

Equiano and franklin comparison essay

Business



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The experiences of both Equiano and Franklin are wide ranging and interesting enough to inspire best selling autobiographies. Though as founding father and a free slave they could be seen as worlds apart, the two men have astoundingly similar origins, accomplishments, and goals. Franklin and Equiano, each being scholarly men of their time period, had they met would have certainly found much about themselves analogous while at the same time having plenty to argue about. Equiano, through raised in what is now Nigeria, came to heartily embrace the religion of his captured. He was deeply devoted to Christianity and used its morals to guide his life.

Equiano viewed setbacks or bad fortune as punishments from God for his sins. When he was sold by his long time master Pascal, Equiano was of the opinion that such was deserved for sinful actions. Equiano embraced the miraculousness of Christianity and allowed its doctrines to guide him on a spiritual journey towards moral perfection. Such was his conviction that he at one point experience a vision of God, informing him upon his journey.

Though Franklin too lead a journey toward moral perfection, the morals which governed it were mostly self determined. Franklin lived by his 13 virtues, not by the doctrines of any religion.

His was a systematic approach to achieving moral perfection, involving charts and behavioral monitoring schedules unlike the efforts of Equiano which were fervent and faith driven. The skills and accomplishments of Equiano and Franklin have notable parallels despite the disparity in the obstacles faced by each. Franklin and Equiano both published best selling autobiographies and had ample experience at sea. Though both could easily be considered self made men, the rise of Equiano is, as was with his moral

governance, far more miraculous. Franklin emerged from indentured servitude as a runaway alone in Philadelphia.

From his servitude, though, Franklin gained marketable skills which allowed him to build a successful printing company. Franklin had minimal formal education, being mostly self learned, as did Equiano. As a free, white man, however, Franklin faced far fewer obstacles than Equiano. In addition out educating himself, Equiano bought his freedom and established a successful career upon the seas. Franklin's position in society allowed him to successful in politics and many other fields which were closed to Equiano.

Equiano, for a time, served as a commissary for the British government in the Sierra Leone colony before being dismissed. His termination was because of efforts he made to improve the governance structure and operation. When Franklin attempted the same thing, he helped create the United States. The difference in circumstances is obvious, but the example still shows the impact of Equiano's skin color. Even as a freeman, Equiano faced persecution and danger because of his race. In one instance whites in the South attempted to pass him off as a runaway slave; Equiano avoided the consequences of this by denouncing it as madness loudly and with conviction.

Apparently, he seemed too learned to be what they claimed, what a surprise. Franklin and Equiano, while their virtues and accomplishments differ, their goals are remarkably similar. Franklin sought to advise others on morals and help to guide them to life achievement through his biography and other writings. Through his political and social ventures, Franklin aimed to better

the lives of many, including slaves. Franklin was an avid abolitionist; in 1787 he was elected the first president of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery.

Equiano also advocated the destruction of slavery, most effective argument being his published life story, and sought to help guide others morally.

Franklin and Equiano's efforts to guide others towards the best life possible, though their ideas differed in what was best, represent an awareness of the hardships they had each overcome during their lives. The autobiographies of Franklin and Equiano are testament to fantastic experiences and astute nature of both men. Had Equiano lacked such extensive obstacles in life, he would have most assuredly had as broad accomplishments and Franklin; already Equiano's accomplishments are impressive. Overall, it could be said that Franklin and Equiano were men made from the same cloth, simply sewn in a different pattern.