

### Courtney Roberts: Comparative Voices.

When I was a Slave: Anthony Dawson “De nigger during slavery was like de sheep. He couldn’t take care of hisself but his master looked out for him, and he didn’t have to use his brains. De master’s protection was like de woolly coat. But de ‘mancipation come and take off de woolly coat and leave de nigger with no protection and he cain’t take care of hisself either.”

Similarities: Mr. Dawson and Mr. Farmer both needed their ‘master’ (being the owner or the federal government) to care for them.  
Differences: Mr. Dawson couldn’t function without his ‘Master’ where Mr. Farmer manipulated the use of the Federal Government to progress his agenda.

Voices, Freedom Rides; James Farmer “If we were right in assuming that the federal government did not enforce federal law because of its fear of reprisals from the South, then what we had to do was to make it more dangerous politically for the federal government not to enforce federal law.” “Our theory had been right that once we allowed the racists to create a crisis by bloodying us, then the federal government Would have to provide protection, and it did.”

When I was a Slave: Mary Armstrong “Polly devil if there ever was one, and she whipped my little sister what was only nine months old, and just a baby, to death.”

Similarities: Violence is the similarity here. Both are addressing violence.  
Differences: In the slave case, she eventually hits Polly devil with a rock in the eye to avenge the death of her sister. She doesn’t get punished because she is then someone else’s slave. In Voices they try to think of non-violent ways to act, knowing the white racist will start the violence against them.

Voices, Student Sit-ins; Diane Nash “One of the things that we had learned from Gandhi’s movement was to turn the energy of violence that was perpetrated against us into advantage”

When I was a Slave: WL Bost “This made me mad so I took his insurance policy and cashed it. I didn’t want nothing to do with him, if he deny his own color.”

Similarities: Color was always a factor.  
Differences: In most of the Voices movements, whites were involved in trying to make change. In this scenario with WIWAS the near white black was trying to pass a white person and his adopted black father eventually didn’t want anything to do with him.

Voices, Freedom Riders; James Peck “Finally I came to again, and I looked up and a white GI....said ‘You look bad, do you need help?’”

When I was a Slave: Tom Robinson “ But I do remember how she used to take us children and kneel down in front of the fireplace and pray. She’d pray that the time would come when everybody could worship the Lord under their own vine and fig tree—all of them free.”

Similarities and differences: Both groups are working together. In WIWAS even though it was a slave/master situation they were all kneeling and praying and on equal footing with the Lord. However in the Bus Boycotts, the white women didn’t want to lose their maids so figured out a way to circumnavigate the transportation as well as the demands for them to fire their black help. I just find the co-dependency of both groups ironic. Whites couldn’t get to heaven if they treated their slaves bad and in many of the slaves voices talked about religion and their masters ensuring that their slaves were brought up with Christian values. In Voices the bus boycotts, sit ins and other movements brought a loss of revenue and labor which led for change based on the whites needing the blacks.

Voices, The Montgomery Bus Boycotts; Virginia Durr “The strange thing that happened was a kind a play between the white women and the black women, in that none of the white women wanted to lose their help.”

When I was a Slave: Frank Bell “He takes a big long knife and cuts her head plumb off, and ties a great heavy weight to her and makes me throw her in the river.”

Similarities: The biggest similarity is the violence. As both books described the violence I was shocked. The little regard for human life. Even if you are racist, most people wouldn’t treat animals as cruelly. Some people just didn’t value the life of the African Americans at all. Differences: In this case I think the difference was only the time periods. However the inhumanity didn’t change at all. The men who killed Emmitt Till in the 50s were just as brutal as the description of a Master killing Mr. Bell’s wife before the Civil War.

Voices: Emmett Till “Her son’s face was swollen and disfigured. He had been beaten severely. One eye was gouged out, and one side of his forehead was crushed. A bullet was lodged in his skull.”