

# "narrative of the life of fredrick douglass" essay



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The Narrative of the life of Fredrick Douglass is a pure and classical narrative written by Fredrick Douglass from the first person singular format focusing on Douglass's own reaction to slavery in America.

The Author is also the persona in entire narration as he recounts his real experience in slavery right from childhood (' Clayton'1). The narrative is set around slavery period in 1817 when the author was born. During this time, Douglas (author) had separated from his mother. Meanwhile, his father worked as a clerk in a rich man's farm.

In the narrative, Lloyd owns huge chunks of plantations where slaves are compelled to work under tough conditions (' Easyread' 5). Douglas' life develops in the plantation until he approaches 7 years when he is taken by his father's brother-in-law to Baltimore. As the story unfolds, we find that Douglass faces torture in the hands of several slave masters (' Clayton' 44).

He became enlightened and realized the importance of education.

Eventually, he fled himself from slavery, changed his name and married a free black woman, Anna Murray. Finally, he engaged himself with anti-slavery movements as an orator (' Clayton'180).

In the narration, there are major and minor characters that the author has used to develop the plot. The author plays two major roles as both the narrator and main protagonist (' Easyread'1). He uses an average tone to express his emotion over horrific moments he experienced while in slavery. The author builds his characters in the narration and eventually able to develop several themes from their diverse roles.

Moreover, he is able to bring out his views well through their role in the scene. For instance, he portrays Sophia Auld as unrealistic and inhumane as part of developing his argument against slavery. He uses her cruelty to demonstrate adverse impacts of slavery.

Douglass portrays Covey as a villain to develop a theme of conflict in religion ('Easyread' 76). He makes him get convinced that he is a Christian although his evil actions provoked him. As a major character in the story, Covey violence triggered Douglass to get transformed into a more brave character who eventually became freedom seeker. Meanwhile, he develops other minor characters to build his plot.

Douglass has also developed various themes in the narrative to address universal issues affecting society during his times. The main theme developed from the narrative is on effects of slavery to victims and slave dealers ('Easyread' 4). This is evident from the ruthlessness subjected to slaves by their masters. Slaves suffered both physical and psychological torture.

Moreover, inappropriate use of slaves led to family conflicts especially when masters adopted slaves to as concubines. Religion as a theme has been well developed in the story. The author develops a distinction between Christians and non-Christians. The slaves refer Covey as a serpent for his evil actions ('Clayton' 76). The incumbent is in conflict of convincing himself that he is a Christian.

Other themes developed in the narrative include education, ignorance and freedom. From the author's point of view, he reflects on negative effects of

slavery and as well emphasizes on the importance of freedom (' Easyread' 164).

Additionally, the author has used several schemes such as images and metaphors to develop the plot and make it more appealing to the audience. Initially, the author uses symbols to represent abstract concepts in his views. For instance, Sophia Auld has been used to symbolize oppressive nature of society (' Clayton' 32). In the story, the persona uses his life to symbolize human rights.

However, the author is a bit controversial in the fact that he appears to play two roles simultaneously though differently (' Clayton' 6). Moreover, he criticizes slave-owners yet he does not explain why slavery has become rampant.

The narrative has some significance both in the cultural and historical context of the 19th century human civilization. Apparently, we are able to embrace strides made in the search for freedom against slavery. In addition, the major themes developed are still evident in modern day history.

Moreover, the culture depicted in the narrative can be equated to a mirror reflecting daily experiences in modern society since not much may have changed especially with the advent of neo-colonialism and improper local and foreign policies by some nations.

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. Clayton: Prestwick House Inc, 2005.

Douglass Frederick. Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass. Easy read Comfort Edition. New York: ReadHowYouWant. com, 2008.