

Critical Insights: The Slave Narrative

“The Slave Narrative presents recent critical work in the literary genre known as the freed or runaway slave narrative, from the antebellum sensation, Uncle Tom's Cabin, to post-bellum novels and 20th century neo-slave fiction such as *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, as well as the sensational modern novel turned Academy Award-winning best picture *Twelve Years a Slave* by Solomon Northup. Each essay, written by various professors and/or Ph.D. candidates, has internal footnotes keyed to a bibliography at the end...

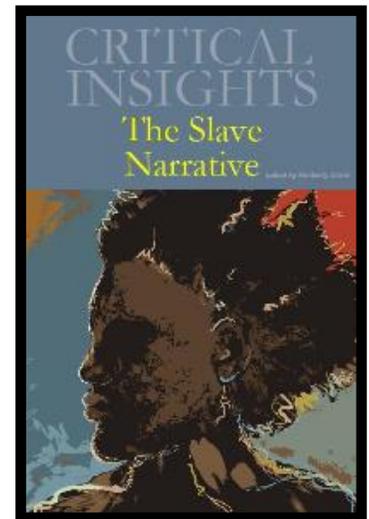
According to Drake all slave narratives contain the same plot points...usually contain examples of the cruel treatment endured at the Master's hand, when and how the slave realized what it meant to be a slave, the humiliation of being inspected and sold like cattle, and the sorrow of being separated from family and friends at the whim of the slaveowner and the effect on the slaves' psyches.

Many of these narratives were dictated to abolitionists who used them to fan the fires of the movement to abolish slavery. Since slaves were prohibited by law from becoming literate, telling their life story to someone able to write and publish it was the only way some could leave their thoughts and experiences as a witness to their lives as slaves. Later, the WPA used interviewers to allow ex-slaves and/or their families to record their slavery stories.

The Slave Narrative fills a sometimes overlooked segment of material about a subject that, while still considered a dark area of American history and contains complex essays which will appeal most to academics and the many general readers who cannot get enough Civil War books alike. For that reason, *The Slave Narrative* is recommended for both upper-level academic and general collections”

-ARBA

Text Reviews



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