

Slavery in "narrative  
life" a book by  
frederick douglass  
essay (critical  
writing)...



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Fredrick Douglass was born Fredrick Bailey between 1817 and 1818 in Maryland. His mother was black while his father was rumored to be a white slaveholder. He developed an intense dislike for slavery as a small boy and dedicated his life to fight the vice. After escaping from slavery, he joined anti-slavery movements and became one of the most popular blacks in history.

In *Narrative Life of Fredrick Douglas*, the author recounts the experiences of slavery in the 19th century. The autobiography describes the oppression, harassment, torture, and atrocities committed by the whites under the legal frameworks of slavery. The narrative's plot introduces the early life of the author and proceeds to illustrate his resentments towards slavery and racial discrimination. Strong literary elements that include figures of speech, tone, and imagery are used to bring out the author's strong hate for slavery. The tone that is used throughout the story is filled with sarcasm and loath for the atrocities committed by the white slaveholders. The author portrays anger when he recounts the harshness of the slave masters when disciplining, awarding, and interacting with the slaves. In one instance, the author recounts witnessing his aunt being whipped using a cowskin on a bareback until blood dripped to the floor (Douglass 7). The plot illustrates Douglass' transfer to Baltimore to work under Hugh Auld and the significance of the change in his discernment of slavery. The author describes how his first formal lessons under the guidance of Sophia Auld transform his objectives by instilling a passion for fighting slavery. However, his education dreams are cut short by Hugh's statement " a nigger should know nothing but to obey his master" (Douglass 33). The dialogue portrays the hatred for the blacks.

The character traits of the slaveholders are brought out by the use of the word nigger and the emphasis on ignorance as a weapon against the empowerment of the blacks.

The narrative uses a sarcastic language to enhance the tone and illustrate his interests in an antislavery revolution. For example, he considers a situation where an individual's heart requires a fleshy cover to understand the plights of the slaves. The author states, " There is no flesh in his obdurate heart" to describe individuals that would remain unchanged by the contents of the songs composed in the forests (Douglass 14). The heart is described as an organ that requires the fleshy part to become sympathetic and concerned.

The plot highlights the author's plans to escape from slavery and join other free blacks. The thoughts of escaping were influenced by a growing desire for freedom among the blacks. When the author is taken to Covey because of his revolutionary ideals, he engages in a fight that causes the slaveholder to fear and respect the black slave. Eventually, the author escapes and changes his name from Bailey to Douglass to conceal his identity.

Additionally, his escape serves as the beginning of anti-slavery revolutions and strong demands for the freedom of the black community.

The theme of slavery is reflected in the contemporary racial discrimination and inequalities. According to Martin, today's society still portrays significant levels of racial discrimination against African Americans (98). Racial disparities are common in police checks and the employment sector. In a study conducted by Chan, the police were ranked first in racial profiling (76).

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They have developed a misguided stereotype that associates blacks with crimes. The research found that blacks were more likely to be suspected of crimes compared to their white counterparts. The profiling affects the credibility and the freedom of the African Americans. Most of the stereotyped individuals rely on the historic perceptions of blacks as worthless and undeserving of any positive attribute. Additionally, work-based discrimination is mainly founded on gender and race. Some managers are still skeptical about the capabilities and competencies of a black employee. The skepticism has caused most blacks their promotions and job opportunities. Although the contemporary racial disparity does not involve atrocious activities of murder and whipping, they interfere with the individual rights and freedom. In fact, a black employee is at a higher risk of being suspected of malicious activities compared to other communities. The retrogressive perceptions that were used by slaveholders are still common in most parts of the country. The black person has not been accepted fully as a legitimate citizen. The whites still consider America their country while considering the blacks intruders.

The story exposes the atrocities committed during the slavery period. The author uses a harsh and angry tone while condemning the activities and perceptions of the white slaveholders. The theme brings out a strong message against any form of discrimination or oppression. In fact, the experiences of the slaves portray resilience, determination, and perseverance that led to a free country. Although racism is still experienced in many instances, it is gradually fading with the numerous anti-racism campaigns and strong policies that support freedom of speech and equality.

Everybody has the right and freedom to exercise his talents and resources in this country.

Bay craft means a form of a water vessel or boat

To bowse means to talk and respond in a rude manner

Taking the ell means taking a large portion

Forte means gift

To gall means to be mad

Black gip means a deceptive black person

To goad means to aggravate

A hod means a pail

Mulatto children mean the first generation of a black and white ancestry

A staid means someone who is reliable and hardworking

Chan, Janet. " Racial profiling and police subculture." Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice/La Revue canadienne de criminologie et de justice pénale 53. 1 (2011): 75-78. Print.

Douglass, Frederick. " Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass. 1845." The Classic Slave Narratives (2013): 1-124. Print.

Martin, Michelle H. " Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights by Robin Bernstein (review)." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 38. 1 (2013): 96-101. Print.