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The ability to work through trauma and a person's capacity to be self-compassionate is a recovered self. Recovered self is not complete freedom from post-traumatic effects. It is the ability to live in the present without being overwhelmed by the thoughts and feelings of the past. Traumatic experiences cannot be erased but the intensity of the trauma can be minimized. Recovering from a traumatic experience requires that the painful emotions be thoroughly processed. Trauma cannot be repressed or forgotten. If they are not dealt with, they may create a condition of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. One way to gain power over the bitterness that has been left behind by trauma is to write about it and continue our stories through long journey to recovery. Then a theory emerged focused on the relationship of words and trauma and helping us to read the wounds with the aid of literature i.e.

“scriptotherapy”, Suzette A. Henke coins this phrase in her book *Shattered Subjects: Trauma and Testimony in Women's Life-Writing*. She reports on the particular usefulness of the process of writing in healing trauma, “through the artistic replication of a coherent subject position, the life-writing project generates a healing narrative that temporarily restores the fragmented self to an empowered position of psychological agency” (16). Life narrative turns to be healing narrative for the survivors of trauma. Survivors' pains and wounds are projected in their writing which makes them feel relief to some extent. Therapeutic effect of writing changes the narrator and the life of the narrator. They increase their ability to manage stress.

In *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, Olaudah Equiano and in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs go through the sequential tough events that cause psychological and physical trauma on them. Though there is a

gap between the productions of these two texts, there are similarities between the stories. They are freed slaves and actively involved activists in the slavery abolition movement. They open a window through which we can glimpse slavery and freedom in the context. These narratives describe numerous heinous acts of dehumanizing and torture committed by the slaveholders against their slaves. Jacobs is enslaved and raped by her master whereas Equiano is also kidnapped and sold into slavery at the age of ten. Both of them experience racial discrimination and more than this Jacobs has to endure gender discrimination as well as sexual assault. It is tough enough for Jacobs to regain her freedom in comparison to Equiano because slavery is terrible for men, but it is far more terrible for women. They suffer from an inferiority complex, an identity crisis, and the humiliation of racist insults. The bonds of mother and child, husband and wife, and brother and sister are destroyed. They turn to be mute and suppress their sufferings as they are blacks in white community and Jacobs is doubly oppressed as she is a black woman. Her chastity is violated. The identification of female is associated with body and the equation of female honor with chastity prevented Jacobs from exploring the events that happened with her immediately after her escape. But later, by revealing the same bodily experiences and by celebrating their own bodies and words, they critique racial oppression and slavery system that they suffered.

The present research work deals with the autobiographers' managing of their serious situation and psychological state of trauma, insecurity and feeling of shamelessness into self-confidence, racial pride and speech recovery. This research also contains the theoretical presentation of African-American and European society in the nineteenth century and also analyzes the trauma and its recovery through 'scriptotherapy' in their books. With no legal checks on their behavior, slaveholders

inflict every conceivable kind of torture on their servants. Most slave masters viewed slaves as little more than animals or objects, never acknowledging their humanity. They are given new names, their real identities are erased. Jacobs is the one who runs away and survives helping others in her life. On the other hand, Equiano is the one who, from his early age, faces different problems like separation from his parents and his sister; servant at different white masters' houses; horrible punishments for unjust reasons. Their identities as slaves are erased or become invisible but they are able to fashion a true identity and discover a real sense of self despite these all extremities in their lives.

Jacobs experiences different afflictions of slavery in America. She is abused, mistreated, assaulted, and beaten. She lives with her mother who was owned by the Horniblow family, and by luck she is taught to read and write by Mistress Horniblow. Jacobs's life changes from tolerable suffering to unendurable abuse when she is passed to a new master, James Norcom who subjects her to psychological and sexual abuses of all kinds. She narrates, "for years, my master had done his utmost to pollute my mind with foul images and to destroy the pure principles inculcated by my grandmother, and the good mistress of my childhood. The influences of slavery had had the same effect on me that they had on other young girls" (Jacobs 54). The suffering she undergoes is unexplainable in words. She claims, "the wrongs, the vices, that grow out of slavery are more than I can describe" (27). At the age of twenty-two, the abuse becomes too much to bear, and Jacobs goes into hiding in a small attic in her grandmother's home, where she hides herself and watches her children and her former life through a small crack in the wall. She notes in her narrative, "season after season, year after year, I peeped at my children's faces, and heard their sweet voices, with a heart yearning all the while to say: Your mother is here" (82). She faces

unendurable experiences. She faces various humiliations but she struggles for survival of her children and herself. Telling of her life story honestly helps her to draw the meanings and morals about her own life. The narrative is an expression of self-invention, a matter of the author putting in words and the process of her own self discoveries. It is an act of self-invention. The writing does not simply reflect a self but creates one, does not simply report an identity but claims one, does not simply claim an identity but transforms that identity.

Olaudah Equiano becomes a freeman fulfilling the dreams of his childhood and the purpose of his manhood, throwing off the heavy chain of slavery which had cumbered his every motion. He is separated from his parents and relatives and taken far away to Europe to be sold to the white masters. He narrates, “the next day proved a day of greater sorrow than I had yet experience; for my sister and I were then separated, while we lay clasped in each other’s arms” (Equiano 25). He goes through different tortures and barbarity for unnecessary reasons. He tries to run away but it is completely hopeless attempt. He considers that, “if possibly I could escape all other animals; I could not those of the human kind” (26). This shows how he develops a negative concept towards white people. He along with other slaves is treated like animals which make them prefer death to slavery. He stresses, “we continued to undergo more hardships than I can now relate, hardships which are inseparable from this accursed trade” (33). His real identity is changed by the master and given a new name for their comfort in calling him. This shows how their identities are shifting according to time and place. He represents the sufferings of all the black slaves in Europe. Both Equiano and Jacobs employ the characteristics of writing as healing to better understand or heal from trauma in their past.

African slaves undergo mental and physical sufferings in the white community

whether in America or Europe. It is more horrible for a black woman to survive and fight against her own community and white community. During slavery system, black men and women were sold as commodities to serve their white masters and Equiano and Jacobs are the representatives of it. On the one hand, Equiano faces brutality and immorality of African and European from his childhood. His vivid descriptions and the various punishments and humiliations of his slave life are heartrending and it takes us to the heart of slavery's injustice. On the other hand, in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs goes through gendered violence of slavery in white's house. She is subjected to sexual harassments, coerced into concubinage, exiled from her children and forced into hiding before her flight to north. Both of them have gone through similar kinds of pain that forces them to break the silence, to cross the border of social conventions and head towards constructing a 'new self'. They defeat the system bent upon their use and casual destruction. How the authors who experience trauma can free themselves from these cages and trauma and counter the racist discourse is the main concern of the researcher. They can recover the horrible experiences of their past and create an alternative self in their autobiographies. Equiano assesses, "I hope the slave-trade will be abolished. I pray it may be an event at hand" (234). He embraces every occasion of improvement and every new thing in his life. He learns to read and write and leads his life towards a new direction and destination.

In *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs and in *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, Olaudah Equiano do record of their own sufferings or firsthand experiences as slaves at white masters' houses. By revealing the sex assaults, uncovering the nature of slavery in Africa they construct a new self and move from victim to survivor. Jacobs and Equiano make their empowering

definitions in their autobiographies by uncovering sufferings of Black men and women during slavery. They are not devoured by white men and slavery system. The writing process serves Jacobs as means of coping with personal tragedy and loss. She declares, “the book helped me to go through mourning and survive word by word, and tear after after, I retraced every step of that horrible year” (Jacobs 241). The therapeutic release offered by writing helps her to recover from loss. Their narratives give testimony to the cruelty that they and other slaves suffered. It works as a tool to move towards social equality. Their roles shift to active speakers from mute watcher and become empowered narrators. By the end of the book, their positions have been changed remarkably, from speechless slaves to abolitionists.

The subject of life narrative was expanded during eighteenth century and those earlier excluded subjects including ex-slaves, criminals and middle class women, used life narrative as a means to know themselves and position themselves within the social world. Ex-slaves started writing about the degradation and achievement of status as full human beings. Self writing became self making. They find life narrative as a powerful rhetorical means of intervening in repressive institution of slavery by writing their narratives of enslavement, self education, and quest for entry into free society. These two ex-slaves, Olaudah Equiano and Harriet Jacobs, do the same thing and fight back against slavery by revealing all the painful experiences to the world. This helps them to construct a new identity as powerful writers and slavery abolitionists respectively, in Europe and America. Their previous identity as slaves gets dismissed and they are showered with a new identity. This heals their traumatic experiences that they underwent in slave life. Coretta Pittam argues that, “the autobiography and slave narrative have helped to reestablish the damned into respectable beings. It gave life to a downcast and marginalized figure in America and

European society” (48). She further adds that black writers have remade a negative ethos into a positive one. They use rhetoric specifically slave narrative and autobiography, to rebuild the esteem and ethos of the individual and collective blacks. Ide Corley in his article “Freedom and Trauma in the Life of Olaudah Equiano” asserts that, “writing provides power leading to individual freedom. They proved that slaves can be humans in terms of all the qualities” (81). For them, writing works as means to be free and to live as a free man. They use writing to break the isolation they perceived in slavery and with their autobiographies; they attempt to build a relationship with the rest of Americans, Africans and Europeans.

Slave narratives of men and women resist oppression and strive for freedom but the strategies of coping with the situation and resistance are differed by gender. It is tougher for Jacobs to survive slavery and counter the racial stereotypes. Eighteenth and nineteenth century social definitions of femininity marginalized white women but entirely excluded black women. She insists in her narrative, “slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women” (Jacobs 86). Death is better for her than slavery and there are wrongs which even the grave does not bury. She describes the degree to which black women suffer in slavery. She speaks openly about rape and pre-marital sex and speaks continuously about slavery. She describes, “I wanted to keep myself pure; and under the most adverse circumstances, I tried hard to preserve my self-respect; but I was struggling alone in the powerful grasp of the demon slavery; and the monster proved too strong for me” (60). It is not easy job for her. Jacobs reflects, “the painful and humiliating memory will haunt me to my dying day. Still, in looking back calmly, on the events of my life, I feel that the slave women ought not to be judged by the same standard as others” (62). Writing about her past gives her opportunity to remake a positive image of self during her enslavement and

helps to recover herself into a virtuous and respectable woman. She dares to do it and becomes successful in her mission and helps others to free from the trap of slavery. She adds, “you know a woman can whisper her cruel wrongs in the ear of a dear friend much easier than she can record them for the world to read” (26). She does it to arouse the women of the North to a realizing sense of condition of two millions of women at the South and persuade them to take a public stand against slavery.

Olaudah Equiano also undergoes severe conditions in his slave life. He is kidnapped and sold in the hands of different white masters. He is separated from his family, relatives, brother and sister. He is tortured and beaten for unnecessary cause. He admits, “tortures, murder, and every other imaginable barbarity and iniquity are practiced upon the poor slaves with impunity” (Equiano 234). Male narrators stress on the importance of reading and writing like Equiano focuses how illiteracy disables him while they were slaves and how they feel the need but women’s narratives do not emphasize this factor. Equiano traces, “I had often seen my master Dick employed in reading; and I had great curiosity to talk to the books” (39). While male narrators accentuate the role of literacy, females stress the importance of relationships. Ide Corley also claims, “male fugitives stressed their individuality, their ability to stand alone and assume adult male responsibility for themselves” (83). He buys his freedom and actively engages in slavery abolition movement in Europe. He narrates, “I hope to have the satisfaction of seeing the renovation of liberty and justice resting on the British government, to vindicate the honor of our common nature” (Equiano 232). He takes help of writing through which he can express the atrocities of slavery and make the world listen louder than they can ever do by shouting. He shows that they deserve to live as free people. Towards the end of his narrative, he concludes, “in this deep consternation the Lord was pleased to break in upon my soul with his bright beams of

heavenly light; and in an instant, as it were, removing the veil, and letting light into a dark place” (126). This proves how he becomes able to press all the obstacles and overcome atrocities of slavery and becomes a powerful and an active abolitionist.

Empowerment and reconnection are the core experiences of recovery. The traumatized person recognizes that s/he has been a victim and understands the effects of his/her victimization. Now, they are ready to incorporate the lessons of their traumatic experiences into their lives. They are ready to take concrete steps to increase their sense of power and control, to protect them against future danger. Judith Herman claims, “certain violations are too terrible to utter aloud, this is unspeakable. It is refused to be buried. The denial of atrocities does not work. Remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites both for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of individual victims” (1). People who survive atrocities often tell their stories in a highly emotional manner which serves truth and secrecy. When they recognize the truth, survivors can begin their recovery. Herman further adds that we need to understand the past in order to reclaim the present and future. Victims who were silenced begin to reveal their secrets. Jacobs illustrates,

I have not written my experiences in order to attract attention to myself; on the contrary, it would have been more pleasant to me to have been silent about my own history. Neither do I care to excite sympathy for my own sufferings. I want to add my testimony to that of abler pens to convince the people of the Free States what slavery really is. Only by experience can any one realize how deep, and dark and foul is that pit of abomination. (3)

Acknowledging the reality of one’s condition and taking steps to change it becomes signs of strength, not weakness; initiative, not passivity. They feel wonder and freedom. They speak of losing and regaining the world. Corley notes that, “they lived

isolated and mistrustful lives. Writing the narrative, reflecting on their experience in words, helped Equiano and Jacobs to understand their passage from the isolation they perceived in being slaves to the community possible as freemen” (80). They present themselves as someone who, in order to achieve freedom from slavery, find sources of strength within themselves rather than from community. They put themselves forward as someone whom other slaves, freedmen and fugitives can emulate.

Telling their own stories in life narrative becomes their means of understanding their experience and that of other African slaves. That’s why as their understanding evolves, they keep on writing their stories. Writing and control over trauma becomes their vehicle. Corley’s study points out that, “they needed to put their insights into words so that they could understand them. Telling one’s own story is a particularly human way of organizing and coming to understand one’s experience” (80). The recovery of trauma is how we cope with the danger once it is over.

Survivors find jotting their traumatic experiences down on the paper to make their lives more meaningful and purposeful. This act decries the cruelty and brutality of slavery and helps to bring about its abolition. Judith Herman’s finding confirms that, “survivors undertake to speak about the unspeakable in public in the belief that this will help others. This makes them connected to larger power than themselves” (150). He further states that when recovery is achieved, the survivor often feels a sense of renewed pride. They have capacity to revisit old hopes and dreams and it gives courage to move out of the constricted stance of the victim. The slave narrative evolved between 1830 and 1860 as a way of letting slaves themselves have a voice in their cause as both eye witnesses to the horrors of slavery and I-witnesses to their own feelings as human beings caught up in such a monstrous system. Jacobs assures, “Reader, be assured this is narrative no fiction. I have not exaggerated the wrongs

inflicted by slavery; on the contrary, my descriptions fall far short of facts, strictly true” (3). She reveals the truth and let the world know about it with the help of writing. Thus, there is relationship between letters and liberation in the representative blacks’ writings. Their autobiographical genre reflects their displacement and marginalization within the dominant society.

Survivors struggle to find ways of telling about sufferings. Autobiography can work as therapeutic intervention for the people who are haunted by traumatic memories. It gives voice to unspeakable. One feels trapped by a traumatic event and memory becomes like a prison. By writing the whole experience, we can form a more familiarity with a journey back to safety. Corley comments that, “writing gave the power to assert their existence as well as their freedom from those who would keep them as slaves” (76). By shaping the experience into a form that can be shared, they turn their private hell into private heals. Writing is an action that restores a sense of control and directly counteracts the sense of powerlessness that is the identifying mark of trauma. By becoming a storyteller of our own life, we can gain control over the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, finding the words that help us integrate the turn of events into our understanding of the world. Fionnghuala Sweeney claims that, “they worked and communicated as antislavery and emancipator activists in ways other than through the written word” (393). They face their world more confidently, their heads are up, they are breathing easily and they are grounded. They learn how to live and how to use fear and trauma as a source of energy and enlightenment. Equiano draws the attention of British Government by writing a petition and presents it in front of the queen. He notes, “I had the honour of presenting the queen with a petition on behalf of my African brethren, which was received most graciously by her majesty. And as the inhuman traffic of slavery is to be taken into the

consideration of the British Legislature” (Equiano 158). Jacobs secretly writes articles for the newspaper against slavery to the editor of the New York *National Anti-Slavery Standard*. They overcome their fears and inner conflicts. This all have been possible through the means of writing. Joanne M. Braxton claims that, “they construct a uniquely black and female autobiographical self, leaving a literary legacy and providing guidance, encouragement, and direction both for readers and for future literary trends” (128). Life narrative has become a means through which both black men and women reconstruct their identities and shape their lives in a particular mode. In the introduction of her narrative, Nell Irvin Painter states that, “Jacobs decided to become an author in her own right as a means of advancing the struggle against the institution of slavery. She wrote for *National Anti-Slavery Standard*. She became an active and engaged abolitionist” (xxii). This courage to reveal gendered evils of slavery and the barbarism of American slavery and the character of its victims vests a new identity as an abolitionist in her life.

The main purpose of slave narrative is to reveal the brutality of slavery and bring about its abolition. Slave narratives of Equiano and Jacobs give us an inside view of slavery, from capture in Africa through emancipation in Europe and America. The ability to read and write becomes a powerful weapon for them which help them in their journey from slavery to freedom. Jacobs asserts, “I was born and reared . . . and it has compelled me to write these pages at irregular intervals” (3). She commences the long process of self-emancipation and becomes trauma owner. If they had no courage to write then they could never come out of the haunting memories of those painful events. They would not be able to help million of slaves to free from the shackles of slavery. Roy L. Brooks in her study comments that, “these testimonies of ex-slaves give us a vivid view of the horrors of human bondage. They tell us without

hesitation that slavery had no redeeming value. They escaped and turned to be abolitionists and spoke for the vast majority of slaves” (327). Their self writing becomes an aid to the abolitionist cause. They have been successful to overcome the trauma and rise up higher without giving up hope for better life. They turn to be survivors from victims. They become source of inspiration and courage for rest of the slaves. Beth Maclay Doriani states that, “slave narratives portray black men and women as shapers of their own identities and destinies and as individuals who need not meet the standards of whites and males to achieve their own personhood” (202). Their real identities are seized and changed by whites in relation to different owners and places. But they reclaim their own identities in a way that no one can tread it. Jacobs, during her concealment sends pieces of writing to be published to her friend, Amy Post. If she had not written then she would not have been known as an active abolitionist and a writer these days. Doriani explains, “Jacobs sends sample pieces to newspaper in the form of letters from a fugitive slave, eventually completing the entire narrative privately in the autobiographical genre of her people” (201). Both of these narratives reduce the intensity of trauma with the help of writing. They reintegrate their selves and their values in a new way. They incorporate the meaning in their life. They experience a new sense of the preciousness of life, renewed commitment to them, clear goals and a new understanding of the value of their ties to others.

Writing is a part of healing process. It is self-analysis. It works as a tool for self expression and self protection. Survivors can grapple with the continuing challenges of their lives with the help of writing. Many writers claim that all writing sinks its roots in the nutrients of the therapeutic process. David Starkey suggests, “writing is a healing act . . . it means healing psychological distress, integrating

people, their inner discontinuities harmonized . . . to be healed” (178). Writing offers the hope of connecting the reintegrated self to the world. Henke also argues that project of life writing does rescue by transferring the pain and trauma into words. Starkey suggests that, “writing helps individuals process and make meaning from the dark nights of their lives” (181). Jacobs and Equiano bring out all the evils of the slavery respectively and this gives them a relief to live and a reason to fight for chained slaves. Their life becomes worth of living though once they were slaves. Painter in the introduction part claims, “*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* is the first and foremost a piece of engaged writing, a means of advancing the struggle against the institution of slavery politicizing respectable Northern white women-as women” (xxii). Their contribution for abolitionist cause gives freedom and new way of life for millions of slaves. Thus, pen helps to deal with the pains.

During slavery, African-American men and women did not owe their bodies themselves. They were considered as the property of the slaveholders and entirely the subject of will of another. They had no agency or control over their own bodies and were also subjected to various offenses, punishments against them including rape for women. Despite their trauma, they are not voiceless but have freed themselves in body and “found a language and a narrative to shelter a vulnerable past” (33). During the nineteenth century, African American in particular those who were living in the South were literally suffering from a segregated society. Most of them were unfairly treated, tortured and murdered without any pity. Jacobs narrates, “when he told me that I was made for his use, made to obey his command in everything; that I was nothing but a slave, whose will must and should surrender to his” (186). They are like objects for masters. Nevertheless, these people don’t give up their dreams of being free and struggle challenging all the sufferings and the discrimination that traumatized

most of them. Literature helps African-American writers at shaping thoughts and whose roles in the society reflect their determination to get their rights and strive for freedom. Equiano and Jacobs are the most powerful black writers who challenge themselves and challenge both the white and black society that oppressed them and made them feel inferior and ashamed of their black color even though it is not their fault. Their slave narratives liberate them from the constraints of corporeality and reject traits ascribed by others.

They have demonstrated great empowerment in their ability to take control of their trauma and integrate it into knowledge for testimony. Bringing the enslaved black man and enslaved and raped black women to the centre enables them to explore the meanings and nuances of psychic trauma, one of the most devastating effects of slavery. Equiano narrates, “I believe it is difficult for those who publish their own memories to escape the imputation of vanity . . . I am not so foolishly vain to expect from it either immortality or literary reputation” (13). He can’t silently suffer while his countrymen are plundered and oppressed that’s why he rises above his personal sufferings and raises voice “to break the yoke of slavery and to administer a little comfort and ease to thousands and tens thousands of very grievously afflicted, and too heavy burthened negroes” (153). They have control over trauma- a self possession after healing. A crucial element in moving through this trajectory is narrative; one needs a story to move from victim to survivor. Equiano and Jacobs transform their traumatic experiences into a narrative. Blacks use autobiography as the means to create their alternate self. According to Friedman, “a woman’s alienation from her culturally defined self motivates the creation of an alternate self in her autobiography” (22). In this regard, Suzette A. Henke also finds evidence that women often use writing in order to heal the wounds of psychological trauma precipitated by rape,

incest, childhood sexual abuse, grief, unwanted pregnancy, pregnancy loss. Their writings are used as means for survival and healing. She analyzes traumatic narratives as the focal point of a large body of autobiographical practice representing the genre of narrative recovery.

America has constantly been a nation of racial diversity, where the role of African American in shaping and being shaped in such a segregated society is stated and reflected in their literary works. Racial trauma has an impact on the lives of many black Americans which results from all the suffering and pains they endured, and the hidden rage, desire to break the silence motivate them to stand up for the change and cope with the hard situation. Yet, this change was seen as a dream that was not easy to obtain and which demanded a lot of sacrifices and determination in order to achieve it and overcome their blunt trauma which affected their lives for so long. Thus, many writers deal with this sensitive subject of trauma and how it affects their ordinary lives and shapes their personal and inner states.

It is a miracle that after all what Equiano and Jacobs endured; they survive, struggle, find the job, and continue on their way toward success. Above all, Equiano and Jacobs learn about the power of love and hope for a better life. Finally, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* by Olaudah Equiano and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs in which they make the readers feel how scriptotherapy helped them to overcome their trauma and break the silence and counter the image in which blacks are viewed as chattel and commodity and to convince white society that African are, after all human beings. And the best lesson one can take from a traumatic experience is not to give up on life but instead making it as a rock to step on and rise up higher.

Jacobs and Equiano portray blacks as shapers of their own identities and

destinies, and as individuals who need not meet the standards of whites and males to achieve their own personhood. Hundreds and possibly thousands of biographies and autobiographies of slaves and former slaves appear in print; some of them are brief and some are too long but these two narratives represent the life of a slave in a very detailed approach. They deal with the torturous treatment of slave men and women, the sexual exploitation of slave women, and also point to the punishment that slaves have to endure. Jacobs adds, “if you want to be fully convinced of the abominations of slavery, go on a southern plantation, and call yourself a negro trader. Then there will be no concealment; and you will see and hear things that will seem to you impossible among human beings with immortal souls” (58). They are former slaves which add the authenticity and the authority on the subject of the slave trade. Equiano also presents the pathetic condition of black slaves in Europe where they are treated like animals and likened to beasts of burden who are haunted as the prey of European slave traders. He narrates, “many humane gentlemen, by not residing on their estates, are obliged to leave the management of them in the hands of these human butchers, who cut and mangle the slaves in a shocking manner on the most trifling occasions, and altogether treat them in every respect like brutes” (Equiano 105). They are considered to be non human beings. Whites have no any sentiments and feelings for those black slaves. They reach beyond the oppression of their most recent experiences and link to their past in recording their life stories. This act of recording their past experiences helps them to understand the unutterable tales of pain and suffering of victims. Jacobs concludes that, “it has been painful to me, in many ways, to recall the dreary years I passed in bondage. I would gladly forget them if I could. Yet the retrospection is not altogether without solace” (225). Writing her past also gives her tender memories of her grandmother. It is painful to recall but it equally gives solace

to the narrator. Writing as healing is one potential vehicle to find the meaning from suffering. Sharon L. Jones claims that, “the texts of African American writers of slave narratives function as means for them to negotiate, recover and analyze their memories in order to transform themselves and society” (307). By making the personal stories public and by daring to pick up a pen to tell their stories, black abolitionist writers, leave records of their lives. They write to witness slaver’s atrocities, they also write to celebrate their hard won escape from that system and their fitness for freedom’s potential blessings.

Slave narratives show that slaves suffer physically, emotionally, and spiritually under slavery; that slaves yearn for freedom and resist slavery in every possible way. Women have less mobility and thus fewer opportunities to flee than men. Male narrator gives stress on the importance of reading and writing like Equiano does; how illiteracy disabled him while they were slaves and how they felt the need but women’s narratives do not emphasize this factor while male narrators accentuate the role of literacy, females stress on the importance of relationship. Black men and women, however, face different stereotypes. Black men combat the stereotype that they are ‘boys’ while black women contest the idea that they are either helpless victims or whores. For a male fugitive, public discourse serves to claim his place among men; for a female, her relationships as a daughter, sister, wife, mother, and friend demonstrate her womanliness and her shared roles with women readers. Ide Corley discovers that, “the slave narratives of Jacobs and Equiano suggest that, while they were responding to their place and period’s significant themes among them; individualism, community, resisting oppression, and striving for freedom- strategies of coping and resistance differed by gender” (77). Female as well as male, slave narrators desire and strive for literacy. Being literate never save women from the

burdens of slavery, racism, sexism and they know it. That's why they do not give central significance to the acquisition of literacy. Jacobs is taught to write and read in her early phase of slavery by her mistress. Instead, the most significant realities in these women's lives usually derive from their personal relationships. Psychologists such as Carol Gilligan and Jean Baker Miller have noted, women, more than men; tend to come to make choices based on their understanding and experiences of relationships. Relationship plays important role in women's lives.

The focus on community often distinguishes black women's autobiography from that of black men, black men's autobiography being more obviously individual centered celebrations of heroism and freedom won. This is not to suggest that black male autobiographers are unconcerned with the struggles of the black community. They have also dedicated much of their free lives to elevating the positions of blacks in America and Europe. Johnnie M. Stover argues that,

The emphasis in their narratives was on the need for the black man to be strong, independent, and heroic, and his struggle was presented as being one neither supported nor hindered by ties to the slave community from which he was escaping. Enslaved black women, on the other hand, routinely demonstrate their ties to family and community in their autobiographies, which made their decisions to escape the bonds of slavery more difficult and complex. (89)

Jacobs depicts a network of relationship on which she depends and to which she contributes. She respects and fears but above all, she loves her grandmother, her children, her brother, her uncle, her aunt. She feels closely connected with family and friends. Male narrators relate little about their families whereas women always describe their close relatives. Most male fugitives seem to define freedom as

autonomy, whereas most female fugitives seem to define freedom as interdependence with relationships. Jacobs muses about escaping slavery, “I could have made my escape alone; but it was more for my helpless children than for myself that I longed for freedom. Though the boon would have been precious to me, above all price, I would not have taken it at the expense of leaving them in slavery” (100). Women narrators of slave experience organize their narratives around their relationships with meaningful people in their lives. She defines freedom as independence, as the right and ability to maintain herself and her loved ones within a network of mutual care and service to and from others. Though men and women have different strategies to escape from slavery, they engage themselves in writing to break the isolation they perceived in slavery. They attempt to build a relationship with rest of the Africans, Americans and Europeans. Some white people who were their masters have played significant roles in their journey to freedom. Both of them are assisted and helped by their white masters and their own community. This shows that they have maintained a balance in their writing.

Black men and women use language as a weapon to ensure the freedom of their children and themselves. They celebrate survival against racial oppression, sexual exploitation, and discrimination. They attempt to embrace and heal themselves by recollecting their past in a series of flashbacks. They show the literary power of subversive communicative tools as they employ them to trace the various acts of resistance used by Equiano and Jacobs to nullify the oppressions of enslavement. Wanda A. Hendricks notes that, “because of the nature of enslavement and because of the scars left by particularly vicious acts of oppression, Afro-American autobiographers; like Jacobs and Equiano, chose to make their stories public in an effort to effect changes for themselves and for their black brothers and sisters” (150).

They use narrative through which they can express resistance to the oppressions they suffered, and they successfully carve enough room from within which to release the power of their social, political, and literacy voices. They claim agency for themselves and confound the attempts of their oppressors to make them powerless. Through their autobiographical texts, they display the many ways in which the black women and men who are thought to have the least voice, manage to put forth powerful statements. Linda S. Maier in her study emphasizes, “their creative talent empowered them to resolve their own individual grief and achieve a greater sense of inner strength and confidence. By sharing their story, they speak for those who have no voice and for those who are kept in silence” (148). They are able to put everything together in these pages in such a way that we see a light at the end of a very dark tunnel. It is the possibility of reconciliation that gives power to control. Autobiographical occasion transforms him/her into something or someone new different from the earlier time.

These narratives are stories about the struggle for freedom and identity. A slave becomes a man. The fact of writing slave narrative involves not only an act of self-invention but an act of liberation, as “the will to power as the will to write.” Equiano reviews, “accordingly he signed the manumission that day; so that, before night, I who had been a slave in the morning, trembling at the will of another, was became my own master, and completely free. I thought this was the happiest day I had ever experienced” (136). Reading and writing becomes his empowering tool for gaining freedom. Slave owners often view efforts to learn to read and attempt to repress them. Robert Zussman remarks, “in the course of writing, the ex-slaves demonstrated not only a successful triumph over bans on literacy, not only an ability to do something that slave owners thought dangerous or impossible. They also demonstrated and established a humanity that slavery had denied” (817). The word

and word help them to unsettle the foundations upon which racism, sexism, and racist-sexism depended and thrived. They give vivid personal account of the ways in which blacks, even in regions with large numbers of slave are able to affect and shape their own destiny. Kimberly Drake states, “the ability to utilize written language or literacy, is also portrayed by many ex-slaves as crucial to their quest for freedom, a freedom which in large part is the ability to allow the consciousness to develop without restriction” (92). They take control of their bodies in order to give themselves a degree of freedom and security. In their writing, they come to declare their identity through their truthful reconciliation of having risen above deprived circumstances. Acquiring literacy and writing about their experiences becomes an actual vehicle for enslaved people. Jacobs insists that, “No pen can give an adequate description of the all-pervading corruption produced by slavery” (57). The sufferings they endured can’t be explained in words. Words fail to describe their pains. But they explain it to some extent. By the act of writing and demonstrating their achievements of higher skills and thought, they can convince white people that they are indeed human and worthy of freedom. It casts in the form of a quest from enslavement to liberation.

Slave narratives have political and personal implications. The writings of ex-slaves are viewed as both powerful works of literary art and persuasive tool for articulating and advancing the abolitionist agenda. Jacobs confirms, “reader, my story ends with freedom; not in the usual way, with marriage. I and my children now are free! We are as free from the power of slave holders as are white people of the north; and though that, according to my ideas, is not saying a great deal, it is a vast improvement in my condition” (16). These narratives offer convincing evidence in making a case for the humanity of people of African descent by setting forth a particular image of ex-slaves that emphasize commonly admired human traits and

virtues. Kimberly Connor points out,

Realizing that all African would be judged on the evidence they presented in their narratives, ex-slaves wrote about their experiences to accomplish twin goals. Based on what they reported about the actual conditions of enslaved people they could create consensus in the nation that slavery as an institution was immoral and should be abolished. (37)

Demonstrating their proficiency in language becomes a form of resistance. They use this skill to take down the very institution that forbade it. Equiano's writing also plays a vital role to drive towards the abolition of the African slave trade in the British Empire. Equiano notes, "As the inhuman traffic of slavery is now taken into the consideration of the British Legislature" (161). His writing influences the creation of legislation, regulations and acts towards the abolition movement in Europe. Equiano states his purpose of writing, "a great part of my study and attention has been to assist in the cause of my much injured countrymen" (152). Jacobs also has not written her story for the sake of economical concern. Her main concern is to pull the attention of her readers to the harsh, brutal, demeaning condition of slaves, and especially the sufferings of women slaves, are exposed. Their narratives support the abolitionist movement and help to combat against slave trade.

Their narratives capture the essence of the abolitionist message. They call the Americans and British to live up to their moral responsibility. They expose violent conditions of the African slave trade to convince the government and public to make a practical difference for the improved conditions of the African slaves. They encourage their audience to take an active role in the abolition process. Jacobs narrates, "I do earnestly desire to arouse the women of the North to a realizing sense of the condition of two millions of women at the South, still in bondage, suffering what I suffered, and

most of them for worse” (3). The strong use of language makes the reader understand more clearly how much slaves, especially the women slaves suffer. Equiano and Jacobs’s participation in the abolition movement depends on their writing. Their narratives have great significance because they are former black slaves who have written their books themselves. In doing so, they provide evidence of the African’s ability to gain literacy and the intellectual potential to use it for political ends.

Equiano proposes, “I hope to have the satisfaction of seeing the renovation of liberty and justice resting on the British government, to vindicate the honor of our common nature” (232). Both of them help to dismantle the slave trade with the help of their narratives. Equiano and Jacobs write articles in newspapers, lecture for abolitionist cause. Their role is significant. Equiano’s vigorous activism and the publication of his enormously popular narrative coincide with the concern of a parliamentary inquiry into slave trade, and his book is frequently quoted during the proceedings. They speak out strongly against slavery and focus attention on black people throughout the world. They are actively involved in securing justice for their people.

Many African slaves learn to speak the language of their masters; very few have opportunity to write their own abolitionist narratives. Even those former slaves, who could write such as the poet Phillis Wheatley in the American slave context, wrote material that implicitly challenged slavery, but few challenge it as explicitly as Equiano and Jacobs’s condemnation of the slave trade. They focus on writing in order to expose the ‘miserable situation’ faced by Africans in the slave trade. It is not easy to get education under the oppressive institution of slave trade and write against it but it is not impossible. Their narratives become active force in the drive towards the abolition of African slave trade in Europe and America. They become the spokespersons for millions of black slaves who are unable to speak out or write down

their experiences. This transforms their slave identities as active abolitionists and powerful writers. It is a miracle that after all what Equiano and Jacobs endured; they survive, struggle, find the job, unite with family, and continue on their way toward success. They fight for those who are suffering in the bondage of slavery and make them free of the chains of it.

The very act of writing especially for people who do not occupy positions or status and privilege in the general society is a bold and courageous enterprise rather than simply a demonstration of the ability to express oneself. Specifically for Jacobs, it is a great challenge and risk to pick up a pen and write against the prevailing system. She reveals those sexual behaviors and harassment which are forbidden for black slave women. She is not concerned only with her freedom as Equiano rather she has concern of her children, family and relatives. Her constant attention to the details of her grandmother's courageous resistance to her master's oppressive maneuvers provides a strong female role model of a kind that Equiano never finds; Jacobs's grandmother is "at the beginning and ending of everything" (Jacobs 12). She throws off the societal restraints and breaks with the past and the mother in order to free herself and start a new life, and on the other hand, her desire and need to maintain a connection to that community. She becomes successful to achieve freedom and maintain her ties with her community too. Jacobs relates her story of sexual oppression, the dissociation of black families, and her fight for and flight to freedom, all in an attempt to build a bond of sisterhood between her and these white women readers, a bond which inspires Northern white women to take action against patriarchal institution of Southern slavery. Her writing seems to rid her narrating self of the sense of impurity and inferiority resulting from the abuse that her historical self suffered. It helps to restore her honor. This is the power of writing.

Equiano and Jacobs's long life span as a slave, as a fugitive in the South and in the North, as a participant in organized abolition, as a slave narrator, as a relief worker, as a public commentator on the condition of black people. Their intelligence, courage, resourcefulness allow other men and women slaves to overcome their hardships. The recovery of the narratives and the documentation of their autobiographical authenticity make possible a deeper understanding of Afro-Americans' history and literary quest for identity. They make journey from slavery to freedom, from bondage to independence. It is not possible to achieve freedom and individuality without the support from both their slave communities and from whites. Equiano and Jacobs, both of them buy their freedom with the help of their white masters. Jacobs's mistress Mrs. Bruce replies, "Shame on my country that it is so! I am ready to incur the penalty. I will go to the state's prison, rather than have any poor victim torn from my house, to be carried back to slavery" (Jacobs 217). The tears are in Jacobs's eyes while writing of her. This shows that all the whites are not brutal and cruel. Some of them still have humanity and morality inside them. As representatives African, they have right to freedom and they actively pursue that right. The narrative freedom they represent is collective, a freedom won only by participation in a social movement, rather than individual. To heal the wound left by loss, they undertake the therapeutic activity of writing about their bereavement. Autobiographical writings are mostly motivated by a desire for self-creation. Writing process converts the author's grief into a celebration of life. Their narratives celebrate a slave capacity to achieve humanity. They create their selves through writing or in words. As slave narrators, they linguistically overcome the discontinuities of their lives.

Finally, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* by Olaudah Equiano and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs in which they

make the readers feel how scriptotherapy helps them to overcome their trauma and break the silence and counter the image in which blacks are viewed as chattel and commodity and convince white society that Africans are, after all human beings. And the best lesson one can take from a traumatic experience is not to give up on life instead making it as a rock to step on and rise up higher. Writing has the potency to revive and make us free. Whether male narrator or female narrator they have basically the same goal but female slave narrators have to convince their readers that they are neither the victims nor fallen women. The purported goal of slave narrative is to reveal the truth about slavery by describing a representative personal history, one which might stand for the experiences of all slaves. They tell their stories honestly and completely and encourage audience to take stand against slavery. They become able to manage to speak even as they feel they are currently undergoing trauma. They articulate and narrate what at first seemed non-narratable. They demonstrate them as a man and woman of strong character and morality. Their writing becomes a tool to make slavery a national sin and gains power to alter the reality. Thus, writing autobiography takes them out of past traumatic experiences and transforms their pains into strength. It is a liberating and humanizing activity. Through writing they discover and create the world of self and they become able to share insights into life and their identities with others. They heavily dedicate rest of their lives to abolish slavery and free black people.

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