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Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave

In Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, the author, Frederick Douglass, wuses multiple stylistic elements such as repetition and personification. These elements help the reader to better understand the passages overall rhetorical purpose. The main idea of the passage was to show the reader what it was like for him as a slave. The elements also help explain what he thought about during that time.

Douglass uses personification to show his feelings and explain how frustrating, stressful and painful it was, being a slave. In paragraph one, Douglass says “My natural elasticity was crushed, my intellect languished…” The quote shows that he was mentally tormented by all the strenuous labor.

Douglass also uses repetition to help describe the kind of physical treatment they were forced to endure, as well as the labor. In paragraph one, Douglass writes “Work , work, work, was scarcely more than the order of the day than of the night.” This quote demonstrates that Douglass hatred all the work they were forced to do. The repetition shows that he found it to be quite annoying.

In paragraph three, Douglass goes on to explain how he thought and what he thought about at the time. The entirety of the paragraph is a quote about what he wanted out of life, and how he wants a better one. He says “You are loosed from your moorings, and are free...You move merrily before the gentle gale...You are freedoms swift-winged angels…” His use of repetition shows that he longs for a better life. It also shows that he is jealous of those who are free.

The purpose of the usage of stylistic elements differs between the third paragraph and the rest of the passage. In the third paragraph, they’re used to describe his wants and what he yearns for: freedom. The rest of the passage only used the elements to describe how he felt, his treatment, and how much work he had to do.