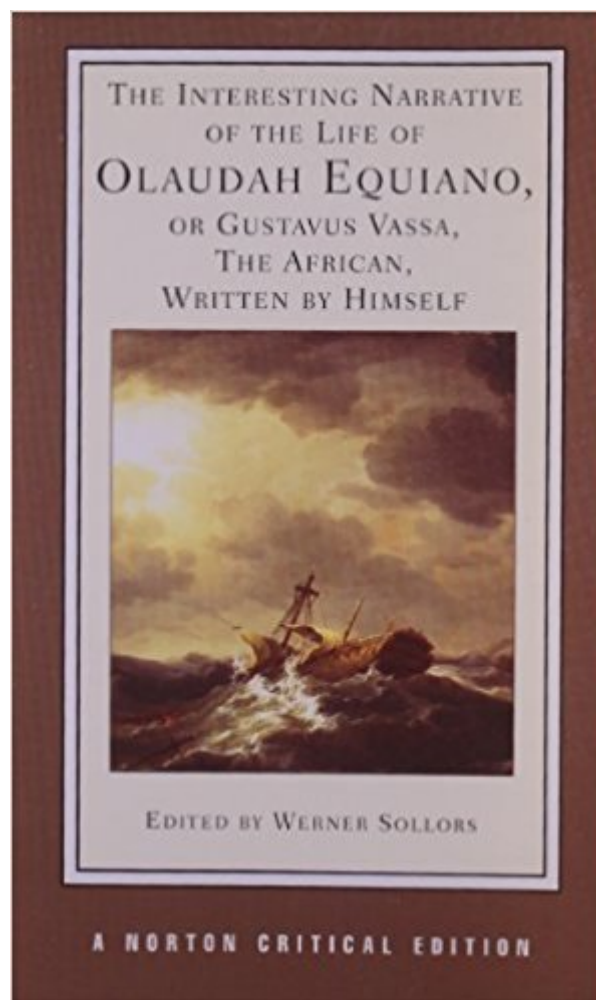


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# The Interesting Narrative Of The Life Of Olaudah Equiano, Or Gustavus Vassa, The African, Written By Himself (Norton Critical Editions)



## Synopsis

The text of Equiano's narrative presented here is that of the 1789 first edition. It is accompanied by an introduction, maps, illustrations, and annotations. "Contexts" provides essential public writings on the autobiography, general and historical background, related travel and scientific literature, other eighteenth-century works by authors of African ancestry, and works debating the slave trade. "Criticism" includes six contemporary reviews and nine modern essays on the narrative by Paul Edwards, Charles T. Davis, Houston A. Baker, Jr., Angelo Costanzo, Catherine Obianju Acholonu, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Geraldine Murphy, Adam Potkay, and Robert J. Allison. A Chronology and Selected Bibliography are included. Illustrations, maps

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Werner Sollors is Henry B. and Anne M. Cabot Professor of English Literature and African American Studies at Harvard University. He previously taught at Columbia University, the Free University of Berlin, and the Università degli Studi di Venezia. He is the author of *Ethnic Modernism*, *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature*, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*, and *Amiri Baraka/LeRoi Jones: The Quest for a Populist Modernism*. • His edited works include *A New Literary History of America* (with Greil Marcus), *African American Literary Studies: New Texts, New Approaches, New Challenges* (with Glenda R. Carpio), *The Multilingual Anthology of American Literature: A Reader of Original Texts with English Translations* (with Marc Shell), *Multilingual America: Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and the Languages*

of America, The Return of Thematic Criticism, Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader, The Invention of Ethnicity, and the Norton Critical edition of *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*.

*The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African. Written by Himself* by Olaudah Equiano. Olaudah Equiano created a record of the 18th century slave trade through his first-hand knowledge and experiences and the writing of this book. Born in Eboe, Africa, what is now Nigeria, he begins by describing life in Eboe and illustrates the cultural, religious, and moral aspects of African life as he knew and understood them. In 1756, at the age of 11, he was kidnapped, torn from his family and all that he knew. He was sold into slavery and brought to the West Indies under cruel, torturous conditions. He was bought and sold by one seafaring captain and then another and another, as per the whims and needs of each. Early on in his life as a slave, one of his masters gave him the name Gustavus Vassa. Although at first he refused the name, he was taught harshly to make it his, the name he then used for most of his life. During one voyage to England as a slave, Olaudah Equiano found Christianity. Fascinated with the religion, he visited churches and began studying the Bible. Eventually he was baptized as a Protestant of the Church of England. He was an avid student of the Bible and a devout believer and later sought missionary work in Africa but was denied ordainment. In 1766 he was granted his freedom. As a free black man, he continued his association with the captains of ships, yet he continued to endure cruelties, often finding himself at death's door and wishing death to take him. From there, however, the account is of his religious experiences and understanding, his deep religious convictions, and his desire to do missionary work. For me, the book ended with his freedom from slavery. Olaudah Equiano was there. The telling of history does not get any better than that.

A wonderful story of tragedy and faith by one of the first narratives of a literary freed slave. A first hand account by an exceptional man abducted from the interior region of Benin in west central Africa. Thankfully for him, and his readers, he was able to become very literate in English language and writing. His honesty and integrity, along with his intelligence, hard work, command of the English language, and quest for faith led him to lead a rewarding life in an era when black people were extremely abused. It is a gripping tale that I recommend to everyone, no excuses, it was a free download to a Prime member on . It inspires me to research any rumors that this book is inauthentic in any way. It describes an era between the 1740's and the 1780's. It will be of interest to those reading about slavery and maritime trade.

Captivating account of one life of many thousands of the injustices and acts of inhumanity perpetrated upon helpless and vulnerable people violently kidnapped, bereft of home, dignity, life and liberty for the rest of their lives. But one man, the autobiographer, seeks to accomplish a higher purpose from his experience to appeal to the queen to end the violent barbarity of the slave trade

A must-read for anyone with a soul... but be sure to have a box of tissues handy! This is the totally AMAZING autobiography of Olaudah Equiano (pronounced OH-LA-OO-DAH EH-QUEE-AH-NO), who went from being a free young man in Africa to being a slave to other Africans to being a slave to Whites in the Caribbean and American South, and through his faith, honesty, morality, and love for his fellow man of all races he attained his liberty in Britain and ascended to the social rank of Gentleman. A gut-wrenching, tear-jerking, and ultimately exalting story that takes you from the depths of man's grievous wickedness to the heights of mercy, forgiveness, and victory over tyranny. I strongly believe that this should be required reading in every school.

This reads like a combination of the biography of Frederick Douglass and Forrest Gump. In other words, he floats around accidental-like on a breeze, and suffers mightily wherever he goes and has great adventures. Where didn't he go? And what didn't he see in cruelty? It's almost not quite believable, but the narrative gives off an air of authenticity via his combination of eloquence, assertions of truth and request for fact-checking, and his finding God. Astonishing, truly, and moving.

What a fascinating book! Equiano was a fascinating man who had incomparable experiences in the mid to late 18th century. If you want an exceptional insight into this era of England's history, along with the "new world" this is a great read. If you are interested in sailing history during this period, this is a great read. If you are interested in a man's growth from paganism to faith in Christ, this is a great read!

i am not halfway through the book yet but so far it has met and exceeded my expectations. i do a lot of reading of african american history ( though i am not strictly labelling thiw one as such), and this one by far is the most engaging. olaudah's life took place in the 18th century and yet i feel as if i am sitting next to him in the here and now and he is relating his story to me. i can picture this man and what he endured. that the cover was his portrait was dead-on excellent, nothing else would have worked as well as it does to draw the interested party in. i expected a book filled with historical

anecdotes and facts and got that captured in a well written, well-divided, engrossing text-i want to say entertaining also but it is not, it is a sad story at its heart, a sad commentary on life for africans in the 18th century.

This book is autobiographical and tells something of the life of a West African slave forced onto a slave ship and sold into slavery in Barbados. His view of the masters and other whites is negative but changes as his conversion to Christianity brings him into contact with more whites. This was an early, perhaps the earliest of the slave narratives. I find myself wondering how much is accurate and how much is written with assistance or edited into its current form. This is an important book whatever the truth might be. It is worth reading.

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