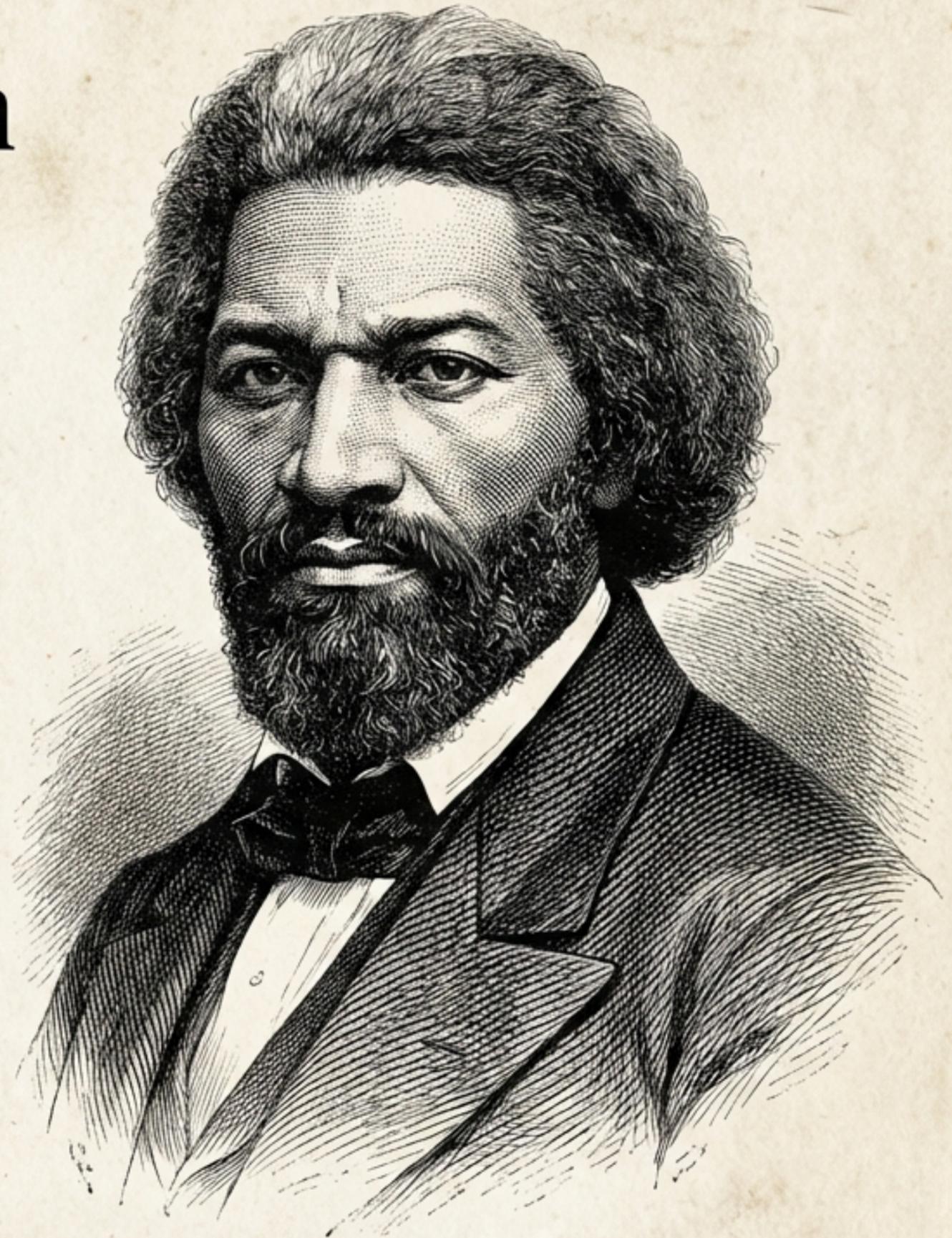


**You have seen how a man
was made a slave; you
shall see how a slave
was made a man.**

**A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE
NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF
FREDERICK DOUGLASS**

1818 – 1895



THE SYSTEMIC ERASURE OF THE SELF



DATE OF BIRTH: Unknown (Approx. 1817–1818)

PATERNITY: **White** (Rumored to be the master)

MATERNITY: **Harriet Bailey** (Separated at infancy; visited only 4-5 times at night; died when Douglass was approx. 7).

Slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters to keep their slaves thus ignorant.

EARLY 1800s
(Redacted)

INFANCY
(Stolen)

CHILDHOOD
(Fragmented)

APPROX. 1825
(Mother's Death)

LOST YEARS

ANTEBELLUM PERIOD

STOLEN HISTORY

FORCED IGNORANCE

REDACTED NARRATIVE

CULTURAL ERASURE

THE ECONOMICS OF DEPRIVATION

Monthly Ration



8 lbs
Pork/Fish



1 Bushel
Corn Meal

Yearly Clothing - Total Value < \$7.00



2 Linen Shirts



1 Pair Linen
Trousers



1 Jacket



1 Pair Winter
Trousers



1 Pair Stockings
& Shoes

*Children from seven to ten years old, of both sexes, almost naked, might be seen **at all seasons of the year.***

The 'Great House Farm' commanded 20 farms, yet provided only subsistence-level survival for its workforce.

TERROR AS POLICY, NOT PASSION

CASE STUDIES

- **CASE STUDY A: AUNT HESTER**
Whipped for jealousy and disobedience.
The "blood-stained gate" to Douglass's hell.
- **CASE STUDY B: DEMBY**
Shot in the face by Overseer Gore for refusing to leave the creek.

Defense: An unmanageable slave subverts all order.

Killing a slave, or any colored person... is not treated as a crime, either by the courts or the community.

THE LEGAL REALITY

THE POISON OF IRRESPONSIBLE POWER



SUBJECT: Sophia Auld

BEFORE: A weaver by trade. Kind heart.
“Face made of heavenly smiles.”

AFTER: The fatal poison turns her “angelic
face” to that of a demon.

KEY INSIGHT: Slavery injures the slaveholder as much as the slave.

“The fatal poison of irresponsible power was already in her hands, and soon commenced its infernal work.”

THE PROHIBITION THAT REVEALED THE PATH

“If you teach that nigger how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave.”

— Hugh Auld



- The Master's Fear: Education = Unmanageability.
- Douglass's Deduction: Literacy is the direct pathway from slavery to freedom.
- The Resolution: "What he most dreaded, that I most desired."

THE AGONY OF AWARENESS

“I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing... The silver trump of freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness.”

- *The Columbian Orator*: Refuting the master's logic.
- *Sheridan's Speeches*: Vindication of human rights.

Literacy opened his eyes to the “horrible pit” but offered no ladder.

RANKED WITH THE BRUTES

“She stands—she sits—she staggers—she falls—she groans—she dies—and there are none of her children or grandchildren present.”

- **The Valuation:** Men, women, and children ranked alongside horses, sheep, and swine.
- **The Fate of the Grandmother:** Served from infancy to death. Rocked the master, peopled the plantation. Reward: Banishment to die in total loneliness.

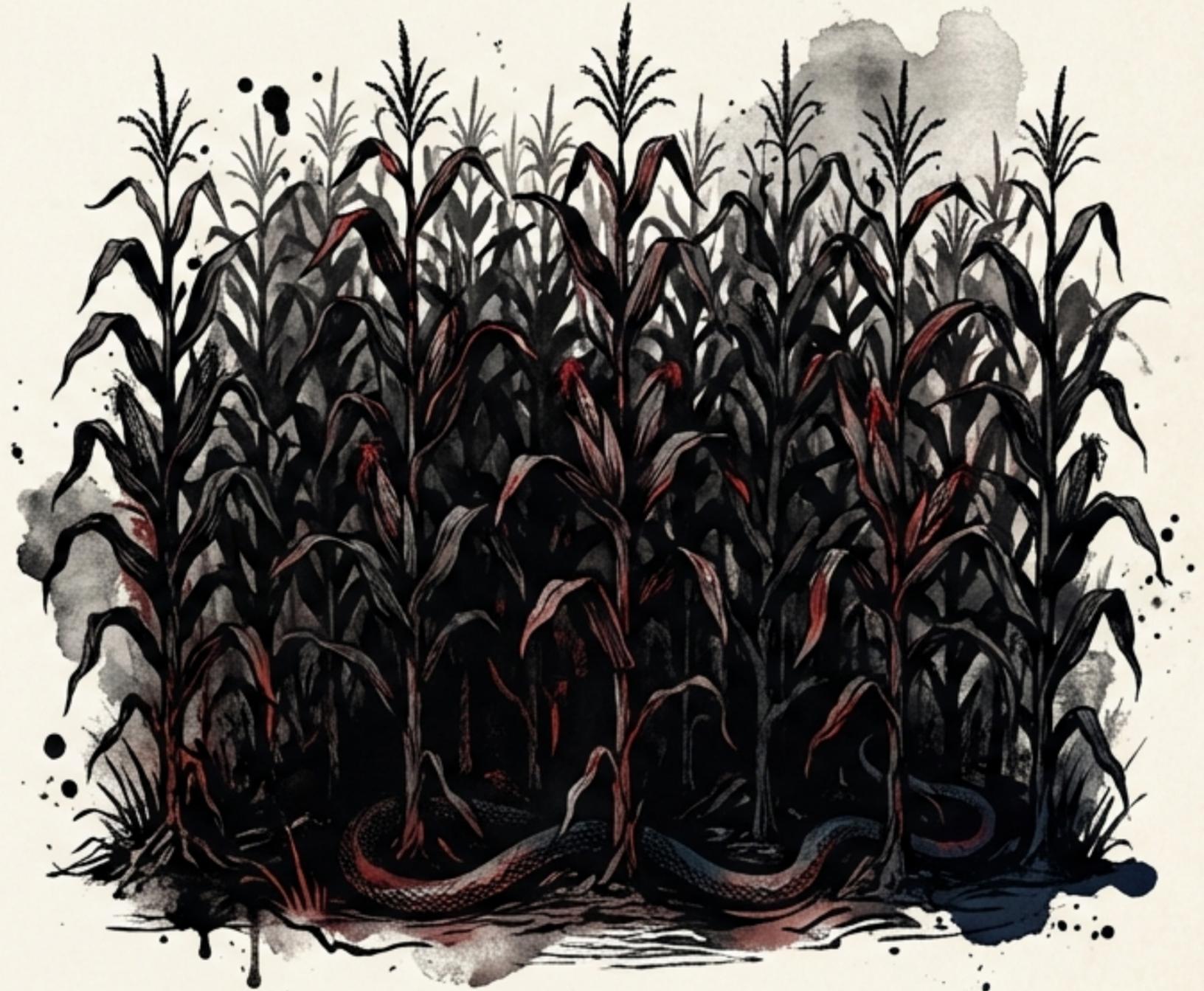


THE MECHANICS OF BREAKING THE SPIRIT

“The **dark night** of slavery closed in upon me; and behold a **man transformed into a brute!**”

ANTAGONIST: Edward Covey (“The Snake”).

METHOD: Work from first light until midnight. Surveillance. Severe floggings.



The “Dark Night of the Soul”—the psychological nadir of the narrative.

THE APOSTROPHE TO THE MOVING MULTITUDE

“You are loosed from your moorings, and are free; I am fast in my chains, and am a slave! You are freedom’s swift-winged angels... I am confined in bands of iron!”

Sunday, the only leisure time, spent on the banks of the Chesapeake. The first formation of the escape plan.



THE RESURRECTION

**“I seized Covey
hard by the
throat.”**

DATE: August 1833.

DURATION: A two-hour physical battle.

OUTCOME: Covey never whips him again.



*“It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom.
My long-crushed spirit rose, cowardice departed, bold defiance took its place.”*

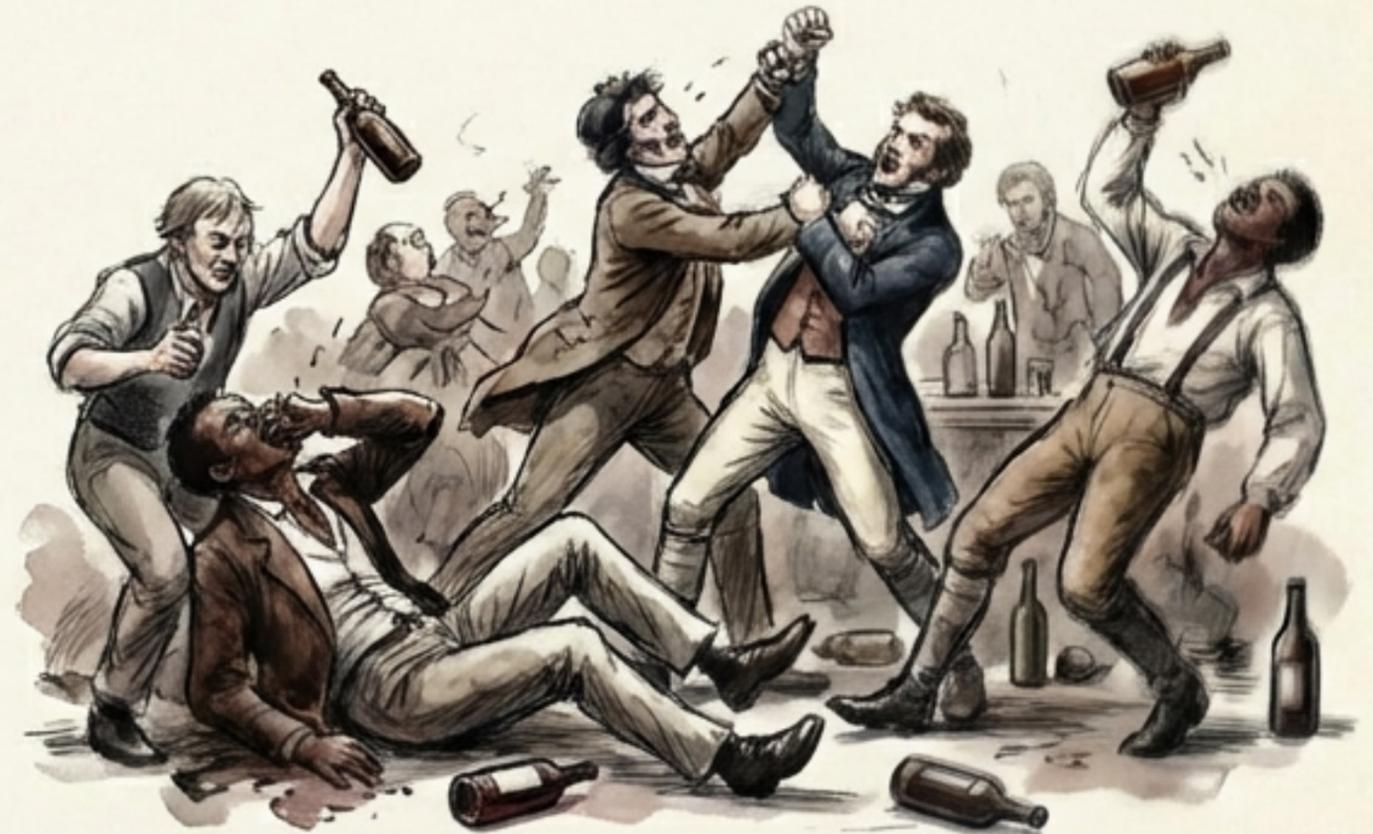
THE FRAUD OF THE HOLIDAY

“When the slave asks for virtuous freedom, the cunning slaveholder... cheats him with a dose of vicious dissipation, artfully labelled with the name of liberty.”

Concept: Holidays as “Safety-Valves” for rebellion.

Method: Systemic encouragement of alcohol consumption.

Goal: To disgust the slave with freedom.



THE ROBBERY OF THE EARNINGS



Job: Calking at Gardner's Shipyard.

Wages: \$1.50/day (\$6–\$9/week).

Transfer: 100% of earnings handed to Master Hugh every Saturday.

“Not because he earned it... but solely because he had the power to compel me to give it up. The right of the grim-visaged pirate upon the high seas is exactly the same.”

THE REALITY OF FREE LABOR



- **Location:** New Bedford, Massachusetts (1838).
- **Expectation:** Poverty (due to lack of slaves).
- **Reality:** Granite warehouses, wealth, clean houses.
- **Work Atmosphere:** “Sober, yet cheerful earnestness.” No cursing, no whipping.

The colored community lived in finer houses than many Maryland slaveholders.

THE CHRISTIANITY OF THE LAND VS. THE CHRISTIANITY OF CHRIST



SLAVEHOLDING RELIGION

- Women-whippers.
- Cradle-plunderers.
- Stealing the livery of the court of heaven to serve the devil in.



TRUE CHRISTIANITY

- Pure.
- Peaceable.
- Impartial.

“I love the pure, peaceable, and impartial Christianity of Christ: I therefore hate the corrupt, slaveholding, women-whipping, cradle-plundering, partial and hypocritical Christianity of this land.”