

Lecture on Orators and Literature Against Oppression

Intro to Black 19th - Century orators/ activists against oppression

- Nineteenth-century black activists and the expressive black body as a site of resistance....
- Question: What speeches were Walker and Truth famous for?
- David Walker (his Appeal 1829),
Sojourner Truth (her famous speech 1851),
Frederick Douglass (his Fourth of July
Speech 1852)

Intro to the Black 19th Century orators/ activists against oppression

- Can you name another important black 19th-century activist?
- Other big names: Harriet Tubman, Henry Highland Garnett, Martin Delaney, Robert Fox, Elizabeth Jennings, Ida B. Wells, Booker T. Washington.

David Walker: It is not clear what he looked like

- David Walker's *Appeal To The Colored Citizens of The World*, arguably the most radical of all anti-slavery documents,
- He caused a great stir when it was published in September of 1829 with its call for slaves to revolt against their masters. Note this was also the early years of abolition.
- It is also important to note that it came two years before The Nat Turner Rebellion, and thus set off a series of laws that were intended to better control blacks.

Sojourner Truth--preacher, activist, 1826-1883



“Ain’t I A Woman”
1851

Frederick Douglass (circa 1818-1895)

Orator, author,
Anti-slavery
activist, and
presidential
advisor



Some Famous Quotes by Douglass:

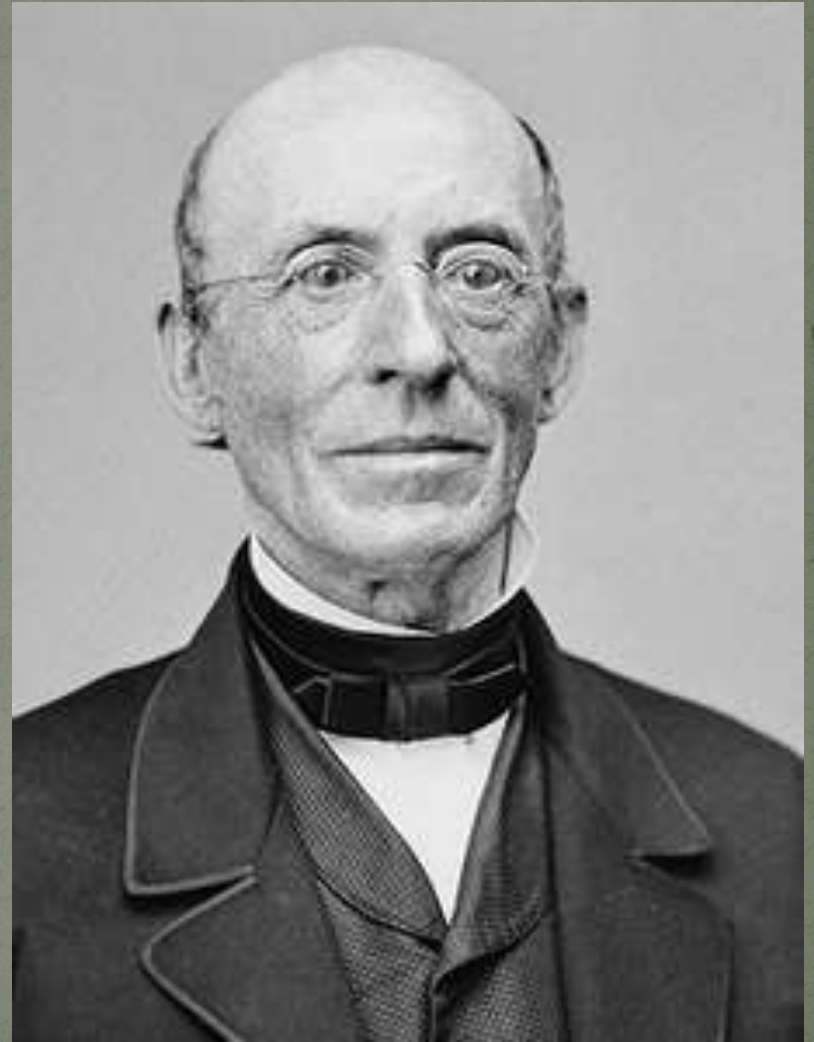
- If there is no struggle, there is no progress.
- Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.
- It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.
- No man can put a chain about the ankle of his fellow man without at last finding the other end fastened about his own neck.
- Fugitive slaves were rare then, and as a fugitive slave lecturer, I was the first one out.
- Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe.

- Frederick Douglass was recruited by the famed and fiery white abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison in 1841.
- He became the most influential black man of his time, meeting with Abraham Lincoln before and after The Civil War, as a staunch abolitionist, and helping to engineer Reconstruction policies for black people.

William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879)

- A fierce abolitionist, grounded in his uncompromising hatred of slavery on moral and ethical grounds, and a mentor to Frederick Douglass,
- He founded the anti-slavery newspaper

The Liberator in 1831 and vehemently rejected the gradualist approach of the American Colonization Society



- An important quote by William Lloyd Garrison.

“So profoundly ignorant of the nature of slavery are many persons, that they are stubbornly incredulous whenever they read or listen to any recital of the cruelties which are daily inflicted on its victims” (Garrison, x [my copy 250]).

He also talks about the incompatibility of enslavement with Western religious practice, the laws and the constitution .

A quote from the Speech

- “I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us.”

Frederick Douglass (1852)

Some background

Douglass learned to read first from his master's wife, Ms. Auld, then by teaching himself and paying young hungry white boys with bread to teach him, reportedly.

- By 1845 Douglass had become well-known for his speeches at abolitionist rallies. He was so articulate and eloquent that many people doubted he had ever actually been a slave (Retrieved 3/15/19, University of Virginia, abolitn/dougnarrhp.html).
 - Remember, we saw an enactment of his Fourth of July speech (1852)
- He wrote his *Narrative* to both "prove" his identity, and to bring his powerful indictment of slavery to a wider audience. It was probably the best-selling of all the fugitive slave narratives: 5000 copies were sold within four months of its first printing, and 6 new editions were published between 1845 and 1849. Douglass published two later versions of his autobiography: *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855) and *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1881) (ibid.).

The Activist

- Using funds earned from his speaking tours, Douglass established the abolitionist paper *The North Star* on December 3, 1847, in Rochester, NY, and developed it into the most influential black antislavery paper published during the antebellum era (Britannica.com).
 - Newspapers and public speaking were important means of communication, also a great use of pamphlets.
- Douglass was also influential in the underground railroad.
- And he was one of the first and most influential male feminists of his time.
- He is considered by contemporary scholars as an assimilationist, in that he did not espouse black nationalist or back-to-Africa ideology, like Martin Delaney for example. He felt that blacks had shed their blood and sweat in this country, and thus had as much right to it as any white man.¹³

End of Week 6 Lecture 😊

Frederick Douglass:
*Narrative of the Life of
Frederick Douglass,
Written by Himself*

APA style in works cited page:

Douglass, F. (1845). *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass, An American slave, written by himself*. Boston, MA: Published at the Anti-Slavery Office

Learning Objectives of this study of Frederick Douglass' Autobiography

- Understand that, as part of the mid-19th century abolition strategy, the autobiographical slave narrative becomes a powerful tool.
- Understand the historical power of the written word in African American thought and action.
- We want to make note of how Frederick Douglass' skilled use of language paints a realistic personal portrait of slavery, while also romanticizing its oppressive nature through pathos (appeal to emotions) and the example it set for other black authors.

- In this autobiography, Douglass distinguishes myth from reality. He uses incidents of cruelty that he witnessed along with songs of the slaves themselves—spirituals—to emphasize this distinction.
- One myth that Southern slave owners and proponents were happy to perpetuate was that of the slave happily singing from dawn to dusk as he worked in the fields, prepared meals in the kitchen, or maintained the upkeep of the plantation.

Your homework

- Look up and define the words: rhetoric, intrinsic, logos, ethos, pathos
- Based on the Preface, who was William Lloyd Garrison and what was his relationship to Frederick Douglass?
- Write one sentence that helps you understand how Douglass comes into consciousness of his blackness and identify where that is in the reading.
- Name a black person in recent times --writer, singer, speaker, politician-- who invokes a similar sense of pathos as Douglass in the struggle for social justice today, and say why?

Vocabulary in the context of the reading

- **Rhetoric:**

the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, especially the use of figures of speech and other compositional techniques.

- **Extrinsic**

- not part of the essential nature of someone or something; coming or operating from outside.

- **Logos:**

The term has biblical implications, but in literature, logos is a rhetorical device or content in an argument that is meant to appeal to logic.

- Can you find an example in the chapters you read?

- **Ethos:**

the characteristic spirit of a culture, era, or community as manifested in its beliefs and aspirations.

Can you use it in a sentence?

- **Pathos:**

a quality that evokes pity or sadness (see Garrison p. IV).

- Can you find an example in the chapters you read?

Another word used by Garrison

- **Expostulation:**

an expression of protest, not a rant exactly, but often lengthy. You might liken it to a stern or persuasive lecture, a written or spoken **expostulation** on the why you should never do the things you may want to do.

Exercise

- Name the most poignant point that you get from the reading .
- Name a current poignant point that you have seen in black art or some aspect of culture recently.

Douglass: Chapters 1 -3

Key points for me:

- The fact that he made this type of autobiography popular.
- He provides insight into black subjectivity during enslavement.
- Douglass' book illustrates how blacks internalized the dominant culture's notion of their inferiority, as well as relations between blacks;
 - For Example, their self-esteem hinged on the greatness and wealth of their master.
- The example of Douglass shows that learning to read and reason opens the mind to one's condition and potential.

Questions and Highlights

- What does Garrison's Preface do?
- When or where did Garrison first meet Douglass?
- What does Garrison's Preface of Douglass's book tell you about Garrison?
- What does Garrison's Preface of Douglass' book tell you about Frederick Douglass?
- What does Garrison think about Douglass' intellect and why was that important?
- What does Garrison say about Douglass' potential as an abolitionist?
- Can you name a black person today (or living) writer who invokes a similar sense of pathos that Douglass did?

- See video of Alvin Ailey
- See video of J Cole

- Free write describing either one of these videos.

Chapter 2

- Example of a logos, page 14, regarding the song [my copy 262-263, and pathos especially bottom 262].
- Read from Chapter V and VI.

Exercises

Chapter 1

- One example of logos: p. 5 [my copy 257] on the issue of mulattos as an example of doing away with the myth of “the curse of Ham.”
- An example of pathos: The scene describing Aunt Hester (p.8 [my copy 258]).

What does this passage say about Douglass?

Some Activity Exercises

- A timeline or free write that compares your life with Frederick Douglass'
 - His development from innocence and childhood, to becoming aware of his circumstance and what he had to do to change it (this especially happens in chapter 6)
- In a free write, based on how far you got in the reading, summarize what what you learned about Frederick Douglass.
- Choose a passage and point out the powerful words of imagery.
- Using powerful evocative language or drawing a powerful picture, describe something or a situation in society that you would challenge.

Pathos In the body

- Pathos: Alvin Ailey—Excerpts from *Revelations 1960*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNqaixKbrjs>

Alvin Ailey, I've Been 'Buked, the complete dance from *Revelations*

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-SoXwSEof7c>

Gospel songs with hidden meanings

- Etta Jones: Swing Low Sweet Chariot

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=Thz1zDAytzU>

- Calvin Earl Wade in the Water

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmGoJq55Neo>

Extra Links to Youtube portrayals where speech and pathos are important for the struggle for freedom.

1. David Walkers Appeal To Colored Citizens

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IGNIROtf78>

Follow instructions on slide 2

2. See following clips on more voices

- See clip ~~Sojourner Truth “Ain’t I a Woman?” (1851) see whole clip but S.T starts at 1:35~~

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3nBxOU8xgk>

How does Sojourner Truth add to Voices and Narratives in your own words but pick out main point[s]

- Frederick Douglass 1852 4th of July Frederick Douglass 1852 4th of July <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jfjSrym-tI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jfjSrym-tI>

How does Douglass add to Voices and Narratives, focus on the point of the speech.

The End