

What's in a Word?

How 10 Women Recount Their
Experience in Bondage



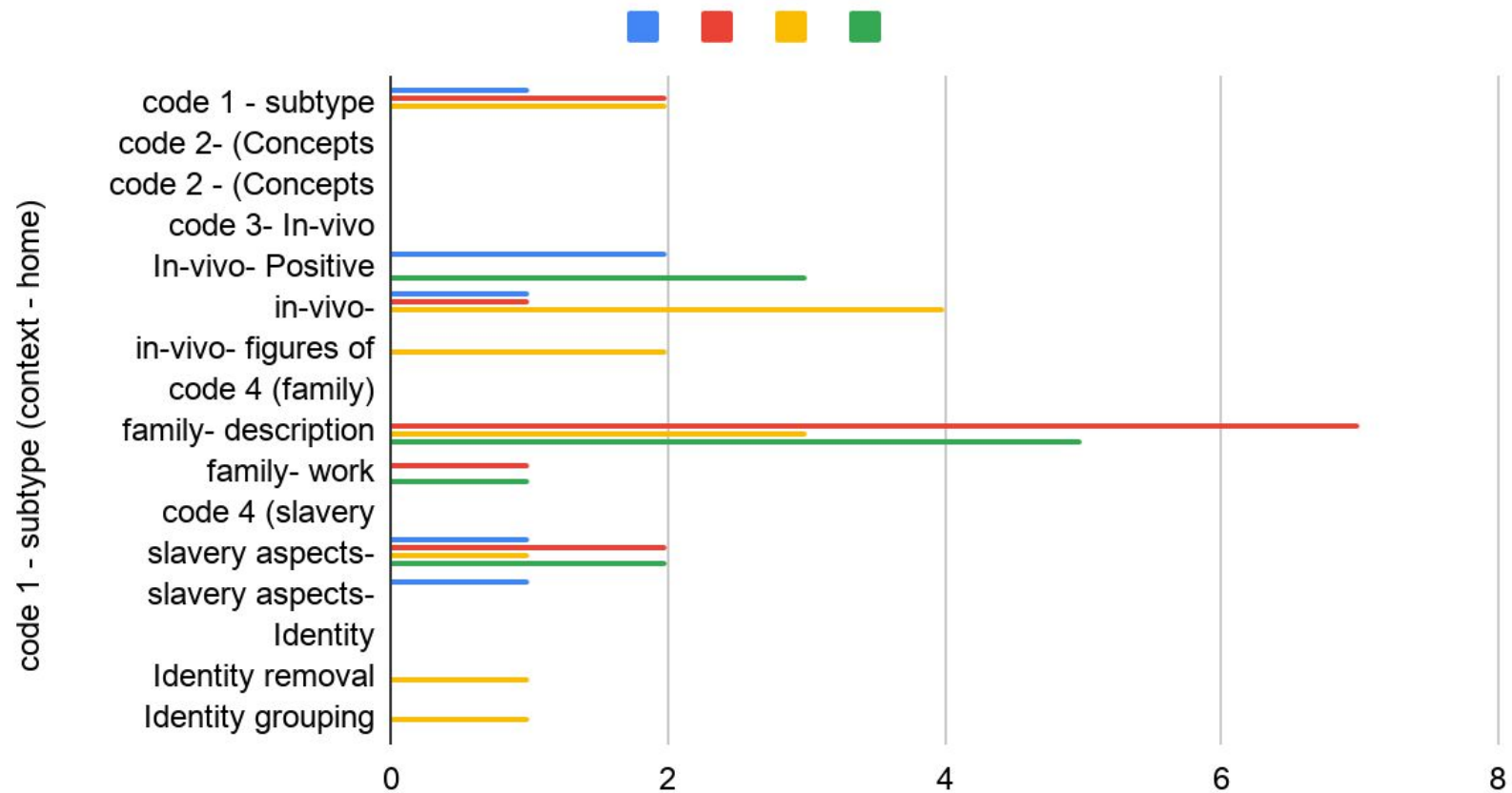
Rachel Palepale
rpalepale@ycp.edu

Research Questions

- How do women's slave narratives differ than men's?
- What are some themes that are shared across the women's slave narratives?

Overview of Findings

Findings



Research Methods

- *Critical Discourse Analysis*
 - Studying documents for rhetorical devices & tools
- 10 female slave narratives
 - 5 originating from Alabama
 - 5 originating from Ohio
 - Random Sampling
- *Data Analysis Methods*
 - In-vivo coding

Finding 1: Identification

Autobiographical “I” or disassociation of group

Evidence for Finding #1

Self Identification	General Identification	Lack of Identification
“I”	“We”	“They”
7/10	1/10	2/10

The slaves all made their own clothes.

De slaves worked on Saturday afternoons.

Finding 2: Positive Commentary

Several instances of positive comments on
different aspects of slavery

Evidence for Finding #2

honey, they had a big (waving her hands in the air) plantation; a whole section; and de biggest home you done ever see. We darkies had cabins. Jist as clean and nice. Them Mosleys, they had a grist mill and a gin. They like my daddy and he worked in de mill for them. Dey sure was good to us. My mother worked on de place for Miss Nancy."

0. dem wuz happy days, I tell you."

Evidence for Finding #2

"Lady, when I sits and thinks of all the good things us had
to eat and all the fun we had 'course we had to work, but you
knows lady, when a crowd all works together and sings and laughs,
first thing you knows work's done."

“The Harvey’s were good masters.
They had plenty to eat, and good,
homespun clothes to wear, and
home-tanned leather shoes” -Ellen
King (Alabama)

Content & Context

- Description- or lack of description- of work
- Family lineage
 - In what ways do slaves describe or discuss their family members?
- Location
 - How does the location of the narrative influence the content of the narrative?

Evidence for Finding #3

~~"I's~~ Angie Garrett, " / ~~"I was about sixteen years~~ [^] at beginning uv
de Wa'. ~~I was born~~ ^{born} in De Kalb, Mississippi. My mother was Betty Scott,
an' I didn't know my father's name. I had four brothers, Ember, Johnny,
Jimmie, and Henry; and three sisters, Delphie, Lizzie Sue, and Frankie,
and my grandmother was Sukie Scott. She lived five miles from Gainesville
across Noxubee Creek (~~in full, Cha Noxubee~~) an' I lived wid her. Never
axed 'bout my grand ^{ee} Caddy, 'caze wa'n't no tellin'. My mammy lived right
here in Gainesville an' belonged to Mr. Sam Harwood.

Discussion

-Interesting Finds

- Nature of positive comments

- Lack of addressing actual labor

- Support from secondary research

- Frances Foster

- Women's narratives attempt to avoid topics such as rape and sexual assault

- Some historians question the validity of narrative collection

Discussion

- Disadvantages with archival research
 - Narrators have passed
 - Reliability
 - Children while in bondage
- Recommendations for future research
 - How is intra-racial sexism displayed through publication of the narratives?
 - How has modern-day African-American literature been influenced by these narratives?

Works Cited

Brogan, Shannon M, et al. "Corresponding with the Past, Writing the Future: A Community-Based Service Learning Project."

Kentucky Journal of Communication, vol. 33, no. 1, 2014.

Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama, Aarons-Young. to 1937, 1936. Manuscript/Mixed Material.

Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/>.

Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 12, Ohio, Anderson-Williams. 1936. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved

from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/mesn120/>.

Foster , Frances. "'In Respect to Females...': Differences in the Portrayals of Women By Male and Female Narrators." *African*

American Review, 2017.