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Everyday Resistance in Harriet Jacobs's Autobiography

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"I had a woman's pride and a mother's love for my children; and I resolved that out of the darkness of this hour a brighter dawn should rise for them. My master had power and law on his side; I had a determined will. There is might in each."

– Harriet Jacobs

Abstract

This essay examines Harriet Jacobs's autobiography *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* from the perspective of resistance theory. The essay uses the analytical framework created by Anna Johansson and Stellan Vinthagen in *Conceptualizing 'Everyday Resistance': A Transdisciplinary Approach* (2020) to concretize and understand different resistance methods and how black women resisted while navigating in society as slaves and as mothers. Resistance theory and methodology is a newer research area in literature studies, and this study attempts to add to that research field to broaden the understanding of Harriet Jacobs's autobiography from a resistance perspective point of view. Johansson and Vinthagen's analytical framework uses four different aspects to capture conceptual and situational combinations of everyday resistance and relationships existing between agents and powerholders. This study finds that motherhood and communal resistance motivate and influence Jacobs's will to continue fighting for liberty and explains how Jacobs's everyday resistance actions create a feeling of meaning and agency in her life.

Keywords: Resistance studies, Everyday resistance, Harriet Jacobs, Black motherhood, Antebellum America, Slavery

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Introduction

Harriet Jacobs's autobiography, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, is one of the few written testimonies by women who experienced slavery in the USA. Jacobs uses in her story the pseudonym Linda Brent to write about her thoughts and reflections about slavery and motherhood. Millions of black slave mothers' stories have been lost due to the American slave trade system that forbade slaves to read or write. Jacobs's story represents a slave mother resisting the slave system and how she adapted her resistance strategies against her enslaver. Karen Craddock claims that within each story told, where a black mother's voice is heard, is a reclamation of black women's lived experiences and common memories of the lived past (20). Jacob's story is not only a story of resistance; it also restores slave mothers' agency and resilience.

The term resistance theory, in the context of literary studies, is uncommon. Resistance studies are generally connected to the study of power in political studies. However, there is a close relationship between cultural resistance and literature written by former slaves, which makes the analysis from a literal and political perspective possible. This study therefore attempts to use Anna Johansson and Stellan Vinthagen's analytical framework of resistance to analyze the concept of "everyday resistance," which, according to them, refers to subtle acts of resistances that agents of resistance adopt when their lives are at stake. Some examples of everyday resistance are thefts, foot-dragging and escape. Slaves were not able to resist openly their enslavers without risking their lives. Jacobs writes in her book about her enslaver's power abuse and mind games and how she adapted her resistance against him. Her strategies to navigate within the slave system shows the complex power relations existing and her capacity to adapt and resist the system itself.

This essay also attempts to discuss motherhood in Jacobs's story. Motherhood is an integral part of Jacobs's ability to find capacity and strength in her fight. Resistance and the idea of personal fulfillment have often been explored in literature and especially in literature written by African American women (Collins 118). Harriet Jacobs's story includes a similar theme of personal fulfilment and resistance but includes the perspective of a slave mother and how she practiced resistance despite being a slave.

This essay will analyze *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs as a literary autobiography and analyze the concept of everyday resistance manifested within the story. Combining everyday resistance theory and method will allow the essay to further add to literary theory from a resistance theoretical perspective. Firstly, the essay will give some historical and social context to the situation of slave women and slave mothers. Secondly, this essay will present the theoretical section of resistance theories, what motherhood is, and the framework used to analyze "everyday resistance." Lastly, the essay will analyze Harriet Jacobs's book trough the analytical framework provided by Anna Johansson and Stellan Vinthagen. Johansson and Vinthagen use four different aspects to analyze everyday resistance: repertoires, social relations, spatiality and temporality.

Historical and Social Context

The economic system in the southern United States depended heavily on slavery. The US Congress abolished the importation of slaves in 1808. Yet, the practice of owning and breeding slaves was not forbidden, and therefore the slave system continued until 1865, when the 13th Amendment abolished slavery in the United States. According to the law during this period, children followed the condition of their mothers, and children born by slave women were considered slaves, while children born by free women were free. Slaveholders who raped slave women owned the children, and so the

slave system continued. White women, on the other hand, were forbidden to have sex with slave men (Collins 50). This ensured that few children with black parents were free.

Countless crimes were committed against slaves. According to Patricia Hill Collins, rape and other types of abuse and threats were weapons of domination. It was a way to control or demoralize slaves since they could not protect themselves (Collins 147). This created a sense of helplessness and internal oppression among slaves. Slave men suffered from violent abuse. Yet, slave women were subjected to more threats of sexual violence than slave men, especially if they were considered attractive (Camp 42). Still, some slaves did have consensual sex with white slaveholders. But, according to Collins, any sexual encounter between two parties, where one was a slave or anyone who had so much control over someone else, could never be claimed to be fully consensual, even if the slave appeared to agree. Slave women, for instance, could never reject but rather avoid their slaveholders. However, this did not strip slave women completely of their ability to act and have agency. Some women never had sex with their slaveholders but made themselves useful in other ways, while others had sex in exchange for bargains (Collins 162). To illustrate, Harriet Jacobs's enslaver harassed and bullied Jacobs for years to make her sleep with him. Jacobs evaded her enslaver but never openly said no to his requests. After years of evading her enslaver, she chose to take another rich white man as her lover. According to Melissa Daniels-Rauterkus, Harriet Jacobs’s act was a type of non-violent civil resistance that helped her avoid the traditional power imbalance between a slave woman and an enslaver (502). She chose to be with a white man who had more power and prospects than her enslaver, which later gave her a chance to free her children (Daniels 506).

Slave women were especially subjected to harassment by their slaveholders. Slave men, on the other hand, were often rented out to other plantations and kept away from their families for long periods of time. The women often stayed nearer their homes. Consequently, many women became the heads of their families (Camp 37). This gave them an important role in their communities. Slave women were not only caregivers but also providers. Matriarchies arose through these structures and became an alternative to the patriarchal system that influenced white societies. Another way to handle the effects of slavery was to redefine the concept of family and create extended family units. Family bloodlines were replaced by the "African bloodline," and slaves referred to other slaves as "my black brothers and sisters" (Collins 49). Many different concepts connected to family and mothering in slave communities derived from the African heritage that black people belonged to. Concepts like blood mothers and other-mothering existed in Western African communities (O'Reilly 6). Blood mothers were the women who had given birth to a child, but othermothers were any woman who helped to nurture and raise it. Othermothers became essential in slave societies where slaves were sold off from their families and friends. This was a way to resist the inhumane treatment by building an alternative community where slaves (especially women) took care of younger slaves, created a safe place, and a sense of belonging to one another (O'Reilly 10). This type of maternal care expressed by slave women towards black people was a communal act of resistance against the exploiting treatment of black people.

Resistance has always somehow been present in the lives of slaves. However, many acts of resistance were done in private and subtle ways. Slaves learned about political opinions that questioned white supremacy and resistance methods from each other. These ideas were learned and passed on in the fields, homes, or other places

where opinions could be expressed freely (Camp 94). The slaves that resisted ideas of white supremacy sometimes back-talked their slaveholders or committed small acts of resistance, like stealing or misbehaving. Still, they were not able to significantly change their situation, but the acts very likely gave them a sense of agency.

Power and Resistance

To understand resistance as a theoretical field and concept, there is a need to understand the concept of power, with which resistance could be claimed to coexist. Power as a theoretical concept began with the ideas of political theory and political power. One of the most influential power theorist was Max Weber. His contribution to the field of power studies was to show how structural and organized power exists and organizes itself (Sadan 35). The research field of power continued to develop and to include illegitimate power and hierarchical structures within communities. Another influential researcher was Steven Lukes, who further developed ideas of power and added the concept of the third dimension of power. Lukes claimed that the first and second dimensions of power are easy to understand and "see," while the third dimension is "hidden" and shows how humans are unaware of how their interests are influenced and controlled by political preferences (Sadan 37). The earlier theories of power were explained in a structural and hierarchal order. Michael Foucault, on the other hand, contributed to the research field by claiming that power exists everywhere and is decentralized. Power exists in all types of social relationships and is reproduced through social interactions (Sadan 38).

Resistance as a concept exists in relation to power. The Foucauldian idea of power claims that power is a complex and dynamic process that is formed through relationships (Johansson and Vinthagen 110). Resistance influences and reacts to

power, while power influences and reacts to resistance, creating an interactive process between them (Johansson and Vinthagen 63). The dominant powers are reproduced through every day social interactions, thus creating norms and normalization processes (Johansson and Vinthagen 28). Resistance, on the other hand, is not manifested through normalization processes but is rather learned through cultural practices that are defined by the situation or agents. Some agents learn resistance practices from others and some agents create their resistance methods; therefore resistance can be both an individual act and a collective action.

The concept of everyday resistance was introduced by James C Scott. Scott claimed that everyday resistance acts are not always actions that are visible and that cause major conflicts, like protests or civil wars. Everyday resistance consists of concealed acts that the oppressed use against the oppressors in order to claim a sense of agency without risking their lives. Some types of everyday resistance acts are, for example, foot dragging, theft, or escaping (Johansson and Vinthagen 19). However, according to Johansson and Vinthagen, Scott and other resistance theorists have some gaps in their analytical resistance frameworks. For instance, Scott focuses much on the idea that everyday resistance acts must be political, while another resistance theorist, Michel de Certeau, claims that all types of actions that aim to be different are more or less resistance (44). Johansson and Vinthagen disagree with Scott and the ideas of de Certeau. Johnsson and Vinthagen claim that everyday resistance acts must create a pattern of resistance during a period in order to be considered resistance, and they do not need to be political either. An act of resistance can be a selfish act or a survival technique that changes depending on the day or circumstances of the one resisting (Johansson and Vinthagen 60).

The concept of everyday resistance has previously been criticized for not being real resistance, since the resisters' actions lack long-lasting consequences or change. Scott claims that society historically has always tended to give more value and importance to political and organized resistance actions (Johansson and Vinthagen 35). However, this critique reduces the resistance that the subordinate groups have previously done and continue to do. According to Johansson and Vinthagen, researchers risk excluding non-political activists or regular people who navigate in dangerous situations where noticeable actions are not possible. It is also a recurrent repressive dominant mechanism used by the elites in power to reduce and discredit the struggle and resistance actions of the subordinate groups (Johansson and Vinthagen 49). Therefore, according to Johansson and Vinthagen, it is the resistance act and the agency itself that count, not what type of consequence or change these create (47). According to Johansson and Vinthagen, everyday resistance techniques are smaller and safer than "open resistance" and do not require much coordination (25). These actions have been taught by others within the marginalized subordinate groups, and the resistance techniques have always existed in the group as a part of the group culture (Johansson and Vinthagen 26).

In America, during slavery, slaves used different acts of everyday resistance against their enslavers in order to feel agency and resist an exploiting system that deprived them of basic human rights. Everyday resistance acts were not the same for every slave, since every slave navigated in different power fields and relationships, thus allowing the slaves to use different types of resistance acts. The acts depended on the situation in which the slave navigated. Some acts of resistance were at times denied by the white masters as non-existent, as a way to reduce the slaves' agency and ability to act. As an example, in southern USA in 1851, slaves that escaped from their enslavers

were considered mad and diagnosed with “draptomania” by the known doctor Samuel A Cartwright. Cartwright claimed that slaves needed their white slaveholders in order to flourish and justified his medical theory with history and the Bible (Caplan et al 2). Many slaves claimed that they escaped from their enslavers because of ill treatment. However, the white slaveholders ignored the slaves’ actions and diminished the slaves by treating them as dissatisfied children. This stripped slaves of their agency and derided the acts of resistance that slaves were able to do. Other acts of resistance were simply undetected by white masters. According to Henry Louise Gates, signifying was a resistance method and a common practice among slaves. As early as the eighteenth century, there were recordings of the practice of signifying, where slaves sang songs full of coded language about their masters (Gates 74). Signifying was a way to convey the experience of slavery and undermine the power structures. Many slaves practiced signifying protectively, and that was often misunderstood by white enslavers. For instance, some claimed that slaves were happy because they were often heard and seen singing (Gates 73). However, the lyrics and songs were coded and sung in a way that only made sense to the slaves.

Other critiques of everyday resistance theories claim that escaping or avoiding the dominant power was not an act of resistance, since the person resisting did not influence the power structure. However, escaping, even if it was temporary, made it impossible for power holders to use their power against the slaves (Johansson and Vinthagen 56). According to Camp, runaways were able to resist the slaveholders successfully due to the slave communities helping them out with food, directions, and shelter (Camp 47). This shows an important everyday resistance form practiced during slavery in America, which did not lead to the liberation of the slaves but was an important act of agency and resistance from a personal and communal perspective.

Therefore, in this essay, conceptualizing and analyzing everyday resistance begins with resistance being a particular act that is consciously chosen, and the aim of which is not to create long-lasting results but rather to undermine power.

Black Motherhood

Motherhood as a concept is difficult to define, and there is no consensus on its definition. To understand the politics of motherhood, there is a need to understand the social dynamics, power structures, and gendered ideologies that shape and influence women's experiences of being mothers. Yet, motherhood must also be understood as a cultural and personal experience. Motherhood is one of the most prominent themes of Jacobs's story. It gives Jacobs the strength and will to take action and change her children's future. Jacobs tells many times of the sorrows of slave mothers who will never be able to meet their children again. She tells her readers about the communal encouragement and resistance that many slaves did, but also about her othermothers who embodied the sacrifices and struggles of motherhood and slavery. Jacobs's book had a political motive to show the cruelty of slavery. Yet, in some ways, the book also attempts to use motherhood as a political tool to awaken white readers' empathy and reclaim black motherhood. Jacobs also attempts in her story to define motherhood for herself through a combination of self-awareness, reflections on what motherhood was for her as a child, and how her othermothers practiced motherhood. Besides reflections about motherhood and the hardships of being a slave mother, Jacobs has reflects on liberty, agency, and class. According to Iulian Cananau's conceptual historical reading of Jacobs's book, race preceded ideas of citizenship, like individual liberty, agency, and class. During the Antebellum era, white women claimed their domestic sphere and were

able to continue their struggle for citizenship (Cananau 24). While motherhood was intertwined with the concept of womanhood, free African-American women could connect citizenship with neither motherhood nor womanhood (Cananau 23). That meant that citizenship rights were not a black slave woman's biggest concern. Jacobs's main concern was the freedom to be a mother.

There were many different ways to exercise motherhood in the slave communities. Some mothers instilled the ideas of white supremacy in their children and taught them how to adapt themselves to the enslavers, while others resisted white supremacy and taught their children self-value and resistance (Collins 51). There are many perspectives on black motherhood and perhaps equally many claims about how Jacobs chooses to see herself as a mother. For instance, according to Stephanie Li, Jacobs's definition of motherhood was the freedom and ability to be able to provide for her children: Li suggests that "Jacobs presents freedom not as a condition of individual liberty, but rather as the ability to provide for and protect one's children" (23). In a similar sense, Nathan Full presents in his MA thesis, "The Power to Overcome: The Resistance and Resiliency of Black Motherhood," three new ways to define and understand black motherhood from a literary perspective in Afro-American literature. In his thesis, he suggests three different perspectives and defines them accordingly: progressive motherhood, regressive motherhood, and fierce motherhood. Nathan Full defines fierce black motherhood as a will to resist oppressive power structures and institutionalized maternal slavery and to reclaim the historically denied relationship between a mother and child (Full 33). Full claims that fierce motherhood's main driving force is to love and protect children and to end slavery. Full writes: "Fierce motherhood, when applied to this definition of kinship, is a reclamation from slavery, one where the children and freedom denied to the enslaved are finally in the possession of the black mother, making offspring and the families that arise from these configurations a key

motivator in the black mothers' acts of resistance." (Full 35). Black mothers assert their family bonds as an act of defiance, while prioritizing their roles as mothers to liberate their children from slavery.

This essay takes inspiration from Full's thesis and suggests that Jacobs's definition has some similarities to Full's ideas of fierceness in black motherhood. Although the aim of the essay is not to focus solely on motherhood, it is of interest to understand how black motherhood is a driving force in Jacobs's resistance actions.

Four Aspects of Resistance

Johansson and Vinthagen suggest four different analytical aspects for analysing everyday resistance. The four aspects are repertoires, social relations, spatiality, and temporality. All of them are important to understand and analyse intersectionality. However, not all four aspects are equally important. It depends on what the focus of the analysis is. Johansson and Vinthagen claim that the most important thing before starting the analysis process is to analyse how power functions and manifests itself (82). The American slave trade system was an exploiting system that used slaves for profit. The wealth and power that followed with the slave system was upheld through different laws encoding race and class. This ensured that black slaves where enslaved for life without the possibility of changing their situation (Elliot and Hughes).

This essay will categorize Harriet Jacob's everyday resistance acts according to the four analytical aspects provided by Johansson and Vinthagen. Johansson and Vinthagen use the concept of "repertoires" to include and capture conceptual and situational-bound combinations of everyday resistance that exist in relation to power (88). Repertoires are collections of methods and ways of repeated patterns of resistance. These methods have evolved historically and culturally (Johansson and Vinthagen

94). Resisters adapt their way of resisting in different creative ways against the power discourse that dominates them (Johansson and Vinthagen 103) and do not challenge the power discourse in an open confrontation. Some of these methods might involve stealing office supplies or food unnoticed in a working environment.

To understand who is carrying out the acts of resistance, the social relations between different individuals must be analysed. Johansson and Vinthagen call it the three-actor model. The three-actor model consists of the agent, the target, and the observer. Agents are the ones that do some type of resisting. The target is the one that represents the power discourse or enforces it, and lastly, one is the observer, who is the actor witnessing the interaction between these two main actors, for example, a researcher (Johansson and Vinthagen 106) or, in this case of Jacobs' slave narrative, a reader. Resistance is not only defined by the resister but also by the target that is being challenged and the observers that witness the interaction.

In the beginning of theorizing power and resistance studies, people who were defined as agents were mostly known as people who belonged to a marginalized group that conducted acts of resistance towards the representatives of power: a strike from below. Nowadays, more theoretical researchers in resistance theory recognize and include more agents in their studies that had previously been excluded, like civil servants (Vinthagen and Johansson 109).

According to Foucault, the link between power and resistance is created through space (Johansson and Vinthagen 123). Power discourses exist within a space and are always present, even if the actors enforcing these power structures are absent. For instance, slaves who fled from the fields/slaveholders were never safe. There were still many other places in society that upheld the power structure, like other slave masters, white people, or even other slaves who tried to gain favours by hunting down and taking home slaves who had escaped.

Space is political and ideological and determines what actors might be able to do or how they interact in a certain space, which in turn determines how acts of resistance are created and exercised. Johansson and Vinthagen argue that the concept of third space is relevant to the analytical framework of everyday resistance. The third aspect of space is the idea that space itself is an uncertain and fragmented or incomplete, thus creating the possibility of being transformed and used in creative ways by agents. This means that agents of resistance can use their tactics and different advantages to perform resistance in a space (Johansson and Vinthagen 128), which is pivotal for resistance studies (Johansson and Vinthagen 131). According to Miranda Green, the garret that Jacobs had lived in for almost 7 years is an interstitial space. An interstitial space in architecture is a space where mostly mechanics or other types of machinery are located. These spaces are not created to function as spaces to live in. Green argues that the garret is an interstitial space because it has no function and that the space is between other spaces that have a purpose in the house. This also symbolizes Jacobs's in-betweenness. Jacobs occupying the garret is neither a slave nor a free woman, and she both is and is not a mother to her children (Green 54). Green argues that the interstitial performs as a resistance tool because the space has no cultural meaning, and with Jacobs's presence, she transforms it into a resistance tool (Green 56).

Time and space are intertwined with one another. However, time as a concept is less discussed than space in resistance studies (Johansson and Vinthagen 136). Time has a big impact on when and how resistance is organized. Time control is something used in many instances where power discourses exist, and resistance can therefore use time to resist power (Vinthagen and Johansson 138) by using specific times of the day or time length to practice certain resistance actions. For instance, truants and other types of escapees have always used the time of night to feel safe and create a way for them to exercise their type of resistance

Analysis

Jacobs faced a multitude of obstacles in her story, yet her commitment to her children's emancipation and wish to be free derived from her years as a child, when she was unaware that she was a slave and saw her mistress as a mother figure. Everything changed when she was given to the Flint family. Her life became hard, and she never stopped dreaming of becoming free. Jacobs's will to be free is also inspired by her brother and her uncle. Their friendship and kinship strengthened their dream of emancipation and instilled ideas of resistance. Jacobs's grandmother Martha, on the other hand, was a slave almost her entire life, and Martha believed that the only way to free her children was to navigate within the premises of the white slave owners and buy her children freedom. Martha upholds, in some ways, the doctrine of white supremacy. Martha believed that slavery existed due to the will of God and that her family members needed to be content with their situation in life (Jacobs 17). However, through Jacobs's story, the reader becomes aware of how slaves were abused, tortured, and kept in ignorance, and how they were manipulated and lied to by white slaveholders. Martha's mother work (act of love) was to provide a home for her family and work endlessly to free her family members. Similar to her grandmother, Jacobs' act of love was to free her children from slavery. Jacob claims that motherhood was difficult. However, the birth of her baby girl Ellen created a determination in Jacobs. Jacobs knew that Ellen would, in the future, like herself, become the object and desire of whoever owned her. Jacobs's main motivation to resist her enslaver and the system itself was the fear of what her children would experience in the future. Similar to Full's ideas of fierce motherhood, Jacobs depicts slavery as a demon that steals children from their mothers, and through her story and resistance actions, she reclaims her children.

Jacobs's story is full of different methods of resistance against her enslaver, Dr. Flint, and the slave system. This section of the essay will analyse the four aspects of resistance in Jacobs's book in combination with discussions on motherhood.

Repertoires

This part of the essay will mention some of the methods of resistance or repertories of everyday resistance by Jacobs and others in her community, as well as the main story within the book.

The system in the South gave slaveholders and white people power over slaves and black people. In Jacob's book, the main difference between free black people and slaves was that free black people had legal rights and the possibility to work for themselves. Black people were inferior in all terms of positions and rights. In the book, Jacobs's story not only includes her resistance methods against her enslaver but also other social resistance practices performed by slaves and the black community. For instance, after the Nat Turner incident, many slaveholders wanted to instil obedience in slaves by trying to control the church where slaves went to worship. Jacobs recalls the ceremonies where revenant Mr. Pike told slaves that they should obey their masters and that God judged slaves who misbehaved. Jacobs wrote that she and many other slaves were amused by Mr. Pike's intention to use Christianity to control them, and that it did not have the desired effect on them (Jacobs 60). Jacobs's ability to deconstruct how religion was used to control slaves shows her and other slaves' awareness of the methods used by slaveholders and white supremacists. Jacobs undermines the power by making the methods of control visible. However, her awareness comes from a historical tradition of resistance. For instance, slaves wrote their songs and hymns where they were able to express their thoughts in church. Signifying in songs was a common social

resistance practice among slaves. Jacobs claimed that the church was controlled by white supremacists and slaveholders. She writes that a priest who slept with a white woman was ostracized, but if a priest raped a slave, nobody cared (Jacobs 64). Jacobs acknowledges signifying by writing down the lyrics of some songs in her book, “Ole Satan's church is here below. Up to God’s free church I hope to go” (Jacobs 61). The song claims that slaveholders control the church on earth and that slaves will find God in heaven.

Resistance actions or repertoires are social as well as individual. Jacobs's acts of resistance/ repertoires were done by herself without much guidance or help of others in her community. However, her methods of resistance were not unusual. Many slaves avoided their masters and had several methods to resist and cope with abuse. Jacobs claims that slave women were subjected to sexual abuse in one way or another by their slaveholders (Jacobs 27). Jacobs’s methods of resistance have a progression from everyday practices such as avoidance and coping to planned resistance methods. Her combination methods vary, but their goal is to undermine Dr. Flint's power over her. Jacobs's ability to analyse and understand her enslaver allowed her to use subtle actions to protect herself and her family. Jacobs writes in the chapter “The new master and mistress” how Dr. Flint and Mrs. Flint mistreated their slaves. Despite Dr. Flint's cruelty towards slaves, he cared about his appearance and reputation. He wanted to appear as a respectful doctor. Dr. Flint’s need to keep up his appearance ensured that Jacobs was somehow protected from Dr. Flint’s intentions as long as other people were nearby. Jacobs as a teenager did chores, and moved within sight of others in the house. Dr. Flint would not step out of line as long as a third party could witness his behaviour toward her. Jacobs writes that one of her methods to avoid Dr. Flint was to sleep next to her great-aunt Nancy, who was a favoured slave of Mrs. Flint. Jacobs writes:

> By managing to keep within sight of people, as much as possible, during the daytime, I had hitherto succeeded in eluding my master/…/ At night I slept by the side of my great aunt, were [sic] I felt safe. He was too prudent to come into her room. She was an old woman, and had been in the family many years. Moreover, as a married man, and a professional man, he deemed it necessary to save appearance in some degree. (Jacobs 30)

Her way of navigating as a young slave girl in the house of her enslaver became an integral part of her life. Jacobs writes that when Dr. Flint realized that Jacobs had found ways to stay away from him, he then found other ways to abuse and threaten her: "What he could not find opportunity to say in words he manifested in signs. He invented more than were ever though [sic] of in a deaf and dumb asylum" (Jacobs 29). Dr. Flint resolved to abuse Jacobs by harassing her with letters or other actions of power. Jacobs proceeded then to adapt her resistance methods and resist Dr. Flint's abuse by pretending to be illiterate and unaware of his mind games, because she knew that it gave him satisfaction to see her reactions to his "foul language" and signs of power over her. However, her resistance actions were in accordance with and within the premises of what slave owners' thought of slaves. Slaves were not allowed to be able to read or write and were considered ignorant. Jacobs used these stereotypes and pretended to be illiterate to undermine Dr. Flint's power games. Another of Dr. Flint's attempts to manipulate Jacobs was to differentiate Jacobs due to her fairer complexion. Dr. Flint would say, "Have I ever treated you like a negro? I have never allowed you to be punished, not even to please your mistress" (Jacobs 32). Dr. Flint didn't allow anyone to punish Jacobs besides himself. Jacobs always rejected Dr. Flint's compliments and resisted by claiming her blackness and her camaraderie with slaves and the black community. For instance, when Dr. Flint insulted Jacobs's love interest, who was a free

black man, she said, “If he is a puppy I am a puppy, for we are both of the negro race. It is right and honorable for us to love each other” (Jacobs 35). According to Johansson and Vinthagen, everyday resistance actions are subtle, but they are also situation-bound and culturally developed. Jacobs seldom defies Dr. Flint openly, but she undermines him by not accepting his compliments her or reacting to his mind games and provocations. She knows that open defiance is punishable and avoids it. However, when Dr. Flint requires a response from Jacobs, her responses carry double meaning and are aimed at him. For instance, when Dr. Flint asks her if she is in love with Mr. Sands, she responds that she is happy that she does not despise Mr. Sands (Jacobs 52). This response for an outsider is difficult to understand. However, for Dr. Flint, who had been harassing Jacobs to sleep with him, it is obvious that her comment is targeted at him.

Even though Jacobs sometimes openly resisted her enslaver, she still navigated within certain parameters that were only possible for her. As an example, Jacobs claimed several times that she was somewhat protected from Dr. Flint because she was in a town where “people knew each other” (Jacobs 28). Dr. Flint's need to keep up appearances and live in a small town forced him to restrain himself. For instance, when Dr. Flint did not give Martha her freedom, he wanted to sell her privately instead of in the auction. When Martha was put up for auction, many people protested by screaming that the act of selling her was shameful, and to protest, no one bid in the auction except an acquaintance of Martha who was going to grant her freedom (Jacobs 13). Jacobs knew that if something bad would occur to her, her family and many people in town would condemn Dr. Flint. Jacobs was also aware that Dr. Flint thought that she was a valuable asset, which ensured a lower risk of her being killed.

Jacobs describes how Dr. Flint tried in many different methods to force her to have sex with him. One of his methods was to give her something that many slaves dreamed of having: their own home. Dr. Flint thought that the cottage would make

Jacobs forced to finally accept him and “willingly” have sex with him. Jacobs knew that Dr. Flint wanted to give her the cottage in an attempt to isolate her and “buy” her. She felt that she would not find enough ways to avoid and escape his intentions for long. She did not have many options to avoid what she called “her fate” and therefore made a radical decision for a woman in the 19th century. She chooses to spoil herself and have sex with another man in order to make herself less attractive and less of an object of desire for Dr. Flint. She writes: “I knew nothing would enrage Dr. Flint so much as to know that I favored another; and it was something to triumph over my tyrant even in the small way” (Jacobs 49). Jacobs writes to the readers that the prospect of Mr. Sands being a young, single, rich man who treated her kindly and was willing to free her and their potential children was what drove her to choose him. Jacobs does not disclose details or information about their relationship, but she does confess that her act was both selfish and a way for her to resist Dr. Flint (Jacobs 48). Jacobs was only 16 years old when she met Mr. Sands. The idea of a young slave girl confessing that she had consensual sex to gain favours with a white wealthy man is still almost unheard of. In fact, Jacobs openly apologizes to her readers, saying that she was forced to act in a way that no one could ever understand. Although she is aware of her decision and the scandal of admitting it, she shows the readers that this decision was her act of resistance. This action becomes an act of resistance towards a slave system that forces slave women to submit themselves to their enslavers. She chooses to act against her enslaver and find an alternative way to improve her chances. This conveys not only the complex reality of slavery but also how some slaves could resist their enslavers and the system itself by using unconventional and creative methods. She provokes Dr. Flint with this action, and she feels that she has had some kind of victory. However, the feeling is short-lived, since she has lost her position as a respectful young woman in society. When it is known that Jacobs is pregnant, the doctor still does not leave Jacobs

alone and claims that Jacobs has no choice but to accept his “goodwill.” Dr. Flint forbids Jacobs to have a relationship with Mr. Sands. She defies him and becomes pregnant again. Even though Jacobs now openly defied Dr. Flint’s wishes, her resistance actions were subtle and passed unnoticed as an act of resistance for many in her community. It is therefore important when analysing everyday resistance acts to be aware of the intentions of the agent. Jacobs intended to make herself less desirable but also to show Dr. Flint that he had no power over her. Her act of getting involved with Mr. Sands was not against the law or something unusual in the South. Many white men have had relationships with slaves. She, therefore, acted within certain parameters allowed for a slave woman, but how she intentionally plans, acts, and chooses Mr. Sands to help her is what makes her action a planned resistance method.

Jacobs’s many attempts to resist Dr. Flint's attention and abuse fail time after time. The doctor finds new and different ways to threaten her and methods to control her. Still, Jacobs successfully undermines Dr. Flint's power over her, while still managing to protect her family and avoid open confrontation. However, many of her small triumphs and resistance acts against Dr.Flint result in more abuse from him. Jacobs recalls how Dr. Flint for the first time hit her when she responded that she was in love with the free man who wanted to marry her (Jacobs 36). Dr. Flint's abuse becomes more physical after this incident, and later he starts targeting her children. Jacobs realizes that she is now more vulnerable because of her children. When she realizes that Dr. Flint has now focused his attention on the children to control her, she only has one option left, and that is to leave. She chooses to remove herself from Dr. Flint’s influence, creating a passive type of resistance where her absence defies him and his claim on her. With her absence, she can divert his attention towards her and save her children from ill-treatment because she knows that they are too young to be of interest to him at that moment.

One could argue that the years that Jacobs was hiding are years in which she passively resists Dr. Flint and does not make any direct acts of resistance. However, for Jacobs, her existence in hiding is not a passive act. She is daily struggling to live in the garret and taking necessary precautions to not reveal her hiding place and endanger her family. Her daily struggles of hiding and living under bad conditions to escape slavery are active choices that she faces every day, creating an active pattern of resistance. She chooses the uncomfortable existence in the garret instead of a life as a slave. Jacobs's resistance methods against her enslaver are unconventional, especially her choice of staying for so many years in the same place. However, Jacobs's main reason for staying in the garret is her children. She does not want to be separated from them. She writes in her book about different slave mothers who have been separated from their children without the possibility of ever seeing or hearing from their children again. The memories of these slave mothers and her grandmother's struggle to free her family from slavery have become one of her biggest fears. Dr. Flint's presence in town and his cunning methods make Jacobs worried about the safety of her children. Jacobs therefore sacrifices her possibility of staying in a more comfortable place and puts a hold on her life in order to protect her children.

During those years of hiding, Jacobs becomes a symbol of defiance for Dr. Flint and his family. However, for Jacobs's family and friends, her escape represents hope for a better life. Her family and friends, who know where she is hiding and provide for her, are actively resisting the Flint family. Their reasons for hiding Jacobs are personal, but at times their actions of hiding Jacobs become communal and an act against the system itself. For instance, Martha, who had internalized white supremacy after her years as a slave, her act of hiding and caring for Jacobs is personal. However, Martha has her own way of planning and resisting the system, although she never admits it. Martha invites two men for Christmas who are potential threats to Jacobs. She knows that her action of

showing her small house reduces the risk of her being involved in her granddaughter's escape, but she also knows that her kindness towards these men can be helpful in the future (Jacobs 100). Resistance acts done by Jacobs's friends and family show how they all gained something from it personally. Even other slaves, who did not have a personal connection to Dr. Flint but helped Jacobs felt a personal joy in Jacobs's victories. As an example, Betty, the cook who cared for Jacobs in her first hiding place, had no connection to Dr. Flint, but Jacobs recalled how Betty cursed Dr. Flint and chuckled, "Dis nigger's too cute for 'em dis time" (Jacobs 87). For many slaves and black people, every act of resistance against the slaveholders was a triumph.

For a long time, Jacobs's strategy was to hide, which was a form of a more passive resistance against her enslaver. However, Dr. Flint refused to stop harassing Jacobs's family and friends; his lies and threats made Jacobs and everyone helping her worried. Jacobs's passive act of resistance later becomes more "active" when Jacobs decides to fool Dr. Flint about her whereabouts. She chooses to resist her enslaver by sending fake letters. However, it does not stop there. She is also interested in how Dr. Flint reacts to her letters, creating a sense of power over him. She is hiding in plain sight and fooling him. Dr. Flint is not aware of Jacobs's schemes against him, but Jacobs is aware of her resistance actions, and this is what makes everyday resistance acts crucial for marginalized groups. How repertoires create a sense of control and make an agent feel is an important part of resistance and power studies. It makes resistance methods a part of a person's ability to feel agency and control in a difficult situation.

Many of Jacobs's acts of resistance come from a necessity to save herself and her family. Her acts are not political but personal from the beginning. Jacobs's resistance methods are, in the beginning, subtle but versatile. Some of her methods to resist Dr. Flint were planned, and others were everyday actions that ensured her more safety, either physically or mentally. Her resistance methods create a pattern due to their

consistency. However, everyday resistance does not only include visible resistance methods but also invisible actions. Jacobs's story ends with her becoming emancipated after many years of struggle. She achieves her aim in the end, and she can tell her story from her perspective. Jacobs makes her resistance actions and thoughts visible with the help of her book. This allows her readers to understand the many complex layers that Jacobs navigated in. Other slaves like Aunt Nancy, who died as a slave, also performed subtle acts of resistance. Jacobs writes about Aunt Nancy in one of her chapters in an attempt to honour her memory. She claims that although Nancy never openly resisted the Flints, she had her own way of claiming agency and resisting the system. Jacobs writes:

> When they thought I had better return and ask my master's pardon, because there was no possibility of escape, she sent me word never to yield. She said if I persevered I might, perhaps, gain the freedom of my children; and even if I perished in doing it, that was better than to leave them to groan under the same persecutions that had blighted my own life (Jacobs 119).

Aunt Nancy's story is perhaps similar to many other slaves' stories. The possibility of resisting enslavers and showing open defiance was difficult. However, that did not mean that most slaves did not resist and work against the system. This most likely meant that many slaves' acts of resistance went unnoticed due to the slaves' ability to adapt and plan. Jacobs claims that she was able to continue resisting Dr. Flint due to the support and encouragement of her aunt. For some slaves, the act of assisting other slaves' resistance was an act of resistance itself. Slavery was not only an economical and lawful institution; it was a well-developed system of internalized control and methodical abuse. The power that slaveholders had was immense. Many slaves did

resist, and analysing and acknowledging these resistance methods and their ability to sometimes go undetected makes the framework of everyday resistance important.

As the years pass, Jacobs becomes more aware of how slavery and racism are normalized and how it is possible to resist racism by not accepting it. Her resistance methods were, from the start, personal, and a necessity for survival, but they later became more political. For instance, Jacobs compares how the English treated her in comparison to she was treated in the Free States and how racism is still prevalent in the USA. In Rockaway, Jacobs is treated differently from other baby nurses because of her complexion, and she is resolved to not accept the bad treatment. She writes, "I was resolved to stand up for my rights, they concluded to treat me well. Let every colored man and woman do this, and eventually we shall cease to be trampled under foot by our oppressors" (Jacobs 145). At the beginning of the book, Jacobs, at a young age, questions slavery and white supremacy, but at the very end of her book, she encourages slaves and the black community to actively resist and claim their rights.

The Three Actor Model

Another aspect of the analytical framework provided by Johansson and Vinthagen is the relationship between the agent, target, and observers. To simplify, in the book, Jacobs is the agent while Dr. Flint is the target. Dr. Flint is the antagonist in the book, but he is also a symbol of slavery. For instance, when Jacobs escapes from Dr. Flint, his physical presence does not influence her life directly. Yet, he is still present and lures in the shadows as a threat lingering in New York, reminding Jacobs that she is a slave. The relationship between Jacobs and Dr. Flint was complex. Dr. Flint, as Jacobs' master, could do what he wanted with Jacobs without any legal consequences. However, he is sadistic and prefers to emotionally abuse Jacobs rather than physically abuse her. Dr.

Flint's aim with his abuse is not only to have sex with Jacobs. Dr. Flint wants Jacobs to be submissive and surrender herself to him. Dr. Flint finds something in Jacobs that he wants to possess. Perhaps Jacobs' youth and intelligence (Jacobs 82) makes her desirable or some sort of challenge for a man who had his entire life been able to manipulate and control his slaves to do as he wanted. Although Jacobs is afraid of Dr. Flint, she never responds to any of Dr. Flint's attempts to control or manipulate her. Dr. Flint's obsession with Jacobs lasts until his death. It is possible to claim that Jacobs had some sort of influence over her enslaver. Her influence could also be seen as a type of power. However, it is wrong to say that power and resistance is the same. Power and resistance are integrated with one another, but when someone in a position of power is influenced by someone in a marginalised position it does not change the power structures. It undermines it temporarily. However, power structures or relations are not simple to understand. In theory, Dr. Flint had all the advantages, but somehow Jacobs was able to undermine and provoke his authority.

The readers, to whom Jacobs refers and tells her story, are the main observers in the story and can witness the ongoing cruelty of slavery and Jacobs's interactions with Dr. Flint. In many instances, the readers are the only ones who can understand the dynamic between Jacobs and Dr. Flint. Jacobs feels ashamed when her brother or other members of her family can witness how she is mistreated by Dr. Flint. Even so, she chooses to not involve her family to protect them. Jacobs writes that she and her brother could not show how much they loved each other because that could be used as a tool to control them (Jacobs 38). Many slaves had ongoing battles with their enslavers that their families and friends were not aware of. Jacobs at a young age knew that slaveholders controlled and abused slaves by hurting or threatening their families. As mentioned previously, Jacobs claimed that she was somewhat protected from severe abuse since she came from a small town where people knew each other. Jacobs often

writes about the cruel treatment of slaves, but she also writes that she and her family were treated with less physical violence than other slaves. Still, this did not mean that she and her family were not cruelly treated. This only indicates that her experience was less violent than many other slaves' experiences. This could be due to the fact that Dr. Flint and Mrs. Flint respected Jacobs's grandmother Martha, who had been a slave for 50 years in Mrs. Flint's family and was like a mother to Jacobs. Jacobs's grandmother was a well-known and respected person in town, and she had many friends and influential acquaintances. As an example, Jacobs's first hiding place after escaping is in the house of a wealthy white woman who is an acquaintance of her grandmother. Later in the book, Dr. Flint visits this woman to borrow money and search for Jacobs in New York. This showed the different financial positions of Dr. Flint and Jacobs's benefactress but also indirectly Jacob's grandmothers' social position in their town. Jacobs writes this about her grandmother: "Though she had been a slave, Dr. Flint was afraid of her. He dreaded her scorching rebukes. Moreover, she was known and patronized by many people, and he did not wish to have his villainy made public" (Jacobs 28). Dr. Flint's need to keep up his appearance and Grandmother Martha's social position in town prevented Dr. Flint from perhaps using other methods of violence and abuse against Jacobs. Although Jacobs does not tell her grandmother about all the abuse she endured, Martha is watchful and aware of Dr. Flint's obsession with Jacobs. For instance, when Martha sees that Dr. Flint hits Jacobs in her house, she starts an argument with Dr. Flint and tells him to leave Jacobs alone and that he should start praying for his soul (Jacobs 70). In other instances, Jacobs' family became observers of the ongoing power struggle between Jacobs and Dr. Flint, and this becomes clear when Jacobs goes into hiding, and she needs to rely on their help to continue her fight against Dr. Flint. However, Jacobs's family members, as mentioned, also resisted Dr. Flint and could be claimed to act as agents themselves in some parts of the book.

Jacobs witnesses many different interactions and ongoing resistance methods made by her family and friends, as well as other types of power dynamics and relationships. For instance, Dr. Flint could also be manipulative towards his wife and make Mrs. Flint feel inferior when they argued. Jacobs tells Mrs. Flint about Dr. Flint's threats and abuse. When Mrs. Flint confronts Dr. Flint, he dismisses her and proves to Mrs. Flint and Jacobs his power over them (Jacobs 32). Mrs. Flint, a woman in the US South in the 1800s, is not able to demand anything from her husband or stop him from abusing their slaves. Jacobs not only witnesses the consequences of slavery in Dr. Flint and Mrs. Flint's relationship. She claims that slavery destroyed many enslavers' families. Young girls became aware of their father's intentions with the slave women, and the wives could not forbid their husbands to take advantage of the slaves. The wives could remove the slaves and their husbands' bastard children, but not the act itself. This lack of power made many enslavers' wives hard and cruel. Jacobs writes that Southern women knew that their fathers and husbands raped the slaves, while women from the north were not aware of the rape culture. Yet, many wives chose to blame the slaves instead of their husbands because they lacked the power to change their situation (Jacobs 46). Jacobs's analysis shows how she was aware of the patriarchal system and how that influenced slavery and the family structures in the South.

Space and Time

Space and time are the third and fourth analytical aspects of Johnson and Vinthagen's resistance framework. Jacobs used space as her main resistance method to evade and resist Dr. Flint at the beginning of her story. One of the advantages of Jacobs was that she understood Dr. Flint's character. When Jacobs escapes, she is not able to closely watch or anticipate Dr. Flint's moves. She hides, but she never stops planning ways to

resist Dr. Flint's claim on her children and herself. Instead, she uses time and space to create distance between her and her enslaver's control over her.

Jacob's possibilities of finding a safe place to hide after her escape are almost non-existent. She must not only find a place where she can be safe from the weather conditions and animals but also from people who could betray her. Besides that, she needs to fully rely on others to provide her with food and clothes. When the temporary solution is to stay at her grandmother's house in the garret, she is still not safe. White people could be safe in their homes, but not black people. As an example, when the Nat Turner incident occurs, Jacobs recalls how white people killed and destroyed black people's homes during the search. Jacobs was not able to do anything to resist the search of her grandmother's house but knew that she could provoke those who would search her grandmother's house: "I knew the houses were to be searched/…/I knew nothing annoyed them so much as to see colored people living in comfort and respectability; so I made arrangements for them with especial care. I arranged everything in my grandmother's house as neatly as possible" (Jacobs 55). Jacobs then transforms a neutral space into a resistance tool through her actions. She is not openly challenging the system but rather working within the parameters that are allowed for a person in her position. She undermines the authority of white people by arranging the space neatly to provoke the searchers. It is only due to her family's acquaintance with a white person who happens to pass by Jacobs's grandmother's house that the search in ends without further consequences.

Space can be an effective tool in resistance actions. However, it is the ability of the agent that determines how effective and useful a certain space can become. For instance, Jacobs's first hiding place at the white lady's house gave her a feeling of triumph when she saw Dr. Flint pass by her hiding place. It gave her a sense of control that she could observe Dr. Flint while he did not know where she was (Jacobs 85). The

garret gave her sometimes the same feeling of control over her enslaver. The advantage of being hidden while at the same time being able to study Dr. Flint without his awareness is something powerful for Jacobs. She used this as an advantage and was able to know what Dr. Flint thought and anticipate his schemes with the help of her aunt Nancy, who acted like a spy in the house of Dr. Flint. This sense of control, however small, helped Jacobs continue her fight. As mentioned in the theoretical section of this essay, space itself is uncertain and fragmented, which allows agents to transform and use space in many different ways. Yet, this uncertainty also allows space to represent many different aspects of resistance actions and feelings in an agent. The garret has many different symbolic meanings for Jacobs. The space manifests itself as a symbol of freedom from slavery and prosecution. She calls it the "loophole of retreat" (95). However, the place also manifests itself as a symbol of imprisonment. One could argue that the imprisonment is voluntary since Jacobs chooses to stay there to watch over her children, but at the same time, she is suffering from being in the small room. She describes how she endured rainy winters and hot summers in the garret and became sick. She is also forced to watch her children grow up without being able to interact with them. The consequences of her hiding place do not stop when she leaves it. She had physical problems for years after she left the garret (Jacobs 122). The garret is not a comfortable place for her. It is a tool to resist and to find a way to achieve her main goal, emancipation for her children and eventually herself. The space itself is more or less neutral, but with Jacobs's physical presence and her perseverance, the garret changes and acts as a resistance tool and a symbol for herself. Space in resistance theory is an ever-changing tool that transforms and evolves with the purpose and feelings of the agent. When Jacobs was hopeful, the garret was her safe space; when she was anxious, it was her prison. Like space itself, resistance is not a stable action or a simple process. It is a complex process of actions and feelings within the agent that changes

and transforms all the time. Agents who resist experience a wide range of emotions as well as experiences in their fight. However, resistance for an agent is almost always a positive experience that creates a sense of control in a difficult situation.

Time in terms of resistance is essential in Jacobs's story. Time has always functioned as a safety precaution for any type of resistance made by a marginalized group. For instance, night-time conceals and creates the possibility of being anonymous and safe from the precautions of open defiance. Many of the interactions between slaves and activities in the novel therefore occur at night. Even the interactions between Jacobs and her family for the seven years that she hid occurred during the night. Jacobs's grandmother's house is a safe place for Jacobs, but the house exists within a space where anyone could betray her. Jacobs's persistence and intelligence are her main resistance tools. However, one could argue that time itself is a resistance tool. It is how Jacobs chooses to organize her resistance and abides her time to scheme against Dr. Flint and free her children that makes time essential. For instance, Dr. Flint does not believe that Jacobs has left the area because of her children. Jacobs decides to hide and wait until Dr. Flint believes that she has fled the area. She knows that he will try to find ways to provoke her into making a mistake and revealing herself. However, Jacobs does not let herself lose patience. She actively chooses to not react to Dr. Flint's provocations and lets time and space create distance between her and Dr. Flint. She knows that if time passes, he will become tired and inattentive, and then he will make a mistake, which she can take advantage of.

When her children are imprisoned, she is very worried. However, she knows that the enslavers are aware of the fact that for many slave mothers, their children are their weakness and that slave children can be used to control the slave mothers. She has seen countless slave mothers suffer because their children are slaves. Motherhood for Jacobs is not to be a mother who can interact with her children and show them love. For

Jacobs, a mother ensures the safety and freedom of her children. She laments many occasions when she could not interact with her children during her many years in hiding and how she cried when even her children believed that she had left them. She sacrificed her time with her children and her prospects of being physically free to ensure that they would be emancipated. She is aware that her focus is to free her children so they can live their own lives. She states several times that she does not care for her own freedom as much as for her children (Jacobs 70). She redefines motherhood for herself and does not lose the aim of her purpose in her fight against her enslaver. Jacobs knows that if she can be more patient than Dr. Flint, he will eventually believe that she has abandoned her children, and then he will not be able to use them against her anymore. Time is therefore used actively in the novel. How much time must Jacobs be away in order for her children to be free? How much time does Dr. Flint need to believe Jacobs's scheme? Jacobs is able to use time as a tool of resistance. In a matter of months, her children and her brother became free from Dr. Flint's grasp.

In the end, Dr. Flint never stops searching and harassing Jacobs's family and friends. Eventually, time itself grants Jacobs the possibility of becoming free. Dr. Flint being 40 years older than her dies of natural causes and his family agrees to let Jacobs's friend buy Jacobs's freedom.

Conclusion

This essay has used the analytical framework of everyday resistance provided by Anna Johansson and Stellan Vinthagen, and it has analyzed what types of resistance methods Harriet Jacobs used in her slave narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, how the relationship between Jacobs and her enslaver was, how Jacobs resisted her enslaver while being hidden for seven years, and finally how motherhood motivated Jacobs in

her resistance. By introducing the concept of everyday resistance, subtle resistance acts are made visible and concrete. Resistance is rarely concretized and analyzed in literary studies. It is common to analyze how power manifests itself and how literary characters navigate within the premises of power. Although power is interesting to analyze, however, it is equally important to understand how resistance manifests itself in relation to power and how agents of resistance continue resisting in a position of disadvantage. Closely studying resistance in Jacobs's book allows for a profound understanding of different resistance methods, the main motivations of an agent, and a deeper understanding of how black women resisted while navigating in society as slaves and as mothers. Jacobs as a teenager resisted Dr. Flint to cope with abuse and threats, but when her children were born, Jacobs purpose for living became her children. While motherhood has a prominent part in the story and is part of Jacobs's identity and ability to find strength and continue her fight to emancipate her children, resistance for Jacobs is a psychological process with a range of emotions, both negative and positive. She defines motherhood for herself as her main purpose to protect and free her children from slavery. This allowed Jacobs to endure years of isolation and discomfort to keep her children safe. The essay has also discussed how communal resistance influenced Jacobs's ability and will to resist slavery and how she successfully resisted her enslaver with the help and support of her community. Communal resistance was an integral part of the community of slaves, especially for those slaves who openly defied and resisted their enslavers; without the community, many slaves would never have been able to resist, including Jacobs. Finally, this essay used resistance theory and method to broaden and deepen the understanding of Harriet Jacobs's book and show the many layers of resistance methods, motives, and experiences in the story.

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