



The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Historico-Philosophical Analysis

Kanu, Ikechukwu Anthony

Department of Philosophy, Augustinian Institute, Nigeria

Email: Ikee_mario@yahoo.com

Phone: +2348036345466

ABSTRACT

This piece has studied the basic facts of black slavery and its consequences on the African continent. It discovers that with the discovery of the New World, the Europeans discovered vast potential wealth, both in mineral resources and land. Both sources of wealth needed ample labour for their exploitation. The native Indians could not supply it- they died in vast numbers of diseases the Europeans introduced. This lack turned the eyes of Europe to West Africa. In 1518, the first load of African prisoners was taken directly from West Africa to West Indies, ushering in over three centuries of the infamous triangular trade. This piece further discusses the capture of the slaves and their transportation to Africa, their conditions in Europe and the abolition of the trade. It concludes that the Atlantic slave trade is the hidden history of West Africa's present crisis.

Keywords: Trans-Atlantic, Slave Trade, Historico, Philosophical, Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The 18th century produced significant philosophers of exciting lives and ideas. To these, Jean Jacque Rousseau (1712-78) was not an exception. He was one of those who epitomized the greatest turning points in the history of Western thought. He is popular for his essay on politics *The Social Contract*. However, in his prized essay of 1754 on *The Origin of Inequality among Men and Whether it is Legitimated by the Natural Law*, he explained the origin of the inequality of species. He begins by analyzing the equality of men which he ascribes to the condition of man in the pre-existence state. Inequality among men, he argued came about as a result of leaving the state of nature,

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which he called an original sin, in which man ate the forbidden fruit, that is, the fruit of the emergence of the hunger for private property. The first man who fenced in an area and called it his and found people simple enough to believe him, is the originator of the civil society (Dahrendorf, 1970).

With this development, man arrived the land of inequality, of oppression and exploitation. In the new land of inequality, the only language appreciated was that of Protagoras: “man is the measure of all things”. He designs the structure of the world to enhance his personal goals. To achieve his objectives he degrades the dignity of others. Hunger for wealth blinded man to the truth that to possess a little in an honourable way, is better than to possess much through injustice. As a consequence of this evolution of the human society, Jean Jacque Rousseau said that “Man is born free but he is everywhere in chains”. This statement is true of the African who was born free like any other human being in the world, but found himself under the chains of slavery. This piece is centered on the infamous Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and its consequences on Africa even after over a hundred and sixty years.

Africa’s Experience of the Slave Trade

Slave trade was already in Africa before the advent of the Arabs and subsequently the Europeans. Africa had so many lands, and to meet up with desired production rate, families bought slaves to help out; these slaves were well incorporated into the family so that the second or third generations of slaves were seen as members of the family. They could marry, have kids and even possess property and could not be killed without a genuine reason. They were fed, sheltered and protected. Sometimes they occupied chief positions in the society, especially when the slave proves to have managerial ability or military skill, he could be raised to the level of caretaker of his master’s household. Female slaves could also become wives to royals and thus their descendants become royals as well. In many parts of Africa, royals have slaves as their ancestors. These slaves in Africa are better referred to as indentured servants.

Before the European Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, the Arabs were already engaged in the purchase of slaves, which were transported through the Sahara to North Africa and Arabia. This was the Trans-Sahara Trade, principally between North Africa and the empires of Sudan. With the conversion of North Africa to Islam, and with the Islamic law forbidding Muslims from enslaving other Muslims, Africans South of the Sahara became victims. In the Sudanese state, the Muslims enslaved the non-Muslims, whom they regarded as pagans, and used them to grease the Trans-Saharan slave trade. Most of them ended as domestic slaves in North Africa and Arabia. The misery of these slaves were enormous, especially as they had to walk across the desert with little food and water, and sometimes carrying their master’s goods. As a result, many died.

By the end of 16th century, the Trans-Sahara slave trade declined, basically because of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade which was beginning to shift attention from the desert to the coasts. The European slave trade was more sophisticated than that of the Arab's. The Arabs were primarily concerned with the selling of slaves to Arab buyers who used slaves for domestic purposes. Whatever, the intensity of the Arab slave trade, its consequences are not "matchable" with the massive, involuntary movement of people out of western and west central Africa between 1440 and 1880.

In about the middle of the 15th century, with the dawn of the Industrial Revolution in the Western hemisphere, the European expanding empires lacked manpower to work on new plantations that produced sugar cane for Europe, and other products such as coffee, cocoa, rice, indigo, tobacco, and cotton. This is because, on the one hand, the native Americans who were enslaved by the Europeans proved unfit as a result of the ingenious tropical diseases that they suffered, diseases like smallpox, mumps, and measles, which the Europeans introduced into the region and to which the Native Americans lacked immunity. Africans, on the other hand, were excellent workers: they often had experience of agriculture and keeping cattle, they were used to a tropical climate, resistant to tropical diseases, and they could work very hard on plantations or in mines, and so the Atlantic slave trade became an integral part of an international trading system which was then guarded by international laws, and Africans became the best economic solution for plantation owners seeking inexpensive labour.

The trans-Atlantic slave trade involved the largest intercontinental migration of people in world history prior to the 20th century as millions were severed from their homelands. This period of carnage went on for about five hundred years during which an estimate of 12 million viable Africans were enslaved from their home lands to locations around the Atlantic, and about 10 million were able to reach the desired destination. The vast majority went to Brazil, the Caribbean, and other Spanish-speaking regions of South America and Central America. Smaller numbers were taken to Atlantic islands, continental Europe, and English-speaking areas of the North American mainland. The Portuguese began the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in 1441, and for about 200 years they dominated in this trade. Ashun (2004) avers that it all began when Atam Goncalves, an explorer of Prince Henry of Portugal, captured 10 African men from Senegambia to serve as a proof that the Portuguese had finally reached the black man's land and found people truly living there. Since then, Europeans began the tradition of returning with African captives. It is such that as far back as 1454, before the building of the Elmina Castle, about 250 Africans were taken to Spain every year. In 1518, Emperor Charles V of Spain authorized the shipment of 15,000 Africans to Santo Domingo to work on the plantations. This marked the beginning of the unfortunate story of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

The Portuguese were not long after joined by the Spanish, French, Dutch, after 1560 the English also joined in the trade and merchants from Liverpool were not exempted. As you can see, it was a big trade and of huge

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interest, at least from the fact that it brought the world powers to Africa (Gimba, 2006). It is estimated that during the five centuries of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, Portugal was responsible for transporting over 4.5 million Africans, which is about 40% of the total. During the 18th century, however, when the slave trade accounted for the transport of a staggering 6 million Africans, Britain was the worst transgressor - responsible for almost 2.5 million, this is a fact often forgotten by those who regularly cite Britain's prime role in the abolition of the slave trade.

The Capture and Transportation of Slaves to Europe

In 1500 a new culture developed in Europe that required Negroes as domestic workers. So the Portuguese bought slaves in Africa to supply this small scale demand. However, with the discovery of the West Indies by Christopher Columbus and development of plantations in Brazil which was then a colony of Portugal, and with the development of sugar, tobacco and cotton plantations in European colonies like in North America, silver and gold mines, the demand for slaves grew rapidly.

The European slave merchants had different ways of getting at their victims. Sometimes, the Europeans captured Africans themselves, sometimes too, they collaborated with Africans to capture Africans, and at other times, African slave raiders captured Africans and sold them to African merchants, who in turn sold them to the Europeans. However, at the start, the innocent victims were invaded and captured along the coasts and taken abroad. By this time, the slave trade began to be increasingly important than trade in gold, ivory, and other produce. According to the earliest records of slave trade kept by Azurara, leader of a Portuguese venture in 1446, after the ship had landed on the West Central Coast of Africa, soldiers swamped ashore, seized a few curious victims and unsuspecting natives and proceeded inland seeking more victims (Gimba, 2006). There were also times when they failed in such raids. Abraham (1962) has one of the graphic descriptions of such raidings; he said that,

Alonzo Gonzales, the Portuguese, was the first man to point out Africans to his country men as articles of commerce in 1434. In 1440 having kidnapped 12 Africans, he put a woman among them on the shore in the hope that her people would come forward to redeem her. Next day, some hundred and fifty appeared. The Portuguese did not feel venturesome on that day, and they were handsomely treated to a volley of stones. (p.118).

Such confrontations demonstrated Africa's strength, and it then became obvious to the Europeans that the only practical way to get slaves were to bring commodities to African chieftains for exchange with slaves. However, from about the 18th to the end of the 19th century, slaves were obtained from along the west coast of Africa with the full and active co-operation of African kings and merchants. Wars were very important at this time. During wars

prisoners of war were gotten and conquered territories were forced to pay annual tribute of slaves, and if they conquered territory can't pay, she has to conquer another weaker tribe and force her to pay her tribute. Wars were common between states like Oyo and other Yoruba states. Normal life was indeed disrupted in many places in Africa (African encyclopedia for Schools and Colleges, 1974). Relations were entered into with many of the African states like Benin kingdom in Nigeria and also with Congo. The Europeans on their visits expressed all manners of friendship and liberalism, they brought presents and peaceful deportments and messages from their king. Sometimes they put on the garb of missionaries, of which in the true sense many of them were not, most were concerned with the economic value of the African rather than with the salvific value of his soul. For instance, in the Congo, they first came as missionaries, and Afonso the king of Congo thought that he had found a confidant in the king of Portugal, only to be gravely disappointed when his subjects were forcefully carried away as slaves. He became so helpless watching his crying subjects taken to the Gold mines in the Gold Coast or across the ocean to Portugal resulting in the depopulation of his kingdom (Dagin, 2007). Whatever might have prevailed, we are sure of one thing, that to live in the ease and plenty by the toil of those whom fraud and violence had put into their power, was neither consistent with Christianity nor common justice.

Trade in slaves was booming, so much that the whole of the administration of the coastal region of West Africa, from the Senegal River down to Angola, were popular for their supply of slaves (The Spectrum Encyclopedea of Africa, 1976). When these slaves were caught, they were tied and chained, and then made to walk long distances of about 1,000 miles to the European coastal forts. The march was so tedious such that most times, only about half of the slaves made it to the ports. They were underfed, shackled, and those who were sick were either killed or allowed to die, and those who made it to the forts were kept in dungeons for months before the arrival of the boarding ship, and then they were packed like goods for the European plantations. Very notable of these dungeons is the Elmina Castle. In this Castle, they were maltreated. They were packed together in unhealthy conditions, the women were raped by the whites since they did not come with their wives for fear of disease. Captives were held at the dungeons for about one or two months, depending on when the ship comes.

In return for the slaves, the African kings and merchants received various trade goods in exchange including beads, cowries shells which were used as money, European manufactured goods and textiles and hardware, liquor, horses, and perhaps most importantly, firearms. It was such that the price of a Negro was one Birmingham gun. In places like the New Calabar, between 1703-4, the price for a slave in the Slave Market was 12 bars of iron for a male and 9 bars of iron for a female. The guns were used to help expand empires and obtain more slaves, until they were finally used against the European colonizers, in exchange for slaves. Since the African sold their fellows to the Europeans, the Europeans saw slavery as being justified since

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they argued in the 17th and 18th centuries that if the Africans had the right to sell their own children, the Europeans certainly had the right to buy them (Abraham, 1962). Here we find a true scenario in which the unsupported efforts of piety, morality and justice were weak against interest, violence and oppression.

Slave masters, especially from colonial American slave ship were known to hypnotize the African merchants with alcohol (rum) before they began bargaining. On the arrival of the European slave merchants, they spread the taste for liquor on the coast, and negro traders drank until they lost their reason and then the bargain was struck. At other times they even enslaved African slave merchants after bargain. An African slave dealer during bargain was reported to have been invited to a dinner by the slave ship captain, and just after the captain had paid the African for his slaves, in the ship, the captain seized his bag of gold and consummated the process by enslaving the guest (Gimba, 2006). On board, the men bought as slaves were chained to guard against revolt. The usually fewer women and children were freer. They were fed twice a day, and the quality and quantity varied pending on purchases done before departure. Corn and rice from the less-forested regions on the northern and southern extremes; yams from the Niger delta to the Zaire River. Sometimes dried beans from Europe were standard fare. Each person received about a pint of water with a meal (Encarta Encyclopedia, 2004). Since the slaves were regarded as goods rather than human beings, when the ship was at risk of sinking, the goods (African slaves) were thrown into the sea to balance the movement of the ship.

Slaves were introduced to new diseases and suffered from malnutrition long before they reached the new world. It is suggested that the majority of deaths on the voyage across the Atlantic - the middle passage - occurred during the first couple of weeks and were a result of malnutrition and disease encountered during the forced marches and subsequent interment at slave camps on the coast. The enslaved African was quite unlike the native Indian in that the African was taken away from his native homeland to where he was completely deprived of the aperture to interact with his people as well as the ability of his social organization. While the American slave could hide from his exploiters because of his knowledge of the land, the Africa found himself lost in the whole terrain.

The slaves that were sent down to Europe came by various means. Some of the slaves were the mentally ill. Criminals were also disposed as slaves; this took the place of capital punishment. Heretics and those who fell out of favour with the ruling authorities were also sold as slaves. However, almost half of the total of slaves came through military conquests of other states or communities. For the Atlantic slave trade, captives were purchased from slave dealers in West African regions. Some African kings sold their captives locally and later to European slave traders for goods such as metal cookware, rum, livestock, and seed grain. Previous to the voyage, the victims were held in "slave castles" and deep pits where many died from multiple illnesses and malnutrition; some killed themselves.

The Triangular Nature of the Slave Trade

The result of slavery in Africa was a triangular movement of trade, where by England, France and Colonial America supplied the exports and ships and Africa, the human merchandise. The African slaves were moved to the coast and then taken to plantations in Europe where they worked for the provision of goods like sugar, cotton, rubber and other tropical products and these same goods were brought over to Africa and again exchanged with slaves. While the ships sailed with cargos of manufactured goods they were returned filled with slaves who were treated as cargos. This triangular trade gave a triple stimulus to European industries, and created new ones.

The export of trade goods by slave traders from European ports to African ports forms the first side of the triangular trade. The transport of slaves from Africa across to the Americas forms the middle passage of the triangular trade. This leg was horrifying for the slaves, and it is estimated that the slave traders made about 54, 000 turns to Africa when they picked with them millions of viable Africans as slaves. This journey usually lasted for months, sometimes a year before arrival to the European ports, pending on the origin, the destination and the winds. The third, and final, leg of the triangular trade involved the return to Europe with the produce from the slave-labour plantations: cotton, sugar, tobacco, molasses and rum.

The Condition of the Slaves in Europe

The condition of the slaves in Europe varied pending on the charity of the master. Some masters relatively took good care of their slaves. Other owners treated them as animals and some times even less than animals. In places like Brazil, the slaves were kept together and allowed to continue their traditional beliefs. In some other places they were deliberately separated to prevent them from uniting against their masters. Yet, this did not stop slave revolt as records have about 250 of such revolts in America (African Encyclopedia for Schools and Colleges, 1974).

The slaves moved over to Europe were slaves for life, and their children were also destined to slavery without any offence of theirs. Hard work and torture reduced the life-span of the slave, so that throughout America the life span of the slave was estimated at seven years. They worked like animals usually under the supervision of their taskmasters who kept them alert with whips about which specificity is crucial: between 50 and 200 strokes were the penalties for the least negligence. To be a slave was to be a beaten body. Laennec Hurben describes the unfortunate condition of the slave and the uncivil attitude of the civilized masters thus: "For the master had to work rigorously- for the degradation of the slaves, for their complete and utter downfall so as better to reduce them to what was considered to be their natural condition" (Hurbon 1990, p.94). While working on sugar cane plantations, when the slaves were caught sucking sugar cane, their masters

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went to the root of the matter by breaking their teeth so that they wouldn't suck any more.

The story of a rebellious or lazy slave is more pitiful. According to Hurbon (1990),

The tortures reserved for the rebellious and lazy slave are not evidence of a particular cruelty of some masters, but are part of the structure of the daily practice of slavery. To apply a red-hot iron to the tender parts of the slave, to tie him to stakes so that insects gnawed him to death, to burn him alive, to chain him, set dogs or snakes at his heels, to rape negresses, and many such tortures served above all to express absolute domination. And it was absolute, or rather it claimed to be: in the act of branding slaves, changing their names, mixing the races, making them lose all kinship, in short producing among them a cultural amnesia from which they emerged zombies, living dead totally subjected to the caprices and humours of their masters. (p. 94).

Whipping, branding, dismembering, castrating, or killing a slave was legal under many circumstances. Freedom of movement, to assemble at a funeral, to earn money, even to learn to read and write, became outlawed. Their clothing, feeding and housing were at the liberty of their slave masters who usually carried them out with extreme unwillingness. According to Dutre, the adult slaves had a few rags as clothing while the children were naked, without the 'privilege' of a rag; this was in line with the condition of the slave that was supposed to be made visible until death. And when the slave dies, he was buried like an animal, either with his rags or wrapped with some canna leaves (Hurbon 1990). This was the reward for his labour. His situation was so poor that for him, all that pleased him was Sunday, on which he did not work, and sleep, during which he did no work.

The Abolition of Slavery

The abolition of slavery in Africa was not born out of humanitarian motives or feelings as such, it was capitally as a result of the revolt of the slaves themselves and more for economic reasons. For instance in France, On 27 April 1848 Victor Schoelcher, the French under-secretary of state for the colonies, signed a decree abolishing slavery, because of the danger of a general uprising of slaves. Under the economic argument central to the 18th and 19th centuries: first it was argued that people did not work effectively under the conditions of slavery. Secondly, the wars in places like among the Yorubas, and devastations caused by slave raidings was making trade very difficult and dangerous in many parts of Africa (African Encyclopedia for Schools and Colleges, 1974). Thirdly, the number of slaves was growing in number and this was a threat to the European population. Fourthly, new technologies were coming up. Machines for work on plantations were now

coming into the market, and they were cheaper and faster than the African slave.

Before the formal abolition of slavery, the slaves had begun to sing their freedom which they expressed in different colours. They sang this song primarily in two ways: either by leaving their bodies to their masters to rejoin Africa symbolically or spiritually: suicide, the refusal of care or food and infanticide. As an alternative, they ran away from their masters individually or collectively marooning about. Hurbon (1990) wrote, Rumours of poisoning, revolts accompanied by burning of the plantations and sugar factories, haunted the sleep of their masters throughout the 18th century. Soon, in the wake of the French Revolution, St Dominique, France's most popular colony, with more than 400, 000 slaves, offered the spectacle of the first major successful slave revolt. An insurrection sparked off during the night of 15th August 1791, was the inauguration of a long struggle lasting 13 years. (p. 97).

From the account in William Byrd's diary, expressions of these struggles emerged. "On the 9th of September last at Night a great Number of Negroes Arose in Rebellion, broke open a Store where they got arms, killed twenty one White Persons, and were marching the next morning in a Daring manner out of the Province, killing all they met and burning several Houses as they passed along the Road" (William, 2005). An African man named Jemmy, thought to be of Angolan origin, also led a march from Stono near Charleston toward Florida. Other slaves joined Jemmy and their numbers grew to nearly 100. Jemmy and his companions killed dozens of whites on their way, in what became known as the Stono Rebellion. White colonists caught up with the rebels and executed those whom they managed to capture. The severed heads of the rebels were left on mile posts on the side of the road as a warning to others. White fear of blacks was also rampant in New York City. In 1741, fires were ignited all over New York, including one at the governor's mansion. In witch-hunt fashion, 160 blacks and at least a dozen working class whites were accused of conspiring against the City of New York. Thirty-one Africans were killed; 13 were burned at the stake. Four whites were hung (Obadina, 2005).

France was the first European country to abolish slave-trade in the late 18th century in 1794. It was revisited by Napoleon in 1802, and was banned for good in 1848. In 1807 the British Parliament passed the "Abolition of the Slave Trade Act", under which captains of slave ships could be fined for each slave transported. This was later superseded by the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act, which freed all slaves in the British Empire. Abolition was then extended to the rest of Europe. In 1818-1825, similar laws were passed in places like Brazil, Portugal, Spain (African Encyclopedia for Schools and Colleges, 1974). Prominent figures on the fore of the move for the abolition of slave trade were David Livingstone whose reports helped in accelerating the ending of Slavery; Wilberforce a member of the British parliament, Lincoln, a one time US president. However, all these abolitions came only after there were enough slaves across the Atlantic for agricultural and

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domestic purposes. The parts of Africa whose income depended largely on the slave trade did not want this, and as such continued in the trade. British ships watched the coastal areas to hinder illegal slave trading, and this became part of the reasons for British extension of her colonization of Africa. However, many Africans remained in many parts of Europe and have contributed to the development of the areas.

The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade as the Hidden History of Africa's Present Crisis

The late Afro-American civil rights leader Martin Luther King said that only very few people realize the extent that slavery had "scarred the soul and wounded the spirit of the black man". In Africa, the many places that suffered from slave-raiding passed through the re-molding of many years before recovery from the experience. Places in Africa that depended largely on slave trade found it difficult to discover other areas of economic importance. This period of carnage began at a time when Africa was at an agricultural stage of civilization. Ashun (2004) avers that this was the origin of periodic famine in Africa. With the tensions created by slavery all the dreams that lied laid ahead were destroyed (Gimba, 2006). Local industries were destroyed and the independence of Africa crushed. They further introduced tobacco, alcohol, guns and gun powers to keep us drunk and busy fighting while they catered away with our resources. Many Africans died from tobacco and rum, and many were lost in wars intensified by the imported guns.

Consequential to the several raidings, many people ran away from their communities and went into hiding in remote and easily defended highland areas for protection, which of course affected the peace and course of development of the people. However, with the abolition of slavery, those who took refuge in places outside their habitats began to make their ways to more habitable areas. This left deep sentiments of hostility in some areas; for instance between the Southern and Northern parts of Sudan. People feel that they have been abused and disregarded by others. The sentiments of hostility are enormous that till date, it is very difficult to preserve the unity of the country (Gimba, 2006).

The wars that were waged between communities so as to procure slaves were intensely destructive, and had its consequences. There was a growth in insecurity, and increased uncertainty of life gave added force to superstitious beliefs and customs. People sought salvation and protection from the spiritual world. They paid homage to gods to safeguard themselves and their families from misfortune. It was great so that distrust was a basic requirement for individual and communal survival. All these have their hands on Africa's underdevelopment. Wherever there is no peace and stability, there can't be development.

The psychological impact of the dehumanizing trade was crippling as so many Africans believed that the whites took the slaves away to be eaten as food. There was constant anxiety caused by perpetual fear of being captured and herded away like common animals to a place of no return (Obadina, 2005). It profoundly changed the racial, social, economic, and cultural make-up in many of the American nations that imported slaves. It also left a legacy of racism which many African nations are still struggling to overcome. According to Karenga (2005), the morally monstrous destruction of human possibility involved redefining African humanity to the world, poisoning past, present and future relations with others who only know us through this stereotyping and thus damaging the truly human relations among peoples.

The loss in human resources had dire consequences for labour dependent agricultural economies. Population has contributed to the socio-economic development of many European countries, say in the areas of providing labour, markets. Even in China and parts of Asia, the contribution of population to economic development cannot be overemphasized. And of course African people were conscious of the relevance of population to economic development. For instance among the Balanta in Guinea Bissau, it was believed that the family's strength lies in the number of hands to cultivate the land, among the Shambala of Tanzania, like expressions are obtainable, "a king is people" (Walter 1976, p.106). The predominance of the slave trade prevented the emergence of business classes that could have spearheaded the internal exploitation of the resources of their societies. The slave trade drew African societies into the international economy but as fodder for western economic development. This experience has left Africa permanently disadvantaged when compared to other parts of the world, and largely explains that continent's continued poverty.

After the abolition of slavery, freed slaves went back to Africa. In 1782, Sierra Leone was founded by the British people as a settlement for the slaves from Britain. In 1849, Libreville which means Freetown in French, now the capital of Gabon was founded for free slaves from France. In 1822, released slaves from USA were also settled in Liberia. Till date, location destabilization or their historical (from Africa to Europe and from Europe to Africa) unstable nature of settlement has affected their development. Their situation finds expression in the view of Cheik Ante Diop, who was a black American who remained abroad after the brutal slave trade. He said that when people always move around they cannot create culture. Permanent location is a mighty element of civilization. When the African freed slaves were pushed back to Africa they began again from the savage state when men roamed about having no continued abiding place (Gimba, 2006).

CONCLUSION

The foregoing has studied the event of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Africa and its consequences. It has discovered that the 19th century was one in which the shadow of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade overshadowed every aspect of life in Africa. The consequences are numerous: the cheapening of human life, fundamental insecurity, disintegration of social bonds and the constraint on productivity. The consequences are still telling on Africa. Many of the freed slaves who remained in Europe became poor peasants, working as household workers and migrant workers, unemployed and living in shanty areas and still victims of racism. The task of eradicating racism in all its ramifications is a dream that still remains unrealized. It is a dream which must be regarded as part of the duty of the human race in the midst of many contemporary human struggles. I would like to end this paper with a tribute I saw at Elmina castle, Cape Coast, Ghana: "In everlasting memory o the anguish of our ancestors. May those who died rest in peace. May those who return find their root. May humanity never again perpetrate such injustice against humanity. We the living vow to uphold this".

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