

Narrative of the life of an american slave

[Sociology](#), [Slavery](#)



E. At the beginning of Chapter 3 of *Narrative of the life of an American Slave* (1845), Douglass writes: ()By paying careful attention to Douglass's language, consider this description as an allegory or as multi-layered story—what does it tell us about how power works in slavery; what is the fantasy of control that this garden suggests? In your essay, you might consider the symbolic meaning of the "garden" and/or of the "tar". The short paragraph gave information about the master of Douglass Colonel Lloyd, describing an affair about the garden of Lloyd.

Briefly, Lloyd owned a garden that planted many different kinds of fruits which were very attractive to his slaves. In order to prevent stealing of his fruits, he tarred his fence all around the garden, therefore, people who was found tarred would be whipped. After the adoption of this stratagem, the slaves became fearful and no longer dared to steal fruits from the garden. (Douglass, 1845, p. 59) In this story, we could see that the masters controlled the slave totally relying on brutal punishment.

When the tarring method was not adopted, the slaves kept stealing fruits, even if they knew that once they were caught, they would receive great pain. This was because they thought there was still chance that the master would not find out and then they could enjoyed those fruit. However, once they knew that hardly could they steal fruits from the garden without being caught, they stopped stealing. This showed that whipping really exerted great pressure and deterrence on slaves. Furthermore, the story also suggested the relationship between master and slaves.

The garden was like the master, surrounded by fence, holding of power in which no slaves could cross the line. In the paragraph, there is this sentence, <https://assignbuster.com/narrative-of-the-life-of-an-american-slave/>

“the garden was not the least source of trouble on the plantation. ” (Douglass, 1845) This suggested that there were trouble between slaves and the master also in other aspects. It seemed that the power of the master was not that absolute. Before the master tarred the fence, there were still some slaves risked themselves to steal fruits.

Besides, Douglass also mentioned in chapter I that Aunt Hester was whipped because she went out without permission and met a guy. The master could only punish the slaves afterwards but sometimes was unable to controlled them before. In the last sentence of this short paragraph, Douglass mentioned, “they seemed to realize the impossibility of touching tar with being defiled. ” (Douglass, 1845, p. 59) In fact, through the story, Douglass was not only talking about master and slaves, but also implying the argument of abolitions.

Some of the people did not agree to abolish slavery because they believed that slavery could be carried out in a civilized way, the extreme examples of savage slavery was exaggerated and could not take that as the support of abolishing of slavery. “They do not deny that the slaves are held as property; but that terrible facts seem to convey to their minds no idea of injustice, exposure to outrage, or savage barbarity. ”, according to Garrison’s preface.

This suggested that even though those people knew slaves were not treated as a human-being, they didn’t think they would be cruelly treated. “As if all these direful outrages were not the natural results of slavery! As if it were less cruel to reduce a human being to the condition of a thing, than to give them a severe flagellation!... As if, whips, chains, thumb-screws, paddles,

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bloodhounds, overseers, drivers, patrols, were not all dispensable to keep the slave down, and to give protection to their ruthless oppressors. ”, written by Garrison. (Douglass, 1845, p. 59)

Therefore, in the paragraph, Douglass used the story to support the argument of abolitionists that lashing, whipping and cruel treatment were the consequential result of slavery for masters to control their slaves. The attractive garden represented slavery system. Since slavery benefited the rich or the normal residents, they would try to get into the garden, i. e. keeping slavery. At first, those people who supported slavery thought that there might not be a relationship between cruel treatment and slavery so they kept going into the garden. However, some of the brutal examples existed.

Then, in fact, there was tar on the fence that it was impossible to go into the garden without tainted tar on them, i. e. without deprived of human rights of slaves. This was the inevitably result of slavery. “They seemed to realize the impossibility of touching tar with being defiled. ” (Douglass, 1845, p. 59). In my opinion, the last sentence is very sarcastic. Even the slaves, who were thought as uneducated, low intelligence and low position in the society could figure out this moral and stopped doing that, how could those people who claimed themselves as intellectual and educated not finding out this problem.