

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

In this chapter, the writer presents the data she collected and the analysis she had done. As the film *A Twelve Years a Slave* was about slavery, most of the discrimination which were experienced by the slaves was due to their race difference. The slaves were Afro American which has dark skin while their masters were the white Americans which were Caucasians. The writer chose the scenes of the films which contained the discriminations experienced by both Solomon and Patsey. In *Twelve Years Slave* movie, Solomon moves from one master to the other masters several times. Until then, when his master is Edward Epps, Solomon meets Patsey. As the movie was written by Solomon himself, the movie is seen from Solomon's point of view. As the main character, the viewers are taken to see Solomon's bitter experience to be enslaved. It is a really bad experience. However, the climax of this movie is according to the writer, when he meets Patsey.

Patsey actually takes a role as a supporting character. She is described as a young black woman who can work really well. It even makes her master, Epps, gives her a high compliment among the workers. She is even better than the male workers. They can only produce around 200-400 pounds of cotton while Patsey can produce like around 500 pounds. Epps often uses Patsey's great achievement as the minimum standard of the cotton production. He will without doubt punish the other workers

when they can only make less than Patsey's. Patsey's life unfortunately does not get any better. Epps comes to her and rapes her at a time. Solomon knows about it but he cannot do anything. Her master even tells him to flog Patsey. The heavy burden even makes Patsey ask Solomon to end her life. Solomon does not do that and he also cannot do anything when finally he gets his freedom. He can only give his last hug for Patsey.

The writer discusses the discriminations experienced by Solomon and Patsey based on the theory proposed by Velaquez (2002). They are intentional discrimination and institutional discrimination.

#### **4.1 Intentional Discrimination**

In general, what happens to Solomon and Patsey are the results of intentional discriminations. As mentioned in chapter 2 previously, blacks people were considered inferior compared to the superior whites so that Solomon and Patsey become the victims of slavery. Using the idea of Velaquez (2002), Solomon's and Patsey's discrimination is intentional. Solomon and Patsey were forced to work for other people just because they are black. The discriminative treatments experienced by the black slaves are shown in the discussion below.

#### **4.1.1 Intentional Discrimination Happened to Solomon**

##### **a. Taken and beaten like an animal**

Once a free man of Saratoga, New York, Solomon Northrup, who works as a violist, is persuaded by two white men to follow them to Washington. The white men, one is said to be a dr. Brown and the other, Hamilton, offer big money to Solomon if he is willing to work for a circus with them. On an occasion, Solomon and the white men celebrate the financial success of their work. Solomon did not know that the drink he has in the restaurant is duped with drugs. He wakes up in a room chained to the floor.



Figure 4.1. Solomon tries to pull the chain tied him to the floor (Twelve Years a Slave, 00:12:27)

What happens to Solomon is the result of intentional discrimination. He is the target of the kidnappers who deliberately take and sell him to the plantation's master because he is black, an inferior being, so he deserves to be sold as a slave. When the two white men persuade Solomon, they say that the job in the circus that they offer to Solomon include "creatures from Africa that have never been seen by people before."

At that time Solomon does not pay attention to the two men, but the use of the word “creatures” implies the attitude of these two men toward Africans.

Solomon tries to free himself, but he fails. When the guard comes to his cell, Solomon tries to tell the guard that he is a free man, not a slave. Instead of freeing him, the guard asks for his letter and states that “You ain’t a free man, you ain’t from Saratoga, you are from Georgia, you are a runaway nigger from Georgia.” (Twelve Years a Slave, 00:12:12-00:12:14).

Georgia is one of the states in which slavery took place. It was in 1526 when a Spaniard named Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon tried to make a place to stay in South Carolina near the mouth of the Pedee River (Campbell, n.d.). From there, the inhabitants called the place Georgia. There were 100 African slaves brought by Ayllon to build the place. However, the slavery was not that popular until then when the British came and made their colony which stretched from Massachusetts to Georgia. It was also boosted by the fact that in 1612 there was an invention made by John Rolfe who found the way to make tobacco tasted better. This invention led to an increase in slavery as there were more slaves needed to harvest the crops to sell to Europe.

Learning from the experience of Georgia State where black people were forced to work in the plantation as slaves, it can be inferred that Solomon’s kidnapping is intentional. Although he is a free man, like what Fogel and Engerman (1984) say, he is seen as incompetence. Thus, Solomon is treated as a commodity to be bought physically, not intellectually.

In the small cell, Solomon is not only confined but he is also beaten. Everything he owns is taken away from him including his old clothes, the clothes that he claimed were given to him by his wife; the clothes that tie him to his past life. The film shows that the beating and the bad treatments are done to break his spirit. Solomon is treated like an animal that needs to be conquered and mastered.



Figure 4.2. Solomon is beaten by the guard (Twelve Years a Slave, 00:12:16)

In the era when there was slavery, most of the black slaves did not have any good treatment from their masters. The masters of the slaves were far from doing any fair act to their slaves. It can be seen in the film that the masters treat the white workers and the black workers differently. The workers are usually divided into two parts. The supervisors were usually held by the white men and the workers who were the slaves. The white workers are treated as people who have dignity, while the black workers are treated like slaves.

Despite the fact that the treatment might depend on the masters' personal characters, most of the slaves did not have any gentleness, respect and fairness. In terms of the absence of the gentleness, their masters would not be hesitant to beat up

the slaves when the slaves disobeyed or did not work as much as the masters wanted them to. From the movie it could be seen that when the slaves were topless, none had no scar on their backs. In terms of the absence of respect, the slaves were mostly treated as they were as low as animal.

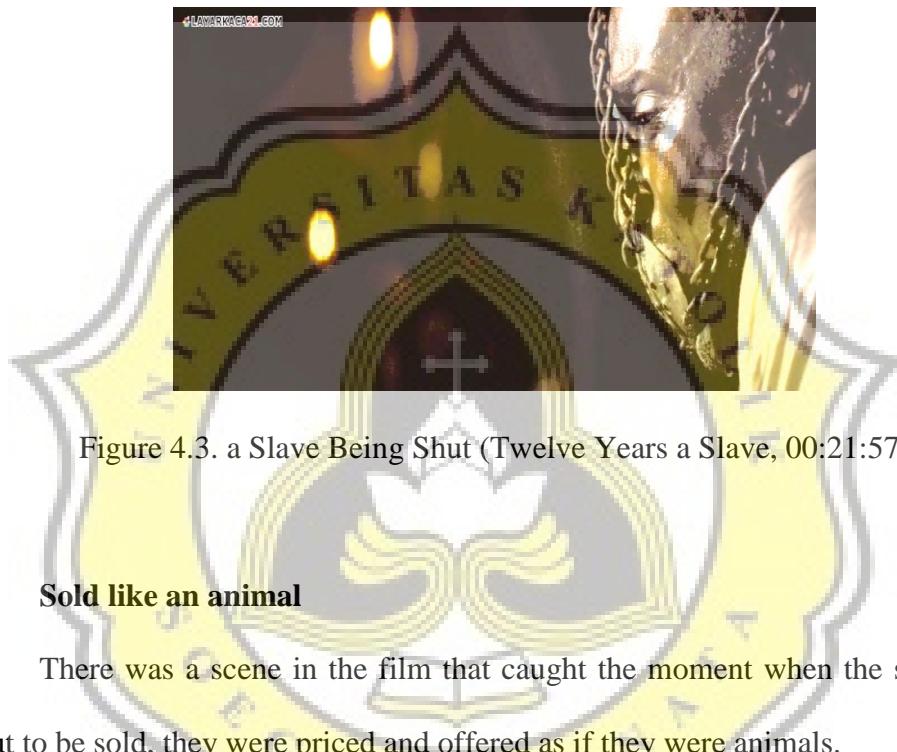


Figure 4.3. a Slave Being Shut (Twelve Years a Slave, 00:21:57)

b. **Sold like an animal**

There was a scene in the film that caught the moment when the slaves were about to be sold, they were priced and offered as if they were animals.

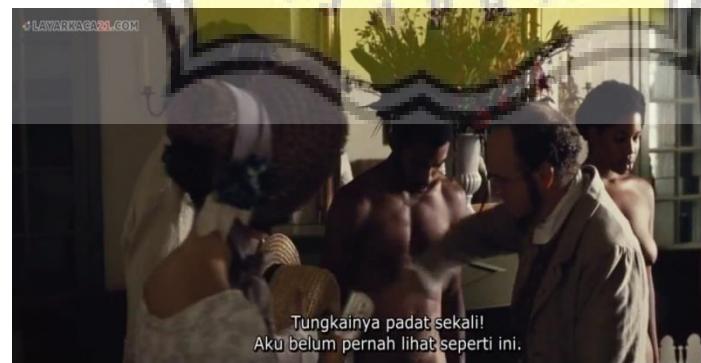


Figure 4.4 The seller was promoting the slaves he wanted to sell.

The slaves are even stripped of their clothes when they are auctioned. One of the basic right of a human is the right to decide what is good or not good and act based on the decision of it. Wearing clothes is surely one of a way to show the dignity of humanity. As body parts are private thing, one would prefer to wear clothes to cover it in front of many people. In the film, it is shown that Solomon and his family were able to wear the clothes they wanted when he was a free man. Things change when the movie scenes get into the part when all the slaves are brought into a house to be sold. Some of them do not wear any clothes because the seller wanted the buyer of the slaves to see how good the body of the slaves were.

It is terrible to see the scene. The slaves do not wear clothes because the seller wants to show the buyers that the slaves have good body which are able to work hard and deserve to be sold at a high price. In this scene, Solomon does not need to be naked as he is not sold. It might be because he was beaten hard few moments before he is about to be sold. His newly injured back would make him cost cheap. Solomon only observed what was going on in that house.

### **c. Forced to sleep on the ground**

The slaves do not have a proper place to live. They do not sleep on beds but on the ground in a separate building from their masters. The masters of the slave are usually the riches. They should have money to buy the slaves who are often sold in a high cost. They also usually own a garden or plantation, the place where the slaves work. Although the slaves live in miserable places, they cannot run away from their

masters. At night, they should sleep together in a place provided by the masters. One of the place's conditions could be seen from this scene.



Figure 4.5 Slaves must sleep in a narrow place on the ground

The scene shows that many slaves must sleep in a bad condition. They have to sleep in a bundle on the floor. The master does not provide them with comfortable place for sleeping. Furthermore, they also do not have any blanket to warm their bodies.

#### **d. Denied of their own name**

The worst thing in this intentional discrimination toward black people is that they do not have rights to keep their own names. Name is not only a word attached to a person. Name is a label that a person is known by. It is given by the parents to their children in a hope that the child's character might represent the name that he or she has, for instance, Lucky and Richie. When a boy is given the name Lucky, it means that the parents wish their child to be lucky. The word 'rich' in the name "Richie" might mean that the parents want him to be rich. With all the good wishes in a name, a person must be proud to call his name when someone is asking for it.

Solomon was not born a slave. At the beginning he was a free man and he was quite wealthy. He and his family dressed nicely. He could freely mention his name and people who lived in his neighbourhood also knew his name. He could even buy an expensive present for his wife when they went into a shop.



Figure 4.6 Solomon and his wife got into a shop (Twelve Years a Slave, 00:26:52)

However, the freedom to mention the real name was not applicable to the slaves. It is not because they were not proud of their names. It was because they were forbidden to have their own names.

Earlier in the discussion, the writer shows that Solomon is beaten like an animal to break his spirit. The same scene is actually the time when Solomon mentions that his name is Solomon and he is a freeman, not a slave. Solomon does not do anything bad to deserve that kind of punishment. But, it makes the man even get angrier. The man is a slave collector. He does not want the slave he had collected to run away because he will not get any money if the slave does so. Therefore, when

Solomon says that he is a free man, he gets angry and forces Solomon to never mention that name again.

Solomon, at first, insists to keep mentioning his real name and tells the man that he is a free man. He tries to negotiate, but when the white man asks for any letter which could say that he is not a slave, Solomon cannot show it. It makes the white man get even angrier and hits him harder until the stick is broken. Solomon does not mention his real name again after that.

Another scene which shows that the slaves are denied of their own names is when Solomon is lined up and is called as Platt. Solomon tries to ignore being called as Platt, but then the white man accuses him of ignorance. When Solomon tells the white man that his name is not Platt, the white man slaps him and insistently says, “Your name is Platt.” (Twelve Years a Slave, 00:28:28-00:28:30).



Figure 4.7 Solomon tries to explain that he is not Platt. (Twelve Years a Slave, 00:28:27)

e. **Given improper food in quantity and in quality.**

Food is surely one of many important things that are needed by any living things to stay alive and to have the energy they need to do the activities. The amount of food needed is at least as much as the energy spent so that one might be able to survive. However, *12 Years a Slave* movie shows the portrayal that the amount of food given by a master can not really compensate the energy spent by the slaves. They have to work really hard to satisfy their masters' expectation or else they will be whipped. However, the master does not really give sufficient amount of food for the slaves. In the movie, there is never a scene showing the slaves having their lunch in the afternoon. So there is a possibility that the master does not give any lunch for the slaves. They need to work as hard as possible to avoid the master's punishment, and as a consequence, they probably skip their lunch and go on working.



Figure 4.8 The food eaten by Solomon (*Twelve Years a Slave*, 00:02:48)

Not only lack of quality, the food given also lacks of quality. It can be seen from the picture that in a plate given by a master, the menu is just a kind of bread, some berries and a cut of dried chicken. Solomon as a slave must consume this kind of food. The food is really different from the kinds of food he used to eat when he

was a free man. There is a scene in the beginning of the movie where as a free man, Solomon is having a good time and good meal in a party where he played his violin and got some applauses from his colleagues.

#### f. Work like there is no other day

It is true that human needs to work to fulfil their needs, but it does not mean that they can just work all the time. Having a break is also a necessary thing to do. Without a proper resting, the body and the mental health will take their tolls.

The slaves do not really have the luxury of having a rest. When there is no light the slaves do not work or cannot work in a plantation, but instead of having a rest, their master will ask them to do any other things. One of the ridiculous things to be done which is shown in the movie is when Mr. Epps orders the slaves who are having a rest in their room to come out and have a dance party in his house. The party sounds like a fun thing to do, but it is not. There, the slaves are ordered to dance energetically although they have been tired from all day working in the plantation or doing other jobs.



Figure 4.9 Mr. Epps (Solomon's Master) asks the slaves to dance after they have worked for all day long (Twelve Years a Slave, 01:01:35)

It can be seen in the scene that unlike normal people who will be excited to go to a party, the slaves walk without any excitement. They walk into the room with tired expression. They are actually too tired to go for the dance and prefer having a rest than attending a dance party. However, unlike other people who can reject an invitation to a party, the slaves are powerless. In the movie, Mr. Epps considers the dance party as a part of the slave jobs. He will not hesitate to whip anyone who dares to refuse his want.

#### g. Denied of day off

Working, like any other activities, takes up energy. People need to focus, concentrate, and act when they are working. So they need some rest after working as. they need time to recover the energy both physically and mentally.

Slaves work harder than the common people. They do not have time to break during the working time. They also get very harsh punishment when the results are under the target set by their masters. The masters call the slaves to see the results of

their work. If it is less than what they expect, the slaves will be punished. After that, they must continue to work. Some slaves have the chance to have a day off in Sabbath day. There is a scene in the movie showing Patsey having a congregation with his fellow slaves. However, it is not stated if it is a whole day off or just a short break.

#### **h. Denied of the rights to state their own opinions.**

One of the basic human right is the right to state an opinion. In a time when there is no slavery, if there is something people like or dislike then they may give their opinion. Although it does not mean that if they do not like something, then they can unpleasantly critisize it. There might be a certain condition that might follow like giving the opinion politely. However, a slave is really discriminated in this matter. They should always say “yes” and follow order. They do not even have any right to oppose anything done by a master either to themselves or any other slaves.

In the beginning of the movie, there is a scene in a ship that shows Solomon and another slave are throwing a dead body wrapepd in a layer of cloth into the sea.



Figure 4.10 Solomon throws the body of a dead slave overboard (Twelve Years a Slave, 00:24:34)

The body is a body of a slave who dared to oppose a master. When they were all in a ship, a master came to their room. He was about to rape a female slave. Realizing the master's intention, the slave tried to stop the master. Unfortunately, the master brought a knife with him. He did not doubt to stab the slave who was about to stop him. Solomon and other slaves witness the incident, but they can do nothing because they still want to live. Once they oppose or complain, the master will kill them as well. Solomon who actually wants to oppose the master has been told by his fellow slaves that if he wants to stay alive, he should learn to keep his mouth shut.

#### 4.1.2 Intentional Discrimination Happened to Patsey

Intentional discrimination is also experienced by Patsey. Similar to what happens to Solomon, Patsey is discriminated and treated bad because she is a black woman. The discrimination and the bad treatments are discussed in the following discussion.

a. Sexually abused

All slaves actually have a job to do a service for their masters. The males usually work in the plantation which need more physical strength, while the females work at the masters' home to do the house chores. However, some of the masters are so evil. They do not only ask the slaves to do works, but they also force the slaves to be their sex slaves. One of the slaves who should experience this bitter condition is Patsey.



Figure 4.11 Patsey was being raped by her master

Patsey is actually a great worker. She works in the plantation and becomes the best among all slaves as she collects the most cotton. However, she cannot escape the abuse. One night her master came into her room and raped her. She could not do anything to resist her master because she is afraid of the punishments.

As can be seen in the movie, Patsey is helpless and cannot escape the rape of her master because she is a black woman. The rape happened to Patsey is intentional since the white master really understands that Patsey will not resist his approach. As a master and a white person he has control over Patsey, a slave and a black woman.

The discrimination experienced by a black female slave was often harsher than the discrimination happened to a black male slave. A black female slave is discriminated as a black person, a woman, and a slave. If the male slave is treated like an animal who cannot develop, the female slave will be treated worse.



Figure 4.12 Patsey is picking the cotton (Twelve Years a Slave, 00:55:50)

#### b. Treated inhumanely

The slave has to follow the master's orders. Different from the common workers who have the right to have a day off and refuse to come to work on their day off, slaves cannot do that. If a slave deny that order, the master might just kill the slave and there will be who can stop it. Other than sexually abused, Patsey's life is also controlled by the master. One of the examples is when she is called from her day off to serve her master by Solomon



Figure 4.13 Patsey is having tea time on a Sabbath day (12 Years a Slave 01:07:07)

Patsey protests Solomon because it is a Sabbath day, and there is no work on the day. However, Patsey knows that Solomon is bringing the master's order, not a request which can be turned down easily. Knowing that condition, Patsey returns to the house. Here, it can be seen that Patsey does not own her own life, she is just a pawn played by the master.

In the master's house, Patsey explains to Epps that it is a Sabbath day so she deserves to have a day off. Yet, Epps does not want to understand it. He gets mad and asks Solomon to whip Patsey. When he sees that Solomon does not want to hurt Patsey and disobeys him, Epps threatens Solomon. He says that if Solomon does not whip Patsey seriously he promises that he will kill every single slaves he has. Not having any other choice, Solomon whips Patsey as hard as he can.

In the working space, there is usually be a system of punishment and rewards. It helps the company to manage the workers to make the company grow bigger. The workers who make mistakes can get punished so that they learn. Meanwhile the good workers can have a reward as a symbol of how the company appreciate their good

work. However, in the slavery time. There is no reward and punishment system from the master. The master can just punish the slave even though they make no mistake, just because the master wants to punish the slave.



Figure 4.14 Patsey is desperately trying to explain to Epps about her reason of leaving (12 Years a Slave 01:47:32)

It can be seen that actually Patsey does not make any mistake. She gets out on a Sabbath day, which is a day when she is permitted to leave. She does not even leave for a long time. Yet, Epps as her master still wants to punish her just because he wants to.

In general, the movie shows the discriminations done by the masters to their slaves. Masters are actually the people who buy the slaves. In the *12 Years of Slave* it can be seen that once the slave trader gets some slaves, they will treat the slaves like animals. They beat and force the slaves to use their new name. The clothes that the slaves wear before is taken, and they are given the 'slave outfit'. The slave trader

will then make a kind of announcement so that the people who are interested to hire the slaves for their plantation or any other kind of work can buy them.

The price offered for each slaves is different from one to another. It is usually based on the physical ability of the slave. If the slave looks young and strong, the price will be more expensive. However, it does not mean that if the slave is still a kid, the price will be cheap. There is a scene in the movie when a master, Mr. Ford can only buy for a mother and should leave her children because he cannot afford to pay all of them.



Figure 4.15 Mr. Ford is trying to bargain for the children of a slave (12 Years a Slave 00:31:15)

It is a terrible scene to see because here human is made as a commodity which can be traded. Supposedly, human is not a thing or animal which is tradeable. Yet, in this scene the trading is like a common thing. Furthermore, although not all masters treat the slaves badly, some of them really think that the slaves are equally humane as them. They regard the slaves as a property which can be treated the way they like. It becomes the justification for some of the masters to treat the slaves in a really bad way, like torturing, raping or even killing the slaves.

In terms of the freedom, slaves do not have it. They are not free to go anywhere they want. They should work as hard as they can, then return to their shelter once they have finished the work. The master who cannot really supervise the slaves by himself will ask people to supervise the slaves. When a slave tries to escape by running away from the plantation, the supervisor will do a preventive action to stop the slaves by shooting them.



Figure 4.16 A white man supervisor is holding a rifle while guarding the slaves from escaping (12 Years a Slave 00:34:35)

#### 4.2 Institutional discrimination

The second sub-chapter in this chapter 4 is about institutional discrimination happened to Solomon and Patsey. Velasquez (2002) explains that institutional discrimination is a type of discrimination that is done by many people. The example given by Velasquez is the slavery in America where the black people were discriminated and enslaved.

The intentional discrimination previously discussed is divided into two parts first which is experienced by Solomon and second which is experienced by Patsey. In this subchapter, the writer intends to unite the institutional discrimination experienced by both Patsey and Solomon because in this discrimination both of them experienced the same situation ever since they live at the same place which has the same system of law and the same kinds of inhabitants.

Solomon and Patsey are discriminated not only by individuals but also by institution. In this case, the United States and the people living in it. It is hard for Solomon and Patsey to escape slavery because all people especially white people around them, though not all agree to slavery, seem to contribute in keeping the black people enslaved.

The slave trader has actually discriminated Solomon in many ways as what the writer has previously mentioned. However, the discrimination is actually done by the common people too. They surely know that the slaves are treated inhumanly. As it can be seen on the following picture where the slaves are put in a heap in the back of a cart.



Figure 4.17 Slaves in an small open cart (Twelve Years a Slave, 00:28:40)

It can be seen that slavery is actually not illegal. Therefore, it is not a thing that needs to be hidden. It can be seen that when some slaves including Solomon are transported to another place, they are transported in a small cart openly. The slave trader is not afraid of being caught by anyone. As for the slaves, they look totally uncomfortable. There are some of them, but the cart is just not big enough for them all.

The writer puts this under the institutional discrimination because it can be seen that there are so many people there. However, they do not even turn their head when the cart with the slaves is passing through. Bringing a group of slaves is not something uncommon. They do not care about the suffering experienced by the slaves that have to stay in a small cart like that. They might see that it is normal for the whites to enslave the blacks and it is a normal thing too to see the slaves suffer..

The people who discriminate Solomon and Patsey can get away without punishments from the law because what they have done to either Solomon, Patsey or other slaves is not against the law. The fact about this is not revealed until when Solomon is speaking to Bass, a man whom Epps hires to make a new house.

When Bass and the slaves are working on the house, Epps comes by and offers Bass to drink and have a rest from the heat. Bass then says that Epps cares about Bass' well-being but Epps does not care what about the slaves. He thinks that the working condition for the slaves there is all wrong. He also questions Epps about what right he has to treat his slaves in such bad condition. When Epps replies that he buys them so the slaves are his property. In reply, Bass says, "There is no justice or

right about slavery. And of course you're right Law says that you have the right to hold your niggers" (*12 Years a Slave* 01:43:05-1:43:30). Bass' sentences explain that the slavery itself is not without any basis nor against the law as it walks along with the law itself. However, as a man who strongly believe that the slavery is a mistake, Bass says that everyone can make a mistake. Consequently, law can be wrong as well. Bass believes that there is no justice in the law about the slavery so the law must be changed.

The argument between Bass and Epps triggers Solomon curiosity. He asks where Bass comes from. When Bass replies that he was born in Canada, Solomon admits that Canada is a beautiful country. Bass does not expect at all that Solomon would have known that place. To answer his curiosity he asks Solomon about how he has ever been to a place like Canada but ends up at Epps' place as a slave. Solomon answers that he becomes a slave because the world is not a fair place. Finally, he asks Bass' help to send a letter to his friends in the North. The information will be able to release him from the slavery. In the end, Bass keeps his promise. Solomon's friends come and release Solomon from Epps and he gains his liberty. However, luck does not go well with Patsey. Under the assumption that she is born a slave, she can not gain her liberty. Even if someone buys her from Epps, according to the law, she will still be a slave, not a free woman. When Solomon finally leaves Epps plantation, Patsey cannot say a word. She can only look at Solomon.

What happens to Patsey emphasizes the idea that discriminations against slaves, usually black people, are institutional discrimination. It is supported by many

people and even the law. As the discrimination is institutional, slaves are put in in disadvantageous position. Their freedom is cut off, their dignity is trodden, and their rights are denied by fellow citizens and the state.

