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The Frederick Douglass Essay

At the beginning of the story, Frederick Douglass mentions that he does not know his father. Supposedly, his father might be his own master. But as Frederick was mentioning in the story, there was no evidence for this claim but rumors he had sometimes heard from other slaves. His mother died when he was about the age of seven. He was not meeting her regularly, only when she was able to run away from her place to spend a night with her child as the slaves were keeping separately from their relatives. Aspects who might play the role of Frederick's father figure would be too difficult as he does not mention any older male as the role model for him in the story. Usually, the older male figure and authority were the masters. But as he was serving to different ones during his life, he was considering them in different way. Some of them were cruel as Mr. Covey, and some of them were behaving better as Mr. Freeland, who Frederick understood as a true southern gentleman: "On the first of January 1834, I left Mr. Covey, and went to live with Mr. William Freeland, who lived about three miles from St. Michael's. I soon found Mr. Freeland a very different man from Mr. Covey. Though not rich, he was what would be called an educated southern gentleman." (46) Although Frederick was praising Mr. Freeland's comparing to the previous masters, this has not prevented him from running away.

Considering the question of the mother figure might be more debatable topic. Frederick had known his own mother, but as she died early during his childhood, the bond between the child and his mother was broken. The most important woman in his life was without any questions Mrs. Auld: "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" (26). Despite the fact, that Mrs. Auld very soon stopped to teach Frederick reading because of following her husband's will, she gave to the young slave an idea of long-term perspective how to escape from the captivity. During the next years, he was able to gain the ability to read by himself and with the occasional help of usually young white boys from the neighborhood. Thus, the spark Mrs. Auld emblazed in him became the most important impulse in his life.

According to the text, slaves in some areas were usually relatives. Or at least some of them. Frederick was mentioning a few of his relatives as well, e. g. his aunts or his grandmother. Actually, it was not clear whether she was his real grandmother, but she was playing this role for many other children even the white ones as a domestic female-slave. As his brothers and sisters, he was

considering other slaves with which he was living or serving. It could be seen in this short fragment: "Master Andrew-a man who, but a few days before, to give me a sample of his bloody disposition, took my little brother by the throat, threw him on the ground, and with the heel of his boot stamped upon his head till the blood gushed from his nose and ears--was well calculated to make me anxious as to my fate. After he had committed this savage outrage upon my brother, he turned to me, and said that was the way he meant to serve me one of these days." (32) A young boy, he is speaking about, was not his real brother, but just another slave. In the conditions in which the slaves were living was that enough to be considered as a brother or sisterhood.

As I was mentioning previously, the ability to read, which Frederick could gain thanks to the short efforts of Mrs. Auld followed by long term endeavor by himself, he gained the crucial skill for getting the knowledge and information and – most importantly – building up his confidence. During the story, he asks a philosophical question: "Does a righteous God govern the universe? and for what does he hold the thunders in his right hand, if not to smite the oppressor, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the spoiler?" (48) This confidence and will to break the not only imaginary chains is then recast into reality when fighting with his master Covey. "From this time, I was never again what might be called fairly whipped though I remained a slave four years afterwards. I had several fights but was never whipped" (44). This was the second cardinal step on the way to go free.