

GATEWAY TO AFRICA:
THE PILGRIMAGE TOURISM OF DIASPORA AFRICANS TO GHANA

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For my research assistant, host, and friend

Paa Kwesi Sampson

Meda wo ase paa!

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Progress does not come by itself. Neither desire nor time alone can ensure progress. Progress is not a gift but a victory. To make progress, man (sic) has to work, strive and toil, tame the elements, combat the environment, recast institution, subdue circumstances, and at all times be ideologically alert and awake (Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah by way of James Anani Amemasor).

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This dissertation examines the competing goals of Ghanaian tourism stakeholders, diaspora African visitors, and Cape Coast residents regarding pilgrimage tourism in Ghana's Central Region. Based on over one year of fieldwork in Cape Coast, my research incorporates interviews and surveys with tourism policy makers, tour guides, visitors, and local Ghanaians and African Americans, as well as participant-observation of guided tours at Cape Coast and Elmina castles and PANAFEST (Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival) and Emancipation Day, and analysis of the castles' guest books.

Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle are potent sites of memory for the trans-Atlantic slave trade and serve as icons of a naturalized gateway to Africa for diaspora Africans. These castles are the backdrop for PANAFEST and Emancipation Day, two Pan-African oriented festivals observed in Ghana since the 1990s which attract large numbers of diaspora Africans. African Americans have been selected by Ghana's Ministry of Tourism as the target market for pilgrimage tourism, but many African Americans are offended by being labeled as tourists because they consider going to Ghana as a sacred act of coming "home." The boundaries between tourist and pilgrim become blurred through the manifestations of social memory evident in castle tours and Pan-African festivals.

This research looks at how social memories dwell in different sites and practices: in the rhetoric of public speeches, in the content of guided tours, in the bodies of visitors,

in the performances of reenactment, in the ceremonies of *communitas*, and in the physical structures of the castles. The construction and deployment of social memories rooted in a shared experience of oppression evidenced in the historical examples of the slave trade and colonialism furthers the project of uniting diaspora Africans and Ghanaians as collective Africans. However, Ghanaians and African Americans have different frames of reference from which they perceive the history and memory of the slave trade that reveal cultural disjunctures in how they relate to the notion of a shared African identity. While Ghanaian stakeholders privilege generating foreign exchange through the promotion of tourism, diaspora African visitors seek a meaningful homecoming and acceptance as members of the “African family.”

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Fieldwork

I am often asked how I became interested in this topic; this is not easy to answer because I have not followed a direct path into this research. My interest connects to my experiences as an undergraduate student from Indiana University attending the University of Ghana in 1993-94. I was adopted locally as a University of California (UC) student, because we all arrived in Ghana around the same time, had the same advisor, and were socialized together. Within weeks of our arrival, we took a mini-van excursion from Legon to the Central Region. I first visited Elmina Castle during that trip. We did not go on a guided tour but merely wandered around the grounds on our own. I tried to imagine what the captives in the dungeon might have experienced—what sounds, smells, sights, tastes, and touches they might have endured. In my journal, I struggled to express in words the strange feeling I had upon entering the dungeon—I felt chills and extreme guilt for the exploitation of human lives. At that time, I had little historical knowledge of Elmina Castle and my imagination of African slaves and European masters was largely informed by American popular culture. As a white person visiting Elmina Castle, I uncritically identified with the European ancestors I presumed could have had a hand in the slave trade. As my American companions and I reflected on what the experience meant, several questions lingered in our minds: “Who is to blame?”; “Should whites feel guilty?”; “How do we reconcile legacies of the slave trade?”

When I returned to Ghana as a graduate student for three months in the summer of 1999, I conducted household level research on the socioeconomic implications of structural adjustment programs. I also kept my eyes and ears open for current events in

the Ghanaian media and heard about tourism again and again. Tourism was being framed as a promising sector to advance Ghana's economic development, which had already delivered significant foreign exchange. Tourism stakeholders identified ecotourism and heritage tourism as potential specializations around which Ghana could market its tourism efforts. I went back to Ghana in the summer of 2000—living this time in Cape Coast for three months to conduct exploratory research on ecotourism and heritage tourism. I was interested in how villages surrounding Kakum National Park were being affected by the development of an ecotourism/conservation project. Another aspect of my research centered on what Cape Coast residents thought about tourism at Cape Coast Castle. I wanted to know if they had benefited from diaspora African visitors, and what tour guides at Cape Coast Castle had to say about some of the controversies that have featured in their experiences as interpreters of history. I attended some of the main events of Emancipation Day 2000, held in Accra's National Theatre, which included an address by then-president Jerry Rawlings, public discussion on the issues of repatriation and reparations, and a re-enactment of a 'slave march' in which some Ghanaians depicting captives were chained together and wailed as they were beaten and corralled by others who depicted African middlemen. I thought that this combination of activities and ideas was fascinating, timely, and deserved further scholarly inquiry. After conducting my summer 2000 fieldwork, I decided to study pilgrimage tourism in Ghana.

When I began writing proposals for my dissertation research in 2000, I was interested in looking at the social and economic connections of diaspora Africans—particularly African Americans—to Ghana as broad process in which there would be a continuum of one-time tourists, annual pilgrims, and repatriates. From my 1999 and

2000 summer research trips to Ghana, I was aware that tourism in general, as well as tourism that was specifically centered around attracting people of African descent in diaspora was becoming increasingly more prominent in the Ghanaian national media. News reports typically underscored the importance of this tourism to national and regional economies, suggesting that Ghana could reap considerable gains through tourism development which brought in much-needed foreign exchange. Since tourism features so prominently in Ghana's national economy—ranking the third highest contributor—there are practical reasons for Ghana's policymakers to conceptualize all visitors to Ghana as tourists and to figure out how to attract more of them. Many people (e.g. students, researchers, missionaries, aid workers, family members, etc.) who come to Ghana are not typical tourists but are so classified because they come to Ghana on temporary tourist visas. Problems arise when those individuals who are labeled by Ghanaians as tourists want to be recognized as something else, as in the case of some African American and Afro Caribbean visitors who vehemently oppose the classification of tourist. For these individuals, coming to Ghana resembles more of a return home and a pilgrimage. Some of the tours on offer at Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle resemble the structure of a ritualized pilgrimage in which individuals separate themselves from their usual identities and undergo a transformation in which a new African identity is claimed (see chapter 4). Although they have slightly different orientations, both the annual Emancipation Day celebration and biennial Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival (PANAFEST) are promoted to welcome diaspora Africans back home as members of the “African family” while encouraging them to contribute towards the development of Africa. The presence of groups of African Americans coming to Ghana on pre-packaged tours, attending these

festivals via large tour buses, and documenting these events with their cameras illustrates how the distinction between pilgrim and tourist is blurred in practice.

Though the repatriation of diaspora Africans to Ghana has been inconsistent over the years, it is relevant to understanding the broader affiliations African Americans and Afro Caribbeans have to Ghana as a literal home. This homecoming defies easy categorization into the notion of either tourism or pilgrimage. Since 1957, when Kwame Nkrumah led the struggle for Ghana's independence against British colonial rule, and continuing into the 1960s, President Nkrumah himself encouraged African Americans and Afro Caribbeans to migrate to live in Ghana permanently. W.E.B. DuBois and George Padmore were prominent figures who took up Nkrumah's call, an invitation which was primarily directed towards the intelligentsia and trained professionals (doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc.) of the African diaspora. In the 1970s and 80s, there was a lull in this migration, and some diaspora Africans left Ghana; this movement mirrored an economic downturn in Ghana. Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, the migration of diaspora Africans has picked up again, though perhaps not to the levels of post-independence Ghana. In 2000, the population of African Americans permanently residing in Ghana was estimated to be one thousand (Zachary 2001). What do the migrations of diaspora Africans mean for broader conceptualizations of identifying with Ghana? Based on her 1987-89 field research in Ghana, Obiagele Lake (1995) found that repatriates of African descent from the U.S. and the Caribbean tend to identify both with their nation of birth (e.g. the U.S. or Jamaica) and with a broader African community. Her empirical study indicates the dual nature with which many diaspora African perceive their own identities in relation to their coming to Ghana. In practice, individuals have

multiple and sometimes competing identifications with Ghana—coming from both within and without—that serve to confound labeling the process of diaspora African migration to Ghana as a definitive homecoming.

The pilgrimage tourism that I describe in my dissertation is a delicate balancing act because it involves the competing interests of Ghanaian stakeholders and diaspora Africans. While the former operates on the urge to bring in foreign currency, the latter is driven by a desire to make meaningful spiritual connections with Ghana as an African homeland and to cultivate personal relationships with Ghanaians as fellow members of the “African family.” I will describe and analyze how these divergent perspectives, which—on the one hand—privilege money-making, and—on the other hand—privilege identity, play themselves out in practice. Other scholars have framed the travel of diaspora groups to perceived homelands as tourism (Bruner 2005), pilgrimage (Coleman and Eade 2004), and homecomings (Markowitz and Stefansson 2004). I have found in the course of doing my research that in practice, these labels are often blurred as individuals and groups sometimes occupy multiple positions alternatively or even simultaneously. From a broader perspective, what do all these labels share? I argue that social memory works as the glue which holds together these modes of travel together. How are the memories of the slave trade and Ghana’s independence movement being recalled? How do Ghanaians and African Americans use and connect with these memories in their present lives? What do processes of memory-making demand for the maintenance of a broader Pan-African identity that makes room for individuals from the continent as well as those from the diaspora?

Throughout the course of writing up my research, I have grappled with what to call the phenomenon that my dissertation addresses. ‘Heritage tourism’ seems too vague; although it captures a broad understanding of the historical and cultural resources tied to destination sites like Cape Coast and Elmina castles, exactly whose heritage is on offer? ‘Slavery-heritage tourism’ is a phrase that has been incorporated by tourism scholars under the rubric of ‘dark tourism’ which looks at travel to destinations associated with death, destruction, and the macabre. Its specific focus on slavery fails to capture broader notions of homecoming that include positive affiliations between one’s identity and destination sites, as in the redemptive return many diaspora Africans feel when they come to Ghana. ‘Roots tourism’ implies that people of African descent are going back to sites associated with their ancestors’ homes. While this phrase is associated with Alex Haley’s *Roots* and the now suspect tracing of his lineage back to a particular village in the Gambia, it does convey fond imaginings of a homeland. However, some diaspora African migrants to Ghana take issue with ‘roots tourism’ for its implication of a somewhat superficial relationship with the African continent. Individuals have told me that they are not going back to their roots but are fulfilling a prophecy and claiming an inheritance that was denied when their ancestors were uprooted from the continent. Though not a perfect solution, I find ‘pilgrimage tourism’ (see Schramm 2004) to be the most compelling label. It describes visitors taking part in a sacred act of returning home, that in some cases resembles the structure of a ritual, and also the more mundane activity of tourism. Paula Ebron (2000) illustrates in the case of an African American homeland tour to Senegal and the Gambia that such experiences are characterized by both the goal of recovering of a collective sense of historical ties to Africa and by their commodified

nature (917). In these situations, there are jarring paradoxes at work. One paradox concerns the fact that diaspora African travel “home” is comprised of both sacred/extraordinary and secular/mundane elements. Another related paradox concerns our understanding of movement with the concepts of tourism and pilgrimage. Tourism typically entails movement *away* from home, just like pilgrimage. In the instance of diaspora Africans coming to Ghana, pilgrimage tourism is a return “home.” For the bulk of my dissertation, ‘pilgrimage tourism’ is a sufficient term for what I discuss; it falls short because it does not incorporate the experiences of those diaspora Africans who have migrated to live in Ghana on a more permanent basis.

Memory & the Traveling of Diaspora Cultures

Maurice Halbwachs (1992 [1952]) writes that collective memories (also known as social memories) are “reminiscences of the past that link given sets of people, for whom the shared identity remains significant at a later time when the memory is invoked” (qtd. in Boyarin 1994: 23). Through collective memories that people, social groups construct and maintain their own images of the world through agreed-upon perceptions of the past. Pierre Nora (1989) conceptualizes *lieux de mémoire* as ‘sites of memory’, including memorials, ceremonies, and objects located between memory and history:

Memory and history, far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition. Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past. Memory, insofar as it is affective and magical, only accommodates those facts that suit it; it nourishes recollections that may be out of focus or telescopic, global or detached, particular or symbolic—responsive to each avenue of

conveyance or phenomenal screen, to every censorship or projections. History, because it is an intellectual or secular production, calls for analysis and criticism. Memory installs remembrance within the sacred; history, always prosaic releases it again (8-9).

Both Maurice Halbwachs (1992 [1952]) and Pierre Nora (1989) emphasize that our perceptions of the past are affected by the mental images and practical uses of the present, so that memory is basically a reconstruction of the past from the perspective of the present. Scholars who have drawn from their work have sought to understand the culturally constructed means through which memory is objectified and deployed in practice. I will give examples of how memories reside in different sites and practices—in the rhetoric of public speeches, in the content of guided tours, in the bodies of visitors themselves, in the performances of re-enactment, in the ceremonies of *communitas*, and in the physical structure of Cape Coast and Elmina castles.

Just as the middle passage signifies the quintessential historical moment in the memories of diaspora Africans, Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle are the iconic *lieux de mémoire* for those who consider Ghana a site of pilgrimage that both memorializes the tragedy of the slave trade and serves as a conceptual and physical ‘meeting grounds’ (MacCannell 1999 [1976]) for reclaiming a redemptive African identity. For Paul Gilroy (1993), the image of the sailing ship in the spaces between Africa, the Americas, and Europe encapsulates this focus upon the middle passage and a redemptive return to an African homeland (4). His conception of the ‘black Atlantic’ underscores the collaborative, transcultural, and international flow of intellectual ideas while critiquing the essentialist and exclusivist approach of conflating race, ethnicity, and culture and simultaneously ascribing absolutist traits to them. Gilroy writes:

The history of the black Atlantic since [the navigation of the African

Pedro Nino who was Columbus' pilot], continually crisscrossed by the movements of black people—not only as commodities but engaged in various struggles towards emancipation, autonomy, and citizenship—provides a means to reexamine the problems of nationality, location, identity, and historical memory. They all emerge from it with special clarity if we contrast the national, nationalistic, and ethnically absolute paradigms of cultural criticism to be found in England and America with those hidden expressions, both residual and emergent, that attempt to be global or outer-national in nature (1993: 16).

Gilroy's black Atlantic is compelling because it entertains the possibility of identity formation and inspiration outside of the confines of essentialized notions of race and ethnicity. He is hopeful that we can envision the problems and solutions of the twenty-first century not along the axis of the color line, but through addressing the issue of leveling the playing fields to combat global poverty (1993: 223).

Like Gilroy, Kwame Anthony Appiah takes an anti-essentialist position in conceptualizing African identities. Speaking from his own experiences as the product of elite Ghanaian and British parents, Appiah (1992) authoritatively rejects the possibility of a homogenous African identity rooted in race. He points to the great language, religious, and cultural diversity of the continent, and critiques the ways in which Pan-Africanists have failed to elaborate an African identity which is not a reflection of a European gaze. He sees Pan-Africanists repeating the same old arguments that Europeans were the agents who underdeveloped and exploited Africans and upheld racist beliefs justifying their actions. For example, this pattern can be found in the public speeches of diaspora Africans in Ghana during PANAFEST and Emancipation Day; in this case, diaspora Africans define themselves on the basis of fighting against historical and contemporary forms of European and Euro-American driven racial injustice and economic exploitation. Appiah suggests that the problems Africa faces should be

understood as *human* problems arising out of a particular context, which are not unique to Africans, or unlike others in the rest of the world.

Identity formation is inevitably bound up in identity construction and vice versa, to the extent that one may not be able to point to specific examples of the constructedness of identity if one has already appropriated these elements and fails to self-consciously question the processes at work in adopting them. Such an individual may perceive herself as simply being who she is, particularly if she was not conscious of the choices she was making (or of the limited options imposed upon her by society) and especially if she has invested heavily in her identity. While Appiah appears more concerned with identity formation, Benedict Anderson is more focused on identity construction. More specifically, Anderson (1983) has made significant contributions to our understanding of the constructed nature of national identities. In ‘imagined communities,’ people may share a purpose and destiny despite never knowing one another because they believe themselves to inherit a common past and possess a collective biological and cultural heritage. When traditional Ghanaian chiefs participate in public forums alongside Afrocentric African American spokespeople, they invoke the imagined community of Africans rooted in essentialized notions of a unified Black race sharing “traditional” culture. Public speeches by diaspora Africans and Ghanaians during PANAFEST and Emancipation Day emphasize a shared memory of struggle against the twin evils of racial and colonial oppression and pride in asserting redemption through Pan-African solidarity.

The construction of an African homeland for diaspora Africans is a nationalistic project characterized by a number of traits. A collective ideology, institutions, customs, and language, the psychological and social bonding of a people, tropes of nostalgia for

the past and future destiny together, belonging to the land, recognition of common family and kin, metaphors of shared blood, the belief that external forces are contaminants, and symbolic forms of patriotism are all found in the rhetoric, rituals, and performances associated with pilgrimage tourism in Ghana. As Paulla Ebron (2002) argues in relation to homecoming tourism in The Gambia, products have transcended the realm of tangible goods to inhabit a commodity fetishism in which “Africa” is performed for tourists (166). In the context of Ghana, the idea of “Africa” is produced by tour guides and performing artists, distributed through festivals and the media, and consumed by various audiences—diaspora African returnees, Ghanaian chiefs, tourism developers, and ordinary Ghanaians. The film, *Sankofa*, which dramatically depicts the consequences of failing to heed the Akan concept of “returning to one’s roots,” has been widely viewed by African American audiences.

I find merit in Appiah’s point that Africa’s problems are not unique to the continent. I also see value in the notion of Anderson’s ‘imagined communities’ in theorizing the constructed nature of many nationalistic projects. Their work reminds us that there are real limitations of basing a homogenous African identity on such a narrow definition as having black skin or simple objectifications of homogenous, “traditional” African culture. While I agree that the assumption of a homogenous African identity across class, ethnicity, and nation is highly problematic, it is important to remember that race, though culturally constructed, is nevertheless real. We need to evaluate the limitations of our concepts and consider how they fail to adequately address popular opinions and public sentiments on the ground. Race remains a factor in everyday life because it is invoked in public culture and remains a principle in social organization.

Race is also a lived experience for the people who continue to feel the sting of racism. Historical and contemporary racial injustices tied to the legacies of the slave trade, slavery, and colonialism cannot be denied. From a humanistic perspective, I understand why individuals strongly identify with being African. Identities are imposed from without according to dominant cultural conventions, but identities are also chosen and reinforced from within according to the individual. I do not wish to dismiss the intricate and very personal reasons people have in relating to and investing in particular aspects of their identities (e.g. being black) over other aspects (e.g. being a woman, Christian, straight, or a mother). While the notion of imagined communities has legitimacy in calling attention to the constructedness of nationalistic identities, it can also be critiqued for failing to accommodate the everyday lives of people in their identifications with these communities.

James Clifford (1997) has suggested the crucial role memory plays in maintaining a sense of integrity despite the traveling of diaspora cultures (44). These traveling cultures continue to move back and forth in various forms: television, films, novels, web sites, magazine and newspaper articles, commodities, and people. African American travelers to Ghana do not come as blank slates, but are already informed by popular and public culture. Shaped by their imaginings of a potential homeland, they may anticipate the emotional pilgrimage to sites of memory invoked by Alex Haley's *Roots*, Haile Gerima's *Sankofa*, Maya Angelou's *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes*, Richard Wright's *Black Power*, history lessons from school, magazine, website, and newspaper testimonials bearing witness to the power of visiting the slave dungeons, and photographs taken by family or friends with their accompanying stories chronicling previous trips to

Ghana. In this case, traveling cultures are not relegated to a one-way orientation of ideas and people traveling from centers of African American cultures to Ghana. Official visits of Ghanaian traditional chiefs to urban African American community centers in the U.S. and Ghanaian-produced books, videos, and T-shirts for Ghanaian and diaspora African consumers provide additional points of reference for cultivating a trans-national African identity. Through ‘memory scapes’ (Ebron 2000; Appadurai 1990) created by popular media forms and public social interactions, Ghanaians prepare themselves to properly receive diaspora visitors and African Americans establish memories to an imagined homeland long before setting foot on a plane bound for Ghana.

Jonathan Boyarin uses the phrase, the ‘politics of memory’, to refer to the ways rhetoric about the past is mobilized for political purposes (1994: 2). The public speeches of PANAFEST and Emancipation Day convey the urgency for Africans of the continent, mainly Ghanaians, and Africans of the diaspora, mainly African Americans and Jamaicans, to join forces as a unified social group committed to the uplift of Africa and Africans everywhere. However, Africans of the continent and Africans of the diaspora interpret the ‘politics of memory’ through different frames of reference. While Ghanaians largely see fostering their relationships with diaspora Africans as a vehicle for economic betterment, African Americans value cultivating their relationships with Africans in order to fuel a renaissance of positive identity-formation rooted in traditional African culture. When African Americans embark upon a pilgrimage tour to the *lieux de mémoire* associated with the slave trade *and* a reclaimed homeland, the ‘politics of memory’ is in play. My dissertation will generalize about African Americans and Ghanaians, but I will also show the diversity within each group. For example, African

American frames of reference through which African identity is perceived and appropriated are malleable and shift when one travels to Ghana or dwells in the U.S.

Tourism and Pilgrimage: Paths to Memory

Perhaps no other structures evoke the memory of the slave trade more than the dungeons of Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle. These sites provide powerful venues for pilgrimage tourism, and serve as the backdrop to PANAFEST and Emancipation Day events. Edward Bruner (1996) argues that the representation of history at Cape Coast and Elmina castles is fundamentally different, depending on whether the tour is led by Ghanaians or African Americans. He says tours by Ghanaians contain more of the diverse history of the site, including its historical and contemporary uses beyond serving as a 'slave dungeon'. In contrast, he states African Americans base their tours around the tragedy of the slave trade but also include redemption through claiming Africa as home. I agree that different tours are offered by Ghanaians and African Americans, but I find that the difference lies less in content and more in form. Based on my review of visitors' books to these castles and participant-observation of guided tours in 2001-02, I (Reed 2004) contend that standard tours given by Ghanaians privilege the 'slave story' and African redemption, just as African American tours do. Ghanaian guides tend to give third person historical interpretations, where African American guides provide tours that follow the structure of ritual. The convergence of guided tours by both groups around the 'slave story' reflect broader goals of the UNESCO Slave Route Project and visitors' comments which underscore a commitment to the 'anamnesia'—the refusal to forget—of the slave trade (Boyarin 1994: xiv).

The literature on heritage tourism as pilgrimage, central to understanding the relationships being forged between Ghanaians and diaspora Africans, is ultimately grounded in the notion of ritual processes involving the stages of separation, liminality, and reintegration (Turner and Turner 1978; Van Gennep 1960). Nelson Graburn (1983) applies this model in likening tourism to pilgrimage: first the tourist separates from an everyday world through leisure and travel, then enters a sacred space of liminality mediated by different social conventions, and finally reintegrates back into ordinary “workaday” existence. Dean MacCannell (1976) sees the tourist as a type of pilgrim, searching for authenticity in other “times” and “places.” Jewish pilgrimage tourism case studies have contributed to this literature in documenting how heritage sites and museums create meaning, when pilgrims reflect upon their identities while maintaining a relationship to a common past, which is both “real” and “imagined” (Ben-Ari and Bilu 1997; Kugelmass 1992). I will show that pilgrimage tourism in Ghana is similarly fraught with conflicting notions of identity and mediated through a sense of collective memory.

Positionality

Anthropology has shown me that there is inherent value in looking beyond one’s own backyard. When I spent an academic year studying at the University of Ghana in 1993-94, I grew to appreciate American and Ghanaian cultural similarities and differences. Sometimes I wished that we could copy and paste some of the cultural values from Ghana into the U.S. For example, I was pleasantly surprised to find that racial difference was not as salient in Ghana as in the U.S. and that the burden of race-consciousness permeating American society was not so heavy because ethnic and

regional identity took precedence. At the University of Ghana, I easily befriended Gas, Akans, Ewes, and Dagbanis, as well as African Americans, Jamaican Americans, Philippino Americans, white Americans, and mixed ethnicity Americans. Although the topic of race and ethnicity came up in conversation—notably after reflecting upon an organized trip of American students to Elmina Castle—they were hardly salient in my friendships, many of which I maintain and treasure to this day.

Experiencing other cultures can lead one to see different possibilities, to broaden one's mind, and to foster understanding and acceptance of alternative world views. As a contemporary anthropologist, I do not share the positions of some of my anthropological ancestors (e.g. Herskovits and Boas) who thought that anthropologists must be from outside the culture they study in order to have distance and be unbiased. Most anthropologists today would agree that absolute objectivity is impossible to achieve and that instead of trying to make spurious claims of objectivity, we should be up-front about our biases and weaknesses. I recall one African American man in Ghana telling me that no one can tell his story but himself. He implied that no one can tell the African American or African story, except members of those groups. I disagree with the position that individuals only have the right to study and speak *about* their own group. At the same time, I want to make clear that in my dissertation, I am not claiming to speak *for* diaspora Africans or *for* Ghanaians, but I do speak *about* them. While I use the constructs of African Americans, diaspora Africans, or Ghanaians as terms of reference in order to make comparisons and generalizations, I do not consider these groups to be bounded, homogenous, cultural entities. What I am offering are my own interpretations of events and ideas taken from my 2001-02 fieldwork in Cape Coast, Ghana. I believe

valuable insights emerge from multiple perspectives on the same topic. Scholars who happen to be African American, white American, British, German, and Ghanaian have all brought useful perspectives to the study of pilgrimage tourism and homecoming in contemporary Ghana. In my opinion, none of these viewpoints should be discarded simply because of the identity of the researcher. At the same time, one must acknowledge his/her positionality, potential biases, the limitations of his/her data, and the relative strengths and weaknesses of evidence used to support particular claims. The relative strengths and weaknesses of data are not based solely or even primarily upon the identity of the researcher and the politics on the ground; research design and methodologies have direct implications on the value of evidence. That being the case, I still want to acknowledge that identity politics certainly played a role in my research.

I found that gaining rapport with and trust from African Americans was a challenge during my fieldwork. Some African Americans resented me, a white American woman, for inserting myself into both in the public forums of PANAFEST and Emancipation Day, as well as at Cape Coast and Elmina Castles, and carrying out my research in these spaces. I can understand that when diaspora Africans make a homeland tour or migrate to Africa, they want to connect with other Africans; they feel at ease because they are among people that look like them. Some of their ancestors were seized from the continent and forced into international slavery. For many diaspora Africans, this is a painful wound that does not easily go away—especially if they are minorities living in racist societies. I sympathize with this anguish and acknowledge that the history of the slave trade is integrally connected to ongoing racism in places like the United States.

In the course of conducting my fieldwork, I recognized how embedded race-consciousness is within American culture and how this race-consciousness has in recent years traveled to Ghana. The reminders of race-consciousness I encountered in Ghana were especially disheartening when I felt that I was being prejudged simply by the color of my skin, that by virtue of my being white, I was presumed to never have the capacity to understand the story or perspectives of someone else. Upon further reflection, I recognize that while I personally felt hurt by these kinds of incidents, I also could understand that they were connected to much broader issues of racial dynamics practiced in the U.S.—dynamics that were linked to structural racism and white privilege.

During one of the open forums for the Pan-African Youth Congress at PANAFEST, I recall the African American emcee asking for volunteers to take notes on the discussion topic, “How to Break the Shackles Free?” When there was initially no response from the audience, in which I was the only white, I raised my hand to volunteer, and some other audience members followed suit. The emcee directed three of us to take our seats at the front of the auditorium to take notes on the discussion. Then, an African American man raised his hand to propose that only *Africans* be recorders; everyone knew that he meant “black skin” and “African clothing or hairstyle.” When the emcee turned to me and asked if I minded, I was chagrined and silently took my seat.

Although PANAFEST is promoted as a festival for everyone who is African, African-descended, or a friend of Africa, not all of these groups are equally encouraged. At least some African Americans present felt that it would be inappropriate for a white woman to take notes. After the session, a Ghanaian woman found me to apologize for what had happened earlier in the auditorium, saying that she did not share the sentiments

expressed by the man who wanted only Africans to take notes. I told her that I understood the issues, but the sting of that racial sanction and public humiliation stuck with me during my fieldwork. My particular experiences with how these dynamics of racial/identity politics played out left me with conflicted sentiments. I acknowledge that white privilege, racism, and economic inequities are current problems in the U.S. and Ghana, and I want to express my interest in contributing to finding solutions to these problems. Although I have directly engaged these issues in my role as an anthropology instructor, I felt that my role as an anthropologist precluded me from overtly aligning myself with particular political positions in the field. The identity politics at work in this particular context were so potent that my involvement—in this case as the only white audience member—would neither be accepted nor acknowledged. Instead, I was rejected and served as a scapegoat through which others could solidify claims to an African identity. This incident showed me how, by inserting myself into such a forum, my presence was tolerated but essentially unwelcome.

Outside of the heated context of that PANAFEST forum and in some of the interpersonal contacts I had with African Americans resident in Cape Coast and Elmina, individuals acknowledged that they had heard of my being psychologically beaten up. One woman told me how unfortunate it is that society puts people in a box and assumes, for example, that all whites behave maliciously towards blacks. "...But just because of the color of your skin. And I guess it's—discrimination has always been and racism has always been addressed to us [blacks]—so now they call it reverse racism and reverse discrimination..." On a separate occasion, one man had asked me what my research would look like in the end, and he implied whether my dissertation would favorably or

unfavorably describe African Americans and their efforts in Ghana. He was deeply concerned that my work might, in some way, go against the hard work he and others had done in furthering the political, educational, and social aims of Pan-Africanism. At the same time, he encouraged me to speak my mind and stand up for what I observed going on in describing diaspora African/ Ghanaian relationships. I assured him that I was not yet certain how I would interpret my research, but that I would try to present a balanced perspective and include different groups' views. I sincerely desire to be fair to all of the parties involved in this topic. For example, I tried not to side with either Ghanaian tourism stakeholders or diaspora African nationalists. Though each of these two groups is not necessarily even uniform in their outlook and goals, they provide a contrast with one another. My point in mentioning them is that though they may reflect different perspectives, I intend neither to ally with one side over the other, nor to harm either agenda of alternatively, promoting tourism development or African nationalism.

People were concerned about how I was going to write up my dissertation and hesitated to speak with me partially because of an article by G. Pascal Zachary (2001) in *The Wall Street Journal* entitled, "Tangled Roots: For African-Americans In Ghana, the Grass Isn't Always Greener." This article discusses some of the misunderstandings involved with African Americans living in Ghana. Some African Americans resent being called the same Akan term—*oburo*—for 'foreigner' or 'white'; some Ghanaians cannot comprehend why African Americans would want to migrate to Ghana when many Ghanaians clamor for greener pastures in Europe and the United States; and some Ghanaians view African Americans as sources of money. The article spurred letters of protest from then acting ambassador of Ghana in Washington, D.C., and the president of

the American Chamber of Commerce in Ghana. They complained the article was overly negative, misrepresented the views of those interviewed, and failed to cite positive examples of relationships between African Americans and Ghanaians.¹ When I initially met African Americans living in and around my field site, I was inevitably reminded of this article and told that they were now reluctant to speak with anyone, for fear that what they say could be similarly manipulated or taken out of context. Some Ghanaians who were interviewed for the article also told me that their statements were taken out of context. Some African Americans found the article offensive when it described one of them as a “self-styled Black Hebrew” and characterized their reception by Ghanaians as “chilly” without also mentioning the positive aspects of their homecoming.

The author of *The Wall Street Journal* article, Pascal Zachary, was a white Jewish American man. One African American man that I interviewed explained he assumed he would have more in common with Zachary than with me, since both were men and both were Jewish, and implied that therefore, he would have been more trustworthy. Before carrying out any discussion with this African American man, he asked me what my ethnic background was and the origin of my name. I replied that Reid is a Scottish name and my name (Reed) came from that. Though I am a combination of Irish, English, Scottish, Dutch, and probably other ethnic groups, I do not generally think of myself as being a specific ethnicity nor do I feel a part of a diaspora group which views another place outside of the U.S. as a homeland. Instead, I identify primarily as an American and not as much as being a white person. Having said that, I also recognize that as a white person living in American society, I have the benefits of white privilege.

¹ See “Letters to the Editor: Ghanaians Welcome African Americans.” 2001. *The Wall Street Journal* (New York), 2/April, Eastern Edition, A23.

Though some African Americans perceived my being white, speaking the local language, and living for a year in Cape Coast as suspicious (one even thought I was working for the CIA), some did not. On the other hand, my white identity meant something completely different for Ghanaians. Some Ghanaians remarked to me that because I was white, they could be honest and frank with me about their feelings about pilgrimage tourism. More than once, Ghanaians stated that if I were African American, they would not have shared some of their more critical remarks. Another related issue is that Ghanaians and African Americans do not necessarily have the same understanding of what constitutes a race or ethnic group. For example, one Ghanaian man who I met during PANAFEST asked me if I was African American. This question really surprised me at the time because I have a very fair complexion. However, upon further reflection, his question makes sense if one accepts the notion that race and ethnicity are culturally constructed. After all, many Ghanaians have a different conception of the phenotypic dividing line between blacks and whites and corresponding assignment to racial classifications. Furthermore, many Ghanaians perceive PANAFEST and Emancipation Day as primarily African American festivals, which could also explain his questioning my ethnicity. I will elaborate on the issue of Ghanaian perceptions of different racial groups in chapter 6 when I present some of the terms of reference for foreigners in the Akan language. One Ghanaian chief who has traveled to Jamaica and the U.S. remarked to me that he was disturbed by the high number of fair-skinned blacks in the U.S. and that he feared that eventually “pure blacks” would be “no more.” I assume that many African Americans would be appalled at this chief’s statement which separates the authentic,

“pure” blacks from the lighter-skinned, “less authentic” blacks. The different frames of reference at work in this example belie some of the limitations of the “African family.”

Outline of Chapters that Follow

I have divided this dissertation into seven chapters, each of which contributes to the broader picture of pilgrimage tourism in contemporary Ghana. Chapter 2 provides a background history to the sites of memory, Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle. It also provides some historical context on Cape Coast as a center of political agitation for national independence from British colonial rule, as well as historical context on African American migration to Ghana. Chapter 3 offers an overview of tourism development in Ghana’s Central Region, its importance to the national economy, and includes synchronic and diachronic summaries of past PANAFEST and Emancipation Day celebrations. In chapter 4, I discuss the perspectives of the tour guides at Cape Coast and Elmina castles. In their role as culture brokers, tour guides convey a range of messages to the touring public about the memory of the slave trade, evoke social memories, and sometimes draw parallels between historical memory and contemporary injustice. Chapter 5, drawing heavily from my own surveys of visitors to the castles as well as from comments in the guest books, presents the sentiments of visitors at these sites. This chapter chronicles some of the debates surrounding how these sites should be named, how they should be used, the admission policy, the content of the tour guides’ presentations, assigning blame for the slave trade, and visitors’ overall impressions of their experiences in coming to the castles. In chapter 6, I elaborate on Ghanaian and African American views relevant to pilgrimage tourism and homecoming in Ghana. This chapter is based on my surveys of Cape Coaster Ghanaians and interviews with African Americans resident in Ghana, and it

treats the relative perceptions Ghanaians have of African Americans and vice-versa, the sometimes conflicting motivations and goals at work in pilgrimage tourism, and efforts both groups have made at raising the consciousness levels of others towards adopting a Pan-African identity that makes room for Ghanaians and African Americans alike as members of the “African family.” Chapter 7 offers concluding remarks and ties together my points of discussion in earlier chapters.

A Note on the Use of Names and Terminology

Before moving on to the next chapter, I need to make a few comments on my use of names and terms. When my research assistant, Paa Kwesi Sampson, introduced me to one African American acquaintance with whom he had worked in executing previous PANAFESTs. When he explained to her that I was researching “roots tourism,” she would not make eye contact or shake my hand and said that she was not interested in talking with us. A few other African Americans told me that they did not want to be included in my research, so I have complied with their requests. I recognize that some people are fatigued from researchers continually coming around to ask similar questions and are frustrated with the ways their views have been construed or misrepresented. Not wanting to contribute further to these problems, I refrain from using the names of specific individuals in most cases. I give the names of officials only when their professional affiliations are of significance to this research. In other instances, I use pseudonyms or simple descriptions of individuals. Chapter six indicates the gender, age, and class background (by neighborhood prestige ranking) of Ghanaians surveyed but does not include their names or other demographic information.

According to scholarly authorities on the history of forts and castles of Ghana (e.g. van Dantzig 1980; Anquandah 1999), the term *castle* is applied to only the three largest of these structures: Cape Coast Castle, Elmina Castle, and Christianborg Castle (the latter now serves as the official residence of Ghana's president and is off limits to tourists). The term *fort* refers to the smaller fortified buildings which are larger than lodges; *lodges* are small trade-factories which were sometimes not fortified (van Dantzig 1980: i; Anquandah 1999: 10). Although trained tour guides at Cape Coast and Elmina castles use this distinction, in common Ghanaian parlance, all of them—from refurbished castles to fort ruins—are simply called 'castle'. Untrained tour guides and caretakers at some of Ghana's smaller forts also call them 'castle'. Many African Americans have suggested that these sites be called 'castle-dungeons', 'dungeons', or 'slave forts' to convey their primary purpose. For the sake of consistency, I will adopt the distinction used in the scholarly literature and refer to these structures in Cape Coast and Elmina as castles. In chapter 5, I will elaborate upon the problems with 'castle' as a term of reference in contemporary popular discourse. I use the term 'captive' for those individuals who were seized and subdued, corralled from the hinterlands to the centers of slave trading, held in captivity in such structures as the forts and castles, and forced to enter ships embarking upon the middle passage bound for the Americas. I prefer to use 'captive', over 'slave' because it indicates that these individuals still had identities which were not defined solely as property. In common practice, these terms are often conflated and used interchangeably, and my dissertation uses each term within its social context. Tour guides, visitors, and tourism planners commonly use 'slave' as a term of reference. In cases in which I am quoting such individuals or referring to titles of public events, I

may resort to using 'slave'. When I put forward my own views or offer descriptions—of the castle tours, for example—I will use 'captive'. Now that I have elaborated upon my entrée to the field, theoretical framework, positionality, and use of names and terms, let me move on to providing the background history to Cape Coast, the castles, and Pan-African connections bringing diaspora Africans to Ghana.

Chapter 2: Historical Background to Elmina Castle and Cape Coast Castle

Ghana, formerly known as the Gold Coast from the seventeenth century until independence, has the distinction of having the densest concentration of forts of any African nation. The forts and castles in what is now Ghana were originally constructed by various European countries to secure and protect trade interests along the Guinea Coast² (See Appendix I for Cape Coast and Elmina Castle timelines). Albert van Dantzig (1980) divides up the history of Ghana's forts and castles into the period of Portuguese hegemony (1470-1600), Dutch & English penetration (1600-1640), intense competition between different companies (1640-1710), relatively peaceful coexistence between companies (1710-1800), and early colonization (1800-1900).

During medieval times, the Wangara (Malian ethnic group that were black and Muslim but were not speakers of Arabic) dominated the gold trade of the West African interior (Wilks 1982: 333). The Wangara were known for their long distance commerce that linked gold producers in West Africa to consumers in the Mediterranean basin, including the Magreb, Egypt, and Spain. By the twelfth century, some of this gold was traded in Christian Europe (ibid.: 335). By the second half of the fifteenth century, the Portuguese sought to divert commerce away from trans-Saharan middlemen and establish direct gold trade linkages with West Africans.

Except for Latin America, which was monopolized by Spain, West Africa was the only major supplier of gold in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when the forts of the Gold Coast were established (van Dantzig 1980: 1). Modern-day Ghana was a logical place for the Portuguese to found their gold trade because of its substantial deposits near

² I use 'Guinea Coast' to refer to the geographical area including the Senegambia, Sierra Leone, the Windward Coast, the Gold Coast, the Bight of Benin, the Bight of Biafra, and West-central Africa (western coast of the continent south of Cape Lopez).

the coast (ibid.: vii). The Gold Coast had a natural, rocky coastline which provided a solid foundation for the forts and castles that were constructed to facilitate and protect trade relations between Europeans and Africans. In contrast to the coastline of the Gold Coast, neighboring areas had lagoons and mangrove swamps, so there was poor access to the interior (ibid.: 3). Furthermore, the Gold Coast's irregular, rocky coast provided many natural harbors, capes, and bays, allowing for easier entry inland than the dangerous rocky reefs in other parts of the Guinea Coast (ibid.: viii).

Prince Henry 'the Navigator', nephew of King John I of Portugal, wanted to expand his holdings in the unknown world to gain direct access to Africa's sources of gold (van Dantzig 1980: 1-2). In 1469, Fernão Gomes and his men set out to explore one hundred leagues of coastline each year for five years in exchange for leasing "the enterprise of Africa" from Alfonso V. Before the contract expired, they had reached Cape Lopez (now in Gabon). In 1471, Gomes' men reached the part of the African coastline that appeared to be the most favorable for trade—large amounts of gold could be acquired in exchange for relatively little merchandise. The first transaction of this kind happened at the mouth of the Prah River, where local Africans likely traded in alluvial gold.

São Jorge da Mina/Elmina Castle

Since so much gold was for sale in this area, the Portuguese thought that the gold mines must be very near to the coast, coining the area *Mina de Ouro* or 'the gold-mine' (van Dantzig 1980: 2). Later, the area came to be known as Elmina. Trade there concentrated on a place called *Aldea das Duas Partes*, the 'Village of Two Parts', at the mouth of the Benya lagoon. What eventually became Elmina was not an independent

state during the fifteenth century. Two different kingdoms occupied the land on either side of the lagoon at the time of the Portuguese arrival; Eguafo controlled the land to the west of the lagoon, and Fetu—centered at Efutu—occupied the area to the north and east (Feinberg 1989: 77). The historical foundation of Elmina is an area of contestation between some local African groups. While some Elmina oral traditions claim that the founder of Elmina was one Kwa Amankwaa—a member of the Eguafo royal family who came to Elmina to hunt, a Dutch map from 1629 documents the presence of both Fetu and Eguafo (DeCorse 2001: 39).

The Benya lagoon was one of the best natural harbors of the coast. Extensive barter in salt and gold took place here between coastal residents and those from the interior long before European contact; slaves were also prominent in trade between the Gold Coast and both the Grain Coast (Liberia) to the west and the Slave Coast (Benin) to the east (van Dantzig 1980: 3; Perbi 1992: 64). At this spot in 1482, the Portuguese built *São Jorge da Mina* (later called the Castle of St. George of the Mine and Elmina Castle) to protect their trade. This site was named after the patron-saint of Portugal and its establishment as a permanent trading post signaled a new phase of Portugal's economic interest in the region (Vogt 1974: 103; van Dantzig 1980: 5). The average annual gold deposited into the Lisbon treasury from Elmina was approximately 8,000 ounces during 1487-1489 and 22,500 ounces for the period 1494-1496 (Wilks 1982: 336). Traders from the interior showed much interest in the new manufactured goods from Portugal, and Mina soon developed into an important market, the preeminent post in Portugal's Atlantic empire, and the principle supplier of gold bullion to the world market (Vogt 1974: 103; Wilks 1982: 337).

Initially, however, the Portuguese desire to build a castle at Elmina was not well received by the local population. Caramansa, described in some sources as the king of Elmina, is said to have reasoned that the Europeans might not be content in this location because of the hot climate and difficulty in finding the luxuries to which they had been accustomed from Portugal, and that 'the passions that are common to us all' would inevitably cause disputes (van Dantzig 1980: 3-4). He concluded that it would be much better if both states simply continued trading as usual, allowing Portuguese ships to come and go but denying them from building a permanent trading structure (van Dantzig 1980: 4). When Diogo de Azambuja negotiated with Caramansa to secure permission to build São Jorge da Mina, the Portuguese promised to always offer protection to the people of Elmina (DeCorse 2001: 42). Though no document confirming this relationship exists today, when lands were released towards the construction of other forts along the Guinea Coast, 'notes' were drawn up stating that chiefs were entitled to collecting fees as ground rent from European tenants (Anquandah 1999: 18).

São Jorge da Mina was built in 1482 under the command of Diogo de Azambuja with the assistance of 600 men, including masons, carpenters, engineers, surveyors and soldiers. The Portuguese brought with them timber, cut stone, lime, bricks, nails, tiles, and tools. Setting the standard for the construction of subsequent forts, the castle was late medieval in design and housed cannons (Lawrence 1963: 104). São Jorge da Mina was made up of two fortified enclosures—one within the other—containing residential quarters, offices, workshops, store rooms for provisions and trade goods, open areas for the soldiers' drill and for artisans, and underground cisterns (Lawrence 1963: 25). The dominant feature of the 1482 structure was a two-story rectangular block, containing a

courtyard flanked by towers projecting from two or three of its corners. An immense courtyard extended in front of the rectangular block, which was protected by an enclosing wall (Lawrence 1963: 104). At an unspecified point in time, de Azambuja sent the surviving members of the construction expedition back to Portugal, with the exception of sixty men and three women and de Azambuja himself, who remained as governor (Lawrence 1963: 105). During the period of 1550-1637, the Portuguese replaced the castle's northern and western corners, the courtyard, and the north bastion to form a more defensible structure.

According to John Vogt, the earliest written extant record from Portuguese Mina is a document written by Lopo Soares de Albergaria, the outgoing captain general of São Jorge da Mina between 1495 and 1499 (1974: 103). Vogt's analysis of this primary source shows that between 1499 and 1529, two significant transformations took place: the garrison organization, personnel, and salaries shifted, and the extent of staff engaging in private trade in gold and slaves changed (Vogt 1974: 104). During Lopo Soares' tenure, the garrison fluctuated between 25 and 47 people, and when he handed over command to Fernão Lopes Correa in 1499, there were 32 Portuguese stationed at São Jorge (Vogt 1974: 104). Although few details surrounding this event are available, Elmina achieved its independence as a distinct chiefdom from Eguafu and Fetu in around the year 1514, with the assistance of the Portuguese (Feinberg 1989: 77).

As provision allowances for garrison personnel far exceeded the amount necessary for subsistence, the excess money was often invested in trade in gold and slaves. Vogt states that the greatest opportunity for Portuguese soldiers' personal gain was in the purchase and re-sale of slaves; however, the cash maintenance allowance was

later replaced by a ration of foodstuffs, as royal revenues from the gold trade were threatened at the beginning of the sixteenth century (107-8). As early as 1495, there was an active slave trade with the Portuguese colony of São Tome and with Benin. From the earliest times of Portuguese trade at Mina, African captives were brought from other parts of Guinea—especially from Benin (Vogt 1973: 94). Regardless of rank, every official at São Jorge da Mina was entitled to at least one captive as his personal servant, though the captain general had the right to pay each member of his private staff one ounce of gold in lieu of providing them with a personal slave (Vogt 1974: 108). The Lopo Soares document records slave sales and shipments of goods between Lisbon, São Tome, the Slave Rivers, and Benin, and states that merchandise—especially slaves—were purchased by African merchants and that representatives of the kings of Efutu (Fetu), Comany (Eguafo), and Benin paid the Portuguese visits at their posts (Vogt 1974: 109). These captives were used as porters transporting trade goods from the coast to the interior and as farmers clearing land in forest Akan society (Wilks 1982b: 464).

A ledger of Portuguese trade from 1529 to 1531 indicates that the trade goods on offer at São Jorge in order of importance were metal hardware, woven fabrics, slaves, and a miscellaneous grouping of wine, coris (blue beads), wooden chests, purses, and belts (Vogt 1973: 93). From the late fifteenth to the early sixteenth centuries, cloth amounted to 40 percent of Portuguese trade at São Jorge, metals were 37 percent, and slaves were 10 percent (Wilks 1982b: 464). Wilks (1982b) suggests that the Portuguese would not have been able to sell significant amounts of their trade goods at Elmina had they not

provided a steady supply of slaves (465).³ For a long time prior to the Portuguese presence in West Africa, Wangara middlemen brought European trade goods across the Sahara to West African consumers. Firearms were a novel commodity that had the potential to distinguish Portuguese commerce from Wangara commerce. At first, firearms were vigorously traded for gold at Elmina.

From the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, a papal decree forbade the Portuguese from trading in firearms because Christians feared that arms sold at Elmina might end up in Muslim hands (Fynn 1971: 17; Wilks 1982b: 464). A notable exception to this rule was the arming of those dwelling near Portuguese forts (Elmina, Shama, Axim, and until c. 1578, Accra) for protection against European rivals and hostile attacks by local rulers (Kea 1971: 186). Among these European rivals to the Portuguese monopoly were the Dutch, who began trading (including firearms) in the Gold Coast in 1591 and 1592. From 1593 to 1607, over two hundred Dutch ships visited the Gold Coast, typically carrying guns for trade (Kea 1971: 187). The main African exports to Europeans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were slaves, gold, and ivory; the dominant trade item at this time was slaves (Perbi 1992: 67). From the middle to the end of the seventeenth century, there was a dramatic expansion of the firearms trade in the Gold Coast; however, guns and gunpowder rarely found their way to northern markets (ibid.: 69). During this period, the Dutch, English, Swedish, Danish, and Brandenburgers required protection of their commercial establishments and jockeyed to expand their foothold, taking over European competitors whenever possible (Kea 1971: 188).

³ Scholars estimate that from 1500-1535, the Portuguese imported between ten and twelve thousand captives to Elmina, although this figure does not factor in those brought by smugglers and interlopers (Wilks 1982b: 465).

The Dutch Tenure of Elmina Castle

In 1637, the Dutch made their third attempt at overpowering the Portuguese at Elmina. They bombarded Elmina Castle from St. Jago hill, drove the Portuguese away, and maintained control of the castle until 1872. When the Dutch took over the castle, they made considerable changes to the façade and much of the interior. For example, they transformed the Portuguese church into an auction hall and built a new Dutch chapel within the castle. They also refurbished the north and west bastions and the riverside yard. Dutch reconstruction of the castle was completed around 1774, and during this time the total habitable space within the structure was 3,950 square meters (Anquandah 1999: 61). Slaves who were held awaiting shipment were housed in store rooms similar to those for holding goods, and it was not until the slave trade boomed that the Dutch built special prisons as slave dwellings (Lawrence 1963: 132).

Although the specific architectural history of the castles (see Lawrence 1963) is beyond the scope of this chapter, I find important discrepancies between popular knowledge presented during contemporary tours of the castles and the scholarly sources. For example, one of the archways to Elmina Castle opens through the outer wall approximately twenty feet above the beach. The width of this doorway has been reduced in relatively recent times with cement, leaving an opening only wide enough for one man to squeeze through. The popular belief is that slaves were lowered from this opening to the beach to be placed on ships and that the opening was made smaller to prevent slaves from escaping; however, Lawrence (1963) argues that this opening was used for the passage of goods, which were hoisted on a rope by a crane and windlass placed on top of the bastion (118).

Jean Barbot, an agent of the French African Company, wrote a first-hand account of his voyages along the Guinea Coast in the late seventeenth century (Lawrence 1961: 228). In 1682, he visited Elmina Castle for an Easter worship service at the Dutch chapel and commented:

This castle has justly become famous for beauty and strength, having no equal on all the coasts of Guinea. Built square with very high walls of dark brown stone so very firm that it may be said to be cannon-proof. On the land side it has two canals always furnished with rain or fresh water sufficient for the use of the garrison and the ships—canals cut in the rock by the Portuguese (by blowing up the rock little by little with gunpowder). The warehouses either for goods or provisions are very largely and stately always well furnished (qtd. in Anquandah 1999: 59-61).

Population Dynamics at Elmina

Although reliable population estimates are lacking, there is no doubt that Elmina was one of the largest—if not the largest—town on the Gold Coast in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, due in part to the gold and slave trades (Feinberg 1989: 85). During the Dutch period, the European garrison comprised over one hundred men and Elmina's population grew, especially directly to the west of the castle (DeCorse 2001: 36). Elmina witnessed an influx of Akan-speaking traders from the interior, and Africans from other areas came to Elmina either as captives from elsewhere in West Africa or as employees of the West India Company. A number of Gold Coast Africans (e.g. Kormantin, Fetu, Denkyira, Akim) sought Dutch permission for refuge in Elmina from rival ethnic groups. Typically, the Dutch permitted outside groups to settle in Elmina in exchange for an oath of allegiance and service to the Europeans (Feinberg 1989: 82). Captives living in Elmina were owned by some Elminans and by the West India Company and their employees. The extent of fraternizing between captives and Elminans is not known, but they were occasionally freed by the Dutch at the request of an Elminan or a European.

Most freed captives were women who were absorbed into the local Elminan community (Feinberg 1989: 83).

Europeans working for the Dutch West India Company came not only from the Netherlands, but also from what is now Belgium, France, and Germany. Many of the company's recruits—especially the military—were from lower class backgrounds and were relatively unskilled. Usually between eighty and one hundred European men lived in Elmina, typically in the castle or in Fort Coenraadsburg but a few in the town itself (Feinberg 1989: 85-6). In 1645, there were eighty-five Europeans at Elmina Castle, in addition to eighty-four slaves working for the Chartered Company, and one hundred captives who awaited the middle passage (Lawrence 1963: 49, 140). The Europeans were comprised of a garrison of sixty-nine officers, a governor, a treasurer, four traders, nine handicrafts managers, and a lay preacher who conducted religious services and dispensed medicine (Lawrence 1963: 140). Slaves were used for work inside and outside of the forts, and usually purchased on the Slave Coast and brought to Elmina; some may have been brought from the Gold Coast interior as well (Feinberg 1989: 83). Free Africans and Afro-Europeans were sometimes employed by the company, but very few jobs were available before 1750. By the end of the eighteenth century, the entire garrison was African or Afro-European; the West India Company increasingly turned to these individuals as a means of cutting costs and replacing those Europeans lost from illness (DeCorse 2001: 36; Feinberg 1969: 39-40).

This part of the Guinea Coast was known as 'whiteman's grave' because malaria, yellow fever, and dysentery were endemic and caused European deaths. Many Europeans stationed on the coast chose a lifestyle of excessive drinking, which

contributed to their short life spans. Typically, they lived in the forts four or five years before dying or leaving their posts (Anquandah 1999: 12). The Dutch and English regularly consumed alcohol to excess for social recreation leading to disorderly conduct. Few European women traveled to Africa and those who did typically did not survive for long. Predicant G. Verbeet sent his wife back to the Netherlands because of the “sexual pressures caused by the presence of this solitary white woman among so many men who had only African women to turn to for companionship” (Feinberg 1989: 86-7).

From the time the Portuguese established their fort in Elmina in 1482, European men and African women had sexual relations; their children were called the vernacular, ‘mulattoes’, but are referred to as ‘Afro-Europeans’ in scholarly sources. A large Afro-European population developed in Elmina in part because Portuguese men often lived in the town despite official disapproval from European officials (Feinberg 1989: 88). The English Company also permitted men to spend the night in town and bring women into the fort, but the Dutch were reprimanded for both practices and permitted men to leave the forts only during daylight when they were on duty (Lawrence 1963: 58-9). The Dutch Company’s Board in Amsterdam prohibited concubinage with local women, but in practice it was common. In 1700, the director general and members of the council ordered that Dutch men having children out of wedlock must take them back to Holland or provide “a proper sum for honest maintenance and Christian education” (qtd. in DeCorse 2001: 37). A communal house was built in Elmina for these children, who upon the age of five or six years would be separated from the Africans or the Europeans and educated in the art of letters, the foundation of economics, crafts, and the making of plantations (DeCorse 2001: 37). The other European trading companies accepted the

inevitability relationships between European men and African women, and generally provided Afro-European males with formal education and employment, training them from childhood into a company's service (Lawrence 1963: 64).

The majority of men working for the Dutch West India Company depended on African women for companionship and sex, and they sometimes married them under Dutch or Akan law. However, relationships between European men and African women generally included cohabitating without any customary or legal nuptial ties. The African women in these relationships were either free Akans or slave women personally purchased by an individual from traders or from the company. Some relationships continued as long as the man remained on the coast, as indicated by the bequests made to these women in the men's wills (Feinberg 1989: 89).

Feinberg (1989) has identified over 250 Afro-Europeans of Dutch descent. Of these 250, about seventeen percent of whom are women and roughly two-thirds of whom were born in Elmina (89). Afro-Europeans who had an Akan mother were absorbed into the mother's lineage, but those who had mothers from patrilineal groups or whose mothers were slaves were not as likely to be adopted into African families. Acceptance into the African community was especially important for Afro-European women, who employed by the West India Company (Feinberg 1989: 90). Beginning in the 1780s, Afro-Europeans had a choice of either integrating fully into Akan society, or accepting a new legal status (Feinberg 1989: 92). Choosing the latter exempted them from some traditional oaths and local laws. They could also choose to be part of the Afro-European voluntary association which had been established in Elmina. Regardless of their

leanings, Afro-Europeans in Elmina and elsewhere continued to be culture brokers and economic middlemen between European and African cultures in the nineteenth century.

The Rise of the Slave Trade

From the 1610s to the 1650s, the Dutch did not sell guns in the Gold Coast but would distribute them for defense purposes; however, the English would sell them or occasionally give them away as gifts to local merchants who opposed Dutch trade interests (Kea 1971: 189). The Dutch policy of only supplying arms to rulers with whom they had commercial and military agreements shifted in the latter half of the seventeenth century. From the 1680s to the 1700s, the Dutch were the leading supplier of arms to the Guinea Coast (Kea 1971: 195). According to Willem Bosman, an officer of the Dutch Chartered Company who resided on the Guinea Coast for fourteen years and wrote a first-hand account in 1704:

Perhaps you wonder how the Negroes come to be furnished with fire-arms, but you will have no reason when you know we sell them incredible quantities, thereby obliging them with a knife to cut our own throats. But we are forced to it; for it [sic] we would not, they might be sufficiently stored with that commodity by the English, Danes, and Brandenburgers; and could we all agree together not to sell them any, the English and Zeeland interlopers would abundantly furnish them. And since that gunpowder for some time hath been the chief vendible merchandise [on the Gold Coast], we should have found but an insufficient trade without our share in it (qtd. in Kea 1971: 194).

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the gold trade was surpassed by the slave trade on the Gold Coast. In February 1730, the Dutch West Indian Company director, Rademacher, wrote back to the Netherlands:

The Gold Coast has now virtually changed into a pure Slave Coast. The great quantity of guns and gunpowder which the Europeans have brought there has given cause to terrible wars among the kings, princes and caboceers of those lands who made their prisoners of war slaves. These slaves are bought at steadily increasing prices. Consequently, there is now very little trade among the coast Negroes except in slaves. The English send every year hundreds of

ships and the French, Danes and Portuguese send many too (qtd. in Anquandah 1999; 104).

The reasons for the increase in the slave trade on the Gold Coast included the increased demand for slaves on the sugar plantations of the New World, and the corresponding higher prices that African middlemen and raiders could demand (Fynn 1971: 15).

Trade in slaves was not carried out in isolation from trade with other commodities of the day, and this trade often took the form of bartering for a 'sorting'. A 'sorting' comprised a combination of commodities—such as textiles, weapons, tobacco, beads, alcohol, and metal hardware—that were valued in ounces of gold dust and exchanged for a slave. After the defeat of the Akyem in the latter half of the eighteenth century, both the Fante and the Asante had large numbers of war prisoners to sell; however, the Fante reportedly held onto these prisoners until the prices of slaves increased sufficiently (Fynn 1971: 100). Male captives were more expensive than females and prices fluctuated with the supply and bargaining power of Africans. In March 1755, Cape Coast governor, Thomas Melvil, noted that the price of slaves at Anomabu had increased from a seven to eight and one half ounce sorting in 1740 to a ten ounce sorting in 1755 (Reese 1999: 226). In September 1766, slave prices increased to eleven ounces per male and nine ounces per female, but by August 1767, prices decreased to nine and seven ounces, respectively (ibid.: 227). In October 1780, Cape Coast Castle governor, John Roberts, reported to the African Committee that a male slave could be purchased for an eight ounce sorting containing:

one Knipes Halfsay [a heavily twilled fabric] (coastal value 10s.), one Soot and one 'Mixt' Romaul [silk or cotton textile squares usually from India] (combined 12s.), one ounce of gunpowder (£1), one gun and one Chelloe [striped or checked plain weave of calico often used for slave pants and usually from India] (combined £1), one Bejutapaut and one Neganepaut [East

India piece goods] (combined £1 4s.), one cotton (8s.), four lead bars (2s.), two Guinea Stuffs [coarse piece goods used for clothing] (4s.), four brass pans and two kegs of tallow [animal fat used in making soap] (combined 10s.), eight gallons of brandy (£1), and one Half-cotton and one Silesia [linen] (combined 6s.) (qtd. in Reese 1999: 224).

However, some Gold Coast Africans, such as the Akwamu traders, refused European manufactured goods and demanded gold for their slaves. African traders' refusal to accept European goods sometimes resulted in tensions and threats. In 1729, for example, an agent for the English Royal African Company instructed personnel at Cape Coast Castle that the gold they had purchased in Whydah was not to be sold in Cape Coast and that if the native traders would not accept English goods, then they should keep their slaves (Fynn 1971: 15).

By 1813, the eastern boundary of Elmina stretched to the Sweet River, approximately three miles east of the main town. The main residence for the majority of Elminans, however, remained the area around the peninsula until June 13, 1873, when the British bombarded and destroyed the town after acquiring Elmina Castle from the Dutch, and began to impose their authority over Elminans (Feinberg 1989: 77).

Cape Coast Castle

In 1555, the Portuguese began organized trade at what they called *Cabo Corso*, 'Short Cape', which was later corrupted by the English into 'Cape Coast'. However, the traditional vernacular name for Cape Coast is *Oguaa*, which comes from the Fante word (*gua*) for 'market'. While the Portuguese enjoyed a trade monopoly in Elmina, there was open trade at Cape Coast, which drove down prices. Even though trade flourished in this area, there is no evidence for any European building construction there until the middle of the seventeenth century (Hyland 1995: 165).

Heindrick Caerlof, a Polish-born mercenary, worked for a number of different European trading companies (the Dutch West India Company, the Swedish Africa Company, and the Danish East and West India Company) in the mid to late seventeenth century and is generally credited with establishing the first substantial trade lodge at Cape Coast in 1652. Caerlof and the Swedes built Fort Carolusburg, named after King Charles X of Sweden. In 1655, Caerlof drew up a treaty with Boodema, the king of Fetu, which ceded the coast to the Swedish Africa Company to “build forts, lodges, and houses” while attempting to undermine English efforts of establishing forts at Cape Coast (Daaku 1970: 62).

During the next eleven years, the Danes, Swedes, Dutch, English, and local Fetu chief fought with one another to capture Fort Carolusburg. In 1672, King Charles II of England granted a new charter to the Royal African Company for developing trade on the Guinea Coast, which spurred the expansion of trade in gold and slaves (Anquandah 1999: 49). English traders gave two pounds of gold, thirty muskets, and some gunpowder to the caboceers of Fetu in exchange for permission to build a lodge at Cape Coast (Kea 1971: 190). Africans owned the land on which this structure was built, and European residents were required to pay rent (Priestley 1969: 7). The British preserved roughly three quarters of Fort Carolusburg, and built a much larger enclosure to secure their fortification, which eventually came to be known as Cape Coast Castle.

In some cases, slave ships traded at multiple ports within the same region (e.g. within Senegambia, Sierra Leone, Windward Coast, Gold Coast, Bight of Benin, Bight of Biafra, West-central Africa, or South-east Africa). It was less common for ships to trade at more than one region, but for those that did and began buying slaves in Senegambia,

Sierra Leone, or the Windward Coast, the larger balance of their purchases was made at either the Gold Coast or the Bight of Benin (Eltis et al. 1999: 23). For example, ships trading along the coast had an average of 21.8 percent of their final numbers on board before acquiring the bulk of their captives on the Gold Coast (ibid.).

In 1682, Barbot described the structure of Cape Coast Castle after it had been enlarged by the English Royal African Company:

[The castle has]...four flankers and a large platform, on which are mounted thirteen pieces of cannon, being about eight-pounders, pointing on the road and passage up to it; which can easily hinder any enemies ships anchoring there...On the battlements are ten guns, and twenty-five on the flankers, from a minion [supporting structure] to nine-pounders; and on a rock called Tabora, twenty paces from the castle, are four or six twelve-pounders in a round tower, garrisoned by about as many men; which serves to keep the Blacks in the town in better awe, as well as to defend them from all other Blacks their enemies, that come from the inland country...The lodgings and apartments within the castle are very large and well-built of brick, having three fronts which with the platform on the south almost make a quadrangle answering to the inside of the walls and form a very handsome place-of-arms, well-paved; under which is a spacious mansion or place to keep the slaves in, cut out of the rocky ground, arched and divided into several rooms so that it will conveniently contain a thousand blacks let down at an opening made for the purpose. The keeping of the slaves underground is a good security to the garrison against any insurrection” (qtd. in Lawrence 1963: 184-5).

It is important to note that the architecture of these sites changed dramatically through time, and they began to resemble castle-fortresses instead of trade lodges because they had to defend European trade from competing European trading companies, each of which formed trade alliances with local populations. From 1766 to 1773, the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa—responsible for the administration of British forts—rehabilitated the castle and gave it its contemporary form. This castle was built from locally quarried sandstone on an irregular polygon design. The eighteenth century castle had a large pentagonal courtyard overlooking the ocean, with one long side and two short

sides enclosed by low curtain walls on the seaward side, two landward sides containing three story buildings, and a bastion located at each of its five corners (Anquandah 1999: 49).

The habitable accommodation of Cape Coast Castle was 3,900 square meters (Anquandah 1999: 49). Administration of the forts and castles in the Gold Coast fell upon the director general of a particular European trading company. He was typically assisted by a council, a chief merchant, a bookkeeper, a works superintendent, a chaplain, a physician, and a school teacher. Additionally, merchants, nurses, cooks, tailors, masons, carpenters, and soldiers contributed to the normal functioning of the castles. Apart from the Europeans stationed in Cape Coast and Elmina castles in the eighteenth century, up to one thousand captives could be housed at each castle at any one time. In 1796 a nominal roll noted the relative make-up of the castle: sixteen officers, ten subordinates (non-commissioned officers or artisans and the butler), twenty-five soldiers and bandsmen (playing drums and fifes), three bell boys, seventy-five male slaves performing specialized duties and ten unfit for service (apparently elderly or infirm), eighty-two women slaves for general labor and seven unfit, and their numerous children (Lawrence 1963: 194).

Priestley (1969) notes that the forts and castles on the Gold Coast in the eighteenth century may convey the impression that Europeans were disassociated from local Africans and were more self-sufficient than they really were (7). Even though Cape Coast Castle had a European garrison and staff for administration, trade, and defense, they relied on the local African population to provide canoemen, domestic service, and general labor. African castle slaves and servants typically lived in nearby houses and

provided domestic services, loaded and unloaded ships, and served as canoe men, interpreters, or artisans. Other Africans made regular visits to the castles to trade (Anquandah 1999: 12).

As middlemen in trade, the Fante wielded considerable control over daily operations of whether commodities were traded at all, and the value for items traded. Richard Brew, registrar at Cape Coast Castle with the Royal African Company who later commanded forts at Tantumkweri (east of Cape Coast) and Dixcove (west of Cape Coast) before becoming an independent trader, reported that in 1770 slaves were scarce and dear (Priestley 1969: 76). After three months, one of his ships had still not found half a cargo. Instead of increasing the supply of captives available for external trade, at times intertribal warfare led to a halt in trade—especially from the 1740s to the 1770s. Disruption in the slave trade was one reason that fort personnel spent so much time and money in mediating local disputes. European merchants often complained about the high price of slaves, attributed to African middlemen's shrewd business sense and the highly competitive nature of European trade (Priestley 1969: 76).

In contrast to their Portuguese counterparts in the late fifteenth century, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the personnel (including white and black wage laborers, canoe men, and castle slaves) of the British Company of Merchants Trading to Africa were forbidden to trade slaves and were paid in alcohol and other commodities rather than money (Reese 1999: 230). Paying wages in alcohol created conflict in Cape Coast during the tenure of Governor Melvil, when numerous fights broke out between company servants, European and African workers, and among Africans (Reese 1999: 235).

Archaeological excavations of Cape Coast Castle in 1996 revealed the structural remains of the seventeenth and eighteenth century Swedish and English brick fortress under the modern castle's courtyard. Among the artifacts unearthed were hundreds of red bricks, roof tiles, imported European pottery, glass beads, liquor, perfume, ointment bottles, gun parts, local pottery and milling stones, bones of cows, sheep, goats, chickens, turkeys, geese, fish, mollusks, and graves of English officers (Anquandah 1999: 49). Circumstantial evidence from excavations at Cape Coast Castle suggests that captives held there ate food from all these animals and Danish records show that captives were given rations of beans as well as meat, and that tobacco was given to slaves to 'drive away melancholia' (Simmonds 1973: 267). Schnapps, gin, and wine bottles and smoking pipes were common artifacts from archaeological excavations of forts in Ghana (Anquandah 1999: 12).

Some of the results of excavations at Cape Coast Castle appear to be at odds with Barbot's first-hand account. According to archaeologist Simmonds (1973), the contemporary 'dungeons' at Cape Coast Castle were used for a longer period of time as store rooms than as prisons for housing captives; the dungeons are believed to have been used for this purpose for a period of only thirty years, from 1777 to 1807 (267). Barbot's account, on the other hand, says that the dungeons were used to hold captives for much longer.

Archaeological findings diverge from contemporary information provided on Cape Coast Castle guided tours too. Tour guides often describe captives held in the dungeons as being chained together, to the wall, or to an iron ball. However, during excavations of Cape Coast Castle, no iron shackles, pins, stakes, or fixing points for

chains that could be directly linked to confining slaves have been found (Simmonds 1973: 268). Tour guides report that captives were held up to three months in Cape Coast or Elmina castles. This information conforms with captains' records and log books which show that a ship could take up to three or four months to get a full cargo of slaves and means that some captives were kept in Cape Coast Castle and other forts for at least this long (Simmonds 1973: 268).

Dutch/Asante/Elminans and British/Fante Relations

Europeans protected their forts from both landward and seaward, from attacks initiated by other European companies as well as by local Africans who sometimes colluded with European rivals. The Dutch—with the support of local Africans—based their bombardment of the Portuguese in 1637 from Ft. St. Jago, located on top of a hill overlooking São Jorge da Mina. There were several instances between the 1660s and the 1780s, when the Dutch and English—each with their own respective African allies—fought one another for control of Fort Amsterdam at Cormantin (east of Cape Coast) (Lawrence 1963: 245). Despite periodic policies of 'non-alignment' between European companies and African peoples, in general the Dutch formed strong alliances with Elminans and Asante, and the English allied themselves with the Fante.

During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the Asante state developed from a loose confederation of Akan polities. Under the leadership of Osei Bonsu (1800-1824), it stretched from Gonja in the north to the coast. Some of the conquered states exercised considerable autonomy but paid an annual tribute to the Asantehene and had to allow an Asante military governor to reside locally (van Dantzig 1980: 68). In 1807, the British declared the slave trade to be illegal; by this time, the

Asante had become the main suppliers of slaves on the Gold Coast (Fynn 1971: 146).

The domestic trade in slaves continued to thrive until its legal abolition in 1874 in the Asante Region and after 1908 in the Northern Territories (Perbi 1992: 64).

Because of conflicts over the slave trade, it became more difficult for the Asante and British to maintain peaceful relations. During this period, the Netherlands had not yet outlawed the slave trade and continued officially dealing in slaves for several more years. The Elminans angered other coastal Africans when they improved their relations with the Asante, who had designs on expanding their empire along the coast. Asante victories over non-allied coastal peoples resulted in a ready supply of captives, and the Elminans caught fugitives to sell to the Dutch (Lawrence 1963: 168). While the Elminan-Asante alliance was tacitly supported by the Dutch, the British allied themselves with the Fante against the Asante during the nineteenth century. Asante expeditions of 1811 and 1816 contributed to the conquest of the coastal peoples, and then an Asante 'Regional Commissioner' was sent to live in Abora Dunkwa in the Fante territory (Fynn 1971: 146). A number of Anglo-Asante disputes erupted, notable among them being a defeat of the British and the coastal peoples at Nsamankow in Wassa in 1824 and the defeat of the Asante by the British and their allies at Dodowa in 1826 (Fynn 1971: 146).

The British administration at Cape Coast Castle shifted somewhat over the years. In 1750, the Royal African Company was replaced by the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa, which took control of the forts in 1752 (van Dantzig 1980: 58). In 1821, the British crown succeeded the Company of Merchants and appointed Charles MacCarthy as governor (van Dantzig 1980: 70). The British wanted 'legitimate trade' in palm oil to displace the slave trade. During this time, the Dutch considered whether or

not revisiting their trade in gold would be profitable. In 1828, because of declining profits, the British government decided to discontinue its dealings in the Gold Coast. Cape Coast merchants implored the British to revive trade, and eventually a parliamentary act placed the British forts in the Gold Coast under the authority of a Committee of London Merchants (van Dantzig 1980: 70). Captain George Maclean (sometimes incorrectly referred to as ‘governor’ by tour guides) was selected as ‘president’ of the Committee of London Merchants and served a number of roles while residing at Cape Coast Castle from 1830-1842 (Hyland 1995: 169). In carrying out the role of judicial assessor, for example, he would help settle local ‘palavers’ or court cases by applying British law. The Merchant Committee was so successful under Maclean that in 1843 the British crown again took over (van Dantzig 1980: 71).

The Bond of 1844 was the formal agreement between the regional chiefs and the British crown—represented by Governor H.W. Hill—which recognized British authority over the Fante and coastal states. ‘The Bond’ marked the beginning of British colonization of the Gold Coast. Later the colonial office sought to administer the colony, defending it against Asante invasions, and maintaining its forts (van Dantzig 1980: 71). However, the Fante—who had been long-time allies with the British—were circumspect about granting them too much power. The Fante Confederation, active from 1868 until 1873, was a union of Fante engaged in self defense and self government. The constitution of the Fante Confederation was signed in November 1871 and proposed that administration be carried out by chiefs and “educated gentlemen” in a legislature which was to share power with an executive council (Getz 2004: 97). The constitution identified defense, modernization, and development among its goals and stated that

though European models of state-building were desirable, Britain could not be trusted to carry out such projects (Getz 2004: 97).

In 1867, the Dutch and British agreed to divide up their holdings on the Gold Coast so that each merchant company would control a continuous stretch of land. All forts and castles to the east of the Sweet River were to be British and all those to the west of it were to be Dutch. Each company vacated the forts in the other's zone without consulting the Africans involved, some of whom were militantly opposed to Dutch control (Feinberg 1976: 621). The people of Dixcove, for example, were resistant to being placed under Dutch authority (Getz 2004: 96). Eventually this tension and the expenses of maintaining trade led the Dutch to negotiate their withdrawal from the Gold Coast with the English.

In 1872, a treaty was signed stipulating that the Dutch cede all their possessions on the Gold Coast to Britain in exchange for a cash sum (£3,790 1s. 6½d.) and the transfer of some British claims in Sumatra given to the Netherlands (van Dantzig 1980: 73). However, when the British assumed control of the castle at Elmina, the local Elminan population—who had been allied with the Dutch and the Asante—refused to acknowledge the authority of the British. Furthermore, the Asantehene adamantly objected to the Dutch giving up what he considered his own possession at Elmina where Asante claimed to have collected ground rent from the Dutch—the so-called 'Elmina note'—since 1701.

In the 1870s, Cape Coast Castle housed military stores and served as the headquarters of the West Indian Regiment, comprised largely of Jamaicans, who the British recruited to help fight the Asante (Anquandah 1999: 50). In June 1873, the

Asante defeated the Fante at the coast, and the British responded by proclaiming martial law in Elmina and ordering the surrender of all arms at Elmina castle (DeCorse 2001: 30). The British bombarded and leveled part of Elmina, and the area lying just west of the castle was never rebuilt. Though no Elminans died in the bombardment of the town, roughly two hundred Asante were killed in related fighting and the attack was devastating to Elmina's economic importance (Decorse 2001: 31, 43).

In 1874, the Treaty of Fomena was drawn up in which the Asantehene relinquished jurisdiction over the states in the area south of the Prah and Offin rivers—then known as the Gold Coast Colony—and promised to maintain open trade routes, to abolish human sacrifice, and to pay an indemnity of 50,000 ounces of gold (van Dantzig 1980: 78). By the 1890s, neither Asantehene Prempeh I nor his predecessors had paid the gold required (50,000 oz) in the Fomena treaty. As a result, he and members of his royal family were brought to Elmina castle, where they were held as prisoners inside the square towers on top of the seaward bastions for four years before being exiled to Sierra Leone and the Seychelles until 1931 (van Dantzig 1980: 78).

The Decline of Elmina and Cape Coast

Some argue that the reason why Cape Coast developed as the principal town in the region is due to the landscape of the hills in and around Cape Coast that spread out in all directions towards the hinterland and not to the dominance of the British over the Dutch in the nineteenth century (Hyland 1995: 164). Regardless of the reason for the advancement of Cape Coast, its eminence was relatively short-lived. In 1877, the colonial government was transferred from its headquarters in Cape Coast Castle to Accra, and the economy and prestige of Cape Coast as a commercial center never recovered

(Hyland 1995: 170). Another reason why the economy of Cape Coast declined was that Sekondi and Takoradi replaced Cape Coast as important ports for the gold and timber trades.

However, the reputation of Cape Coast as a focal point for education remained. The castles and forts along the Guinea Coast laid the foundation for Christian missionization and Western-styled education. The first schools were established from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries within Elmina and Cape Coast castles. In the first half of the eighteenth century, Johannes Capitein, a native of the Gold Coast, was trained in the Dutch Reformed Church and served as chaplain and school teacher in Elmina Castle. In the early 1750s, the Anglican Minister Thomas Thompson arranged for Philip Quaque, a young man from Cape Coast, to receive ministerial training in England by the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. In 1766, Quaque became the first chaplain and school master of Cape Coast Castle (Lawrence 1963: 63). He is one of four individuals, along with George Maclean and his wife, with a marked grave in its courtyard. The establishment of the Wesleyan Mission Headquarters in Cape Coast in 1835 furthered the town's reputation as a center for education (Hyland 1995: 172). Cape Coast is home to Mfantshipim, the first secondary school in Ghana established in 1876, as well as a handful of other nationally-renown and coveted secondary schools.

Elmina and Cape Coast castles have served many purposes since the colonial government was transferred to Accra. Cape Coast Castle housed military stores during the two world wars (1914-18 and 1939-45). In the 1960s, the Ghana Public Works Department was the last to use the castle for storage (Simmonds 1973: 269). After Ghana's independence in 1957, Elmina Castle housed the Ghana Police Recruit Training

Centre and the Edinaman Secondary School (Anquandah 1999: 61). In 1972, the Ghana Museum and Monuments Board took over the management of Ghana's forts and castles. In 1979, Elmina Castle, Cape Coast Castle, and Ft. St. Jago were named UNESCO World Heritage sites and now attract thousands of visitors annually. The next chapter will describe this transformation from warehouse to revered cultural monument.

Chapter 3: Ghana's Tourism Industry and PANAFEST & Emancipation Day

Background History

This chapter provides a substantive overview of Ghana's tourism industry. By focusing on the development of pilgrimage tourism in Ghana's Central Region, I describe how successful planners are in promoting the goals of helping the economy and fostering unity between Africans and people of African descent outside of the continent. Is Ghana just using Pan-African political rhetoric to appeal to diaspora Africans? What are the motivations for promoting PANAFEST (Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival) and Emancipation Day, two Pan-African oriented festivals celebrated in Ghana since the 1990s?

Like many other countries of the so-called developing world, Ghana has turned to tourism as a way to invigorate the economy and earn foreign currency while promoting cultural heritage resources. Tourism is now the world's largest and fastest growing industry (Lanfant, et al. 1995), and stakeholders in Ghana are interested in tapping into its potential. Tourism is the third highest provider of foreign exchange in the Ghanaian economy and contributes 6.7% to GDP (Mensah 2004). Ghana earned \$340 million from the tourism sector in 1999, optimistically projected to rise to \$1.5 billion by 2010 (Quaicoo 2000). Ghana's *Tourism Development Plan* for 1996-2010 was drawn up within the policy framework of Vision 2020, Ghana's long-term plan for national development (Ministry of Tourism, et al. 1996: 344). Vision 2020 says that by the year 2020, Ghana should have achieved a balanced economy and a middle-income country standard of living. Vision 2020 states:

This will be realized by creating an open and liberal market economy, founded on competition, initiative and creativity, that employs science and

technology in deriving maximum productivity for the use of all our human and natural resources and in optimizing the rate of economic and social development, with due regard to the protection of the environment and to equity in the distribution of the benefits of development (qtd. in *ibid.*: 29).

Tourism is identified by Vision 2020 as an important opportunity for economic development based on the natural, historic, and cultural resources of the country. The plan specifies 10% as the goal for the annual growth rate in the services sector, which includes tourism (*ibid.*: 41). Ghana's 15-year *Tourism Development Plan* proposes improving the tourism infrastructure and promoting private investments in the tourism sector. The plan targets making tourism Ghana's second largest source of foreign exchange and international tourist arrivals of 400,000 by the year 2000; by 2010, tourism is supposed to draw one million visitors and be the number one source of foreign exchange (Mathew 1997). The plan itself was financed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and developed in consultation with the World Tourism Organization (WTO).

Tourism Structure and Responsibilities

According to Ghana's Ministry of Tourism (MOT), tourism stakeholders include the government, private investors and developers, local communities, tourism industry enterprises and their employees, and the tourists themselves (Ministry of Tourism, et al. 1996: 320). The MOT is the centralized governmental body responsible for outlining national tourism initiatives. The general standpoint of the MOT is that since tourism development in Ghana is in its early stages, a more centralized approach is required to make the most of resources and to insure that development is balanced. Once the foundation for sustainable and integrated tourism development is maintained, a more decentralized policy can be adopted. In 1997, Ministry officials encouraged integrated

regional development of tourism, while outlining projects to attract more international tourists to Ghana (Kyei-Boateng 1997). Even though the tourism industry in Ghana has been centralized through the Ministry of Tourism, tourism initiatives have been carried out at the regional and district levels, involving both the public and private sectors. Numerous organizations have a hand in Ghana's tourism industry and their relative responsibilities have shifted over time and between projects. After describing some of their general features, I will focus on clarifying the duties of those organizations which have been involved in pilgrimage tourism in Ghana's Central Region.

The Ministry of Tourism (MOT) was established in March 1993, when tourism was regarded as a high enough priority to merit its own ministry, instead of being subsumed under the Ministry of Trade and Tourism (Ministry of Tourism, et al. 1996: 326). However, in March 2003, the MOT was reconfigured as the Ministry of Tourism and Modernization of the Capital City. Media reports at the time criticized this and similar moves as political maneuvers that led to unnecessary confusion. It restructured some of the ministries and shifted personnel in key positions. For example, the former Minister of Information and Presidential Affairs was now to serve as the Minister of Tourism and Modernization of the Capital City. When the MOT operated as a distinct entity, its primary responsibilities were: (1) policy formation for the promotion of domestic, regional, and international tourism; (2) legislation and regulations on tourism development; (3) tourism research and statistics collection; (4) collaborating with other relevant governmental agencies, international associations, international donors, and the private sector; and (5) supervision of tourism development (ibid.: 327). The newly reconfigured Ministry of Tourism and Modernization of the Capital City was supposed to

promote human resource development within the private and public sectors towards furthering tourism, to coordinate the modernization of Accra—especially in terms of improving its sanitation and infrastructure—and to monitor and evaluate sector performance (Ministry of Tourism and Modernization of the Capital City 2005).

The Ghana Tourist Board (GTB) was established in 1973 and has offices in each of Ghana's ten administrative regions; it is the primary implementation body for tourism policy handed down by the MOT (Ministry of Tourism, et al. 1996: 329). Regional managers of the Ghana Tourist Board represent the MOT and the chief executive of GTB at the regional level. The operational functions of GTB include: (1) quality assurance: inspecting hotels, restaurants, and tour operators and monitoring their quality to ensure that proper standards are met; (2) marketing and promoting tourism plans: projecting an image of tourism resources in the region to other organizations, businesses, or tourists; (3) collecting and disseminating statistics on such areas as arrivals at attractions, hotels, and restaurants, nationalities of tourists, and how the tourism sector contributes to the national economy; and (4) assisting in both carrying out and informing the national and regional objectives of tourism development in Ghana. In the Central Region, GTB officers coordinate with other tourism-related agencies, including (but not limited to) the district assemblies, the Ghana Museum and Monuments Board (GMMB), the Ghana Wildlife Department, the Ghana Heritage and Conservation Trust (an NGO), the Department of Geography and Tourism at the University of Cape Coast, the Ghana Hotels Association, and Ghana Restaurants Association.

In 1968, Ghana was the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to form a national committee of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) (Hyland

1994: 2). ICOMOS is committed to international architectural and archaeological conservation and provides technical assistance with conservation efforts in “developing” countries. The personnel of the Ghana Committee of ICOMOS and the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB) overlap, as does their interests in conserving historical sites. In 1969, the government established GMMB by uniting the existing Museums Commission and Relics Commission (Quainoo 1994: 2). Operating in tandem under the aegis of the GMMB, the Museums Division has been responsible for the establishment and maintenance of museums, while the Monuments Division identifies national monuments and structures of historical and architectural significance. GMMB, headquartered in Accra at the National Museum of Ghana, has a regional branch in Cape Coast. This organization is responsible for the conservation of historic sites and monuments—including all of the forts and castles—and managing Ghana’s museums. The museum educators and tour guides at Cape Coast and Elmina castles are hired by GMMB, which is responsible for planning, supervision, and coordinating operations.

The challenges of a lack of funding and shortage of trained personnel willing to work for available wages posed a formidable task for the conservation of Cape Coast and Elmina castles. In 1989, the Central Region Integrated Development Program (CERIDEP) was initiated and the Central Regional Administration appealed for assistance from the Ghana Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MFEP), UNDP, and USAID. That same year, a delegation of Ghanaian governmental officials led by Regional Secretary, Ato Austin, visited the U.S. to request assistance in implementing CERIDEP. The delegation met with representatives of five U.S.-based organizations: Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities Incorporated (MUCIA), the

U.S. chapter of ICOMOS (USICOMOS), the Smithsonian Institution (SI), Conservation International (CI), and the Debt for Development Foundation (DDF). The Central Regional Administration, in conjunction with the above organizations, secured a \$5.6 million grant from USAID to support CERIDEP for natural resource conservation at Kakum National Park and Assin Attandanso Resource Preserve, and the historic preservation of Elmina and Cape Coast castles and Ft. St. Jago (MUCIA 1994). The regional government and its international partners helped develop museums and interpretive services, and market these sites as tourist destinations. They also facilitated professional training of Ghanaian staff, provision of equipment, construction costs for site preservation, research funds, and established a trust fund with \$250,000 in seed capital to ensure continued historic preservation and maintenance (ibid.). Apart from the USAID grant, \$3.6 million in technical assistance was provided through a UNDP grant and 907 million cedis was allocated by the Ghana government for broader aspects of CERIDEP beyond those covered by the USAID grant.

The Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities was responsible for administering the USAID grant and providing overall project coordination. Under MUCIA's supervision, each organization had its own specialized function. Conservation International dealt with natural resource conservation; the Smithsonian Institution with the development of museums and interpretive services; USICOMOS with historic preservation; the University of Minnesota's Tourism Center with tourism promotion and marketing; CEDECOM with providing limited financial and administrative services; and local contractors with construction and technical services.

In 1990, the Central Regional Administration set up the Central Regional Development Commission (CEDECOM) to promote integrated development in the region, and tourism development was prominently featured. Within the framework of CERIDEP, CEDECOM implemented the project through three governmental agencies. The Ghana Game and Wildlife Department was responsible for nature conservation; the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board handled historic preservation and the development of museums and interpretive services; and the Ghana Tourist Board covered promotion and marketing.

The National Commission on Culture (NCC) is another government agency based in Accra with regional branches. It has been very active in the Central Region, collaborating with the MOT and GTB in conservation programs at Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle. The NCC has been the driving force behind some PANAFESTs and NARFACs (National Festival of Arts and Culture). Money to refurbish the castles came from the Ghanaian government, USAID, and UNDP. MUCIA helped to administer funds from USAID, which were restricted to developing tourism in the Central Region. USAID and MUCIA—whose role in this project was later taken over by Conservation International—wanted Ghana to develop its own organization for overseeing its heritage resources.

The Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust (GHCT) was the product of this vision, which received a grant from USAID, with the understanding that it would eventually be self-sufficient in funding. GHCT, though headquartered in Cape Coast, is responsible for all of the regions of Ghana. Its role within the Central Region is to raise funds through grant writing in order to maintain Kakum National Park, forts, and castles. GHCT

allocates funds according to the following ratio: 20% to GHCT administration, 40% to historic preservation, including forts and castles, and 40% to Kakum National Park.

Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust has an anomalous position among Ghana's tourism organizations, in that it functions as an NGO and is not regulated by the state, though it supports government-run initiatives.

Promotion of Roots Tourism

Ghana's Ministry of Tourism has targeted African Americans to come "home" in order to "get back to their African roots." The *National Tourism Development Plan for Ghana (1996-2010)* states, "Where it is known, the African-American market sees Ghana as the birthplace of its heritage..." (1996: 137). In 2003, 27,000 tourists arrived in Ghana from the U.S. and 10,000 of these were reportedly African Americans (Mensah 2004). At the University of Cape Coast's *Department of Geography and Tourism Week* held in November 2001, then-Deputy Minister of tourism—Nana Akomea—stated that Ghana is strong in the area of "slave tourism," but that it could be strengthened further. He claimed that six million African Americans earn at least \$600,000 or more per year and that they are Ghanaians' "natural brothers and sisters." This statement is a wild exaggeration but shows that Ghanaians perceive African Americans as wealthy and the diasporan group with the most economic capital.

In 1992, Selma Edwards, president of E-Z Tours of New York, said that Senegal dominates African American tourism to West Africa because of its ample supply of hotels and the relative ease of securing visas (Asmah 1992: 1). However, Edwards saw promising potential in Ghana, given its history and indigenous culture, the name of Kwame Nkrumah, and the W.E.B. DuBois Centre. She stated, "We have 40 million

African-Americans out there who can be enticed to come along on these tours. But we need to help each other” (qtd. in Asmah 1992: 1).

“Roots” tourism in Ghana is a delicate issue. Some of the African-descended peoples courted by the Ministry of Tourism do not want to be seen as tourists. Visiting Cape Coast and Elmina castles is a pilgrimage to sacred historical sites for some of these individuals, and they think that framing it as tourism cheapens the experience into a profane, secular activity (see Graburn 1989 [1977]). African Americans and others of African descent who come to Ghana view Ghana—more than any other country in West Africa—as a homeland. Some reason that because Ghana has the most forts and castles, it is likely that their ancestors came from or passed through this geographic area. Perhaps equally compelling, Ghana was the first sub-Saharan African country to gain independence in 1957, under the leadership of Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.

Nkrumah symbolized standing up in the face of adversity to combat colonialism and embracing Pan-Africanism as a solution to social and economic injustice. Nkrumah’s famous statement, “the liberation of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked up the liberation of all of Africa,” reveals his commitment to ending colonialism in other African countries. Kwame Nkrumah was educated in the U.S., lived in the U.K., and his vision of Pan-Africanism was global. After Ghana’s independence, he invited Africans in diaspora to come to Ghana in order to share their technical skills and knowledge towards the development of the nation and the continent as a whole. W.E.B. DuBois and George Padmore were among those who migrated to live in Ghana in the late 1950s and 60s at Nkrumah’s request. Today in Ghana, they are remembered for their role in

promoting Pan-Africanism. Public speeches of PANAFEST and Emancipation Day often invoke the names of Nkrumah, DuBois, and Marcus Garvey.

Background to PANAFEST

Since the 1990s, PANAFEST and Emancipation Day have been celebrated in Ghana and have attracted a growing number of diaspora Africans. The stated concept underlying PANAFEST is to promote Pan-Africanism and development of the African continent and is organized for “Africans and peoples of African descent as well as all persons committed to the well-being of Africans on the continent and in the diaspora” (PANAFEST 1997: 17). PANAFEST has two fundamental goals: to promote a shared sense of “African-ness” and to foster the economic development of Africa.⁴ In order to understand how PANAFEST’s aims and objectives inform practice, I will consider public speeches, discussions at colloquiums, representations of the festival in the media, and the thoughts of participants. I will discuss the background and history of PANAFEST and its connection to Emancipation Day.

PANAFEST ‘92

The Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival was first celebrated in 1992 as a biennial, week-long festival in Ghana. The idea originated with Dr. Efua Theodora Sutherland, a Ghanaian playwright and teacher who was married to an African American named William Sutherland, and developed out of her 1980 paper, “Proposal for a Historical Drama Festival in Cape Coast” (Anum 2003). This proposal was her vision for

⁴ PANAFEST’s stated aims are: (1) “establishing the truth about the history of Africa and the experiences of its people using the vehicle of African arts and culture;” (2) “providing a forum to promote unity between Africans on the continent and in the diaspora;” and (3) “affirming the common heritage of African peoples the world over and defining Africa’s contribution to world civilization” (PANAFEST 1997: 17). PANAFEST’s objectives are: (1) “to develop a framework for the identification and analysis of issues and needs, central to Africa’s development and to the improvement of the quality of life of her people;” (2) to encourage regular reviews of Africa’s developmental objectives, strategies and policies;” and (3) “to mobilize consensus on ends for the formulation of possible alternative options for development” (ibid.).

“uplifting and reuniting African peoples through the arts” and expressed her commitment to fostering connections between Africa and its diaspora (Anyidoho 1997 [1996]). As a loyal Pan-Africanist, she helped establish the W.E.B. DuBois Memorial Centre for Pan African Culture, the site of a mausoleum, museum, and library honoring DuBois.

In 1992, Sutherland’s kernel of an idea became actualized as the PANAFEST. In preparation for the event, there was a national playwriting competition, seminars, and workshops—all centered on Pan-Africanism. The first PANAFEST was held in Cape Coast, Elmina, and Accra from December 12-19, 1992 under the theme, “The Re-Emergence of African Civilization” (PANAFEST 1997: 17). Efua Sutherland addressed participants and said that the main goal of PANAFEST was to offer a forum for greater unity through the arts and culture of Africa and its diaspora (Sam 1992b).

Government officials, traditional chiefs, independent theater companies, musical groups, artists, intellectuals, activists, and tourists participated in PANAFEST ’92. It was the first international festival held in Africa to bring continental and diaspora Africans together since FESTAC ’77 (Second World Festival of Black Arts and Culture) in Lagos, Nigeria and the First World Festival of Black Arts and Culture in Dakar, Senegal in 1966 (Anikualpo 1999; Ofori-Ansa 2003). Representatives from the U.S., Zimbabwe, Togo, Benin, Jamaica, the Gambia, and the U.K. traveled to Ghana for the first PANAFEST. A number of events included in PANAFEST ’92 continue to be part and parcel of the biennial festival: musical, dance, and theatrical performances, a grand durbar of chiefs, a bazaar, a Pan-African colloquium, photographic and art exhibitions, and tours (Sam 1992a; Dadson 1992a). Cape Coast Castle served as the main venue for the festival, although the durbar and colloquium were held elsewhere in Cape Coast. Thomas

Segkura, the Pan-African Orchestra, Jermaine Jackson, and Public Enemy performed at “The Re-union” international concert in Accra (Dadson 1992a; PANAFEST 2004).

The principal organizers for PANAFEST '92 were: the National Commission on Culture, the Tourism Development Scheme for the Central Region (TODSCER) Ghana, the International Theatre Institute (ITI) Ghana Centre, and the University of Cape Coast (UCC) Ghana. In Cape Coast, a number of individuals were involved in planning the first PANAFEST: Secretary Sam Pee Yalley of Cape Coast Municipal Authority, Kwesi Agble of CEDECOM, Central Regional Director of CNC R.W. Hrisir-Quaye (chairman of the planning committee), Central Regional Manager of GTB J.D. Lomo-Mainoo (chairman of the hospitality committee), and Osabarima Kodwo Mbra V—Omanhene of Oguaa (Cape Coast) traditional area (Dadson 1992b).

The government of Ghana funded a major part of the festival until 1997, when it withdrew support and PANAFEST moved towards becoming a private foundation. Other significant sponsors of the first PANAFEST were the Organization of African Unity (OAU), UNESCO, the Commonwealth Foundation, USIS, the British Council, Alliance Francaise, and the Ghana Airways Corporation (Dadson 1992a).

Former president, J.J. Rawlings, officially opened PANAFEST '92 at the grand durbar of chiefs held at Cape Coast's Victoria Park and announced that the festival was a “great source of cultural enrichment of all Africans at home and abroad” (qtd. in PANAFEST 2004: 1). He said that PANAFEST should be considered a theatrical event for the portrayal of African history, culture, and traditions, but it should also include the opportunity for the continent to re-write her history through her own perspective, stating “for, until the lion learns to write its own story, history will continue to glorify the

hunter” (qtd. in Mensah 1992: 1). Rawlings emphasized that the event afforded Pan-Africanists the chance to take stock of the challenges facing Africans and for everyone to rededicate themselves to the cause of emancipation, unity, and sustainable development. He said that Africa should benefit from aiding in Europe’s advancement as a result of the slave trade and that the inequities of the global economic order need to be addressed (ibid.). According to Lieutenant General Arnold Quainoo, PANAFEST ’92 was “the first concerted effort to use the vehicle of theatre as a means of going back into history to unearth the hidden truth about Africans both at home and in the diaspora,” (qtd. in Asmah 1992: 1). Dr. Mohammed Ben Abdallah, Chairman of the National Commission on Culture, agreed and said that PANAFEST’s purpose was also “to provide a forum to promote unity between Africans on the continent and in the diaspora, and to affirm the common heritage of the Black and African peoples and define our contribution towards the development of the continent and toward civilization” (qtd. in Asmah 1992: 1). Abdallah proclaimed in his speech, “The sweat of the sons and daughters of Africa enriched and developed the lands of our oppressors, while Africa, home of the slaves, grew poorer and more under-developed” (qtd. in Sam 1992a: 1). A large contingent of traditional leaders—thirty-two paramount chiefs and their retinues—participated in the grand durbar of chiefs (ibid.). Barima Kwame Nkyi XII, president of the Central Regional House of Chiefs and paramount chief of Assin Apimanim Traditional Area (Assin Manso), gave a public speech in which he invited all “sons and daughters of Africa” as well as “those who went in pursuit of greener pastures” to come home to help build Ghana (qtd. in Dadson & Reynolds 1992a). Saying that Africa’s culture has never

disintegrated, despite suppression and colonization, he urged the youth in attendance to stop imitating other cultures that are foreign to Africans' way of life (Sam 1992a).

The musician, Isaac Hayes, urged all African Americans to “turn their hearts and minds to mother Africa” (Dadson & Reynolds 1992b). He said that his visit to the dungeons at Cape Coast and Elmina castles was an emotional experience which had instilled a “rebirth and commitment” to Africa. He affirmed, “I am now fully committed to the task of uniting all Africans in the diaspora,” and told the audience that he was raising funds for the preservation of slave dungeons in Ghana for the world to know what happened during the slave trade so that it would not be repeated (qtd. in Dadson & Reynolds 1992b). Although Hayes and Dionne Warwick pledged to solicit contributions for the refurbishment of Ghana's forts and castles, their promises were never fulfilled.

During the PANAFEST '92 colloquium, a number of identity politics issues were discussed. Lady Elean Gifford, a Jamaican Pan-Africanist poet and writer, proposed that a day be set aside for a candlelight vigil and pouring of libation in honor of the ancestors who were subjected to inhuman treatment before being sent away from Africa (ibid.); this ritual was performed at the conclusion of PANAFEST '92. Colloquium participants agreed that it should be recognized biennially as a special day to “commune with the ancestors” (Dadson & Reynolds 1992c). The issue of reparations for the slave trade is perennially addressed at PANAFEST and Emancipation Day events. Lord Anthony Gifford, a British human rights lawyer based in Jamaica, argued that reparations be paid to countries whose citizens were subjected to slavery. He stated that payments for crimes against humanity should be viewed as a demand for justice and not a handout of charity and described Cape Coast Castle as living testimony to the atrocities committed against

Africans and the Black race during the slave trade (Dadson & Reynolds 1992d). Yet another proposal that surfaced during the colloquium was to re-name the castles as dungeons. The reasoning was that as the slaves did not live in “what the whiteman called castles” but rather in dungeons and that the castles should therefore be called ‘slave dungeons’ (Dadson & Reynolds 1992e). The theme of PANAFEST ’92 itself, “Re-emergence of African Civilization,” was criticized at the forum. Some participants argued that African civilization was never submerged; it is simply that the world’s *understanding* of African civilization was now re-emerging. The organizers of PANAFEST defended the chosen theme by saying it related the impacts of the slave trade to its aftermath and modern consciousness (ibid.).

During PANFEST ’92, a delegation of forty African Americans from New York led by radio broadcaster Dr. Gary Byrd, Dr. Marcus Garvey, Jr. (son of Marcus Mosiah Garvey), Maria Farakhan (daughter of Minister Louis Farakhan), and musicians Isaac Hayes, Flavor Flav and Chuck D. visited Ghana and convened with President Rawlings and Dr. Ben Abdallah. During their meeting, the African American group urged Rawlings to consider offering dual Ghanaian citizenship for diaspora Africans, to renew the campaign for reparations, and to erect more monuments to the “African holocaust” (Nyinah 1992). Rawlings said that though he was personally in favor of granting them dual citizenship, the matter had to be considered carefully because of the danger of intelligence organizations of the West pitting Africans against one another (ibid.). Abdallah suggested that the solidarity of Jews all over the world was the result of a collective consciousness, which was utilized in establishing a strong Jewish state and in demanding reparations from the holocaust. He argued that in order to achieve the goals

of forging symbiotic economic, political, and cultural linkages between Africans and Africans in the diaspora, Ghana needed to continue some of the efforts first made by Kwame Nkrumah in developing a collective African consciousness.

This same delegation met with some traditional chiefs—including Osabarima Nana Kojo Mbra V. Dr. Marcus Garvey Jr. stressed the commitment of 150 million peoples of the African diaspora all over the world to return to Africa, and to Ghana in particular (African-American Leaders 1992). He called for chiefs throughout Ghana to release lands to diaspora Africans for development purposes, and proposed that the Ghana government ease travel restrictions for them. This delegation was honored at a durbar in Abandze, site of Fort Amsterdam. The event was conceptualized as a way for the African Americans to experience a pilgrimage and to reflect on the history of the slave trade. At the durbar, Kojo Sam, the Central Region's editor of the *People's Daily Graphic*, suggested an Abandze/New York Development Foundation as a bridge between Ghanaians and African Americans. Other sister city initiatives, such as one between Eguafo and Compton, have developed more recently to link Ghanaian towns with African American urban centers.

During the Abandze durbar, Gary Byrd was enstooled as *nkosuohene* (development chief) of the town (Orleans-Mends 1992). This is just one example of the trend of African Americans being enstooled as local chiefs, as Ghanaians hope this facilitates community development. At Agogo in the Ashanti Region, Byrd was again installed as a *dawurubohene*, divisional chief of communication, between African Americans and Africans of the continent. Dr. Marcus Garvey, Jr. was enstooled as *nkabomuhene* (unity chief), and Loretta Rucker (spokesperson for the African American

Public Radio Consortium) became one of the queenmothers in Agogo (Barimah 1992). In Ada Foah, Isaac Hayes was enstooled as *noyami mantse*, an honorary sub-chief (Isaac Hayes Made 1992). African Americans, particularly around the PANAFEST and Emancipation Day seasons, have been “snatched” and made into development chiefs or given other honorary titles as a means to promote investment in community development. Sometimes this is done hastily without Ghanaians closely inspecting their character or educating them on the expectations involved in having this honor bestowed on them, which can lead to misunderstandings on both sides.

At this time, a number of projects intended to attract African Americans to Ghana were under way, including the refurbishment of Cape Coast and Elmina castles and the commissioning of Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park—which includes a mausoleum, an immense bronze statue of Nkrumah, a small museum, library, and reflecting pool. African Americans were expected to make up a large percentage of visitors to the castles, and the “modern African-American tourist” was perceived by some Ghanaian journalists as “following in the foot-steps of the renowned philosopher and civil rights activist W.E.B. DuBois” (ibid.) and “re-affirm[ing] the commitment of the late Marcus Garvey to bring people from the diaspora back to their roots” (Sah 1992). In line with this sentiment, the government encouraged African Americans to invest and retire in Ghana (Asmah 1992: 1).

At PANAFEST '92, President Rawlings announced that the government had asked the National Commission on Culture and other festival organizers to establish a permanent PANFEST Secretariat at Cape Coast to immediately commence planning for

PANAFEST '94 (Mensah 1992). NCC officer, John Darkey,⁵ was named the acting director of the PANAFEST Secretariat and was assisted by an interim international advisory board devoted to PANAFEST '94 preparations (Dadson & Reynolds 1992c). This committee was comprised of Lt. Gen. Arnold Quainoo, Mohammed Ben Abdallah, Gary Byrd, and Loretta Rucker, among others, and was collectively responsible for creating programs for the festival.

PANAFEST '94

PANAFEST '94 was launched in July and held from December 9-18, 1994, on the same general theme as the previous festival, but adding, "Uniting the African Family." The festival was organized under the auspices of the Ghana government and the PANAFEST Secretariat. Although the government contributed financially to the festival, PANAFEST '94 marked the first year that the festival secretariat aggressively pursued private sponsorship. The festival was based in Cape Coast, but events were held in other cities (Elmina, Accra, Takoradi, Kumasi, and Koforidua) across Ghana simultaneously, to allow more Ghanaians the chance to participate and to enable foreigners to see more of Ghana. International participants at the festival reportedly exceeded 4,000, coming from thirty-two countries, including the U.S., Cuba, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Denmark, Germany, Holland, U.K., Nigeria, Liberia, and South Africa (PANAFEST 1997). Although these figures seem encouraging, Chief Segun Olusola, chairman of the Lagos-based International Centre of the Arts and former

⁵ John Darkey later changed his name to Akunu Darkey at an African naming ceremony held during PANAFEST.

Nigerian ambassador to Ethiopia and the OAU,⁶ said that fewer African countries participated in PANAFEST '94 than what was anticipated (Addy 1994).

New events for the second edition of PANAFEST included: an “African holocaust” candlelight procession, a remembrance service for victims of slavery, film festival, women’s day, youth day, and an eighteen-hour “International Reunion” concert in Accra. The Pan-African colloquium focused on African science and technology. Additionally, PANAFEST '94 featured an exhibition at Cape Coast Castle on African architecture, which became the “Architectural and Building History Museum.”

Stevie Wonder headlined the PANAFEST concert at the National Theatre, and the eighteen-hour concert at Independence Square featured Ghanaian standouts Kwadwo Antwi and Ras Kimono (Sarpong & Ofosuene 1994b; Sarpong & Ofosuene 1994c). In response to public concern that the cost of attending performances was prohibitive for the average Ghanaian and that this resulted in low turnout, the PANAFEST Secretariat dramatically reduced admission rates. For example, the Stevie Wonder concert admission was reduced from 25,000 to 10,000 cedis and the eighteen-hour concert was lowered from 4,000 to 1,000 cedis (ibid). Because of limited funds and the high expense of renting the National Theatre and other venues, artists were expected to perform gratis and provide their own travel and accommodation expenses; this led to a number of last-minute cancellations.

The newly-constructed Central Region Cultural Centre was host to some of PANAFEST '94 events, and Victoria Park was the site of the opening ceremony. The museum and video under the exhibition, *Crossroads of People, Crossroads of Trade*, was opened at Cape Coast Castle prior to PANAFEST '94, but was officially promoted as

⁶ The OAU (Organisation of African Unity) was changed to the AU (African Union) in July 2002.

part of the festival's activities. Harry Sawyerr, Minister of Education, reported that the museum cost \$1.2 million and suggested that it would help people learn about "the holocaust unrivalled in human history" (Sam & Aidoo 1994a). USAID, the Smithsonian Institution, Shell Ghana Limited, MUCIA, and UNDP helped to restore the museum, in collaboration with the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board.

In an address during the grand durbar of chiefs read on behalf of OAU Secretary General Salim Ahmed Salim, a commitment was made to place PANAFEST directly under the auspices of the OAU from 1994 onwards (Mensah & Asare 1994; Nyinah 1994). Rawlings called for PANAFEST to be more than an exercise in nostalgia, but an effort to collectively work for the development of Africa and to raise the dignity of people of African descent. He criticized Western media imperialism, said it was infiltrating Africa, and accused it of threatening Africa's traditional values by broadcasting foreign films and television. He also demanded more equitable economic dealings on the world stage. He stated, "What we must claim is our legitimate right to a just world economic order in which we can obtain returns on the products of our labours, and where the economic system is not loaded against the so-called developing countries" (African Civilization Never 1994: 6). Other speakers used rhetoric and the metaphor of slavery to emphasize contemporary injustices and the urgency for African unity. Gary Byrd said that Africa could not afford to continue with a "new slavery" under the IMF (Mensah & Asare 1994). Osabarima Kwodwo Mbra V recognized the importance of PANAFEST in fostering unity among Black people in Africa and in the diaspora (Sam & Adioo 1994a).

The 1994 edition of the Pan-African colloquium lasted five days and focused around the goals of PANAFEST. It included an address from Vice President Kow Nkensen Arkaah, who proposed that Pan-Africanism be reexamined and reformulated to meet the economic challenges of contemporary Africa. PANFEST director, John Darkey, said that PANFEST would continue to provide a forum for the advancement of the ideals of Pan-Africanism as a political and social force (Sam & Aidoo 1994b). In actualizing this goal, Dudley Thompson (Jamaican High Commissioner in Abuja) proposed to E.T. Mensah (Minister of Youth and Sports) that the Ghanaian national soccer team tour Caribbean countries to share experiences in the spirit of Pan-Africanism (Stars Invited to 1994).

During PANAFEST '94, Thompson called for Western countries to pay reparations to Africa. He said the point of reparations was not the money but the restoration of African dignity (Mensah & Asare 1994). Some diaspora Africans and Ghanaians believe that the castles should be allowed to fall into disrepair and eventually crumble into the Atlantic Ocean, while others suggest that they need to be conserved to stand as testimonies to injustices committed against humanity. During PANAFEST '94, one African American woman argued that the dungeons of Cape Coast Castle should remain as they were, leaving their grim testimony intact. A *Daily Graphic* editorial supported this idea saying, "Yes, this is the Achewald [Auschwitz] of African people and to paint or paper over anything there must be the moral equivalent of destroying vital murder evidence" (Half-Way Through 1994).

The remembrance service was held at the forecourt of Elmina Castle in honor of those who died in slavery and in the struggle for African emancipation. Officials

slaughtered a sheep and poured libation in order to pacify the ancestors. Traditional chiefs and diaspora African delegates ate eto (mashed yam and eggs considered sacred food) together and embraced as a sign of unity. Church leaders prayed for re-establishing ties between Africans and people of the African diaspora, and urged participants to institutionalize PANAFEST in order to show the world the truth about the slave trade and how the castles facilitated it. John Darkey said that this ceremony was timely and that it would offer “living experience and testimony to the importance of Elmina as a central point of slavery and African emancipation” (Aidoo 1994: 9). The *Daily Graphic* stated, “One of the worthiest features of PANAFEST ’94 has been the bold decision of the National House of Chiefs to use it as a Festival of Atonement for the role played by some of our chiefs and elders who sold their best men and women into slavery” (Half-Way Through 1994: 5). During this atonement, traditional chiefs recognized that some of their predecessors actively participated in the slave trade and publicly apologized to diaspora Africans for these historical transgressions.

John Darkey called on Ghanaians to view PANAFEST as a collective enterprise and make more of a commitment to it in the future. Ghanaians did not patronize many of the events held in Accra. Organizers marketed the festival more internationally than nationally. PANAFEST ’94 was plagued by a lack of publicity, technical resources, and personnel, as well as logistical problems (Asare & Tamakloe 1994a). The expense of admission fees, concurrence of activities in too many cities, and late cancellation of events discouraged festival participation (Sarpong 1994b).

At the conclusion of the festival, P.V. Obeng (Presidential Advisor on Governmental Affairs) launched the Third Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival, slated

for August 16-25, 1996 (Asare & Tamakloe 1994b). He called upon the PANFEST Secretariat to immediately prepare for the next installment of the festival. Withdrawal of government funding and insufficient preparations derailed PANAFEST '96 from happening as scheduled. This came at a time when the government wanted to reduce its support of the festival and PANAFEST began to be conceptualized as a private foundation. Organizational and budgetary challenges ultimately led to the postponement of the festival until August 29-September 7, 1997 (Agyekum 1997).

PANAFEST '97

The renovations to Cape Coast and Elmina castles begun in 1996 were supposed to be completed in August 1997, in time for PANAFEST. Various performances, as well as reverential night activities and exhibitions, were to be held at the castles. Phase two of the Historical Preservations of Castles and Forts Project focused on rehabilitating Cape Coast Castle, Elmina Castle, and Ft St. Jago and was coordinated by MUCIA and the Ghana Museum and Monuments Board, with \$780,000 in funding from USAID (B. Opoku 1997a; Quainoo 1997a). They planned to change the roof back to its original brick tiles, replace decayed wooden floors, doors, windows, and paint, improve plumbing and lighting, and upgrade Palaver Hall at Cape Coast Castle so that it could accommodate public functions. Kojo Yankah, who was Central Regional Minister at that time, was unhappy about the transformation of Palaver Hall, describing it as a “plastering of history” and distorting the authenticity of the site (Quainoo 1997b). This sentiment was echoed by African Americans, as I discuss in chapter 5.

PANAFEST '97 was organized under the auspices of the OAU and the Ghana government, with the same theme as the previous PANAFEST, but its sub-theme was

“Uniting the African Family *for Development.*” Events were based in Cape Coast and Elmina so that the festival was concentrated in one geographic area and costs were reduced. Cape Coast and Elmina were logical choices for hosting the festival because their castles and their history of the slave trade attract many diaspora Africans. Planners wanted PANAFEST events to be more affordable in 1997, to encourage more participation by Ghanaians.

PANAFEST '97 was also different because it overlapped with Fetu Afahy , the annual festival of Oguaa traditional area. The idea of combining the two festivals was advanced by the late Osabarima Kodwo Mbra V. Celebrating the two events together would allow more local Ghanaians to experience PANAFEST, and give visitors the chance to witness a traditional festival first-hand. The PANFEST Secretariat produced pre-festival sensitization programs to get more residents of Cape Coast and Elmina to participate in PANAFEST '97, but attendance was lower than PANAFEST '94 (First Lady to 1997). There were 1,200 international participants from twenty-three countries, including Jamaica, Nigeria, Cameroon, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Austria, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, U.S., U.K., Israel, Surinam, Barbados, Bermuda, Cuba, Brazil, and Malaysia (Azu 1997). Odeefuo Boa Amposem III, Denkyirahene and the president of the Central Regional House of Chiefs, urged traditional chiefs to participate in the upcoming festival and asked Ghanaians to foster unity with diaspora Africans and to project a positive image of Ghana (Afful 1997a). Additions to the festival in 1997 included: an akwaaba welcoming ceremony, canoe regatta, marathon, inter-denominational church service, excursions to nearby villages for

traditional ceremonies, and exhibitions on kente, slave routes of Northern Ghana, African American inventions, and African connections to the land of Israel.

Prior to the festival, a Jamaican couple faxed the PANAFEST Secretariat, requesting that they have a “traditional” marriage while they visited Ghana. The Secretariat responded by scheduling the ceremony to take place in Ampenyi, a village near Elmina; this ceremony was a side attraction for ‘village community ceremonies.’ The event included the families of the bride and the groom. Drinks and a dowry were presented by the groom to the bride and her adoptive family, according to traditional marriage custom. The couple also adopted Ghanaian names during the ceremony. The program of ‘village community ceremonies’ included the performance of traditional puberty rites and child-naming ceremonies. These would show guests first-hand how Africans prepare their girls for marriage and give ancestral names to people from the diaspora. Barima Kodwo Aduakwa IV, Akwamuhene of the Edina (Elmina) Traditional Area and chairman of the Elmina program committee of PANAFEST ’97, explained to the press that the reason why some Africans in the diaspora want to change their names is “...because they believe that their current names have no bearing on their ancestry” (B. Opoku 1997b: 5). The Jamaicans, Surinamese, and African Americans who took part in naming ceremonies in Ampenyi and Dompouase were given local names, assigned to clans, and presented with certificates by the PANAFEST Secretariat (They’re Reborn 1997).

At the grand durbar of chiefs in Victoria Park, there was a large contingent of twenty-four paramount chiefs and their retinues from the Central Region, as well as Nana Odeneho Oduro Numapau II, a paramount chief in the Ashanti Region and president of

the National House of Chiefs (B. Opoku 1997d). In his speech, Nana Numapau said PANAFEST would enable people of African descent worldwide to learn about their Motherland and Africa's potential so that they could "one day come back home for good" (Afful 1997b: 3). Vice President J.E. Atta Mills invited Africans and those in the diaspora to use PANAFEST to foster economic ties. He also stated that Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah drew inspiration from such diaspora visionaries as Marcus Garvey, W.E.B. DuBois, and George Padmore, which made it possible for Nkrumah to achieve independence for Ghana and struggle for the self-determination of other African countries. Mills suggested that in this spirit, PANAFEST should inspire participants to "bring together all the threads of history and culture which began here and which now extend to every part of the world" (Afful 1997b: 3). Chiefs from Surinam and Jamaica met with Central Regional chiefs during PANAFEST '97. Nana Lafantie, chief of the Matawi Maroon Society of Surinam, told the Ghanaian chiefs that the Matawi Maroon Society's homecoming helped them re-connect to their African roots. Odeefuo Boa Ampose III stated, "Let us invest in the rural areas...Let our brethren from the diaspora remember that their home is crying for their industrial ventures" (Quainoo 1997c). These speeches invoke the names of Pan-African leaders and urge diaspora Africans to think of Africa as home, a place in which they should invest both culturally and economically.

During PANAFEST '97, some Africans in the diaspora complained about being treated as outsiders, and questioned the sincerity of African nations in welcoming them "home." Economic and cultural differences can lead to disjunctures between diaspora Africans and Ghanaians. Yet, many diaspora Africans long to embrace African culture and seek recognition as Africans. For example, African Americans may feel alienated by

living in the U.S. and not being fully recognized as Americans or treated as second-class citizens because of racism endemic in American society. At PANAFEST '97, some expressed aggravation at being asked to secure a visa before traveling to Ghana for PANAFEST. At the Pan-African colloquium, one diasporan stated, "We are sons of the soil and we shouldn't obtain formal papers to come to our homestead" (qtd. in Anikulapo 1999b: 30). Mutabaruka seconded this sentiment and went on to say, "How can you tour your own home? We should not be treated like these European and American tourists. They are the people who come to experience the culture of another land. So they are tourists. To all people of African descent they own the land, the culture, the resources and they deserve to be here and be treated as children of the land" (qtd. in Anikulapo 1999b: 30).

When African Americans travel to Ghana, many Ghanaians do not consider them Africans, but think of them as Black Americans. Some African Americans say that they feel most American when they travel outside the U.S. This paradox points to the limitations of identities adopted by the individual and acknowledged by broader social groups. Regina Harris, an African American student at the University of Ghana, said, "We long so much to rid ourselves of that disconnectedness we feel because we are never really Americans in America... We only become Americans when we go abroad... I think PANAFEST is going to be a body of rejuvenation for me... where that feeling of disconnectedness won't be so overwhelming" (Edwards 1994: 1).

The above remarks illustrate how diaspora Africans seek recognition as Africans by Ghanaians. They resent the cultural, political, and bureaucratic obstacles in the way of being affirmed as fellow Africans. Diaspora Africans must obtain visas before

traveling “home” and once they arrive, they may not be acknowledged as any closer to the “African family” than white Europeans and Americans. In chapter 6, I elaborate more on *oburoni*, the Akan term of reference used for ‘foreigner.’

At the conclusion of the festival, Vice President Mills suggested that PANAFEST should be an annual festival instead of a biennial event, and that PANAFEST’s International Advisory Board needed to reflect the diverse membership of the Pan-African world. Mills pledged on-going government support for PANAFEST, and John Darkey underscored the need for financial backing of PANAFEST 1999 (Afful 1997c). Festival organizers had received a 300 million cedi loan to finance PANAFEST ’97, which was supposed to be repaid by October 31, 1997 (Dadson 1997). This government loan was not transferred to PANAFEST organizers until one month before PANAFEST ’97 started (Ashon 1997). In spite of this constraint and the lingering negative public attitude towards PANAFEST from 1994, PANAFEST ’97 was considered more successful than previous editions. It was better organized and satisfied more festival participants, mainly because events were concentrated in Cape Coast and Elmina. Since PANAFEST ’97 was based in this area, visitors could easily interact with locals and experience their culture in ways that were more meaningful than in the past.

Emancipation Day 1998

Emancipation Day commemorates the abolition of chattel slavery in the British colonies in 1834, and is now celebrated every August 1 in the Caribbean. This event was institutionalized in Ghana after President Jerry Rawlings witnessed it in Jamaica. He was so moved by the event that he wanted Ghana to be the first African country to honor it. The first Emancipation Day in Ghana was sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism from

July 25-August 2, 1998 with the theme, “Emancipation, Our Heritage, Our Strength.” It included a number of components, many of which are repeated annually: a slave trade re-enactment, symposium on the slave trade, the return of remains of African-descended ancestors, durbar of chiefs, wreath-laying ceremonies, a food, fashion, and craft bazaar, and inter-denominational church service. Emancipation Day was intended to remind Africans of the tragic trade in human cargo and to resolve that enslavement never happen again. The aim of Emancipation Day was also to show penitence on the part of African collaborators in the slave trade and to enable continental Africans and those in the diaspora the opportunity to clear their consciences, so cooperation for mutual benefit and economic development could move forward (Mensah 1998).

As a prelude to Emancipation Day, a group of African Americans held an inter-denominational service at the site of a historic slave market in Salaga. The purpose of the service, attended by the people and chiefs of Salaga, was to honor those who were captured and sold at the market. The group of students and professors of African American history also visited Yendi to see the grave site of Babatu, the notorious slave raider, and to pay a visit to the chief, Ya Na Yakubu Andani II (African Americans Hold 1998).

A youth forum was held in Accra just prior to the opening of Emancipation Day in which hundreds of African youth called on nations that took part in the trans-Atlantic slave trade to issue an apology and pay reparations to Africa (Emancipation Celebration Begins 1998). The speakers included professor and presidential aide Kofi Awoonor, Deputy Minister of Tourism Owuraku Amofa, and African American historian James Smalls.

In his opening address for Emancipation Day in Accra, President Rawlings stated that economic emancipation was the greatest task confronting the present generation of African people and said that it can be achieved through unity and the combination of financial resources and technical skills (Agbenu 1998; Nyinah 1998). Later in the day, Vice President Atta Mills opened an international conference on emancipation. In a public forum titled, “The Economic, Philosophical, Social, and Spiritual Dimensions of Emancipation from Slavery,” Kofi Awoonor proposed welcoming diaspora Africans home, uniting with them, and fostering development on the continent by stopping the emulation of alien cultures and grounding development in African culture (Owusu 1998a).

During Emancipation Day 1998, the remains of an African American, Samuel Carson, and a Jamaican, Crystal, were re-interred in Ghana. This act was a symbolic gesture of recognition by Ghanaians that people of African descent in diaspora are Africans. Owurako Amofa said, “Africa is the home of African-Americans [and Afro Caribbeans] and they are always welcomed” and reasoned that burying these remains at home was in keeping with African tradition (Mensah 1998). Prior to the re-interment, a “Slave March” was held in Accra. The caskets containing Carson and Crystal led the march, which drew thousands of Ghanaians and hundreds of African Americans (J. Opoku 1998). During this procession, some Ghanaians performed as “captives,” chained to one another with ropes, who wailed when beaten by their “masters” (ibid.). The caskets were then laid in front of the statue of Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah at the Nkrumah Mausoleum, where a candlelight vigil was held. James Smalls was stunned by the commitment of the Ghana government and the efforts of the Ghanaian people to

return the remains of diasporans to Ghana, which he said, “symboli[zed] the spiritual re-connection of Africans to their descendants in the diaspora” (Mensah 1998: 3).

During Emancipation Day, Central Regional Minister Kojo Yankah declared that the “Door of No Return” at Cape Coast Castle, which served as the exit point for captives embarking upon the Middle Passage, would now be “forever opened for the return of our brothers and sisters in the diaspora” (Quainoo 1998). After libation was poured at the “Door of No Return,” the caskets were brought through it from the seaward side, to signify the acceptance of diaspora Africans into the country. This entrance from the seaward side was officially named, “Door of Return,” to mark its change. A funeral service was held in Cape Coast Castle in which Ghanaians and diasporans dressed in black and red cloth, sang funeral dirges, drummed and danced, fired muskets, and mourned. Assin Manso was the village selected as the final resting ground for the remains because its chief—Barima Kwame Nkyi XII—was instrumental in the Central Region’s tourism development, and it contained a former slave market and *Ndonkor Nsuo*, ‘Slave River.’ This river is said to have been the last place African captives bathed and traders assessed their health before continuing the journey along the Slave Route to Cape Coast Castle (Remains of 2 1998).

This ritual ceremony—named “Martyrs Day Celebration”—attracted diaspora Africans, three paramount chiefs of the Assin State (Barima Kwame Nkyi, Okumanin Professor Obiri Yeboah, and Odeefuo Tibu Asare) and government officials (Minister of Tourism Mike Gizo, Deputy Minister of Environment, Science, and Technology Farouk Brimah, Chairman of the NCC Nana Akuoko Sarpong, Central Regional Minister Kojo Yankah, and members of the RCC) (B. Opoku 1998). During the ceremony, government

officials handed over the coffins to Barima Kwame Nkyi XII, who said that the return of the remains was “symbolic of the atonement and healing of the wound between Africans and African-Americans” (B. Opoku 1998: 1). Nana Numapau II, president of the National House of Chiefs, agreed. He had slaughtered a cow and a bull at a 1997 ceremony in the U.S. to atone for the mistakes of chiefs during the slave trade (Remains of Two 1998). Barima Kwame Nkyi XII reportedly said that the chiefs and people of Assin Manso have offered an entire stretch of land covering the former slave market, slave river, and burial grounds to be turned into a historical memorial complex for the Pan-African world (Quainoo 1998). Sonny Carson, a relative of deceased Samuel Carson, stated, “We are ready to come back home and would want every country in the diaspora to bring a body to be buried in Ghana” (Quainoo 1998). Owuraku Amofa suggested that Emancipation Day should be a time for the annual pilgrimage of Africans in the diaspora to unite with Africans on the continent (Remains of Two 1998).

Speaking at separate wreath-laying ceremonies at the Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum and the W.E.B DuBois Centre, Vice President Atta Mills affirmed the message that continental Africans and those in the diaspora should form a strong alliance for the economic emancipation of Africa (Duodu 1998). Wreaths were laid on behalf of fathers of Pan-Africanism, chiefs and people of Africa, the youth of Africa, African Americans, and Afro Caribbeans.

An inter-denominational thanksgiving service attended by President Rawlings was held in Accra to bring together Ghanaians and diaspora Africans to worship. Reverend Dr. Nicholas Duncan-Williams, bishop of Action Faith International, led the service and stated, “It is through this unity that there can be total emancipation of all

black people” (Emancipation Thanksgiving Service 1998: 16). He asked Africans in the diaspora to forgive the part some Africans played in the slave trade and affirmed that the time had come for reconciliation and moving forward. Duncan-Williams stated that the bondage of Africans in the diaspora was, “a blessing in disguise because through it, they had gained the skills of their oppressors and had been able to amass wealth and walked in the corridors of power” (Owusu 1998b: 1). Related to this sentiment, I describe in chapter 6 how many everyday Ghanaians believe that diaspora Africans enjoy economic advantages unavailable to most Ghanaians. Some Ghanaians claim that diaspora Africans were fortunate to have been sent away as a result of the international slave trade, because they have prospered from living outside of Africa and are contemporarily better off than most Ghanaians.

Mike Gizo said Ghana’s first Emancipation Day was a success because it helped to change the mentality of many Ghanaians towards Africans in the diaspora who they saw as “intimidating” (3 Sites Chosen 1998). He thought the re-interment was a “spiritual journey which will help Blacks in the diaspora to reconnect with their roots” (3 Sites Chosen 1998: 1). Gizo commented on the economic importance of the celebration, noting that Isaac Hayes had contributed \$10,000 towards establishing a school in Ada, where he is an honorary chief (ibid.). He announced that UNESCO had chosen August 29 as the annual date for International Emancipation Day (ibid.). The Ghana Tourism Federation (GHATOF) and the Upper West Regional Minister of the Ghana Tourist Board proposed that future editions of Emancipation Day should include other areas of Ghana where the slave trade took place, and should not be limited to Accra, Cape Coast, Elmina, and Assin Manso (Arsene 1998).

Officials from the Ministry of Tourism promoted and organized Emancipation Day. Public speeches typically reinforced the dominant message from previous PANAIFESTs: the need for diaspora Africans to unite with continental Africans in making economic contributions towards the betterment of Africa. Emancipation Day and PANAIFEST participants projected mixed messages about their ultimate goals. While Ghanaian political leaders publicly urge diaspora Africans to invest in Ghana to improve tourism and economic development, diaspora Africans are more interested in uniting the African family. An editorial from the *Daily Graphic* cautioned Africans in the diaspora never to think of their relationship to Africa in romantic terms and “reduce it to pleasure visits as tourists” (Part of a 1998). Although everyday Ghanaians sometimes refer to diaspora Africans as ‘tourists’ and ‘foreigners,’ diaspora Africans reject these labels. Instead, they seek deeper, personal, and meaningful connections with Ghanaians in their homecoming. Some of them are offended by being asked to invest in Ghana just as they are being welcomed home.

Emancipation Day 1999

The second annual Emancipation Day celebration was held in Assin Manso on July 29, 1999, with the same theme as the previous edition. The durbar of chiefs for Emancipation Day included speeches by Barima Kwame Nkyi XII and Owuraku Amofa, who jointly commissioned work on the “Monument of Return,” to be erected as a memorial for all Africans and descendents of Africa lost during the slave trade. The memorial would be located on top of the tombs of Crystal and Samuel Carson, who had been re-interred during the first Emancipation Day. During the Emancipation Day 2000

durbar of chiefs, speakers again appealed for contributions to the “Monument of Return,” which had yet to be constructed.

A beauty contest for “Miss Emancipation” was held at the National Theatre in Accra. The winner was reported having “all the features of a real African woman,” which included a dark complexion, African hairstyle, and minimal make-up (Okine 1999). All thirteen contestants condemned the atrocities committed during the slave trade and asked all Africans to unite and liberate their minds in order to help Africa develop.

Philip Moore, leader of the African American Association of Ghana, addressed the audience at the Millennium Emancipation Day Bazaar, saying, “We should all make sure that Emancipation becomes a spiritual thing for all Africans in the diaspora, so that every visit we pay to Africa will be a real home-coming and not a pleasure tour” (Gobah 1999: 14). At the same time, Moore suggested that the Ministry of Tourism organize more programs to attract African Americans to Ghana.

PANAFEST ‘99

The fourth edition of PANAFEST, held under the auspices of the Ghana government and the OAU, was held in Cape Coast, Elmina, and Accra from July 30 to August 8, 1999. The 1999 theme was, “The Re-emergence of African Civilization: Uniting the African Family: Youth—the Agenda for the New Millennium.” West Africa day, a beach party, and soccer matches were new events incorporated into PANAFEST ‘99. Countries represented included South Africa, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, the Gambia, Cote d’Ivoire, Benin, Jamaica, the U.S., and the U.K.

Though most of the PANAFEST '99 events were held at the Central Region Cultural Centre, the grand durbar of chiefs was held at Cape Coast Stadium after a parade by masqueraders, *asrafo* groups, youth groups, and citizens through the town. Jerry Rawlings did not attend, but his speech was read by Nana Aboagye Agyei, the Ejisuhene and member of the Council of State. This speech stated that PANAFEST was a spiritual movement linking Africans on the continent with people of African descent through arts and culture to help solve the continent's problems and help Africa compete favorably in the global economy (Sekyere 1999b). He paid tribute to George Padmore, W.E.B. DuBois, and Kwame Nkrumah for their efforts to liberate Africans and said that these role models will inspire future generations to follow suit (Opoku 1999a). The paramount chief of Oguaa, Osabarimba Kwesi Attah, urged the present generation not to simply bask in the achievements of African freedom fighters but to work hard to build upon them (Sekyere 1999b). Nigerian Minister of Culture and Tourism, Chief Ojo Maduekwe's speech said the blame for slavery and colonialism should be shared both by "visitors from across the sea and our brothers, leaders at home who oppress their own people by selling them into slavery" (Anikulapo 1999c: 44).

In a meeting with Phyllis Mitchell, the Jamaican Minister for Education and Culture, President Rawlings urged PANAFEST organizers to "make it an instrument that will guide Africa to face the challenges of modern slavery" and stated that Ghanaians should learn from history to chart a path for the future (Nyinah 1999: 1). The Jamaican minister responded that since the seed of PANAFEST has been sown and is growing, it continues to bind Jamaicans and Ghanaians together (Agbenu 1999).

A three-day colloquium was held under the theme, “Developing Millennium Agenda for the Youth,” which included papers on Pan-Africanism and contemporary issues in Africa (Opoku 1999c). Professor Emeritus of the University of Ghana, J.H. Kwabena Nketia, made an opening address for the colloquium, stating that it should be a forum for developing programs to enhance knowledge, skills, and experience of the youth to enable them to contribute towards the social, economic, and political life of their communities, while refraining from ideological or partisan directives (ibid.).

According to the public and mass media, PANAFEST '99 reportedly lost its vibrancy and quality (Anikulapo 1999a). It attracted few big name performers and drew smaller audiences, particularly those from the local community who had turned out in support of earlier PANAFESTs. One reason for the low attendance was the expense. Some popular Ghanaian musicians were expected to pay their own registration fees instead of having the secretariat cover them through entrance fees, as had been agreed (Ebu 2000). As a result, they cancelled their performances. Registration for simply attending the festival was 397,098 cedis⁷ for journalists and as much as 2,647,320 cedis for some other categories of participants; a token 1,000 and 2,000 cedis was charged simply for people to enter the bazaar grounds; exhibitors had to pay between 100,000 and 400,000 cedis to rent a stand to display their wares and complained that people were not buying because festival organizers were charging entrance fees (ibid.). Exhibitors' fees were considerably more expensive in 1999 than the 30,000-100,000 cedis required for PANAFEST '97, when no gate fees were charged for patrons.

⁷ The exchange rate for 1999 was 2,647.32 cedis to 1 USD. In 1997, 1 USD was equivalent to 2,050.17 cedis.

Funding PANAFEST '99 was difficult. The Ghana government had been a major sponsor of the festival in the past, but withdrew most support, leaving the private PANAFEST Foundation to become more self-reliant and raise funds through private donors. To offset the lack of financial support from the Ghana government, the PANAFEST Foundation encouraged investment from the private sector. Sponsorship included the Commonwealth Foundation, Ghana Civil Aviation Authority, Metro TV, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, TV 3, GHACEM Limited, British American Tobacco, TAYSEC, AFGO, Ghana Oil Company, Fan Milk Limited, Enyidado Industries, and Guinness (Hesse 1999). However, some of the donors' pledges were never fulfilled, which left PANAFEST '99 with considerable debt (Ebu 2000). Scholar and poet, Kofi Anyidoho, who served on the board of directors for PANAFEST '97, argued that both the Ghana government and the OAU should put their money where their mouth is in funding the festival, if they expect it to continue (Anikulapo 1999b).

Just after PANAFEST '99 ended, the first International Historic African World Reparation and Repatriation Conference was held in Accra. The five-day conference was held under the theme, "If We Africans Forget the Atrocities Committed Against Us in the Past (Slavery and Colonialism), Surely Our Children will Suffer Tomorrow" (Asare 1999). Besides promoting business ties between Africans on the continent and those in the diaspora, the conference sought to lobby African governments to demand compensation from countries that benefited from the trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonialism. Conference organizers said that reparations should be paid to Africa and her descendents for "crimes committed against humanity" (ibid.). Odeefuo Boa Amponsem III, Denkyirahene and president of the National House of Chiefs, opened the conference.

From July 27-29, 2000, the second annual edition of the conference was held at the W.E.B. DuBois Centre in Accra. The conference was organized by the Afrikan World Reparations and Repatriation Truth Commission (AWRRTC), an NGO based in Ghana, under that patronage of the Ministry of Communications and Ghana Tourist Board. The purpose of the conference was to brainstorm plausible arguments for Africa to claim reparations as a result of the slave trade and colonialism (International Reparations Conference 2000).

Emancipation Day 2000

Emancipation Day 2000 was opened in Accra on July 27, 2000 under the theme as previous editions but adding the sub-theme, “Deepening the African Consciousness.” New for Emancipation Day 2000, a large delegation of African Americans attended a durbar in Assin Praso and visited part of the slave route along the Pra River, as well as a mass grave for slaves (Asiama 2000). President Jerry Rawlings, NCC Chairman Nana Akuoko Sarpong, Minister of Tourism Mike Gizo, and Deputy Minister of Tourism Nana Paddy Acheampong, representatives from the African American Association of Ghana and the Caribbean Association of Ghana were all featured in the official opening.

Rawlings stated in his address:

Rather than dwelling on the injustices of the past, we must...critically examine our own shortcomings, mistakes and inadequacies, which, if not corrected now will prevent us from achieving up to our potential in future. Let us begin too, by accepting one basic reality; notwithstanding the evils perpetrated on us as people in the past in slavery, colonialism, and other forms of bondage—the world is moving inexorably forward. We have a choice to make: we can continue to look behind us to make excuses for the situation in which we find ourselves today, a situation where our children are dying everyday, either by wars, or by that silent and pernicious killer of dreams, violence and poverty. In short it is time we got our own house in order, for if we do not, we will have no one but ourselves to blame” (qtd. in Agbenu 2000: 1).

The Emancipation Day forum was held under the theme, “Repatriation and Reparations—the African Case,” which included discussions on granting Africans in the diaspora the right of abode in Ghana. Advocates for such ‘repatriation’ argued that although many African Americans want to return to their roots, the stringent immigration regulations prevent them from doing so and to contribute towards the development of Ghana and of Africa in general (Van-Ess 2000). The reparations case for Africans was also discussed at the forum, and parallels were drawn to Jews receiving compensation for crimes committed in their holocaust. An article published in the *Daily Graphic* stated, “Although [the slave trade of Africans] has been attested as the greatest holocaust in human history, there has been much less sympathy for Africa than has been shown for the Jewish of the World War II” (Nyalemmegbe 2000: 9). Esi Sutherland Addy, daughter of Efua Sutherland and lecturer at the University of Ghana, suggested at the Emancipation Day women’s forum that Emancipation Day, PANAFEST, and Nana Yaa Asantewaa commemoration be held jointly. She argued that since they have the same objective of bringing Africans in the diaspora together with those on the continent, combining them would ease the financial burden and allow for better planning (Van-Ess 2000).

A wreath-laying ceremony in honor of Nkrumah, DuBois, and Padmore concluded the third Emancipation Day held in Ghana. Speeches were made by Ghanaian government officials evoking the need for African unity and paying tribute to Nkrumah’s words, “If Africa remains fragmented, then gains made from emancipation will be washed away” (qtd. in Asante 2000: 3). Speeches made by African Americans and Afro Caribbeans expressed disappointment at the low patronage of Emancipation Day events by continental Africans and urged them to support the event. For example, African youth

day witnessed only two hundred participants and most of the invited speakers did not attend. During youth day, Kofi Awoonor proposed that the ministries of education and of tourism collaborate in developing school curricula on the trans-Atlantic slave trade and that schools form emancipation clubs to foster awareness of what took place under slavery (Asante & Hui 2000).

Newspapers said Emancipation Day would enable Africans in the diaspora to make pilgrimages home and also attract those who are skilled or wealthy to Ghana to help the economy. Emancipation Day and PANAFEST are touted as opportunities to promote Africa's development; however, some have questioned how committed the Ghanaian public is to embracing diaspora Africans in a contemporary movement that uses Pan-Africanism as a tool in boosting the economy. Edem Amenumey, affiliated with the Department of Geography and Tourism at the University of Cape Coast, wrote an editorial posing a number of difficult questions to the Ghanaian public:

To what extent are we prepared to receive our long-lost brothers and sisters? How can we sincerely encourage and motivate some to stay permanently to invest here without, as it were, bending over backwards to please them? To what extent does the ordinary Ghanaian identify with the concept of emancipation and understand the yearly pilgrimages made by their brothers and sisters in the diaspora? Given that in our traditions, talking about slaves and slavery is almost a taboo, do Ghanaians really understand what is at stake? Have we provided sustained public education to conscientise the average Ghanaians? What do the people of Assin Manso and its environs think about slavery and emancipation, given that their proximity to the slaver river? Will they be willing to have their homes and township 'invaded' as it were by 'foreigners' (2000: 7).

In chapter 6, I revisit some of these questions in considering the extent to which Cape Coast residents participate in the pilgrimage tourism currently promoted in Ghana. Based on my interviews with Cape Coasters, there are mixed reviews about how Ghanaians perceive diaspora Africans, and whether or not they consider them deserving of special

recognition as long lost kin. The dominant messages of PANAFEST and Emancipation Day may be lost on everyday Ghanaians who are more concerned with making a living and providing for immediate family members. Educational campaigns directed at the Ghanaian public have sought to explain the significance of bringing diaspora Africans back to Africa. However, some Ghanaians are not convinced that diaspora Africans are more closely related to them than any other group of ‘foreigners.’

Emancipation Day and PANAFEST 2001

2001 was the first year in which PANAFEST and Emancipation Day were held in conjunction with one another. The PANAFEST Foundation organized the event, which was based in Cape Coast and Elmina from July 27 to August 3, 2001. The theme was “The Re-emergence of African Civilization: Uniting the African Family: Bridging the Gap through Information Technology.” New events for PANAFEST and Emancipation Day 2001 included a poetry and photographic exhibit on resistance, technology forum, and enstoolment of African American Rosalind Jeffries as queenmother of Elmina. The festival attracted over 3,000 participants from Jamaica, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Mali, Benin, Brazil, South Africa, U.K., Germany, Switzerland, and the U.S. (Quainoo 2001; Dadson 2001).

A pre-PANAFEST pilgrimage was undertaken by fourteen African Americans to a slave route site at Paga-Nania in the Upper East Region. The delegation was shown trees to which slaves were tied and a burial ground used for slaves. Pe Charles Awiah Awampaga II, paramount chief of the Paga Traditional Area, said the site had been kept to remind “our brothers and sisters in the diaspora of the wickedness of man and also to create the awareness that they have relatives back home in Africa, especially Ghana”

(qtd. in Castro Zangina 2001: 12). James Smalls and Rosalind Jeffries, spokespersons for the African American pilgrims gave public speeches saying, “African-Americans do not harbour vengeance to punish the perpetrators of such diabolical acts. But God should forgive them because they thought by buying Africans they were in brisk business” (qtd. in Castro Zangina 2001: 12).

The opening ceremony in the forecourt of Elmina Castle included a procession of chiefs and distinguished guests, music and dance performances, speeches, slaughtering of a goat, pouring of libation, and eating of the sacred *eto*, as well as a wreath laying ceremony at the entrance to a dungeon inside Elmina Castle. James Smalls relayed the significance of his group’s pilgrimage to sites the slave route:

...We got to realize in Paga that there are extraordinary sites, where our people experienced being captured, being held in slave markets. We got to come down on the road, through Tamale to Kintampo, into Kumasi, and yesterday coming to River Pra, stopping to have libations poured before we crossed the river. And then participating at Assin Praso in a magnificent durbar, and then going to the mass graves of many of those who were killed at Assin Praso at a point of exchange where they tried to escape. Today we are here in front of this extraordinary dungeon-fort that was the first to be established on our homeland. But in our hearts, being the children of those who were enslaved in diaspora—sent to South America, Caribbean, North America—we understand that those were not *our* ancestors, but our *common* ancestors. And we are very clear that there is no guilt for Africans who live on the continent to hold, any greater than the guilt for those of us who live away to hold. What PANAFEST and Emancipation have allowed for us to do, is to forgive ourselves and to bring about the healing necessary to unite our cultural nations and political nations so that this will never happen again...Only in the past, can you find completed ideas, completed principles, completed concepts, completed notion of peopleness, completed ideas of family, completed concept of self, that you can draw upon in the present to build your future. Sankofa is more real than we understand. We do not want to forget the past. We will forever remember the past, and we want the world to know—we never gave up, we never gave up, neither in Africa, nor abroad...

Smalls' speech stressed that Africans need to unite, that the time for blaming fellow Africans for historical collaboration in the slave trade is over. He cites the concept of *sankofa*, "going back to the source to retrieve what was lost," in order to stress that remembering the past is absolutely critical to forging a positive, unified future.

During the grand durbar of chiefs, public speeches were given by representatives from Jamaica, South Africa, and Ghana. Fewer Ghanaian chiefs participated in PANAFEST 2001 because organizers wanted to simplify the festival. The durbar was officially opened by Vice President Alhaji Aliu Mahama, who said, concerning PANAFEST, "Having assumed the role of pacesetters in encouraging Africans and people of African descent to embark on a kind of regular pilgrimage to Ghana, we are obliged to offering the best of our culture and hospitality to our august tourists and family members...Ghana is your home and you are warmly welcome" (qtd. in Vice-President Launches 2001: 7). Nana Akomea, Deputy Minister of Tourism, and Vice President Mahama both urged Africans in the diaspora to contribute to the development of Ghana and to Africa as a whole. Hawa Yakubu, Minister of Tourism, apologized to Africans in the diaspora for allowing slavery to happen and, at the same time, encouraged them to unite with Africans on the continent towards development (Quaicoo 2001). She also pledged in her address that the ministry would assist in solving all problems which hinder the successful celebration of the festival.

As part of PANAFEST's "Rites of Passage Day," Rosalind Jeffries was enstooled as queenmother of Elmina at the chief's palace. During this ceremony, an African American delegation announced that they were donating 1 million cedis towards establishing a local Pan-African library. The group presented the Edinahene with a

computer and a box of books as a gesture to “bridge the technical divide” and aid in development, while promoting Pan-Africanism.

The technology forum urged participants to think about ways to bring about advancement in information technology for African development, poverty reduction, and boosting the economy in the world market. Speakers argued that by expanding access to computers and improving IT literacy, Africans could improve education and business management while maintaining autonomy. Professor Kweku Opoku-Ansa suggested that if these measures were not taken, Africans would be more subject to neo-colonialism. He said, “otherwise other people who are more ambitious and more versed with the trend would be documenting our history and telling our stories” (qtd. in Anikulapo 2001a: 1-2). Speakers stressed the need to preserve African values and morality by protecting African children from websites that “don’t have our values, but harmful Western values.”

The theme of the youth congress was “How to Break the Shackles Free.” Participants called for learning African languages, loving and knowing oneself, and buying made-in-Ghana-goods. Some African American audience members said that Africans should eradicate the white Jesus and interracial relationships that threaten “our movement.” Some Ghanaians said that Africans should consider their enemy to be imperialism itself, and not simply white people. These individuals proposed fostering political allies based on common interests and not racial identification because black-only social and political movements were not the most fruitful course of action.

PANAFEST women’s day was comprised of a morning session of speeches and performances and an afternoon session of smaller group discussions. Most of the points raised in the discussions revolved around the objectification of women’s bodies used to

sell products. Participants agreed that women's issues were not given sufficient attention in the media. The First Lady and the Minister of Tourism were both supposed to speak at the women's day forum, but neither showed up.

One big problem during PANAFEST '01 was the fact that Ghana Airways cancelled their scheduled flights at the last minute, leaving seven hundred diaspora Africans who intended coming for the festival stranded in the U.S. (Quaicoo 2001). Another issue was that one hundred of the three hundred and fifty stands constructed for traders to rent at the trade exhibition were not rented. Traders complained that rental fees were too high, but some of the festival organizers disagreed and reasoned that the rates were necessary to subsidize increased electricity and phone service costs.

Financing the festival continued to be a challenge during 2001. The newly-elected Kufuor administration was accused by some of withdrawing government support because the PANAFEST board members' political allegiance lie with the former Rawlings administration and NDC party (Anikulapo 2001b). The Homecoming Summit for Ghanaians living abroad, held right before PANAFEST 2001, received considerably more funding from the Ghana government. In contrast to government support of the Homecoming Summit, financial donations and presidential participation were lacking in PANAFEST '01. A government loan of 100 million cedis—substantially less than what had been contributed in the past—was given to the PANAFEST Foundation two weeks before the festival was to begin, which was supposed to be paid back by the end of the month. Compared to its expenditure on PANAFEST, the government gave more money towards Emancipation Day events held at Assin Praso and Assin Manso, each receiving grants of 20 million cedis. The lean budget PANAFEST had to work with was blamed

for a lackluster colloquium that was poorly attended. The absence of other African countries at the 2001 edition of the festival was chalked up to a lack of finances. Additionally, many of the scheduled PANAFEST '01 events started late, and African Twins Day was even cancelled.

The Mirror newspaper ran an opinion page of PANAFEST and Emancipation Day 2001, which incorporated the views of PANAFEST board members, local Ghanaians, and Africans in the diaspora (Our Panelists Express 2001). Some criticized the festival for lack of money, poor publicity, insufficient accommodations, travel problems, and poor planning as it conflicted with the Grand Sales Trade Exhibition in Accra which reduced sales for vendors at PANAFEST. Many Ghanaians do not participate in PANAFEST because they think it is primarily an African American festival and an event for the Central Region (Ofori-Ansa 2003). This perception shows us the limitations of "Uniting the African Family." Despite the negatives, there were a number of positive implications of PANAFEST and Emancipation Day 2001. These included establishing a spiritual linkage and unity between continental and diaspora Africans, promoting investment and advocating for development for Africa, and reflecting on the histories of the slave trade, colonialism, and Pan-Africanism.

The Director of the Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust and President of the Ghana Tour Guides Association, Nkunu Akyea, admitted that the 2001 event had its share of organizational problems. Some of the Ghanaian chiefs were irritated that they were not consulted as much as in the past and that an African American was made the executive secretary of PANAFEST. One chief reasoned that since African Americans are just now getting re-acquainted with African culture, they are not in a position to lead

Africans. Nkunu Akyea defended the decision to make Rabbi Kohain the Executive Secretary, reasoning that putting an African American in charge of organizing PANAFEST sends the right message: making diaspora Africans feel welcome in Ghana. Others thought the PANAFEST support staff under Kohain was too inexperienced, staffed mainly by young Ghanaian volunteers who were completing their national service requirement.

A Cape Coast-based radio show called “Concrete Talk” hosted an appraisal of PANAFEST 2001 by Rabbi Kohain, Nkunu Akyea, Echo Eshun (member of Cape Coast Development Association), and two local radio personalities. That PANAFEST ’01 even happened at all was considered one measure of success, as there was much public skepticism about whether it would occur. Rabbi Kohain explained the problem of the lack of government funding:

We have put ourselves in the position to be as self sufficient as we possibly can.... But that does not abdicate the responsibility of the government to give some financial support toward a festival of this magnitude. So, we feel, that we deserve some support. We’ve brought revenue into the government. If we use conservative estimates of 2000 [or] 2500 people having traveled to the country at that time, and we use the new \$50 departure tax that the government exacts against *every* foreign traveler, then we can estimate that at least 1 billion cedis equivalent was collected....[from] those who left the country, not talking about the VAT for those staying at hotels, those eating at restaurants, not talking about the exchange that even our taxi drivers, and our tour operators sold. So, PANAFEST has benefited a number of people in the nation, especially the tourism industry.

Other panelists agreed the government should help finance the festival because it stands as “an embodiment of the nation culturally.” Some suggested that local businesses who profit from the influx of tourists into Cape Coast should also contribute.

Echo Eshun raised the issue that if care is not given to maintain the festival, it might be lost to South Africa or other countries that would put up the funds necessary to make it successful. One of the radio personalities, Jojo Gyepi Gbrah, argued that because Ghana played such a prominent role in the slave trade, the festival should remain in Ghana, and if PANAFEST were to be taken on by another African country, it may never return to Ghana and the nature of PANAFEST would be lost. Nkunu Akyea opposed the idea of rotating the festival outside of Ghana, citing that the OAU endorsed PANAFEST and saying Ghana should be the permanent host of the festival since Ghana was the cradle of Pan-Africanism.

Chairman of the International PANAFEST Board, Kojo Yankah, announced during the grand durbar of chiefs that the board was considering making PANAFEST an annual event. During the PANAFEST appraisal, Rabbi Kohain defended this proposition, because organizing it would become more regularized and potential sponsors could write it into their annual budgets. However, some of the panelists were very skeptical, citing financial and organizational problems. Also, one panelist argued that the message of PANAFEST and Emancipation Day is not to be taken lightly and making it an annual event would cheapen it and lessen its appeal, making the public de-sensitized to the message.

Another issue raised during the PANAFEST '01 appraisal was whether or not the festival has benefited Cape Coast and if there is a need for it to be celebrated there. Cape Coast and the Central Region are economically depressed areas, and basing the festival there was viewed as a way to bring in foreign currency, boost employment, improve sanitation, and foster integrated regional development. Nkunu Akyea cited a number of

positive effects he associated with Cape Coast's hosting of the festival over the years, including the construction of the cultural centre—the only one of its kind located outside of Accra. Since the push for tourism development began in the Central Region in 1991, the number of hotels has increased dramatically from seven to seventy-two. The telecommunications system, restaurants, and roads have all been improved. The castles were refurbished, and three residence halls (used to accommodate PANAFEST visitors) at the University of Cape Coast were renovated. Assin Manso, host of Emancipation Day, is one of the fastest growing areas in the whole region, and Akyea suggested that if people continue to spread the word about PANAFEST, it will help the urban renewal of Cape Coast as well.

PANAFEST and Emancipation Day public speeches and discussion forums provide a wealth of ethnographic material that tell us which messages are most important to festival participants. While some Ghanaians show diminished interest in PANAFEST and Emancipation Day or consider these events to be disconnected from issues that they can relate to, other Ghanaians participate because they embrace Pan-Africanism, want to welcome “home” diaspora Africans, and see these festivals as vehicles for economic development. Chapter 4 delves deeper into Ghanaian perspectives on diaspora African pilgrimage tourism by sharing how individual tour guides at Cape Coast and Elmina castles act as savvy culture brokers in disseminating information to the public. These castles are not only venues for PANAFEST and Emancipation Day. They are also important and powerful symbols of return for diaspora Africans.

Chapter 4: Tour Guides at Cape Coast & Elmina Castles

Much of my fieldwork time was spent observing the day-to-day events of Cape Coast and Elmina castles. By participating in guided tours and conducting interviews with nearly all of the tour guides, I came to understand that even though the details of tours may differ, the ‘slave story’ holds a preeminent position in the recounting of the history of the castles. This history is framed within the context of learning from the tragedy of the slave trade, so that all visitors commit themselves to preventing similar crimes against humanity. This chapter details some of the specific ways in which tour guides at the castles present and perform history.

Sometimes presenting the histories of these sites can result in discomfort, tensions, or even conflict among the touring public. For example, visitors on a guided tour of Cape Coast Castle were in fisticuffs. According to the *Daily Graphic*, a tour guide sparked the conflict between African Americans and Europeans due to his unprofessional presentation and lack of sensitivity in discussing slavery (Darkinson 1994). Whether or not the tour guide was to blame in the above conflict, verbal or physical clashes between African Americans or Afro Caribbeans and whites continue to take place at Cape Coast and Elmina castles. The fact that these sites and the presentations within them evoke intense emotions shows that people do care about identity politics, the way in which history is presented, and standards for appropriate behavior associated with visiting them.

During my fieldwork of July 2001—July 2002, there were ten tour guides working at Cape Coast Castle and seven tour guides working at Elmina Castle.⁸ Of

⁸ I include the museum educator, who also gave tours, in this count. Not all of these guides kept regular hours, worked full time, or for the entire length of my fieldwork.

these, three guides at Cape Coast and six guides at Elmina had worked for more than one year. The majority of guides (6/10) at Cape Coast Castle were national service personnel, who worked on a voluntary basis for approximately one year. In contrast, the majority of guides (6/7) at Elmina were employees who received regular pay from the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board and augmented their salaries with tips from visitors. All of the tour guides had some form of post-secondary education. The majority of them either held or were working towards a bachelor's degree and two were in the process of completing master's degrees. Whether or not they held university degrees, many of the tour guides had a secondary school teaching background. Until recently, there were no defined qualifications for who would be eligible for the position of tour guide, though the tendency was to hire those with teaching experience; since 2001, they have been required to hold a bachelor's degree in history (though it need not be focused on the history of the slave trade). Some personal and professional divisions exist between those tour guides who have a background in school service and those who hold history degrees; some of these divisions carry over into different interpretations of the castles' details.

The training of the tour guides at the castles consists of an orientation by the museum educator, encouragement to read books related to the histories of Ghana and of the slave trade, and shadowing more experienced tour guides. Novice guides learn the content of senior guides' tours and ask them questions when a point is not understood. Most of the newer tour guides reproduce the interpretation of the more well-seasoned guides. Some of the tour guides have not only sought out historical documents and attended relevant museum exhibitions, but have also carried out interviews with elderly family members to supplement their knowledge of the slave trade along the Gold Coast.

At times, tour guides attributed how the slave trade must have been carried out on the Gold Coast based upon their reading of historical texts that discuss the slave trade in West Africa generally or in specific places such as the Bight of Benin. There is little cross-checking of tour guides' presentations by the management of the castles, so guides may take liberties in deciding what to present and emphasize. Some tour guides read visitors' comments and make adjustments to their presentations based on them. While participating on tours, I often wondered how much of a guide's presentation was learned from a book or oral history, versus his own extrapolation of historical events based on imagining or embellishing the historical circumstances surrounding the castle. First-hand accounts themselves have been scrutinized by historians as to their relative accuracy and bias (see Feinberg 1976; Kea 1971). Although it is not the point of this chapter, assessing the historical veracity of guided tours is nevertheless difficult not only because of the uncritical acceptance of some of these written sources, but also because of the bricolage of materials tour guides use as inspirations for their own creative recounting of history.

Segregating Tours

Though it is not the official policy of the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board or its staff, in practice African Americans and Afro Caribbeans are often on separate tours from whites. Ghanaians, on the other hand, are placed with either group. According to one tour guide, although some African Americans and Afro Caribbeans would not mind joining a tour with whites, the majority would want whites absent from their tours. Senior tour guides have advised their junior colleagues not to combine diaspora Africans and whites on the same tour because the former group sometimes blames the latter group for the ill effects of the slave trade and problems arise. Accra-

based operators who organize packaged tours to Cape Coast and Elmina castles sometimes request that visiting diaspora African groups be given their own tour; this is especially common during the high season for diaspora Africans during July and August, when Afahy , Emancipation Day, and PANAFEST are held. Individuals or small groups of diaspora Africans at times ask castle personnel to exclude whites from their tours. Some African Americans have explained to castle personnel that touring these sites is an emotional and painful experience, and that they would not want white people to see them or take photographs of them in an emotional state.

One tour guide informed me, "...You see, when people come here, they get very emotional...Some African Americans, because of this period, and you see some of them weeping seriously, and then to them, they wouldn't like to listen to any other explanation on that—[than] the whites were responsible for the situation in which they find themselves now." African Americans told tour guides that they would feel more comfortable asking questions about the atrocities of the slave trade if whites were not present. One tour guide explained that a diaspora African had asked him, "'Do you have Europeans here? Caucasians or whites? Will he be on tour?' I said, 'No,' and that kind of thing. So, that should tell me that they are not welcome." Another tour guide mentioned that whites are uncomfortable on tours when an African or African American is joining because they feel guilty and self-conscious in the presence of blacks when they see the dungeons and hear the history.

The tour guide and security staff determine who comprises a tour and use their discretion to separate people, if necessary. Tours generally run on a first-come, first-served basis. If there are five whites and five African Americans waiting for a tour, they

will form one group; however, if there are ten African Americans and two or three whites, then usually the African Americans take their own tour without the whites. One Cape Coast Castle tour guide relayed his experiences with separating visitors:

....On two separate occasions there were Jamaicans, who, who I was conducting a tour for Jamaicans. And, some...Europeans tried to join. And at [the] dungeons, they nearly exchanged blows. So, what I did was to call in the other tour guide to handle the Europeans. That was about three years ago. And only this week, only this week, only last Monday, there were four British nationals who came over here touring, [to] be taken around, while four African Americans from New Jersey—they came to join the group. Later on they said that “No,” they would not like to move with the Europeans....To save the situation, I called in [another tour guide]; he was around and he took them.

When I asked this tour guide to elaborate on the details of the former incident, he recalled:

I remember when one said, “You sold our ancestors!” Then the other sharply retorted that, “Who sold your ancestors?” Yes, you see? Look at that situation....And such situations are very—it starts very slowly...Yes, in the first place, it started [with] verbal words, and this, and then those. Then I felt that, no, I don’t want them to strike. I knew how the whole thing was heading towards. And one held, held him back very well. One held the other, the other’s T-shirt. And the way and manner the whole thing was going, I felt that I—the tour guide—should have to do something about that.

The blame game is not limited to visitors touring the castles. One Elmina tour guide reported to me that he has noticed a shift over time with regard to who is to blame for slavery. In 1997 and 1998, African Americans told him, “They [Europeans] stole us!” Since 1999, this sentiment has been replaced by, “You [Ghanaians] sold us!” Other tour guides have also commented on how they are sometimes accused of being descendents of slave traders or middlemen by diaspora Africans. Tour guides themselves present the role carried out by African middlemen in various ways. Many hardly mention the presence of African middle men. Others explain that coastal peoples, like the Fantes,

sometimes traded slaves because of inter-ethnic conflict and that they really had no choice. Under the climate of insecurity that was perpetuated by slave raiding and warfare, coastal peoples could either trade captives or become captives. Few of the guides mention pawning, the payment of tribute in captives, or the details about Africans as middlemen. If asked about the African middlemen, tour guides will discuss them, often adding that the local Africans had no idea how harsh the living conditions would be for slaves in the Americas, because the domestic slavery that they were witness to was of a less brutal nature.

Tours of Elmina Castle typically begin in the Female Slave Yard, where the guide describes how female captives were held. He describes how the governor would look down upon these women from his balcony and select one who would be bathed in the yard below, climb the ladder, and go through the trap door up to his quarters where she would be raped. One Elmina tour guide said that during his tour, a European man told him that this scenario must have been okay because at least the woman would have been sexually fulfilled. This tour guide reasoned that these kinds of offensive comments spark altercations among the touring public and that if they could be minimized or eliminated by separating whites from blacks on tours, then it is justified.

When diaspora Africans and whites are combined in a guided tour, diaspora Africans may eventually wander back to the ticket booth to be placed in another non-white group, join a group already on tour, or simply explore the castle on a self-guided tour. Tour guides typically accommodate the wishes of these tourists, despite the challenge of meeting these demands when there are not enough guides to go around. Some of the tour guides I interviewed thought that it is not healthy to segregate people on

tours, but that for the sake of maintaining peace or to be considerate of the wishes of customers, it is justified to separate diaspora Africans and whites. Tour guides said we must not only try to tolerate each other, but also use the experience of visiting the castles as a lesson about tragedies that should never be repeated in the future. Some tour guides were baffled that black and white Americans could live amongst one another in the same country for hundreds of years, travel to Ghana, and not accept being on the same guided tour of the castle. One of the museum educators that I interviewed thought that separating whites and blacks on tours was not the best idea and reasoned that we need to move on. She said tour guides “add fuel to the fire” especially when African American visitors come to the castles. Some tour guides enjoy drumming up visitors’ emotions in spite of supervisors’ disapproval of it.

When I asked one Elmina tour guide to relay an anecdote of a tense encounter that he witnessed, he shared the following.

There was a time on this very courtyard, there was an Irish couple who came here for a tour, of course. And there were a few, about five or so African Americans also here. And the African Americans were not actually on tour. They had been here already, so they just came to—I don't know whether to pacify their ancestors or whatever. But the moment they saw this Irish couple, they started insulting them, [in trying to] dragging them out of the place. The man relaxed, but the woman just didn't understand *why* this should happen, so the woman also replied. So, there was an exchange of words, to the extent that, if they had not been separated, they even might have been exchanging blows here and there. So we had to actually carry the woman out of the place with her husband, we just explained to them. The woman just didn't understand why they were angry, “Because, well, I’m Irish. There was a similar thing [in which Irish were oppressed] and I can sympathize with you.” But because of the *color*, they had no time to find out whether you were an Irish, whether you were a Britain, whatever. “Once you are white, you are white,” you know, it's nasty. And for the [white] Americans too, it's nasty. Even for the castle, they [African Americans] don't want to see it, alive. They want the castle dark. So, they [African Americans] will not be saying things like that [insulting whites]; I will be reminding them [not to] from time to time.

So if they come here and see some of these visitors or tourists who are not *Africans*, whether American, whether, if you are not *black*, they have a problem with you.

Culture—and not race—is sometimes the salient factor in the composition of tours. African Americans touring the castles with Ghanaians occasionally complain to the tour guides that the Ghanaians laugh inappropriately while on tour and do not show enough sensitivity. One guide recalled when some Ghanaians laughed at his juxtaposition of Maclean’s spacious living quarters with the squalid living conditions of the slaves in the dungeons. He said that the African Americans on the same tour were very angry and upset and asked him how they could laugh at such things. The tour guide responded to the situation by listening to the concerns of the African Americans and by advising the Ghanaians against laughing inappropriately. Senior tour guides recommended that the newly-trained guides should adjust their vocabulary when giving tours to an African American audience. For example, the term ‘slaves’ should be replaced by ‘captives’ or even ‘ancestors’; likewise, Cape Coast or Elmina castles should be called ‘dungeons’ instead of ‘castles’. When I asked why these were important distinctions, one tour guide replied, “[African Americans] were saying that they weren’t slaves....they were unlawful migrants to the New World. So, they prefer to be called captives rather than slaves. So, when you call them slaves they become annoyed.” Chapter 5 will elaborate upon the reasons for arguing that the term ‘castle’ should be replaced by ‘dungeon’.

Tour (Im-)Propriety

The standard guided tour of Cape Coast Castle begins at the entrance to the Male Slave Dungeon. Outside the entrance is a marble plaque etched with the words:

IN EVERLASTING MEMORY
OF THE ANGUISH OF OUR ANCESTORS.
MAY THOSE WHO DIED REST IN PEACE.
MAY THOSE WHO RETURN FIND THEIR ROOTS.
MAY HUMANITY NEVER AGAIN PERPETRATE
SUCH INJUSTICE AGAINST HUMANITY
WE, THE LIVING, VOW TO UPHOLD THIS.

Tour guides either read this inscription or ask a person on the tour read it. This act calls attention to the sentiments found in the plaque and sets the mood for the tour. From the onset, visitors are invited by tour guides both directly and indirectly to imagine the historical events that took place at the castle. The act of reading the inscription indicates the proper level of reverence those on tour should exhibit, while drawing the visitors in to empathize with those individuals taken unjustly. The overall message is one of redemption: for descendants to find their homeland as a necessary act of self-realization and for all to learn from and act upon lessons from history, vowing not to repeat the same mistakes made during the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Cape Coast and Elmina castles qualify as *lieux de mémoire*—sites of memory—because they physically and symbolically represent history and memory. Pierre Nora (1989) writes that these sites are subject to “the dialectic of remembering and forgetting,” susceptible to “manipulation and appropriation,” and are vulnerable to “being long dormant and periodically revived” (8-9). This notion of malleable memory is obvious in tour guides’ and visitors’ interpretations of the castles’ histories.

Tour guides often size up their audience and make adjustments to their presentations based on visitors’ demographics (race, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender). The following account comes from a tour that I attended, together with a Euro-American woman, a European woman, a Ghanaian woman, two Ghanaian young men, and their

white Danish girlfriends. When discussing the process by which a captive was auctioned in Cape Coast Castle, our Ghanaian tour guide illustrated his point by pulling aside one of the young Ghanaian males:

So a strong man like my friend here, for instance, will go for about twelve guns or four kegs of gun powders, about six bottles of whiskey or schnapps, some second-hand clothes (someone laughs), blankets, brass bowls, and knives, and many things in a package—earrings and watches and many things. And the buyers made in the upper right hand here (tour guide rubs the right shoulder of the man, illustrating his point) [They'd put] palm oil, and you are branded with the initials of the merchants, agents, or company. You might have [the initials] J.S.S., John Smith's Slave behind you (someone laughs). Very soon you have all the letters of the alphabet behind you, if you are sold to another person: that person sells you, that person sells you, brand you, brand you, brand you, brand you, it just gets all the alphabet behind you.

In response to this scenario, the other Ghanaian young man on tour was giggling and the one being made the example of had a smile on his face. Clearly, these two Ghanaian visitors laughed because they thought this was amusing, and the Ghanaian tour guide obviously enjoyed presenting history in this manner. These kinds of exchanges made me wonder how various visitors might have responded to them laughing at the episode. When I questioned this tour guide, he explained that he had used individuals of various nationalities to demonstrate the role of “John Smith’s Slave” on other tours. When this was done, sometimes visitors on these tours showed anguish and other times they laughed. The tour guide said he did this to engage groups in a way that will “invigorate” them.

After relaying this example to an Elmina tour guide, I asked him how he thought African Americans would respond if they were on the tour. He thought African Americans would call those Ghanaians insensitive, but he does not blame the Ghanaians, because he reasons that most of them are ignorant about the history of slavery. He noted

that sometimes whites come to the castles with their Ghanaian girlfriends and display affection in public. “People laugh on tour and don’t realize that this is not a time for merry-making,” he explained. At the same time, he feels that as a trained tour guide he can do little in such situations because ‘the customer is always right.’

In contrast, a Cape Coast tour guide relayed an episode in which he stepped in to censure visitors after some African Americans complained to him about Ghanaians laughing inappropriately while on tour.

I asked them. You know, one of the African Americans approached and told me, ‘Why is it that these people are laughing?’ And I told them that in fact it’s highly unacceptable for you to laugh during tour, just laughing [at] things so, while others are serious. So, I warned them; I told them that if they don’t take it they are going to be thrown out. That is what I told them, because this is not a laughing matter.....(AR: ‘What were you saying at that time?’) We were up in the governor’s residence. After, after, when we got to Maclean’s Hall, I was saying, the governor—this was the governor’s court room—that’s where he settled all cases. And they laughed, when they laughed there I took it normal. But when we got to the governor’s sitting room, I told them this whole area was the governor’s sitting room and they started laughing....And I added that this—it was up here during the sea breeze, while the slaves were down there starving and suffocating to death. And it’s like....They laughed and laughed and laughed. But, what came to my mind was maybe they were thinking it’s funny because, ‘No, this whole big area for one governor alone, and then the slaves would be down there packed in their numbers, and starving and suffocating to death.’ That was what they found funny. (AR: ‘Do you think they really found it funny, or do you think that, sometimes when people laugh it’s out of embarrassment, or they don’t know what to do because the moment is a bit tense? If they hear such horrible things that happened, or you think they really thought it was funny?’) I wouldn’t think they really found it funny, but maybe they were shocked, or like they were surprised, so that covered the laughter....Yeah, you know, they were fuming—the African Americans, they were fuming. And they drew my attention to that. Why do these people laugh about something which is very serious. So that compelled me to actually call them aside and warn them.

While I toured Cape Coast Castle with one young African American woman and eleven young Ghanaian men, our tour guide made a number of comments which made

the Ghanaian men laugh. When the guide described the inhumane and unsanitary living conditions endure by the slaves and then mentioned that food was thrown down at them, they laughed. Later, when the guide took us to the Female Slave Dungeon and explained that the European merchants raped some of the African captives and made them pregnant, some of the Ghanaians laughed. They responded in a similar way when the guide jokingly said that the cells holding female captives had much more ventilation than those holding males because “female slaves produce more body heat.” When I asked this tour guide right after the tour about the laughter, he said that people laugh to relieve tension after hearing something unpleasant. When I asked him about the responses of diaspora Africans to these examples, he said that some of them laugh, others keep quiet, and still others ask “Why?” He explained simply, “They also want to have fun here.”

The Slave Story

The ‘slave story’ describes captive Africans living with very little light or ventilation in crowded dark, dank cells. In Cape Coast Castle, tour guides tell visitors how human feces, blood, and decomposed bodies form the floor of the male dungeon. In Elmina Castle, guides recap how female captives were hand-picked by the governor to be sent up to his chambers to be raped. Though the history presented is selective, it is not necessarily inaccurate, but highlights the most egregious tragedies slaves were made to endure. Vivid descriptions—which are stressed by all of the tour guides—evoke an emotional reaction, haunting visitors and inviting them to imagine such torture.

The following account describes the chamber of Cape Coast Castle’s male slave dungeon used for those who reportedly incited rebellions:

The tunnel on the floor, that was a drainage for their feces and urine. So, when it rained, water comes in through these holes. This was to wash the

floor. But the whole place got covered with filth and many of them got sick and died here. The excavation here revealed bones, some shackles, branding instruments, and some ropes. Some parts of the earth [floor] were tested; it contained blood, flesh, feces, many other things. This was a portion of the earth (that was left untouched by the excavation and is higher than the rest of the floor). (Someone sighs audibly.) It's made up of feces, made up of blood, decomposed bodies, bones, foods, and many, many materials. If walls could speak, they would tell you what happened here. They were the witnesses to this inhuman treatment here for years.

Through this narration, tour guides reinforce visitors' sense of imagining the past. One can smell the dank, humid stench, feel the lack of ventilation and light, and see the dismal conditions of the dungeons and easily empathize with the tragedy that took place there.

When I related the standard description offered by tour guides to James Anquandah, an archaeologist from the University of Ghana who excavated portions of Cape Coast Castle in 1996, he said that he had never excavated the male slave dungeon himself, but two other excavations of Cape Coast Castle had preceded his.⁹ In his excavation of the female dungeon, Anquandah found human waste, tobacco pipes, weapons—indicating that there were soldiers guarding the women—and glass beads, presumably worn by the female slaves. They found bones of cattle, rodents, birds, and fish in the female dungeon. Anquandah told me that most African Americans want to hear that the female slaves were suffering, but the archaeological evidence indicates that they had some good meals there. He was skeptical that any slaves were buried within the walls of Cape Coast Castle. He found plenty of bones during his excavation within the castle, but thought that the materials used for these burials would not have been used for slaves but more likely for soldiers. Though he had found some names from archival sources suggesting the identity of those buried, these names were not corroborated by materials found in situ. None of this information Anquandah told me is included in

⁹ These excavations were carried out by Deutsch Simmonds (1973) and Kirkdale Archaeology (1991).

guided tours of Cape Coast Castle. He confirmed documentary evidence (Simmonds 1973) that no iron shackles have been found during excavations of Cape Coast Castle, yet they are part of the tour guides' description of the male slave dungeon.

According to castle tour guides, Africans in diaspora want to hear the whole story—the details of what happened to the slaves who were held there—and they want to deliver. “They might have heard it from books, but when they hear it—complementing with the sites—then it makes everything real, the experience real.” Another tour guide said it is important to share the details of the history with everyone—whether European, African American, or Ghanaian. “Actually when they come here, we need to give them *every* detail. You know, history is basically the study of past important events. And if you assert the definition as such, then there's no need to hide, because there are things which *happened*. We are not fabricating them—things which happened—we have to tell them the right thing. So there is no need in hiding information.”

After visiting the male slave dungeon, the tour guide stops at the marked graves of Philip Quaque (a local African missionary), E.B. Whitehead (a British soldier), George Maclean (one-time president of the British company of merchants), and Lytettia Elizabeth London (Maclean's wife who died prematurely). Tour guides will often present George Maclean as a governor who laid the groundwork for British colonization of the Gold Coast. Maclean served as a mediator in local court cases and disputes, enforced laws abolishing slave trading at Cape Coast Castle once it had been outlawed, and permitted Africans designated to be sold into slavery to find a safe haven in Cape Coast Castle. These details of Maclean's life are not covered on guided tours. I have witnessed and have also heard tour guides report on some visitors spitting on Maclean's grave, out of

disgust for his presumed involvement in the slave trade and colonialism. This parallels the case of the defacement and graffiti inscription of “Slave Trader” on Edward Colston's statue in Bristol, UK. Colston generously contributed to the building of schools and hospitals in the seventeenth century, but was later found to have amassed his fortune from his dealings in the slave trade. This revelation sparked public debate over whether this kind of person should be memorialized as a benefactor to the community on a prominent street of Bristol (Chivallon 2001: 353-356). These examples tell us how selective people's understanding of history may be. In creating and sustaining markers of memory, such as memorials or interpretations of guided tours, there is no room for reconciling two opposing memories. History is bound to generate multiple memories, which may be diametrically opposed and clash if they are brought together at the same site of history.

The Salience of Particular Spaces

As chapter 2 indicates, these castles have served many purposes over the years. Initially built as smaller lodges or forts to trade in gold, they metamorphosed over the centuries serving as fortresses for trading captives for slavery, seats of colonial government under British rule, post offices, prisons, police training depots, schools, barracks, and now tourist attractions. Though these myriad functions are sometimes mentioned by some of the tour guides, they—apart from use in the slave trade—are not emphasized. There are cases in which visitors' specific interests—in shrines or architecture, for example—help to direct the presentation of the tour guides, but these are in the minority. One Elmina Castle tour guide commented that, “....An African American group with some two Ghanaians came and said, ‘Look, I want my people to

know exactly what happened. I want them to cry, I want them to *feel* that they have some to somewhere.’ I said, ‘Oh! So, what do you want me to do? To go and put some charcoal here and there, you know, just to scare them, to cower, or to lash them? No! I am going to give them a tour of this place.’” From his perspective, he always presents the same information—no matter the racial or national composition of visitors—and it is up to the visitors how they will react to his presentation. Another Elmina tour guide reported to me that the general information he provides is always the same—whether visitors are black or white—but that visitors’ questions influence how detailed his presentation is. One Cape Coast Castle guide put it this way:

First, we must know the group....and we will know what to deliver. Some people will like to know more, hammer more on the activities that went on after the slave trade, some people will want to know the role played by the Europeans. Some people will want, why few people have been buried over here. Now a group of African Americans are not interested to see some of these who are buried there. So, such areas, sometimes even we don’t even mention. Some people would like to see more about cannons and why the purpose of so many cannons and cannon balls. Some people want to see those things. Why should all these cannons [be] pointing at the countryside, because they knew that if the pirates were attacking, they would not come by a boat—and that would draw the British and the Ashanti wars. You see that? So, always we look at the people [on tour]—not because we are trying to hide certain things, but we’d rather emphasize more on, when they want to know more on that sort, we talk more on that.

Castle tour guides state that students and teachers of all racial/national backgrounds and African Americans are the groups that demand to know details of the slave trade and what happened to captives at the castles. While diaspora African visitors may ask questions about what atrocities their ancestors were made to endure, white visitors generally are more reticent and refrain from asking detailed questions. What is typically underscored in tours of both Elmina and Cape Coast castles is the ‘slave story’, the effects of the slave trade on Africans, and redemption in the dedication of the Door of

Return. In contrast with Cape Coast Castle, Elmina Castle tours detail information about the various uses of the castle and the history of the site beyond the tragedy of captives' treatment during the slave trade.

At Cape Coast Castle—especially during the busy high tourist season—tour guides often end their tours after reemerging through the Door of Return and showing visitors the Condemned Cell. This small, stifling cell was the punishment for captives who rebelled and where they were sent to starve or suffocate to death.¹⁰ Ending a tour at this stage omits the governor's quarters, meeting rooms, barracks, and Palaver Hall. Cape Coast Castle guides reason that sometimes groups have limited time to spend at the castle. Furthermore, finite numbers of tour guides have limited time to meet the demand of tourists; guides must be selective about which aspects of the site should be presented. Though these constraints are also found at Elmina Castle, standard tours there *do* tend to incorporate the officers' and governor's quarters, as well as Prempeh's Room—used by the British to detain the Asantehene, Nana Akwesi Agyeman Prempeh I, in 1896. Elmina guides also present a more holistic historical accounting of the site. For example, they tell visitors about the uses of the castle after the abolition of the slave trade as an administrative center for the British, a training site for the Royal West African Frontier Force during World War II, and a police training school in 1948. Individual guides at Elmina are supervised more closely than their counterparts at Cape Coast. Also, senior guides at Elmina have set the standard fairly high, so that newer guides will model a more comprehensive interpretation of the site.

¹⁰ Both castles have a Condemned Cell, where touring groups occasionally leave wreaths in memorial to those lost in the slave trade.

Cape Coast guides think most visitors come to the castles expecting to hear the ‘slave story’ and could care less about other aspects of the history of these sites. One tour guide commented, “There are some groups who would not even want to see [the governor’s quarters.] Instead, they are interested in seeing the dungeons, the Door of No Return, and the Door of Return. African Americans are interested in the role Africans played here—they are not interested in the governor’s residence or the grave sites.” According to one Cape Coast Castle guide, “A lot of activities have taken place in here apart from the slave trade: the beginning of the gold trade, the trade in palm oil and others. One of the Christian churches started from here, and then this was the seat of government and administration. But in all of these, we don’t hear of them. We hear of only the slave trade.” Many tour guides said that they always offer the same history to the public, but some admitted that they feel pressure to emphasize certain aspects. In practice, they inevitably alter their presentations with regard to visitors’ interest—or lack of interest—in particular aspects of the histories surrounding the castles. Tour guides take notice if visitors are keener on taking photographs than listening to the history, or if visitors become attentive, uncomfortable, ashamed, angry, or sad about their presentations.

Some tour guides rationalize leaving out particular rooms because they contain no period furniture, artifacts, or clothing in them; therefore, they have little to work with. Though similar tours at Gorée Island in Senegal include the display of shackles presumably worn by slaves, there are no props displayed in the dungeons of Cape Coast and Elmina. However, tour guides effectively draw upon the environment of the dank, dark dungeon, and *lack* of tangible objects to describe the bleak existence of slaves. The

history of the slave trade is of course not the only history surrounding these sites, but that history is what gets emphasized because it is considered by tour guides to be the most significant and what visitors want to hear. For guides, the perspective of the captives is essential to this experience and the perspective of others (African non-captives, Afro-Europeans, and Europeans) is secondary or non-existent.

Some of the rooms in both castles are currently used as offices for Ghana Museums and Monuments Board or as space for gift shops. The room above the male dungeon in Cape Coast Castle was used as a church and the first school, later a restaurant, and now a children's library. Typically a tour guide will remark upon the irony of worship in the church while slaves were suffering in dungeons directly below, but the more mundane aspects of these rooms are excluded. Palaver Hall, where historically prices were negotiated and disputes were settled, has been remodeled according to contemporary Ghanaian aesthetics—complete with freshly painted yellow walls and bright fluorescent lights lining the ceiling—to be used for GMMB personnel meetings, seminars, and a variety of other functions. Some tour guides avoid this room altogether, saying that they do not want to spend time explaining why the room looks the way it does. They think that simply entering the “modern” room is a jarring experience which does not fit well with the rest of the tour.

Many tour guides say that particular spaces within the castle hold meaning. For example, one tour guide at Cape Coast Castle commented that *officially*, he sees African Americans and Afro Caribbeans as tourists because they pay a tourist fee, but *personally*, he sees them as coming back home. His conviction that they are returnees is especially strong at the Door of Return when he explains to them the significance of Ghana being

the 'Gateway to Africa' that was symbolically christened in 1998 for the first Emancipation Day in Ghana.

In order to fully appreciate its significance, one must first know the history surrounding the Door of No Return. The Door of No Return, located in Cape Coast Castle near the female dungeons, is where captives made their final exit from the African continent to the awaiting ships. This "door" is actually comprised of two, large double doors opening out into a contemporary view of local fisher folk working or children playing against the backdrop of the rushing Atlantic waves. One can smell the salty air and picture the canoes used to transport captives out to larger sailing ships bound for the Americas. Guides discuss the fear that captives must have experienced upon seeing the ocean for the first time after being snatched from the landlocked hinterlands and spending up to three months in the dungeons. Captives were so afraid, we are told, that they sometimes committed suicide in the waters outside the castle. For captives who embarked upon the middle passage, there were dangers of disease, starvation, and storms on the ocean, not to mention squalid living conditions. If a captive died while on board, he would not be treated to the Christian burial commonly given to sailors and merchants, but would be unceremoniously dumped overboard without any blessing or last rites.

After relaying the tragic story of the middle passage, tour guides have the visitors turn around to see what is written on the ocean side of the exit to the castle; this side reads Door of Return. The guide explains that this door was named as such in 1998 as part of the Emancipation Day festivities and that it now symbolizes the return that people of African descent in diaspora may now make with Ghana as the gateway to Africa. The

guide typically congratulates and welcomes home any African American or Afro Caribbean visitor present on tour.

The Broader Picture: Contemporary Parallels of the Injustice of the Slave Trade

Only two of the tour guides I interviewed try to connect the injustices of the slave trade with the injustices of the global economy. They transition easily between seeing Africans as victims in the slave trade through the loss of human resources from the continent, and seeing continuity in African victimization as prices of cocoa and gold—both major commodities for Ghana—are controlled by the international market. Ghana’s status as HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Country) serves as a reminder of economic dependency on institutions like the World Bank and IMF. One Cape Coast Castle tour guide, whom I will refer to as Kweku, makes a habit of commenting periodically throughout the tour, “This is the kind of injustice we’re talking about,” when referring to what he perceives as particular injustices of the slave trade. For example, Kweku says this when recalling that European convicts were not imprisoned in Europe but were sometimes given “good jobs” as slave overseers on Caribbean plantations. He concludes his tours by asking visitors to think about relationships between injustices of the slave trade and plantation slavery, and injustices suffered by countries like Ghana which lack economic power to set prices of commodities on the world market. After demonstrating that the church was located directly on top of the male dungeon, Kweku says:

This was the entrance into the church (knocking on wooden door), and this was the entrance into the dungeon (pointing down to wooden grating on the floor). (Someone on tour sighs and says, ‘That is disgusting!’) You see? But can you imagine the melody that came from here? The psalms and the songs came from here (knocking on door to former church), the groans and the moans also came from here (pointing to the dungeon), and the constant rhythm of the ocean. ‘Hallelujah! Hallelujah!’ / ‘Oh-Oh, Oh-Oh’ that was going on. This is the kind of injustice we are talking of.

Now the dungeons are empty, the cells are free, the chains have been broken, but is slavery gone? We're working on our plantation, we cultivate our crops: mango, cotton, cocoyam, and many others. We send them to the World Bank and they give us the price. This time, you are enslaving your land. You will continue to work and you give out your results, and they price it for you. And when they bring their product, it is the same price as you buy it. If you buy a Mercedes Benz in Japan, [it's the] the same thing that you pay just for it here. But when you take your cocoa to the market and they give you the price, you see? So they just, every day, keep you under the poverty line, and you go begging for aids, for donations, for loans, with debts and strings and many others. This is the kind of injustice that you must try to end now. The chattel slavery injustice is over, but this social and economic injustice must end before everyone is equal and there will be justice in the world.

He seamlessly links the injustices of slavery with the injustices of economic domination in contemporary Ghana, while underscoring connections with historical injustice perpetuated in systems of slavery generally. Kweku remarks after exiting the Door of No Return:

Those who survived [the Middle Passage] and arrived were sold to plantation owners and miners who used them on their farms—the Americas, the Caribbeans, and the West Indies. During that period, there was nothing like union. So from sunrise to sunset, the masters were the union, the employers and everything—they determined the working wage and everything. And was there a wage? The proceeds went to building America and Europe.... We are highly indebted poor countries, highly indebted poor people. Those who plundered our resources—both in men and natural—we have to go to them, begging them for aid, for donations, for loans, and whatever else.

This argument bears a striking resemblance to those put forward by Walter Rodney:

A useful parallel which would help in understanding what took place in West Africa during the centuries of slave-trading can be found in Africa today, where many leaders join with the European and American imperialists to exploit the great majority of the African people.... the Atlantic slave-trade should be seen as the first stage of the colonial domination of Africa by Europeans (1967: 7, 21).

Several of the tour guides are familiar with the scholarship and discourse that discuss the legacy of relationships between Africans and Europeans emerging out of the

slave trade.¹¹ Kweku has an impressive personal library of African and African American history and novels; he pulls threads from these various sources together to offer up a historical presentation that captures the attention and imagination of visitors. Occasionally, he chats with visitors about the American civil war, lynching of Blacks in the U.S., Bill Clinton’s visit to Ghana, and contemporary American foreign policy with Africa. Some of the supervisors with GMMB have commented to me that Kweku’s tours are too sensationalist, excite visitors’ emotions unnecessarily, and fall outside the usual range of content covered by other tour guides. One official remarked, “There’s more to it than political undertones to everything. [I] wouldn’t want him to think about enslavement and [say that] what is still going on is still slavery, but to provoke further curiosity.” Kweku has been sought after by operators based in Accra to lead tours for African American groups that visit the castle. This fact suggests that he knows what his clients—at least the African American market—want to hear, and he is good at delivering it.

Kweku says he gives white visitors the same detailed presentation on the ‘slave story’ that he gives diaspora Africans, even though there are times when they appear as if they would rather not hear the details.

I give them the information, so that it is clear, so this is what happened between Africans and Europeans at this point in time. And if possible, I ask them to take favorable policies, in whichever position they are, towards...Africans—when I get an all European [group]....They do agree that if we were to calculate the bank-working hours of Africans who arrived alive in the Americas, the Caribbeans, and the West Indies, and South America, they do agree....So that if we can own their country, then why don’t they do something to compensate us for that energy we put into it?

¹¹ One tour guide even cited Walter Rodney’s work when I asked about conflicting historical sources during an interview.

This remark uses the ‘slave story’ as a point of departure to argue for reparations to address the inequity of economic relations between Africans who built the economies of the New World and whites who were the beneficiaries.

Tour guides are very much aware of current debates regarding reparations for the trans-Atlantic slave trade and repatriation of diaspora Africans to Africa. These topics occasionally crop up on castles tours or PANAFEST/Emancipation Day events. Though these issues are not necessarily included in tours, guides have become sensitive to issues raised by African Americans in Ghana. Cape Coast Castle continues to host Emancipation Day’s annual reverential night, in which speeches by African Americans and Ghanaians are made and a pilgrimage to the dungeons is undertaken. The Ghanaian media (newspapers, television, and radio) disseminates these messages to wider audiences. In the absence of strict guidelines for what tour guides should offer, their presentations are bound to vary somewhat and to be influenced by contemporary popular discourses.

Tour guides are the first line of communication with the public. As culture brokers, they have power to convey historical messages and infuse interpretation with significant meaning in the contemporary context. Many tour guides aim to please in their historical interpretations and delivery, providing visitors with what they think they want to hear. Guides educate or entertain visitors in a number of ways. Sometimes they offend, sometimes they inform, sometimes they embellish, sometimes they get the history right, sometimes they get the history wrong. What do visitors think of their presentations? What aspects of tours produce strong reactions from the public? Chapter 5 presents perspectives of the castles’ visitors. I detail the various public debates that

have erupted over terms of reference, restoration, use of sites, admission, and historical interpretation. The diversity of visitors' opinions shows how Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle are contested sites with contested histories. Nietzsche writes that the kind of historical consciousness embedded in the physical make-up of monuments represents, "a belief in the coherence and continuity of what is great in all ages, it is a protest against the change of generations and against transitoriness" (qtd. in Levinson 1998: 7). Cape Coast and Elmina castles are considered "African Holocaust memorials" to some and mean something completely different to others. The next chapter shows just how transitory the public's interpretations of its meanings are.

Chapter 5: Visitors at Cape Coast and Elmina Castles & Disputed Interpretations of the Sites

“History is a sword. Its force is powerful and its swing may never be retraced.”

Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle are a backdrop to the process of marking memories of the slave trade. In this process, the castles are sites in which history is presented to the public, and the public reflects on this history in light of contemporary discourses of identity, racial injustice, and redemption. This chapter presents some of the more prevalent themes presented in the castles’ guest books dating from 1987—2002, and survey data of the castles’ visitors targeting Africans and people of African descent from November 2001—August 2002, a sample size of 440 (see Table 5.1). Whenever possible, I contextualize these comments within the prevailing debates surrounding such issues as the appropriate term for these sites, use of the castles, admission fees, the interpretation of tour guides’ presentations, and the overall reactions of visitors in experiencing Cape Coast and Elmina castles.

Table 5.1: Breakdown of Cape Coast and Elmina Castle Survey Respondents

Group	N
African Americans/ African Canadians	229
Continental Ghanaians	122
Afro Caribbeans/ Afro South Americans	33
Continental Africans (excluding Ghanaians)	20
Whites	11
Ghanaian Expatriates	8
Afro Europeans	6
Other	11
Total	440

Castle vs. Dungeon

One public debate since the renovation of Elmina Castle and Cape Coast Castle as UNESCO World Heritage sites in 1991 has been whether to refer to them as dungeons, castles, or some variation thereof. Even though most Ghanaians refer to them as castles, this term has not been accepted by everyone. Many have argued that these are not sites that were built to house a king and queen, and their names should reflect their purpose more accurately. Some say these sites do not deserve to be associated with the

corresponding positive valence of ‘castle’; instead the term of reference should reflect their primary purpose of use in the slave trade.

Visitors are bound to develop a stronger opinion on this issue once they go on a tour and reflect on the ‘slave story’. Ghanaians and African Americans have suggested in the guest books that they should be called dungeons, as in the following remarks. “This is not a castle—it is a dungeon and should be referred to as such and should not be ‘whitewashed’ by refurbishing it.” “This place should not be called a castle. Its [sic] just a euphemism for slave dungeon. People should be aware of the harsh reality of this and not have it candy-coated.”

Some African Americans, Afro Caribbeans, Ghanaians, among others sensitive to this reasoning say that captives were held in the dungeons of these structures and to avoid using ‘dungeon’ is to deny historical fact. Some consider making a pilgrimage to Cape Coast and Elmina castles as a necessary act of homecoming. During this homecoming, they want to honor the memory of the captives by recognizing that captives *did* suffer in dungeons. The following terms are examples of what visitors thought these places should be called: castles, castle-dungeons, forts, slave castles, captive trade ports, slave forts, slave dungeons, dungeons, torture chambers, hell holes, relics of inhumanity, and African slave trade memorials.

Table 5.2: Survey Respondents’ Opinions on Term of Reference Across All Groups

Name Castle Should Be Called	Percent (N=417)
Castle-Dungeon	35.0%
Dungeon	30.0%
Castle	19.7%
Fort/Fortress/Port/Trade Center	4.3%
Multiple Answers of the Above	2.6%
Other	8.4%
Total	100.0%

The issue of naming is occasionally raised on tours when visitors directly confront tour guides. During his guided tour of Cape Coast Castle, Kweku recorded the following discussion he had with a couple of African American visitors.

Visitor 1: “Why do we refer to this as *castles*? Castles is very positive, is, you know, affirming. And is the dungeon... Why has it been romanticized as a castle?”

Guide: “Yes, that was the idea of a castle where the king’s representative would stay here to deal with the people here.”

Visitor 1: “For the king?”

Guide: “Yes. So, as time went on, it was used as a slave castle. So, normally, people call it a slave castle, not a king’s castle.”

Visitor 2: “It’s a slave dungeon—we should call it a slave dungeon.”

Guide: “It’s a slave dungeon, well..”

Visitor 2: “It should always be a slave dungeon. This is no castle!”

Guide: “Okay. Others would prefer to call it a slave castle. Others prefer to call it a slave dungeon....”

Visitor 2: “Please, for us, you call it a dungeon!”

Visitor 1: “The castle is a great place though, where you have slaves and servants and...”

Visitor 2: “... Well keep in, keep in, keep in mind, that it was a castle for those who lived here because for the captives that they brought, they were not *slaves*. They were *people*, they were *human beings*.”

Guide: “They were people.”

Visitor 2: “They weren't slaves until they got on that boat to go wherever, on the Middle Passage...”

Guide: “That's why we refer to them here as *captives*. When they go out, they were...”

Visitor 2: “Yeah, they were nothing, they were property. They were something to dispose of.”

Visitor 1: “I understand that. Okay.”

Visitor 2: “But even this was a castle to them.”

In 1994 as part of a conference on historic preservation of the castles, some African Americans resident in Ghana proposed to change the name from Cape Coast Castle to Cape Coast Castle and Dungeons and likewise, from Elmina Castle to Elmina Castle and Dungeons. Though this proposal was never accepted by Ghanaian policy makers, public addresses by prominent African Americans during PANAFEST and Emancipation Day commonly refer to these sites as Cape Coast Castle and Dungeons and Elmina Castle and Dungeons. The Ghana Museum and Monuments Board (GMMB), which oversees the management of forts and castles, refers to the structures in Cape Coast and Elmina as castles. Those who defend the use of the term castle argue that these structures were not built solely for the purposes of holding captive Africans: “The castle must be maintained as a name, because the dungeon is just part of the castle.” Although these sites were originally used to store European goods, protect established storehouses from attack, and provide permanent housing for commercial and military staff (van Dantzig 1980: vi) and later came to be more heavily involved in the slave trade, their early history and use are not emphasized. Instead, the slave trade era and their use as dungeons are the most important aspects of these sites for contemporary visitors.

Going to the dungeons evokes powerful feelings of anger, sadness, and guilt. Visitors interpret the history, which can have very personal associations with their identities, through an emotionally-charged lens. They want to fulfill their expectations of

what they have heard they will experience: a deep meditation on the tragedy inflicted upon captives during the slave trade. Visitors do not want to be denied the personal, sacred experience of memorializing the slave trade. They want to reflect on the site in a way which does not whitewash its history. This is why the term, castle, is offensive to some, and why what people call these places matters.

Tourism Policy and What's Best for Ghana

The marketing strategies of the Ghana tourism industry influence appropriate terms of reference and historic presentation content and emphasis. According to the Central Region heads of the Ghana Tourist Board, “The African American and then the Caribbean market is a very big one. And we have [people with] income in that area, but it looks like our marketing and promotion is not very effective. We haven’t been able to define the structure of our market yet. I think we are not very clear with the basic demographics, so we do a lot of shotgun approach to marketing. We just spread the information and we expect that the people will come.” Some useful tourism research on domestic and foreign markets alike has been carried out by students and faculty at the University of Cape Coast’s Department of Geography and Tourism. The key characteristics of African American, Caribbean, and European markets have remained ill-defined; these are the markets that the government and the Ministry of Tourism are most interested in attracting. Domestic tourism is a significant source of revenue, and public support is important for the success of tourism in Ghana. Ghana’s economy could improve dramatically if international tourism booms. Tourism policymakers have focused on developing international markets because of their economic potential. The problem is that very little research has been done on the nature and diversity of these

markets. Bruner (1996) suggests, “If the African American market only or primarily is targeted, the emphasis could be to satisfy that market. But if the market is a broader American and European one, then the emphasis might be placed differently. Beyond marketing efforts, of course, there are larger issues of historical representation, and the key question becomes, What is best for Ghana?” (294). The question of “What is Best for Ghana?” can be understood on a number of different levels. For example, tourism policymakers may consider implications for the national, regional, and local economies. They may try to foster social relationships between Ghanaians and visitors on personal or professional bases. They may draw up plans that seek to prevent negative effects of tourism: drug abuse, prostitution, and crime. Ghana’s tourism industry itself is not a singular entity with a unified perspective on how to tackle and prioritize these issues. If we focus only on the tourism surrounding the castles, there is still a wide range of interests that must be pursued by policymakers: presenting the history of these sites, making meaningful memories, and generating revenue. In light of these sometimes competing interests, satisfying everyone is a difficult task.

Restoration

From the earliest days in which visitors’ remarks were recorded in the Cape Coast and Elmina castles’ guest books, visitors of all backgrounds have commended Ghana for the restoration and conservation work carried out with the castles. While some simply caution that these sites should be kept in their original state, others give reasons why they should be preserved or restored. “A very sad story of man’s inhumanity to man. This castle should be preserved for history, and a reminder of the horrific sufferings of black people in the hands of those who called themselves ‘Christians’.” “This castle must be

preserved as historical evidence of the cruelty of the slave trade.” “Please keep restoring this building. We have restored many convict jails in Australia so we NEVER forget what happened.” “It’s well built and I saw how white [sic] treated us in the ancient days and how my late King Prempeh I was suffered [sic] and died; Please, I appealed [sic] to the authorities and take good care of this old castle.” “We must preserve without destroying what is original. This is too important to lose!!!” “The renovations are good, but they are eroding very important rooms and elements of the slavery history. If you can stop them immediately. Can the white man face the international court for all this injustice to Blackman? Oh, poor us. May the souls of ancestors rest in perfect peace.” “...I think the electricity in the cells takes away from the moment.” “This place shd. be kept in it [sic] natural state.” “...History never really dies—or fades away. Thanks to the Ghanaian people for maintaining such an important part of everyone’s history.” “The ELMINA CASTLE is a laudable heritage to ensure that is the necessary duty to forgive even for our own healing, humanity is not allowed to tolerate such awesome injustice through collective amnesia. The good people of Ghana should be commended for this.” These comments bear witness to the idea that preserving the physical castles supports anamnesia, the refusal to forget. The specific referents of victims may differ—whether it be Prempeh I or nameless numbers of captives—but the notion of a tangible structure providing historical evidence for crimes against humanity remains the same. Visitors argue that these sites must be preserved in order to insure that the history is never forgotten and, in some cases, to ensure that people are held accountable for past injustices committed by their presumed ancestors.

Use of the Site

In the early 1990s, the presence of a restaurant within Cape Coast Castle and a gift shop within Elmina Castle sparked much controversy over the utilization of space. The public raised concerns about the purpose of visiting the castles. African Americans residing around Cape Coast and Elmina were vocal with their disapproval, arguing that it was morally wrong to have a restaurant located above the site where captives were held in a dungeon, and that, for them it was sacrilege. From their perspective the castle grounds themselves represent a cemetery, a place in which their ancestors may have suffered and died, and it would be inappropriate to place a restaurant in a cemetery. In contrast, some Ghana Museum and Monuments Board employees believe that since Cape Coast Castle was named an UNESCO World Heritage monument, it should contain restaurants and amenities like those in tourist sites all over the world. From a business standpoint, visitors should have access to a place within the tourist site to rest, eat, and spend additional time, for the longer they are at a site, the more likely they will be to learn something and spend money there. Some visitors' remarks in the guest books echo these sentiments. "It's [a] very important historical site in Ghana. Investments should be used to bring it to a world attraction to attract foreign visitors to visit the area. It lacks essential ammenitites [sic] so I hope it will be addressed." "Interesting and comprehensive tour—how about somewhere to sit and take tea at the end?" "More publicity made and some renovations/eating houses around be provided e.g. roast fishes/plantains." "I find this tour very interesting and I think they should make a refreshment plays [sic] for the tourist."

Ghana Tourist Board officials disagreed. They told me that removing the restaurant was a sound policy because the site was inappropriate for entertainment. Public opinions support this position as well. Some visitors' comments express disapproval of using the castles for offices and meeting spaces. "I can't believe this building is still being used. It should be a memorial to all who were sold and died." "Good narrative; bad experience, stopped [sic] being used as offices and be painted..." The whole castle (including the "offices" upstairs) should be made accessible to tourist. They shld. not be used as offices." "Need for access to the Palava Hall. We need to know more."

During the early 1990s, a project management committee—comprised of GMMB, GTB, Ghana Wildlife, other relevant local agencies, and foreign counterparts—convened for monthly meetings about the upcoming refurbishment of the castles. Each agency submitted reports and discussed its own agenda. For example, the Ghana Tourist Board, which coordinated with the museum education department of Cape Coast Castle, was concerned with tour guide training, interpretation, and delivery.

The *Conference on Historic Preservation of Elmina & Cape Coast Castles and Fort St. Jago* convened May 11-12, 1994 to bring together viewpoints over the direction of the castles' development. Hosted by the Ghana National Commission on Culture, this conference brought together diverse perspectives on conservation of the three World Heritage sites, functional uses and management of historic buildings, philosophical considerations in preserving Ghana's castles and forts, and tourism and heritage conservation. Conference participants recommended that, "facilities for restaurant, restrooms and shops could be located outside Elmina and Cape Coast Castles but

appropriate musical performance and religious services should be permitted in the monuments” (qtd. in Bruner 1996: 294). Though officials of GTB state that such performances must be “culturally compatible with the history of the castle,” there is a lack of consensus about events like fashion shows, church meetings, and musical performances. At the time of my 2001-02 fieldwork, any performance taking place in Cape Coast Castle or Elmina Castle required specific approval by the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board, who collected rental fees.

In the wake of the debates over how Cape Coast and Elmina castles should be preserved, restored, or reconstructed, a letter to the editor of *New African* entitled, “Ghana—Don’t White Wash the Slave Trade,” was published and widely circulated. The author of the letter was Imahküs Vienna Robinson, an African American who migrated to Ghana together with her husband in 1990 after visiting Cape Coast and Elmina castles in her first trip to Africa in 1987. In her letter, she criticized international organizations (USAID, UNDP, Shell Ghana Ltd., USICOMOS, and the Smithsonian Institute) for failing to include an African perspective (apart from GMMB) in deciding the fate of important monuments of the “African Holocaust.” Robinson writes:

At the Cape Coast Castle, in Palaver Hall, where foreigners bartered and sold us; where documents were signed to seal our fate and that would ultimately begin the creation of other tribes of African (African-Americans, African-Jamaicans, etc) people; in those hallowed halls, windows have been removed, the old mortar chipped away and replaced with new glass windows. The outer walls of the Castle are gradually being chipped away and replaced with fresh cement, mortar and paint. As I approached the Cape Coast Castle with a few brothers and sisters who were visiting from Philadelphia, one sister remarked upon seeing the Castle: “Oh, what a beautiful building!” I was shocked, my entire being vibrated and the fear that was in my gut in 1987 returned. My God, the terrible deeds of our oppressors are being prettied up” (1994: 4).

For Robinson, the most egregious alteration to the castles was the painting of the men's dungeon at Elmina Castle a bright yellow, which for her resembled any other room in a house or hotel. She reasoned, "The Cape Coast and Elmina Castle/dungeons are hallowed grounds and should be left undisturbed, otherwise you are tampering with history" (ibid.). Robinson believes that the same international interests who bought African ancestors were now white-washing African history, and that it is up to Africans at home and those in diaspora to wake up and do something.

Edward Bruner (1996) raised the question of whether or not to paint the castles in a meeting with the Council of Chiefs of Edina (Elmina); they were in favor of Elmina Castle being painted, provided that it did not cover up the atrocities of the slave trade (F.N. 6: 302). Many Ghanaian stakeholders in the tourism industry recognize the need to be sensitive to these issues. At the same time, they disagree with the view that painting the castles and developing them as tourist sites automatically leads to destroying their sanctity. An anonymous official from GTB explained:

I think that the tourism can be used to preserve our historic sites and our historic monuments. Without that I don't see a government pumping money into preserving a historic site or building a monument and then just walking away. I don't see how it can work. It is only tourism that can generate revenue for it to be sustained. So, those who argue that it is a sacred site....they have a point. But see, on the other hand, we can also preserve these places, we can even limit the number of people who go there, but still make some money out of it. We can use tourism to preserve the places and then use it to conserve...what we have. So I think that is the only logical way of preserving our heritage. Use tourism to get it sustained, to get it rehabilitated and sustained....So we can still maintain the sacred nature of these relics and heritage as well as make some small money to keep on sustaining them...Since it concerns slave trade and slavery and all of that, we have to be careful about what kind of development we allow there so it doesn't eradicate that sacred nature.

The restaurant above the male dungeon at Cape Coast Castle and the gift shop inside one of the dungeons at Elmina Castle were eventually removed. In preparation for PANAFEST '97, a new, privately-run restaurant was built just outside Cape Coast Castle's perimeter overlooking the Atlantic shore. However, this structure burned to the ground in July 1998 due to faulty wiring (Baffour Poku, Times, July 21, 1998: 12). In 2001, a Ghanaian businessman built a privately-run restaurant in place of the one that had burned, and it attracts many of the visitors who come to nearby Cape Coast Castle. Meanwhile at Elmina Castle, a restaurant and a gift shop operated (and continue to do so) along the castle's outer perimeter with a second gift shop located near the Governor's Quarters.

Visitors to Elmina expressed their outrage in the castle's guest books. "Sad, strong!, painful, focused!—Disgusted with renovations and the erasing of our history....You will not be allowed to make a 'Disneyland' from our pain and suffering!" "The whole idea of renovating the castle is a mischievous attempt at rubbing all traces of a very sad, sadistic, inhuman and ungodly atrocities by man against humankind. A big shame! No, no, we shall always remember. What an experience!" "This is a grave yard of Africans." "This is sacred ground there should not be stores and restaurants here!" "Hallowed ground! How can you eat and sell at the graveyard of our ancestors!" "...a gift store where human beings were tortured—is very curious." These criticisms of how the castles are being utilized echo those expressed earlier and are not likely to go away. However, some visitors consider the developments at the castles to be beneficial, as evidenced by the following remark taken from the guest book at Elmina Castle:

“Hopefully with further renovations and increased tourism and advertising, the Africans can turn a negative into a profitable positive for themselves.”

Admission Fees

A central aspect to the contentions of utilizing the castles as tourist destinations is the issue of charging admission fees. During my 2001-02 fieldwork, both Cape Coast and Elmina castles had a Ghanaian entrance fee of seventy-five cents, and a fee of five dollars for non-Ghanaians.

Table 5.3: Castle Entrance & Photographic Fees Posted For 2001-02 In Cedis (7,551.73 cedis equivalent to 1 USD)

Category	Ghanaians	Non-Ghanaians
Adult Guided Tour	¢5,000	¢30,000
Adult Self-guided Tour	¢2,500	¢15,000
Tertiary Student Guided Tour	¢2,500	¢15,000
Tertiary Student Self-guided Tour	¢2,000	¢7,500
Secondary School Students & Children	free	free
Non-commercial Still Photography	¢5,000	¢5,000
Non-commercial Video Photography	¢10,000	¢10,000
Commercial Photography	¢500,000— ¢1,500,000	¢11,327,595— ¢18,879,325

Tourism planners of GMMB and the Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust justify the differential fees charged for Ghanaians and non-Ghanaians in a couple of ways. They want to encourage local residents to claim a sense of ownership, and become responsible

for maintaining these structures, and they argue that the best way to ensure this is to make admission affordable to them. Many tourism planners in Ghana argue that the cedi is weak relative to the dollar, so most Ghanaians simply cannot afford the cedi equivalent of five dollars to enter the castle.

From overhearing visitors' comments and talking with tour guides, it seems fairly common for Ghanaians and non-Ghanaians to criticize the admission fees for different reasons. Ghanaians complain that fees are too high or that they should be charged a group rate instead of per capita. Remarks from the castles' guest books illustrate this point. "From history, my advise [sic] to the authorities is, that if the fee were reduced considerably to about ₵200.00 more people like the ordinary man can visit this historic building and the Government will get more money than what is being obtained...." "Students from tertiary institutions should be charged a flat rate as a body [instead of being charged individually]."

Non-Ghanaians are more likely to take issue with the *principle* of charging different rates. Some foreign visitors have written in the guest books that they are appalled by this, arguing that in their home countries, museums do not discriminate based on nationality for charging admission. "All races are equal! The price should be equal as well." "Judging on previous comments 30000 cedis as opposed to 1000 cedis for Ghanaians seems unjustified and over priced. We chose to not enter." "Found the place interesting ashamed though that 'non Ghanaians' are discriminated against in the way of being charged more money to enter."

Ghanaians living abroad and/or married to non-Ghanaians, as well as non-Ghanaians resident in Ghana, occupy somewhat intermediary positions in relation to

these categories and are put off when asked to pay non-Ghanaian rates. One Ghanaian-American remarked in the guest book, “Please stop the practice of charging foreigners more than Ghanaians. It’s discrimination and does not forster [sic] peace and unity. As a Ghanaian born I feel very offended by this practice...” Another entry read, “I see no reason I should pay more than necessary to visit the castle with my wife to see her root and visit home. I am a Ghanaian and my wife an African American, whose roots are from Ghana. I felt cheated on my motherland.”

In a letter to the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper, one expatriate, who had been resident in Ghana for over thirty-five years, described her own embarrassing experience when taking her Ghanaian husband and Ghanaian fair-skinned children to Shai Hills Game Reserve, where authorities deliberated on the true nationality of the children and how much the family should be charged (Ghana’s Potential 2000). She cited a legal case at the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice in which the differential fees charged for Ghanaians and non-Ghanaians at the Ghana International School conflicted with Article 17 of Ghana’s constitution.¹² She suggested that, as far as tourism was concerned, a better alternative would be to adopt Kenya’s policy which makes a distinction between ‘residents’ and ‘non-residents’, irrespective of their origins (ibid.). In an interview, a GTB official reasoned that if a Ghanaian man were married to an American woman and had to pay a different fee for his wife than for himself, this would be an example of discrimination. “We do not make the policy alone. So we keep telling them [to drop the differential charges]; maybe one day they will appreciate it.” Even

¹² The first two clauses of Article 17 state, “(1) All persons shall be equal before the law. (2) A person shall not be discriminated against on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status” (Constitution of the Republic of Ghana 1992: 16).

though some officials acknowledge the validity of public criticism of the different entrance fees, not all Ghana tourism planners agree.

Another issue related to admission charges is that sometimes African Americans and Afro Caribbeans are offended by being asked to pay admission *at all*. Many who resent being labeled foreigners or tourists feel that their ancestors came from Ghana. In my survey, when respondents were asked how they perceive themselves in visiting either Cape Coast Castle or Elmina Castle, African Americans/African Canadians answered 'returnee' most frequently (26.7%), whereas Afro Caribbeans/Afro South Americans and Ghanaians answered 'visitor' most frequently (36.4% and 47.1%, respectively).

Table 5.4: Percentage of Diaspora Africans Within Each Geographic Area Calling Themselves Particular Term(s) When Visiting Castles

Term of Self	African-American / African-Canadian (N=225)	Afro-Caribbean / Afro-South American (N=33)	Afro-European (N=6)
Visitor	15.1%	36.4%	33.3%
Returnee	26.7%	24.2%	0%
Tourist	15.6%	9.1%	16.7%
Pilgrim	12.0%	12.1%	16.7%
Visitor & Returnee	2.2%	0%	16.7%
Visitor & Tourist	4.0%	3.0%	0%
Visitor & Pilgrim	0.9%	0%	0%
Returnee & Tourist	1.8%	0%	0%
Returnee & Pilgrim	4.9%	3.0%	0%
Tourist & Pilgrim	3.1%	0%	0%
Visitor & Returnee & Tourist & Pilgrim	3.1%	0%	0%
Other	10.7%	12.1%	16.7%
Total	100%	100%	100%

74% of the African Americans/African Canadians and 78.1% of the Afro Caribbeans/Afro South Americans reported that they had an especially strong connection to Ghana in particular, as opposed to some other African country. The most frequent

explanation for this Ghana connection of both groups (30% and 45.5%, respectively) was ancestral origin. As I have stated before, diaspora Africans commonly believe that their ancestors came from or lived in Ghana because what is now Ghana had more forts and castles that were used in the trans-Atlantic slave trade than any other country in West Africa. If their ancestors did endure being held in the dungeons and passing through the Door of No Return to embark on the middle passage, why are they being asked to pay for making a pilgrimage to a sacred site and marker of historical injustice? Doris Parchment, leader of the Jamaican delegation to PANFEST '97, was reported to say that in spite of the "royal welcome" that they received in Ghana, they are not made to feel like Africans (Jamaican Delegation Complains 1997). She did not understand why they had to pay entrance fees reserved for foreigners and commented, "Our concern is not the money but the principle" (ibid.).

This sentiment can be found in the castles' visitor books. "The significance of Elmina Castle lies in its connection with the trade in African slaves. First, this point should be emphasized at the start of the tour. The distinction should not be between Ghanaians and non Ghanaians but between Africans and non-Africans. Second some non-Ghanaian Africans (even from abroad) could periodically participate in the tour lectures." "...I would humbly suggest that the entrance fee reflect the difference between Ghanaians and non Ghanaians, but should distinguish between Africans (continental and Diasporan) and non Africans. I don't begrude [sic] the amount I had to pay, just the classification. As a returnee to the motherland I would wish to be seen as such..." "A monument you are lucky to have and an era that should not be forgotten. But how dare you charge me to visit the torture chambers of my ancestors. You should be ashamed."

“A large draw of this castle is of the slave trade. It is a further injury to charge descendants of slaves to come here.” “....Having been away for over 400 years why am (I) being labeled a tourist and asked to pay tourist rates??”

It is not right for slave descendents to pay and travel thousands of miles in order to return to the home of our fathers and not hear the truth with power about the worst enslavement of our people in all the world—this is something that should not be taken lightly because slavery can still return if the people are left in ignorance. Why should the survivors [sic] of this act be charged a fee to see and smell the dungeons where are [sic] mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, sons & daughters were brutally slaughtered. This organization should change its tour script or remain shamed in the eyes of the survivors [sic] who truly loved and hurt in our hearts for our precious ancestors.

Not all diaspora Africans or non-Ghanaians complain about being charged the non-Ghanaian rate. African Americans often visit the castles as part of a packaged tour. In these cases, the Accra-based tour operator charges a lump sum, from which admission fees are paid to GMMB. Because of this arrangement, visitors may not even be aware of the Ghanaian versus non-Ghanaian rates for admission. When asked specifically about the differential charges of Ghanaians and non-Ghanaians of African descent, half of all respondents believed the differential entrance fees were acceptable.

Table 5.5: Opinions On Castle Entrance Fees Across All Respondents (N=418)

Admission Policy for Non-Ghanaians Of African Descent And Ghanaians is Acceptable	49.3%
Non-Ghanaians Of African Descent Should Pay the Same Admission Fees as Ghanaians	22.5%
Non-Ghanaians Of African Descent Should Offer Donations But Not Be Required to Pay Admission	17.5%
Non-Ghanaians Of African Descent Should Not Pay At All	4.8%
Multiple Answers	3.1%
Other	2.9%
Total	100%

African Americans/African Canadians and Afro Caribbeans/Afro South Americans selected this as their most common response. Many who come to Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle are visiting for the first time; this could explain why the majority—despite some of the negative comments in the guest books—is not opposed to differential admission charges. 78.2% of non-Ghanaian visitors I surveyed were on their first trip to Ghana.¹³ 79.2% of all respondents were visiting either Cape Coast Castle or Elmina Castle for the first time.¹⁴ Considering the novelty of coming to Ghana or to the castles, visitors are more likely to simply pay the admission fee without thinking twice.

¹³ Ghanaians were excluded from this question because most of them lived in Ghana.

¹⁴ Ghanaians were included in this question in order to gauge how many of them visited one of the castles for the first time.

Central Regional Ghana Tourist Board officials know that Ghana's tourism planners have to perform a delicate balancing act to generate revenue while avoiding offending visitors. One GTB official explained:

If our target is European though, we don't have this feeling that they belong to the country, so it is not a problem [to charge them]. Even African Americans, Caribbeans...and some of them, even one, is getting upset because he [is] feeling he is being discriminated against in the motherland, we have to be careful. Unless we do a proper orientation prior to them going to the sites for them to understand.

Like any tourism promoters, these GTB officials are concerned about how visitors perceive Ghana, and they want to deliver a quality product. They know that word of mouth has helped Ghana's tourism success, and they do not want to see that success jeopardized, even by one disgruntled visitor.

Some African Americans or diaspora Africans are hurt if they are not recognized by Ghanaians as descendents of Africa.¹⁵ Diaspora Africans may feel that they are being taken advantage of by being charged the non-Ghanaian rate. This feeling is especially painful when diaspora Africans think that those Ghanaians residing in Cape Coast and Elmina are descendents of middlemen and merchants who sold slaves to Europeans and are the ones profiting from the castles' tourism today. One African American wrote in the guest book, "I feel African Americans were sold by Africans and now as I visit I am being exported again." Tour guides told me that African Americans and Jamaicans sometimes accuse them of having sold their ancestors. In light of this sentiment, being asked to pay an admission fee is all the more offensive.

¹⁵ 'Oburoni' (pl. 'abrafo ') is the Akan term of reference for foreigner which is commonly applied to diaspora Africans as well as Europeans and other groups. Chapter 6 will discuss this term and its implications at length.

Ghana is trying to promote itself as the Gateway to Africa for people of African descent in diaspora and has designated the Door of Return in Cape Coast Castle as a tangible reminder of the effort to welcome home displaced family members from the diaspora. Some African Americans and Afro Caribbeans feel that if Ghana were sincere about welcoming them home, then they should not be so money-conscious. They are annoyed by being asked to pay the non-Ghanaian rate at the castles and being solicited for investment during PANAFEST and Emancipation Day public forums.

A few African Americans resident in Ghana suggested to me that the castles would get much more money if they asked for donations instead of charging admission fees. From my survey results above, however, it appears that most do not mind paying the non-Ghanaian rate. GMMB staff think that free-will donations are an unreliable source of revenue. Regular allocations of money are needed for the maintenance of the structures, staff salaries, educational programs, and the conservation of museum materials. Some of the exhibition panels in Cape Coast Castle's museum are deteriorating, with words and images eroding from the salty ocean air and visitors touching them. The exhibits themselves have not changed since they were installed in 1994. Without the assistance of outside grants or foreign donors, they will probably not be repaired or replaced.

Developing Cape Coast and Elmina castles as tourist sites involves commodifying an experience that, to some, should remain in the realm of gifts. According to Simmel, money helps promote rational calculation in social life and encourages the rationalization characteristic of modern society (in Parry and Bloch 1989: 4). Tourism planners in Ghana convincingly rationalize why regular revenues must be generated through castle

entrance fees. The problem is that some of the visiting public do not see themselves as tourists. They consider visiting these sites as something more spiritual, more sentimental, more personal than the mundane activities labeled tourism; for them, this experience should not be calculated in monetary terms. Money becomes a moral issue in which some consider it wrong to be charged admission for visiting what amounts to a sacred site of pilgrimage. These pilgrims search for a deeper connection to Ghana or Africa in general. When an experience becomes commodified, it tends to dissolve the bonds of personal connection between exchange partners and affects the separation between persons and things (Parry and Bloch 1989: 4-5). Instead of adding to the feeling of solidarity to Africa through diaspora connections to an African homeland, the standardization of being charged admission fees as non-Ghanaians reminds visitors of their difference—that they are not Ghanaians and that they are recognized as tourists, just like anyone else who visits these sites. The terms diaspora Africans use to refer to themselves (e.g. Africans born in America) can be different from the terms Ghanaians use to describe them (e.g. Black Americans, Jamaicans, or *abrafoɔ*).

Historic Presentations and Reflections

Historical information at the castles takes the form of museum exhibitions or presentations given by tour guides. This section focuses on the range of responses visitors have as a result of touring one of the castles. Visitors are more likely to criticize information presented by tour guides than the content of the museums. Their remarks often relate to their own racial/ethnic/national identities and comment upon the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade vis-à-vis their own identities. Many visitors reflect upon this history and what applications it has for humanity in the present.

Hidden History

Visitors' entries in the guest books sometimes comment on how slave trade history has been hidden, that visitors had not heard about it, and that by touring the site they now had the opportunity to learn the truth. Many visitors pledge to share what they learned with people back home to raise awareness about the history of the castles. "What a [sic] eye opener! In America they only tell us (Blacks) about the Nazis and the Jews. Why don't they tell us about this atrocity." "At last, my history is revealed." "I wish everybody in Europe would realize/admit the horrible things that have happened here. I never learnt much about this at school. We, Dutch, don't want to look at the black pages of our history." "The story puts things in perspective and completes the jigsaw for those of us seeking our history and answers to our questions about 'Black Slave Trade'..." "Our positive and strong spirit will survive! Recommitment to self education and sharing with others." Visitors alternatively feel guilt, mistrust, and gratitude for finally hearing about this history which is not commonly or adequately addressed in their home countries.

Critiques of Tour Guides' Interpretations

The vast majority of visitors' entries evaluating the historic presentations given by tour guides is overwhelmingly positive. Many people simply write, "excellent tour," or "great tour guide," or praise a specific tour guide. Others have criticized guides' interpretations and sometimes mention specific areas for improvement or aspects of the tour that they find problematic. While some think the presentations lack detail, complexity, or emotion, others find fault with the overall emphasis of the tour—that it falls short of conveying how very tragic the slave trade and its effects have been. For

example, one visitor wrote, “This particular guide regarding my ancestry should not be as carefree as it was. To me this is an emotional experience and should be presented as such, not just an explanation without feelings.” Many comments from the guest books suggest that tours should be more sympathetic to the perspective of African captives or, alternatively, that they explain in greater detail all of the parties involved with slave trading beyond blaming only Europeans. Visitors’ criticisms often discuss the castle’s history in a race-conscious manner. Many want to express who is ultimately responsible for the transgressions of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Comments from visitors’ books and my own surveys show that most people blame Europeans. However, some visitors indicate that African interlopers and Christian missionaries also played their part in carrying out or condoning the slave trade and that they should also be criticized.

African Sympathetic/European Critical Perspectives

When touring a castle and reflecting upon its history, visitors’ comments offer perspectives sympathetic to African captives. The following remarks question the veracity or details of historical interpretations offered at the castles. “The tour was informative, but there needs to be an explanation of the differences in essence and experience of African continental slavery and the trans atlantic slave trade where whole cultures, names, languages, people were killed and raped by the wicked and evil EUROPEANS!!”

Since my last visit in 1992, it is good to see some renovation and restoration of the slave fort. It is my desire that more emphasis be given to the era of the international slave trade system. This is a painful history that cannot be forgotten, neglected or downplayed. This slave fort should be a reminder to Africans throughout the diaspora of our brutal past. Movies like “sankofa” honestly depict a true history or should I say “our story.” Let us begin the 21st century by all contributing to renovation of this historic monument. May I suggest to the curators and administration

that all areas be adequately named—detailing the exact purpose of the area in relationship to the slave trade system.

Some African and diaspora African visitors believe that Ghanaian guides purposely downplay the evils committed by Europeans during the slave trade in order to avoid offending white tourists.

Comments urge planners to construct tours so that visitors experience particular feelings or relationships to the castles. “I think more should be done to stress the horror of what occurred here. No tourist from Europe should be able to leave without being shaken (for a few minutes) and of course Africans worldwide cannot be allowed to forget.” “This is not a tourist center only but a place for African-Americans to reconnect with their past. It is a sacred place and you have cheapened it with your lies. This castle/prison is a misrepresentation of fact and should be closed until the actual truth can be brought to the surface! Our story should be respected enough to be told in a truthful manner.”

My survey of castle visitors revealed similar comments. “The European is still controlling the story and history of African people. Not one picture in the Elmina Dungeon portrayed the chains and oppression of slavery. The pictures in the Portuguese Church are inappropriate and have tried to minimize the brutality of the slave trade.” Visitors question who is in control of telling the story of the slave trade. At the same time, the underlying assumption is that any European version of this history is biased and downplays the severity of what occurred. Although Africans (Ghanaians) interpret the history of the castles for the public, some diaspora Africans accuse them of pandering to the interests of international donors, Europeans and Americans, who facilitated the castles’ refurbishment. Ghanaians and Americans associated with the Smithsonian

Institution collaborated on establishing the castle museums. Some visitors think Ghanaians water-down historical interpretations of the slave trade and de-emphasize European brutality towards Africans because Ghanaian assistance from donors will be jeopardized. Apart from the issue of funding, some diaspora Africans accuse Ghanaians, generally, of having colonized minds that leads them to privilege whites/Europeans over blacks/Africans.

Re-assigning Blame Perspectives

Other visitors of various ethnic/national identities criticize the interpretation that Europeans were the sole villains of this history and call for a broader recounting of the slave trade. They think blame for crime committed through the slave trade should be assigned to various African ethnic groups and chiefs as well as Europeans. Although many African Americans write that interpretations do not come down hard enough on Europeans' role in the slave trade, one African American wrote, "I wish the tour focused more on the Africans. Not all white men are responsible! And the Ashanti (African) people helped a lot!" A British visitor commented:

A remarkable structure with its own story to tell. Nevertheless, the old historical quibble e.g. the slave trade is not 200 years of history; it existed well before that in Africa. European involvement commercialized and expanded it to horrific proportions but the 'idea' of the slave existed in African society prior to European arrival. As a consequence some, albeit few, ethnic groups actually did rather well from collaboration with Europeans in this sordid enterprise!

Although all the facts you presented are accurate, I have never come across such a skewed version of the history of the slave trade. How did the slaves reach the castles? What role did the local kings play? What shape were the slaves in when they arrived? The era of slaving is one of the worst in human history. No one was innocent and recent scholarship has upheld a more inclusive, more equal view of the African and European trade.

Graves

As the above remarks suggest, visitors sometimes interpret the presentations offered at the castles in racialized ways. Tour content is always subject to critique and comment. As I mentioned in chapter 4, Cape Coast Castle guides regularly stop at the marked graves of Captain George Maclean, Lyteta Elizabeth London, E.B. Whitehead, and Philip Quaque. Some visitors are offended that there are grave markers for these individuals—mostly Europeans—and not for the countless captives who perished before embarking upon the middle passage. Instead of interpreting these marked graves in social and historical context, visitors react to them through a presentist lens which considers the graves' existence and inclusion on guided tours as an unacceptable valorization of European domination, and African complicity in that project (in the case of Philip Quaque). In the guest books, African Americans and Afro Caribbeans living in the U.S. criticized the presence of Maclean's grave in Cape Coast Castle. "Remove the governor's grave!" "The graves are an insult to the castle." "We are very concerned that the British Governor and his wife has been given such prominence in the history of slavery. Our own people who suffered have not been given a monument. It is our belief that the British should enshrine their Governor in Britain—not in Ghana. Please please—ask for a relocation out of respect for our people..." "Can someone please explain the reasoning behind the 3 non-African tombs buried in the middle of the courtyard. I think it's time to stop praising the people who put Africans and African-Americans in this irreversible situation!!!"

While these diaspora Africans suggest removing markers of Europeans, other visitors say castle staff should exhibit more of the material culture of the governor and

Europeans who resided at the castles. A Scottish visitor wrote in the guest book, “Illuminating and well researched tour. It might be useful to have available details of a trust fund if any exists which might for example be used to furnish the governor’s and soldiers’ quarters to produce an even greater contrast to the captives conditions.” A party comprised of British, Jamaican, and American visitors wrote, “. . .It would be more educational if the various rooms were decorated in original furniture. The rooms should be able to tell the story.” Visitors associate the authentic history of the slave with period furniture, decorations, and clothing; these trappings should be able to “tell the story.” An American expressed ideas similar to those above. “Please authenticate the Governor’s residence to look exactly the way it was then. I think that will make the necessary contrast with the dungeons. Has there been any discussions about atonement?” Many visitors believe that reconciliation from the legacy of the slave trade can only take place if everyone acknowledges the complexity of slave trade history. By paying equal attention to European and African spaces within the castles, some think a more holistic rendering of this history would be promoted.

Reflection, Revenge, Reconciliation, and Redemption

In the castles’ guest books visitors often feel the need to express an overall sentiment or lesson they have taken away from their visit. When I asked them how their visit affected them and what it made them think about or feel, the most common response among all visitors was that they felt sympathy for the suffering of the slaves or their ancestors. For African Americans and African Canadians, the most common response was that they felt connected to their heritage. Afro Caribbean and Afro South American visitors were more likely to report feeling very emotional or a combination of emotions

(see Table 5.6). Visitors also reflect on the inhumanity of the slave trade and ponder how to reconcile the historical injustice. They alternatively advocate for recompense or even revenge and acknowledge that unjust crimes continue in the present. Many visitors cannot resist entering into the 'blame game' in which individuals find it necessary to place ultimate blame of the injustices of the slave trade upon Europeans or alternatively, a combination of European merchants, African chiefs and middlemen, and missionaries. Visitors who blame others in their guest book comments are driven by the need to process intense emotions and reconcile the historical injustice.

Table 5.6: Overall Reactions of Each Racial/Ethnic/National Group When Visiting Castles

Overall Reaction	AA / ACan N=210	ACar / ASA N=27	AE N=6	ContG N=110	ContA Not G N=19	GExpat N=7	White N=10	Other N=10
Emotional	11.4%	33.3%	16.7%	9.1%	15.8%	14.3%	30.0%	20.0%
Sympathy for Ancestors/Slaves	16.7%	11.1%	0%	29.1%	26.3%	14.3%	20.0%	10.0%
Connected to My Heritage	23.8%	22.2%	50.0%	4.5%	0%	28.6%	20.0%	0%
Lesson for Humanity/Education	6.2%	3.7%	16.7%	10.9%	31.6%	14.3%	30.0%	10.0%
Negatively About Whites	6.7%	3.7%	0%	26.4%	5.3%	0%	0%	20.0%
Effects of Slavery	7.1%	7.4%	16.7%	2.7%	5.3%	0%	0%	4.3%
Strength of Ancestors/Africans	13.3%	3.7%	0%	0.9%	5.3%	0%	0%	20.0%
Unite with Africans/Redemption	10.0%	3.7%	0%	11.8%	0%	14.3%	0%	10.0%
Other	4.8%	11.1%	0%	4.5%	10.5%	14.3%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

AA/ACan= African-Americans/African-Canadians
 ACar/ASA= Afro-Caribbeans/Afro-South Americans

AE= Afro-Europeans
ContG= Continental Ghanaians
ContA Not G= Continental Africans Not Ghanaians
GExpat= Ghanaian Expatriates
White= Includes Europeans and Americans

Anti-European Sentiment

The following visitors' comments illustrate the strong anti-European feelings some individuals hold, which are accentuated by touring the castles, confronting feelings of anger and sadness, and blaming perpetrators of injustices committed under the slave trade. "All life continues to flow to Africa and her children—expedient death to Europeans!" "It says a lot about the humanity of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British when you realize they could live so many months/years alone. The miserable conditions of all those enslaved Africans. AFRICANS REMEMBER: 'A LEOPARD NEVER CHANGES HIS SPOTS'." "How horrible there [sic] acts of terrorism were. Renewed anger towards European descendants. How very very strong, powerful and mighty are Africans and their descendants—truly the people of an African God." "I begin to develop hatred for the whites especially when I visited the dungeons."

A degradation of the human race!! The experience takes me back to these shameful, degrading, humiliating, and wickedly senseless domination of blacks by the whites. Did they treat WHITE slaves the same way? Their time will surely come. Who judges? Who decrees punishment? I wonder what they deserve. I shudder to contemplate what is right for their efforts to degrade God's creation to lifeless THINGS!!

All of the comments above were written by either African Americans or Ghanaians. The following entry was made by a Swede and shows how white guilt drives condemnation of white men.

I am outraged by the whole concept [that] the white man is superior. He is the worst thing that ever hapened [sic] to our planet. And as long as he

exists this planet will bleed. He has destroyed the air with his pollution, taken America north and south, Australia, New Zealand. Armed to his teeth to take Africa and will not let go. Continue to build war head [sic] to see to it this planet is wiped out. Slavery—robbery, you name it and he is [sic] done it all. He moves to your area as a neighbor and you move away.

Questioning Who Is Responsible

Other visitors are more circumspect about assigning blame; they question who is ultimately responsible for slave trade crimes. “This is a serious monument not only to us but to humanity. But the question will be asked who was guilty of this crime against humanity?” “The Black is wicked and the white is wicked. It is therefore not colour but what is in man. Jer. 17: 9. The heart is desperately wicked.” “Black pages in European and Fanti/Ashanti people’s history. The fort is nicely kept and should stay as an example of man’s cruelty to his/her fellow brother and sisters.” “Man’s inhumanity to man—that brother could sell brother, neighbour against neighbour and the evil of money greed ran through all their minds. African and European alike.” One Ghanaian wrote, “The Europeans cannot be blamed!” A Black British responded, “In answer to the first comments above, ignorance is a dangerous thing! Thank you letting us experience a piece of our history. Peace!” A British visitor remarked, “It is sad to realize that the slave trade started by Ghanaians selling their brothers for profit!” This was altered by an unidentified visitor, who scratched out “...Ghanaians selling their brothers for profit!” and added “British” in its place. In the examples above, the contents of visitors’ books themselves perpetuate memories of the slave trade as individuals write and respond to comments, offering their own reading and reaction to the entire experience of touring the castle.

A Ghanaian-American responded to a survey question asking for comment on the African role in the slave trade by stating, “Yes it hurts that our brothers sold us but without the demand created by Europeans and even Arabs, it would not have occurred [sic].” An African American wrote, “[I felt] initial anger and sadness. I eventually felt hostility towards the Ghanaians—other people like me who sold their/my ancestors for mirrors, blankets and goods—No God either the Christian concept or the traditional African religion concept of God believes—condones greed!” Another African American remarked, “[I thought about] how my ancestors were treated by their on [sic] people and Christians [sic] missionary. It is a shame for both. The visit has made me think about how people are over money and things. It's a shame to be sold by your people.” A Ghanaian remarked that coming to Cape Coast Castle made him think about, “the unhuman [sic] treatment meted to fellow Ghanaians who were enslaved by the Europeans with the help of our cruel chiefs.” Another Ghanaian commented, “Really, the visit has made me sad, embittered and empathetic and think of how racist the whites were and are now.” Visitors reflect upon African complicity in the slave trade, racism, and hypocrisy of Christianity, not only in terms of history, but also in terms of contemporary injustices and the on-going effects of the slave trade.

Reparations

The topic of reparations inevitably surfaces in visitors’ comments as they search for justice in compensating descendants of slaves for historical mistreatment and in ameliorating the contemporary effects of the slave trade. Emancipation Day and PANAFEST include formal and informal discussion about reparations. Many visitors at Cape Coast and Elmina castles suggested how the injustices of the slave trade might be

rectified. A Portuguese wrote, “The world, the white world owe’s [sic] (has a great debt) to black people. They could start paying by doing, supporting the total rehabilitation of this, and other forts in the Ghana coast.” One African American commented, “Very painful and depressing for people of African descent. The question still remains ‘How can those who claim to be human can be so heartless actually evil and now does not want to offer reparation?’” Another African American remarked, “Today I was convinced even more that my ancestors are crying out for our people to receive reparations in any form possible. I promise to do everything I can to educate all that I come in contact Re: our rich history.” Many Ghanaians and other West Africans believe that the West directly profited from the human resources taken from Africa through the slave trade. They reason that whites/Europeans must compensate blacks/Africans for mistreatment and underdevelopment, as in the following examples. “Bring back the blood of our ancestors. The West owes Ghana more than Ghanaian Loans.” “....The white ought to render an apology for we the Africans for their inhuman treatment meted to our beloved great grand fathers.” “This is a glaring example of how Europe Underdeveloped Africa, though with the collaboration of some African chiefs. Shame on those chiefs—But Africa needs compensation. The struggle shall continue to gain that compensation.”

In my survey, when all visitors were asked their opinion on reparations that would hold European countries, the U.S. and Canada responsible for the trans-Atlantic slave trade, 61% responded that these countries should provide reparations to both Africans and ‘descendants of Africa,’ people of African descent in diaspora including African Americans and Afro Caribbeans. 15.1% felt that reparations should be paid only to Africans on the continent, 9.5% thought that reparations should be paid only to

descendants of Africa in diaspora, 5.6% said that no reparations should be paid, and 8.8% gave another response.

Table 5.7: Percentage of All Respondents Holding Particular Opinions on Reparations

Opinion on Reparations	Percent of All Respondents (N=410)
Should Pay to Continental Africans	15.1%
Should Pay to Descendants of Africa	9.5%
Should Pay to Continental Africans and Descendants of Africa	61.0%
Should Pay Nothing	5.6%
Other	8.8%
Total	100.0%

The survey shows that among Ghanaians in favor of reparations, most thought that because valuable human resources were removed from Africa to the detriment of the continent, Africa must be compensated. “...The slave trade affected all the people in Africa. Those who were taken away could have worked to sustain the economy. Some could have been important personalities in the society to marry the downtrodden [sic] in order to raise up children. Everybody is somehow affected.” African American and African Canadian respondents (N= 229) who supported reparations based their arguments on the suffering of both Africans and diaspora Africans. Afro Caribbeans and Afro South

Americans (N= 33) in favor of reparations claimed that the West needs to take responsibility for contributing to the contemporary problems of Africans and diaspora Africans.

Individual, more detailed responses attest that some visitors perceive a commonality between the legacy of slavery as an historical phenomenon, and the racial prejudice, discrimination, and marginalization that are contemporary realities. The following comments were made by individual African Americans.

Make more than empty vocal gestures towards righting or at least recognizing the current state (social, political, economic, educational, etc.) of Africans in diaspora. Monuments creative solutions beyond affirmative action that truly address the problems in society as a historical result of slavery. [In citing his/her reasoning for reparations]: (1) There are monuments, defacto affirmative action for Jews; (2) there were reparations to Japanese Americans for WW2 injustices; (3) there are many other examples of worldwide recognition of inhumanity to man on scales MASSIVELY smaller than what occurred in the diaspora and with far fewer lasting effects. This action/discussion needs to take place.

“Significant financial resources need to be directed to those people (Afrikans and descendants) who suffered through the Middle Passage and the entire slavery experience, because we have never been compensated for the immeasurable [sic] losses, nor profited sufficiently from our labors in building the countries where we were enslaved.” “No sin can be forgiven, no breach repaired without evidence of repentance. The descendants of our oppressors benefit today only because they are the descendants of oppressors. There has to be economic, educational, and social justice before reconciliation can occur.” An Afro-Jamaican wrote about how white supremacy promotes on-going forms of slavery endured by Africans and Caribbeans. “Because all of us suffered from our contact with the white man and our mental condition due to this contact has not been profitable for us. The Caribbean and Africa are all classified as Third World nations so they look down

upon us because they continue to feel we are inferior because we allow them to use us as workers or slaves (mentally, economically, psychologically).”

Most survey respondents in favor of reparations were content with holding European countries, the U.S., and Canada accountable; however, a few commented on the problems with carrying out this policy. Some thought this solution was flawed because of the multiple parties—including Europeans and Africans—responsible for the injustices of the slave trade. Others pointed to the difficulty in paying descendants of slaves living in the diaspora. The next three remarks were written by African Americans. “Today I've been reflecting on my ancestors being SOLD, thinking that other Africans were willing (and financially benefitting) [sic] participants in the slave [trade]. While reparations for colonialism would be appropriate, I'm not sure reparations for slavery are.” “Unfortunately, no amount of money can pay for all the physical and emotional pain and suffering that were and are still being experience [sic] as a result of slavery and since some of African ancestry played a role in perpetuating slavery, they too would have to be held accountable.” “Africans, Europeans, and slave owners profitted [sic]. Africans owe slave descendants. Europe owes Africa and slave descendants. Slave owners owe slave descendants.” An Afro Caribbean posed several important questions in evaluating the efficacy of reparations. “African descendants are all over the world. Who gets paid? How? How do you make it fair? What about those who participated? Do they get paid also?”

Forgiveness

While some visitors express the view that specific actions such as reparations need to be taken in order to right the wrongs of the past, other visitors find that

forgiveness and reconciliation are more important goals to strive towards. One African American remarked, "Lord, teach me not to hate." A British visitor wrote, "I felt the spirits of our ancestors and weep for the blood lost. We can but only go forward with love and humanity for everyone regardless of race religion or creed." "After seeing this historical monument I'm very glad to remark that African people can forgive. Now I enjoy Ghanaian hospitality even more," stated a German. The next three quotations show how some Ghanaians want reconciliation because of their Christian faith, and others just think it is the right to do. "Sad though, much can been [sic] learnt. We only hope that history does not repeat itself. We forgive those who persecuted us in the name of Jesus. We now feel we are a well of one people. The move on it should be speeded up." "Lets burry [sic] the hatchet and come together." "This contact with the Europeans here left a big mark on us but all attempts must be made to forgo the hatred generate [sic] after learning it...." A Zambian visitor commented, "I am happy to have seen with my eyes what history had done. I hope history would not repeat itself rather come to help us unit [sic] as one." Some visitors look at the slave trade and the castle's story as a human tragedy that must be overcome through joining together despite racial, religious, or class differences.

Redemption

Visitors often ponder the path towards redemption. This reflection, at times, inspires individuals to resolve to do something to correct ongoing racial discrimination and injustices facing Africans and diaspora Africans. An Afro Guyanese-Jamaican commented, "May the memory of this place motivate all my future endeavors. My spirit finds comfort in understanding my beginning." Many African Americans describe their

coming to the castle as a profound communion with their ancestors, reminding them of their heritage and inspiring them to renew their commitment to helping Africa and Africans. “This tour on my 54th birthday—I still hear the cries of my ancestors and family from the ground. I will continue to endeavor to come back and help raise our youth to be connected with their motherland—AFRICA.” “[Coming here] connects me on a deeper level with my ancestors, with my Creator, with who I am and whose I am. It makes me surely proud of my heritage...It makes me stronger—more determined to do what is needed and free enslaved minds of Afrikan Americans, to know and reinforce in who they are.” “[Visiting this place] has made me think about myself and my position in the world. When the guide listed the European last names of the Africans—I could hear my own. I could hear the Africans asking me for help, asking me to see, asking me to make sure it never happened on any level. It has been a challenge made to me by the ancestors.” “I am forever changed. I felt almost as if I could feel the spirits of my tortured ancestors and I felt apologetic. I knew once I entered the dungeons that I was not doing enough for my people throughout the diaspora.” “My visit has affected me profoundly. I imagined the absolute horror my ancestors must've experienced, and I was deeply saddened and enraged. My disdain for Europeans increased exponentially. I have re-committed to the struggle for the liberation of all Afrikan people.” A Ugandan visitor wrote, “I personally think it is time African [sic] took a step back and thought about the injustices that have befallen [sic] our people and come up with positive plans attitudes to reinforce our self esteem as Africans instead of perpetuating the whole process.”

Pan-African Union

In the visitors' books, some urge Africans to unite, drawing upon the presumed shared traits that Africans in the diaspora share with those on the continent. They believe Pan-African solidarity is the solution for ridding Africa and her people of the racist, colonial, and neo-colonial practices of Europe and the United States. The following three quotations were written by African Americans. "Never again, Black People around the world must unite." "Very important but painful experience. May this shrine inspire all African peoples throughout the diaspora to unite and build power. WE MUST take control of our own destiny beginning with the economics of our community/Nation. Slavery has taken a new "Master" known as poverty and ignorance." "I am so thankful to Allah that I have been permitted to return. I know our Ancestors rejoice and sing praises for this day and the return of Africa's children. This has strengthened my consciousness and intensified my Love for Mama Africa, and I recognize that I have work to do on the continent to assist in changing the conditions of our people WORLDWIDE! May the Creator find mercy and bless us in all that we do to Unite Ourselves!!" A Ghanaian commented, "Slavery went on here, is still going on today and will probably continue—Africans must unite to fight in the struggle together. Europeans are still exploiting us even today." "How I wish Africans could learn from past experiences and team up to build up our continent," stated a Nigerian visitor.

Lessons Learned

The broader lessons that visitors take away from their experiences in touring the castles vary. Some comments express viewing the world along racially-distinct lines. For example, visitors remark that their visit has confirmed their suspicions that

whites/Europeans are evil. Others say that we need to move beyond placing blame upon any one group; instead, we should focus on preventing the slave trade from recurring or do something about contemporary forms of slavery.

While some visitors remark that Cape Coast and Elmina castles are sites that all people of African descent in particular should visit, others write that everyone—regardless of ethnic or racial background—can learn something about how profound human injustice can be and strive to make the world a better place. In my survey, one European-American wrote, “I am a descendant of slave owners and it was very important to understand what we were a part of.” A Ugandan commented in the guest book, “Every black man should at least once in life visit such a place.” “It really made me happy to be able to return and learn about my historical roots. Although it was very disturbing especially being a woman and African-American, I appreciated the experience. I wish it was possible for all African-Americans to come and be educated....” An African British remarked, “A very disturbing yet moving journey through MY history and ancestors, an educational trip that everybody black, white, yellow should all take part in.” A Welsh commented, “An important, provoking place. History shapes the future therefore letting as many people as possible know about atrocities from the past—are valuable—not only from a tourism viewpoint, but to ensure they may never happen again....”

Touring the castles can evoke broader reflection about historical and contemporary forms of injustice. Visitors and tour guides compare the injustices of the slave trade with colonialism, the Holocaust, institutionalized servitude, racism, and inequities of the global economy. I asked visitors the extent to which the presentation of

slavery at the castles relates to the contemporary treatment of Africans and people of African descent and found that the majority reported that it strongly relates.

Table 5.8: Extent to which Slavery Relates to Contemporary Treatment of Africans and Descendants of Africa Across All Respondents

Opinion on Strength of Relationship	Percent (N=419)
Strongly Relates	62.3%
Relates Somewhat	23.6%
Neutral	7.2%
Does Not Relate	5.0%
Does Not At All Relate	1.9%
Total	100.0%

Individual comments, both in my survey and in the guest books, demonstrate that visitors connect slave trade history to present-day implications of the slave trade. One African American wrote, “[Coming here has made me think about] the complexity of the slave trade. How the dehumanization inflicted here, during the middle passage and in the USA continues today.” Ghanaians interpret contemporary forms of slavery in different ways, as the following two quotations show. “I have observed the dastardly inhuman sale of our ancestors to the new world and I have the opinion that slavery is the worst thing that had ever happened to humanity. Let us rise up against all forms of modern slavery example Trokosi [a form of servitude practiced in Ghana in which a girl works for a traditional priest to repay a debt owed by her family].” “Quite interesting, you take a look at the castle sufferings, pain aguish and you feel racial discrimination should be

looked at by the United Nations.” One Kenyan remarked, “Oppressed oppressed and oppressed. We are still in dungeons under the oppressors [sic] trade in the name of global economy. Africa, let us not forget the pains our people suffered. It pains me today. Can oppressors stop it?” Genocide and ethnocide throughout history and in different parts of the world provide other obvious parallels to the crimes committed under the slave trade. The following quotes were written by an Austrian and an Irish, respectively. “Shares in history with concentration camps and other horrific incidents—a necessary memorial to remember.” “Many parallels with Ireland under British occupation.”

Identities

Visiting the castles can be a transformative experience in which individuals reflect upon their own identities vis-à-vis the history and memory of the site. Diaspora Africans frequently express a connection to their ancestors, thankfulness for returning ‘home’, or determination to strive for a better future. Alternatively, visitors in general may feel pride, sorrow, guilt, or a combination of these emotions. The following comments, taken from visitors’ books and my surveys, are commonly made by diaspora Africans. “To walk the courtyard and into the Dungeon is a truly necessary step in my developing as an African in a strange land ‘America’.” “This has been a great pilgrimage for me and my children. I now have a feel [sic] of completeness.” “I came to reclaim my roots and culture, to pay respect to the ancestors. Love, peace, and unity for all African [sic] here and abroad.” “Very worthy visit. Finally returned to heal my soul. Very sad and tragic indeed. Never again!! We are a Survivor! All your force and evilness could not stop us...And still we rise! We Rise! We Rise!” “I was really moved and affected by my

experience here. As an African American it help [sic] to soothe the pain. And appreciate my ancestors.” “To my mother and her mother and all the mothers and fathers: I have made it back strong in Al-Islam thanks to you and I am a servant of the true God (Allah) who will set things straight in His own time an [sic] way!!” “My family/my ancestors survived Amerikka. I’m back to Africa in 2001. Giving thanks and praise to our creator. One Africa. African redemption. Race first. Self reliance. Nationhood.” For many diaspora Africans, making a pilgrimage to the motherland is a necessary act of self realization and of identity formation. This pilgrimage signifies connecting with African heritage, healing from racial injustice, honoring ancestors, and affirming religious (e.g. Islam) faith or political (e.g. Black nationalism) conviction.

Sankɔfa

Michael Herzfeld writes that iconicity is the principle of signification derived from resemblance, which “seems natural and is therefore an effective way of creating self-evidence” (1997: 27). *Sankɔfa* serves as an icon for diaspora Africans interested in connecting to Africa as a motherland. It is one of many Asante adinkra symbols, pictorial images traditionally made from carved calabashes dipped in dye and used as stamps on funeral cloth.¹⁶ *Sankɔfa* is associated with the Akan proverb, “*Se wo were fi na wosan kɔfa a yennkyi*,” which means “It is no taboo to return and fetch it when you forget; you can always undo your mistakes” (Glover 1992). *Sankɔfa* is commonly glossed contemporarily as ‘go back to the source’ or ‘go back to your roots.’ This message is also depicted by a bird with its head turned around to meet its neck. *Sankɔfa*

¹⁶ According to Akan folklore, Adinkra was a famous king of Gyaman (now Ivory Coast) who angered the Asantehene, Bonsu-Panin, by trying to copy the golden stool. The art of adinkra is said to have originated from Gyaman. Adinkra means good-bye, and the tradition of wearing funeral cloth decorated with adinkra symbols has been linked to saying good-bye to the deceased (Glover 1992).

illustrates iconicity as its meaning has been reified through the mass production of sankofa T-shirts and wood carvings, as well as the title of the popular film (*Sankofa*) that depicts what happens when an African American woman loses sight of her African heritage. These commodities are made by Ghanaians, African Americans, and Ethiopians, among others; it is problematic to say that one group monopolizes their production. The consumption side is a different story. Other adinkra symbols (e.g. *Gye Nyame* or 'Except God') are much more popular with Ghanaians. Diaspora Africans, particularly African Americans, have embraced the iconicity behind sankofa. They buy objects depicting this symbol, but also find deeper, personal significance in its meaning.

African American visitors to the castles have utilized the notion of sankofa to show how important making a pilgrimage to the castle is. "Sankofa—It is good to remember from whence we came to ensure that history does not repeat itself!!!" "It [touring the castle] was breath taking. The story has never been told. Continue to reach out for your lost children. Embrace them/welcome them back home. They have been searching for so long. Trying to find their spirit place. They are trying to find their mother in a cool, cruel, inhumane society. How can I go forward if I don't know my past?..." "My Ancestors died here and I am a descendant of one of the survivors. Returning to the place of my heritage is a blessing always; to be manifested today and tomorrow. Remembering, reaffirming and reconnecting with the past to move forward—SANKOFA!!!"

Pride

Many visitors express pride in the strength that African captives must have possessed in order to make the arduous journey of the middle passage and endure life

under enslavement. The following statements, written almost exclusively by African Americans, were common in my surveys of visitors to the castles as well as in the visitors' books. "The castle is a monument to the strength and tenacity, the endurance and forgiveness of Ghanaians and all Black people of the Diaspora." "For years, I have read about the history of my people in all its glory and struggle. Coming to this castle has made real one aspect that is part of the experience. It transformed words into walls.... We are indeed tremendously strong powerful spiritual people who will always survive." "It gives me great strength and pride in the resilience of my African nation; that I, sold into slavery can return and leave freely. Give thanks! I've come home!" "A reality check—very heart-wrenching experience to see what my ancestors endured. That is why we are so strong as people—I am proud to be an African 'in America.'" "My ancestors had tremendous strength (of will and endurance) to survive the inhuman conditions that they were forced to endure. Thank GOD for them!!" "I thought about our beginning here and how strong our bloodlines [sic] is to have survived the passage, then slavery then Jim Crow in USA—I truly feel my African roots pulling at my heart and mind."

Sorrow

Many visitors of various backgrounds express empathy for forefathers and foremothers who were sold into slavery. "I am crying for the evils committed to African people by the white people," wrote a Ugandan. An African American remarked, "Weep for the suffering of my ancestors." An American commented, "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless millions mourn." "Very sad to imagine the appalling [sic] conditions here," stated a British.

Ghanaians identify with the captives' perspectives and not those of the middle men, slave owners, or chiefs. "Felt extremely sorry for our forefathers." "It's been an opportunity for us to see the inhuman treatment metted [sic] out to our forefathers, but we hope the spirit of forgiveness will enable us [to] live at peace with them [whites]."

A notable exception to what Ghanaians typically write was the following remark from Cape Coast Castle's guest book. "I am very impress [sic] about this magnificent castle. I am very pleased about the rehabilitation which has given the castle a face lift. The irony I am not able to unravle [sic] is that it was the same Ghanaian who sold his fellow Ghanaian. Why should we be crying now?"

Guilt

Europeans and Euro-Americans often express guilt about their connection to white slave traders, missionaries, or colonizers. British visitors wrote the next two remarks. "In view of what we have done in the past, I am surprised but thankful the Ghanaian people are so warm-hearted and friendly." "It is shocking and leaves me with a sense of shame. I hope that the Ghanaian people do not see me in the same light as those who came before...." A Dutch visitor to Elmina Castle commented, "You're not proud to be Dutch when you hear the awful things they've done here 200 years ago." A German wrote, "Sometimes I feel ashamed of what white men were doing here." "What a mixture of horror, guilt and responsibility I feel as a white American—and look what has happened in the USA with the African Americans! We owe them so much, but give so little!" A Canadian remarked, "It is really hard for me to go through it. Matter of fact me a 24 year old man started to cry not just because of the white men in slavery that are ancestors but human being [sic] putting down other human [sic] just for wealth,

selfishness and also because the color of men [sic] skin.” From time to time in the visitor books, a few Europeans and European Americans will apologize. “Although Germany has had little to do with the slave trade in particular we have one of the worst histories ourselves. Sorry.” A Dutch visitor wrote, “Never again, my heart is broken. I will never forget this, please forgive us.”

Performance of Popular Discourse

Foreign visitors and Ghanaians are inevitably confronted with popular discourse which relates to the history of the slave trade and Pan-Africanism. This discourse typically promotes the message that Africans are one people and should unite whether they are living on the continent or in diaspora. As described in chapter 4, castle tours often juxtapose European domination with African victimization, leaving out the details of the involvement of African middlemen that would present the history more complexly. Selective history can discount the variety of ways in which African chiefs, merchants, war captives, and political dissenters might have had very different roles in the slave trade (e.g. Shaw 2002; Mann and Bay 2001). Furthermore, this narrow portrayal of the slave trade becomes reified in the context of television shows, performances of PANAFEST and Emancipation Day festivities and their re-broadcasts on TV, radio programs, and performing and public arts. In this way, discourses on memory and history are transmitted and disseminated to wider audiences.

A dominant popular discourse is that European merchants tricked African chiefs and middlemen into allowing them to establish their forts, and later to trade in captive human beings, by plying them with alcohol and trading in guns. This corrupted traditional African society and made it possible for chiefs and merchants to sell their own

people. This story is memorialized in a sculptural display in the Atorkor Slaves Memorial Park in the Volta Region, which was created by Ghanaian artists in the 1990s. This pictorial monument depicts village life, the arrival of the Europeans, the advent of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and the trickery of slave traders in fooling local Africans to board ships bound for the middle passage. The message is reinforced by a local tour guide who explains the sequence of sculpted panels. Located in the middle of the memorial park is a prominent statue of African captives on their knees being whipped by a European slave trader. This representation is not factually wrong; however, it does show an essentialized understanding of the respective roles of Africans and Europeans in the history of the slave trade.

This kind of depiction of Africans as victims and Europeans as villains is not limited to official memorial grounds. It was vividly performed in a play featured during the Reverential Night events of Emancipation Day 2001, held on the grounds of Cape Coast Castle. This performance—put on by Center Stage Folklore and Drama Group, which is comprised of Ghanaians—dramatized early contact and trade between local Africans and Europeans. The “Europeans” were dressed in long-sleeved white shirts and trousers and wore white plastic noses. They walked stiffly, marching in line. Their appearance and mannerisms suggested that they are an uptight and stuffy people. In contrast, the “Africans” were dressed in simple cotton shorts and/or smocks—except for the narrator, chief, and linguist, who were dressed in cloth wrapped around their bodies. The villagers happily worked together as they sang. Their chief and his linguist proudly carried themselves and addressed the public as the villagers listened respectfully. Africans were portrayed as having a rich, peaceful culture.

The dramatization opened with the narrator pouring libation as he said, “Mother Earth, the special womb that gave birth to Africa, the land of the Blacks. This is your drink—and ye ancestors, for we wrote back the clock of mystery—here is your drink, your drink, your drink.” The Africans were shown going about their daily lives. The narrator said, “Then, out of the blue, a new race emerged from the sea. Yes, *Kwesi Buronyi* (Akan name indicating ‘white man’) had arrived. Brothers and sisters—we have, since, never been the same again.” The Europeans arrived with alcohol and guns, which the Africans eventually stumbled upon and experimented with. When the African chief learned of Kwesi Buronyi’s arrival, he and his retinue met with the Europeans. One European man presented him with a book, presumably the Bible, and said, “This contains all understanding for you.” Another European gave the chief a mirror. The Africans seemed to be pleased with these gifts. Then one of the Europeans said, “We want a piece of land to build our house, school, and castle,” which is misunderstood and translated in Fante as the Europeans are building a place for the Africans to lay their heads. After the African chief approved their offer, the Europeans began to survey a piece of land, and both parties signed a document granting the Europeans access. The Ghanaian narrator emotionally reflected: “The humiliation, the torture—all at once—the legacy of the bringer of the Bible to Africa. Families were torn apart. We even lost our names. We lost our identity on the high seas. But why should it be *Africa*? Why should it be Africa? And why didn't anybody stop them? Why didn't anybody stop *them*? Are we animals to be treated this way? If nobody did stop them, today, let us stop them!!!” The performance concluded when the rifle-toting Europeans guided some of the shackled African captives towards the dungeon. The women among them sang a dirge as the

group proceeded off stage to the Male Slave Dungeon, where the audience was then invited to join them as part of the reverential ceremony.

This melodrama depicting the coming of Kwesi Buronyi and the advent of the slave trade provides the public with an additional point of reference—beyond television shows, films, books, or tours—that reinforce dominant discourse on the slave trade. Visitors keep these representations with them as they reflect on visiting such sites as Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle. As this chapter has demonstrated, visiting the castles may mean different things to different people. Europeans may come to assuage their guilt; diaspora Africans may come to reconnect with their homeland. Contestation over the interpretative histories of Cape Coast and Elmina castles shows that social memories are important to people. Visitors care enough about owning and representing the past to share their personal feelings or argue with others in the guest books; some even resort to verbally or physically fighting one another when expectations of how the slave trade should be represented are not upheld. Though one-off visitors to the castles may be consumers, marketers, and even producers of memories, Ghanaian and African American residents in Ghana are more heavily invested in producing representations of the slave trade and African heritage. Chapter 6 focuses on their roles in the promotion of Ghana's pilgrimage tourism.

Chapter 6: Local Perspectives on Tourism and Pilgrimage

In chapter 5, I presented a number of issues raised by visitors to Cape Coast and Elmina castles. By focusing on Ghanaian and African American residents of Ghana, this chapter builds upon my discussion of the ways in which identity, perceptions of African-ness, and attempts at forging a common bond between Africans on the continent and Africans in diaspora are being promulgated. Instead of centering the discussion around temporary visitors, however, this chapter is grounded in perspectives of Ghanaians and African Americans who live in Ghana's Central Region. Because the Central Region has been the focal point for pilgrimage tourism, people living there are the most likely to visit the castles, participate in PANAFEST and Emancipation Day events, and encounter commercial and journalistic treatments of them on radio programs, television shows, newspapers, or magazines. All of these manifestations of pilgrimage tourism are heavily steeped in the rhetoric of shared African-ness that connects African Americans to the African continent and utilizes Ghana as the gateway for a return to the homeland. Because gaining the support of local residents is so critical for the overall success of this tourism, it is vital to understand the range of opinions Ghanaians hold about diaspora Africans. It is equally important to appreciate the perspectives of African Americans who have migrated permanently to Ghana. Resident Ghanaians and African Americans have been involved in campaigns to educate one another, and Ghanaians at large, about their shared features of African identity and common experiences of racial injustice. This chapter examines specific aspects of the limits to and perceptions about these shared qualities.

Oburonyi Etymology

The Akan term, *oburonyi* (*oburoni* in Asante-Twi), inevitably crops up in the public discourse about the degree to which diaspora Africans belong to Africa and should be considered Africans. This term literally means, ‘one who comes from beyond the horizon,’ and comes from the separate terms of *borɔ* meaning ‘horizon’ and the suffix *nyi* meaning ‘person’. Despite its origins, *oburonyi* is now glossed as ‘foreigner’ or ‘white person.’ Akan language instructors of the Fante, Asante-Twi, and Akuapem-Twi dialects whom I have consulted provided a number of alternative interpretations of the etymology of this term and its plural form.

The plural of *oburoni* is *abrafoɔ*. Some words which sound similar are: *abrafo* meaning ‘executioners,’ *aborofo* meaning ‘swimmers,’ *aborɔ* meaning ‘evil mindedness,’ and *borɔ* meaning ‘sweet’ (in Akuapem-Twi) *Aborɔkyire* is a term that is related to *oburonyi* and comes from *borɔ* and *ekir* (in Fante), meaning ‘beyond the horizon’ or ‘abroad.’ The term, *buronya*, is the shortened form of *buroni enya* or ‘white man has got something.’ A number of words are derived from these roots and reflect what things foreigners have brought: *aborɔbe* or ‘pineapple,’ *abirkyirebe* or ‘apple,’ *aborɔdwuma* or ‘potato.’ Additionally, *woye aborɔ* means ‘you are evil-minded.’ My Akan instructors suggested that the range of terms represents the positive and negative aspects of European objects or practices brought to Akan speakers, citing Christianity and education as well as the British demand to sit on the golden stool.

Oburonyi has a number of modifiers in colloquial Akan: *oburonyi pete* or ‘vulture foreigner’ refers to counterfeit or unclean foreigners from Asian, North African, or Middle Eastern countries; *oburonyi fitaa* or ‘pure foreigner’ refers to authentic, white

foreigners especially those of British or American extraction; *obibini-oburonyi* meaning ‘black foreigner’ or simply *obibini* (plural ‘*ebibifoɔ*’) refers to African Americans and other diaspora Africans. One Cape Coast resident that I interviewed explained that some Ghanaians call Jamaicans *ahwemufoɔ* or ‘sugar cane people’ because they were sent away to work on sugar cane plantations. Though these terms are infrequently used by Akan-speakers, they are important to consider because they hint at how contentious *oburonyi* and its modifiers can be; they may also provide a clue to how Akans perceive different groups of foreigners.

Many diaspora Africans have suggested that Ghanaians replace *oburonyi* with terms that are not at all related to ‘foreigner’ or white person. Doris Parchment, leader of the Jamaican delegation to PANFEST ’97, said that they found it strange that Ghanaians called them *oburoni*, because of its contemporary meaning of ‘white man’. She remarked, “After 400 years, it is about time somebody coined a word to refer to us” (Jamaican Delegation Complains 1997). In his editorial in the *Daily Graphic*, Nana Kwadwo O. Akpan suggested that Ghanaians replace *oburoni* with the Twi phrase, “*Ko Fa Bayni*” (addressing one person) or “*Ko Fa Bayefo*” (addressing more than one person), meaning those who started from home have “gone, taken all to which they have been exposed, and returned” (1997). Akpan argues that this phrase reflects the historical circumstance of diasporans and accurately describes what they may contribute to the development of Africa, their motherland.

At an academic conference at the University of Science and Technology in 2000, an African American scholar proposed that Ghanaians begin employing the neologism, *sankɔfani*, as a term of reference for diaspora Africans. She reasoned the term *oburoni* is

offensive to diaspora Africans and that *sankɔfani* or ‘one who goes back to the source to fetch what was lost’ is more appropriate. Some of the Ghanaian scholars present at the conference quickly explained that calling someone *oburoni* is not meant to be an insult, but is done either in a matter-of-fact manner or jokingly. Ghanaians themselves sometimes call one another *oburoni* if they have a fair complexion, Western education, speak English, hold a white-collar job, travel abroad, or exhibit features associated with foreign cultures. This is especially used by rural Ghanaians to refer to others who have moved to urban areas.

Rabbi Kohain explained that many diaspora Africans are offended by the label *oburoni* because they think it is applied to them because they come from America and cannot speak the language. Kohain understands it differently:

No, unless you are from this clan you are an outsider. And that is the problem with *oburoni*. They think it’s automatic white. Not automatic white—you are an outsider, you don’t speak our language, you’re not from this village, you are a stranger. Not, that you are a white man or a white woman, you are a stranger. And because you are a stranger, you are *oburoni*. And that’s a hard pill to swallow for Africans from the diaspora. But, when you go deep enough and get the emotional side out of it, and go into the psyche of the people, and you understand that they are not just picking on you. You can be as black as seven midnights, but if you are not from that village and speak that language, and a part of that clan, and can’t name what clan or *asafo* company you come from, you are a stranger.

Even though it seems as if most African Americans would prefer not be considered foreigners, some do not mind. One African American woman residing in Cape Coast told me in an interview, “I don’t care if you call me a foreigner—I am a foreigner in this country. I do not get upset.” In this case, she matter-of-factly agreed that she is a foreigner and that she identifies as an American. She mentioned that some African Americans state that they descend from a particular African country, but she

makes no claims even though Senegalese and Ivory Coast border officials thought she was Nigerian.

Cape Coast Perceptions of African Americans and Afro Caribbeans

Cape Coast residents have a wide range of opinions about the extent to which diaspora Africans are kin or foreigners, and their comments reveal a complex, multi-layered picture of belonging. Cape Coasters often responded to my survey questions that they considered African Americans *both* their brothers and sisters *and* foreigners. Many Ghanaians find no contradiction in accepting both relationships. While some interpret the notion of being ‘brothers and sisters’ as one of sharing black skin or being African, others believe *all* human beings—no matter the race or nationality—are brothers and sisters under god. A fifty-eight year old, well-to-do male said, “Slaves were not only taken from Ghana. [They were also taken from] Nigeria, the Gambia. You can’t say that all Africans in diaspora are Ghanaians, or for that matter our brothers. But for all humanity, they are our brothers, just as whites are—we’re all humans under God.”

Some Ghanaians told me they do not consider African Americans to be *oburoni* in their physical appearance because they have black skin, but when they speak, their language betrays them and makes them *oburoni*. Cape Coasters suggested that economic class, hairstyles, and language reveal ways in which diaspora Africans are different from Ghanaians.

I feel we talk different languages, so at times they can’t converse with us as they expect. I feel that the language—not all of us can speak Fante, neither do we all speak English. I feel it’s the language which makes them appear unfriendly. If you look at them carefully, you will see that life overseas is different—is sort of good living, so they can change a bit. A careful look at them reveals that they are pure Africans...I am saying that their hair and their language have changed a bit, and that makes them

foreigners, yet you can't say that they are foreigners because their color and ours are the same thing.

Well, because we don't speak the same language, people will consider them as foreigners, and you see, these Jamaicans because of their hair-do. The rasta, in fact, I personally—they like smoking the 'wee' too much—but they say, this is what I hear... We are all black. When you see them, if the fellow is not with the rasta, but is ordinary and is moving, you may not see that he is from Jamaica or you may see him as one of us, but because of the hair-do, and their language that brings the difference—but we are the same.

Hairstyles and clothing were often seen as markers of ethnic difference. At the same time, some Ghanaians listed cultural similarities that they have in common with diaspora Africans, especially Afro Caribbeans; puberty rites, naming ceremonies, food, and words are thought of as areas of cultural retention or cultural commonality. Many Ghanaians told me they think African Americans look African based on their color, but they do not consider African Americans to behave like Africans.

Ghanaians have negative stereotypes of African Americans and Jamaicans: unkempt appearance, widespread unemployment, and high crime rates. that they associate with African Americans and Jamaicans. They assume that those who wear their hair in dreadlocks and dress very casually tend to use marijuana, are lazy and criminal, and these are the types of diaspora Africans about whom many Ghanaians express reservations. A middle-class Cape Coaster shared his concerns about what he perceived as external and threatening cultural influences:

The Afro-Americans are Africans, but they have been treated inhumanely so they bring that with them. They steal most of our girls away without getting proper consent. They've imported homosexuality—our people copy—shooting and murdering—they come from that [environment]. Don't braid the hair of men or prick the ear of men. They should sit down and study the custom of the origin. You need to know your root, instead of bringing something to spoil it.

An elderly Ghanaian chief told me, “In fact, when they come here, I say, ‘Listen—trying to be so unkempt doesn’t make you an African.’ Because my daughter came from Britain with these carvings and that and that, and (I said,) ‘What do you mean with these locks? You are not going to fool me out because we relate these things to trouble.’” One woman from Cape Coast explained that some African Americans have the misconception that dreadlocks are indigenous to Africa. While this hairstyle would be acceptable for a professor in the U.S., the same person would have difficulty in holding a profession position and being taken seriously in Ghana. She stated, “An African American who is normal Catholic or Protestant will get on well here, but this [African] Hebrew stuff is foreign to us and not many people accept [it].”

Slave ancestry is another factor in how Ghanaians perceive diaspora Africans. Many Ghanaians are conscious of one’s social status, which is mediated by family line, economic background, and educational level. These are important characteristics culturally because they influence who is selected for traditional chieftaincy and leadership positions. Because it is impossible for many diaspora Africans to trace their family lines to a particular clan, family, and village, it is difficult to know their appropriate status within Ghanaian society. One elderly Ghanaian *safohene* (a traditional chief of the *asafo* political/military institution in Fante society) told me a proverb to illustrate his feelings about diaspora Africans: “כַּשֶׁנֶּשֶׁת הַחַיִּים נִשְׂרָפֵת אֲבָרָתוֹ עֲדָה לֹא נִשְׂרָפֵת.” [‘A snake sheds its scales but it is still a snake.’]. In his view, which is largely informed by stereotypes regarding physical appearance, employment, and crime, African Americans do not behave in a “civilized” manner. Try as they may to become Africans, they will always be African Americans and descendants of slaves.

A retired Ghanaian politician said that although some African Americans could have come from the best royal family, they are still associated with being slaves, and even though this is unfair, the sentiment that “once a slave, always a slave” lingers in Ghana. Cultural sanctions associated with being a descendent of slaves are applied not only to Africans in diaspora, but also to indigenous Africans. In contemporary Ghana, many chieftaincy disputes have erupted from family and community scrutiny of a chief’s ancestry. A person who descends from a slave cannot be a royal or enstooled as a traditional chief. The Fante expression, “*Dɔnkɔ nndzi adze*” [‘A slave cannot lord over us’], is used to refer to Ghanaians and diaspora Africans. For example, a twenty-three year old Cape Coaster of modest means used this expression in responding to the issue of conferring chieftaincy on African Americans and Jamaicans by stating, “I don’t think the elders will allow them because custom doesn’t permit slaves—‘*Dɔnkɔ nndzi adze*’—to be involved in royal matters.”

This practice of conferring chieftaincy on foreigners received local attention in the Central Region during the past decade. A few public forums on the issue have been sponsored by the K.E.E.A. District Centre for National Culture, during which Ghanaian regional traditional chiefs, an American who has been made a queenmother, cultural officers, tourism officials, and Ghanaians and African Americans resident in the Central Region participated. The overwhelming message of this forum in 2001 was that conferring chieftaincy of any kind on foreigners cheapened the institution and was equivalent to selling out traditional culture. In a survey of Cape Coast residents, I asked if it was acceptable for African Americans and Jamaicans to be enstooled as chiefs. Most Ghanaians thought granting the position of development chief [*nkosuohene*] was

permissible but paramount chief [*omanhene*] and divisional chief were not. Most Cape Coasters reasoned that because traditional chieftaincy requires being a member of a royal blood line and intimate cultural knowledge of traditional customs, these positions should be off limits for African Americans and Jamaicans, or any foreigner. However, because *nkosuohene* is an honorary title meant to recognize the contributions an individual makes towards community development and because it is an achieved status—as opposed to an ascribed status—most Cape Coasters thought it should be open to non-Ghanaians as well as Ghanaians. The following response by a sixty-eight year old, middle class male captures the pros and cons of this issue well:

I can see that it may be yes or no. Yes, in the sense that they are thinking of rapid development and then we are also thinking of enticing these foreigners that we appreciate what they are doing, and therefore we are honoring them by this. And then, if you are looking at our custom as it used to be, the time of our ancestors, you can see that we are also contradicting that. Therefore, we can look at the two sides of it. It can be useful, it could also be a contradiction, but we can explain why there is need for that. . . . If it went to *nkosuohene* as it is now being carried out, then that is in place, because in that case, we don't have this question of royal family and all these will not come in. But we are looking at someone who is prepared to spearhead the development of the nation, and if we get such people showing up in the community and assisting, then we see that this elevation will be an appreciation for the help they are giving us. So in that case, it is okay. For being a queenmother or being a chief, sub-chief, or a divisional chief, that is against the custom.

Besides the issue of slave ancestry, another factor that poses challenges for diaspora African acceptance into Ghanaian society is the perception by some Ghanaians that African Americans think they are better than them. Several Cape Coast residents expressed concerns that diaspora Africans sometimes act superior to Ghanaians. A fifty-nine year old affluent male told me, “There is a proverb: ‘You cannot be taller than your parents.’” In my interview with them, a wealthy father and daughter discussed this issue.

Daughter: “Some African Americans can have a superiority complex and think they are better than Africans. I see those in the U.S. as different than those [who have settled] here [in Ghana], who make more of an effort to appreciate African culture.” Father: “Yes, this was the root cause of the war in Liberia. Those Africo-Americo-Liberians thought they were of a higher class and better than indigenous Africans—this was the basis of the war.”

Cultural Dissonance and Economic Difference

Real and perceived class differences between African Americans and Ghanaians lead to cultural dissonance and divergent goals. While many African Americans are interested in cultivating a social bond with Ghanaians based on shared African identity, Ghanaians focus more on the potential economic returns of relationships with rich foreigners. Each side reminds the other of its respective agenda. Part of the problem is that there is little opportunity for interaction between African American tourists and Ghanaians. African American tourists traveling to Cape Coast and Elmina are typically on a tight schedule that includes visiting the castles and a night’s stay in a local hotel, before being whisked back to Accra. A twenty-five year old female Cape Coaster explained, “When you put them in big hotels...I don’t see anything connecting us to them.” Despite their limited interaction, African Americans and Ghanaians forge sometimes opportunistic and sometimes meaningful relationships with one another. The project of consciousness-raising and sensitivity training happens at a variety of levels from individual conversations to radio programs to public addresses at PANAFEST and Emancipation Day. A sixty-year-old affluent male resident of Cape Coast stated,

“...There should be a deliberate effort to conscientize people—Ghanaians of all ages—so when tourists come, they’ll know what to do.”

On the individual level, savvy Ghanaian children approach African American tourists and tell them they look just like one of their family members. The children hope to get some money out of the encounter—either by begging or selling trinkets for cash, or by collecting addresses and later requesting money for school, books, or toys. At the same time, African Americans remind Ghanaians that they are returning home to Africa and should not be called *oburonyi*. A twenty-seven year old working-class Cape Coaster explained:

When they come and we make them happy, they tell friends back home about their experiences in Ghana and try to convince them to come down to establish businesses here. I have seen some Black Americans who are resident at...a suburb of Cape Coast. They have so enjoyed their stay here to the extent that if you tell them that they are Black Americans, they get annoyed. They say they are Ghanaians.

In general, Ghanaians place a lot of value on traveling, meeting different people, and exchanging ideas. Most recognize the importance of projecting a positive image of Ghana to foreign visitors, because these visitors will eventually travel to their home countries and report back on their perceptions of Ghana and its people. These testimonials spread by word of mouth are bound to influence future visits of others to Ghana. The notion that Ghanaians are hospitable is ubiquitous both inside and outside of Ghanaian society. Ghanaians are culturally required to treat strangers or foreigners very well because they believe this is proper and demonstrates how they would want to be treated if they were to travel. Ghanaians are very concerned about the perceptions foreigners have about them, because it is culturally appropriate, and there is potentially a lot at stake—both economically and culturally—in maintaining positive relationships.

Some African Americans complain that Ghanaians treat whites better than them, that Ghanaians privilege European cultural traits over African cultural traits, and that Ghanaians have colonized minds because they have internalized Eurocentrism. A thirty-two year old female Cape Coast shop keeper relayed an encounter she had with an African American: “One of them saw a portrait of Jesus Christ in our shop and said we should put up Kwame Nkrumah’s own, rather, and that we were being brainwashed by the whites.” During my fieldwork, a few Cape Coasters told me that African Americans behave “more African” than most Ghanaians do. In Ghanaian society, the youngest generation, in particular, is perceived to have uncritically adopted Western cultural values. Some Ghanaians believe encouraging tourism of African Americans and Jamaicans to Ghana would revitalize elements of “traditional” African culture. At the same time, these same Ghanaians express fears that unsavory elements of Western culture creep into Ghana through tourism. A forty-nine year old affluent male said:

Economically, it would be beneficial to us to bring in money and ideas. Traditionally, we can help some of our people to appreciate some of our own traditions. Ghana’s youth are virtually Americans. People visiting want to take up our traditions—African Americans have had traditional weddings here. The youth look up to Americans, [so it can help if they] start picking up culture. [On the other hand, some African Americans and Jamaicans] come in and the culture and ideas they bring in is a bit foreign—in terms of drugs and sex. In Ghana, sex is protected. Jamaicans come here and smoke joints freely. We used to not have anything like AIDS. I think some of these things were brought in by tourists.

Many Ghanaians cannot comprehend why African Americans would want to settle permanently in Ghana, when so many Ghanaians are clamoring to get visas to Europe, Canada, and the U.S. In popular discourse, many Ghanaians compare their own economic position in the world to that of African Americans. Some even reason that because African Americans are better off economically and are supposedly from the most

powerful country in the world, they are the lucky ones—even if their ancestors were taken from the continent to be sold into slavery. This idea was raised in a discussion during the George Maclean Day forum held in Palaver Hall of Cape Coast Castle in 2002. Maclean Day was organized by the castle’s museum educators and included participation by Cape Coast secondary school students, their teachers, a history professor from the University of Cape Coast, and GMMB officials and staff.

Male student 1: “...But for me, I see that the slavery was helping us. Because nowadays, we see people whom—they were sent away—bringing us good things.”

Female student 1: “Please, I do agree with the fact that when the Afro-Americans or the Negroes come to their homecoming, they bring some things. But let’s face facts, how much do they bring? Let’s compare the thing to the brain drain. Do they stay in this country? And when they come to this country, I think that if they stay here and work for us, the benefits derived would be no more than the few pounds or dollars that they’ll bring and go back.”

Female student 2: “I don’t think the slave trade benefited us because there was brutal resistance from the slave trade, there was a form of insecurity among people. You would just be going in, you would be captured and sold into slavery. Somehow it affected the local industry because people didn’t feel safe enough to come out....”

Female student 3: “...From my little history, I know that the slave trade caused an irreparable drain. What I mean by that, is it took all the energetic people around. People that would have made use of the resources we have here and they took them away. At that time, we did not have enough knowledge about the resources that we have. People might just farm, keep all, and eat it. The people who would have been industrious and made good money and help the development of the nation, were taken away. So what the slave trade, what it caused us, what it took away, there is no way we can get it back. So if you stand here and you say that people will bring us some pieces, I don't think it's enough, because we've lost so much to the Western world that we cannot get it back, no matter what we do. They've taken all our resources and used it up. We have to go chasing the World Bank, and now Libya...I know that Ghanaians, actually, are best with the government and all that, but then—I strongly believe, no matter what is due—because of the resources that were taken away, we can develop in a way, but then we can never measure

up to the Western world because of what they took away as a result of the slave trade.”

Female teacher: “We are actually debating on the fact about whether the slave trade was beneficial to the people of Ghana and the reason why it ought to be stopped. In my opinion, I feel strongly that the slave trade, to a limited extent, benefited the whole of Africa. And then when you consider the benefits that people of Africa derive as a result of the slave trade, it was very little. And then the benefit that the Europeans got out of this trading activity far outweighs the benefits that we had as Africans....Considering the agricultural sector, the industrial sector, the commercial sector, how all of these areas was affected as a result of able-bodied people being taken away out of this country to go into some of the European nations. So when you weigh it very well, to a limited extent, the African benefited from it very small, but the rest of the positive benefits went into the hands of the Europeans....[Her next few statements shift from discussing the past to discussing the present, which is taken up by the next speaker.] *It’s not something that ought to be encouraged at all. It ought to be totally abolished, so that our able-bodied men will serve in the country and then develop the country for the benefit of everyone. It can be encouraged up until now. I don’t know what will have happened to us. Almost the country would be really de-populated, and then there would be no one to develop the country for us* (my emphasis).”

Male student 2: “One of the things I think we ought to remember is the problem of brain drain. Where do they go to? We know that a lot of Ghanaians, who go to the Sahara, to join Spain. They go on foot. So, I believe, we listen to these things, and for us, it should help us to fetch our way of thinking so that we do not repeat the mistakes that have happened some years ago. Then, people were forced into slave ships. *Today, people are forcing themselves to the slave dungeon. And that is the irony of the matter.* And, I think that, supposing we’re getting to speeches like this, it should help us to continue with a dialogue that Africa is capable of handling its own affairs. If only, we will not continue to point our fingers at the white people as people who have done us in, but we will take advantage of the thing—that we have to negotiate better, develop our negotiational [sic] skills, so that whatever transaction that comes up, whether in trade or whatever, we will be able to give out our best so that we will not say that we have the resources and you bought them cheap (my emphasis).”

Emcee: “...You know, I think that it is with the deepest attitude to say that, ‘All our able men were taken away, that’s why we are like we are.’ Do you—the young lady—you make me feel like those of us who remain, were the weak ones. So, I think that some of us wanted so much to have escaped—so that they didn’t get us, so our great-grandfathers were strong

enough to produce all of us. So, there is still some strength in the country, and don't be down-hearted. I think things will be okay. Perhaps, I think those that are saying that the slave trade was bad, I don't want us to draw our attention so much on the effects of slave trade on the economy or development of this country. I think you know debate has gone on with it, but I think it is fair to say that it had an impact on the development of this country. I'm sure that every society that has suffered that kind of fate, will recognize that it had a negative effect on the development of the society. *As to whether we would have come where we have come if there had been no slave trade—that one I cannot answer. But what one can also say is not be too unsympathetic with those who hold the extreme view that the slave trade assisted us in a way....On the gentleman's very controversial point—although he may not be found right, sometimes we cast our minds on the fact that almost all of us want to be black Americans, we want to talk like black Americans, we want to dance like them, even go to the whole extent to go there. So, perhaps, he has a point, I don't know. I'm not going to dwell into that controversy. There is no doubt also in my mind that Maclean colonized Gold Coast, if you like. But we will also have to examine, what would have happened to Gold Coast without Maclean? I'm not saying that what he did wouldn't have been done by anybody, but there is a probability that because he operated under so-called sectional nobility, maybe he even used the same system quick, and that would have helped with the development of this country. But whether colonialism, as a whole, has been good for us or not, again I leave it to the historians to debate the point (my emphasis)."*

The speakers above shifted back and forth between discussing the history of the slave trade and current concerns over the brain drain. Whether the slave trade was good or bad for Africa was the central question raised by one of the students. Instead of answering this question by referring to particular geographic and time contexts, speakers talked about how the slave trade has impaired Ghana's development through the loss of able-bodied men and women and how skilled Ghanaians today choose to migrate to Europe or the U.S. Maclean Day participants suggested that if this brain drain continues, there will be no one left to develop Ghana. As the emcee remarked, some Ghanaians emulate African Americans. Ghanaians could experience ethnocide if their most educated citizens leave and adopt foreign cultural practices. Because most African

Americans who visit Ghana donate money and gifts but do not stay for long, their contributions to the economy are likened to the brain drain. According to the contributors above, Ghana could reap greater economic support from diaspora Africans if they remained in Ghana for longer periods. Interestingly, the emcee wanted to discourage too much deliberation about the slave trade's effects on Ghana's economic development, yet he raised another controversial point in hinting that George Maclean's colonization of the Gold Coast might have spurred development.

The notion that diaspora Africans are in an economic position to assist Ghanaians is emphasized in public speeches of PANAFEST and Emancipation Day. This message is transmitted by government officials and traditional chiefs at PANAFEST and Emancipation Day. National newspapers, magazines, television and radio programs, and web sites further disseminate these ideas. Ghanaian officials call for diaspora Africans to spread their wealth and ask the Ghanaian public to welcome them home as family. Deputy Minister of Tourism, Owuraku Amofa, addressed the public during Emancipation Day 1999:

As I welcome from the four corners of the world, our brothers and sisters from the United States of America, the Caribbean and the entire Diaspora, let me assure you that you have embarked on a pilgrimage perceived as one of rediscovery of your roots. This is a true homecoming and a triumphant return to the ancestral home. The day, Africa stood still and the "Gate of No Return" collapsed, for the triumphant entry. Slavery and colonisation succeeded in dividing Africans. It is now time to knit the torn threads together. August 1st therefore presents us with this rare opportunity, a moment in time to reflect collectively on the past and *chart a healthy course for our socioeconomic emancipation*. This we believe should be the genesis and true foundation of genuine unity for progress. We need to forge solidarity among all people of African descent for the advancement of the Continent of Africa, in line with the design and aspirations of the founding fathers of Pan-Africanism, Dr. W.E. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, George Padmore and Dr. Kwame Nkrumah all of blessed memory. Africa lost millions of men, women and children for over 300

years, a period in which bonds were forcibly severed with relations and the homeland. Ghana has thought it fit as an African nation, and a torch bearer in the African struggle for total emancipation, to acknowledge and atone for the insult slavery unleashed on humanity and African civilization. *The African dawn is, awakening us, as we enter the next millennium, to the realities of our responsibilities to ourselves and the motherland. The wealth of Africa is for Africans, and we must responsibly harness it for our common good.* Ghana, the seat of the ancient and sophisticated black kingdom and civilization, is ready for the dispersed children of Africa and friends of the Continent to celebrate Emancipation Day '99. Discover the kith and kin and satisfy all those ancestral yearnings too deep to be expressed, in the rejuvenating fountains in the land of our birth (Ministry of Tourism 1999, my emphasis).

Amofa's address is quoted at length here because I think it emphasizes the key aspects of pilgrimage tourism in Ghana. This speech reifies the notion of Pan-African or Black Atlantic solidarity through the rhetoric of welcoming home brothers and sisters from the diaspora, while paying tribute to those ancestors who suffered and perished during the slave trade and honoring the leaders of Pan-Africanism. Amofa's address explicitly links the solidarity of all descendants of Africa as vital to the goals of progress of the continent. As the first sub-Saharan African country to gain independence in 1957 and focal point of Pan-African ideology, Ghana is singled out as a leader in "total emancipation." Paul Gilroy (1993) would likely pose the question, "From what is Ghana seeking 'total emancipation' today? From slavery? Racism? Capitalism? Coerced industrialization?" (30).

The rhetoric presented in Amofa's address indicates "total emancipation" cannot be realized unless all Africans unite in acting responsibly towards the common good of the continent. Aspects of acting responsibly could mean consciously consuming made-in-Ghana goods or fostering business partnerships with Ghana. This latter notion was the crux of the Africa—African-American Summit hosted by Ghana in May 1999. With

pilgrimage tourism, we see an additional arena in which Ghana's economy could be elevated, as diaspora Africans experience the ideal tourist encounter while returning home to share their snapshots and memories with other potential consumers of pilgrimage tourism. Clearly, diaspora Africans have been targeted by Ghanaian policy makers as having the economic and social capital that could benefit Ghana.

By proclaiming the names of the “founding fathers of Pan-Africanism,” W.E.B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, George Padmore and Kwame Nkrumah, Amofa evokes the feeling of a shared memory of struggle against racial and colonial oppression and pride in asserting Pan-African solidarity. These hero figures will remain immortal in the minds of those who proclaim a connection to Africa in terms of personal identity and heritage. Ghana is the conceptual “meeting grounds” for such great leaders, and it is significant to note that all of the men above knew one another personally and/or were deeply influenced by each others' ideas. All four of them also are good examples of Paul Gilroy's assertion of the Black Atlantic, considering the fact that they all had traveled to both Africa and the Americas or Europe and engaged scholarship informed by the Enlightenment, communism, and other “Western” academic “traditions” or ideologies, alongside those which were deemed more “African.”

Kwame Nkrumah had been deeply inspired by the writings of Hegel, Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Mazzini, as well as Garvey's *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey* (1923), which presented his ideas of ‘Africa for Africans’ and his ‘Back to Africa’ movement (Nkrumah 1957: 45). Nkrumah was personally acquainted with W.E.B. Du Bois and George Padmore. The three of them led the 1945 Manchester Congress, which addressed the direction “black” politics was to take in the wake of

World War II. As independent Ghana's first president, Nkrumah personally invited DuBois and other renowned blacks to become Ghanaian citizens and contribute towards Pan-Africanism and African self-determination at "home." This message of Ghana as homeland and African kinship between Ghanaians and diaspora Africans continues today.

During the Durbar of Chiefs at PANAFEST 2001, Okyeame Kofi Benya, the chief linguist of Oguaa Traditional Area, spoke as he poured libation:

Almighty God, years ago some of our brothers and sisters were sold into slavery. Today we pray that they have come back to their ancestral land. We pour libation to re-awaken the seventy-seven gods. We also pray for our chiefs and remember Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, who wished to unite Africa, and the organizers of PANAFEST, whose effort have brought back our brothers and sisters from the diaspora whose ancestors were sold into slavery. *Let's pray by their coming they encourage more investment to create more job opportunities. We also pray that as they have come back home, they would do well to interact and marry our ladies who are not yet married. Almighty God guide them so that their monies will be well-invested for the development of Ghana and especially Oguamaan [the state of Cape Coast] (my emphasis).*

He delivered his speech in Fante. Because it was not translated into English, non-Akan speakers could not understand it. Some of the Fante speakers laughed when he encouraged the marriage of local women and diasporan men. He thought this would foster economic opportunities for Cape Coast. Other Cape Coasters I interviewed were not in favor of diaspora African men "stealing the local women away."

Local Ghanaian Impressions

Many of the Cape Coaster residents I interviewed seem to share the sentiment expressed in public speeches. They explained that tourism which attracts diaspora Africans should be further encouraged, in order to welcome them home and encourage investment in Ghana. A fifty-eight year old wealthy male said, "It's very good. It helps

to bring the children of the ancestors who were taken in slavery, so that they know their roots. They have to come back to help. They will know the conditions here and lend a helping hand.” In fact, some Cape Coasters reported that African Americans have contributed to their children’s school fees and established a local health care clinic.

Although most Ghanaians are positive about the potential benefits of fostering links with diaspora Africans, some express skepticism about the likelihood of economic benefits or reservations about the types of people who may come to settle. A forty year old male of modest means expressed his frustrations:

I know that PANAFEST is organized so that our brothers in the diaspora would come home to help develop those places that the slave trade took place [Cape Coast]. However, after the first and second one, to date there has been no change anywhere, which makes me feel that only a few people gain from this festival. This has made me lose total interest in the festival. I would not partake of that which wouldn’t help my people....

Ghanaians believe PANAFEST and Emancipation Day are “festivals for Black Americans,” and African Americans and Afro Caribbeans participate more than Ghanaians. As long as Ghanaians find limited reasons to attend these events, festival organizers will have difficulty in galvanizing support behind them. A twenty-five year old working-class male explained:

Basically the PANAFESTs that we go—most of us living in Cape Coast don’t attend the seminars. We only go ‘round at the bazaar grounds and browse around and sometimes see some cultural performances at the CNC. But the recent PANAFEST [2001], I realized the participation was very low. Looking at what had happened before, more people couldn’t exhibit and I’m sure it was maybe due to affordability, in terms of how much it cost to have a stand for your exhibition and how much people are going to buy from them to—at least—equalize whatever they spent.

Who Will Benefit Ghana More?

It is nothing new to hear Ghanaians talking about how different groups of people can contribute to the national economy. At a 1995 rally in Harlem, former President Jerry Rawlings announced that Ghana was preparing the legal framework to offer dual citizenship for Americans of African descent. Rawlings cautioned the audience, “Do not come to the continent without the appropriate skills and resources because you will only be contributing to its poverty. Pool your savings together to invest in the economic and social future of Africa” (qtd. in Aidi 1999-2003). In 1999—this time during a visit to Washington to meet with President Bill Clinton—Rawlings promised to make good on his pledge to grant dual citizenship to African Americans. The proposed ‘law of return’ which would have offered dual citizenship to African Americans has not been enacted.

Towards the end of the Rawlings’ administration and the beginning of the John Kuffour administration (January 2001), the media shifted attention towards the direct economic contributions of Ghanaians living abroad. It was widely reported that Ghanaians living abroad remit \$400 million annually to family members in Ghana (Tetteh 2001). In July 2001, the first Homecoming Summit attracted over five hundred Ghanaians from the U.S., Canada, U.K., Germany, and Japan to brainstorm ideas on economic development. Coverage for this novel summit overshadowed that of PANAFEST 2001, which took place directly after the Homecoming Summit.

The Kuffour administration wants to attract Ghanaians living abroad and African Americans, and the Ghana government has taken steps to encourage investments by these groups. African Americans make important economic contributions, considering that approximately one thousand are resident in Ghana and ten thousand visit Ghana annually.

In August 2002, the Ghanaian parliament approved “Immigration Act, 2000: Act 573,” under which people of African descent in the diaspora¹⁷ can reside and operate businesses in Ghana. This piece of legislation fell short of allowing diaspora Africans citizenship or the right to vote. In December 2002, Ghanaians abroad could apply for dual citizenship with voting privileges anticipated to begin with the 2008 national elections (Diaspora Vote Committee 2005).

Ghanaians are open to investment by multiple parties—provided that economic conditions improve, businesses grow, and employment opportunities increase. A Central Regional traditional chief told me about an encounter he had had in Accra with a West Indian Rastafarian who begged him for money. The chief mentioned that Ghana does not have a bowl of honey for such people to “chop from,” and implied that as resources are scarce, those who are planning to stay in Ghana had better come with a plan in mind to help instead of becoming a burden on the economy. A fifty-nine year old, well-to-do male Cape Coaster echoed his concerns:

There is nothing wrong with it [diaspora Africans permanently residing in Ghana], especially when they’re coming back to their roots, but then I think about what benefits and gains you will get out of that. I’d be interested in seeing how they will contribute to our development and anything that will promote world peace, without rancor. I’m not in favor of blaming people for what happened long ago.

Many Ghanaians encourage diaspora African (and others’) investment and/or migration to Ghana as a partial remedy for the brain drain of Ghanaians. As a sixty-four year old female Cape Coaster of modest means remarked, “African Americans, Europeans, Japanese, and Ghanaians living abroad should all be allowed to establish businesses in

¹⁷ A ‘person of African descent in the diaspora’ is defined in Act 573 as, “a person whose immediate forebears have resided outside the African Continent for at least three generations but whose origin, either by documentary proof or by ethnic characteristics is African” (Parliament 2000: 22).

Ghana. We shall not go outside to look for employment. I, for one, don't feel happy when my child tells me he/she would like to travel to look for employment." At the same time, some Ghanaians doubt that many diaspora Africans would want to stay in Ghana permanently. "Who will benefit Ghana more?" is not simply a material question. Broader implications of identity are also relevant. Who should be welcome in joining the Ghanaian and/or Pan-African family? Does casting the net wide lead to a cheapening and loss of culture?

Reconciling Legacies of Racism

While some Ghanaians are more concerned with economic benefits that may result from pilgrimage tourism, others are more interested in encouraging diaspora Africans to come to Ghana because of historical connections and social commonalities. Many Ghanaians assume that the relatively high numbers of forts and castles along the Ghana coastline, combined with phenotypic resemblance, prove that most African Americans and Jamaicans originated from what is now Ghana. Sometimes, Ghanaians will provide anecdotal examples of individuals—like Louis Armstrong—who were said to have traced their genealogies back to Ghana through family names or physical resemblance. Even Ghanaians who do not agree that African Americans originated from Ghana concur that they came from West Africa and agree that they should feel welcome anywhere on the continent because of their heritage. Public speeches at PANAFEST and Emancipation Day highlight the legacies of racism inherent in the slave trade and colonialism, and assert the importance of "bridging the gap of the African family" in order to collectively combat inequities of the global economy and persistent racism.

Some Cape Coasters agree with this message. As one sixty-five year old, affluent female explained:

It brings people together and makes them feel like one. It makes them have humility. [It brings the message of] sankɔfa and being all one race—black race. We should come together for the common good. The slave trade is going on in different forms. Unity means strength—we need to fight the evils done to us to improve our lot...I'm not interested in [attracting them in order to] improve the economy so much. I'm more interested in seeing each other as one people—to exchange good will and ideas.

The reinterment of the remains of Crystal and Carson for Emancipation Day 1998 gave rise to a range of opinions about the worth of this exercise in contemporary Ghana. Many Ghanaians were receptive to the idea that these descendants of Africa were buried in Assin Manso—where captives en route to Cape Coast Castle reportedly took their last bath in the 'Slave River'. In preparation for the event in 1998, planners scheduled radio broadcasts in several local languages to inform Ghanaians what would be taking place and why it was important. Judging from local sentiment about the issue, this campaign was fairly successful. Some Cape Coasters commented on the symbolic value of the reinterment. A sixty-five year old wealthy male said, "It's an inspiration to do that...After all, they have the connection from this place—so it's good. I think they would be proud that—even though they don't know where [which village] they come from, they have been buried in Ghana and they are Africans. That will bring rapport between the indigenous people and those in diaspora." Ghanaians pointed out that it was culturally appropriate to bury the remains of African descendants on their home soil; after all, it is common practice for Ghanaians to be brought to their hometowns for burial. For example, after Kwame Nkrumah's death in Romania, his remains were first buried in

Guinea, later brought to his hometown in Nkroful, Ghana, and eventually reinterred in Accra (Boahen 2000: 224-5).

Other Cape Coast residents, on the contrary, thought that the reinterment of Crystal and Carson was unnecessary. While a few argued that reburying the dead went against Christianity or Islam, others simply stated that it was a waste of money. A thirty year old, working-class female explained, “I think it’s a bad idea because they died many years ago. Meanwhile it’s a waste of money and plane fare. Moreover, there is land wherever they died and so it’s not necessary to disturb the dead. The cost incurred could be used to develop the country.” Several Cape Coast residents expressed skepticism that the African descendants really originated from Assin Manso. A poor, twenty-one year old male said, “It wasn’t necessary. What really shows that was their hometown?” Many Cape Coasters expressed their disapproval of the reburial by using the proverb, “Asaase biara nnkyir fun” [No earth rejects a corpse]. On the one hand, this proverb expresses a truism; on the other hand, it conveys Ghanaians’ resignation to something they find unnecessary and impractical. One affluent, sixty-four year old male stated his matter-of-fact opinion: “It invokes some sentiment. Maybe they are attached to it emotionally. We, Ghanaians, look at it quite dispassionately. I’m not a traditionalist. We should not lose sight of history, but it shouldn’t hold us back. Only technology can help us to produce more and give us economic benefits.” His statement succinctly summarizes the practical concerns of many Ghanaians—the bottom line of promoting acceptance of diaspora Africans into the African family is boosting the economy.

Reparations: Local Ghanaian and African American Perspectives

Ghanaians also have different opinions about reparations for the slave trade. Many Cape Coasters that I surveyed had not heard of this issue. However, after I explained reparations, most Cape Coasters gave their opinions on the subject. Those who favored reparations repeated some of the same arguments made in the public forums of Emancipation Day and PANAFEST. They argued that the wealth of the West was built from the blood and sweat of slave labor, and valuable human resources were taken away to the detriment of the African continent; therefore, Europe, the U.S., and Canada should pay reparations to diaspora Africans, but especially to continental Africans who presumably are in greater need of aid. A twenty year old male of modest means remarked, "They should remember that before their countries developed, it was through the sweat and toil of our ancestors and they should not feel reluctant to come to our aid when they already know our problem in Africa. Compensation could be in kind to descendants of Africa." A poor, thirty year old male said, "...Africa should be compensated because it's the slaves who turned their countries into the First World kind, with ours becoming Third World. The compensation should come as a development project which will create employment and last."

Some Cape Coasters who disagree with the payment of reparations simply say that we should 'let bygones be bygones.' Others reason that the trade in human chattel amounted to simply trading a "commodity" and that it would be unreasonable to go to where you sold the commodity and demand your money back. For some, too much time has passed to try to reconcile the injustice in such tangible ways as to demand compensation. Cape Coast residents questioned the validity of holding the present

generations—descendants of slave-trading whites or chiefs—responsible for the crimes of the past. The following statement offered by a sixty-eight year old wealthy male may explain generational differences of Ghanaians regarding who is responsible for reparations:

[With] slavery—we cannot blame the whites completely. Our own leaders were answerable for these—they were instrumental. It was with their connivance, because I can't be here and somebody can come and arrest me and take me away after all, there are my people around who will rescue me....So if we have anyone to blame, then we have to blame our own people, who made room for these whites. For they came: 'We need people to go and work for us.' 'Okay. These people are here—take them away.' So I will say that partly it was selfishness, business and....I will say that sheer wickedness, which probably might have allowed our chiefs.... to condone and connive with the whites to take away a lot of our people. So how do you go and blame them?...*The question here is that the indigenous people are not thinking of that role their ancestors played, but they were concerned with the whites as if the whites just came in and took them away, because the true picture is sometimes not being presented. This is how I see it, because when they are talking about the slave trade to a school boy, he may think the whites just came in and gathered the people and took them away, but who might have paved the way for them? They had agents who were ready, and therefore tell them, 'We got people here.' How could you go there? Because in those days, the chiefs were very powerful....*The people came in and took our people away and used them for this. So naturally the indigenous people will be embittered. You will be very angry with the whites without thinking of the role our own chiefs played. And that is why people will just go in and ask, 'You must compensate us.' But what about the role played by chiefs?...So to me, the stand adopted by the whites is okay, because I have referred you to: nobody can come in and take things away without somebody aiding him. And therefore what do we do with our chiefs? But they are dead and gone. Probably even though those chiefs were there. But they are no more—how do we blame their offspring of those people? You can't blame them. We were not there when our ancestors....So the whites are also saying that, 'We were not there. Even though our fathers might have done that, but with the connivance of your own people'" (my emphasis).

Many Cape Coast residents reasoned that compensation for Africans on the continent (as opposed to those in diaspora) was in order simply because this is the group

that needs the most help economically at present. Many Ghanaians, and Africans in general, are ignorant about the history of the slave trade, its nature, and the participants involved. School textbooks in Ghana, as in the U.S., pay little attention to the slave trade or to slavery.¹⁸ History books at the senior secondary (high school) level emphasize human origins and pre-colonial African civilizations. However, some texts provide more information on the slave trade than others. For example, K.B.C. Onwubiko's (1982) School Certificate History of West Africa A.D. 1000-1800 devotes two entire chapters on the topic out of twenty-three chapters. Nevertheless, many Ghanaians do not reach this level of education and do not have access to sources. Most people learn about the history of the slave trade by visiting the castles and witnessing performances such as the arrival of Kwesi Buronyi which I described in chapter five.

The historical interpretations found in history textbooks, like those at the castles, are not free from ideological, hermeneutic, and epistemological considerations. For example Onwubiko (1982) claims:

...It has become fashionable, especially among people of non-African descent, to associate the concept of slavery with the people of the African continent alone. But such an idea is a gross misrepresentation of the truth...The impression is sometimes created by some non-Africans that the African people were in some way peculiarly fitted for enslavement since they submitted to it in a most docile manner and never struck a blow in defence on their freedom and liberty (255, 263).

These statements are absurd exaggerations that are not supported by historians' work. He excludes evidence for his assertion that non-Africans have fundamentally different views from Africans on these issues. Onwubiko also makes broad generalizations about Africans' understanding of the relationship between foreign aid and compensation for

¹⁸ Examples of history books used in Ghanaian public schools include Onwubiko 1982 and Gadzekpo 1999. One former S.S.S. history teacher supplemented the curriculum with Der (1998).

slave labor. “It is probably a common opinion in Africa today that the part which Africa played in the building of the United States of America [through slave labor] is being gradually acknowledged by the latter in many ways by various kinds of international aid” (272). His claim may be a possibility—some contemporary Ghanaians used similar arguments for supporting reparations for Africans—but remains unsubstantiated with evidence.

Some of the local African Americans I interviewed are actively involved in an organization called the Afrikan World Reparations and Repatriation Truth Commission (AWRRTC). AWRRTC seeks to unite Africans from the diaspora and the continent, compensate Africans for the slave trade and colonialism, and help diaspora Africans return to their homeland. Many local African Americans reason that reparations are necessary to correct the wrongs of the past. After all, the Japanese and Jews were granted reparations for injustices committed during and after WWII, so Africans should likewise be compensated for the slave trade and its aftermath. They claim that African American labor built the U.S. economy, that African Americans disproportionately continue to do menial work or labor involving health and safety risks that whites refuse to do, and that the government never made good on its promise to give African Americans their forty acres and a mule after the Civil War.

One African American woman expressed skepticism that the case of reparations for Africans parallels that for Jews. She reasoned that in the case of Jews, Germans purposely tried to exterminate them, and that reparations took place within a limited time frame so as to hold Nazi perpetrators were directly accountable for their crimes. She argued that too many years have passed to legitimately hold the present generation

responsible for the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Furthermore, she mentioned that some Africans profited from the slave trade and that therefore, European countries, the U.S., and Canada cannot be held solely responsible. As Emancipation Day forums, I have heard African Americans in Ghana respond to some of these positions. They say that because the injustice of slavery was never addressed by previous generations, the present generation of whites must be pressed to deal with the issue.

When I asked local African Americans about the possibility that continental Africans could also receive reparations for labor lost during the trans-Atlantic slave trade, some answered that they thought most Ghanaians are in denial about slavery, are reluctant to talk about it, and are unwilling to admit their ancestors' role in the slave trade. Some local African Americans reason that for real healing to take place, African and European complicity in the slave trade needs to be acknowledged. Rabbi Kohain explains:

And if there is going to be a healing process, it has to be whole, wholesome, and holistic—then it has to address all sides. And if we are going to be in condemnation of the European participation in the slave trade, sparing not, then we also have to examine the collaborators and those who participated who were also of African ancestry. And I say that, not for the conventional reason of just wanting to say it, and say that, “Oh, let’s not just blame the whites; let’s blame the blacks, too.” I say it for the purpose of what I mentioned to be holistic because it still crops up. There is still the element of African Americans, who feel that the African brother, that, “Y’all sold us,” in general. There is still some element of the African community that feels paranoid about how the Africans in diaspora feel about them as “we sold you.” So if we don’t go into it and find out the truth of it, and where the acknowledgements need to take place, acknowledgements with apologies need to take place, apologies and restitution, or whatever needs to take place, there will always be a sore.

Although Kohain calls for acknowledging the sins of all parties in the slave trade, he believes that in the spirit of Pan-Africanism, the reparations movement should be a

collective effort to benefit all African people, whether born in diaspora or on the continent. Some Ghanaian chiefs have sought reconciliation with diaspora Africans by publicly apologizing and participating in ritual atonement ceremonies.

Traditional Chiefs' Atonement Ceremony

As part of the PANAFEST season, a ritual washing of the stools and skins (ritual objects associated with seats of African chieftaincy authority and the spirit of a people) was performed on December 9, 1994. This was the first time a ceremony of atonement had been performed as an apology to African Americans and Afro Caribbeans (Kemp 1995). It took place in the forecourt of the chief's palace of Jamestown (section of Accra) at midnight and involved approximately 3,000 people, including Ghanaian and Nigerian chiefs, and diaspora African and Ghanaian observers.

Priests, linguists, chiefs, and their retinues wore black and red, signifying mourning at funerals. The chiefs opened the ceremony by asking for forgiveness for the role some of their ancestors played in facilitating the slave trade. The chiefs explained that the practice of slavery had existed for thousands of years in Africa, where it had been characterized by servitude and not by cruelty (ibid.).

During the ritual, the chiefs atoned, and their retinues chanted, danced, drummed, and sacrificed animals. Then, the chiefs marched through the streets of Accra, spreading herbs and libations on themselves and on fellow participants. The chiefs eventually removed their mourning cloth to reveal white cloth underneath, symbolizing purification and a new beginning.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the newly purified stool and skin were presented to Nana Kwadwo O. Akpan, an African American who was deemed custodian

of the *Fihankra* stool and skin and in 1997 ceremonially installed as *Fihankrahene* (chief of *Fihankra*). *Fihankra*, literally “when leaving home, goodbyes could not be said,” is the term associated with the recently purified stool and skin associated with African descendants born in the diaspora as a direct result of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, all of whom ritually became citizens of *Fihankra*. The ceremony itself has been referred to as the ‘Purification of *Fihankra*,’ which reaffirmed cultural and spiritual ties of diaspora Africans to the continent (Overview 2005).

In 1995, a delegation of sixteen chiefs and queenmothers from Ghana traveled to seven cities in the US. Their objective was to explain the cultural and historic significance of *Fihankra* (Akpan 2005). In New York, they participated in an atonement ceremony in which libation was poured at the African Burial Ground in lower Manhattan in an effort for chiefs to seek forgiveness for African participation in the slave trade. Nii Adote Mofatt poured libation as he stated, “We have come to appease our great-grandfathers and mothers who have been buried here. We call on the rivers of Africa who give life. We call on the spirits of our ancestors who have fought for the cause of African people so that their spirits will be awakened and come join us” (qtd. in Higgins 1995).

In 1999 in Ghana, the AWRRTC solicited official apologies from traditional chiefs because some of their predecessors were collaborators in the slave trade. The President of the Ghana National House of Chiefs participated in this campaign by offering an official apology on behalf of chiefs who historically collaborated in the slave trade. He also invited diaspora Africans to come back home to Ghana.

Between Cultures

Ghanaians who have interacted substantially with diaspora Africans or have lived in the U.S. or U.K. typically have broader perspectives on promoting connections with Africans in the diaspora and projecting positive images of Africa. These Ghanaians are more familiar with the endemic racism that black minorities in Europe and the U.S. deal with on a regular basis, and this exposure fosters empathy for diaspora Africans coming home to Ghana. A wealthy Cape Coaster in his sixties who had, at one time, been married to an African American and lived primarily in the U.S. for decades told me about his own experiences of racism and his reasoning for settling in the United States:

I used to lecture on African culture, and I had this school that they were inviting me every year, to this school. So at that time, people had not seen too many Africans. And people like to talk to me, feel me, hold me, and ask questions about how many lions I killed or whatever the case may be, and why some of my black ones over there were astonished to see me—and this was *way* back, you know, about over thirty-something years ago, when America wasn't—as I said I've seen [discrimination] in America and it wasn't like today and people had not seen real Africa apart from what they'd seen on TV, and the relationship wasn't as today, because now the gap is closed....

....So I remember....some of the black organizations that I lectured said, "Why did you come to America with all these problems we have here?" And I stood there for a while, and I told them. "I came from Cape Coast where I've now realized most of our mothers and grandfathers and mothers and so forth that were brought to America were kept before they came here. After as they were brought over here, to do what?—to help America to get where it is today."

....Jim Crow was in existence when I was in America then. You could see lynching and all that was there and I have witnessed some people that were lynched. Not seeing them lynched, but the aftermath. And some of them burned to death that we have seen. Those were the—I have been part of what is called the change in America but people don't realize it. I have been thrown out when I was doing a culture show—from New York to New Orleans, I was thrown out, they held my collar, and threw me out. Discrimination was in the heyday in those days, and I experienced it personally.

It, it—not that I am angry, but to see what happened to my ancestors that were brought over there. And to see at the time that I was there—they are doing this to me, then what happened to them way back when they didn't have this kind of variety of freedom like I thought I have when I was in America? They called police on me with other groups and threw me out of the place—I am not saying that personally. They have refused me from entering in certain places, they have told me point blank, “Niggers are not wanted in this place.” And I have read it with my own eyes sitting there in New Orleans, “Niggers are not wanted.”

...Coming back to what I was saying, that the guy wanted to know why I came to America, I said, “I am here because I've realized that when my ancestors were brought over here to put America on the pedestal, they started lynching them as they want to lynch me and so forth. So I'm here since they have helped America to be where they are—they started lynching them. But I'm here—they have lynched them—but I'm here to reap up their benefit, that they couldn't get before they were lynched. So I am here to collect the rights that they should have had and any benefit that is due them—that they didn't get a chance [to collect], that's why I chose America...I chose America, because I felt America has more blacks over there and when I come to know the history where the Blacks were—there were no Blacks more congested in any place than America then, apart from England. So this is some of the questions that people ask me—why I came there and I answer them. I am here to reap the benefits of my ancestors because...they lynched them before they were made to enjoy. So I am sitting to collect their benefits.

Not surprisingly, few brought up the notion of collecting benefits and inheritance while reconciling racism and injustices of the past. Most Cape Coasters, or Ghanaians in general, do not have the same types of personal experiences with racism described above. Some Ghanaians have heard about historical and contemporary forms of racism in the U.S. and asked me if it is true that Black Americans are racially persecuted, but many are completely unaware of these issues. By the same token, most Americans are not taught anything about African history and know very little about the history of the slave trade and slavery. The lack of common points of reference—for example, embedded in terms such as ‘Uncle Tom,’ ‘house slave,’ and ‘field slave’—leads to cultural

misunderstandings between African Americans and Ghanaians. Even more mundane cultural elements like country music are misunderstood. Some African Americans are alarmed when they realize how popular country music is in Ghana because they associate it with rednecks, the American South, and lynching. In contrast, many Ghanaians simply like it and appreciate the intelligible lyrics.

Local African American Perspectives

Ghana has been a compelling destination for African Americans because of its relative peace, economic and political stability, the history of Pan-Africanism and the slave trade, and the fact that English is spoken widely. The African American Association of Ghana (AAAG) is based in Accra and is comprised of African American permanent residents in Ghana. Some of its goals are: “to promote greater social interaction between families of Association members...to serve as a resource for visiting African Americans...to celebrate traditional African American holidays; to support selected Ghanaian institutions and commemorate Pan African Leaders” (qtd. in Schramm 2004: 168 F.N. 25). While there are certainly individuals who would like to see the AAAG become more activist in its orientation by engaging political issues like reparations or dual citizenship, the majority of its members think the organization should just be a social resource.

African Americans who periodically or permanently reside in the greater Cape Coast area are not a unified community. Individuals practice different religions, make different lifestyle choices, and hold different political beliefs. In spite of these differences, this loose-knit community is both more unified and more politically radical than the African Americans living in Accra. African Americans share commonalities

about why they are drawn to live in Ghana. Most have had a lifelong interest in Africa, a perception that Africa is home, and a longing to fulfill the dream of coming home. In many cases, their first encounter in Africa was as an educational tour group. Several of the African Americans I interviewed reported bringing their own tour groups of students, teachers, co-workers, religious community members, family, or friends to Ghana and other African countries. They did not organize these trips in order to make a profit; instead, they were driven by an urge to share the pilgrimage to Africa. After their initial more educational and touristic visits to the continent, many of them decided to settle in Ghana, where they have established businesses and development projects. Over one thousand African Americans live in Ghana, and ten thousand African Americans visit annually, comprising 12% of total tourists (Holsey 2004: 170).

Some African Americans feel that their spirit is tied to Africa and this personal connection compelled them to stay. They believe they are more liberated and are more likely to gain the respect that they deserve in Africa rather than in the U.S. Because of the difficulty in tracing their family lineages with certainty to particular places in Africa, many African Americans rely on a feeling that they have, phenotypic resemblance, surname similarity, or DNA testing to try to decipher their ancestors' homeland and ethnic group. One African American man mentioned that some believe in the concept of 'genetic recall' in which something in the genes and blood is forever tied to one's African heritage and that there are corresponding "sacreds" and truths that only Africans knew, coded in their DNA. Not all African Americans have these beliefs, use these methods, or are concerned about finding a particular home village or home country. The knowledge

that their ancestors came from Africa is sufficient for some African Americans who are not as concerned with the details.

One African American returnee warned me, that contrary to what some journalists and scholars have reported, there is nothing “mystical” about Africans from the diaspora coming to Ghana. He thought some diaspora Africans have raised their consciousness to the level that they choose to perceive Africa as home and come to meet their long lost brothers and sisters. Once in Africa, they want to do something to improve its condition. He considers it a blessing for those of African descent to return to African soil, whether they realize it or not. Though it may not be *mystical*, the process that he describes is *spiritual*. In his case, this spiritual connection ties in with his African Hebrew religious beliefs and interpretation of Old Testament scripture which he considers prophecy unfolding in which people from what is now called Africa were expelled to a strange land, where they were cruelly treated for over four hundred years, and are now returning home to meet the brothers and sisters from whom they had been separated. He personally believes that he has come back to “claim his inheritance” in Africa that was given to him in the past. Although he has migrated to Ghana, he feels it is no more a homeland for him than is any other African country. He suggests that, like many diaspora Africans, he has no way of verifying exactly where his ancestors originated; he simply knows that they came from Africa and feels that they are pulling him back.

Rabbi Kohain

Rabbi Kohain Nathanyah Halevi is the unofficial spokesperson of the African American community and a spiritual leader of the African Hebrew faith in the greater Cape Coast and Elmina area. He has also served as the Executive Director of the

PANAFEST Foundation since 2000. Having lived in Ghana since 1993 and having traveling back and forth between Ghana and the U.S. since 1986, Kohain describes his motivation for coming to Ghana:

What first brought me to Ghana was the life-long infatuation with reconnecting with the motherland—Africa. And because Ghana was one of the more popular, populated African states to those of us in the diaspora with its history of Pan-Africanism and welcoming Africans in the diaspora, it was a easy choice for me to chose Ghana as my first nation that I visited in the West African coast...[In] what sense it's home for me is the sense of belonging to a particular place. That one has rooted and grounded himself in and one feels the potential for growth and feels a sense of identity.

Rabbi Kohain has not tried to establish his family's link to Ghana either through DNA testing or genealogy, but he feels spiritually connected to Ghana in a way he has not felt with other African countries, Israel, Jordan, or Egypt. He married a Ghanaian, had a child with her, and has integrated himself into Ghanaian society in a number of ways.

Perceiving Ghanaian Reception of African Americans

Rabbi Kohain interprets Ghanaian reception of African Americans along three basic lines:

Here, we have brothers and sisters who really understand that brothers and sisters in the diaspora are a part of Africa and belong and deserve to be here...; then there are those who basically, you know, perceive you as a stranger coming to their land...; and, there are others, who basically are concerned about every day survival and are trying to make sure that they eat every day.

Other local African Americans likened their repatriation to Ghana to a process of “babies taking baby steps” in integrating themselves into African culture. Some of them have been honored by families who have named babies after them. Others have been recognized by local villages with titles of queenmother, development chief, or safohene

and make regular contributions towards community development. They may not necessarily perform all of the traditional rituals¹⁹ associated with these positions.

A few African Americans admitted to me that they dislike fufu and struggle with the local language. One African American man reasoned that these cultural differences are to be expected after being separated for so many years. There are a lot of things that they do not agree with, just as local Ghanaians do not accept some of the things African Americans believe. In spite of their differences, they have reached a happy medium and learned to live with one another. One African American woman volunteered that African Americans coming to Ghana sometimes make the mistake of acting superior and advising Ghanaians what to do because they come from a technologically advanced country. For her part, she would rather learn from Ghanaians, and she reasons that some of the brightest minds in the world came from Ghana.

Perceiving Ghanaians

Some African Americans feel that Ghanaians think too much with their stomachs, and not enough with their hearts. In other words, Ghanaians are perceived as being overly concerned with economic returns and fail to appreciate the deeper reasons why their relationship with diaspora Africans should be cultivated. Another common perception is that Ghanaians favor whites or non-blacks in their interpersonal interactions, in the service industry, and in awarding business contracts. As one local African American woman explained:

Other people who are not Africans or African Americans come in here and stay as long as they want and they don't have to have all this stuff they want us to have in order to be here. And those other people are the ones who exploit the land and take out the gold, take out the oil, take out the

¹⁹ One African American told me that he did not participate in some aspects of traditional African religion such as animal sacrifice because of his own religious beliefs.

bauxite, and all the minerals and things that we have. But we don't take out anything, rather we come in to help development, and they make it harder for us than they do for them—because they're still chained to colonialism. The Ghanaian mind is still chained to colonialism...And so anybody that's got white skin can come in here and take anything they want...So, that's the one thing I resent—that nobody protects the Ghanaians.

Another African American expressed his frustration by stating, “What I hate the most about some of us Ghanaians is that we always seem to respect the whites more than our own selves and that is sad. You can see that all over—on the streets, at the supermarkets, and all other social places” (3/2/02).

Educating Ghanaians and Raising Consciousness

Several African Americans residing in the Central Region have campaigned to raise consciousness about African identity among Ghanaians. They have lectured on positive African role models, Pan-Africanism, African history, and African American history—particularly regarding slavery in the Americas. Rabbi Kohain gives the reasoning behind these educational outreach initiatives:

Our community here in the Central Region—we have been part of radio programs, community forums, where we have tried to expose our brothers and sisters here to the experience of those of us in the diaspora, or replay the history, show the connections, provide the forums. Because, you know, in over 400, 500 years, we haven't had any forums whereby the reconnection process could really take place. So [we've] become estranged to each other by virtue of those experiences, lack of connection throughout the 400 years. So, this is where the idea of PANAFEST and Emancipation Day play major parts, because they as events were prioritized and significance and importance was given to them because they could serve as vehicles to provide forums where there had never before existed to bring the African family together. So, that was conscious—not just for song and dance—but to provide a form and a platform, that we could bring the community together in a non-intimidating atmosphere.

Every March 6, Kohain is invited to speak on the local radio station and reminds Ghanaians that this date is not only their Independence Day, but was a victory and inspiration for all Africans around the world. He emphasizes that Kwame Nkrumah was a world leader on par with any of his contemporaries and that he gave many people all over the world hope. Kohain explains that Ghana is the most logical center for furthering the goals of Pan-Africanism: “Most Pan-Africanists feel that anywhere you would choose to go in Africa to put forward a Pan-African program and platform, you would have to work on the ground to prepare the ground. So, nowhere will be easy. Since most work has been done in Ghana, it’s the easiest, because you don’t have to start from the beginning.” Rabbi Kohain actively promotes Pan-Africanism, not only in local radio addresses, but also in community forums held during African History Month and other significant dates.

The fifth annual installment of African History Month in Cape Coast took place on February 12, 2002 in one of the local secondary schools. This event was supposed to include an essay competition,²⁰ but only two entries were submitted out of the fifteen local schools participating in African History month, so the deadline was extended. Instead, the previous year’s winners presented encore performances, and African American and Ghanaian educators delivered speeches. Apart from the student performers, the main participants included the Deputy Regional Director of the Ghana Education Service (GES), a headmistress and assistant headmaster of two local schools,

²⁰ Essays were to respond to the question, “What does this modified quote from Dr. MLK, Jr. mean to you?”:

“If we are to have peace on earth, our loyalties must be ecumenical rather than sectional. Our loyalties must transcend race, our tribe, our class, and our nation. And this means we must develop a world perspective. No individual can live alone and as long as we try, the more we are going to have war in this world. Now we must either learn to live together as brothers and sisters, or we’re all going to perish together as fools.”

Rabbi Kohain, and two other local African Americans. In their dramatic performances, students said Africans are imprisoned by European culture, and that Africans must use their own names over European/Christian ones. The previous year's winner argued that reparations should be paid for Africa and its people, citing European culpability in the slave trade, colonialism, and neo-colonialism.

Speeches by African Americans covered the history of African History Month from its origins in the U.S., the resistance of terms like 'niggers,' 'negroes,' and 'blacks,' applied by outsiders, and recognition of Africans born in America as 'Africans.' The GES speaker commended local African Americans for their educational scholarship project that provides school fees for students in need of financial support. One of the African Americans acknowledged African Americans who have "returned home" and individual Ghanaian schools that participated in African History Month. Finally, students were urged to establish African history clubs in their schools.

Ghana is not the only location for these types of educational projects; they also travel back and forth to the U.S. Rabbi Kohain and other Central Regional African Americans have been instrumental in raising consciousness about African identity among African Americans in New York. He says that most diaspora Africans are still ignorant about Africa, and, for example, speak of Africa as if it is a country instead of a continent. Kohain was the headmaster of an independent, Afrocentric elementary school in New York and the co-founder of an affiliated institute established in 1976 which served as an African American and African Hebrew community center. This institute offers both elementary classes in African drumming, dancing, languages, and history, in addition to community lectures geared towards adults, and performing arts for all ages. They host an

African Ball every February, as well as an annual African Family Day festival which began in 1987 on the hundredth anniversary of Marcus Garvey's birth. Showcasing musical performances, African clothing and food, this is the largest African festival in Westchester County with over seven thousand participants.

In 1988, Osabarima Kojo Mbra V, the late *Oguaahene* (chief of Cape Coast) was invited on his fortieth anniversary on the stool to be the keynote speaker at the institute in New York for the state's first observance of Juneteenth. The celebration commemorates June 19, 1865, the day that the news of emancipation of slavery in the U.S. reached the furthest stretches of African Americans in Texas. During the *Oguaahene's* visit, Kohain and others persuaded him to seize the opportunity to invite "his people home" and to encourage the settlement of African Americans to Ghana. During Osabarima Kojo Mbra V's address, he further suggested that they bring Juneteenth to Ghana and educate Ghanaians about its significance. With the *Oguaahene's* invitation, Juneteenth was eventually transplanted to Ghana by Kohain and a few other African Americans. These individuals organized a commemorative ceremony in Cape Coast Castle on June 19, 1994 (Bruner 2005: 109).

Perceptions on Pilgrimage Tourism in Ghana

As I mentioned above, many African Americans actively resist the label of 'tourist.' A few African Americans I spoke with pointed out, however, that the African Americans who come to Ghana primarily for site-seeing and not for reclaiming an African identity are the same people who have "assimilated into the white world" or have been "enculturated into enjoying Western culture." According to this logic, African Americans who have assimilated into dominant American culture contrast sharply with

Africans born in America wanting to make the pilgrimage home. Rabbi Kohain explains the significance of this journey:

I see it as a pilgrimage exercise, that Africa or Africans in the diaspora, to those who are very African centered, this is nothing less than Mecca or Jerusalem in terms of wanting to get back home to the motherland....

[For African Americans] the fact that that living hell in America during the time of capture, enslavement in America—"I can only balance that if I can only get home. And, it's almost turned into—kind of like a metaphorical or allegorical ideal that it's like going to heaven, if I can only get back home to Africa. So, it's not like a normal trip for an African traveling out of the diaspora....

There is something embedded in the site, that "I'm going home," "What will happen?," "I'm returning." Sometimes [it is] the first in a generation, the first in a family to have gone back to Africa. In the sense of, "When you go there, remember me; when you get there, call my name out; when you get there, pick up some sand or some soil for me; when you get there, don't forget to bring me something back;" all makes it part of a spiritual journey. So, the most appropriate term that I can think of is like a pilgrim, a pilgrimage. And that's where PANAFEST and Emancipation [Day] highlights a season ceremony and program....It focuses groups of people to choose that time to go, because they will meet programs that answer that call inside of them that, "I'm returning home to mother Africa; I'm meeting other Africans in the African family; we're going through rituals that will bring us significant meaning to our experience; we're seeing or culture, we're laughing, we're enjoying, we're smelling the smells, tasting the spices, feeling the feeling, hearing the sounds—all into one. So, that's what makes it even a spiritual happening and event as well.

Visiting the castles is not a goal for all diaspora Africans who have migrated to live in Ghana. One local African American man expressed that though he has seen the outside of Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle, he has never entered either structure:

I know my history now despite the fact that over there in the States, we were never taught African history. We were always being blinded by the white man. Now I know and have always known I'm an African. I know over four hundred years ago my ancestors were captured and kept in there [castles] 'til ships transported them across the ocean. There's no need—I don't have any reason to go there (3/2/02).

Another local African American man told me that he felt no reason to go on another tour of the castles, as his initial impression is still very vivid. He mentioned that one of his friends had suggested to him that people should let them crumble to the sea, to which he replied that if that were to happen, they could be written out of history because the tangible structure would be gone (11/15/01: 15).

A local African American woman explained the significance of the castles in a different way. She reasons that most African Americans do not know exactly where they come from—all they know is that their ancestors left the shores of Africa and that the castles represent a starting point to reconnect. She describes her first visit to Gorée Island in Senegal and castles in Ghana in a way that links the memory of the slave trade to the memory of African American sharecroppers struggling to get by and the memory of the struggle for civil rights:

I felt total anger...I wasn't the only one; there were a few of us. What reflected back was how we grew up in the South. All I could see was that tobacco field and my father up every morning at 4:30 and my momma up cooking, going to the field, coming back. I don't know what it might have been like if I stayed [in Africa]—that I don't know. But, I keep telling myself it couldn't have been any more horrible than that life was....I come from a little town in North Carolina...Out of all the apparent good relationships between blacks and whites, when they segregated that school—it stopped going on [with] segregation. And my cousin's daughter was one of the first ones that went to the quote unquote white school. A lot of young whites gathered in the back of this house and...they were making noise and running around [to intimidate blacks]. One man took his gun; he went out; he just sprayed bullets everywhere. That was the end of that [intimidation] (9/11/01: 5-6).

This woman, locates her calling to treat sick children and mitigate the suffering of the poor to her own experience of growing up in poverty and learning the necessity of sharing in order to survive. Like several other African Americans residing in the Central Region, she has as her mission when living in Ghana to be directly involved in helping to

alleviate poverty. She and another African American woman run a local free clinic that provides basic health care and medical supplies for the community.

Several of the local African Americans I interviewed took issue with the lack of sensitivity in which tourism planners, operators, and guides approach their product. As I mentioned in chapter five, several African Americans residing locally have spoken out against the presence of restaurants and offices in the castles, as well as the Ghanaian mainstream interpretation that they feel whitewashes the history of the slave trade. One African American woman remarked, “Ghana has bastardized the buildings—with its offices and restaurants, it has painted and paved over the history. People in charge of the sites don’t have the same background [as African Americans do] in terms of relating to the slave trade as an atrocity. They just block it out. But these places will always be with us and will always serve as poignant reminders to recall our history.” (4/27/02). She believes that those in charge of the castles have largely failed to present the horrors of this history and did not know the difference between restoration and renovation. In her mind, all visitors should be charged the same admission rate, and it is not the responsibility of diaspora Africans alone or even primarily—as some Ghanaian policymakers have suggested—but *everyone’s* to help preserve these symbols of atrocities against humanity.

Another example of how tour operators’ products are lacking is that most tours with African Americans involve a pre-packaged bus trip that shuttles visitors to Cape Coast/Elmina castles and shuttles them back to Accra in the same day. In such cases, there is little opportunity for visitors to walk around town, get acquainted with any of the local people, or experience a pilgrimage. If they do spend the night in the area, it is

generally at one of the four or five star hotels that are secured in such a way as to prevent interactions with local Ghanaians, apart from the hotel service personnel. Rabbi Kohain sees himself as a resource for Africans in diaspora who come to Ghana in search of a deeper connection of pilgrimage. His own experiences of coming to Ghana and staying with families instead of being put up in a hotel and bringing tour groups over the years has shaped his ideas about what African Americans are really after when they come to Ghana: a “real” experience to meet the people, walk around, and feel the culture.

Rabbi Kohain has experience with some of the previous officials from the Ministry of Tourism and recognizes that with the individuals he has personally met (Mike Gizo, Hawa Yakubu), they balance the demands of bringing in tourism revenue with approaching pilgrimage tourism of diaspora Africans with necessary sensitivity:

I have had personal one-on-ones with them and I feel that sensitivity, but they are also under the obligation of making a ministry work, which means they need resources, and have to build an industry because a lot of pressure is on building the tourist industry, which means money. ‘Cause they’re under the gun of a developing nation. And they need resources, and tourism is cited as one of the potential major areas, that they can bring resources in and they have to meet that challenge to keep their job...And the only way it’s taken serious is by the resource and revenue that it brings in or attracts. And that’s the unfortunate measuring rod, that puts those who are in the job, of having to do a job, of making the ministries work, have to focus on the finances to be counted as relevant. Then, not at the expense of compromising the sensitivity of one of the major constituencies they are trying to attract, which is Africans out of the diaspora (9/20/01: 30).

At the same time, Rabbi Kohain and many other African Americans are offended by the notion that diaspora Africans are continually asked at such forums as PANAFEST and Emancipation Day how much they will contribute to the national and local economy:

One of the things that I feel about that, personally, is that is the wrong premise for the reuniting of the African family. And I felt that the services during PANAFEST, I felt somewhere in marketing of this reunion, too

much of the marketing strategy is based around what resources people are going to receive, and not around the moral principle of it—you know, the integrity and the strength of reuniting in and of itself, and healing the wound that has happened in the separation of the African family. So when we began to lean heavily upon the marketing strategy of, “They’re bringing resources; they’re bringing their money from America; they’re gonna help us develop; they’re gonna help us get out of our poor situation.” So then, what ends up happening was, when that is not produced fast enough, it’s the very foundation that you built the relationship upon. So, when that doesn’t happen, it’s like you have no grounds of the relationship. So, when the relationship is built upon the integrity of more moral and principled issues, then it creates more of an atmosphere for the relationship to build along stronger lines. When the material, the financial, the intellectual, whatever resource it is that we’re expecting or hoping for—when that materializes that’s just gravy on top of—but it’s not the foundation for the relationship” (12/19/01: 5).

Kohain reasons that traditional chiefs should play an especially prominent role in cultivating a strong relationship with diaspora Africans, because of their past role in selling fellow Africans during the trans-Atlantic slave trade. While the government’s concern for development is understandable for Kohain, he sees that the chiefs are the ones who “should be on the front line of the moral crusade to say, ‘These are our children; this is our family....these are our people, they belong here’” (ibid.: 6). He considers it critical for diaspora Africans to be integrated into Ghanaian society not at the level of nation-state, but at the level of the)man structure in which an individual may be adopted into a family and a clan within a particular traditional area. Until this is done, he says Africans from the diaspora will continue to be perceived as *abrafo*).

Once these avenues are opened up to diaspora Africans, Kohain says that it is up to Africans in the diaspora to be clear about where they want the relationship to go and what they want in coming “back” to Ghana. Kohain explains:

Do you want to come back and amalgamate and be a part of the systems on the ground, or you want to come back and be your own self. You can’t have both—the best of both worlds, you know. Do you want to come

back and blend in, and be a part of the system that you come to find on the ground? Or do you want to come back and find some room and space on your own and be your own? But, that's the decision that has to be made. And, once that's clear, the process is easier. But that's not clear yet (ibid.: 8).

In the time since Kohain first visited Ghana in 1986, he has observed a difference in the way in which diaspora Africans are perceived by Ghanaians. He credits this shift to a combination of consciousness-raising efforts, and the development of personal relationships—one-on-one, as well as individuals or churches adopting a whole village. PANAFEST and Emancipation Day have not only brought a number of diaspora Africans to Ghana, but have fostered their relationships with Ghanaians, and have led to a more meaningful engagement of including those in the diaspora as part of the African family (12/19/01: 14). For Kohain, the whole point of PANAFEST has been to reunite the African family through the vehicle of the arts in an effort to address real issues, identify problems facing Africa and African people, and to collectively come up with solutions.

He reasons:

The problems that we have identified as our major problems...we can no longer afford to waste our time nor the resources to view them in isolation of each other. Starvation, hunger, ignorance, all of these issues are being addressed almost like on separate projects...by each classification of Africans, no matter where we find ourselves. On the African continent, we have...fifty-four nations, fifty-four parliaments, fifty-four presidents or prime ministers, fifty-four ministers of finance trying to tackle all these problems in fifty-four different ways. If we go to the Americas we find the same things. The African American community is still addressing the same thing. The African American community in America is concerned that it's the highest level of population infested with HIV and AIDS. It's concerned about its disproportionate figures and percentages filling up the penitentiaries and prisons. It's concerned about the unequal wages for the same work...Most often than not, Africans in Africa feel that African Americans are alleviated from those struggles. "Not in America and Europe—they don't deal with that." And they don't realize the struggle that Africans in the diaspora having that they see themselves almost in the same trouble, but there is no collective coordinated effort to address them

collectively, which is where I think Pan-Africanism comes in... There needs to be an aggressive attempt to redefine Pan-Africanism under the current day circumstances, and to be able to define it for the present day generations—for it to have a continued relevance in our struggle, and continuation to advance the African cause (6/14/02: 6).

Chapter 7: Conclusion

I described in previous chapters how various actors—including tourism policy makers, tour guides, visitors, and local Ghanaians and African Americans—participate in and perceive pilgrimage tourism in Ghana. In order to understand this phenomenon from a holistic perspective and to appreciate the joint effort of the individuals and parties involved, my research used interviews, participant-observation of the guided tours at Elmina and Cape Coast castles, PANAFEST, and Emancipation Day, and surveying both African and African descended visitors to the castles, and Cape Coast Ghanaians and African Americans. If I had focused on only one group or one aspect of Ghana's pilgrimage tourism to the neglect of others, I would have excluded the broader goals of the different stakeholders and the contradictory messages embedded in the practices of pilgrimage tourism.

Many factors influence the perceptions individuals take away from their experiences in visiting Cape Coast and Elmina castles. Tour guides' oral accounts diverge considerably from the events that transpired at these sites; their presentations must be selective for both practical (financial considerations and time constraints) and abstract (evoking memories) reasons. Different forms of popular culture—such as television, magazines, films, and the internet—inform individuals' and groups' perceptions of the past and expectations of what they should experience on a tour. I have shown how different groups both hold a range of beliefs and exhibit trends in their opinions regarding the discourses surrounding pilgrimage tourism. The events of PANAFEST and Emancipation Day has been absolutely critical to this research because

they add ethnographic detail about the rhetoric in public speeches, performances, and rituals.

Ethnic and national groups care deeply about public historical performances and memorials tied to their own identities. Maurice Halbwachs (1992 [1952]) feels that people do not remember events directly with what he called ‘historical memory’ in contrast to ‘autobiographical memory.’ Instead, people are pushed on to think of the past through reading, listening (to guided tours or public speeches) or by participating in commemorations or festivals. These commemorative moments give people a chance to “gather together to remember in common the deeds and accomplishments of long-departed members of the group” (ibid.: 24). I agree with Halbwachs, and have shown how memories are socially constructed.

The introduction to this dissertation presents identity construction and identity formation as somewhat conceptually distinct phenomena. Upon examining them in practice, I believe that they are integrally tied and impossible to separate. Stuart Hall (1996) writes that identification assumes a social group’s recognition of its shared origin or common set of traits “naturally” associated with it. This recognition fosters solidarity to the social group. Hall contrasts this definition with a more discursive understanding in which identification is a construction which is always “in process” but is never an exact fit (ibid.: 2-3). His notion of ‘identity’ is not essentialist, but strategic and positional, subject to the vicissitudes of history (ibid.: 4-6). Identities are increasingly fragmented and multiply constructed. In Ghana’s pilgrimage tourism, there are moments in which Ghanaian and diaspora African identification with an African collectivity intersect. At these moments, identifications are constituted through commemorative rituals. Judith

Butler (1993) states, “Identifications are never fully and finally made; they are incessantly reconstituted, and, as such, are subject to the volatile logic of iterability [capable of successively repeating a procedure to more closely yield a desired result]. They are that which is constantly marshalled, consolidated, retrenched, contested and, on occasion, compelled to give way” (qtd. in *ibid.* 16).

The Ghanaian state and media, and individual spokespersons tell diaspora Africans and Ghanaians to embrace unity in a shared African culture, rooted in essentialized notions of the black race and a common struggle against Western domination through the historical examples of slavery and colonialism. The memories of the slave trade are the most compelling to diaspora Africans and Ghanaians when they are constructed and deployed collective *lieux de mémoire*—notably in the form of ritual. Once there is an attempt to articulate specific agendas and solutions in line with Boyarin’s (1994) notion of ‘the politics of memory’, however, the notion of a collective African identity transcending nation, culture, or class crumbles. In this case, the ways in which the practices of memory are mediated are not uniform, but rely on the sometimes competing goals of the various groups who construct and maintain memories.

Two fundamentally different objectives are being advanced in attracting diaspora Africans to Ghana. For diaspora Africans, the goal is recognition by Ghanaians and other Africans to be legitimate members of the “African family.” Secondly, diaspora Africans want reparations for the slave trade and dual Ghanaian citizenship. For Ghanaian stakeholders in the tourism industry, the goal is to bring in as much foreign exchange as possible. In their promotion of pilgrimage tourism, they are banking on African Americans as a market. While the push and pull of the memory of the slave trade

compels us to think of the historical tragedy itself, and then to vow never to repeat it, the ‘politics of memory’ play out in very different ways, revealing the limitations of collective memories. Homi Bhabha writes:

We have entered an anxious age of identity, in which the attempt to memorialize lost time, and to reclaim lost territories, creates a culture of disparate ‘interest groups’ or social movements. Here affiliation may be antagonistic and ambivalent; solidarity may be only situational and strategic: commonality is often negotiated through the ‘contingency’ of social interest and political claims (1996: 59).

Whose Heritage Is It?

The history surrounding Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle raises fundamental questions about to whom heritage belongs. The histories of these sites are long and complicated, involving Europeans and Africans of various national, ethnic, class, and gender backgrounds. Comments in the castles’ guest books testify that visitors of many different nationalities and ethnic groups identify with these sites and find multiple meanings there. As I showed in chapter five, Europeans express guilt over the role of white slave traders, African Americans feel pride in African heritage, and Ghanaians exhibit empathy for the captives and anger towards whites. All groups believe we need to interpret the injustices of the slave trade more broadly as a lesson for humanity. Visitors express a diverse range of sentiments, reflecting their castle experiences.

People of all ethnic and national backgrounds are moved by and find meaning in visiting the castles, but which aspects of their history should be emphasized during guided tours? Though tours are not uniform in their content and form, the ‘slave story’ is prioritized as the most important aspect of castle history. Policymakers and the public continue to debate over how Europeans’ presence in the castles and African complicity in the slave trade should be incorporated into tours and museum exhibits. The castles’

museums stray from the primary perspective of the captives when they address architectural history, Fante culture, the history of trade between Europeans and Africans, and African American history. This tells us that Ghanaians want to present visitors with aspects of their own history and contemporary culture and that policymakers believe that the castles have a history broader than the ‘slave story’ which needs to be told.

Some Ghanaians think that the castles are symbols of African American or diaspora history. These Ghanaians reason that since the structures recount diaspora African history, diaspora Africans should pay for their maintenance. Ghanaian policymakers worry that whoever funds the restoration and maintenance of the castles would have power over the historical interpretation of these sites. Some African Americans resident in Ghana think Ghanaian stakeholders are overly concerned with offending possible European and Euro-American donors and that this factor influences tour content.

Apart from considerations about funding, which groups are most committed to patronizing Ghana’s forts and castles? Despite GMMB efforts to keep the admission fees for Ghanaians relatively low, many ordinary Ghanaians still cannot afford to pay. Many Ghanaians have very little interest in the histories of the forts and castles, and they do not want to be reminded of the sad history of the slave trade. Educational campaigns sponsored by Ghanaian stakeholders and resident African Americans have been met with limited success in raising the consciousness of local Ghanaians about why they should care about the castles and the slave trade. One African American granted Ghanaian citizenship by Kwame Nkrumah has taken extraordinary measures to raise awareness

about the importance of preserving Ghana's forts and castles and promoting Pan-Africanism.

Dr. Robert Lee

I was first acquainted with Robert Lee at the observance of the 134th birthday of W.E.B. DuBois, as part of the Black History Month events, at the DuBois Centre in Accra. He met Kwame Nkrumah when they were both students at Lincoln University (the first higher education institution for young men of African descent), located in Pennsylvania; Lee was just seventeen, and Nkrumah was twenty-five. In 1953, Lee came to Ghana after Nkrumah himself granted his visa. When Nkrumah asked him if he could manage to live in Ghana, Lee agreed to stay permanently. He brought his wife and children, who were eventually given Ghanaian citizenship. He and his wife—both dentists—established a mobile dental health clinic and an office for private practice. Lee describes how Nkrumah inspired him to come to Africa:

Kwame Nkrumah did represent a freedom effort, as a black man he was a symbol of that for most of us—a symbol of what a man can do if he struggles at it. . . . There's no force in the world so terrifying that you can't overcome it. He was a student from Africa—not from South Carolina, but from Africa. Big jungle, elephants, animals, savages with the bones in their noses—he came from a place like that and talked about freedom. There must be some possibilities. So, that's where Kwame Nkrumah was, and I just happened to be lucky enough to be in the same school. And, hear it from his own mouth before anybody else did. I saw some of them, I knew some of them, I paid attention to Africans. Most African Americans don't pay attention. . . . Nkrumah represented to me and many African American men, maybe some females—Maya Angelou came here because of the same thing—there's a black man who's got the courage to stand up. . . . and say, as an African, land in Africa belongs to Africans.

Lee and other highly skilled African Americans were moved by Nkrumah's example. According to Lee, this led to African Americans "fighting to claim our share of the pie" with the civil rights movement in the United States. Unlike many of the African

Americans who returned to live in the U.S. after having migrated to Ghana in the 1950s and 60s, Lee wanted to remain in Ghana because he felt liberated by living in a society that was not so hectic, technology-driven, or conscious of skin color. He realized early on that ethnicity, language, and culture rather than race were useful ways to differentiate people in Ghana.

Though he never became active in Ghanaian politics, Robert Lee has participated in a number of events designed to bring together diaspora Africans and Africans from the continent. For example, he delivered a paper at the 1994 *Conference on Historic Preservation of Elmina and Cape Coast Castle and Fort St. Jago* in which he explained the significance of making a pilgrimage to the slave forts was for African descendants:

To these descendants, coming back to Africa through the Slave Forts is a necessary act of self realization; a recapturing of the “Lost Soul of Black Folk”. It is like lying on the psychiatrist’s couch and getting rid of a great burden which has been borne for centuries. The mystery of this long passage to a strange and unfriendly land where drudgery and death were the only future that beckoned the lifeless experience of so many million[s]. Even today, the spirits of the diaspora are somehow tied to these historic structures and coming to stand under these forts and experience the feelings of walking in the damp, murky dungeons is a reminder of their ancestors’ anguish and despair. Ghana was the Capital of the Slave Trade as is obvious by the vast numbers of Forts with dungeons; now it stands to be the capital of Pan Africa; opening its doors to its kinsmen who will come through these doors looking for historic relief (2-3).

Lee’s paper urged policymakers to present the history of Ghana’s forts and castles as world heritage—not just African heritage. At the same time, he argued that the African slaves deserved the most attention in historical interpretations of the sites.

In the 1970s, Lee led a campaign to restore Fort Amsterdam in Abandze, east of Cape Coast. He established the African Descendants Association Foundation (ADAF) in an effort to raise awareness among all Africans (diaspora and continental) about the

importance of Africans controlling the rehabilitation of Ghana's forts and castles. Lee felt that Africans needed to be in charge because diaspora Africans and Africans from the continent needed to cooperate, create avenues for mutual understanding, reflect upon their relationship as Africans, and control the historical interpretation of these sites. Lee actually lived in Fort Amsterdam for nearly one year in order to raise international awareness of the importance of diaspora African and African cooperation in restoring the fort.

He said that his project was met with resistance from Ghanaian stakeholders, and ADAF was regarded with some suspicion because, at that time, Ghanaians questioned why anyone would want to restore a slave fort. He believes many Ghanaian officials still operate in a neo-colonial mindset and are afraid of offending potential European donors. During the time Lee leased the fort, GMMB wanted to take charge of all the funds for its preservation. Lee disagreed because he had invested some of his own money in the project and he wanted it to be a joint effort between diaspora Africans and Africans. After being disappointed with Ghanaian officials' approach to the Fort Amsterdam project, Lee decided to use his money to build a tomb for the remains of W.E.B. DuBois and promote the DuBois Centre as a resource for Pan-Africanism, bringing together diaspora Africans and Africans. These kinds of efforts to raise Pan-Africanist consciousness can be understood as inventions of tradition. While some scholars argue that all traditions are invented and that this concept holds little value, I believe it is significant and interesting to consider how traditions become invented and then subsumed into the habitus of everyday practice and thought.

Invention of Tradition

Eric Hobsbawm identified three fundamental markers of the ‘invention of tradition’: (1) the development of primary education; (2) the creation of public ceremonies; and (3) the mass production of public monuments (1994: 77-8). Pilgrimage tourism to Ghana typifies Hobsbawm’s notion of the ‘invention of tradition’ because it illustrates each of these elements. Diaspora Africans may grow up hearing about their African roots, attend Afrocentric schools, and develop a sense of black pride in performing songs like, “Lift E’vry Voice and Sing,” (also known as the “Negro National Anthem”). In recent years, this song has traveled to Ghana, and Ghanaian performers have sung it during PANAFEST and Emancipation Day.

Ghanaian school children make regular visits to Cape Coast and Elmina castles. Going on guided tours of these sites and visiting the museum at Cape Coast Castle may be their only opportunity to learn about the trans-Atlantic slave trade. In school textbooks, Ghanaian students typically read only a few pages on the slave trade, but considerably more on Kwame Nkrumah and Pan-Africanism. During African History Month, African Americans and Ghanaians have been actively involved in outreach campaigns that educate the local community about cultural commonalities. The public events of PANAFEST and Emancipation Day as well as the mass media affirm the connections between diaspora Africans and Africans on the continent, providing additional points of reference for education. Commemorative ceremonies and pilgrimages to particular sites along the Slave Routes reinforce these connections in powerful ways. Public monuments have been erected to pay tribute to such African heroes as Kwame Nkrumah, George Padmore, and W.E.B. DuBois, as well as to

memorialize “enslaved African ancestors” reburied in Assin Manso, and local victims lost to the slave trade in Atorkor.

Broadly speaking, the ‘invention of tradition’ in PANAFEST and Emancipation Day does not yet appear timeless, as invented traditions are supposed to be. Nevertheless, public speakers promote a Pan-African identity that is taken for granted. Rituals like those found in the chiefs’ atonement ceremony, the eating of the sacred eto (egg and mashed yam), and the communion in the Male Slave Dungeon are designed to support tradition as a continuity with the past. These traditions are performed in an unproblematized way. Focal points of PANAFEST and Emancipation Day are grand durbars in which Akan chiefs dress in traditional regalia, are carried by their retinues, and make speeches through their linguists. Many diaspora African visitors are in awe of the pageantry of these displays of traditional chieftaincy. At the conclusion of the PANAFEST 2001 Opening Ceremony, diaspora Africans representatives wearing dashikis, long pants and kufi hats joined African chiefs wearing cloth wrapped around their bodies in the eating of the sacred eto. This ritual act of diaspora Africans and Ghanaians donned in “traditional” garb communally eating a “sacred traditional” food was intended to signify solidarity in being African and illustrates how continuity with the past is supported through the invention of tradition.

Commemorative Ceremonies

Commemorative ceremonies, an important part of Ghana’s pilgrimage tourism, include slave marches, plays recalling the arrival of Europeans and the beginning of the slave trade, candlelight vigil processions through the principal streets of Cape Coast to the castle, the reinterment of the “enslaved ancestors,” and rituals of return held in the

dungeons. Emancipation Day and PANAFEST include a number of elements often found in commemorative ceremonies: public speeches in which certain phrases are repeated, media transmission of public events, invoking of names of leaders, honoring the dead, events occurring on specific recurring dates, processions held at a particular time of day in specific spaces, re-enacting a narrative of an historical event, attention on the significance of particular sites, structures, or places, a focus of carrying on the messages to the youth, and embodied rites of passage that may take many forms. Connerton (1989) writes:

What, then, is being remembered in commemorative ceremonies? Part of the answer is that a community is reminded of its identity as represented by and told in a master narrative....An image of the past, even in the form of a master narrative, is conveyed and sustained by ritual performances. And this means that what is remembered in commemorative ceremonies is something in addition to a collectively organized variant of personal and cognitive memory. *For if the ceremonies are to work for their participants, if they are to be persuasive to them, then those participants must be not simply cognitively competent to execute the performance; they must be habituated to those performances....if there is such a thing as social memory, we are likely to find it in commemorative ceremonies* (my emphasis 70-1).

Some Ghanaians are not “habituated” to the commemorative ceremonies that comprise Ghana’s pilgrimage tourism. Many do not understand why African Americans and other diaspora Africans publicly shed tears and get emotional over something that happened so long ago. Differences in performing and interpreting the Slave March illustrate some of the disjunctures which challenge the possibility of a collective African social memory. As I mentioned in chapters 3, the Slave March has regularly been included in PANAFEST and Emancipation Day events over the years. When I saw this performance in Accra during Emancipation Day 2000, Ghanaians portrayed wailing captives in chains being beaten and corralled by other Ghanaians who represented

middlemen. Unlike the play illustrating the arrival of Europeans and beginning of the slave trade which I described in chapter 5, this Slave March had only African performers. I observed most Ghanaian actors convincingly playing their parts. However, a few barely contained laughter as they were beaten and were apparently amused by the situation of depicting captives. At the same time, most African Americans and Jamaicans were solemn, some wept, and a few snapped pictures of the spectacle or of their companions posing within this context.

In May 2002, one of the all-male residence halls at the University of Cape Coast organized their hall's week under the theme "Emancipation Celebration." This event included a mock slave auction, slave march, and speeches. I witnessed their Slave March, which was a procession through the UCC campus in which some young Ghanaian men dressed as captives and slave traders. Revelers danced to a live brass band, and 'slave owners' playfully roped their 'captives' together and feigned beating them. In contrast to the Slave March I had seen in Accra, participants and observers were not solemn but jovial and exuberant. I imagined how offended most African Americans would be by this event. One of my tour guide friends who had invited me to this "Emancipation Celebration" agreed that African Americans may think that Ghanaians are making fun of them and are not taking the history of the slave trade seriously. However, in defense of the UCC event, he criticized the tendency of African Americans to dwell upon the tragedy of the slave trade:

I have shared their agonies and their sorrows. I believe that it's about time we put all those behind us and think about...what we can do to make our future or the future of our children better so that we don't want to think of the slave story....So why do we have to remind ourselves of sad issues all the time? I want to think of better times—that is all we should do now....What are we doing after emancipation? Both Africans are being

emancipated on the continent, Africans are being emancipated in the diaspora. What are we doing to bridge the gap?

This example reveals the ambivalence of Ghanaians towards commemorating the past, and how sharply they diverge from the official messages conveyed in slave marches featured during PANAFEST and Emancipation Day.

Clearly, cultural differences exist between diaspora Africans and Africans on the continent, or for that matter between working class African Americans and elite African Americans or between Fantes and Ewes. Identities and identifications are not as self-evident or automatic as they are often assumed to be. These gaps in culture and identification lead to different understandings about what emancipation means and how emancipation celebrations should be approached.

The divergent structures of rituals and myths compel audience members to respond differently. Connerton (1989) argues:

Ritual and myth will then be seen to differ structurally in at least one major respect. A myth can be narrated by a singer to an audience as entertainment, or by a parent to children as a lesson, or by a structuralist to implied readers as a set of oppositions. *To recite a myth is not necessarily to accept it.* What the telling of a myth does not do, and what the performance of a ritual essentially does do, is to specify the relationship that obtains between the performers of the ritual and what it is that they are performing. It follows from this that there is an element of invariance encoded into the structure of ritual that is not present in myth (54, my emphasis).

Not all audience members necessarily believe in the cultural values in the mythic statements, rhetoric, and performances at Emancipation Day and PANAFEST. Many Ghanaians are uncomfortable with the topic of slavery and do not understand why diaspora Africans would want to commemorate such a painful period in human history. African Americans see this response as Ghanaians' lack of sensitivity and their

unwillingness of to honestly own up to the roles their ancestors might have played in the slave trade.

In contrast to mythic statements, ritual performances featured during PANAFEST and Emancipation Day more successfully suture together identification as collective Africans. In chapter 5, I described a play commemorating the arrival of Europeans and the beginning of the slave trade. At the conclusion of this melodrama, the audience is invited to join the performers in the Male Slave Dungeon of Cape Coast Castle, where a reverential ceremony is held. Candles are lit, names of great African s/heroes and deceased loved ones are called out, and participants mourn together in a state of *communitas* in which distinctions between Ghanaians and African Americans are momentarily blurred, the African family is reunited, and redemption can now take place. This commemorative ceremony reinforces anamnesia (refusal to forget) of the slave trade and reflection on contemporary race relations and economic positions. In light of this, in the case of Ghana's pilgrimage tourism, memories of the slave trade tell us much more about present-day phenomena than about past veracity. Pop culture and mass media reinforce dominant representations of slave trade memories, and beliefs and behaviors associated with these memories.

Space is the Place, Time is of the Essence

Michael Herzfeld's (1997) notion of iconicity that I discussed in chapter five helps to explain how principles like *sankɔfa* and symbols like the castles are taken for granted and embedded in cultural practice. Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle are icons of a naturalized gateway to Africa, in which the history of the slave trade is memorialized and redemption can now commence. These specific referents for the

castles were not always so salient as they are contemporarily with the promotion of Ghana's pilgrimage tourism. Cape Coasters who grew up near the castle remembered it more as a place to play hide-and-seek, or a site that functioned alternatively as a post office, school, or prison—not as a memorial to the tragedies of the slave trade.

The spaces associated with Cape Coast and Elmina castles have been reterritorialized, compelling us to reexamine “the politics of community(ies), solidarity, identity, and cultural difference” (Gupta and Ferguson 1997b: 37). These places now mean fundamentally different things for visitors who tour them. As the backdrop—and sometimes, the stage—from which PANAFEST and Emancipation Day events are performed, speakers, dancers, musicians, and actors promote the rhetoric of African solidarity. Gupta and Ferguson write: “By stressing that place making always involves a construction, rather than merely a discovery, of difference, [we] emphasize that identity neither ‘grows out’ of rooted communities nor is a thing that can be possessed or owned by individual or collective social actors. It is instead, a mobile, often unstable relation of difference” (1997a: 13). This instability is evident in some of the controversies surrounding the renovation and use of the castles, critiques of how their histories are interpreted, and questions over who should ultimately control their meanings.

Historical Consciousness & Hegemony/Ideology

Jean and John Comaroff think of consciousness as “the active process—sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit—in which human actors deploy historically salient cultural categories to construct their self-awareness” (qtd. in Sutton 1998: 207). As I have suggested above in contrasting mythic statements with commemorative ceremonies, I share their belief that it is as important to consider the *forms* in which

people choose to speak and behave, as it is to analyze the *content* of their messages. This dissertation describes the various ways in which diaspora Africans and Ghanaians express their historical consciousnesses and memories of the slave trade. African American and Ghanaian stakeholders are directly invested in the project of promoting connections between past and present based on overcoming the injustices of the slave trade, colonialism, and neocolonialism. They have united forces by building up an ideological identification with an African collectivity. This African solidarity, however, carries different meanings about the relative importance of social bonds and economic connections for diaspora Africans and Ghanaians.

David Sutton states:

History is dangerous to the present when, in Collingwood's words, it is not cut off, i.e. commodified for tourist consumption, museumified, made an abstract object of nostalgia. Understanding the relevance of the past means more than simply reconstructing the hidden histories of those omitted from dominant national or local historical narratives. It means charting the different modes of a given people's historical consciousness, the different ways that people establish connections between past and present (1998: 204).

Unlike Sutton and Collingwood, I believe that history and memory can still be dangerous to the present, even when they are commodified for tourism, museumified, or made into objects of nostalgia. Comments in the castles' visitor books show how diaspora African pilgrims and Ghanaian tourists sometimes express rage and hatred for whites, who are blamed not only for their roles in the slave trade and colonialism, but for benefiting from a world system that is stacked in their favor, economically, politically, and socially.

While these kinds of sentiments certainly have validity, they also remind us of how historical consciousness can have dangerous repercussions. Verbal and physical fights between diaspora Africans and whites have taken place at Elmina and Cape Coast castles,

and some diaspora Africans and Ghanaians walk away from their tours with resentment and animosity towards whites. Michael Herzfeld writes, “Historiography is a disturbing teacher, since it suggests that the concerns of the present may not be as immutable or as nearly eternal as their protagonists might believe. The very fact that we talk about ‘the past’ illustrates the groping for a reified certainty to which we are all heirs” (1997: 62). Present uses of the past *do* matter, and they are worth fighting for.

Yael Zerubavel makes an important point in saying:

Although history serves as a source of legitimation, memory shapes the representation of the past. A dual process of ‘recovery’ thus takes place at one and the same time: while some aspects of the past are uncovered or shift from the margins to the center of our historical consciousness, other aspects of the past are marginalized or fade into oblivion. Any remembrance thus entails its own forgetfulness, as the two are interwoven in the process of producing commemorative narratives (1995: 214).

The emphasis of guided tours on the atrocities of the ‘slave story’ and concomitant relegation of the European presence to the margins of historical significance, coupled with the memory of Africans as victim-heroes and Europeans as villain-oppressors serve to reinforce what have become dominant social scripts. The role of African middlemen is scarcely mentioned on guided tours, unless guides are specifically asked about it. This absence further shapes visitors’ memories of the past, as African complicity in the slave trade fades into oblivion. Even though tour guides remind visitors of the broader lessons everyone should learn from visiting the castles—a commitment to never allow such injustices to be perpetrated in the future—this message is often lost in the mix of emotions and embodied memories visitors experience in the dungeons.

Hegemony and ideology advance particular messages in the context of Ghana’s pilgrimage tourism: namely, that Africans everywhere have been victimized in that past

and that now it is time to unite forces to build Africa and her people as a significant player on the world stage. Official speeches at PANAFEST and Emancipation Day, tour guide presentations, and ritual performances promote the unity of diaspora Africans and Africans of the continent. These examples demonstrate the ideologically-driven group efforts of government officials, tourism promoters, traditional chiefs, performers, diaspora African residents, and pilgrims.

John and Jean Comaroff remind us that hegemony and ideology can reorder the notion of culture itself “in such a way as to embrace, at once, its systemic and indeterminate features: the fact that it appears, on the one hand, as an orderly worldview and, on the other, as a heterodox, even chaotic, repertoire of polyvalent images and practices” (1992: 28). This heterodoxy manifests itself both in Ghanaians’ divergent expectations and skepticisms of the promise of socio-economic return from diaspora Africans and in African Americans’ disappointments and blessings in forging deeper spiritual and social connections with Ghana and Ghanaians. When the remains of the “enslaved ancestors” were brought through Cape Coast Castle’s Door of Return and reinterred in Assin Manso as a state-sponsored ritual, and Ghana’s first recognition of Emancipation Day, Cape Coasters responded alternatively with embracing the symbolic return of diaspora Africans as family members and with cynicism about the frivolity and expense involved in the spectacle.

Practice of Memory and Ritual Apology

Barry Schwartz and Horst-Alfred Heinrich (2004) argue that while the present is witnessing a time of American political and religious leaders apologizing for past atrocities such as the genocide of Native Americans and the internment of Japanese

Americans, individual American young people do not feel responsible for these moral wrongs of the past. They write:

The swelling wave of repentance to the outpouring of collective memory literature in the 1980s and 1990s, and both developments are part of the late twentieth-century 'sensitivity revolution', with its unprecedented concern for minority dignity and rights. As old forms of religious and class conflicts evolve into ethnic, racial, and gender conflicts, disadvantaged groups become increasingly aware of the uses of public discourse. References to past injustice and suffering are particularly useful because they legitimate new distributional policies (affirmative action, including racial and gender quotas and preferences), new civil demeanor and discourse (political correctness), new interpretations of minority contributions to history, new heroes, new villains, new insights into America's criminal history. Such is the background of the new ritual apology. The spur of regret intensifies as the 'dominant culture' comes under attack (ibid.: 116).

Schwartz and Heinrich's argument that the present is marked by a propensity for American leaders to say "sorry" is overstated. American leaders have expressed considerable ambivalence with regard to the 'new ritual apology'. In recent years, white church leaders have condemned and apologized for the racially-motivated burning of black churches in the American South. At the same time, both Bill Clinton and George W. Bush have fallen short of offering official apologies to African Americans for slavery because to do so might create a legal foundation for reparations. During my fieldwork, I closely followed the *UN World Conference against Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance*, held in Durban, South Africa from August 31 to September 7, 2001. *West Africa* reported that some Africans wanted the conference to, "Affirm that the slave trade is a unique tragedy in the history of humanity, particularly against Africans—a crime against humanity which is unparalleled not only in its abhorrent barbaric features but also in terms of its enormous magnitude, its institutionalized nature,

its transnational dimensions and especially its negation of the essence of human nature of the victims” (qtd. in *Coming Trial of 2001*: 19).

Western delegates thought this wording should be changed to, “affirm[ing] that slavery and the slave trade are an appalling tragedy in the history of humanity” (ibid). Senegal’s president, Abdoulaye Wade, raised questions over whether any amount of money could really compensate for the slave trade and whether Africans should also be culpable for having a hand in the slave trade. U.S. and Israeli government officials left the conference because of pressure to “condemn Israel” for upholding practices of discrimination against Palestinians (U.S. and Israel 2001). U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell’s denouncement of the draft declaration and his request that U.S. representatives withdraw upset members of the Congressional Black Caucus, Rev. Jesse Jackson, and delegates from American and internationally-based NGOs. Before the walkout, the conference could have raised awareness about the reparations movement to a much wider audience and turn reparations into a trans-national legal issue.

The Durban conference was ineffectual, in part, because low-ranking delegates from the U.S. and Europe represented their governments, and U.S. and Israeli officials abandoned the conference. Shortly after the conference concluded, the events surrounding September 11 quickly eclipsed concerns about racism, and the world focused on responding to a ‘new global terrorism’. Ironically, instead of the conference ushering in a new era of upholding equal rights for people regardless of race, the ‘war on terror’ has signaled a time for human rights abuses of Arabs and fundamentalist Muslims (e.g. prisoners held in Guantanamo Bay without due legal process, and suspects of terror plots held in Iraqi prisons subject to cruel and unusual torture in contradiction to the Geneva

Accords) who are perceived to be threats to a so-called democratic, freedom-loving world. The continuing war in Iraq seeks to uphold the idea that the U.S. is a liberator and bringer of democracy to people formerly under the thumb of the ruthless dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, while no mention is made of the U.S. government's strategic interests in the region and American companies' jockeying for position over Iraq's oil reserves. In this climate, it is not surprising that media coverage of the war in Iraq overshadows concerns about both contemporary manifestations of genocide (such as current events in Darfur) and reconciling past forms of human injustice such as in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and genocide of Native Americans.

Between the Sacred and the Profane: Pilgrimage Tourism and Meanings

The UNESCO Slave Routes Project seeks to end the silence surrounding the trans-Atlantic slave trade by promoting the development of international sites to educate the public and promote dialogue about the historical trade spanning Africa, the Americas, and Europe. Cape Coast and Elmina castles are two major examples of pilgrimage tourism attractions that convey a host of meanings to Ghanaian stakeholders, tour guides, visitors of various national and ethnic backgrounds, and the local population. Dean MacCannell writes, "Tourist attractions in their natural, unanalyzed state may not appear to have any coherent infrastructure uniting them, and insofar as it is through the attraction that the tourist apprehends society, society may not appear to have any coherent structure, either" (1999[1976]: 56). Throughout this dissertation, I have described how people find meaning in visiting Cape Coast and Elmina castles and participating in PANAFEST and Emancipation Day events. As Ghana's pilgrimage tourism has developed from the refurbishment of the castles and the first PANAFEST in the early 1990s, planners have

deliberately structured these attractions around an ideological message of embracing the return of the African diaspora home to Ghana.

MacCannell uses the phrase ‘sight sacralization’ to describe the structural stages through which a tourist, a sight, and a marker (a piece of information about a sight) derive social significance (ibid.: 43-45). These stages include: (1) the ‘naming phase’ in which an historical shrine is officially designated; (2) the ‘framing and elevation phase’ in which objects are put on display and opened up to the public; (3) ‘enshrinement’ in which these objects themselves take on a sacred nature worthy in and of themselves for visitation; (4) ‘mechanical reproduction’ in which the sacred object is reproduced in prints, photographs, models, and these representations are themselves displayed; (5) ‘social reproduction’ in which groups, cities, and regions start to name themselves based on famous attractions.

Each of these stages is clearly evident in Ghana’s pilgrimage tourism. As I have said in my introduction, diaspora African visitors often anticipate and have expectations of what they will experience on a pilgrimage tour to one of the castles—UNESCO World Heritage sites—before ever leaving their homes. Upon arrival visitors can see a host of objects, including shackles reportedly used on captives. The dungeons themselves, devoid of material remains, become sacred shrines because of the interplay of history and memory, descriptions by tour guides, and rituals performed there. Videos, post cards, books, and models of the castles are either on display in on-site museums or are available for purchase. Finally, when Ghana recognized Emancipation Day for the first time in 1998, stakeholders pronounced that Ghana had become the ‘Gateway to Africa’ for

diaspora Africans. The Door of Return was ritually enshrined as the entryway through which diaspora Africans could now reclaim their African identity.

Ghana's Central Region, containing both Cape Coast and Elmina, is known for its tourist attractions both nationally and internationally. However, not all Cape Coasters think of Cape Coast Castle in a uniform way; some think of its role in the slave trade, while others consider its various mundane uses through their lifetimes. Some Cape Coasters have embraced diaspora Africans, and others are lukewarm about the promotion of Ghana as the 'Gateway to Africa' and critique such efforts as media stunts devoid of substance. The overall messages and meanings conveyed at Cape Coast and Elmina castles and PANAFEST and Emancipation Day are largely mediated by tour guides, public speakers, and performers of rituals. These presentations may exclude considerations of point of view and historical complexity while promoting ideological messages of uniting as a Pan-African family. Many historians make the distinction that memory appeals to the emotions, the senses, and is arbitrarily selective in nature, while history relies on documented, largely textual sources, and critical distance (Katriel 1999: 99-100). Visitors to these sites and participants in these events must interpret the memory and history on offer through varying frames of reference. In these ways, finding meaning in Ghana's pilgrimage tourism may have less to do with documented history and more to do with cultural scripts common to particular social groups.

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Appendix I: Map of Field Sites in Ghana



Appendix II: Elmina Castle and Cape Coast Castle Timelines

Timeline for Elmina Castle (largest, first European building in sub-Saharan Africa)

- 1482: Elmina Castle (a.k.a. São Jorge da Mina; St. George's Castle) founded by Portuguese
- 1486: Building of Elmina Castle completed and made headquarters of the Portuguese West African possessions
- 1550-1637: Portuguese rebuild the castle's northern and western corners, great courtyard, and north bastion
- 1637: Dutch overpower Portuguese and gain control of Elmina Castle; made headquarters of Dutch possessions in the Gold Coast
- 1637-1774: Dutch turn Portuguese church into an auction hall, build new Dutch chapel, new constructions of north and west bastions and riverside yard
- 1872: Elmina Castle ceded to Britain

Timeline for Cape Coast Castle

- 1555: First trade lodge built by Portuguese
- 1653: Swedes build first semi-permanent fort (Fort Carolusburg)
- 1653-1664: Fort Carolusburg changes hands between Danes, local chief, and Dutch
- 1665: Ft. Carolusburg transformed into Cape Coast Castle by English
- After 1672: King Charles II grants a new charter to Royal African Company for developing trade on Guinea Coast; Expansion of gold & slave trade ensues
- 1680s: Cape Coast Castle undergoes major architectural changes
- 1757: French Navy bombarded Cape Coast Castle, resulting in heavy damages
- 1766-1773: Castle was entirely restructured in stages by British Committee of Merchants; Last remnants of old Ft. Carolusburg demolished

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- Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship*, University of Cape Coast Department of Ghanaian Languages, Ghana, 2000.
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TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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- Exploring and Exploding Stereotypes of Africa*, Anthropology Department and Honors Program, University of North Dakota, Fall 2006.

Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, Anthropology Department, University of North Dakota, Fall 2006 and Spring 2007.

Senior Capstone Seminar in Anthropology, Anthropology Department, University of North Dakota, Spring 2007.

Topics in Anthropology: Travel and Heritage, Anthropology Department, University of North Dakota, Spring 2007.

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Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, Anthropology Department, University of North Dakota, Spring 2006.

Anthropology of Tourism, Anthropology Department, Indiana University/Purdue University at Indianapolis, Spring 2004.

Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, Anthropology Department, Indiana University/Purdue University at Indianapolis, Fall 2003 and Spring 2004.

Visual Anthropology, Anthropology Department, Indiana University/Purdue University at Indianapolis, Fall 2003.

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, Anthropology Department, Indiana University, Bloomington, Spring 2000, Fall 2002, and Spring 2003.

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GRADERSHIPS

Representation and the Body, Gender Studies Department, Indiana University, Bloomington, Fall 2000.

GUEST LECTURES

“Tour Guides as Culture Brokers: Presentations and Negotiations at Cape Coast and Elmina Castles, Ghana,” Paula Girshick’s *Anthropology of Tourism* course, Indiana University, Bloomington, Spring 2003.

“Heritage Tourism in Ghana: Reflecting on Colonialism, Slavery, and the Postcolonial through PANAFEST and the Castles,” Beverly Stoeltje’s *Knowledge, Politics, and Mediation in Africa: Multiple Perspectives* course, Indiana University, Bloomington, Spring 2003.

“Experiences from the Field: Pre-dissertation Research in Ghana,” Anya Peterson Royce’s *Social and Cultural Anthropology* course, Indiana University, Bloomington, Fall 1999.

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

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Organized layout and design for Society for Economic Anthropology Newsletter

PUBLICATIONS

- 2005 "Introducing Slavery-Heritage Tourism: Part II," and "Indicative Bibliography I: Slavery-Heritage Tourism," *The Dark Tourism Forum*, <http://www.dark-tourism.org.uk/>.
- 2004 "*Sankofa* Site: Cape Coast Castle and Its Museum as Markers of Memory," *Museum Anthropology* 27 (1-2): 13-23.
- 2000 (with Angela Bratton) "Indiana University's Department of Anthropology: The Graduate Students' Perspectives on the State of Feminism," *Voices* 4 (1): 12-14.
- 1999 Book Review of *Women at the Crossroads: A Prostitute Community's Response to AID in Urban Senegal*, by Michelle Lewis Renaud. Published in *Africa Today* 46 (2): 138-140.

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- July 2001-July 2002 Dissertation research in Ghana (Fulbright-Hays)
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SCHOLARLY PRESENTATIONS

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- 2006 "African History Month: Global/Local Dimensions as Practiced in Cape Coast, Ghana," Black History Month Address, Augusta State University, Augusta, Georgia.
- 2004 "African Americans and Ghanaians Negotiate the African Diaspora in Heritage Tourism," Anthropology Club Brown Bag, Department of Anthropology, University of North Dakota.
- 2004 "*Sankofa* Site: Cape Coast Castle and Its Museum as Memorials," African Studies Program Noon Talk, Indiana University, Bloomington.
- 2003 "The Anthropology of Tourism of Cape Coast, Ghana," Anthropology Club Brown Bag, Department of Anthropology, Indiana University/Purdue University at Indianapolis.
- 2003 "PANAFEST and Beyond: Problems and Pragmatics of Using Video in Ethnographic Research," Anthropology Department Brown Bag, Indiana University, Bloomington.

- 2003 “Beauty Standards in Ghana: Emulation and Difference,” Undergraduate Diversity Series Program on Cross Cultural Beauty, Indiana University, Bloomington.
- 2001 “At the Roots: Diaspora Africans and Ghanaians Experience Heritage Tourism,” African Studies Program Noon Talk, Indiana University, Bloomington.

CONFERENCES

- 2005 “Slave Trade Memory: Ghana’s Heritage Tourism and the Promotion of African Identity,” paper presented at the meeting of the Mid-America Alliance for African Studies, Springfield, MO.
- 2003 “*Sankofa* Site: Cape Coast Castle and Its Museum as Memorials,” paper presented in Council for Museum Anthropology Invited Session, meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Chicago, IL.
- 2003 “Where are the Locals?: Tourism Patronage and Connections to the African Diaspora in Cape Coast, Ghana,” paper presented at the meeting of the African Studies Association, Boston, MA.
- 2003 “A Feedback Relationship of Fieldwork Dilemmas: Practical Examples from Heritage Tourism in Cape Coast, Ghana” paper presented at the meeting of the Central States Anthropological Society, Louisville, KY.
- 2003 “Negotiating Between Stakeholders in Ghana: Tourism Research and Collaboration in an Incipient Industry,” paper presented a panel organized and chaired by author at the meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology, Portland, OR.
- 2001 “Dungeons or Castles?: African-Americans and Ghanaians Negotiate Sites of Heritage Tourism in Ghana,” paper presented at the annual Museum Studies Symposium, Bloomington, IN.
- 2001 “At the Roots: African-Americans and Ghanaians Experience Heritage Tourism,” paper presented at a panel co-organized by author at the meeting of the Central States Anthropological Society, Lexington, KY.
- 2000 “Yaa Asantewaa is Queen Mother: The Remembrance and Appropriation of an Asante Identity,” paper presented at the International Conference on Nana Yaa Asantewaa, Kumasi, Ghana, and at the annual African Studies Graduate Student Conference, Bloomington, IN.
- 2000 “Beyond the Forest: Negotiating Tourism on the Periphery of Kakum National Forest, Ghana,” paper presented at a panel co-organized by author at the meeting of the Central States Anthropological Society Meeting, Bloomington, IN.
- 2000 “Sugar Daddies, Ladies of the Night, and Small Boys: Exploring the Sex Trade in African Tourist Destinations,” poster presented at the meeting of the Society for Economic Anthropology, Bloomington, IN.
- 1999 Invited Discussant: *Local-scale Ramifications of Neoliberalism*, panel of the Neoliberalism and Restructuring in Latin America and Africa: A Blessing or a Curse? Conference, Bloomington, IN.

SERVICE

Manuscript reviewer (invited), Africa Today, 2004

Faculty Colloquium on Excellence in Teaching (FACET) Summer Institute, 2003

*Co-founder and Organizer, Anthropology Graduate Student Association Film Series,
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Graduate Student Representative, Department of Anthropology Faculty Meeting, 2000

*Steering Committee Member, Fifth Annual Midwest African Studies Student Conference,
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Founding Member, Students in African Studies, Indiana University, 1999-2000

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Anthropological Association

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