

# Christianity in frederick douglass narrative story essay



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Christianity plays a very significant role in the narrative story of Frederick Douglass, who happened to be a slave in America. It is practiced by the slaveholders as well as the slaves themselves. To the slaveholders it is a means of defending their cruel acts but to the slaves, it is the only source of consolation unto their souls even in difficulties, believing in God for their deliverance.

A high rate of hypocrisy is represented in this narrative story on Christianity but there is also the real Christianity presented as having carrying a redemptive value of true Christianity. This discussion is therefore inclusive of the role of Christianity which is represented in the narrative Frederick story in comparison of both representations by the slaveholders as well as the slaves themselves.

To start with, Christianity has been subverted where it is used as a tool for power within the composition of slavery. In this there is justification of the existence of slave in the argument that God admitted for slave existence when He cursed Ham (Douglass 11).

Christians use the bible as their guide and according to the scripture in Genesis chapter 9 verses 24, Noah who was the father of Ham as his youngest son, cursed him into bondage of slavery after he saw the nakedness of the father but instead of covering him he went ahead and told it to his brothers.

Basing on this argument therefore, Americans justify themselves on the existence of slave. Douglass does not however blame Christianity for such

cruel acts but instead he gives thanks to God with the full knowledge that Christianity is based on good morals.

Under all circumstances, slave owning can never be compatible or else be inexistence wherever true Christianity is present. Christian morals are therefore suggested to conflict with the act of slavery. This is well represented when Douglass explains how Mrs. Auld in the representation of her angelic character and a woman who held perfect model that every Christian woman should uphold.

He presents her when he first met her to have a face that seemed to be like that of the heavenly smiles by the fact that she could even treat slaves in full equality as she could allow them to have a eye contact with her, an experience that Douglass had not encountered with white women. Soon after being instructed on slave treatment by her husband she then changes drastically as from the essence of an angel to a devilish character where according to Douglass her face afterwards changed into a demonic look (Douglass 33).

The hypocrisy of Christianity is presented where slavery is not liable to the guidelines that are present in Christian teachings. It is a fact that is illustrated in the more the teaching of the Christian values, the more the increase of cruelty in slavery acts. A good case is illustrated when Auld had gone for a religious camp and upon his return he changed from worse to worst in the relation to the slave treatment. This is not all, as what is written in the bible is used to exercise more cruelty.

A crippled woman was severely whipped by the argument that God permits the masters to whip their servants who fail to the commands of their masters with support of the bible verse found in Luke chapter 12 verses 47. As represented in the story, Christianity is seen to serve individual's needs, monetary, and political aspect of just a group portion and not the liberty of all. This does not however stops or demoralize Douglass being one of the slaves in his belief concerning Christianity.

In the comparison of the Christianity practices held by the slaves to that of the slaveholders, the slave version represent Christianity that is pure, existence of full peace in it, an impartial with full representation of Christ. This kind of Christianity does not advocate for the corrupt deals, slaveholding where slaves continually believe for their redemption in God and it is also against women whipping; slaves represent a pure Christianity while the slaveholders hold a hypocritical Christianity.

Slaves view Christianity as a saving grace where they find joy even as they participate in the spiritual activities as they sing songs and all worship forms such as prayers (Douglass 18). Slaveholders are then busy in their perfect hypocrisy where they perfectly do directly opposite of what is expected of them.

Slave mode of Christianity, present good spirit that comes from God. This spirit ministers to them through the angel thus they live in hope through faith. Douglass presents this kind of faith through the offering of praises to God despite the mistreatment from the slaveholders with thanksgiving (Douglass 32).

Slaveholders on contrary to this they also offer some prayers where one would think that upon prayers the good spirit would work on them and maybe show some good deeds to the slaves. Thomas and his wife who were one of the slaveholders, held prayers to God an act which they carried on daily bases asking God for his blessings in the increase of their basket. Out of these prayers there was no good spirit which even could have caused them to give at least enough food to their slaves.

Christianity is demonstrated to be affected by the present of inequalities which are present between the slaves and the slaveholders. This therefore led direct opposite of the kind of life which was lived by these two parties in terms of collective and practical life thus differing in the spiritual lives.

They however carry some activities in common even though the result of these activities is manifested differently in both of the parties. For instance they are both involved in making prayers to God which is a common practice to all Christians. Both parties use the bible which is the Christian guideline even though the slaveholders use it for their justification of their cruel deeds.

In conclusion, Christianity is presented as the main religion by Douglass where it serves two roles: the symbolic functions and the narrative functions. The false Christianity is represented by what he refers as the hypocritical Christianity in America which the whites practiced who bastardized genuine Christianity.

It is clearly evidenced from the story that Christianity cannot be said to exist where slavery is present as these are two opposing forces. Simultaneous way of life of both forces is also represented as impossible as Christianity  
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only exist where there is purity and thus any slavery introduction will automatically corrupt it.

The entire reason behind the juxtaposition of Christianity was not however meant to just expose the troubles which are encountered through the human bondage. There is therefore an explicitly of how political statement on ideals contortions behind fitting into present situations (Douglass 18).

Douglass, Frederick. Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass. New York: Prestwick House Inc, 2005.