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# Male and Female Resistance to Slavery through Narration

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## **Dedication**

To the memory of my mother

To my father

To my brothers and my sisters and to all my friends and classmates.

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to thank God for His guidance and help.

I would also like to thank my supervisor Mrs Abdelhadi for her help and discussion of my topic.

I would like to thank all the teachers of the department of English.

## **Abstract**

This thesis compares slave narratives written by Frederick Douglass and Harriet Ann Jacobs, both narratives written by themselves that showed how slavery and the environment during the Reconstruction period created physical and psychological obstacles for blacks, Incidents *in the Life of a Slave Girl* presents Harriet Jacobs' journey of personal self discovery through various relationships with others, and her personal narrative finally serves the larger goal of emancipation for her people Drawing on black feminist, critical race and whiteness studies and trauma theory, beside to *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, which was actually to undermine the reproofs he was given by his opponents and to establish and validate his identity as a former slave.

This research is divided into three chapters: the first chapter involves an overview of slavery and slave narrative, the second chapter deal with analyses of the two narratives and how they create themselves through narration .The third chapter sheds light on the comparison between the two narratives.

Finally this thesis suggests the female slave narrative brings historians closer to recognizing the unique and often underestimated resilience of the African American community.

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## General Introduction

Slavery has been considered as an important issue and theme in many African American writings. The first editions provided by eye writers dealt with individual slaves, whose accounts would help people to know more about the lives of those Africans brought to America. These accounts would also shed light on a dark episode of America's past when Slavery became an institution. Slavery suggests a state where a person is owned and controlled by another, in terms of what they work with and where they live. A slave is one who is in this condition. Slavery can take various forms including child trafficking, domestic slaves, and chattel slaves.

In literature courses talking about slavery may begin with a discussion of Frederick Douglass' Autobiography, as it is the most widely read of all the slave narratives yet; it has also been noticed that female slave narratives such as Harriet Jacobs' work went very deeply into the slave experience from a female perspective and digging into themes like motherhood sexual oppression, and abuse have revealed to be of great interest. So the questions that can be asked are:

- How the slave narrators deal with slavery?
- How gender influenced and was influenced by the experience of slavery?

Writing about slavery started over the 18 -19th century and mostly captured the stories of enslaved Africans, these documents about of the slave's harsh conditions of life under slavery, the physical, psychological, moral, and spiritual damage that he suffered from white "Christian" slaveholders, were published from 1770 to 1820 (Ambition 333). Second from the 1820, many narratives were written to inspire the abolition struggle, as the call for the abolition of slavery grew stronger this encouraged slaves to present the reality of slavery to support to abolitionist call for freedom (bland), these tales were written in the form of autobiographical forms like « Harriet Jacobs » narratives, then there were other narratives that focused on individual and racial progress.

Some slave narratives contained few descriptions of the horrors of slavery, because there were written after the abolition, as a result the focus was more on the road to freedom and the slave 'new identity', this will mostly interest the second category of writers whose narratives were particularly produced to present the violent and long lasting consequences of slavery. These which included stories telling slaves auctions, sexual violence and

breaking up families ; thus these stories captured the personal experience of slavery, It may be hypothesized in this research that :

Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women.

In general the main purpose of these slave narratives was obtaining the right upon which the American nation was founded that is freedom. Many writers, for instance Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs became important abolitionist voices and their editions were used as an abolitionist propaganda (a political organization to influence people ) that is why historians in general had major reservations about using slave narratives as paper sources to study slavery . They put into question their reliability could they trust these accounts or not? and to what extent were these accounts they authentic?

To understand the history of slavery is to have former slaves as first person witnesses give a glimpse of their own experience , all the different European powers, major or minor, in the Atlantic were involved in the slave trade : the Dutch , British ,French and America engaged in a race to the new world at the expense of millions of Africans. They took them as slaves to work in plantations as laborers or farm hands and in houses as servants. They held difference jobs up to their abilities, strengths and looks.

Frederick Douglass's autobiography *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself* and Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the life of a slave girl*, will be examined from different angles as how to authorize an autobiography, as they were capable of freeing themselves from their mental and physical bonds by voicing their personal experiences in connection to slavery and how they wrote theme selves out of the margin in the US history.

**I.1. Introduction:**

Slave narratives represent a number of things to the history community, reading these narratives helps people understand the slave experience in more details, and situates slavery as a dark part of their lives. Some slave narratives have presented Christianity from the perspectives of both slaveholders and the enslaved and how these two categories of people have conducted their lives from a shared context of Christian teachings and Biblical knowledge. This chapter focuses on antebellum slave narratives, Since the late 1960s, antebellum slave narratives have experienced a renaissance as dozens of the thousands still extant have been reprinted and as scholars have published major works that emphasize savagery of slavery which means all work after the civil war period will aimed at post bellum achievement more that Religion is an often recurring theme in slave narratives, Many slaves had adopted Christianity to their African practices; Christianity as a religion of justice, support.

In the light of this, this chapter will deal with an overview about slave narratives, the biblical justification for slavery and the work of both Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs the Antebellum Slave Narrators.

**I.2. What is a Slave Narrative? An Overview of the Genre:**

Slave narratives are the beginning of Afro-American literature; the slaves, who suffered the oppression of white racism, the early Afro-American literature dates back to the period when the US got its independence, there are many themes and characteristics which distinguish African Literature from other literatures. In fact, the African American literature has focused particular themes among them: slavery, racism, poverty, abolition, equality, religion, escape and freedom, that are meant in other words all kinds of sufferance that the Black people had lived. Moreover, in language use, there are uses of proverbs, Idioms, Imagery, symbolism, figures of speeches, myths, lyrics, sonnets. (Slave narrative-Wikipedia)

The slave narratives are an account or portion of someone's life of a fugitive or former slave, either written or orally, most of the writings at the time of slavery were autobiographical which gives us a special glimpse into the very lives of the slaves themselves and also a way of getting us to understand the nature of slavery. Consequently, these autobiographical works written by slaves were named slave narratives related by the

slave personally, It is also often related by someone else, as slaves most commonly could not read or write Some of them have several religious themes such as innocence, fall, redemption, salvation, prayer and the Bible among others. In which the authors are trying to either point out the horrible repercussions of slavery or attempt to overcome them and by doing so to incorporate their own voice within their writing. In addition to that, the slave writings form proved to be a powerful weapon for the abolition movement to end slavery in America as shown by the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin in 1852*. (Halleck,2013.p.170), these writing appeared in the 18th century before the Civil War and by former slaves in the postbellum era are essential to the study and it has been part of literary tradition, such narratives are regarded as highly influential in American literature. These narratives were crucial for slave abolitionists, and not only a historical background for Afro-American literature, but also a landmark for American literature. Some 19th century slave narratives have presented Christianity from the perspectives of both slaveholders and the enslaved and how these two categories of people have conducted their lives from a shared context of Christian teachings and Biblical knowledge. (Haynes, 1959.p.56)

The rise of slave narratives was heavily influenced by the actual political and religious environment and, naturally, by the changes of the social situation of slaves in the late 18th and the first half of 19th centuries had an impact on the genre. Slave narratives share a typical outline, They usually start with a form of acknowledgement and a selection of testimonials and letters verifying that the slave is indeed the one who is telling the story these narratives were the outcome of the conflicts between the southern Whites who supported slavery and the northern slaves who were seeking freedom from the oppression of slavery. (Halleck, 2013.p.186).

The slaves who told their stories accepted this requirement from the abolitionists because of the power and authority inherent in being white and influential. Some of the narratives also included the phrase 'Written by Himself or Herself' and this is found, for instance, in both Jacobs's and Fredrick Douglas's narratives respectively, in terms of resistance, religion was also used to argue for the abolition of slavery, *Douglass* came up with a brilliant plan; emancipate slaves by establishing subject of war as slavery instead of states' right and he was crucial to the reconstruction after the civil war The struggle for literacy is paralleled with their struggle for freedom. Often, they turn to the bible, in order to become upstanding citizens, In a typical slave narrative, the slave transcends from being

enslaved to becoming free; from a pagan to becoming a Christian from being a sinner to be saved, and from ignorance to enlightenment. (Morrison, 1830.p.17)

Overall, it seems that both African American writers; men and women all together were keeping their own print in the American society and they have expressed their real life experiences and their slavery routines in sort of words, novels, musical messages and poems.

### **I.3.The Biblical Justification of American Slavery:**

Due to the strong Christian presence in the American literary tradition at the past time there was an emphasis on Christian values and Christianity in order to cater to white readership . Due to parallels between Black narrators and biblical archetypes like Joseph and Job, white editors often stressed these similarities in the prefaces of slave narratives. The narratives themselves would often display how the slave had made his or her way from heathen to Christian, making events happening in the narrative tie in with a grander spiritual journey. From the 1770s to the 1820s, the slave narratives generally described

a spiritual journey leading to Christian redemption.

The authors usually characterized themselves as Africans rather than slaves, as most were born in Africa. These early slave narratives include accounts of brutality and deliverance, and, as a critic notes, the pervasive metaphor for all life-writing of this kind was the theological journey they aware what they wrote by the guidance of Providence and the earthly agents of God, Many slaves had adopted Christianity, yet adapted it to their African practices. (Halleck, 2013.p.156).

In Christianity, they found hope for and faith in a better future, because many slaves believed that God would end their plight. It was a religion of justice, support, and resistance as an example *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Oloudah Equiano* which describes Equiano's simple, plain, and blissful life in his native land (Eden), his purchase of his freedom and his experiences in a religious vision to become one of "God's children" (Morrison, 2008, 65-66). (Redemption),

According to Roboteau 1980 P 97 This justification of slavery was initiated by the Christian missionaries who succeeded in convincing slave masters that converting their slaves would be for a good cause in owning slaves The missionaries used an evangelical appeal to point out that slaveholders could profit from their slaves as they taught them how

to serve in Christian love and obedience. This line of teaching was going to be productive for the slave owners, as they will have slaves who will work diligently and out of obedience to the advantage of their masters. This illustrates, at the onset, that the emergence of Christianity in the slave community was characterized by obvious traces of contradictions that have stained the true image of Christianity, So Christianity had pervaded the slave community so much so that there were no more barriers to the evangelization of slaves especially those who were born Africans. Elements of African Traditional Religion merged with Christianity to create uniquely African-American forms of the Christian faith that gave rise to the emergence and growth of Afro-Christianity.

Nineteenth-century Christianity faced equal tensions except that in the world of the slave narratives, the players were ordinary people stratified into two distinct classes: slaves and slave masters. Religious masters also put in place measures like organizing separate religious meeting for the blacks; clergymen of the various churches led such meetings which were strategically and tacitly used to instruct the slaves from a religious point of view, Slaveholders had already convinced themselves that slavery was right in both cases. (Spikes, 1997, 48).

Some of the slaves were known to use their status as Christians to demand freedom either for themselves or members of their families. Although baptism was a spiritual act, which implied spiritual freedom and transition from being enslaved from the bondage of sin to a life of freedom, the freed slaves, especially those who had become Christians, considered it as a justifiable reason to be made free. Consequently, the slaves were given the opportunity to partake in religious services and sermons on how slaves were to be obedient to their masters were mainly preached. This Americanization gave some slaves a sense of belonging and a new identity to the point that they willingly accepted to be owned, making chattel slavery a reality. American culture was thus subsumed in Christianity and conversion to Christianity was unavoidably conversion to a new culture. Apparently, religion and culture, though independent categories, paradoxically fused into one principal category that was leveraged over imported African slaves in America in general and antebellum south in particular.

When the abolitionists from the North began evaluating and criticizing Southern slavery, many proslavery writers knew that they had to look no farther than their Bible to find their rebuttal the proslavery mainstream kept the Bible as the core of their defense *we take the*

*Bible of God as our guide; and it its plain teachings we confidently appeal* (Albert J.1980.p. 95)

Which means that the Bible was the absolute truth and all what written in bible' book must done.

In terms of resistance, religion was also used to argue for the abolition of slavery in some autobiographies of some slaves because it is very hard to believe in god while they being slave (Haynes, 1959.p.81) on other side the Bible was both justificatory and liberating: for the masters, the Bible was a tool for the endorsement of slavery as an institution and its teaching and interpretation were used to justify the actions of slave owners.

Literal interpretation of various passages of the Bible prompted some contradictions between Biblical teachings and how both the slave masters and the slaves transposed them for their own purposes. The ways in which both the slaveholders and slaves acted and reacted to the Bible demonstrate obvious elements of contradiction, a paradox of a kind, in what they seemingly believed and how they eventually acted. A justification for the slaves meeting alone without their masters is that the slaves were aware that their masters were convinced about a selective interpretation of the Bible especially regarding obedience because it would promote submissiveness from the slaves as well as to justify their actions towards their slaves

Religion is an often recurring theme in slave narratives, as it is linked to the key concepts that almost all slave narratives features. (Halleck, 2013.p.200).

#### **I. 4.Antebellum Slave Narrator in the Postbellum Era:**

##### **I. 4.1.Frederick Douglass:**

Frederick Douglass, the pre-eminent African American protest leader in the antebellum period. Douglass had escaped from slavery in Maryland in 1838, long after the Civil War, Douglass wrote of his childhood Douglass's *Narrative* makes this pattern explicit; but in addition, he further organizes his narrative around the theme of increasing control over his life as a path toward personal independence. (Albert J, 1980.p.)

After the Civil War and the approval of the Emancipation Proclamation, Douglass at first considered the battle to be won in favor of his cause. He however acknowledged the frailty of the recently changed and disordered society and accepted the offer to continue

Lecturing the antislavery ideology throughout the country, Douglass's Relationship to the Abolitionist Movement was one of mutual necessity, he began his abolitionist career and went through much of the 1840s holding the same position as Garrison, his early mentor in that movement, Literacy also gave Douglass the power to assert his existence as well as his freedom from those who would keep him ignorant and a slave, Even as a young child, Douglass realized that knowledge represented power, for the abolitionist spokespersons like Douglass, this was key; He could use his own life story and look at certain events in relation to the political debates surrounding the issue of slavery itself.(Douglass,1845.p.11)

Douglass was heavily involved in the antislavery abolitionist movement. This meant that he was probably very aware of the political context of his narrative. Moreover, as it was

released with the help of well renowned white abolitionists like Wendell Phillips there was the intention behind the publication that Douglass's narrative would fuel the antislavery debates.(Slave narrative. Wikipedia), we have also established that many Northerners were skeptical towards ending slavery, and even though many supported its abolition, they still saw Afro-Americans as inferior to white Americans. Douglass then, had all the reasons to prove his opponents wrong by releasing his narrative at that particular time in history, for him It could also provide an understanding for how it must have been to live under such conditions, and it can be used in many contexts for advocating human rights beside to this Enslaves people in all regions and times periods often did not have enough to eat and wear. One ex-slave Fredrick Douglas in his novel *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* in 1845, slave held: *I suffered much from hunger, but much more from cold. In hottest summer and coldest Winter, I was kept almost naked—no shoes, no stockings, no jacket, no trousers, nothing on but a coarse tow linen shirt.....* (p41).

For more Douglass addresses both slavery and the use of religion as a justification of slavery. Even though he uses the language of the Bible, and often references biblical figures and stories in relation to events in his own life, he also criticizes those (namely the slaveholders of the South) who use a perverted form of Christianity to justify the enslavement of others. (ibid.p.21)

Arguably, Douglass and his supporters may have been concerned that his critique against Christian white southerners could seem blasphemous or be misunderstood by a Christian Readership as an attack on their religion.(Gay,1985.p.84)

Due to Douglass's interest into the increasing political changes that took place during the 1850s. As a consequence of his trip to Britain, he elaborates on the different attitudes towards colored people there and in the US. (Morrison, 1830, pp.31-32)

#### I.4.2. Harriet Jacobs:

Harriet Jacobs's politics of abolitionist emancipation as a loophole in modern theories<sup>1</sup> of freedom, she attempted to swell sentiment for Emancipation by publicizing and circulating her book which is an immeasurably valuable critique of the sexual politics of the peculiar institution, she wonders what additional value might be gleaned from reading her contributions to the abolitionist tradition as a social critique of slavery animated by an imminent critique of the virtues of modern political emancipation. Though most studies of Jacobs's work focus on her narrative this project places *Incidents* in the broader context of her Civil War writings and subsequent contributions to national reconstruction, In *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs modifies the conventions of the masculine slave narrative to chart her own life. Focusing on the specific plight of women held in slavery and particularly on the sexual exploitation they often endured her autobiography both appropriates and challenges the discourse of sentimentality. (Halleck, 2013, p.169).

Harriet Jacobs's slave girl protocols of emancipation shift the sexual politics of slavery's domestic order from the margins of the abolitionist tradition to its epistemic<sup>2</sup> center, The question of freedom at the core of Jacobs's abolitionism directed itself to both proslavery supporters and antislavery activists alike, Her narrative can be used to teach students a greater understanding of the antebellum period, the experiences of slavery, and the struggles facing fugitive slaves in the North *Incidents* challenged the conventions of slave narrative by telling a story of freedom that exposed the degradations of both being enslaved and being formerly enslaved. Its perspective on freedom aligned with the familiar nineteenth century tropes of suffering, overcoming, and redemption common within abolitionist literature in the United States As it shown in the quote bellow:

*“Reader, I draw no imaginary pictures of southern homes. I am telling you the plain truth. Yet when victims make their escape from the wild beast of Slavery, northerners consent to act the part of bloodhounds”* (Jacobs, 1861, p.39).

<sup>1</sup> It means that there are new ideas and ways to fight slavery like narration which was fruitful to disseminate conscientiousness among slave community.

<sup>2</sup> It is theory and system about the correct way to act in formal situation

According to Harriet Ann Jacobs epistemology is to know what will you write and when.

In the last three decades before the American Civil War, the slave narrative moved beyond the captivity narrative's emphasis on physical enslavement and the spiritual autobiography's focus on introspection to confront the moral bankruptcy of slavery itself. Unfortunately, few scholars have systematically examined the role of gender-related differences in these themes. (Spikes, 1997.p.71).

During and after the Civil War, she joined in relief work and the education of freed slaves. Yet, Jacobs herself never became a champion of the cause in quite the way other black women of her time did. While her contributions to the abolitionist tradition came comparatively late in the lifetime of the movement, *Incidents* was published the same year the Civil War began, Jacobs's choice to narrate the "degradation associated with" her experience of slavery and escape added something to her abolitionism less readily associated with the righteous warrior spirit of her predecessors Harriet Tubman or Maria Stewart (*Jacobs*, 1861.p.39).

The debate surrounding *Incidents* is in itself, illustrative of the complex questions of political agency the liberal tradition imposes upon modern subjects. Emancipation, a clear way out, may not exist in either the law or its abolition, but what we inherit from Jacobs is proof that all structural impositions have loopholes and it is in the loopholes that we may work. In order to put together the kind of picture of abolitionist cultural production and emancipator political praxis then that frames freedom as a loophole in the logic of slavery, let us consider the interplay of discursive tensions we find in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Written by Herself* as the passing on of a set of protocols (Halleck,2013.p.237).

Jacobs also expose the hypocrisies that Christianity tolerates (Ellis 9-10) as her protagonist question God's righteousness and agreement with white supremacy (Jacobs 17, Ellis 85). Furthermore, this narrative focuses on the biblical reference to the Garden of Eden in order to expose and attack the inferior role of black women in society. (Slave narratives, Wikipedia)

This writing specifically focus on the biblical imagery of the snake that relate to Northern abolitionists who use the symbol of the serpent to represent the evils of slavery. Degradation, though seemingly a superficial concern had political consequences for the future of her contributions to the antislavery effort beyond the Constitutional end of slavery. The undercurrents of class allegiances that punished female victims of sexual violence for sexual transgression before the war also sought to police the political status of the recently emancipated in its aftermath. As a consequence in her later years the

relationships with women in the North that had sustained her relief work with the refugees fell away (opcit.p.235).

As a precursor to black feminist interventions in Civil Rights debates over a century later, Jacobs is a kind of political figure who stood in a company of women situated at the intersections of the movements for race and gender equality in a manner that did not hesitate to address issues that exposed the internal conflicts that divided each, Abolitionists created opportunities to exploit the shifting terrain of ethical mores and justice in the antebellum U.S. (Halleck, 2013.p.254).

As a result, what in the early half of the twentieth century evidenced the fictional origins of *Incidents*' cultural production by the end of the century saw the vindication of the slave girl as an authentic narrator of a documented history, so the birth of black feminist interventions to both early women's rights movements and antislavery societies disoriented conventional binaries that typically reinforced categories of essentialized difference the domestic order of slavery struggled to maintain. As historically grounded approaches to the political formation of slavery's domestic order, slave girl abolitionism fueled a precarious but powerful fellowship of solidarity across lines of racial and ethnic differences that lived on far beyond the victory of Constitutional emancipation (ibid.p.266).

### **Conclusion:**

To conclude, all these points discussed in the previous parts, deal with the slave narrative's role in the struggle against the institution of slavery. Douglass and Jacobs showed the audiences what it was like to be a slave, they showed also how the religion influenced their texts, which aims to disclose the reality of slavery and the maltreatment because of their race.

## Chapter II: Analyzing Harriet E. Jacobs & Frederick Douglass' Narratives

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### II.1.Introduction:

Since the aim of our project is to study a male and female ex-slave narrators and how they translated their lives into the narrative form with different ways and theories, the aim of this chapter is to dig into the autobiographies of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacob. Moreover, it deals with gender's attitudes and explores the way both writers because of their ideological stereotypes were excluded from the possibility to be recognized as proper persons and good narrator. We discuss also in this chapter Harriet Jacobs's and her experience with black femininity besides to Frederick Douglass the self made man and how the two of them wrote about their identities out of the margin.

### II.2.Analysis of both Slave Narratives:

**II.2.1.Frederick Douglass (1817-1895):** Frederick Washington born in Maryland, the son of a white man and a slave, he was taught to read by the wife of his owner. In 1838 he escaped to New York City where he changed his name to Frederick Douglass, in 1845, Douglass published his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. (Douglass, 1845.p.2).

According to Smith Foster the narrative of Douglass follows different stages beginning with focusing on the narrative representing a loss or lack of physical freedom (Foster,1979.p.47) then these narrative see another stage focus on antislavery ideology rise of antislavery movements and their message spread to abolish slavery, gave a boost to the *Negro's* confidence after that these narratives focus On political surroundings and further "black" achievements (Ibid., pp.54-52), as was the case with Phillis Wheatley, readers and critics were skeptical that a black man could have a written work of such high quality, he also wrote numerous articles and essays as well as serving in a number of political posts during his life. Douglass was indeed one of the most influential African American of his time. His autobiography is an outstanding primary source of information on slavery. (Frederick Douglass, Wikipedia)

Frederick Douglass' literary efforts to abolish slavery were not just restricted to composing the narrative of his life. Throughout his existence, he tried to reveal the atrocities committed by slaveholders and their cruel behavior towards their subjugates, he used his personal experience to open his audience's eyes and to make them aware of their responsibilities towards their fellow humans, in addition to that his writings and his

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orations made him famous and brought the abolitionist cause a lot of support. (Marilyn, 1991.p.95).

Nevertheless, his ability to express himself and to voice his opinion openly and publically, also made numerous envious critics appear in his life. The initial purpose of his *Narrative* was actually to undermine the reproaches he was given by his opponents and to establish and validate his identity as a former slave. Douglass used his narrative as a platform to advocate against slavery as he said: *The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers. I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers, who had left their homes, and gone to Africa, and stolen us from our homes* (Douglas.1845.p.86), this was also the intention of his white allies who shared his agenda. But instead of falling into the typical traits of former slave-narratives Douglass tries to “write back” to challenge the cultural stories and perceptions that have been scripted to him as a former slave This is a strategy often used in life narratives as one wants to rid oneself of cultural strictures about self-representation Frederick Douglass rose to fame with the publication of his autobiography *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself*. (Douglass, 1845.p.53).

“Frederick Douglass” is a story of self-development, the book was one of the first slave narrative penned by the former slave himself this book is told by Frederick Douglas who describe his painful life and difficulties during his life as a slave under his white master. Douglass's *Narrative* makes this pattern explicit; Douglass further organizes his narrative around the theme of increasing control over his life as a path toward personal independence. A major instrument in his quest is language, and in particular, literacy, in his book he act as both the narrator and the protagonist he portrays himself as a black who worked as a servant for whites at Captain Anthony’s house, his first master than later he was given to another white master (Robert A. 1985.p.82).

Throughout his career, Douglass was preoccupied with language, and the preeminence he gives language and especially literacy in the *Narrative* reflects this preoccupation, he first gained a reputation in the North as an orator. In his writing, and he depicts how he survived and asserted his right to freedom, he also portrayed his struggle to survive in the world of white supremacy in the united state and how he escape from enslavement to seek freedom. Douglass was in that sense, the perfect match, His talent for writing, his political activism, his story, and his winning personality were perfect for releasing a life narrative that the editors knew would be immensely popular, at the same

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time stir up an all but necessary debate around slavery, supporting the abolitionist cause (ibid.P.61-62).

In Douglass's narrative, we have the quest for literacy, and several accounts of his religious beliefs rooted in Christianity which was the major characteristic feature of the slave narrative are the inclusion of religious symbols and fixed Christian expressions. However, Douglass cannot really be described as a "sinner" or "heathen". As many of these types of narratives tried to showcase that the former fugitive slaves had gone through a form of moral, ethical and religious enlightenment, his narrative still contains many accounts attributing to his moral stature, establishing Douglass as a respectable and intelligent individual. (Douglass, 1845.p.10)

In order to claim his own voice, Douglass has to fight even harder than his predecessors, because he never possessed one to start with, as it was denied to him by those in power, Due to legal and social boundaries established at the time, Douglass was born a slave on a plantation and is seen by society as a mindless property that is only supposed to work, prosper and reproduce for his master's sake and not develop any personal thoughts; needless to say that he should not dare to utter them. (Marilyn, 1991.p.41)

Douglass sets out to ascertain his individuality early on his life. He is born on a plantation, inhabited by several of his family members and is not uprooted from a country and his home as such. Even though he only meets his mother a couple of times in his life and he did not know who his father is, although there are rumors that he might be his master's son, he somehow recognizes the plantation and the grounds around it as a home, due to the fact that he was raised there by his grandmother. (Ibid.pp.31-32)

In narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass, an American slave, written by himself there are several key characteristics of slave narrative found in his writing it expose a mal physical treatment and emotional abuse of slavery for example scenes of whipping sexual abuse and starvation especially for women and children, he represent the picture of slavery clearly and deeply that reader can see what he expect through his narrative so:

The first characteristic of Douglas's narrative is the opening sentence "I was born" with no details, no date like many black slaves who are unsure of them exact date; Douglass separated from his mother during his childhood he wasn't able to see her

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regularly, and he only heard that his father is white man; so he wanted to tell that his childhood was ignorant and neglected. (Douglass, 1845.pp.59-60).

The second characteristic shown in Douglas's narrative is the description of cruel master, mistress, or overseer being violent toward slaves, he detailed his first observed whipping and numerous subsequent whipping which is the key characteristic of slave narratives, here Douglas show that the white masters considered themselves superior, by giving themselves the right to treat blacks as pieces of property as they are less humans; so readers can feel deeply the miserable life of slavery; in other hand, in irony is an omnipresent feature in Douglass's narratives. With his rhetorical device, the author or speaker indicates the opposite of what is actually meant. (Robert B, 1991 .p.159).

The slave narratives of Frederick Douglass received rave reviews and praise in the press. It is described as a "turning point" in Douglass's life, and indeed, the book is crafted around turning points, from altercations with his former slave breaker, to mastering reading and writing despite his master's intention. All of these life-changing events continued after the release of his autobiography. Douglass founded his own newspaper, recruited Afro-American soldiers for the Union Army during the Civil War, and held noteworthy positions in the Republican Administration. When he died in 1895, he had become an international figure recognized as an orator, writer, statesman, and representative of his own race. (Bruce, 1996.p.81).

### II.2.2. Harriet Jacobs (Linda Brent):

A writer, abolitionist and reformer, was born into slavery in Edenton, North Carolina, in 1813. Till the age of six, she had a happy childhood with her father, who worked as a carpenter, her mother, her younger brother William (John Jacobs), and her maternal grandmother. When Brent is sold and has to live with Dr. Flint, she experiences whippings, sexual harassment, and the constant threat of rape. He tries to force her into a sexual relationship and so, moved by despair, Brent starts having a relationship with Mr. Sands to escape from Flint's assault, hoping Sands will protect her from Flint. Together they have two children, but it does not hold back Flint, which gives Brent no other choice but to hide, leaving her children behind. In 1842, Brent is able to escape to the North, where eventually she reunites with her children. (Jacobs, 1861.p.2-3).

Jacobs' Incidents in the Life of A Slave Girl describes the horrible and inhumane slave experience through the voice of a "fictitious" narrator, a girl named "Linda", Jacobs

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was, as Gates reveals; the first black woman who published a slave narrative in the United States Harriet Jacobs, the most well-known female slave narrative represent a great importance to the African American heritage in general makes a smooth progression in her narrative by transforming Linda's naive and limited narrative voice into a more sophisticated storyteller, who helps the reader understand her own role in the larger slave culture by describing more than her own feelings and actions (ibid.p.27).

Linda as the protagonist in the book is a daughter for a slave family she does not know that is slave until she was six year old when her mother died, she sent to her mother's mistress who teach her to read, then after the died of her mistress she was sent to live with Dr. Flint, her new white master. Throughout her adolescence, she struggled against the sexual harassment from the white master, she therefore has an affair with Mr. Sand her white neighbor to avoid being raped by Mr. Flint, then Linda runs away and she planned to escape to the north with her children (Bradford, 2008.p.90).

Incidents not only documented the evils slavery imposed on black families, it also displaced figurations of slave women popular as abject victims in need of saving by antislavery advocates, It gives a detailed description of a slave's struggles with abuse, sexual harassment, and her role as a woman and mother, these narratives were included in anthologies of American literary history, where Jacobs'' *Narrative* had been holding the fort for African American literary self-representation for some time. It is now considered as the necessary corrective or counterbalance to the story of feminist strength that Linda Brent presents in his *Narrative*. (Bruce, 1996.p.72)

In going public, so to speak, Jacobs's representation of herself Incidents addressed the immorality of slavery as an ethical injustice and crime of sexual violence that punished its victims with silence and the dispossession of political representation, her narrative suggests that the practical solution to the threat of sexual domination is not allegiance with or acceptance of existing conventions of respectability, but the abolition of their ideological standards of virtue altogether. (Op cit.p.87)

In every instance, Jacobs's desires for emancipation represent the inherent ambiguity of national belong for former slaves and the contingent conditions of freedom slavery; for more, Jacobs' narrative helps to persuade northerners to join the cause against the immorality of the institution of slavery her story also reveals the double burden of

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slavery on women and sexual harassment by their masters like her case so she describe her feeling toward her masters when she said:

*Reader, did you ever hate? I hope not. I never did but once; and I trust I never shall again. Somebody has called it "the atmosphere of hell;" and I believe it is so (Jacobs, 1861. p.39).*

In incidents in the life of a slave girl, written by herself contained several key characteristics of slave narratives found in this writing so:

The first characteristic of a slave narrative is the opening sentence which always begin ‘‘I was born’’ and ‘‘I born a slave’’ as any narrator she don’t give details about her birthday settle only with that sentence which is very obvious pattern in the novel (Jacobs, 1861.p.6). Moreover, Jacobs is used Pathos. Pathos is a quality that evokes pity or sadness. For example: *The baby is dead, thank God; and i hope my poor child will soon be in heaven too.* (ibid. p.14).

She uses pronouns like: ‘‘I’’ ‘‘we’’ ‘‘me’’ ‘‘my’’, she doesn't provide any information that she couldn't personally have known as it shown in the quotes bellow: *we were all slaves, I was so fondly shielded that I never dreamed I was a piece of merchandise, trusted to them for safe keeping, and liable to be demanded of them at any moment* (Ibid. 1861. p.7).

The slaves portrayed in Jacobs' narrative are, by contrast, competent and engaging; they have active minds and rich conversations, thus defying other stereotypical images of black slaves. Such rebellious points appear especially apparent when Linda defies her master's sexual seduction, and tries every possible means to escape from his devilish talons as she said in her speak *‘‘after my long struggle with him, succeed at last in trampling his victim under his feet. I would do anything, everything, for the sake of defeating him. What \_could\_ I do? I thought and thought, till I became desperate, and made a plunge into the abyss.’’* (ibid.p.51).

By the way Jacobs' narrative strategies are simple and straightforward, yet the use of Linda, with her reasonable, timely voice, allows Jacobs to reconstruct the horrors of her slave life and her life as a runaway in ways that her readers could access easily, and could believe the audience for Jacobs' autobiography was the white American readers of her time, the Color and identity are at the heart of Harriet’s narrative and, some might argue, the experiences of every American. Her narrative complicates our conceptions of race

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because she and her children could pass as whites (Meghan M, 2008.p.18); this scene allows us to understand Linda's sense of rebellion and empowerment. We can observe her intense desire to be treated as she deserves through the account of her fight against the monster-like master, in other hand Jacobs's slave narrative works to refuse and re-imagine a lineage of abolitionist praxis commonly regarded as derivative of, rather than distinct from, the Western canon of political theory. Shifting Jacobs's slave girl protocols of emancipation from the margins of the abolitionist tradition to its epistemic center however exposes the hybridists of its discursive assemblage an orientation to political power that relies not only upon the sharpened analytic tools of political philosophical thought, but so too those fugitive analytics wrought by experience to repurpose them (ibid.p.22).

Writing an autobiography from a black female's perspective was itself an act of rebellion, since slaves were forbidden to read or write. Using a fictional narrator gave the author distance that she needed between herself and everyone, including even the most ardent white abolitionists, many of whom were not ready to believe that a female slave could have written such a memoir.

### II.3. Narrative of Harriet Jacobs and Issues of Black Femininity:

The feminist has a strong print in the African American literature; women show their misfortunes in poems and songs, and Harriet Jacobs is indeed one of the most eloquent women of her times. Feminist writing in a variety of fields offers to contemporary readers insight into the preference of Jacobs and other women narrators of slave experience for organizing their narratives around their relationships with meaningful people in their lives rather than around how they proved themselves. Far more so than today, asserting rugged individualism would have been a foreign, perhaps repellent, notion for most nineteenth-century American women of any racial heritage (Marilyn.1991.p147)

Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written By Herself* can be considered as one of the most influential antebellum prose writings that have contributed to black feminist, she narrates her atrocious life as a colored slave girl in the South, Jacobs had to find a new way to express herself, In order to create a black female narrative, so she combined aspects of the slave narrative with issues of the sentimental novel, a genre typically related to the white women's situation and sentiments, Jacobs integrate the sentimental theme of sorrows, trials and sufferings, autobiography focus on the maltreatment of female blacks, which can be considered as a supplement to traditional

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American slave narratives since the genre traditionally only focuses on colored men's sufferings in these narratives (James,1985.p.213-214), the protagonist is physically and psychologically abused on account of her color, her master's discontentment or because she tries to communicate and defend herself, she gives the reader a detailed account of the author's feminine experience when she said: *Reader it is not to awaken sympathy for myself that I am telling you truthfully what I suffered in slavery as a women, I do it to kindle a flame of compassion in your hearts for my sisters who are still in bondage, suffering as I once suffered* (Jacobs, 1861.p29).

Moreover, she also pictures other black women from the community where she lived; in her narrative the most prominent female figure in the narrative is Harriet's grandmother which is a complicated character that is symbolic of the conflicting ideals of womanhood and femininity (Lockard, 2011.p.98).

Slavery and its constraining laws do not only prevent Linda from marrying a free black man, but also forces her into premarital intercourse with a white male. For more, Jacobs makes great sacrifices for her children, on the other she still remembers and honors her ancestors and stresses the notions of the free spirit in her family in this case Linda performed the good mother and responsible women toward her family, in her Narrative Jacobs also operates with the controlling image of Jezebel(Lockard, 2011.p.156). She was aware of the fact that white women often blamed their female slaves for their husband's unfaithfulness in marriage. Her description of herself as morally pure as opposed to the base master not only explains the intended white female audience that she was the innocent, but also pictures the white man as the evil agent. However, from her book Linda does not embody the other, for a while she had had almost all the cardinal values of a true woman. She is pure, pious and domestic; the only thing she does not accept is submissiveness that collides with the free spirit of her ancestors. Foreman points out that in Jacobs's narrative Dr. Flint had never compelled Linda to submit to him by physical force, he preferred to use the power of words, the fact that Jacobs uses the power of words to bribe Linda's purity and innocence is a significant tool that enables Jacobs to address the ideology. In her account Mr. Flint behaves like the biblical serpent that installed sinful ideas into Eve's head that led all humankind into the state of sin, Jacobs's uses biblical imagery to undermine these stereotypes( Jacobs, 1861.p.40-41).

She replaces the image of the evil temptress with the image of Dr. Flint as a snake hissing poisonous words into her hearth. She does not claim the position of Virgin Mary,

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she assumes the position of Eve - the woman who sinned, but became the mother of mankind and for whom Mary's son died on the cross, Jacobs refuses to obey the code of white femininity and decides to take her life into her own hands even at the cost of the loss of her purity and she suggests that she presented some aspects of her life on a more metaphorical level and stresses her position as an ordinary woman whose past is stained, but whose value as a member of the community and mother is significant, Jacob's account of motherhood is very specific and does not correspond to the ideological implication for white women.

Motherhood is the most significant event in her life it brought her happiness as well as sorrow. Her love is proven by her "absence" rather than explicit presence in the lives of her children Motherhood in Linda's life is the key event that makes her responsible not only for her acts, so Jacobs deconstructs the ideology of true womanhood as well as the controlling images of black femininity. She points out that a woman's beauty and value could be gained also by her work for the community and by other unique qualities that make a woman an indispensable member of it. She built her identity in close connection with her African heritage. Moreover, she employed Anglo-American cultural values to undermine the controlling images (William L, 1760-1865.p.59).

### II.3. Frederick Douglass the Self-Made Man (An act of Rebellion):

Douglass was well conscious of the importance of "knowing oneself". But his procedure of achieving self prophecy definitely implied an extra difficulty: the search for an own identity. Douglass's life and personality had to undergo some serious re-reflection after he salvage from slavery considered as an act of rebellion; according to him: *If there is no struggle, there is no progress that is*, he went from having no identity, being almost Nonexistent to the state, to an actual American citizen. In theory, the acquisition of His freedom was settled in one day. However, in practice, this change required a serious re-reflection of his past, He often refers to himself as the "I then" and the "I now", when addressing subjects in which he has developed a bigger insight through the years because he award about changes in his life specially in his own identity when he get the summits' success through his writing and his power to draw an image about slavery to readers (Foster, 1979.p.29).

Generally the Self-Made Men is a famous lecture in 1895 when he gave his own definition of the self-made and how the person construct himself, also he explain how to

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become great man as he said: *Self-made men [...] are the men who owe little or nothing to birth, relationship, friendly surroundings; to wealth inherited or to early approved means of education; who are what they are, without the aid of any of the favoring conditions by which other men usually rise in the world and achieve great results.* (Douglass, 1845.p.49-50), beside to that Douglass does not believe in what he calls the "good luck theory" he believe in hard work, timeserving and exploit the opportunity in presenting himself either to his society or to the whole world, is convinced that success can be explained by only one word, namely "work!": *My theory of self-made men is, then, simply this; that they are men of work. Whether or not such men have acquired material, moral or intellectual excellence, honest labor faithfully, steadily and persistently pursued, is the best, if not the only, explanation of their success.* (ibid.p.560) he also remarks: "Give the Negro fair play and let him alone. If he lives, well. If he dies, equally well. If he cannot stand up, let him fall down (ibid. p. 557).

The songs of the slaves represented their sorrows, rather than their joy (ibid.p.503). He was also conscious of his development as an orator. Additionally, he fully understands that adapting this awareness into his writings and speeches is crucial to win over an audience to the abolitionist side of the table.

### Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, we have attempted to explore how Harriet Ann Jacobs and Frederick Douglass depict their lives as slaves through their literary masterworks by narrating their pain through experience spotting light on the style and techniques that they used.

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### III.1. Introduction:

Women have always been part of literature, they have inspired many writers, whether dramatists, novelists, poets or essayists, women are defined and differentiated in reference to man; he is the Subject, beside to that male narrators celebrating the prosperity and success in authorizing and writing, they also make reputability in literature's history, but both male and female follow various strategies to authorize their narratives and make their stories both intriguing and believable. This chapter is intended to compare and contrast the common features of both narratives. At the same time, this comparison would also be helpful in understanding the ways in which the protagonists and narrators at the same time differ from each other.

### III.2. Comparison between the Two Narratives of Douglass and Jacob:

#### III.2.1. The Common Points between the Two Narratives:

Generally, as a common feature between male and female narratives Jacobs' narrative is ranked with Frederick Douglas narratives as a masterpiece of the slave narrative genre as both are widely read and in generic terms, canons of the American Literature and in particular handy references to both historians and scholars of the slave narrative tradition. While Douglass' work serves as a prototype, not only for the slave narrative genre, but also for a male dominant view of slave narratives, Jacobs typifies a premier feminist response to slavery, thus placing both works on an equal gender scale, these two slave narrators disclose their sorrows, struggles, hopes and, more importantly, their conquests. *I would give much to blot out from my memory that one great wrong, as a child, I loved my mistress and looking back...* (Jacobs, 1861, pp.15-16), "*.... one jacket, one pair of trousers for winter, made coarse negro cloth...*" (Douglas, 1845, p.10).

The narratives of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs narratives presented as genuine autobiographies or personal writings focused particular themes such as: slavery, racism, poverty, abolition, equality, religion, escape and freedom, it is usually describe their struggles of survival and how they escaped from enslavement in search of liberty (Bibb, 1851, p.15). *The struggle for the dignity of the self persists. Insults and injuries abound in freedom as under slavery, albeit in different forms.* (ibid. p.100).

Another feature pointed out by MacKethan is that two slave narratives had to have elements of the concept of Christianity (Browne, 1906, p.09). This requirement was

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essential because since slave owners were by default Christians, Christianity became the default religion of the slaves, Douglass, Jacobs was aware of the kind of audience she was writing for. Jacobs did not use Christianity as a means of receiving sympathy from her audience to pursue her anti-slavery cause, but she defined herself as an African women not as a Christian Jacobs deliberately incorporated the aspect of Christianity to appeal to her audience, and it is hard to find any evidence of such a thing among other scholarly works, or even in the text itself as a result, it can be argued that Jacob's portrayal of Christianity corresponds to reality, she said: *Reader it is not to awaken sympathy for myself that I am telling you truthfully what I suffered in slavery as a women, I do it to kindle a flame of compassion in your hearts for my sisters who are still in bondage, suffering as I once suffered* (Jacobs, 1861.p29).

Another characteristic found in both narratives, is related to the fact that Douglass and Jacobs suffered from being separated from their families at a very early age, they expressed strong affection for family members by citing their names and providing specific information about their lives this shows that both of them present similar experience and convey the same message to readers in their writing, in sort of words, novels, musical messages and poems, they reveal the difficulties of their lives as a slaves, so they portray their struggles to survive in their daily lives, in addition to that both narratives follow the characteristic of slave narrative .

Douglas and Jacobs share many of the characteristics peculiar to the slave narrative. They use the first characteristic of slave narrative using the starting sentence ‘I was born’ they use the first pronoun ‘I’ in order to show that their narratives are real from their own experience, and make clear that slaves too should be perceived as human beings, it is very common for slave narratives to start off this way, and they usually provide a simple background to the situation of the narrator. *“I was born a slave. My father was a carpenter. I had one brother. They lived together in a comfortable home ”* (Jacobs, 1861.p.6).in *Douglass’s narrative he state I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough* (Douglass,1845.p.97).

Another common phrase is written by himself/herself, whereby the author, for more explanation; Jacobs wrote a memoir by herself that was vital as a story of what female went during slavery as a woman and mother, and also brought the conditions of slavery to the attention of a wider audience. Besides to Douglass addresses the issue of

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slavery by him which describing the inhumanity and the male treatment because they were slaves. (Bruce, 1996.p.76).

The two narratives had common characteristics or pseudonyms "Linda" in Jacobs's work and Frederick in Douglass's work, their purpose is to expose injustice and inspire political action from personal experience to universal problems.

Both narratives suggest that, while they were responding to their place and the themes that were important at that period which included the fight for freedom, their strategies of coping and resistance was defined by gender. One common feature with most male narrators, which Douglass also emphasizes, is the ability to speak in public as well as to read and write. Through their use of language, literate male narrators were able to display their place as men and their right to self-dependency in a political democracy based on a voter's ability to understand and debate the issues. On the other hand, like other women narrators, Jacobs emphasizes her womanliness, thus Morgan admits, women narrators related to feminine culture of their time, and that involved telling their stories in terms of relationships (Morgan1838 .p.76).

In fact, the worst experience of Jacobs and Douglass in separating families was one of the most vindictive actions that a slave holder could take. As time passed, families were separated for various reasons, including securing higher profits in other markets, using slaves as part of a wedding dowry, paying off a debt, or as inheritance in wills. Slave owners understood that the family unit was a source of strength for many slaves and used it as punishment by threatening to send away the perceived trouble makers (Blassingame, 1976.p.96).

Blassingame, like most historians, focused on male fugitives because they vastly outnumbered women. Fugitive slave notices were littered with descriptions of bondsmen who could recognize words without being literate by today's standards, were of great physical strength, possessed exemplary masonry skills, or had a command of the English language that was noticeable in comparison to other slaves all distinguished abilities that could aid in their attempt to escape. Nevertheless, women also attempted to escape (ibid.p.138).

Finally, according to Greg Homptom either Jacobs or Douglass have the same goal in narrating and writing; that is to gain freedom, and rehabilitate their race. (ibid.p.145).

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### III.2.2. The Differences between the Two Narratives:

Comparing Douglass and Jacobs, it is relevant to note that although both works trace the path from bondage to freedom, Jacobs' cause is personal as she aims to save her body, her soul while Douglass' is, at least in part, political, wanting to make a political impact. We see that Jacobs addresses the issues of female bondage and sexual abuse from the female perspective so that, for instance, while the story of Douglass is centered around the quest of literacy and the freedom of speech, Jacobs' story is built around the fight for the rights and freedom of her in particular and women in general. There are also crucial differences in the Slave Narratives of female and male. (Leech & Short, 1981.p.105).

What made the male and female narratives different was that these female narratives further revealed the day-to-day threat of their children being sold, and an endless fear of being raped by their white oppressors or even other male slaves on the plantation but male was not thinking about his family like women because women is sensible enough, for that most part of this slave narrative of Harriet Jacobs focused more on pregnancy, Motherhood and resistance of weak female as she said: *The poor mother turned away, sobbing. Her dying daughter called her, feebly, and as she bent over her, I heard her say, "Don't grieve so, mother; God knows all about it ; and HE will have mercy upon me.* (Jacobs, 1861.p.14).

Through their narratives, both male and female fugitives and ex-slaves strove to counter the racial stereotypes that bound them even in "free" societies. Black men and women, however, faced different stereotypes. Black men combated the stereotype that they were "boys" while black women contested the idea that they were either helpless victims or whores. For a male fugitive, public discourse served to claim his place among men; for a female her relationships as a daughter, sister, wife, mother, and friend demonstrated her womanliness and her shared roles with women readers in both the narratives and the lives of slaves. (Bibb, 1851, p.135).

Douglass represent the idea of manhood and presents also that he is the hero of his own adventure focusing on the struggle to achieve his identity and freedom, on the other hand Jacobs show herself as a victim, onerous body and hopeless person as it seems, in her speech She said *after my long struggle with him, succeed at last in trampling his victim under his feet. I would do anything, everything, for the sake of defeating him. What \_could\_ I do? I thought and thought, till I became desperate, and made a plunge into the*

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*abyss* (Jacobs,1861.p.51). *The man who will get up will be helped up; and the man who will not get up will be allowed to stay down* ((Douglass, 1845.p.557).

Douglass narrate his story in chronological order of the event and he tell his experience from the past to the present step by step; from his boyhood then he continued detailing home plantation where he lived which means he specifies his age in the story, but in the narrative of Harriet Jacobs, she write in discontinuous form and fragmentary for that her narration considered as vague story to some scholars such as Blassingame, she spoke about her childhood and describe her feeling in the same time, then she talk about the painful experience in the life of every slave, usually she skips from one point to another (Blassingame, 1976.p.117).

### III.2. Discussing of the Writing Styles of Douglass and Jacobs:

The differences between of Harriet A. Jacobs's "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself" and Frederick Douglass's "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave can be seen in content, ideology, and form. Douglass and Jacobs differ widely in voice, because of gender-related aspects of how voice is rendered, to whom it speaks, how much it is present, and how it is used to authenticate the speaker, in Douglass's narrative he show his personnel experience describing his feeling in masculine vision, and he expressed his professional life focusing on the struggle to achieve manhood and freedom, his goal from writing is to persuade people in north to see the evil of slavery. In the other hand, Jacobs has the same goal that to gain freedom and abolish slavery, but she write in different ways; she spoke about womanhood and sexually abuse, generally she spoke about herself in particular and black women in general (Bruce,1996.p.125).

*On one of these sale days, I saw a mother lead seven children to the auction block. She knew that some of them would be taken from her; but they took all ...* (Jacobs, 1861.p.14).

*Life remains a war. But the focused struggle of wills with the master has given way to a more generalized struggle to affirm the self in a hostile, or in different, environment* (Douglass, 1845.p.100).

Douglass's work is often viewed as the prototype of the slave narrative genre, while Jacobs's work expresses women's issues with a clarity that was shocking to her time. From the study, reader can understand not only about the writing style of male and female through writing but also can learn about what ways men and women are different; women

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often think in closeness and support to preserve intimacy and connection, but men are interesting with status and tend to focus on independence (ibid.p.144).

The result of this study shows that both Douglass and Jacobs follow characteristic of slave narrative. Furthermore, their writing also reflects how men and women perform; frame their experience to a spoken image about slavery even though they use different style and methods.

### III.3. Writing about Themselves out of the Margin:

Generally Slave narratives were presented as significant documentation of the slave experience, it brought attention to the issues born from slavery and forced society to recognize that African Americans would not be silent about their current or future condition. To be black meant one was constantly fighting opposition; their very existence was a direct contradiction to everything that symbolized beauty, significance, and power. In that respect, slave narratives gave black human an opportunity to define themselves through the incidents. (Halleck, 2013.p.156).

African Americans researched and wrote about themselves in an attempt to add to the discussion about the voice of the slave, fighting for the voice of the enslaved was the matter of all slave narrators. First off; Douglass tries to free himself from the constraints of typical slave narratives by distancing himself from the institution of slavery. Douglass manages to free himself by using slavery as a point of self-reference as he said: *From that time until now, I have been engaged in pleading the cause of my brethren – with what success, and with what devotion, I leave those acquainted with my labors to decide* (Douglass, 1845.p.75), and the narrative in itself, focuses more on the feats of Douglass as an individual, and how he becomes self-made. In addition to that, Douglass tries to “write back” to challenge the cultural stories and perceptions that have been scripted to him as a former slave. This is a strategy often used in life narratives, as one wants to rid oneself of cultural strictures about self-representation (Raboteau, 1980.p.167)

As Douglass was so well known, he already had a following that knew his story. Nevertheless, Douglass wants his readers to take part in his journey, he also show us that the identity is more important in his life, and create himself from non to a great narrator (ibid.p.169)

Harriet Jacobs was the first African American women who wrote a slave narrative in the United States. Her narrative is especially appealing to women, as it is focused on

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describing the struggles women faced under slavery in such a way that it spoke for all female slaves. Jacobs could relate to her audience through their shared struggles and hopes as women (Morgan, 1838 .p.76), in the beginning Jacobs found herself as a property relatively to her master at that time lived struggle with herself, because she feel nothing, she is only a soul that agonized, for that reason Linda tried out to design her story to be a universal message describing her life, after long suffering Jacobs and her children are now free, her ultimate dream of having her own family home is just that; a dream. (ibid.p.81).

Frederick Douglass, and Harriet Jacobs emphasized what the African American saw, felt, and did during slavery, these narrators exposed the ills of slavery to a wider audience and fought the idea that formerly enslaved blacks were powerless. By using education as a vehicle for change, both narrators subscribed to an ideology that helped to break down barriers for their people. In fact, learning how to read and write was powerful because it was a skill that could never be taken away; these two narrators opened the doors for other former slaves to control representations of themselves in print. (ibid.p.89).

In the case of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs, they understood that getting an education was important. The antebellum period generated an avalanche of information that forced the country to reconsider the place of African Americans; the attitudes during the Civil War resulted in more attempts by blacks to seek education, because The military offered blacks a life complete with a job, home, and education things that were practically non-existent in the outside world (Grey Swisshelm, 2001.p.36).

In spite of the decades that worst experience of becoming slave of both narratives make both narrators asserted themselves as individuals who used education to improve the lot cast for all African Americans (ibid.p.44).

### Conclusion

Both Douglass and Harriet Jacobs understood how to manipulate their material in ways that made them accessible to their audiences. They used their personal experiences as their major aspiration in a language that could be easily understood. The two life writings together help us to hear the harmony in the voices of two storytellers who have helped to initiate a new literary tradition that of African American literature.

## Chapter III: Comparing Harriet E. Jacobs & Frederick Douglass' Narratives

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### General Conclusion

In general, black men and women on the whole experienced the same horrors due to slavery; both were torn apart from their families, and forced to perform hard labor, and were denied basic rights. The Narratives under study brought attention to the issues born from slavery in order to confront white America with the fact that slavery existed and that many Africans would not be silent about their current or future condition. Exposing the experience of Harriet Ann Jacobs and Frederick Douglass as slaves in the 19th century is the ultimate aim of the present study. For that, a detailed interpretation of both form and content has been undertaken in order to grasp the realities represented by the author. As we have seen, the work includes the author's life events relevant to whole life slaves in bondage. This dissertation follows each author's creative attempt to develop his/her character's voice and identity and looks at the different methods used to make sure that the protagonist is in possession of his/her own self.

Our study has also shown the extent to which Harriet Jacobs and Douglass narratives are an accurate and realistic representation of the period of slavery and of the suffering of black, we have demonstrated how various actions, character traits and scenes parallel the history of slavery as reviewed in the first chapter, the second chapter is about The artistic style of Jacobs and Douglass; through an analysis of form and content we can explore their own style using different approaches and characteristics in narrating. In the third chapter through the study of plot, we compared between style, characters and themes of the two narratives.

Generally we have shown how black female slaves had double suffering: being a black slave and a woman meant one was constantly fighting opposition; their very existence was a direct contradiction to everything that symbolized beauty, significance, and power. In addition, female slaves faced the constant threat and practice of sexual exploitation, harassment, and rape, the sexual abuse was one of the most important aspects of slave hardship that experienced and faced especially by women. Jacobs as black women opened the doors for other former slave women to control representations of themselves in society.

From the research, we can establish that female had bad experience with slavery, these brief comments confirm my hypothesis which is slavery is much worse for women, and it is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women.

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