

Sydney Bramlett

Honors English 3

Mr.Harrison

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Views of Slavery

Reflect history of the detestable acts of slavery. If in today's world, people only knew the view of slave owners. Without the slaves that became authors, the world wouldn't know many of the atrocities committed by such people. A slave being able to read and write was something already perceived as inappropriate, and for one to become an author, to tell the world of what they endured was truly astounding. Through the anguish received and seen by authors Fredrick Douglas, and Harriet Jacobs, clarified in their first hand accounts of slavery, the differences between gender, and content display what a slave endured in day to day life.

Gender depicts writing in many ways, through feminine vs. masculine types of writing, to the legitimate content of what they wrote. Douglas depicts his writing to come across as masculine, and has a stronger content compared to Harriet. Douglas wrote with a form of violence, that could only come from a man. When he says, "No words, no tears, no prayers, from his gory victim, seemed to move his iron heart from its bloody purpose.", there's a sense of masculinity in his words toward violence. Douglas goes into great detail to show what truly happened, and didn't want to leave out any details. Douglas also proves this with his content. Douglas would add in specific details that didn't necessarily need to be there. Douglas's writing at times would seem like he was writing a script, trying to get as accurately down to details as he could. This is proved when he says, "The plantation is about twelve miles north of Easton, in Talbot county, and is situated on the border of Miles River. The principal products raised upon it were tobacco,

corn, and wheat.”, sure every story needs to set a stage for the reader to understand what's going on, but there's not need to say the exact location and what was grown on the plantation.

Women on the other hand, have a different, more realistic view of the world around them. In a world dominated by men, their opinions and views were always under-minded. It makes a person wonder if the men back then took a women's advice, maybe the world would be different today. For Harriet Jacobs life already wasn't live able, not only was she a slave, but a female slave. For this she endured emotional and physical violence, not the same physical violence a man would receive, but she represented a sexual fantasy for a master that already had a jealous wife. This is proved when she says, “I would rather drudge out my life on a cotton plantation, till the grave opened to give me rest, than to live with an unprincipled master and a jealous mistress.” To me it's a very feminine response to being treated like an item, she was already being harassed by her master, and the last the last she needed was for his wife “mistress” to be un doubtfully jealous. Jacobs is also different in representation of her content, she’s not vulgar, and adds feeling to her writing, in comparison to Douglas that writes more as a script. When she says, ““He was a crafty man, and resorted to many means to accomplish his purposes. Sometimes he had stormy, terrific ways, that made his victims tremble; sometimes he assumed a gentleness that he thought must surely subdue.”, she could have went into detail about how her master made victims tremble, or how he could bring victims in by being so gentle that they would go along with it, but she didn't. It could be that she's not giving specifics, because she doesn't want to revisit the situations, or just that she wanted to spare her audience of the details, knowing very well that other women would be reading it.

In conclusion, writing is different according to gender. The way an author writes usually depicts the nature of their character, and the lengths they will go to get their points across. For

Douglas, he doesn't spare the harsh details, which can prove to be a good and bad thing. There's a line where the audience needs details, and the line of having too much detail. For Jacobs she in my opinion gives enough detail, with a sufficient amount of feeling, to show what was happening. Douglas and Jacobs both added their own senses of masculinity and femininity, that they could only do themselves, along with their styles of writing. Writing to me shouldn't just be about gender and style, for the authors such as these, they both have their own way of telling a similar story that could appeal to both genders. Because of that, I think myself and other people would agree that the depiction of slavery is the same in each story, but there are some spared details here and there in each.