



Struggle for Freedom in Olaudah Equiano's the Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano

ABODOHOUI Orierien Olivier

Université d'Abomey-Calavi (Bénin)

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Published Online: 29 August 2025	This research analyzes the struggle for freedom in Olaudah Equiano's autobiography <i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano</i> (1789) as both a personal testimony and a political instrument. This work traces Equiano's arduous journey from his violent abduction in what is now southeastern Nigeria, through the Middle Passage, assorted Caribbean plantations, and trans-Atlantic trading ventures, to his eventual manumission and literary fame in Britain. It situates the author's individual story within the broader, collective struggle of millions for human dignity, cultural identity, and social justice under the Atlantic slave system. Through a postcolonial lens, the study analyzes how Equiano used literacy, Christian values, and personal storytelling to challenge slavery and influence public opinion in Britain. The research also highlights the role of Equiano's narrative in humanizing the experiences of enslaved Africans and contributing to the abolitionist cause in the 18th century. Grounded in slave narrative studies, narrative theory and psychoanalysis, this research work focuses on qualitative data sources including a close textual reading of Equiano's <i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano</i> , scholarly commentary and interpretations drawn from academic journals, books, and critical essays. This work illuminates Equiano's narrative as a pivotal cultural artifact that has not only portrayed his extraordinary life but also has built up a tangible political momentum toward the abolition of the British slave trade in 1807 and inspired subsequent emancipationist discourse across the Atlantic world.
Corresponding Author: ABODOHOUI Orierien Olivier	
KEYWORDS: Struggle, freedom, identity, slavery, abolition.	

INTRODUCTION

The history of slavery cannot be fully understood through statistics or political debates alone. It is also deeply human, filled with individual pain, resilience, and the search for dignity. Among the voices that have survived this traumatic period, that of Olaudah Equiano stands out. Through his autobiography *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, published in 1789, we get a rare first-hand account of the transatlantic slave trade from someone who lived through it and fought against it. Equiano's narrative is much more than a personal testimony; it is also a literary and political tool. His writing blends autobiography, moral argument, Christian ethics, and Enlightenment values in a way that speaks powerfully to both his contemporaries and modern readers. He embodies a unique figure: that of a formerly enslaved African who gained his freedom, mastered the English language, embraced Christianity, and used all of these elements to confront the dominant ideologies of his time. His narrative forces us to question not only the horrors of slavery but also the cultural systems that allowed it to

persist (Equiano, 1789, p.56). This research project emerged from my desire to understand how Equiano's story continues to resonate today and how literature can serve as a form of resistance. I was particularly interested in how Equiano manages to reclaim his identity and agency in a world that constantly sought to erase them. By analyzing his narrative, I hope to uncover the strategies he used to resist both physical and symbolic oppression. Moreover, Equiano's evolution from a kidnapped child in Africa to a free, literate, and influential abolitionist in Britain raises important questions about identity reconstruction, self-representation, and the psychological impact of slavery. I also seek to understand how religious faith, access to education, and mastery of language can serve as tools of transformation and survival in hostile environments. My study adopts a postcolonial perspective to examine the different aspects of Equiano's journey: his personal struggle for freedom, his use of narrative as a political weapon, and his role in the broader abolitionist movement. I also consider how his work challenged stereotypes about Africans and offered an

alternative voice within European society. This research is structured into three chapters. The first chapter presents the research situation. The second chapter outlines the terms of reference and research methodology adopted and the third chapter analyses and interprets the collected data.

I- Description of the Research situation

1.1. Research area

This research lies at the intersection of literature, history, and human rights. It focuses on how personal narratives, like that of Olaudah Equiano, can bear witness to systems of oppression and contribute to the transformation of public consciousness. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* is not only an autobiography. It is a political and historical document that contributed to debates on slavery in 18th-century Britain.

Through this work, we examine how Equiano’s personal experiences and rhetorical strategies helped lay the intellectual and moral foundations of the British abolitionist movement. His narrative also allows us to better understand the cultural tensions and identity challenges faced by Africans living in European contexts. The study contributes to African diaspora studies, British colonial literature, and postcolonial theory by investigating how an enslaved man could use writing to reclaim his humanity and influence his society.

1.2. Literature Review

Over the past few decades, numerous scholars have explored the richness and complexity of Equiano’s narrative. Paul Edwards (1967) masterfully reintroduces us to the gripping narrative of Olaudah Equiano, his life, and relentless pursuit of freedom. In this riveting account, Equiano, born in Africa and sold into slavery, unravels his odyssey spanning continents and cultures during the 18th century and James Walvin (1986) emphasizes that Equiano offered a credible human voice to the anti-slavery movement.

Vincent Carretta (2005), in *Equiano, the African*, raises the questions about Equiano’s place of birth, and proves that his identity was shaped by struggle and resistance, regardless of origin.

Henry Louis Gates Jr., in *The Signifying Monkey* (1988), presents Equiano’s work as an early example of African-American literary subversion through self-representation. Gates (1988) situates Equiano within a broader tradition of "signifying," (p.132). where enslaved and marginalized voices speak back to dominant narratives through coded language and symbolic resistance. His approach enriches our understanding of how narrative form becomes a space of power negotiation.

Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2002) read Equiano’s narrative as a powerful counter-discourse to colonial stereotypes. Their postcolonial lens reveals how the autobiography destabilizes imperial assumptions about African inferiority and uncivilized behavior. For them, Equiano’s mastery of European cultural forms particularly writing in English is not a form of assimilation but an act of strategic appropriation.

Equiano’s religious dimension has also attracted significant scholarly attention. His narrative presents a Christianity rooted in moral integrity and justice in sharp contrast with the practices of many Christian slaveholders.

Carey (2005) highlights Equiano’s use of sentiment and moral emotion as rhetorical tools aimed at mobilizing readers and legislators. His emotional appeals expressed through tears, prayers, and appeals to shared humanity were essential in moving British audiences who were unfamiliar with the brutal realities of slavery.

In addition, newer research has started to focus on Equiano’s economic agency and the way he used trade and maritime labor to negotiate limited freedoms. Simon Gikandi (2011) noticed that “*The performative act of writing one’s freedom becomes a subversion of the slave trade’s dehumanization*” (p.112). He has shown that Equiano’s experience also offers a window into the complexities of Black Atlantic commerce and identity.

My research aims to build on these existing studies while focusing more specifically on Equiano’s psychological, spiritual, and literary evolution. I believe that a more holistic reading of his narrative can reveal not only his resistance to slavery, but also the internal strategies through which he rebuilt himself and claimed full humanity.

1.3. Main Research Question

How does *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* portray the struggle for personal freedom and contribute to the abolitionist discourse in 18th-century Britain?

1.4. Specific Research Questions

- How does Equiano describe the psychological and physical effects of slavery on his identity?
- In what ways do literacy and Christianity serve as tools of empowerment in his journey?
- What rhetorical strategies does he use to gain empathy from his audience?
- How did his narrative influence public opinion and political momentum in favor of abolition?

1.5. Main objective of the research

To analyze Olaudah Equiano’s personal and literary journey from slavery to freedom, and to assess how his narrative contributed to shaping the abolitionist movement in Britain.

1.6. Specific research objectives

- To examine how Equiano constructs and reclaims his identity through storytelling.
- To study the role of faith, education, and economic initiative in his self-liberation.
- To analyze the persuasive techniques used to engage 18th-century British readers.

1.7. Main hypothesis of the research

Equiano’s narrative would not only recount his personal quest for freedom, but would also function as a deliberate political act to humanize the enslaved and influence the abolitionist cause in Britain.

1.8. Specific research hypotheses

- Equiano’s self-presentation would challenge dominant colonial stereotypes about Africans.
- His literacy and religious conversion would serve as instruments of personal and social legitimacy.
- Equiano’s emotional and moral appeals would be a key to mobilizing support for abolition.

II- Terms of Reference and Research Methodology

2-1 Terms of Reference

2-1-1 Theoretical foundations of research

This study is grounded primarily in postcolonial theory, slave narrative studies, and narrative theory and psychoanalysis, which together provide a rich framework to analyze Equiano’s life and work. Postcolonial thinkers like Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak offer crucial insights into how formerly enslaved Africans like Equiano negotiated their identities in colonial and imperial contexts. Bhabha’s concepts of hybridity and mimicry are especially relevant, as Equiano’s life represents a continuous balancing act between African roots and British cultural imposition. So, they help to understand how Equiano both adapted to, and resisted the colonial gaze.

Additionally, narrative theory plays a significant role in this research, with inspiration drawn from scholars such as Paul Ricoeur and Hayden White, who explore how storytelling shapes not only personal identity but also collective memory. Equiano’s autobiography is more than a chronological record; it is a carefully crafted text designed to persuade readers and assert a particular image of selfhood. This deliberate narrative construction depicts how stories are used as instruments of power and resistance.

Moreover, theories on the rhetoric of abolitionist literature, as developed by scholars like Carey (2005), frame Equiano’s literary techniques as strategic acts of advocacy. These approaches suggest that the emotional appeal and testimonial quality of slave narratives were essential in awakening public empathy and support for abolition in Britain. This rhetoric explains how Equiano’s narrative functioned not just as personal testimony but as a catalyst for social and political change.

2-1-2 Writings in support of the Terms of Reference

Several key scholarly works reinforce the theoretical framework for this research:

Paul Edwards and James Walvin’s *Black Personalities in the Era of the Slave Trade* (1983) critically examine the authenticity of Equiano’s narrative and its political significance, helping us navigate debates about its reliability and impact.

Vincent Carretta’s *Equiano, the African: Biography of a Self-Made Man* (2005) offers a detailed exploration of Equiano’s life, including discussions on how aspects of his identity may have been shaped or constructed in the narrative.

Henry Louis Gates Jr., in *The Signifying Monkey* (1988), provides a broader context on African-American literary

traditions, highlighting the importance of autobiographies like Equiano’s in shaping cultural expression and resistance. William Andrews’ *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760–1865* (1986) traces the origins and evolution of Black autobiographical writing, underscoring Equiano’s foundational role in this literary lineage.

These studies affirm the critical importance of Equiano’s narrative not only as a historical document but also as a powerful literary and political text. They justify its use here as a primary lens to explore themes of freedom, identity, and literary activism in the broader context of the 18th-century abolitionist movement.

2-1-3 Important concepts of the chosen model

This research revolves around several central concepts drawn from the theoretical frameworks outlined earlier:

- **Freedom:** More than just a physical condition, freedom here is understood as a complex and ongoing process involving psychological, economic, and spiritual dimensions. It is shaped not only by individual agency but also by the recognition or denial of that freedom by society.
- **Identity Construction:** This concept refers to the way a person’s sense of self is continually reshaped through cultural negotiation, memory, and the stories they tell about themselves. Equiano’s identity is neither fixed nor simple; it evolves as he navigates between African heritage and British society.
- **Narrative Authority:** At the heart of Equiano’s work lies the power to control and share his own story. This authority challenges dominant narratives and reshapes public perception, especially within the politically charged context of the abolition movement.
- **Hybridity:** Borrowed from postcolonial theory, hybridity captures the tension and blending between Equiano’s African origins and his life in British culture. This concept helps reveal the complexities and contradictions inherent in his self-presentation.
- **Testimony and Witnessing:** Equiano’s narrative serves as both a personal testimony of slavery’s horrors and a broader act of witnessing. His voice speaks not only to his own experience but also to the collective suffering and struggle for justice.

These key ideas provide the analytical tools that will guide the close reading and interpretation of Equiano’s text in the following chapters, illuminating both its literary form and political significance.

2-2 Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach centered on critical textual analysis of both primary and secondary sources. The goal is to understand how *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* functioned within the socio-political context of the abolitionist movement, as

well as to explore its role in shaping identity and contributing to postcolonial discourse.

2-2-1 Type of information retained

The research focuses on qualitative data sources, including:

- A close textual reading of Equiano’s *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789).
- Scholarly commentary and interpretations drawn from academic journals, books, and critical essays.
- Historical records and data related to the transatlantic slave trade, abolitionism, and 18th-century British society.
- Postcolonial and literary theories applied to unpack the narrative’s strategies, themes, and ideological implications.

The analysis prioritizes thematic exploration, rhetorical techniques, and ideological undercurrents present in both primary and secondary texts, seeking to reveal the layered meanings behind Equiano’s autobiographical project.

2-2-3 Information gathering tools

Given the academic focus of this study, the main tools for collecting data are digital and archival resources that provide access to a wide range of relevant materials without requiring direct fieldwork. I can cite :

- Digital academic libraries such as JSTOR, Project MUSE, and Google Scholar, which offer a wealth of peer-reviewed articles and critical essays.
- E-books and critical editions of *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, allowing for detailed textual study.
- PDF and physical copies of scholarly essays and historical documents sourced from both online repositories like Internet Archive and Hathi Trust, and university libraries.
- Citation management software such as Zotero or Mendeley to efficiently organize and reference sources, which is essential to maintain academic rigor.

Using these tools ensures a comprehensive and systematic approach to gathering a robust corpus of data, while acknowledging the limitations inherent in relying solely on secondary sources and digital archives.

2-2-4 Data analysis methods

The study applies a combination of literary content analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to interpret the data. This layered approach allows for a deep engagement with both the text and its wider social implications. The analysis involves several key steps such as:

- **Thematic coding:** Systematically identifying recurring themes such as freedom, identity, Christianity, violence, and resistance within Equiano’s narrative.
- **Close reading:** Paying careful attention to language choices, tone, narrative structure, and rhetorical

devices to uncover how meaning is crafted and conveyed.

- **Comparative analysis:** Placing Equiano’s narrative in dialogue with other prominent slave narratives and abolitionist literature, such as works by Frederick Douglass and Thomas Clarkson, to highlight similarities, differences, and unique strategies.
- **Contextual interpretation:** Situating the autobiography within the broader historical

and ideological context of 18th-century British colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade to better understand its political and cultural significance.

This multifaceted methodology helps for a nuanced and critical interpretation of Equiano’s work, emphasizing its dual nature as both a literary text and a tool of activism. It also reflects an awareness of the complexities involved in reading historical narratives that are both personal testimony and political intervention.

III- Data Analysis and Interpretation

3.1. Olaudah Equiano’s Journey to Liberation

In this section, I have analyzed the major steps that marked Equiano’s progressive path toward freedom. Olaudah Equiano’s life is located within the broader historical and ideological framework of transatlantic slavery. By recounting his personal experiences, Equiano does not only document the brutality of the slave trade but he also illustrates how enslaved individuals found ways to resist and transform their condition.

3.1.1. Historical Background of Slavery

To understand Olaudah Equiano’s journey to liberation, it is important to consider the broader context of 18th-century slavery, especially during the peak of the transatlantic slave trade. This system was both an economic engine and a deeply entrenched social structure shaping global relations.

The transatlantic slave trade was part of a triangular system connecting Europe, Africa, and the Americas. European ships exchanged goods like textiles and firearms for enslaved Africans, who were then transported under brutal conditions across the Middle Passage to the Americas. There, they were forced to work on plantations producing crops such as sugar and tobacco, which were then shipped back to Europe, fueling colonial economies.

As Walvin (2001) documents in *Black Ivory*, “slavery constituted the economic foundation of European colonial empires” (p.73). British ports like Liverpool and Bristol prospered from this trade, which was justified through racial and religious ideologies that dehumanized Africans and framed slavery as a “civilizing mission.”

Born around 1745 in what is now southeastern Nigeria, likely among the Igbo people, Equiano was kidnapped at about eleven and sold into slavery a common fate for many West Africans. His life story reflects the trauma of forced separation, violence, and dehumanization experienced by enslaved Africans. Yet, Equiano’s narrative also reveals

resilience and agency. He learned to read and write, converted to Christianity, gained his freedom, and became a prominent abolitionist. His autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative*, challenged prevailing racist views and played a key role in the British abolitionist movement.

Equiano’s story is inseparable from the brutal history of transatlantic slavery. His life offers insight into both the horrors of the system and the enduring strength of those who resisted it, highlighting the ongoing need to confront historical injustice.

3.1.2. Equiano’s Path to Freedom

In *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789), Equiano recounts his journey from enslavement to freedom, offering a rare personal testimony that critiques slavery and highlights human resilience. After being captured in Africa and sold multiple times, he ended up on British ships, where he gained exposure to new languages and cultures. Unlike many plantation slaves, Equiano learned to read, write, and speak English skills that became essential to his eventual emancipation.

His conversion to Christianity was both a spiritual awakening and a strategic alignment with European values, helping him navigate a society that preached Christianity while practicing slavery. Through faith and education, he gained the trust of his masters and later used Christian rhetoric to appeal to European readers in his abolitionist efforts.

Equiano also developed commercial and navigational skills, which allowed him to trade independently and save money. In 1766, after years of saving, he purchased his freedom for forty pounds a defining moment that marked his transformation from property to a free, self-determined man. His story challenges prevailing European views of Africans as inferior, showing that enslaved individuals could reason, learn, and assert their dignity. While most enslaved people had little chance for such autonomy, Equiano’s success was exceptional and paved the way for his role as a writer, Christian, and abolitionist.

Equiano’s path to freedom was not just about legal emancipation but a profound personal and intellectual transformation. His life demonstrates how literacy, faith, and economic independence can empower enslaved people to reclaim their agency and become agents of change.

3.1.3. Identity and Personal Transformation

Equiano’s journey is also an internal one, marked by a profound transformation in identity. Initially stripped of his cultural roots and renamed "Gustavus Vassa," Equiano gradually reclaims his African identity through writing and activism. He becomes both African and British, slave and citizen, outsider and insider. This complex identity is articulated in his narrative: “*I am neither a saint, a hero, nor a tyrant. I am black and I am free*” (Equiano, 1789, p.210). Through literacy and Christian faith, Equiano reshapes himself into a voice of conscience in British society. His embrace of Christianity, while complex and sometimes controversial, provided him with moral legitimacy in a

society that often equated race with savagery. Equiano’s transformation also anticipates the modern concept of diasporic identity: an individual living between worlds. As Paul Gilroy suggests in *The Black Atlantic* (1993), Equiano exemplifies “*transcultural agency*” by navigating both African and Western traditions to forge a liberated self.

3.2. Olaudah Equiano and the Abolitionist Movement

3.2.1 Equiano’s Narrative as a Political Tool

Olaudah Equiano’s *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789) is not merely an autobiography; it is a political document. Published during the height of the abolitionist struggle in Britain, the narrative served to awaken public conscience by humanizing the enslaved African and exposing the brutality of slavery. Equiano carefully structured his account to appeal to Christian morality, Enlightenment values, and British patriotism. He states: “*O, ye nominal Christians! might not an African ask you, learned you this from your God?*” (p.113). This direct appeal to religious hypocrisy resonated with abolitionist audiences. The narrative became a bestseller, with nine editions published during Equiano’s lifetime, and was widely read by both the public and Parliament. As Carey (2005) demonstrates, “*Equiano’s narrative was the most influential African text in the campaign for abolition in Britain. It was both a testimony and evidence*” (p.142). The text combined personal suffering, economic rationality, and moral reasoning key strategies for influencing legislation, including the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act.

3.2.2 Collaboration with Abolitionist Figures

Equiano’s political activities went beyond his writing. He was deeply involved with the *Sons of Africa*, a group of freed Africans in Britain who worked with white abolitionists like Granville Sharp and Thomas Clarkson. According to Vincent Carretta, “*Equiano’s ability to move between Black and white abolitionist circles made him a bridge between communities and a key organizer within the movement*” (Equiano, *the African*, 2005). He presented petitions to Parliament, gave speeches, and wrote letters to influential figures, including Queen Charlotte. Equiano’s unique position as a literate, Christian African gave his advocacy authenticity and power. In 1788, he was appointed to a government expedition to Sierra Leone, aimed at resettling freed Black Britons. Although he later criticized the project’s mismanagement, this appointment reflects the trust he had earned in elite circles.

3.2.3 Advocacy and Activism

Equiano remained a tireless campaigner for justice until his death in 1797. He used his platform to denounce not only slavery but also racism, colonial violence, and economic injustice. In his narrative, he criticizes slave owners and traders with a boldness that was rare at the time: “*Tortures, murder, and every other imaginable barbarity...are practiced upon the poor slaves with impunity*” (Equiano, 1789, p.87). He also wrote articles for newspapers, lobbied politicians, and spoke at anti-slavery events across Britain. His activism was

both grassroots and institutional, combining popular mobilization with elite engagement. Scholars like Paul Edwards (1967) have noted that “Equiano’s life and writings placed him at the heart of one of the most significant human rights struggles of modern history” (*Equiano’s Travels*, p.121). In today’s discourse, Equiano is celebrated as one of the earliest global human rights activists. His legacy lives on in educational curricula, literature, and memorials, especially as contemporary movements continue to combat systemic racism and neocolonialism that pave the way for freedom.

3.3. Impact and Perspectives on Freedom of Olaudah Equiano’s *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*

3.3.1 Impact on the Abolition of the Slave Trade

Olaudah Equiano’s legacy is deeply intertwined with the eventual success of the abolitionist movement in Britain. His narrative and activism significantly contributed to the passage of the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. Although Equiano died in 1797- ten years before the law passed his efforts laid crucial groundwork. His autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, brought the horrors of slavery into the parlors of British middle-class readers. Equiano’s story, written in accessible English and infused with moral appeals, made the suffering of enslaved Africans a tangible reality for people who had never seen a plantation or a slave ship. Parliamentarian William Wilberforce, one of the leading figures of the abolitionist movement, referred to the importance of slave narratives in shaping public opinion. Equiano’s *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* has influenced the cultural and political climate that led to legislative change (Walvin, 1998). His experience has become one of the earliest examples of how personal testimony could influence international policy and public morality.

3.3.2 Perspectives on Freedom

Beyond the abolition of the slave trade, Equiano’s work continues to resonate in modern discussions about freedom, human dignity, and racial justice. His narrative is now seen as one of the foundational texts in Black Atlantic literature and a precursor to modern human rights discourse. Equiano articulated a vision of freedom that was both personal and collective. He described his liberation not only as a legal status but also as a moral and intellectual awakening. He wrote: “I was sensible of the invisible hand of God, which guided and protected me when I was an ignorant heathen in Africa” (Equiano, 1789, p.194). This fusion of spirituality and liberation would go on to influence African diasporic movements and theologies in the centuries that followed. Modern scholars such as Paul Gilroy (*The Black Atlantic*, 1993) and Henry Louis Gates Jr. (*The Signifying Monkey*, 1988) argue that Equiano’s narrative set the stage for a Black literary tradition that uses personal storytelling to contest social injustice. In many ways, Equiano’s work foreshadowed the narratives of later figures like Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. Du Bois. Equiano is studied for his historical role and

for the universal themes of perseverance, justice, and resistance. His life remains a symbol of how the written word can become a tool for freedom.

CONCLUSION

This research has explored the deeply personal and spiritually rich journey of Olaudah Equiano, tracing his transformation from an enslaved child into a self-liberated man, a committed Christian, and a compelling abolitionist voice. Equiano’s conversion to Christianity was far from a passive acceptance of European norms; rather, it was a conscious spiritual awakening that helped him make sense of his suffering, reclaim his humanity, and construct an identity that transcended the imposed label of “slave.” In *The Interesting Narrative*, spirituality is not an abstract concept but a lived experience, embodied in Equiano’s evolving relationship with God through trials and moments of grace. This faith became both his shield and his weapon, providing the moral and psychological strength necessary to resist dehumanization and asserts his dignity. Through his narrative, Equiano actively challenges and dismantles prevailing ideas of African inferiority, presenting instead a portrait of an African man who is intelligent, rational, and spiritually capable. His strategic use of biblical references, his mastery of English moral rhetoric, and his appeals to Christian values are not acts of mimicry but deliberate efforts to engage, confront, and persuade a British audience on its own terms. In this respect, Equiano’s autobiography functions not only as a personal life story but also as a profound political and theological statement. Equiano’s exploration of identity is equally striking. He stands simultaneously as witness, survivor, believer, and agent of change. His story teaches to face the brutal realities of slavery and highlights the enduring resilience of the human spirit. In fine, this study has shown that Equiano’s legacy transcends the abolitionist cause. Equiano’s struggle for freedom invites reflection on the complex intersections between suffering and salvation, historical violence and spiritual endurance. It proves that the struggle for freedom is not only a matter of history but an ongoing spiritual and moral challenge.

REFERENCES

1. Andrews, William L. *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760-1865*. U of Illinois P, 1986.
2. Ashcroft, Bill, et al. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2002.
3. Carey, Brychan. *British Abolitionism and the Rhetoric of Sensibility: Writing, Sentiment and Slavery, 1760-1807*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
4. Carretta, Vincent. *Equiano, the African: Biography of a Self-Made Man*. U of Georgia P, 2005.

5. Edwards, Paul. *Equiano's Travels: The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African*. Heinemann, 1967.
6. Edwards, Paul. and James Walvin. *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings*. Penguin Classics, 1995.
7. Equiano, Olaudah. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa the African*. London, 1789.
8. Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*. Oxford UP, 1988.
9. Gikandi Simon. *Slavery and the Culture of Taste*. Princeton UP, 2011.
10. Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Harvard UP, 1993.
11. Walvin, James. *Black and White: The Negro and English Society, 1555–1945*. Penguin, 1986.
12. Walvin, James. *An African’s Life: The Life and Times of Olaudah Equiano, 1745–1797*. Continuum, 1998.
13. Walvin, James. *Black Ivory: Slavery in the British Empire*. 2nd ed., Blackwell 2001.