“What a man thinks of himself, that it is which determines, or rather indicates, his fate. Self-emancipation even in the West Indian provinces of the fancy and imagination, -- what Wilberforce is there to bring that about?”

Henry David Thoreau, from “Economy,” Walden

Tuesday
- African American Spirituals pages 1629 – 1631
- Frederick Douglass (pages 1017-1020), Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave Preface and Chapter I – Chapter VII pages 1020 – 1045, Chapter X pages 1051 - 1058

Thursday
- Harriet Ann Jacobs (pages 982-984); Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (985-1007)

Writing
Choose from the following (one for Douglass and one for Jacobs)

- **Douglass** wrote and spoke publicly with the support and encouragement of New England abolitionists, many of whom were strongly influenced by the values and literature of Transcendentalism. Consider and write about Douglass’ Narrative as a complex response to that movement, that way of constructing identity (e.g. celebrations of the self, as sovereign and safe, somehow, from the brutalities of social life). For Douglass, what are some of the complications for achieving the self-knowledge that the Concord writers called for so vigorously? Please be specific and ground your discussion in the details that Douglass gives us in his narrative.

- Are there any modern day American examples that come to mind when you think of Douglass as “representative man”? Who is that person? Introduce and present that figure, analyzing the similarities with Douglass as you present the person in much the way that William Lloyd Garrison presented Douglass in our Preface.

- **Douglass**: Choose any one or several sections from the Narrative and analyze it as a literary piece, drawing attention to its lyric beauty with specifics.

- **Jacobs**: Now that you’ve read Douglass’ Narrative and are familiar with his literary style and voice, compare the work of Jacobs in style and voice and account (or speculate about) the reasons for these differences. Consider and write about the very different predicaments that Douglass and Jacobs faced, not only in bondage but also in freedom. When Douglass periodically celebrates his hard-won emancipation, is he talking about a condition that could be available to Jacobs or other black women, even when liberated from servitude to white masters? How might gender influence and differentiate the experience of these writers?

- Do some research on the 19th century *cult of true womanhood* and explain the powerful cultural, psychological, emotional, not to mention political obstacles in Jacobs’ way to expressing her realities and truths.

- Are there any modern day American examples of Jacobs’ struggles in any other oppressive “situation”? Present that figure and analyze the similarities.