

In what ways does
Douglass draw upon
the principles stated
in the declaration
of ...

[Philosophy](#), [Freedom](#)



We have concluded our units on Education and Ethics (Values). Our next unit is entitled “ American Cultural Myths” (where we came from?) Who was Frederick Douglass and where did he come from?

Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), was a former slave, whom after escaping slavery became a very famous reformer, writer and statesman (Willard Gatewood 1846). He was born a slave in Talbot, Maryland in the United States of America. He was very famous for being fluent in English and most people were amazed by his intelligence. This was because at the time there was the notion that slaves were not thoughtful nor were they intelligent on their own. He had just escaped slavery and could publicly speak against slavery. He challenged people to treat each other with equality. He famously knew to say that he would readily work with anybody whether black, white, male or even female.

He is famous for writing several books about his life and experiences as a slave and how he was able to overcome it and triumph to become whom he was then.

Discuss Douglass “ use of verbal irony in his introduction (paragraph1-3)

In his speech, he talks of the limited powers of speech that he has, yet he stands before an audience and talks to them about freedom from slavery and equal treatment. He also talks of his apologies are considered flat and unmeaningful yet he knows that he is not apologetic of anything that he is doing. He stands in front of the audience and speaks of the 4th of July, that is considered as the freedom or Independence Day yet the black people are still slaves in a sovereign.

Identify several passages where Douglass appeals to values he assumes the audience shares with him. What values associated with the fight for independence does he use to argue for the abolition of slavery?

In several passages he talks of the fore fathers who fought for the freedom of the country, they viewed the country's needs as bigger than any of their differences and decided to come together and fight for their right, their sovereignty. He appeals to people to honour this by treating each and everybody equally regardless of our differences in race or the colour of our skins. He asserts that they fought so that each and every individual in America can be free and allowed to exercise his rights as a human being. He appeals to their faith in God, to look and understand the reason as to why he was there to deliver a speech on their independence day. It was simply because he was the best option to be used to demonstrate freedom from slavery and that it has its benefits. He was once a slave but now was a fluent orator who could confidently address an audience. It showed slavery was restricting the development of untapped potential in the country.

The declaration of independence states that all men are created equal and are given by God an array of rights and among these rights are rights to life, right to liberty and right to pursue happiness in life. Douglass validates that as for many white American citizens, these words have true meaning however to the black people these words are not anything than philosophy. This is simply because the black people are enslaved and do not have right to liberty as they are restricted and treated ill. They do not have rights to happiness in life for they even know not what that is. To the black people the

4th of July is nothing but a day that reminds them of exactly what they are missing each and every day. As others celebrate it, they mourn for they long to have that joy of freedom and independence.

Douglass admits feeling anger towards some members of his audience. How does he express his anger? Is his anger justified? How would you feel if you were sitting in this audience?

Douglass expresses his anger by explaining his understanding on slavery and what he could if he had more power and capability. He states that we all believe in God and that we should practise what is divine, but people still choose to practise slavery yet it is inhuman. He says that people already know that and so the time for logical arguments has passed and it is time for irony, the time for fire and thunder. Meaning that the time for real action and fighting for freedom has come for reasoning had proved futile.

His anger is very much justified. This is because this is a man speaking from experience, he has lived it, and he knows how it feels to be a slave and the problems and challenges that come with the title. He is feeling the pain of his brothers and sisters who are still slaves and he would like something drastic to be done to free them.

If I was in the audience I would have agreed with him. This is because slavery is inhuman. Everybody deserves the right to freedom and no man is greater than the other. Instead of using our differences in race and skin colour to undermine and oppress each other, we should embrace each other and appreciate these differences.

In your own word what is the thesis of Douglass speech?

Douglass is a man who has seen and lived the slave life; he knows the pains and the torture in it. He knows all too well and did not want to continue living that life, which is the reason as to why he left never to go back. He now looks at America as it celebrates the 4th of July and calls it Independence Day yet there are slaves somewhere who are not even close to living the American dream. He knows that something drastic needs to be done to change the situation and is willing to be part of the change.

Works cited

- 1). Thomas McKean. The unanimous declaration of the thirteen United States America, Congress, (July 4, 1776)
- 2). Frederick Douglass, " Frederick Douglass Biography". Retrieved September 4, 2012.