

ENG 182 Final Paper

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I Introduction

TODO

II School of Slavery

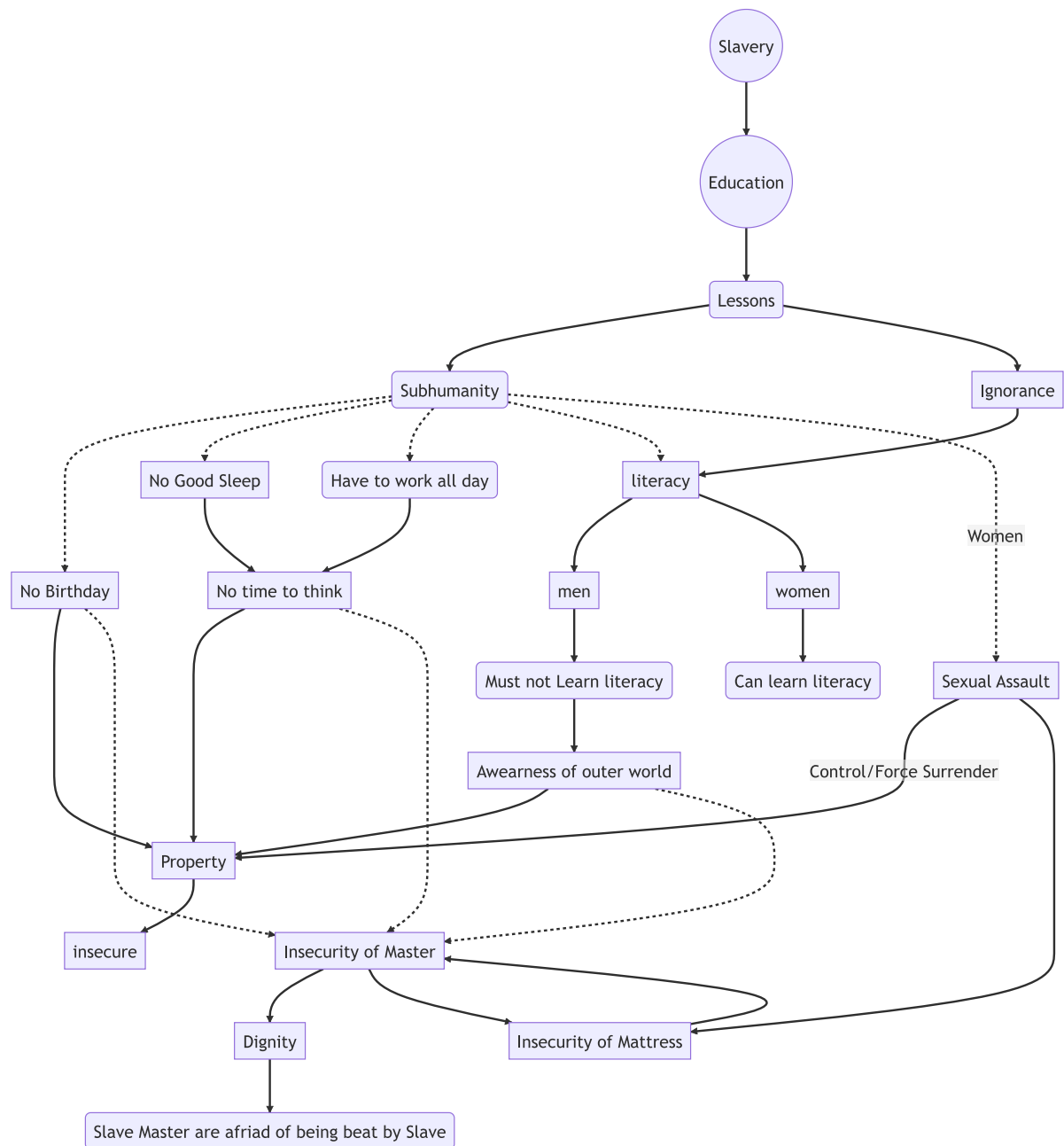


Figure 1: Schooling for Slavery

Slavery is not natural, which means that it requires a special curriculum of maintaining the current state of slavery. The curriculum is designed to make slaves believe that they are born to be slaves, and they should not fight back. This curriculum mainly include two parts: one to convince them as subhuman, and the other to promote their ignorance.

II.i Subhumanity

The first part of the curriculum is to convince slaves that they are born as slaves. In the autobiography by Frederick Douglass, slaves are not allowed to know his birthday (Matlack 1979, p. 1). Any inquiry about birthday will result in serious punishment. By depriving the privilege of knowing birthday, slaves are deprived of the ability of knowing their growth as a human. This treatment is effective in making them feeling that they are as animal in the house, as animals are also not “allowed” to know their birthday. Further, whenever slaves are born, they must be separated from their mother for a couple of years. Therefore, slaves are being deprived of the privilege of having a family. For example, Douglass are having very little memory of his mother (Matlack 1979, p. 2). Even though Douglass’s mom tried her best to get in touch with Douglass, spending the whole night walking miles to see him, Douglass is not able to have a beloved impression from his mom. Further, when his mother are sick and finally die, Douglass is not allowed to present, or even know the information (Matlack 1979, p. 3).

This lesson has a special variant for female slaves. The ability to perform sexual assault has provided the slaveholder an effective weapon to convince female slaves that they are their property. As an example, Dr. Flint has performed various sexual abuse on the young Linda,

polluting her young mind with the unclean image, where “only a vile monster can think of” (Jacobs 2022, p. 39). Dr. Flint consistently asserting that Linda is his property, and she is forced to live under the same roof as Dr. Flint, and also bear with his suffocative surveillance. All this creates a deep impression on Linda that she is a property of Dr. Flint.

II.ii Ignorance

Simply teaching slaves that they are subhuman is not enough. It is also important to teach them that this is the life that they can achieve, and they already achieve a very good life. This is the second part of the curriculum, which is to promote ignorance of the slaves.

The one and most important thing about teaching slaves about ignorance is to deprive their potential of learning literacy. As a old saying, the more we learn, the more we find that we don't know. By depriving the potential of learning literacy, slaves will not be able to learn the outer world, which means they will be satisfied by their current environment. In other words, they are being ignorant about their living environment.

In particular, one of the most implicit but effective method of teaching slaves ignorance is to bind their master's greatness to their dignity. This is greatly demonstrated in the *Great Horse Farm*. Slaves who have a chance to go to work on the *Great House Farm*, even though with minimal extra privilege, will sing songs to celebrate that they are going to work for the *Great House Farm* (Matlack 1979, p. 10). The *Great House Farm* are associated with greatness in slaves' mind. Furthermore, the greatness of masters are associate with the greatness of slaves. For example, “Colonel Lloyd's slaves contending that he was the richest, and Mr. Jepson's slaves that he was the smartest” (Matlack 1979, p. 16-17). According to Douglass, slaves “seemed to think that the greatness of their masters was transferable to

themselves” (Matlack 1979, p. 17). This is very effective in controlling slaves, as they will both be ignorance and would like to work harder to make their master greater. The claim will be revisited in Section IV.

II.iii Insecurity of Slaveholders

III Revolt

1. Ignorance Analysis

1. Douglass’s example of *Great House Farm*
2. Douglass’s example of learning literacy
3. Douglass helps organize the meeting for community to learn literacy
4. Linda’s example of learning literacy

2. Insecurity of Slaveholder

1. Douglass example of defying Covey’s control
2. Linda’s example of merrymaking Mr. Sands

3. Deprive Family and strength

1. Friends
2. Neighbors and community
3. Hard heart

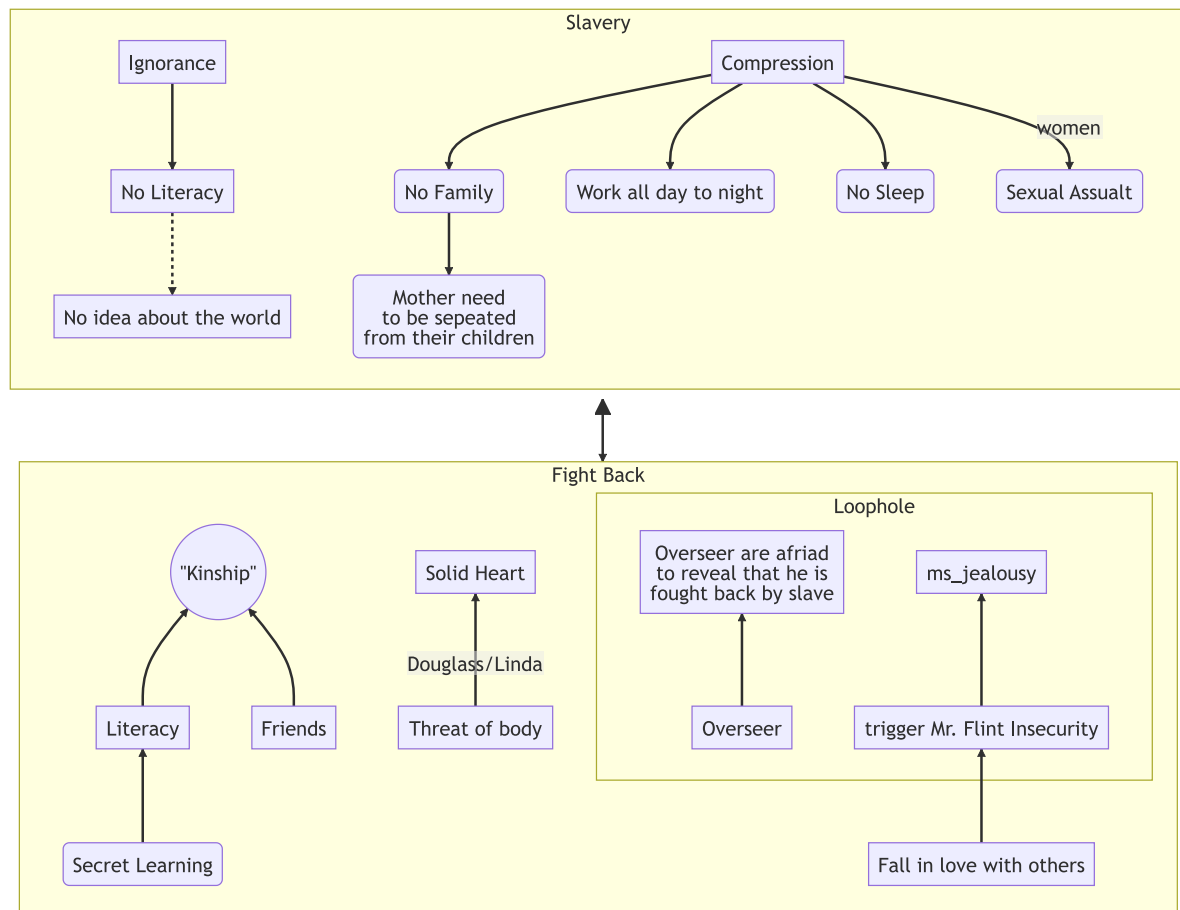


Figure 2: Slavery Fight Back

IV Implication

- School (Chinese Education)
- Control through ignorance and limited access to education:
 - Slavery history: Enslavers deliberately kept enslaved people in a state of ignorance by denying them access to education and limiting their exposure to the world beyond their plantation.
 - Chinese education: While education is highly valued in Chinese culture, the traditional system has been characterized by strict adherence to authority and a focus on rote memorization, which can limit critical thinking and creativity.

- Collective sense of honor
- IV. The balance between conformity and individualism:
 - Slavery history: The institution of slavery aimed to strip enslaved people of their individuality and reduce them to mere property, compelling them to conform to the demands of their enslavers.
 - Chinese education: While Chinese culture often prioritizes collectivism and social harmony, it can sometimes lead to conformity and suppression of individual expression, particularly in the context of education.
- Obedience
- Prison
- Davis's idea about prison industrial complex (Davis 2011)

Bibliography

Davis, Angela Y. *Are Prisons Obsolete?*. Seven stories press, 2011.

Jacobs, Harriet Ann. "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl."

Matlack, James. "The Autobiographies of Frederick Douglass." *Phylon* (1960-), vol. 40, no. 1.