Gives Stirring Speech Accepting Cecil B. DeMille Award at Golden Globes Awards,” *CBS news*,

¹²⁵ *Ibid*

¹²⁶ Emine Saner, “Could Oprah Winfrey Run for US President and Win?”

General Conclusion

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The era of the pre-civil war marked harsh events for the slaves. African Americans suffered a lot during that era; different ways of torture were experienced on them. The harsh treatment they received from the whites pushed them to rebel and make a civil war. They did not accept the fact that they were born as slaves. Slavery was harsh for men but harsher for women. In addition to the suffering of the slave men, slave women were sexually abused and separated from their kids as well. Both men and women played an important role during the war. African American women could help in the war and stand beside men. They could prove their value that they were not useless. After gaining their freedom, African Americans had to face racism and segregation imposed on them by the whites. As a result they had to fight against it to be as equal as the whites, and they achieved goal. Nowadays, women are as equal as everyone in America. Having important jobs, like prime minister, first lady like: Michelle Obama, and leaders and influencers like Oprah.

Oprah's path was not easy, she had to fight and get herself out of that poverty to reach the pursuit of happiness and succeed in living the life of her dreams. Then, she started to use her power to help people and never hesitated to present either concrete or psychological help or guidance.

The results of this research are: The life that the slave women lived in America in the era of the pre-civil war was full of difficulties and sufferance. African American women played an important role in the civil war and presented a great help during that time. In Addition, Their role in the civil rights movement was effective and their fight for equality was not in vain. Also, the African American women became as equal as everyone holding important positions in the country. Moreover, the fact that Oprah is a strong woman who could stand up for herself and achieve all her goals and dreams. Besides, she has a big influence on the society and she is a leader in it, also she uses her power to help people and guide them.

This thesis can be useful for the literature and civilization students, also for researchers who seek to prove the role of the African American women in society.

This work makes the reader wonders if the African American Female Leadership would extend one day to reach higher positions like a president of the United States of America.

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المخلص

كان تاريخ الأفارقة الأمريكيين مليئًا بالصعوبات فقد عاشوا العبودية لمدة طويلة في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية، فتحتم عليهم المحاربة من أجل تحقيق المساواة بينهم و بين البيض. نتيجة لذلك تمكنوا تحقيق هذا الهدف. و بما أن هذه الأطروحة تتمحور حول تأثير القيادة الإفريقية الأمريكية النسوية على المجتمع الأمريكي. أوبرا وينفري هي أحسن مثال كقائدة إفريقية أمريكية مستقلة و قوية، لأنها لم تولد بملعقة ذهبية في فمها. عانت كثيرا في طفولتها و كان عليها أن تعمل بجد لتحقيق السعادة في كرمز بارز للنجاح. هذا البحث التحليلي الذي يعتمد على طريقة دراسة الحالة يهدف إلى تسليط الضوء على الدور الفعال الذي تلعبه المرأة الإفريقية الأمريكية في المجتمع الأمريكي. بالإضافة إلى ذلك أوبرا هي من بين أفضل المحفزات و المؤثرات الذين باستطاعتهم التأثير على الناس و تحفيزهم على أنهم قادرين على تحقيق أحلامهم و أهدافهم مهما كانت.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الافارقة الأمريكيون، القيادة النسوية، أوبرا وينفري.