

# Example of world literature thesis

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**Reflection of Suicide in *Kindred*, *Family*, and *Letter***

*Family* written by Joan California Cooper is the tale of an African slave girl named Clora, her children and the manner in which her blood (through her children) flows from its African origins all-round the whole world, eventually mingling with that of other ethnicities, races, and social classes. In the years prior to the Civil War, Clora gives her master six children, out of which only three survive and become adults. Though Clora commits suicide, she continues to “live” in the form of a narrator of her family’s story. She narrates the story of all the hardships she faced being a slave on a southern plantation. As already mentioned, Clora is a woman of African-American descent narrates her tale of having given birth to ten children, nine for her master who had sold all the children when they became the age of three. The tenth child was the child of a black man and was named Clora. However, out of fear of being sold away, she never revealed the name. The master put both mother and child near the big house so that he can claim the mother by himself again. However, the master’s wife hated these two and made their lives even more difficult. Clora finally escapes slavery by committing suicide. She initially attempted to kill her children by giving them poison, however, they survive and Clora dies. Her spirit was the one that narrates the story. The final bid to avoid the insidious slavery that began to shackle Clora’s mind too was finally set free by her act of suicide. It is not the ultimate defeat, but the final victory that Clora had that no one could suppress her

spirit and she had the last word in taking her own life. This was the ultimate victory that Clora did not live to see, but it was the glorious victory the spirit of Clora experienced. What else can be sweeter for Clora and definitely for Always, who can gloat in the sense that her mother had the final word and not her slave masters.

Another work in which suicide becomes the highlight of the tale is *Kindred* by Octavia E. Butler. This work of Butler is filled with scenes where power, obedience, compliance and pain are evident through the entire narration. The scene that largely shocks readers is the scene when Dana comes to know about Alice's suicide. The entire scenario in the story apparently looks more of an act of extreme anxiety where a woman loses all hopes on life as she is left with nothing to continue her life.

Dana was the one who helps Alice and her husband to escape from the plantation. However, both of them get caught and are beaten up, attacked by the master's dogs, and are even mutilated. Though Alice is helped by Dana in the process of recovery from this agony, her husband and the other person who accompanies their escape is sold to someone in the South. Alice's master Rufus, now having sold her husband to South, wants to have Alice. However, Alice who is unwilling towards this, yells at Dana for having rescued her, and finally decides to take control of the situation all by herself and this she does by committing suicide and ending her life. The act of suicide was the only way Alice thought would help her escape from a manly beast who was had a kind of lust towards her and not love as mentioned in the story.

The third work that is being reviewed as part of this paper is the letter

written by Governor Robert Hunter narrating the realities involved in the New York Conspiracy of the year 1712. In 1712, as a result of being greatly involved in trade relations with the Caribbean, New York City was largely populated by African slaves. The slave life of these African slaves was different in the city when compared to the life they lead being slaves on large plantation or any other rural locations. Numerous enslaved Africans lived in a concentrated zone where they had a little freedom to move around and they even had the possibility to meet with one another. All these enslaved Africans lived and worked in close vicinity to the Whites. While many of the popular stories that spoke of the 1712 New York Revolt have numerous gaps and inconsistencies, one of the concrete and largely approved narrations of this historical event is the one given by Governor Robert Hunter. According to Hunter, there were twenty-three enslaved Africans in total who were involved in this revolt along with many indigenous Americans. The Americans were fully armed with guns and swords when they gathered on the night of April 6, 1712. All of them together had set a building in the heart of city on fire. In the operation carried out of White colonists to extinguish the fire, approximately nine of them were stabbed to death, and many were injured. As a retort to this, twenty-seven Africans were captured, out of which close to twenty-one were executed, a few were burnt alive, and almost six people were reported to have committed suicide to escape the brutal punishment that Whites would have given them if alive. The three stories discussed above are an unfortunate and gory recollection of escaping reality, torture, trauma, and hardships to death. In the minds of

the victims, it is a victory over their opponents who they cannot win over in life, and so the glee in death.

## **Works Cited**

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