

The relationship between slavery, race, and citizenship essay sample

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



Margaret Walker is one of the greatest scholars with great contribution in the literary field. The book contains various features and traditions that depict several aspects of slavery, race, and citizenship. The book has several privilege descriptions of their community and the culture building strategies and exhibits forms of resistance and interrogated myths and stereotypes. The center of the story is the African American struggle for freedom over slavery that was supported by racial prejudice. The story of Walker in Jubilee is divided into three parts that begins at 1840 in Georgia, before ending in Alabama in 1970s. These sections divide the American history into the periods of slavery, civil war, and reconstruction. The book by Walker takes the reader through the American history, under which racial slavery is treated as a necessary transaction in the course of the American development and democracy. This paper discusses the relationship between slavery, race, and citizenship in the perspective of Margaret Walker in her book, Jubilee.

Walker acknowledges that the American first laboring class was under the plantation slavery for more than two centuries. Initially, the British fledged their conquest of the African land and made them subjects in their own land (Walker 16). In this regard, these individuals marshaled the poor whites to their side to help them participate in slavery, exploitation so that they could also become rich. Welker argues that one of the reasons why these people did so was to avoid the struggle between them and the lower class by presenting them with an easy alternative to slavery in the American soil. The slave trade supported the restoration of the white supremacy by making the Africans the subjects of their racially motivated slave trade. It was an act of

restoration of power to the American superimacist to the completely defeated black race by making them their subjects and subjecting them to forced labor.

It is worth noticing in this book by Walker that the slave trade was a racially motivated business. This is because also slave traders directed their businesses at Africa. This is in spite the knowledge that there are other human beings in other continents such as Europe, Asia, or even South America. During the time of slavery, the access to land among the Negroes was completely limited since they were considered a lesser human race (Walker 54). On the other hand, access to land among the whites was not limited as they were considered a superior race to the Negroes. In addition the right to walk among the Negroes was totally curtailed as they were only allowed to walk in some places and during particular time. This was in great contrast to the whites who had the freedom to walk to anywhere at any time. During this period, only the whites were allowed to have firearms, which they sometimes used against the blacks if they feel threatened. In this regard, the rights of the blacks to bear firearms were totally curtailed for the fear of them uprising to end the white brutality. According to walker, the slave trade reduced the employment rights of the Africans to contract labor with penal servitude as the punishment for not willing to work for the white supremacists. In this regard, the Negroes were always guilty of any wrongdoing since he had no enforceable right or innocence. On the other hand, the Negroes were expected to respect their masters, who happen to be white, regardless whether they are right or wrong. Walker points that the systemic effects on the working people of the Anglo-American capitalist

system had a far reaching effects to the Negroes. Walker argues that the American society was built by the African slaves, even though that fact is less appreciated by the Americans. It is worth noting that human labor contributed to a significant percentage of the production costs in any enterprise such that high labor costs translates to less profits. Due to slavery and cheap labor offered by enslaved Negroes, the Americans had a great reduction in their production costs and this ensured that they reaped maximum benefits from their activities. Therefore, this is the basis why Walker believes that the American society was built as a result of racial prejudice of the whites that forced the Negroes to work for them as slaves. A look at the situation of the Negro laborers paints much on their struggles during the gruesome times of the white fascism. Under the lens of the Jubilee, it is worth noting that the American white supremacy of racial slavery created the dominant racialized and gendered American identity instead of class conscious individuals (Walker 87). It is worth noting that the political economy began long time back by with class oppression. However, the discovery of slavery changed the course of political economy from class oppression to racial oppression. Initially, the class oppression faced some hurdles after the 1676 Virginia revolt of the bond laborers who were fighting against the capitalistic corrupt conditions they had to endure. To provide the solution to the problem of the class revolt, the capitalistic white race invented the legally imposed slaver, which was a trick to give the oppressed Americans the white skin privileges. This was a politically motivated trick to enable the oppressed whites to help them support their slavery and to avoid any future revolt. In this regard, the traditionally oppressed white social class

was made to believe that they were socially better than the African Americans and this made them support the initiative fully. The idea was to strategically substitute the race and class by creating a buffer social control stratum that would instigate a never ending racial conflict as opposed to class struggle.

One of the most interesting concepts in the racially motivated slavery is that the child of the Negro female was to assume the status of the mother and not the father. This was a smart move to allow for sexual exploitation of the African American women and the same time not to reduce the value of their slavery activity. They are fully aware that there is no way in which a black man would be allowed to seduce and fall in love with a white woman. In this regard, there was no way any racially mixed children could attain the American citizenship since they were regarded to be Negroes. This is illustrated in the case of Vyry, who is still put under slavery and denied citizenship rights, despite having a white father. She has no rights enjoyed by other children with white fathers since she is enslaved and denied American citizenship. In some instances, the white American males turn the female Negroes to sex slaves so that they can sire several children who will also act as slave in their fathers land. Awarding citizenship to such class would come with obligations that the white capitalist was not in a position to provide. This ensured that citizenship remains only to the pure whites and not the blacks or the mixed breed. This supports the idea that the American citizen citizenship was given on the basis of racial consideration such that the Negroes and the mixed races had no rights of being awarded citizenship.

In conclusion, the book Jubilee by Margaret Walker is a classic story that depicts the relationship between the slavery, race, and citizenship. Walker acknowledges that slavery was driven by the dominant white capitalism that was later coined into racism. Walker takes the readers through the American history under which racial slavery is treated as a necessary transaction in the course of the American development and democracy. According to Walker, the rights and privileges were only given based on racial prejudice such that the Negroes were always guilty of any wrongdoing since he had no enforceable right or innocence. The child of the Negro female was to assume the status of the mother, not the father, and this was a smart move to allow for sexual exploitation of the Negro women without reducing the value of slavery. American citizen citizenship was given on the basis of racial consideration such that the Negroes and the mixed races had no rights of being awarded citizenship.

Work Cited

Walker, Margaret. Jubilee. Mariner Books; New edition edition. 1999, Print