



EDUCATION AND FREEDOM IN FREDERICK DOUGLASS'S *THE NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS, AN AMERICAN SLAVE*

Raoul S. AHOANGANSI

Faculté des Lettres, Langues, Arts et Communication

Université d'Abomey-Calavi

E-mail: peacemakersouls@yahoo.fr

Abstract

The inalienable rights related to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness highly advocated by the American Declaration of Independence fail to bring hopes to fruition. They prove restricted in their implementation due to circumstances dictated by race and the institution of slavery. Blacks of every age suffer extremist hardships which deprive them from the key to success: education. Frederick Douglass, a fugitive slave and fiercely dedicated to abolitionist principles and goals reveals in his book *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, his heroic journey from slavery to freedom while experiencing education as a sine qua non condition. In light of this, the present paper quests racism as an American social plague and demonstrates how education saves African-Americans from the yoke of a certain dehumanization.

Key words: right, race, slavery, freedom, education.

Résumé

Les fruits n'ont pas tenu la promesse des fleurs quant à l'effectivité des droits inaliénables en rapport à la vie, à la liberté et à la recherche du bonheur si tant clamés par la déclaration de l'indépendance Américaine. Ces derniers ont été restreints dans leur exécution par des circonstances dictées par la race et l'institution esclavagiste. Les Noirs de tout âge sont enclins à des difficultés extrêmes qui les prive de la clé de succès qu'est l'éducation. Frederick Douglas, un esclave fugitif mais ardent défenseur des principes et buts abolitionnistes révèle au grand jour, son héroïque passage de l'esclavage à la liberté par l'entremise de l'éducation en tant que condition sine quo non. A la lumière de ceci, la présente étude présente le racisme comme un fléau social et démontre comment l'éducation peut sauver les Noirs Américains du piège d'une déshumanisation certaine.

Mots clés : droit, race, esclavage, liberté, éducation

Introduction

In a general perspective, the American character opens up wide doors to many events which stigmatize in one way or the other the whole society in which men and women hopefully strive for a better life. The invention of race and related drawbacks didn't help bring to fruition the expected challenges to be met by Americans themselves. Social discriminations came up with lasting effects on relations linking both 'whites' and 'Blacks'. In the virtue of a cultural hierarchy that is essentially based on the skin color, the existing relationship between the

two groups tend to distinguish the white oppressors and the oppressed blacks. The Declaration of Independence didn't miss the point in pinpointing the inalienable rights to everyone among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Yet, many of those same Americans mainly Blacks couldn't in any way enjoy those rights and their own empowerment hit the bloc in the process of their implementation. In such a cluster of racial supremacy, Andrew Jackson appreciates the issue of social plague as "[...] inherently 'white': in character, in structure, in culture. Needless to say, black Americans create life of their own. Yet as a people, they face boundaries and constructions set by the white majority" (Jackson, p.4).

Under the yoke of rejection and despise, African Americans have no choice than the one of a fight to restore respect and consideration toward them. In an autobiography entitled *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* he explicitly explains the traumatic life of African slaves in general and of himself in particular. For Frederick Douglass, as for millions of African Americans, the institution of slavery has denied black people from their rights under the protection of an inestimable injustice. Lacking a voice to speak with, an authority to dictate and legal ways and means to meet challenges, African Americans were bound to react and take initiatives in order to bring to fruition their hopes. Violence failed in leading to success, in grating African Americans equality. Only education could play that role, in the eyes of Frederick Douglass who the offered, through his autobiography, an insight into his own life meant to stand for a living example. Defined as a non-fiction in which a writer tells his or her own life story in whole or in part, the author has definitely shared values, entertained and taught lessons about life in general and particularly as concerns the lives of Americans from African origin in a society of their own making.

To go by what Frederick Douglass says, education as a key to reach some targets can significantly or positively impact human beings in their different endeavors, helping to handle matters in the right way they should be identified, framed and implemented. Depending on the subject to be addressed or the issue to be tackled, education in the eyes of Frederick Douglass offers undeniable ways and means to hold the right end of the stick when anyone shows commitment in facing and fulfilling a challenge. Dating back to early settlements and interest fights, Americans in general happened to set up social discriminations among themselves, on the basis of racial considerations. Social disparities were many and diverse, issued by a certain category of Americans to the detriment of others, black Americans. In his *Narrative*, Frederick Douglass has genuinely approached slavery as a crime which has deprived blacks from education and by the same token from freedom. Focusing on some practical details or arguments on, he not only denounces but also approaches the case and indicates the appropriate way out.

With regard to the author's intrinsic ability in demonstrating education as a key to success in such a case of racial discriminations where slavery comes up with its procession of deplorable consequences, the psychoanalysis and postmodernism approaches would serve as critical methods of analysis in order to understand at depth the vey insights of that narrative of his, an American slave. These literary theories being applied could help identify mechanisms through which he conveys the message and characteristics which portray such a message.

1. Definitions and a Special Focus on the Life of Frederick Douglass.

1.1. Definitions of Education and Freedom

Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, the sixth edition defines education as "a process of teaching, training and learning, especially in schools or colleges, to improve knowledge and develop skills". In fact, to be educated in this context means that a person happens to be taught and trained about things not of his knowing before. He would definitely receive fundamental elements which may deal with how to get ahead with something with a specific know-how, best to lead to success. In other words, it equips the owner with materials that are quite appropriate in tacking particular issues in conditions not necessarily easy to meet the point. It may require some particular steps to follow depending on the kind of subject to be dealing with. *The American Heritage Dictionary*, the second college edition defines on its part the same term as "the act or process of educating or being educated. The knowledge or skill obtained or developed by a learning process or the field of study that is concerned with teaching and learning pedagogy. Thus, the kind of pedagogy pointed in such a case being the study of teaching methods , education stands as a sine qua non basis to bank on to fulfill a dream like the one of Frederick Douglass, living in a society of skillful power usurpators.

On the one hand, *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*, sixth edition defines freedom in terms of "the right or the state of being able to do or say what without anyone stopping you or the state of not being a prisoner or slave". On the other, *The American Heritage Dictionary* explains freedom as "the condition of being free of restraints, the liberty of the person from slavery, oppression or incarceration. The possession of civil rights, the capacity to exercise choice and the right of enjoying all of the privileges of membership or citizenship". Judging from these definitions, one could foresee the real motivations lying behind the choice of Frederick Douglass to get seriously trained for the purpose of meeting his dream of full enjoyment of his civil rights under the status of American citizen. The American context of harsh disparities among 'White' and 'Black' imposes on the deprived ones to dig out of their own intellectual capacities the right but inflexible arguments to face the oppressor in every circumstance.

In one word, one could assume that Frederick Douglass stresses the option of improving knowledge and developing skills so as to get free from restrictions and bondage. Getting saved from the claws of slavery and its savage segregations requires in his eyes to get an appropriate education liable to help grasp a good command of the different ideologies or logics which govern the oppressor's motivations before being able to identify and proffer adequate solutions to the problems faced by the Black community in general.

1.2. A Brief focus on the Life of Frederick Douglass as Related to the Issue under Study.

As it has generally been the case with the vast majority of Americans from African origin who happened to make their voices heard about issues in line with freedom fight, their childhood has always been an up-and-down one, full of challenges to meet despite their bare social status. Frederick Douglass has witnessed the same deplorable life early on but expresses an inflexible determination to make of his own life a full success in a society that reserves more than a hell. Born in February 1817 on the eastern shore of Maryland, his exact date of birth remains curiously unknown to the general public, another proof of the serious lack of care toward him. Fully named Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, his own mother, from whom he was separated at early age, was a slave named Harriet Bailey. This constitutes an additional argument to consider him as a pure 'slavery product' and a fact which can't stand without impacting in one way or the other the whole life of the author. Besides, he has never given that lovely chance to know or see at least his own father: the one entitled by the almighty God to lead his to success with blessing, assistance and guidance.

As a slave, then bound to servitude of any kind and acting as an instrument of labor, Douglass couldn't enjoy a pleasant childhood of wonderful dreams and with blossoming projects ahead to fulfill. Separated from his parents in early age, and he was desperately forced to work hard and submitted to cruel treatments while working on the property of Captain Anthony, a renowned slave owner. In fact in 1825, Anthony who often hired his slaves out to others, decided to send Douglass to Baltimore, Maryland, to live with a man named Hugh Auld and his family. Douglass life improved somewhat while working for the Auld family in his new living place. Fortunately for him, Mrs. Auld was a northerner and as it was commonly recognized in the whole American society, northern slaveholders generally did not treat their slaves as boldly as people in the south did. There was by the sake of chance, a little heart-felt treatment emanating from his masters' own free will to grant him with social cares. One glaring opportunity being graciously offered to him was that Mrs Auld admirably taught young Douglass the basics of reading and writing until her husband stopped her. The seeds of a new hope in

Douglass life were then sown. One may not believe why a slave owner could behave as such toward his slaves.

Even through things were a little bit better than they had been, Douglass was still unhappy with his social situation and began to think of ways and means to turn it better. After the death of Captain Anthony, Douglass became the property of Captain Anthony's son-in-law. He was then hired out to professional slave breaker, a man who was used to mistreating slaves until they gave up and did whatever they were told. One day, Douglass suffered the same case but the situation turned bitter to both the Auld family and Douglass himself. As a consequence, the Auld family then brought him back to Baltimore and put him to work in the Shipyards. There in 1838 he borrowed the identification papers of an African American sailor. By passing himself off as the sailor, he was able to escape to New York very skillfully. He finally adopted the name Douglass and married a free African American woman. They settled in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where several of their children were born. Douglass tried to make a living doing manual labor, and he quickly became involved in the antislavery movement that was gaining strength in the North. In 1841, at an abolitionist meeting in Nantucket, Massachusetts, he delivered a moving speech about his experiences as slave and was immediately hired by the Massachusetts Antislavery Society to give lectures. Douglass was an eloquent speaker; that is his speeches were well throughout and forceful, and he was able to inspire those who heard him

Geared up by his early taste to writing and reading, he easily develops an interesting ability in writing about his own experiences as a slave surely hoping that they could help others from the hard trap of being submitted to unwilling hard works and subservience, Frederick Douglass wrote several autobiographies. He described his experiences as slave in his 1845 autobiography *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, which became a bestseller, and was influential in promoting the cause of abolition, as was his second book, *My Bondage and my Freedom* (1855). After the Civil War, Douglass remained an active Campaigner against slavery and wrote his last autobiography, *Life and Times Frederick Douglass*, first published in 1881 and revised in 1892, three years before his death; it covered events during and after the Civil War. Douglass also actively supported women's suffrage, and held several public offices. Without his approval, Douglass became the first African American nominated for vice President of the United States as the running mate and vice President nominee of Victoria Woodhull, on the Equal Rights Party.

The importance of education in the life of human beings has already been examined by many African American writers such as William Well Brown, Harriet Jacobs, Moses Roper and other. In *William Well Brown's Narrative of William Brown*

a fugitive slave, written by himself, issues like the importance of education in the life human being are demonstrated. Because of his self-education, he develops noteworthy skills and tries to read books as well as subscribing to an antislavery newspaper. This allowed him to escape to Cleveland, Ohio into Canada to gain his freedom. Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* is also a book in which we can find how education permits human beings to divulgate sentiments. Because of the kindly mistress Linda encounters at the beginning of the novel, she has received an education. This permits her to narrate her experience of slavery. In the same vein, because he realizes himself as a living example who should essentially bank on education to change the social paradigm which has significantly impacted his whole life, Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* explains how education can positively change human beings by awakening his consciousness and motivate toward adequate actions to be taken. That is with no doubt, the case with Frederick Douglass who has witnessed a brain-wash after being educated by his mistress, Mrs. Auld. His escape from South to North stands as an immediate result of his being fully aware of the necessity to be educated so as to fight and hold the right end of the stick and feel free in taking initiatives.

2. Frederick Douglass and the Notions of Education and Freedom

2.1. Education and Freedom as seen through the Narrative.

From another source different from the earlier ones, *Collins English Dictionary*, views education as "the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or other intellectually for mature life." (p. 900). This definition of education matches well with Frederick Douglass' personal stand about being free by the ways of dignity, responsibility and fame. Referring to the historical background, African-American authors and renowned writers are used to banking on literature to expostulate about and courageously protest against injustice in all ranks, racism and political outrages. They do it to make social criticism, put leaders aware of their own misbehaviors, influence the opinions of peoples and directly or indirectly sway the masses in such a way to make their voices heard following regulations in fields of protest for rights, already said to be inalienable. Since it could safely be admitted that the American land is the one which, according to activists and founding fathers themselves is endowed with the supreme right to protest for rights, Frederick Douglass like many others before him seize the opportunity to hit hard the system that makes impossible for slaves of African descent to enjoy full citizenship.

In such a drive of motivation, authors of literary works hesitate no more in denouncing social plagues by the means of literature seen as a powerful, corrective and didactic tool or weapon in a given society. In this context of education as a lead to freedom, the sub-genre of the enslaved narratives, usually referred to as 'slave narrative', stands as an abolitionist writing which constantly spreads about the horrors of slavery in the US, confronted to the staunch opposition of former Southern enslavers. "Slave narratives" of this kind include Olaudah Equiano's strong abolitionist autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African* (1789), Harriet Elizabeth Beecher Stowe's protest novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), and Harriet Ann Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* written in 1861. Frederick Douglass's *Narrative* follows in their footsteps. A typical autobiography which places itself in the same line with the first ones may be in a nonpareil example of formal education given to a slave by his own mistress. Douglass successfully carried out his escape plans thanks to this education process which paves the way for him to freedom. The work of Douglass fiercely attacks the institution of slavery and contributes in a significant way to put an end to the enslavement of people of African descent in the United States of America. Relying on the power of words and that possibility of conveying messages through the channel of a slaveholders' medium of exchange, his language that is genuinely mastered in all its dimensions by a former slave to be able to communicate with the later one. Uttering, 'Once you learn to read, you will be free', he points out that by being able to read and write, anyone can easily express his mind to anyone and anywhere Douglass understands that when you build up or bring yourself up internally, you will no longer be content or offer ways to be enslaved externally. An oppressor can only maintain control if he keeps the oppressed illiterate and dependent. Education is the pathway to freedom. Without education, you cannot achieve freedom. Fully aware of the abominable hold to illiteracy from slaveholders to prevent from knowing about the goodness of being educated, he says:

The reading of these documents enable me to utter my thoughts, and to meet the arguments brought forward to sustain slavery, but while they relieve me of one difficulty, they brought on another even more painful than the one of which I was relieved. The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers. I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers, who had left their homes, and in a strange land reduced unto slavery. I loathed them as being the meanest as well as the most wicked of men. As I read and contemplated the subject, ... my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish... I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity (Douglass, p.84).

He contends that there is no other way out of bondage than being able to read and write, getting educated. There are according to him, very few things as highly

esteemed and valued as freedom and education. And above all, referring to the American land, pursuit of happiness motivated millions of people to immigrate to America, caused first Pilgrims to cross oceans in order to practice their religion freely and again the one that caused colonies to declare autonomy from Great Britain. . There is no way to education without freedom, the one indicated to make you feel mandated to express your viewpoint, tackle issues with no fear of repression, depending on your understanding and proffer suggestions not only for your own interest but the one of the whole community in which you live. In nutshell, denying education to any people is one of the greatest crimes against human nature. Frederick Douglass minces no word in backing up that truth when he advocates the following : “If a man is without education although with all his latent possibility attaching to him he is as I have said, but a pitiable object; a giant in body but a pigmy in intellect, and at best but half a man... education”. Freedom and education prove so much interconnected and Frederick Douglass highlights this in his autobiography under study in this research paper.

2.2. Frederick Douglass’ adopted Strategies to Meet his Dream.

As it has commonly being advocated by many authors regardless to their origin and fields of study , education is the key to help oneself fulfill one’s dreams as it opens doors and offers numerous opportunities. Consciousness has clearly been manifested in *The Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass, an American Slave*, an autobiography which best describes the ups and downs of a nonpareil situation. After Fredrick Douglass went to live in Baltimore with Mr. and Mrs. Auld, he has had the chance to be taught by Mrs. Auld. The lady begins to teach Frederick Douglass the A, B, C. and by the kindly aid from Mrs Auld, he gets better ahead with his training. He expressively says: “Very soon after I went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Auld, she very kindly commenced to teach me the A, B, C. After I had learned this, she assisted me in learning to spell words of three or four letters” (Chapter 6, p.78). Just at such a point of progress, Mr. Auld found out what was going on, and at once forbade Mrs. Auld to instruct him, a slave exclusively made to be submitted to his masters’ orders. He further more let her know that it was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read. This authoritative address is dictated in these words from Mr Auld:

I you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master to do as he is told to do. Learning would spoil the best nigger there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master (Douglass, p.78).

After hearing this revelation from Mr. Auld and which confirms indirectly his own appreciation about the institution of slavery and the appropriate way out to

enjoy a descent life, Douglass has definitely changed his mind and was so determined to have an education whatever the obstacle to transcend. In view to this, some circumstances create in him a great consciousness about the worthiness of being educated. Fully equipped with weapon, he could significantly claim and obtain a place in that same American society in which he is living the worst possible ill-treatment as a slave. Because he realizes that behind the restriction imposed on Mrs Auld not to teach him anymore lies in fact the mobile to know more about education, he diligently put forwards this:

The first step in her downward course was in her ceasing to instruct me. She now commenced to practice her husband's precepts. She finally became even more violent in her opposition than her husband himself ... Nothing seemed to make her more angry than to see me with a newspaper;... soon demonstrated, to her satisfaction, that education and slavery were incompatible with each other. The first step had given me the inch, and no precaution could prevent me from taking the ell. (Douglass, p.82)

Douglass spontaneously aims so high in being educated and he turns any situation into a new circumstance to learn more and discover the great damages slumbering behind his being illiteracy. He lacks no strategy in improving his level in reading and writing since his determination reveals more than an inflexible will to achieve more intellectually. He skillfully begins trading bread for reading lessons from poor white children in the Aulds' neighborhood. Having no regular instructors, he knowingly converts all the boys whom he met in the street into teachers from whom he studiously learns with intelligence and respect .Quite happy to be taught by whoever could lend a helping hand, he develops some strategies toward that precious objective. A good illustration of his resolution is highlighted as follows:

The plan which I adopted, and the one by which I was most successful, was that of making friends of all the little white boys whom I met in the street. As many of these as I could, I converted into teachers. With their kindly aid, obtained at different times and in different places, I finally succeed in learning to read. When I was sent of errands, I always took my book with me, and by going one part of my errand quickly, I found time to get a lesson before my return. I used also to carry bread with me, enough of which was always in the house, and to which I was always welcome; for I was much better off in this regard than many of the poor white children in our neighborhood. This bread I used to... would give me that more valuable bread of knowledge... for it is almost an unpardonable offense to teach slaves to read in this Christian country. (Douglass, p.83).

Reading and writing should be implemented at the same time, not the one without the other. Despite the hard times and inappropriate learning conditions, Douglass demonstrates an intelligence which could be viewed as the only one of the kind that could stem from a slave's own imagination or initiative. To acquire a good know-how in writing as he finally succeeds in knowing how to read, the method or strategy to follow differs from the one in the reading acquisition process. Douglass seizes the slightest possible opportunity being offered to make a step

forward in meeting a challenge. His neighborhood constitutes a testing field with all little boys he could meet. The constant determination he shows reveals in these lines the tricky plan through which he knows how to write:

I soon learned the names of these letters... After that, when I met with any boy who I knew could write, would tell him I could write as well as he... During this time, my copy-book was the board fence, brick wall, and pavement; my pen and ink was a lump of chalk. With these, I learned mainly how to write... By this time, my little Master Thomas had gone to school, and learned how to write, and had written over a number of copy-books....;When left thus, I used to spend the time in writing in the spaces left in Master Thomas's copy-book... I continued to do this until I could write a hand very similar to that of Master Thomas. Thus, after a long, tedious effort for years, I finally succeeded in learning how to write. (Douglass, p.87).

Reaching such a standard in his knowledge acquisition process with knowing how to read and write, he progressively recognizes his capacities and rights to be demonstrated and claimed. Frederick Douglass comes to know now that evil thing slavery represents. For, his freedom plan couldn't delay to be framed out and followed in order to get out of the claws of injustice and bondage He commenced to see himself being able to do things the same way white people use to. Though he cannot immediately free himself, he therefore takes gradual initiative in such a sense. First of all, he has come to free himself from physical bondage by struggling with Edward Covey. In fact, once Mr. Covey wanted to beat him and he wittily seized Mr. Covey hard by the throat. A battle followed then and right after that battle Mr. Covey does not beat him again. The sequence of face-to-face challenge was appreciated by Douglass in the following statement:

The battle with Mr. Covey was the turning-point in my career as a slave. It rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood. It recalled the departed self-confidence, and inspired me again with a determination to be free (chapter 10, p.113).

Taking the risk to struggle with Mr. Covey, this audacity gives him physical freedom and inspires him to fight for a total freedom: escape from bondage and feel able to express viewpoints freely with responsibility. After being jailed, Frederick Douglass returns in Baltimore. Once there, he is permitted to hire his time by his master and must give to his master eight and nine dollars per week. He finds it is an opportunity for him to get money for his escape. To express that burning desire, he says "I was ever on the look-out for means of escape; and finding no direct means, I determined to try to hire my time, with a view of getting money with which to make my escape" (chapter 11, p.139). Although he fails in his first attempt, Douglass is still determined to count his freedom among his greatest achievements. Thus, he dutifully saves money for the next attempt. As he has had an opportunity to hire his time, he works day and night so as to have enough money which can help him to make his journey. His manifest is openly showed in this passage:

It was a step towards freedom to be allowed to bear the responsibility of freeman, and I was determined to hold on upon it. I bent myself to the work of making money. I was ready to work at night as well as day, and by the most untiring perseverance and industry, I made enough to meet my expenses, and lay up a little money every week. (Douglass, p140)

Douglass leaves no place for little disturbance to make fail his project. This perseverance is nourished by successful ways and means to win the case of freedom. In dealing with his master in any little work to do, he proves very prudent to avoid the slightest possible suspicion liable to create havoc in the implementation of his escape plan. That's the reason why one week, when he must give money to his master and he is lack of it, he remarks that his master was angry and wanted to remove him for working. Douglass manages the deal and promise to pay him back next week. To remove any suspicion from his master, Douglass works hard and pays his master the surplus of his debt. The master was so happy. The strategy works out and Douglas explains it in these words:

At the end of the work, I brought him between eight and nine dollars. He seemed very well pleased, and asked me why I did not the same the week before. He little knew what my plans were. My object in working steadily was to remove any suspicion he might entertain of my intent to run away; and in this I succeeded admirably (chapter 12, p.142)

The pathway from slavery to freedom has plainly been demonstrated by Frederick Douglass throughout his strategies related to this hard American context of bondage where restrictions to prevent slaves from freedom are many and diverse. In the course of finding the best possible alternative to help get his freedom, Douglass minces no chance to seize, no opportunity to grasp and no initiative to take in line with the fulfillment of his objective. Everyone in touch with him represents a case to explore so as to detect any possible ways and means capable of leading to real freedom which, in the eyes of Frederick Douglass stands as the only way out.

Conclusion

Fortunate, lucky and skillful enough to get free from bondage and live a normal life, the fugitive slave takes worthy initiatives in line with his objective. The autobiography entitled *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* depicts in its slightest details the situation in which Frederick Douglass strives successfully to reach an unexpected summit of achievement. From one master to another one, a place to the second and a circumstance to another different one, he doesn't flex anymore from the main to be fulfilled that is his freedom. Drawing from every situation the best lesson to help go ahead with his burning will, he misses no point along his long walk to freedom. Appropriate ways and means are designed, framed and genuinely applied in the only regard of the fulfillment of the aim set by himself. Fully aware of his deplorable living conditions as a slave

capable of doing things the way whites do but still blocked by social hardships towards slaves of African descent by masters, he turned down that course of misdoings with courage, patience and know-how.

His stay in the Auld family turns up with the opportunity to learn to read and write but very soon takes another facet right the opposite, in favor of everything but not education. This was mainly due to Mr Auld's opposition to his wife to make Douglass know about how to read and write because conscious about his being able to claim for his rights and see the light of liberty and hope for liberation from bondage. Doing his best against all odds to know how to read and write, Frederick Douglass lacks in no instant arguments and strategies to face and meet the challenge of being free. Still, the way he organizes these mobiles and plans is his, in face of slaveholders who possess the power of life and death over their subjects.

Bibliography

- Aptheker, H (1973). *Essays in the history the American Negro*. 5thPrinting New York: International Publishers.
- Blassingame, J. W. (1979). *The Salve Community: Plantation Life in the Ante Bellum South*. Revised and enlarged Edition, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Douglass ,F. (1977). *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*. New York: Signet Classic.
- Douglass, F. (1987). *My Bondage and my Freedom*. New York: Miller, Orton and Mulligan. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Faust, D. G. (1985). *The Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Ante-Bellum South 1830-1860*. Baton-Rouge: Louisiana State University.
- Harriet, A. J. (1861). *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. New York. Create Space Independent Publishing Platform.
- Moses, R. (1837). *Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper*. New York. International Publishers.
- Olaudah, E. (1861). *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano Or Gustavus Vassa, The African*. Great Britain. Trade Paper Edition.
- Stamp, K. M. (1956). *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-bellum South*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Stowe, H. B. (1977). *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. London: Everyman's Library.