

Did slavery destroy the black family? essay sample

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



Slavery, the practice of being possessed by someone as a labor force or for his personal needs, was a ubiquitous workforce in nearly every part of the world. Slaves served as the propelling engine behind the Southern labor force for a long time. These African-Americans first arrived in ships from Africa and progressively started setting in the South, where they worked and served as a labor powerhouse. These slaves were used predominately for plantations, were treated as animals and worked under extremely harsh conditions with no pay. Historians have argued for a long time on whether slavery destroyed the black family. Despite the fact that Eugene D. Genovese states that slaves created their own system of family and values, Wilma A. Dunaway clearly proves that due to the harsh living conditions, the inevitable separation between families and the absolute lack of freedom of slaves, destroyed the black family.

Genovese aims on the fact that slavery helped slaves develop their own system of family and cultural values within the southern paternalistic slave society. Despite this radical idea, Genovese fails to prove to the readers in a concrete way her idea of unity. Her points are really not clear and she does not focus on a specific time era or a specific location (i. e. Upper or Lower South). It is true that slavery created a bonding between African Americans in the south since they all had this one thing in common but a feeling of a nuclear family between slaves was totally destroyed by slavery in the south.

Dunaway shows sufficient evidence in her paper to support the idea that slavery destroyed black families in the south. When slaves arrived in the U. S. they were separated and ended up working in different places. Those who were born in the states were most of the times victim of the internal slave

trade in which slave owners constantly sold their slaves. With Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin there was a mass migration of slaves from the upper south to the lower south, destroying even further the black slave families. In the plantations these slaves faced harsh living conditions that deprived them from their own human rights and took away their freedom. They worked hours and hours a day on a plantation under harsh conditions with little or no pay while many times getting whipped and mistreated by their slave owners.

Despite the idea that the oppression that slaves lived through made them together as a whole, harsh living conditions and the separation that these slaves underwent created an environment in which it was impossible to prevent the destruction of the black family. Dunaway shows sufficient evidence for this as Genovese lacks concrete information and loses focus in main points. Genovese also has a particular bias on the total issue. Dunaway clearly depicts her points and supports them with concrete information to show that slavery destroyed the black family.

Bibliography:

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