

Margaret Garner critical essay

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



The Fugitive Slave Act is one of the causes of the Civil War in America. The Fugitive Slave Act is an act that renders all slaves to be controlled and overpowered by their owners with the help of District Court of the United States. However, the owners have a big responsibility towards their slaves especially when it is fugitive for they need to pay to the District Court of the United States when an officer or a marshal captured a fugitive.

When it happens, the owner needs to go to the District Court and have all the papers needed to show that the fugitive was his or theirs. In this case, it will be a big burden for the owners to have fugitives so they find their fugitives on their own before the officers or the marshals could find them because it will cost them a lot of money, time and effort. The purpose of this paper is to show the relation of the Fugitive Slave Act to the life of Margaret Garner during the years of slavery.

Margaret Garner is a fugitive slave who has four children. She and her family went to a friend in order to escape from their owners. They went through a lot of place to find the house of their friend named Kite. However, before they saw the house of their friend, they asked different people to give them the direction going to the Mill Creek, the place of the house of their friend. Through this journey, many people have seen them so their pursuance can reach them whenever they go.

When they were in the house of their friend, their pursuance finds them but before they got Margaret Garner, she killed her youngest daughter, who was also her favorite child. She also likes to kill all her three children but her pursuance got her and brought her to the court. Margaret Garner thought of this situation as the only way not to make her children feel the suffering of

being slaves. The court let Garner and her family free because the evidences showed that they were given a vacation by their owners in a Free State. Therefore, they were free during the time when they went to the house of their friend, but going to the Mill Creek, which is a purpose of escape brought them back to slavery.

Both slaves and free backs in America were affected with this Act because this law made a big transformation to the ownership of the slaves, not only the slaves who are being controlled in this Act but also the owners. In the Fugitive Slave Act, when a slave escaped from his or her owner, there will be a lot of discussion between the owner and the District Court in terms of record verification, and penalty of the owner because of its fugitive slaves. Therefore, the owner will be the one who is responsible in finding its slaves to avoid penalty. Aside from the owner's problem to its labor force, there will be also a problem when their fugitive slaves were captured by the officers or marshals and brought to District Court.

The Northern abolitionist and Southern slaveholders were also affected with this Fugitive Slave Act because it produced a scheme of reward in order to assist the generation of enticements among Southern slaveholder and Northern abolitionist catchers in regaining their possessions. Consequently, escaped slaves will not be safe in the North. Therefore, slaves have limited actions in their works for they were not safe in every place they go.

According to the Section 10 of the Fugitive Slave Act, when any person held to service or labor in any State or Territory, or in the District of Columbia, shall escape. There from, the party to whom such service or labor shall be due, his, her, or their agent or attorney, may apply to any court of record

therein, or judge thereof in vacation, and make satisfactory proof to such court, or judge in vacation, of the escape aforesaid, and that the person escaping owed service or labor to such party.

This statement brought the case of Margaret Garner to the court. According to the evidences, she had her vacation to the Free State during the time she went to the Mill Creek. That is why the court made a decision to set her and her family free because her owners did not abide the law that she can go to the Free States when she was in a vacation. However, the means of killing her daughter for the notion of not making them slaves when they grow up is a form of escape. In this case, they were called fugitives. Therefore, they were brought back into slavery.

During the year of 1850's when slavery became intensifying problem of both North and South due to the Fugitive Slave Act and their slaves, owners became stricter and wanted their slaves to be barricaded inside their properties so that these slaves would not escape. Margaret Garner's tragic story happened during these years, when slaves do not know what to do in order to make their family free even if the pay for this cost was their slavery until they die because of the pain, sorrow, and struggle of being slaves.

Margaret killed her daughter to make a change. She knew that it was not just for her and for her family but also for the society. She wanted change – a change in the way of treating slaves. The law can be seen as “ unjust law” because the individuality of the slaves was taken for granted. The Fugitive Slave Act was all about the actions that can be done to the owners and the fugitives when the fugitive is captured. However, the fugitive has no right to have its life. Slaves were treated as robots and animals, which are actually

humans. The tragic story of Margaret Garner is a revelation to the law and to the whole society during this period - the “ unjust law” made the slaves not humans but animals taking them as their own.

Sources:

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