

Romantic and neo-classical period in literature

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

After extensive study of the Romantic and Neo-Classical period in literature, I have found two works that I would like to compare and contrast. I have chosen two texts that I believe have the same theme embodied in them. The first text is from the Romantic era, Frederick Douglass " Slave Narrative. " The second text is from the Neo-Classical era, Moliere's " Tartuffe. " The theme that embodies these two specific works is shaped by certain elements. During my close analysis of the literary work by Frederick Douglass and Moliere, I found three elements that shaped the theme " Freedom and Bondage" embodied in both works.

The first element is spiritual, religion is the tool used to employ the theme. The second element is physical, the acts done to implement the theme. The final element that is used to enable the theme is psychological, the different tactics and strategies. In the following passage, I will explain how each of these elements relates to the theme. I will prove that Frederick Douglass " Slave Narrative" and the poem by Moliere " Tartuffe" both have spiritual, physical, and psychological aspects in each that relate to the theme " Freedom and Bondage".

The spiritual element of Frederick Douglass " Slave Narrative" as it relates to " Freedom and Bondage" is religion. Religious freedom was one reason the Europeans came to America. Religious freedom is also the very reason that these European descendants used to hold a race of people in the bondage of slavery. Frederick Douglass explains how religion was used by the master as a shield to hide the grossest and inhumane acts that were done to a race of people the Euro-Americans felt were unlike themselves. " Religious slave

owners were the worst," said Frederick Douglass. Owners used the word of God to justify the crimes they inflicted.

By using religion as the owner's rationale, they made the slaves feel like there was no hope in God or any other higher being. A life of bondage was all a slave felt he was born for. Moliere's uses spiritual aspects in his poem "Tartuffe," which relates to "Freedom and Bondage". Religion is the vehicle that puts the theme into movement. The main character in "Tartuffe," Orgon, exercised his religious freedom by living a life without worldliness (holiness). The idea of living a holy life was implemented and orchestrated by the character Tartuffe Orgon's religious advisor.

Orgon ultimately chooses a life of piety. "Yes, thanks to him I'm a changed man indeed. Under his tutelage my soul's been freed," Orgon stated. His religious freedom is what eventually holds him in bondage. Orgon is unable to think or function outside his beliefs. Orgon is unwilling to take violate advice which contradicts his belief system. Orgon was so closed-minded he became bonded by his own religious logic. Frederick Douglass was in bound by religion, the religion of the Master against his own free will. Orgon was bond by religion, the religion of his spiritual advisor by his own free will.

Abuse was the physical aspect of Frederick Douglass "Slave Narrative." The state of slavery was a way the oppressor would use their authority over the oppressed. The form of authority used instilled fear and worthlessness. The oppressor made a slave believe he was better off a slave, where he would be fed, clothed and given shelter over his heads. The oppressor did not mention the price the oppressed would have to pay for such benefits; working from

dawn to dusk, whipped for the slightest thing such as looking his master in the eye.

If you seemed unhappy, dissatisfied or anything of the sort the oppressor could deem it fair to beat the oppressed. A slave was stripped of his or her humanity, esteem, manhood or womanhood and physically treated worse than an animal. The only physical freedom given to a slave was to execute a task. Elements of physical freedom in Moliere's "Tartuffe" was established when Orgon decided to give Tartuffe all of his worldly possessions. Orgon manifests his beliefs into a physical act of unselfish holiness. "By making you my only son and heir; this very day, I give to you alone.

Clear deed and title to everything I own." Orgon's belief that Tartuffe is a holy man and deserves all that he owns is the twine that holds him in bondage. Tartuffe speaks the words that tie the twine tight. "No, I'm the master, and you're the one to go! This house belongs to me, I'll have you know." These same words are what physically misplaces Orgon from all that he owns and hold him in the bondage of despair. The Master's whip is what holds Frederick Douglass in bondage. The only freedom given is to do what is necessary to perform daily tasks. Tartuffe's web of deceit is the twine that holds Orgon in bondage.

Orgon has the freedom of choice not to be in bondage, and yet he is. Frederick Douglass mostly describes freedom as psychological in his "Slave Narrative." One way Frederick Douglas felt free was his ability to read and write. Frederick Douglass also had a trade in the shipyard; he was paid wages from his master to work. The wages he earned were saved and used

toward his ultimate freedom, escape from slavery. The maximum freedom Frederick Douglass experienced while yet a slave was the turning point in his life, when he fought Mr. Covey toe-to-toe for two hours.

Frederick Douglass had finally gained his humanity instead of feeling like a brute all his life. The psychological bondage described by Frederick Douglass was the way the master tricked the slave into thinking there was no difference between freedom and bondage. For example, at Christmas the slave got six days off where they were encouraged to drink, the slaves drank until they could not think to escape or do better for themselves. Orgon had the psychological freedom to believe in what ever he wanted. He chose to believe that Tartuffe was " Saintly" and could do no wrong.

Orgon chose not to believe evidence of the contrary. This inability to see things for what they really are is a form of psychological bondage. Bond by what you think to be true is the same as being bonded by slavery (Orgon becomes ultimately limited). Intellect was freedom for Frederick Douglass the more he learned the more he desired to be free from bondage. Douglass had freedom of the mind; he took freedom of his body by escaping bondage. Orgon used his freedom to be ignorant. Orgon was ignorant of the knowledge that was obviously around him. By deciding to live with ignorance, Orgon caused himself to be in bondage.

The only difference that I found in my analysis of the two literary works by Frederick Douglass and Moliere was choice. Frederick Douglass was born without freedom of choice. Frederick Douglass was not bonded by choice but he refused to let his mind, soul and eventually his body stay in bondage

because he took freedom for himself. Orgon was born with the freedom of choice and used it foolishly. Orgon was free and chose to be in bondage of the mind, body and soul. " Freedom and Bondage" relate to the " Slave Narrative" because freedom was the thing desired of the spirit, mind and body (the God given freedom we all should be born with).

Bondage was a state of being in the " Slave Narrative" because I believe even the most loyal slave had to have dreamt of being free. " Freedom and Bondage" relate to Moliere's poem " Tartuffe" because freedom, being a God given right, was used in a way that bonded the main character Orgon. Orgon had everything and by choice, he almost ends up worthless, in fear, and penniless, a state of self-enslavement. A person can be free and yet bound; a person can be bonded and yet free. Bondage is a state of being and so is Freedom. You! Have the right to choose to be free!!!