

Manipulation of Female Slaves Through Rape

By Charlene Xu

This project involves using modern psychological concepts of both the rape of female slaves in the antebellum south and the following change in their identities. In modern society, psychologists are continuously reframing the definitions of identity and rape. Hence, there are no concrete definitions. By adopting these ideas, I plan to use first hand accounts and scholarly psychological articles to analyze the mental damages of sexual abuse in the antebellum era. For this project, I will also address southern laws to demonstrate the limitations southern wealthy lawmakers implemented on slaves, especially female slaves. The goal is to show that slave owners forcibly changed their female slaves' identities through sexual abuse. The consequences were the psychological damages inflicted upon the victims. Narratives such as those of Harriet A. Jacobs discussed mental symptoms, which included: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), suicidal tendency, self-blame, and social and personal withdrawal.