

Contrast between frederick douglass and harriet jacobs narrative

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Marjorie N. Bandiola Carlson English 101W2 28 February Comparison and the contrast between Frederick Douglass & Harriet Jacobs' narrative. We seldom thank God for the privileged life that we have got, for the worldly comforts that we are bestowed with until our heart is moved by soul-shaking stories. The autobiography of Frederick Douglass, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave*, and that of Harriet Ann Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Written by Herself, succeeds in bowing our heads in prayer. Both the authors were of African-American origin, born slaves, bonded in the southern part of America. They existed during the same period of time; Harriet Jacobs specifies her birth year as 1813 while Frederick Douglass mentions it was 1817 or 1818. Their pens described the same evil system of slavery that they witnessed and suffered. They suffered for more than two decades before they fled to gain freedom. However, the narrative of Frederick Douglass is more lucid and upfront has a better presentation of the conversations, superior illustration and continuity in the story than that of Harriet Ann Jacobs. The writing style of Douglass is more lucid as he describes each incidence. Unfolding the brutality of a master, Douglass mentions, " Mr. Covey gave me a very severe whipping, cutting my back, causing the blood to run, and raising ridges on my flesh as large as my little finger" (Douglass 66). On the other hand, Jacobs chooses to be suggestive in an attempt to maintain her dignity as a woman. While explaining the communication between her and her master, she mentions, " I was subjected to such insults as no pen can describe" (Jacobs 58). Her purpose is rightly fulfilled; however, the reader is left wondering for a while what the insult actually could have been. Douglass is upfront in mentioning

the names of people and places as he had nothing to be afraid of. Jacobs chose not to mention the correct names of the people. She did not name the places of her whereabouts in the southern part of America. She had left some of her family members and friends behind which might have got into trouble because of her story.