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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON

EXAMINING THEMES OF RESISTANCE AND HEALING IN YAA GYASI'S *HOMEGOING* AND MANU HERBSTEIN'S *AMA: A STORY OF THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE*

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THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MPHIL ENGLISH DEGREE

JULY 2022

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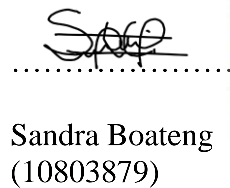
DECLARATION

I, Sandra Boateng, do declare that, apart from the references from other works which have been duly acknowledged, this thesis is entirely the result of my original research. I have neither submitted this work in part nor whole for the award of another degree elsewhere.



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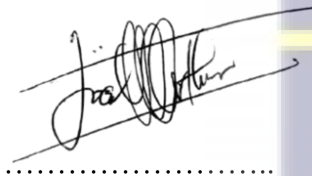
CERTIFICATION

We hereby certify that this thesis was supervised in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University of Ghana.



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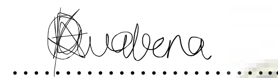

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my lovely grandmother, my priceless mother and my late father.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Let all that I am praise God; may I never forget the good things he does for me." Psalm 103:2

I praise the Almighty God, whose love and grace have been my sources of inspiration through my post graduate education. There were times I lost hope, but He saw me through.

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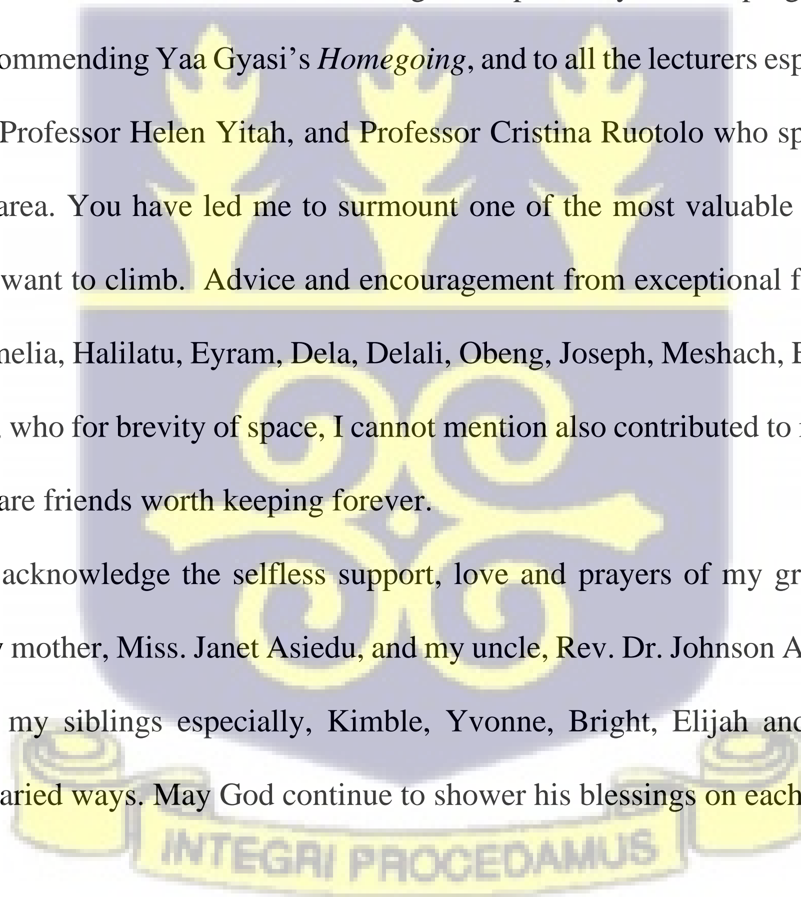

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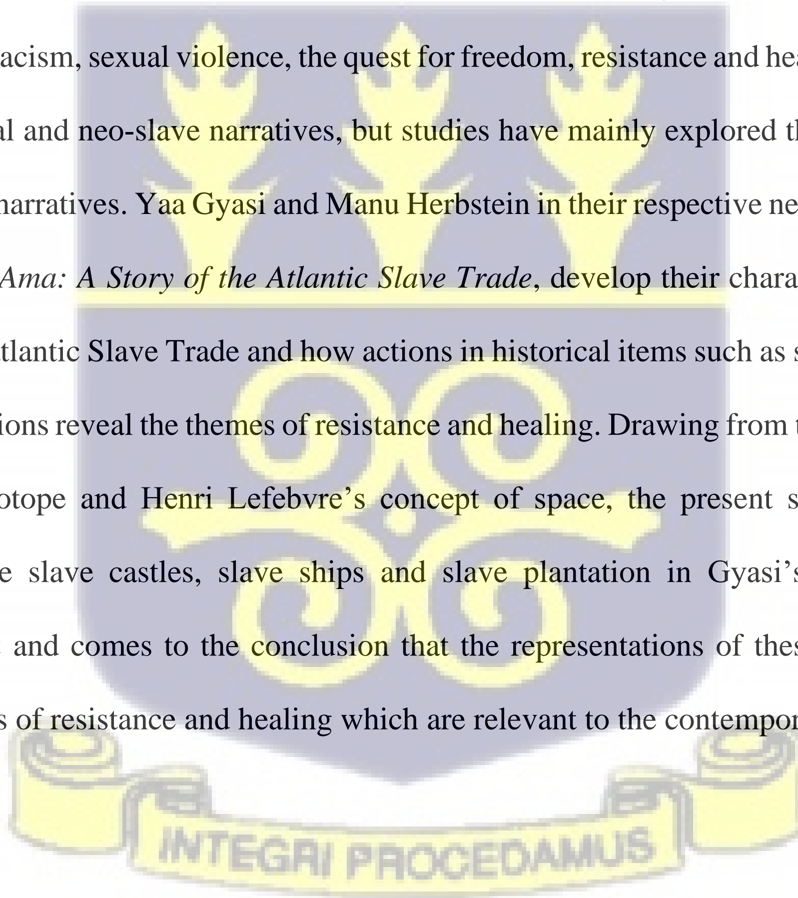
ABSTRACT

The theme of Transatlantic Slave Trade has been a subject of discussion not only in history but in many literary works such as music, novels, painting, drama and poems. This has contributed to the establishment of an interrelationship between history and fiction. The various material and natural settings such as castles, ships, and plantation that made the slave trade possible have featured in many literary works as well. In literature, the slave narratives that arose after the abolition of the slave trade have undergone lots of transformation. While the traditional slave narratives are written in autobiographical form by enslaved Africans who battled against such an atrocious history, the neo-slave narratives are fictive works that share the theme of slavery. Prominent themes such as female identity, racism, sexual violence, the quest for freedom, resistance and healing are dominant in both traditional and neo-slave narratives, but studies have mainly explored these themes in the traditional slave narratives. Yaa Gyasi and Manu Herbstein in their respective neo-slave narratives, *Homegoing* and *Ama: A Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, develop their characters based on the history of Transatlantic Slave Trade and how actions in historical items such as slave castles, slave ships and plantations reveal the themes of resistance and healing. Drawing from the lens of Mikhail Bakhtin's chronotope and Henri Lefebvre's concept of space, the present study explores the depictions of the slave castles, slave ships and slave plantation in Gyasi's *Homegoing* and Herbstein's *Ama* and comes to the conclusion that the representations of these historical items reveal the themes of resistance and healing which are relevant to the contemporary world.



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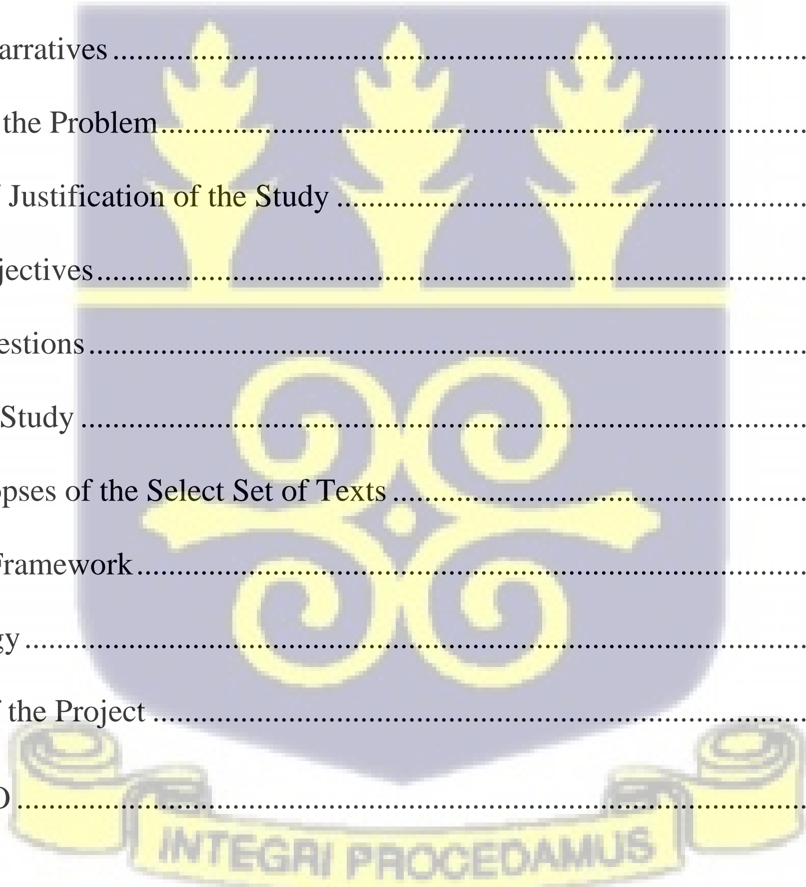

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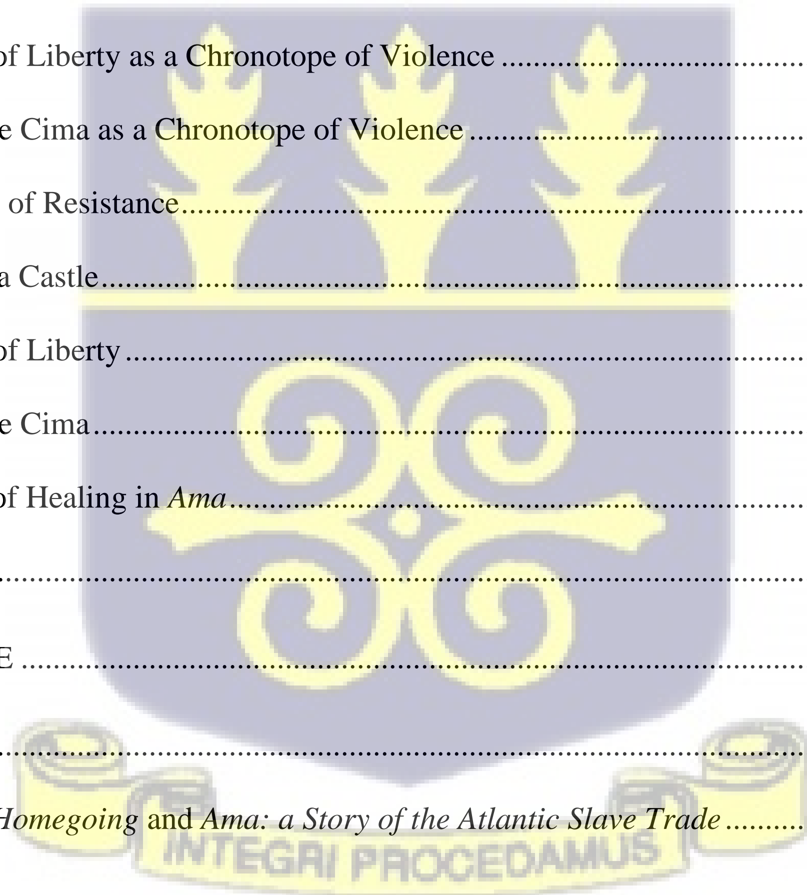

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter represents the first section of the thesis. It introduces the background of the study, statement of the problem, justification of the study, research objectives and questions that guide the study. It also presents what neo-slave narratives are and the summary of the selected texts. Lastly, it provides the theoretical framework and the methodology.

1.1 Background of the Study

> I read Herbstein's novel just prior to departing the US for Ghana. The novel is so well written that I actually felt as if I'd been at Elmina castle and travelled the dark African night with Nandzi. Upon entering the castle at Elmina, strangely, I knew my way around. Everything was exactly as pictured in my mind's eye. I connected with the novel's protagonist and had a re-new-ed pride in the spirit of my ancestors. It is well worth struggling through the unfamiliar names to discover the familiar in the human spirit that spans the ages. (Chris Pierson[1])

Slavery has been a belligerent theme or subject not only in the economic and political realms of Africa and Europe but also a central part of the cultural, social and aesthetic representations in the world at large[2]. According to Kwadwo Opoku-Agyemang, the history of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, for instance, is "a living wound under the patchwork of scars" (1). Though many times and seasons have passed, its traumatic memory refuses to leave the minds of the descendants of the enslaved in both Africa and the African diaspora, and, also, the descendants of slave owners. Literature has contributed significantly to keeping this memory alive. The quote

[1] A review of *Ama* online http://www.ama.africatoday.com/reviews_m.htm.
[2] Bortolot, Ives Alexander. "The Transatlantic Slave Trade"; Nunn, Nathan. "Understanding the Long-run Effects of Africa's Slave Trade"; Dhar, Nandini. "Re-Imagining and Re-Writing Slavery." 129.

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above, for instance, is a review by an African American, Chris Pierson, after reading Manu Herbstein's neo-slave narrative, *Ama: a Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade* and after visiting the Elmina Castle. His comment reveals not only the aesthetic qualities of Literature in representing slavery but, also its role in leaving an impact on readers who seem to have connections with this lasting legacy. Most importantly, Literature, in representing the history of the Atlantic Slave Trade through the use of historical sites, enables both diasporic and continental Africans to form an emotional or spiritual connection with this history. Historian Hayden White opines that narratives play an important role in representing history because they become true representations of human experiences due to their imaginative and creative nature. Scholars such as Rosemary Jolly and Derek Attridge, also, suggest the need "for literature to represent the victimization of the oppressed in realist form" (2). This, Jolly and Attridge state, becomes an approach of speaking against any social and cultural injustices. Slavery can be viewed as both cultural and social injustice because it led to the forceful removal of Africans from their original home leading to their victimization in other places. Maria Olaussen, in *Approaching Asia*, posits that when authors imagine from the colonial archive and produce literature using historical subjects such as slavery, they position themselves as descendants or successors of the legacy of slavery, both literally and in the figurative sense (17). Many authors, playwrights, music artistes and poets, through their various works of art and through the concept of time and place have brought to bear on human consciousness this atrocious history. For instance, Andrew Hock Soon Ng, in *Toni Morrison Beloved: Space, Architecture, Trauma*, contends that Paul D's heart and Sethe's house, 124 Bluestone, in Toni Morrison's *Beloved,* are spatially configured as "a tobacco tin lodged in the chest" in the sense that they refuse to set the characters free from the traumatic memories of slavery (232). Andrew

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further demonstrates the interaction between "history, memory and rememory" of slavery through a dialogue between the main character Sethe and her daughter, Denver, in such spaces.

In *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present,* Mieke Bal highlights the role of art in incorporating the lacerating events of the past since art, Bal suggests, allows "mediation between the parties of the traumatizing scene" and concerned readers or listeners. Bal adds that the recipients of these accounts perform an act of memory that "is potentially healing as it calls for political and cultural solidarity in recognizing the traumatized party's predicament" (x). Thus, films, literary fictions, popular music among other cultural expressions, not only provide key platforms for the symbolic representations of the account of the Atlantic Slave Trade, but they also represent a therapeutic performance of the angst of dislocation, disorientation and disorderliness that characterize the forcible removal of Africans from their homestead.

Some forts and castles, which were used during the slave trade, sit on the shores of Elmina and Cape Coast in Ghana today. These memorial sites are permeated with heavy stains of historical, psychological and physical pain. Most importantly, they have served as metaphors in identifying the roots or home of Africans living in the diaspora. In 1979, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) named Elmina Castle and Cape Coast Castle as World Heritage sites to remember this slave trade (UNESCO *Forts and Castles* 26; Naana Opoku- Agyemang 1; Osei-Tutu 5). These castles and many other historical items such as slave ships or natural and human environments like forests and plantation have been employed by contemporary writers to foreground the activities and effects of the slave trade. Sarah Ahmed proposes in *The Culture Politics of Emotions* that past memories are learned by "direct and/or indirect" connections with "physical or imagined objects" (7). This assertion implies that the representations of characters' direct and indirect contacts with historical sites of slavery such as

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slave castles, slave ships, forests and plantations in literary and non-literary texts become crucial in exploring the emotional responses and spiritual connections of people of African descent. In Haile Gerima's *Sankofa*, for example, Mona's magical encounter with her ancestors in the dungeons in Elmina castle becomes the basis for recognizing and appreciating her past. Similarly, in Okpewho's *Call Me by My Rightful Name*, Otis' spiritual encounter with the spirit of Akimbowale, who is captured and enslaved by "white men" during the performance of the rites of his father in the forest, also becomes a space that relieves him of the chants that have made him uncomfortable for years.

Also, in the Afro-Caribbean artistic context, the lyrics of reggae music constitute a vast textual repertoire where mainly, oral discourse on the memories of slavery and the quest for identity is produced and articulated (David Bousquet, 281). Jorge Giovannetti, for instance, notes how in the 1970s, the lyrics of reggae music in songs such as Burning Spear-*Slavery Days*, Bob Marley-*Slave Driver* and Bunny Wailer-*Moses' Children* and many others became a persistent reminder of the throbbing past of Afro-Jamaicans/Afro-Caribbean living in subjugation (25). This allows literal and metaphorical representations of historical sites such as castles, ships and plantations in works that share the theme of slavery.

William Gleason in *Sites Unseen: Architecture, Race and American Literature* opines that "stories rooted in specific places and housed in particular structures can tell us a great deal not only about past practices but also meanings and ideologies both shared and contested" (2). Slave narratives, in general, are one out of many narratives that are rooted in specific places and structures such as castles, forts, plantations, slave houses among others. The rise of another genre of slave narrative, neo-slave narratives, that appeared in the later part of 20th century and still trending in the 21st century has also served as alternative archives through which various ideologies

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on slavery can be explored. The neo-slave narratives are fictional narratives that are created out of "black histories and past narratives." There is the re-imagination of the condition of slavery which is written to connect the "receding past to the living present" (Min Pun, 58). Simon Gikandi similarly posits that literature itself can affect social life and "texts that threaten to resuscitate historical ghosts and decauterize old wounds will create new paths into imagination" (20). Neo-slave narratives put forward old wounds by exploring on a past history like the Atlantic slave trade. As slavery is explored, other themes on gender, sexuality, resistance, identity, home, repatriation become evident. We shall return to a fuller discussion on slave narratives in the next section.

Slave castles, slave ships and slave plantations have been represented in contemporary slave narratives or neo-slave narratives as literary spaces that foreground themes of resistance and healing, yet this study remains underexplored. Therefore, this study resorts to chronotopes such as slave castles, slave ships and plantations of historical relevance that help to constantly shape the minds of not only characters but also all people of African descent in two neo-slave narratives. In this regard, the portrayal of time, space and place become significant concepts. The present study contends that the representations of historical sites such as castles, ships and plantations in Manu Herbstein's *Ama: a Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade* and Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* do not only represent the traumatic memories that come with slavery but also serve as therapeutic tools in evoking healing among all people of African descent. These texts also inspire resistance against any postcolonial hegemonic structures that seek to disempower African people.

1.2 Neo-Slave Narratives

According to Orlando Patterson, enslavement in its worse was a "social death" (qtd. in Paul Lovejoy 49) that detached individuals from their motherlands and eliminated the bond among kins. Some of the enslaved who found their freedom regardless of their struggles shared their personal experiences through narratives. Henry Louis Gates Jr. describes slave narratives in general as a

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"unique creation in the long history of human bondage, designed by a small but exceptionally gifted group of men and woman who escaped and who went on to write books about the severe conditions of their bondage" (xi). Gates outlines how past slaves wrote books about their life of enslavement by the slave masters (6-7). Slave narratives are broadly categorized into two; the antebellum and post-bellum which were broadly called traditional slave narratives. The traditional slave narratives became well known in the mid nineteenth century specifically in the United States of America. The traditional slave narratives are personal stories from people who were enslaved and were mostly written in an autobiographical mood. Some examples of classical slave narratives are Harriet Jacobs' *Incident in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave (*1845) and Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano (1789)*. Through these narratives, the riveting terrors of slavery are made known to all and as Gates and Nellie Mckay suggest, such narratives spoke for the "the millions of silent slaves who were still held captive throughout the South."

The other type of slave narratives is the "imaginative literature about slavery that emerged after the Civil Rights Movement" (Min Pun 57) and after the abolishment of Transatlantic slavery in 1807 (Christopher Lewis 447). In *Afro-American Novel and its Tradition*, Bernard Bell suggests that the neo-slave narrative, a term coined by himself, has brought into the public scope some questions concerning the relationship between modernity, colonialism, race, trauma, slavery and history writing. Bell describes neo-slave narratives as the "residually oral, modern narratives of escape from bondage to freedom" (289). In *Neo-slave Narratives*, Ashraf H.A Rushdy, a renowned scholar in neo-slave narratives, defines this genre as "modern or contemporary fictional works substantially concerned with depicting the experience or effects of new world slavery" (533). Valerie Smith, in *Neo-slave narratives* also offers a worthwhile definition of neo-slave narratives.

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On one hand, Smith's definition expands the stylistic variety of neo-slave narratives and on the other hand, highlights a collective thematic thread that calls for their easy identification:

> [Neo-slave narratives] approach the institution of slavery from a myriad perspectives and embrace a variety of styles of writing: from realist novels grounded in historical research to speculative fiction, postmodern experiments, satire and work that combine these diverse models. Their differences notwithstanding, these texts illustrate the centrality of the history and the memory of slavery to our individual, racial, gender and cultural identities. Further, they provide a perspective on a host of issues that resonate in contemporary cultural, historical, critical and literary discourses. (168)

Due to their aesthetic diversity, literary analysis of neo-slave narratives calls for intersectional and multidisciplinary readings which explain their complexity. Some neo-slave narratives also may not directly make slavery its major theme but may bring out some repercussions of slavery in the contemporary world so that change can be achieved.

The neo-slave narratives, in contrast with the traditional slave narratives, are contemporary fictional stories on the slavery accounts. They are fictional because they are not written from the personal experiences of the enslaved. Authors who write these slave narratives combine fiction and historical information to present themes on slavery and any other theme that seem to subjugate a specific race or gender. In line with explanations of neo-slave narratives, Tony Morrison describes this kind of narratives as a "kind of literary archeology" and as a necessity in accessing the "interior life of slaves" through "imagination" by providing insight into the "interior life" of individuals who did not get the chance to write their history and to "fill in the blanks that the [traditional] slave narratives left" (92-94). In neo-slave narratives, there is often a fictional slave as a narrator or as a subject. It is also possible for the narrator to have ancestors who were slaves. Some neo-slave narratives are Alex Hailey's *Roots* (1976), Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), Manu Herbstein's *Ama* (2002), Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979), Dionne Brand's novel, *At the Full and*

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Change of the Moon (1999), Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad* (2016) and Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* (2016). The neo-slave narratives use "leitmotifs of resistance and freedom" like the classical narratives. However, whereas the classical narratives are presented in "sentimental and biblical prose" the neo-slave narratives employ postmodern features such as "flashbacks, cyclical time, and fragmented prose" (Salamishah Tillet 913). The authors of neo-slave narratives are descendants who believe that there are repercussions of slavery. These authors, therefore, resort to their ancestry in an effort to alter the social and cultural conditions that exist today, and in the same way that their forebears employed slave narratives to end slavery, they use neo-slave narratives to effect transformation in the modern era. In *A Written Song*, Maria Helena Lima also adds that the neo-slave narratives whether "literary, poetic, performative, or visual" suggest that we re-examine not only a "vexed history of trauma and violence" but also urges us to reconsider "the modern history of the representation of black bodies" (146).

In *Black Women Writers and the American Neo-slave Narrative*, Elizabeth Beaulieu asserts that neo-slave narratives put mothers "who were enslaved at the heart of the tale" by reacting against the "nineteenth century male paradigm narratives," which she thinks have been overemphasized. (Judie Newman 29). Beaulieu cites Alex Hailey's *Roots* (1976) in re-launching the story of enslavement but references Hailey's tale as the male story since its hero, Kunte Kinte, is male, and his daughter, Kizzy, a stock character, who represents the suffering slave woman only. These narratives are often contrasted with other neo-slave narratives because authors such as Toni Morrison, Butler, Herbstein, and Gyasi put gender into focus as they validate the essence of maternity. For instance, Herbstein's Protagonist, Ama, in *Ama* strives so hard to stand against all the challenges she encounters while being transported as a slave to work on the plantation in Brazil. Judith Newman further highlights the role of neo-slave narratives by stating that no matter how

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meticulous authors of neo-slave narratives may be in slave stories production, there is an emphasis on "remapping the world, scrambling agreed definition of place or time, and drawing attention to the limits of conventional conceptions" (33). The neo-slave narrative "can take liberties with the conventions of the original slave narratives, mixing different genres in one work of literature." This new shape of this genre provides new ways to help the "social level." Thus, it enables literature to do important "cultural work" (Regina Behoekoe 18).

The neo-slave narratives writers have remodeled this genre "to serve their contemporary goals and connect with their contemporary readers" (Rushdy 633). These roles of neo-slave narratives invite readers not to only celebrate African Americans who battle against slavery, but to also serve as an encouragement to protect descendants of enslaved Africans in making sure such an atrocious act never happen again. As Martha Craven Nussbaum observes fiction "will not give us the whole story about social justice but can be a bridge both to a vision of justice and to the social enactment of that vision" (qtd. in Behoekoe 18). The neo-slave narratives also offer a way to redress the injustices towards black bodies especially accounts on women who were enslaved and issues on sexuality and romance. As past memories of slavery are confronted, there is the possibility for the descendants to be healed because healing only comes after the past has been addressed. Rushdy summarizes the role of neo-slave narratives:

> Memory is how the past is recalled; memory is also how we heal from that past. […] What Morrison defines as "re-memory" is, after all, a "place in which things so bad had happened that when you went near them it would happen again" (35-36). This is what makes the story of slavery so utterly difficult a one to tell, what makes it a story one would prefer to pass on rather than to pass on to others. Yet it is also the only way to heal, as so many characters in so many of these novels discover again and again. […] And it is by sharing those stories and that history with their readers that the neo-slave narrative authors perhaps hope to heal a nation that in many ways still denies its original wound. (103)

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The reader is, therefore, pushed to imagine and reimagine the depth of slavery and to also bring out different contestable ideologies. This allows researchers to constantly visit the subject of slavery which is seen as an umbrella where institutionalized racism or any subject that subjugates people due to their race originates.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Marcus Rediker[3] suggests that "whereas scholarship on the slave trade, like the Atlantic, is vast and deep …. the history of the slave ship and its social relations which shaped and continue to shape the modern world in many ways is unknown and unnoticed" (10). Scholars[4] have explored the representations of historical spaces such as castles, ships and plantations in classical slave narratives such as autobiographical novels. Themes of gender, sexuality, trauma, cultural identity and freedom in narratives that revolve around enslaved Africans have also been examined by scholars. However, the depictions of these historical places as spaces that provide resistance against all hegemonic form of relationship in neo-slave narratives and as spaces of healing for people of African descent remain underexplored.

1.4 Significance/ Justification of the Study

Avery Gordon asserts in *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* that "to study social life, one must confront the ghostly aspects of it" (7). Slavery in itself is a ghost that continues to haunt the present in so many ways. There is the need to investigate why contemporary writers choose slavery as their themes and also why historical spaces such as the castles, ships and slave plantations are represented in diverse ways in order to meet the demands of the contemporary world.

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[3] Rediker, Marcus. *The Slave Ship: A Human Story.* New York: Viking, 2007.
[4] See note 1 above.

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In his book *Houses of Slaves and "Door of No Return,"* Abaka states that discussions on the transatlantic experience should begin with "giant voiceless walls that sit on the countless shores of Ghana where most of the sites of memories are located in West Africa" (qtd. Kwame Essien 204). Both Herbstein and Gyasi situate their characters in these historical monuments in Ghana where slaves were kept and finally progresses to important artefacts and environments that played significant roles in the enslavement of Africans. These are slave castles, the slave ships and the slave plantations respectively. The convergences and divergences, specifically through the use of these places suggest that conducting a comparative study on how both authors present resistance and healing through the use of such sites will be very insightful. Secondly, the concept of slavery is still relevant in the contemporary global context where fascism seems to be gradually re-emerging and radical racist groups are on the rise in America, Europe and Africa. Such racist and fascist ideologies provide support for slavery and colonialism; their re-emergence implies an attempt to re-inscribe the subjugation of African peoples, re-scarification of the 'African body' with new wounds, and re-opening of the scars of the old wounds. Within such a context of global racial interrelations, it is important to reappraise the narratives of slavery to highlight the importance of themes of resistance and healing.

1.5 Research Objectives

The study seeks to:

1. To investigate how castles, ships and plantations have been represented as historical sites of slavery in Herbstein's *Ama* and Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*.
2. To probe how the representations of castles, ships and plantations evoke the themes of healing and resistance among people of African descent in *Ama* and *Homegoing*.

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1.6 Research Questions

1. By what recurring tropes – metaphoric, symbolic, metonymic, psycho-spiritual– are spaces of enslavement and memory represented in Herbstein's *Ama* and Gyasi's *Homegoing*?
2. In what ways do the representations of the spaces of enslavement and memory serve as resistance and therapeutic agency in *Ama* and *Homegoing*?

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study explores how the various chronotopes that portray the themes of resistance and healing are represented in Manu Herbstein's *Ama* and Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing.* The study focuses on the representation of specific chronotopes such as castles, ships and plantations that help to conceptualize these sites as places that produce the themes of resistance and healing.

1.8 Critical Synopses of the Select Set of Texts

Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*

Yaa Gyasi's historical novel, *Homegoing*, set in the 18th century centres on the descendants of two half-sisters: Effia and Esi who are born in different villages in Ghana. Effia is privileged to have been wedded off to an affluent Englishman who lives in the Cape Coast Castle while Esi, captured during a slave raid, is trapped within a slave dungeon in the same castle Effia lives. Esi is later sold into slavery. Most of the descendants of Effia are left in Ghana but their lives are mixtures of anxiety and tragedy. The generation is haunted by fire, and this leads to the killing of two daughters of one of her descendants, Akua, while leaving Akua's son, Yaw, badly scarred. Yaw leaves the village to stay in America and gets married there. His daughter, Marjorie, is trapped between two cultural identities and is also haunted by fire but when she finally travels back to Ghana to learn about her past ancestral history, she finally gets rid of her fears. The descendants of Esi encounter various challenges after Esi's transportation to the Americans. Her daughter, Ness, is taken away from her to work on the plantation of Thomas Stockham. Ness and her

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boyfriend, Sam, try all means to gain their freedom from the harsh treatments on the plantation. In their attempt to escape, their master tracks them and gets Sam hanged; Ness is sold to another plantation while their son, Kojo, escapes with another slave. Kojo works on a ship to survive in Alabama but is faced with racial segregations just as Marjorie. The story moves to another descendant of Esi in the 21st century named Marcus who is afraid of water because his people were transported through this same element to work as slaves in the Americas. To overcome this fear, Marcus, like Marjorie, travels back to Ghana to learn about his history to overcome his fears.

Manu Herbstein's *Ama: A Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade*

Manu Herbstein's *Ama: A Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade* foregrounds the Transatlantic Slave Trade and its repercussions. Set in the 18th century in Ghana, the novel revolves around a teenage female protagonist Ama also known as Nandzi, who is captured by Bedagdam slave hunters while her parents are away for a funeral. She and other abductees are taken away to Kumasi as part of the yearly tribute the Dagombas and Komkombas must pay to the Asantes. In Kumasi, she is presented as a gift to the queen mother to work as a domestic slave and is renamed Ama. Tragedy befalls Ama when the prince, the heir apparent to the Asante throne, falls in love with her. To prevent such an abomination from happening, Ama is accused by the elders of stealing the queen mother's gold dust and is sold into slavery to the Dutch in Elmina. There, Ama is selected by the Director-General of Elmina Castle, De Bruyn, as a companion and is made to live with him upstairs while her other friends are trapped in the dungeons in the same castle. Before De Bruyn dies, he grants Ama her freedom, but his successor ignores his will and transports Ama to work on the plantations in Brazil. On the slave ship, the "Love of Liberty," Ama and her lover, Tomba, and other enslaved Africans fight for their freedom, but they are defeated. She is sent to Salvador where

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she works hard to gain her freedom. She utters that she will make sure to tell her son, Kwame, the story of her life, and also of her desire to return to her ancestors in Africa after she dies.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

The study adopts Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin's concept of chronotope and Henri Lefebvre's notion of space. Bakhtin is one of the distinguished scholars in the study of space within narratives. In his essay *Form of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel*, Bakhtin takes the concept of space from the philosophy of Emmanuel Kant's and Albert Einstein's Theories of Relativity. Bakhtin notes that, literally, chronotope means "time-space" (chronos meaning "time" and topos "place") and emphasizes "the intrinsic connectedness of the temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in Literature." To Bakhtin, time and space are inseparable and these concepts are essential categories through which human beings observe and organize the world. In his own words:

> In the literary artistic chronotopes, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope. (Bakhtin, "Forms" 84)

The quote above suggests that chronotopes express the "inseparability of time and space" in any artistic work. Time becomes a dimension of space and vice versa. Time becomes spatial in the sense that one can only perceived it when given meaning in space. Space can also be temporal because it moves in the direction of time (Esther Peeren 68). Bakhtin further notes: "the entry into the sphere of meanings is accomplished only through the gates of the chronotope" (258). With this, the actions of characters in different places, at different time; or at the same places and at the same time, allow critical evaluation of the plot structure or themes. Bemong et al add to an

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understanding of this concept by proposing that chronotope should be viewed as a specific space-time context, setting or structures that allow an author to manipulate the plot or describe the actions of the characters in a literary work (4). Blommaert similarly opines that chronotopes evoke "social and political worlds in which actions become dialogically meaningful and are evaluated and comprehended in many ways" (106). The multidimensional nature of the literary chronotopes makes it particularly useful when dealing with spaces and places such as castles, ships and plantations in *Homegoing* and *Ama* because, through the chronotropic lens, themes such as resistance and healing can be deduced.

The French Marxist philosopher, Henri Lefebvre's book *The Production of Space*, has helped to explore the concept of space. He became the first scholar to introduce the concept of space as an analytical category giving space an active role in subjects. Lefebvre views spaces not as mere containers in which activities of humans take place but in itself, space is actively involved in human interactions and activities. Lefebvre further views space as a social construct and process which is constantly altered by its users (39). His concept of space, therefore, provides a way of analysing the link between physical space and how humans interact in them. Lefebvre puts space in three subcategories- "spatial practice, representation of space and representational spaces." He endeavours to incorporate "physical, mental and social or lived space into a unitary theory of space" (21). Regarding spatial practice, Lefebvre sees it as the physical/perceived space of social activity. This can be perceived through the day-to-day practice of buying, playing in places like markets or park. Due to their material and physical nature, Lefebvre refers to spatial practice as "spaces-in themselves" (38-9). The representation of space is how space is conceived by those who work with them. This consists of the maps, designs, drawings, plans by architects, engineers, bankers, urbanists and scientists (38-9). The last of the Spatial Triad is the representational space

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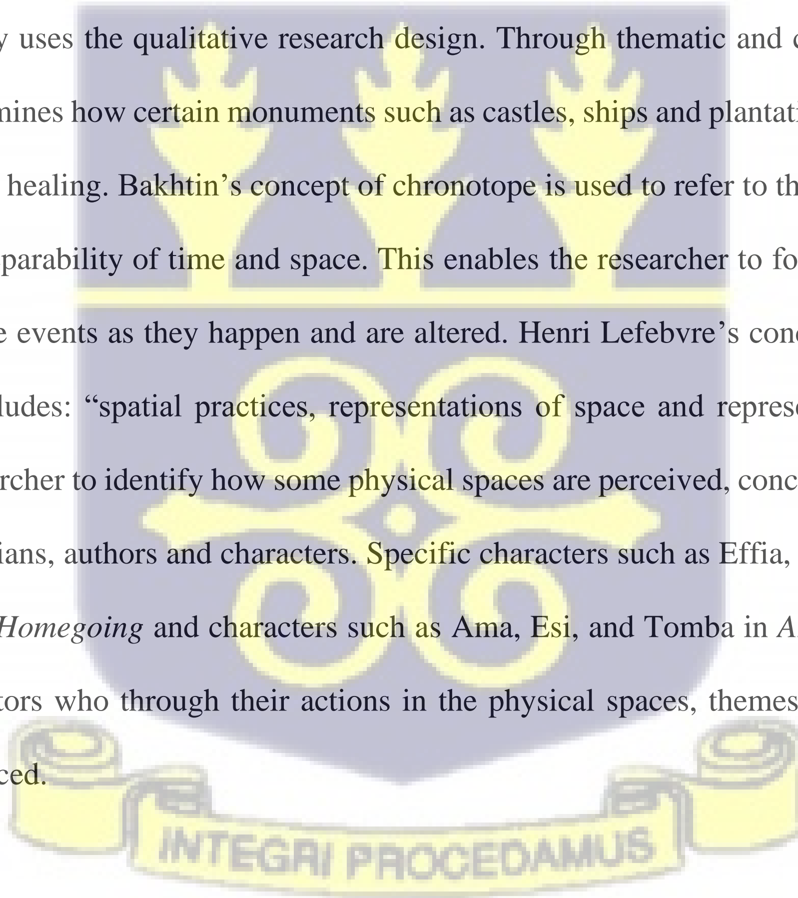
which becomes the "lived space" (33). It represents the combination of both space as perceived and conceived. This is how imagination seeks to alter or appropriate a given space. This element of the spatial triad is often associated with "cultural memories, images, symbols imbued with the cultural meaning." It also presents the "emotional and artistic interpretation of …. space by poets, writers, painters and other artists[5]" (39; 3). Through this aspect, heterogeneous relations/ideologies are shared or revealed. From the expositions of the two frameworks provided, it is quite evident that Bakhtin's and Lefebvre's theories provide an effective framework within which to situate the argument of the present study.

1.10 Methodology

The study uses the qualitative research design. Through thematic and character analysis, the research examines how certain monuments such as castles, ships and plantations reveal themes of resistance and healing. Bakhtin's concept of chronotope is used to refer to these monuments to examine the inseparability of time and space. This enables the researcher to focus on characters' actions and some events as they happen and are altered. Henri Lefebvre's concept of the Spatial Triad which includes: "spatial practices, representations of space and representational spaces" enables the researcher to identify how some physical spaces are perceived, conceived and lived by architects, historians, authors and characters. Specific characters such as Effia, Esi, Ness, Marcus and Marjorie in *Homegoing* and characters such as Ama, Esi, and Tomba in *Ama* are considered as the spatial actors who through their actions in the physical spaces, themes of resistance and healing are deduced.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[5] Lefebvre, 39; Leary-Owhin, Michael, "A Fresh Look at Lefebvre's Spatial Triad and Differential Space: A Central Place in Planning Theory?" 3.

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1.11 Structure of the Project

Structurally, the research is organized into five chapters. Chapter one includes: background of the study, statement of the problem, significance/ justification of the study, research objectives, research questions, explanation of neo-slave narratives, synopses of the select set of texts, the theoretical framework and methodology. Chapter two covers the literature review. Chapter three and four present the analysis of the selected texts. The final chapter covers the findings, conclusion and recommendations for further studies.

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CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on slavery in Africa and the Atlantic slave trade. There is also a review on the various forms of violence that are meted to the enslaved Africans and the various resistance strategies that they use to obtain their freedom. The chapter again reviews both historical and literary works on slave castles, slave ships, and the slave plantations. The chapter further examines the literature on the selected texts: Herbstein's *Ama* and Gyasi's *Homegoing*. These reviews will not only expose the lacuna in this research area, but, also, in the scholarship regarding the select set of primary texts. The result of the chapter, therefore, is that it provides the opportunity to situate the present study within the context of the past and contemporary scholarship on slavery while enabling the researcher to highlight the gaps in the field which the present study attempts to contribute towards filling.

2.1 Sources of Slavery from Medieval Times to the Transatlantic Slave Trade

According to Orlando Patterson, "there is nothing peculiar about the institution of slavery. It has existed from before the dawn of human history right down to the twentieth century, in the most primitive of human societies and in the most civilized" (vii). There was the existence of slavery almost everywhere from the ancient Greece and Rome to medieval Europe, Africa, the Caribbean and Asia. Africa has been closely connected with history as a major provider of slaves for "ancient civilization, the Islamic world, India and the Americans" (Paul Lovejoy 1). In his book *Slavery in Time and Space*, Jack Goody also notes that slavery is known from 2300 B.C where reference is linked to the capturing of foreigners as slaves in Mesopotamia (16). Their earliest legal documents were not "only concerned with land, houses and animals but also humans (slaves)" (cited in Goody 18). According to Lovejoy, the slavery expanded into the twentieth century in

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Africa than in the Americans (1). In ancient times, some Africans offered themselves voluntarily to serve powerful people in communities. The category associated with this form of servitude was "pawns of debts." The people thus categorized were people who gave themselves up as servants because of debt incurred by a family member or themselves (Joseph Anene 94), or to prevent starvation (Lovejoy 4). Samuel Johnson suggests that this system was common in Yoruba and was known as the Iwofa system[6]. Others were captured from other groups during the wars. A Jesuit priest of the sixteenth century also notes that some Africans were taken because of criminal offenses which included being proved a "witch", murdering someone, "being intimate with a king's wife [or] inciting war against kings…" (Lovejoy 39). These suggest that slavery in Africa became a sort of punishments to offenders in order to ensure political decorum among certain states.

As most societies developed, slaves were needed for the continuous labour involved in agriculture. In some part of North Africa and Sudan states, where communities have become Islamized, slavery became the basis for the economic and social system. The Koran expressly permitted "the faithful to possess slaves" (John Wright 4; Anene 95) so all works or performances were left to slave labour. Arabs were the first modern societies to demand large numbers of slaves. Their slave trade began in the seventh century and ended in the twentieth century. This deportation of Africans to the Islamic lands was structured around two main routes; "the maritime traffic between the coast of East Africa and those of Middle East" on one hand and "the Trans Saharan caravan traffic" on the other hand (David Gakunzi 40). The Islamic caliphal empire which conquered the three old continents drew slaves from beyond the boundaries of Islam where Jihad

[6] The Iwofa system granted slaves as free men. Their social statuses, civil and political rights remain intact. An Iwofa was only a subject to his master in the same universal sense that a borrower is a servant to the lender.

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(holy war) was legally waged against heathens rather than Christians or Jewish. Slaves were in surplus to be exported through the Red Sea, down the Nile valley or across the Sahara. The main demand of the slavers was women and girls to be taken as concubines, entertainers, servants or for sexual pleasure (Wright 4). Males were often castrated or became eunuchs and were acquired as reliable "harem keepers, courtiers, and guards of palaces" (Anene 95; Lovejoy 5; Jerome Dowd 6). The more land a Muslim aristocrat possessed, the more slaves he required to cultivate it. (95). Lovejoy cites a similar reason for slave keeping in the Kongo Kingdom in the sixteenth century: "only slaves labour and serve. Men who are powerful have a great number of slaves whom they have captured in war or whom they have purchased. They [even] conduct business through these slaves by sending them to markets where they buy and sell according to the master's orders" (40). Individual slaves were not solely into agricultural but helped their masters in the slave trade. There is also evidence that African slaves were acquired in ancient Egypt for domestic purposes and the construction of pyramids. Anene states that the first Africans to have been sold into slavery must have been the Nubians who lived in the southern part of Egypt and were sold to Europe and in the Middle East.

East Africa was another source of the early slave trade. Asia was where the majority of slaves from East Africa found their way. According to Lovejoy, East Africa exported about 100,000 enslaved Africans in the 17th century; 400,000 during the 18th century and 1,618,000 in the 19th century. Anene notes that Arabs, Persians and Indians who found their way to the coast were engaged in the slave trade. The demand for slaves increased as a result of the creation of massive plantation which produced agricultural products such as garlic, sugar, oil, coconuts, grain and copra for both global and domestic consumption (Matthew Hopper 6). Abdul Sheriff contends that the British imperial agents considered Arabia as "a convenient bottomless pit that allegedly

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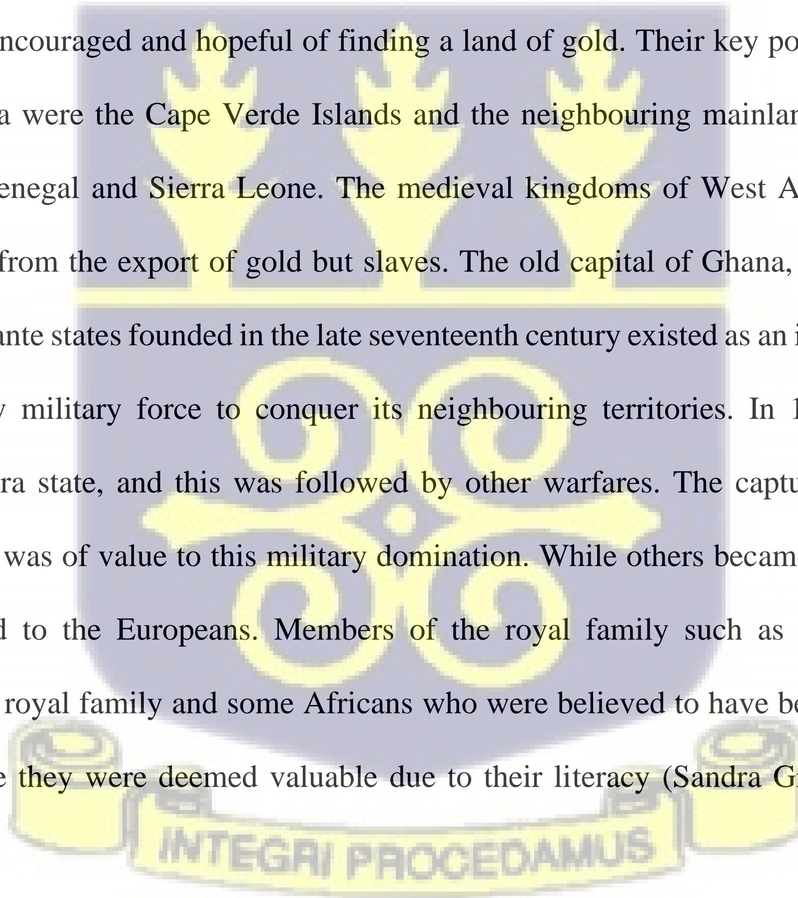
consumed any number of slaves that lively imagination cared to conjure up" (55). Arabs simply demanded slaves not only for economic purposes but because they dislike hard work and since a part of their religion condone slavery, it created room for its practice (Hopper 6). Slave revolts dominated on this coast. Anene further notes that the ruler of Bagdad[7] initiated the policy of including Zang slaves in his army. The slaves realizing their number was increasing in the army chose a leader called lord of the blacks and revolted.

Europeans' arrival in the fifteenth century to the West Coast of Africa brought a new phase in the African slave trade. Though slavery had existed in Africa, the European's racially defined slavery changed the Africans' perspective on slavery. The Portuguese being the first to arrive on this coast were encouraged and hopeful of finding a land of gold. Their key points of connection with West Africa were the Cape Verde Islands and the neighbouring mainland lying along the coast between Senegal and Sierra Leone. The medieval kingdoms of West Africa gained great wealth not only from the export of gold but slaves. The old capital of Ghana, Kumbi, had slave markets. The Asante states founded in the late seventeenth century existed as an independent polity that used mostly military force to conquer its neighbouring territories. In 1701, the Asantes captured Denkyira state, and this was followed by other warfares. The capturing of people as prisoners of war was of value to this military domination. While others became domestic slaves, others were sold to the Europeans. Members of the royal family such as Nana Gyaman of Techiman of the royal family and some Africans who were believed to have been Muslims were captured because they were deemed valuable due to their literacy (Sandra Greene 16-17). The



[7] This city was created in 762 as the capital of the Abbasid dynasty of caliphs, and it was the most important cultural hub of Arab and Islamic civilisation for the next 500 years, as well as one of the world's biggest towns. It was seized by the Mongol leader Hülegü in 1258, and its significance decreased after that. (See Bahry, Louay and Marr, Phebe A.)

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Portuguese, for instance, learnt how lucrative it was to capture and sell slaves to work in the New World of European plantations in order to get large scale production of sugar, rice, cotton, coffee and tobacco. They brought European products such as mirror, gun, knives, hatchets, and beads in exchange for gold and slaves. In the middle of the fifteenth century, several forts and castles were constructed in Ghana, then Gold Coast to enhance slave trade activities. Slaves were kept in the dungeons before being transported to the New World. The slave trade scholar, Philip Curtin, in his book *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* estimates that close to about 10 million Africans were transported as slaves to work in the New World (86).

2.2 Historical Sources on Slave Forts, Ships and Plantations

2.2.1 Slave Castles

> The most magnificent drama in the last thousand years of human history is the transportation of ten million human beings out of the dark beauty of their mother continent into the new-found Eldorado of the West. They descended into Hell; and in the third century, they arose from the dead, in the finest effort to achieve democracy for the working millions which this world has ever seen.
> (Du Bois, W. E. B. Black Construction 727)

The massive transfer of slaves, flora and fauna, minerals taken from Africa to America and Europe- which W.E. B Du Bois refers to as "the most magnificent drama" in our history relied primarily on castles built by slavers in Africa and seas and ships while travelling via the triangular routes to the New World. According to John Kwadwo Osei-Tutu, castles and forts, for instance, were designed to shield and unite strategic positions and exploitative interests of Europeans globally hence, this competition overseas became a form of a "European imperial feature" (7). The Portuguese, who were the first slave traders to settle on the Africa Coast built many forts there (Osei-Tutu and Victoria Ellen Smith 2). Their castle project started from 1400s to 1800s. These

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edifices became vital in promoting political, commercial, social relationships and alliances among all people involved in the trade. The Portuguese's first fort, Fort Anguin, was built on Mauritania's Anguin Island in 1445. Other forts on the West African Coast include Sao Jorge da Mina, now called Elmina Castle, and Sao Paolo de Luango in 1572 on the Angola Coast in Southern Africa (Osei-Tutu 8). Since forts became a necessity for better trade in Africa, between £10,000 and £13,000 was dedicated by the British Parliament amid 1730s to 1760s to support the trading system in the castles. While Arnold Walter Lawrence estimates that forty (40) forts were built in Africa with Ghana carrying the majority of thirty-two (32), Rebecca Shumway estimates a total number of "four hundred English forts (400) especially at Cape Coast and Accra, and hundred (100) to two hundred (200) Danish forts at Accra" (85). The Elmina Castle being the oldest in Ghana became a "blueprint" for many European traders that wanted to build more castles/trading posts along the West Africa coast (Newiff Malyn 9).

While the Portuguese almost secured the Gold Coast for a century, the Dutch seized Elmina from them in 1637 and drove them permanently from the coast in 1642. In 1637, there was a conversion of the Portuguese church in the castle as a slave auction market by the Dutch. The ownership of the forts alternated between the Dutch and the British African Company from 1750. The British finally took complete control of all coastal forts of Dutch and Elmina Castle by the end of the nineteenth century[8]. This made them the dominant European group in Gold Coast. Shumway further adds that the Cape Coast Castle and the Elmina Castle in the eighteenth century became the headquarters of the British and Dutch slave traders and most importantly, the places where Africans who had been purchased in other countries, especially Senegambia and Benin were

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[8] See Zook, George Frederick "*Early Dutch and English Trade to West Africa*" pp.137 and Bruner, "*Culture on Tour* pp.106 and Holsey, Bayo. *Routes of Remembrance. Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana* 30.

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brought on ships for sale to other slavers (86). Despite the varied quantitative descriptions given by various scholars, Ghana remains the only West Africa country that had the largest number of slave castles.

Osei-Tutu and Smith observe that though the fortresses had varied structures, some features were general to most, if not all edifices. They included "curtain walls", "massive battlements" "watchtowers; central courtyards; … gun slits moats", and "cannons" … (4) These features suggest that the Europeans strategically positioned and built these edifices to enhance their political and commercial activities. As suggested by Opoku-Agyemang, the cannons also depict the various resistance strategies that the slavers adopted to protect their territories and also the active roles that some Africans played in saving some of the people who were trapped in the dungeons.

Stephanie Smallwood[9] gives a vivid view of one of the castles, the Cape Coast on the shores of West Africa, Ghana, and what it stands for:

> Viewed from the water, Cape Coast Castle was an especially imposing sight. Rising abruptly above the shoreline, the fortress was rendered "almost inaccessible" by the large rocks that guarded its perimeter. Coming ashore at the landing-place just past the eastern end of the castle, captives entered through the nearby side gate, before being led to the prison where "slaves-in-irons" were housed until ships arrived to carry them away…. "Cut into the rock, beneath the parade ground" that formed part of the castle's large, open courtyard, the facility "consist[ed] of large vaulted cellars, divided into several apartments which [could] easily hold a thousand slaves." …. "The keeping of the slaves thus under ground is a good security to the garrison against any insurrection." Once inside this dungeonlike space, slaves could hear the loud violent surf that crashed against the rocks on the other side of the prison walls. (Smallwood 38-39)

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[9] Smallwood, Stephanie. *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*.

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Smallwood's proposition of the Cape Coast Castle as "an imposing sight" seems to suggest that the building of the architects was rather forced on the African shores to help Europeans succeed in their trades. Africans who had been enslaved were housed in the same ground floor rooms that were used to store trade goods in the Coastal forts. As the demand for Africans increased, the European traders were convinced that there could be attempts of escape or threats from Africans or other traders so they built what Smallwood describes as "dungeonlike underground prison" (39) within the castles that housed the slaves. "A burden of irons" was put around the limbs of the enslaved and shackles were also needed to "physically disable captives during their incarceration in the Coastal forts" (40). The Europeans judging from how the enslaved were led into these spaces in chains only suggest that the structures were simply impermeable, and it was very difficult for enslaved to attempt an escape from these enclosed spaces. Although Smallwood is right about the existence of Cape Coast Castle, her claim that all Africans were transported to the castles through boats is not accurate. Most Africans were marched from very long distances on foot from far places. Consequently, the journey of the slaves towards the castles is much more painful than how Smallwood envisages it. Another inaccurate impression Smallwood creates is in reference to "the nearby side gate" to the "eastern end of the castle." The gate in question seems not be the entry of for the captives but rather a gate of departure of captives before the Middle Passage begins. This explains why the gate is referred to as "The Door of No Return." The actual gate through which slaves entered the castle is at the western side of the castle and ironically opposite to where the Anglican and Methodist Churches are situated.

Osei-Tutu and Smith further expand on the importance of these edifices in the modern world by stating that the structures became physical anchors that gave solid grounds for "the human actions and processes that entangled the histories of Africa, Europe, and Americans, and

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led to the emergence of an Atlantic world based on networks trade, culture, and politics." As "nodal points" that shaped "physical landscapes and social spaces," they become relevant in historical, socio-political and economic encounters both locally and globally (10). It can be deduced that any study that seeks to analyse the forts and castles as spaces where social, political, historical, and cultural themes emerge and are reexamined are worthy since it bears some significance in both the past and the present. Osei-Tutu and Smith go on to further suggest that since UNESCO has named some of these castles as world heritage sites and as National heritage, it "validates their place among humankind's collective history" (10). The interrogations on how descendants of Africa and descendants of slave traders in Europe connect to these physical relics through literature still need to be examined extensively so that their roles within the "first modern transcontinental and transnational intersections of African and European histories" will be fully expressed (11). This, therefore, authenticates the analysis of themes of resistance and healing in the slave castles in *Homegoing* and *Ama*.

2.2.2 Slave Ship

In *The Social Life of Things*, Arjun Appadurai[10] states that "even though from a theoretical point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a methodological point of view, it is the things-in-motions that illuminate their human and social context" (5). The significance of this assertion is that the "things-in-motion" can be applied to the slave ship because it forms part of primary components of material culture that made voyages from Africa to the Atlantic possible. After the enslaved Africans had been kept in the castle for days, there were some methods that the slave traders adopted before sending the slaves into the ships for them to be transported to the New

[10] See his introductory essay to his 1988 edited collection.

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World. Slave trade historian for North America and the Atlantic world, Ira Berlin, presents the harsh treatments the enslaved Africans received before boarding the slave ships to work on European plantations:

> Fear was omnipresent as the Africans, stripped naked and bereft of their every belonging, boarded the ships and met—often for the first time—white men. Brandishing red hot irons to mark their captives in the most personal way, these 'white men with horrible looks, red faces, and long hair' left more than a physical scar. Many enslaved Africans concluded the slavers were in league with the devil, if not themselves devils. For others, the searing of their skin confirmed that they were bound for the slaughterhouse to be eaten by the cannibals who had stamped them in much the way animals were marked [11].

To justify their reasons for enslaving Africans, the slave traders and the plantation owners convinced themselves that Africans were an inferior race even by referring to them as slaves and by stripping off their social and cultural identity since they were branded with irons for the slave owners' identification. Martin Munro in *The Haunted Tropics: Caribbean Ghost Stories* asserts: "To be a slave was to be a kind of ghost, living a half-life in a foreign land, an existence that denied the African's humanity, making the slave a kind of non-being, a shadow of history" (vii). The Atlantic slave trade evolved into a commerce that stripped Africans of their freedom.

The slave ship is seen as "the material setting and a stage for the enactment of the high human drama of the slave trade" (qtd. in Rediker 47). This suggests that the slave ship is seen as both a physical space and stage where tragic or profound series of slave trade events unfolded. Rediker traces the origins of the "world-changing maritime machines" from the late fifteen century when the Portuguese started their voyages to the West African Coast to navigate, explore, and

[11] "The Discovery of the Americas and the Transatlantic Slave Trade."

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master the high seas to trade in gold, ivory, and human beings, and to also fight and seize new lands. During the initial trade, merchants used whatever ship that was available for their voyages to Africa as long as a voyage at a specific time was worthy. The first Englishman believed to have made slave voyages was John Hawkins in 1562. Hawkins sailed to the coast of West Africa with three vessels that could convey loads of "120, 100, and 40 tons"[12]. His vessels, *Ages*, and *Jesus of Lubeck* were not precisely designed for the trade but made successful voyages to the coast to trade in humans. Many slave ships were specifically designed for the slave trade as technology advanced. Almost 12.4 million souls were sent onto the slave ships to be delivered to many European traders that owned plantations from the late fifteenth century to the late nineteenth century (6). He also notes that though the slave ship contributed to shaping today's world, its history in many ways remains unknown (4). However, historians and archaeologists have succeeded in bringing some names of ships and events that happened during the voyage.

According to Jessica Glickman, some features were common to most slave ships to ensure their successful journey to West Africa. There were barricades that kept the crew safe from the human cargo; to keep the vessels safe from being captured or seize, and to also curb the slaves from jumping overboard. There were also swivel guns and rifles, hatch-overs, lattices that were used to ensure the security and safety of the crew. There were bulkheads created to separate men, women, and children to avoid sexual intercourse among slaves and to prevent any violent uprising (24). Nicholas Radburn also observes that merchants selected vessels of varied dimensions and constructions to suit a particular geographical location and market conditions of "individual African slave ports." Large vessels measuring between 2000 to 2,400 square feet were sent "deep

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[12] Junius P. Rodriguez, "Shipbuilding" *The Historical Encyclopedia of World Slavery*" 583.

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water South of the windward" coast because the enslaved Africans could be easily acquired there. The largest slave ship in Liverpool registers, *Duke of Clarence,* for example, made two voyages to Bonny in the early 1880s. Smaller vessels between 1,600 to 1,750 square feet of which *Bud* was an example, were dispatched to the "shallow-water ports" in Upper Guinea and Senegambia because the supply of enslaved Africans was slow (119). The enslaved Africans were "shackled at the neck along a chain of six-by-six slaves, or two-by-two, fettered at the ankle" throughout the voyage.

One of the slave ships that embarked on successful voyages to Africa was *Brooks*. This was a ship specifically designed by Joseph *Brooks*, a Liverpool merchant, for the slave trade in 1781. The *Brooks* was about "100 feet long, 27 feet wide, and was of 320 tons." Its height between the decks where the Africans enslaved were kept was "5ft 8 inches" (Jane Webster[13], 246). *Brooks* made four successful voyages from Liverpool to Gold Coast and Jamaica from 1781 to 1786. *Brooks* became one of the maritime machines that was measured by the parliamentary during an enquiry into British Slave Trade. The Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade published their well-known diagram of the slave *Brooks,* which was misspelt by the abolitionists as *Brookes*, in 1788 after compiling the findings of Lieutenant Parry of the Royal Navy who travelled to Liverpool to survey nine ships of which *Brooks* was part. This image was used to portray the slave ship "with its real dimension" to convey "the sufferings of the Africans in the Middle Passage." The scale model of *Brooks* included 470 Africans- arranged in rows and columns. The abolitionists further partitioned the ship into varied sections for men, women, and children lying on top of others to give shape to the horrors of the Atlantic slave trade. Thomas

[13] "Looking for The Material Culture of the Middle Passage".

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Clarkson in *History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade* observes that even "the print seemed to make an instantaneous impression of horrors upon all who saw it and was therefore instrumental, in consequence of the wide circulation given, in serving the cause of the injured Africans" (111). According to Radburn, the abolitionists also realized the ship *Brooks* which was designed to carry only 470 slaves on each voyage as stated in the laws in the Dolban Act or Slave Trade Act of 1788 never carried such a number but carried more than it required even before Parry surveyed its dimensions. For instance, in 1784, *Brooks* carried 609 Africans; 612 Africans in 1782, and in 1785, 740 Africans (117).

Another ship named *Vigilante* was introduced with images of shackles that revealed the shackling of slaves from ankle to ankle and wrist to wrist. The image is believed to have been taken by Lt. Mildway in the River Bonny on the coast of Africa on 15th April 1822. She was 240 tons and had 345 captives on board. According to Alonso de Sandoval, a Spanish Jesuit Priest, in 1627, Portuguese traders "locked" the enslaved Africans "in the hold of their slave ships where they were closed off from the outside so that they could not neither see the moon nor the sun" (qtd. in Radburn 127). The shackles attached to the images of the slave ship suggest the harsh treatment slaves received before they got to the New World. Abolitionists used this image together with the images of *Brooks* to campaign against the slave trade.

Rediker adds that the slave ship became a place "where sickness, diseases, and high mortality were a lot for both sailor and slave" (325). The captives did not receive any better treatment so some slave traders decided to adopt some strategies that could help reduce the mortality rate. In the mid-seventeenth century, the Dutch slave traders, for instance, began to increase the scanty allowance of their usual rice and beans to the slaves so that the mortality rate can be reduced. Thomas Phillips, a captain of the slave ship *Hannibal*, in 1693 noted that during

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the day, the males fed themselves on the "main deck and forecastle"; the females "on the quarter deck" and the children "upon the poop" (Radburn 128). After this process, the captives will be brutally sent back into their assigned positions in the holds. Also, slave traders decided to allow the captives to have a short time on the decks usually in the mornings before taking them back into the holds. Some of these methods helped keep slaves for a longer period, but they did not stop the outbreak of diseases because of the lack of proper sanitation in the holds. Some sailors, therefore, adopted cruel strategies to save some slaves to have their insurance covered. Such violence happened on one of the slave ships named *Zong* in 1781 while it had loaded slaves from West Africa to Jamaica. The human cargo of *Zong* was tightly packed with 470 slaves. There was an outbreak of a disease leading to the death of sixty (60) Africans and 7 members of the crew. Fearful of further misfortunes, the captain of the *Zong*, Luke Collingwood, suggested to the rest of the crew: "if the slaves died a natural death, it would be the loss of the owners of the ship, but if they were thrown alive into the sea, it would be the loss of underwriter who had insured the voyage." Some members of the crew, like James Kelsal, protested to this act but Collingwood insisted on his decision. That evening, 54 slaves with "hands bound" were thrown overboard. In the next two days, 42 and later 26. Ten (10) of the slaves while watching this hideous outright murder, rather opted for suicide by jumping overboard. Collingwood pretended later that it was lack of water that caused his actions though the ship had 420 gallons. When the insurer refused to pay, the owners took the case to court. This trial, according to Rediker, revealed the cruelty of the trade and proved to be the turning point for the abolitionists such as Olaudah Equiano and Granule Sharp (223).

While onboard, the women had more freedom than the men because their gender status rendered them docile. They were sometimes left unshackled. Some sailors also had sexual intercourse with the black women without their consent. The other enslaved women who consented

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were trying to make the best out of the worst situations. Pious John Newton[14], who was simply described as odd among his fellow mariners for sensibilities, spent most of his time writing letters to his future wife. Newton wrote in his diary "William Cooney seduced a woman slave down into his room and lay with her brutelike in view of the whole quarter-deck." He continued: "if anything happens to the woman I shall impute it to him, for she was big with child. Her number is 83" (75). Thus was a horrific experience of a pregnant woman whose name had been reduced to a number.

On the Ship *Ruby*, the captain often called newly purchased slave women to choose one for his use. In *Sons of Neptune and the Sons of Ham*, Emma Christopher recounts a disturbing incident aboard the ship *Ruby* where the captain selected a young slave as his mistress. The captain subjected her to relentless lashings and brutal beatings, resulting in her tragic death three days later, despite having been his mistress for several months (162). Other enslaved black women with children were often maltreated by the slave crew. For instance, a woman on board *Liberty* died in childbirth but her surviving child was fed on flour, so the child died two days later. A woman on board the *Hudibras* had an abortion after several beatings. Another lost her nine-month-old baby after it has been flogged and burnt to death. The enslaved woman also received her beatings for refusing to throw the body of her child into the sea. Onboard *Neptune*, a boatswain also asked for permission to discard a six-week-old baby overboard because it was troubling him with its cries (161-162).

Some crew members endured various forms of hardship. One captain in 1721 referred to his sick sailors as "walking ghosts" because the conditions on board did not favour them. Rediker also points out that one captain, David Harrison, carried news to Providence, Rhode Island in 1770

[14] Newton, John. The Journal of a Slave Trader 75.

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from the River Gambia that an entire crew of the vessel, *Elizabeth,* had died, leaving "a ghost ship anchor" (224). Other crew members died due to diseases outbreak. Rediker cites instances such as loss of toes and feet due to high scurvy, amputation of legs due to ulcers. Some members also committed suicide due to harsh treatment from some of the captains of the ship. Other crew members died as a result of falls from the main decks into holds while others drowned when their ships capsized (225). The perils associated with the journey to the New World through the slave ships made Europeans involved in the trade as sailors, captains, and surgeons refer to these machines "as slaughter-houses", "coffins" or "floating tombs"[15] that simply buried enslaved Africans alive.

As a setting that housed people of different cultures who were treated differently depending on their race, slave ships are one of the many historical items most authors of neo-slave narratives feature in their contemporary literary works. Therefore, similar to slave castles, slave ships carry some significance in evaluating social, political, historical, and cultural themes in today's world. Therefore, to investigate how Gyasi and Herbstein foreground slave themes of resistance and healing through the use of the slave ship to address contemporary needs in *Homegoing* and *Ama* respectively, endorses the essence of the present study.

2.2.3 Plantations

According to Rediker, the vitality of the slave ship corresponded with that of the other foundational institution of slavery, the plantation. While the slave ship became a factory that produced slaves, the plantation became a factory that consumed and produced the slave ship itself (Marie Britt Rusert, 10)[16]. The more slave owners constantly demanded many workers, the more

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[15] Miller, Joseph. *Ways of Death* 314; Rediker, *The Slave Ship* 274 and Smallwood, *Saltwater* 137.
[16] *Shackles in the Garden: Ecology and Race in American Plantation Cultures*

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slave traders travel to get more slaves. The plantation formed a major economic institution which began in the medieval Mediterranean, expanded to the Eastern Islands, and became prominent in the New World, including Brazil, the Caribbean, and North America in the seventeenth century. The expansion of sugar plantations in 1650s triggered an insatiable demand for labour (Rediker, 48). Sugar cultivation required huge capital investments, a stable labour supply, and a large scale of lands. Coffee and cotton plantation grew much later. In *Essays on Slavery*, Jacky Charles states that the Portuguese and the Spanish attempted to use the enslaved native Americans of whom some were prisoners or convicts or European indentured servants, but they were unreliable due to high mortality rate as a result of malaria, measles, and smallpox (6). Charles supports this claim by noting the outbreak of smallpox in the 1560s that killed about 30,000 Native Americans on the plantations and villages in Brazil. Also, in *African Slavery and Latin American and Caribbean*, Herbert Klien asserts that governments of both Portugal and Spain decided on avoiding the use of Native Americans as slaves due to their religious, political, and cultural reasons (22) so they needed to rely on some form of coerced or cheap labour for the plantations. For Pius Onyemedi in *The Popes, the Catholic Church and the Transatlantic Enslavement of Black Africans*, he notes that the reasons for choosing Africans as slaves for the sugar plantations mainly stemmed from how most Europeans considered the blacks as servants and were simply created to work on these plantations (205 African slave labour, therefore, became the most economical and consistently dependable workforce as sugar cultivation expanded in the latter part of the sixteenth century (Charles 7). For the next two centuries, various ships brought in human cargo with a vast number of enslaved Africans who were purchased by the planters. The enslaved were forced to work, under close and forceful command to harvest products for the world market (48). In the 1690s, gold was

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also discovered in Mines Gerais in Brazil so 1.7 million people were brought from Africa to work too[17].

Barbados became English's "first American colony" to develop sugar plantations mostly dependent on African slave labour (Jerome S. Handler 183). As the number of plantations increased, there was high demand for slaves. Between 1750 and 1780, about 16,000 to 17,000 Africans were imported yearly into Brazil, 18,000 per year in the 1780s; 23,000 a year in 1790s; 24,000 per annum in the first decade of the 19th century, and 15,000 in Puerto Rico in the later part of the 19th century (Charles 10). In *Flush Times and Fever Dreams: A Story of Capitalism and Slavery in the Age of Jackson*, Joshua Rothman affirms that the enslaved in the cotton plantation in Mississippi were described as "fuels consumed to make that development possible" (10). Africans were in high demand as well because, without them, there was no way the Americans could meet the economic demands of the large markets. According to Britt, the plantation is not static, monolithic site: it is a bounded system of dynamic relations (10) since various individuals with different cultural background worked on these fields. The white slave plantation owners sent members of different cultures to a specific plantation. This was due to fear of possible rebellion if communication were allowed among slaves from the same region.

As Richard Dunn notes that the story of sugar was not just about sweetness, the harsh treatments that were given to the slaves must be emphasized. Rusert puts it that the plantation "metamorphosized from an idyllic geography of botanical bounty and pure soil to a toxic paradise; a tainted space that restricted a lot of individuals" (17). Slaves had to plant, care for, and harvest the crops as well as extract the liquid from the sugar cane before boiling and processing to turn the

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[17] Arsenault, Natalie & Christopher, Rose. "African Enslaved a Curriculum Unit on Comparative Slavery System" 15

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final products to sugar and the waste products to rum ("Enslaved People's Work on Sugar Plantation"). The use of various forms of violence on the enslaved to get work done on the plantation allowed the cementation of Africans as objects rather than subjects. Masters of slave plantations used the whip to reinforce their dominion over the enslaved. William Dusinberre affirms this when he states: "Whipping was like defecating: it happened regularly but one did not talk about it"[18]. An supervisor at a distant quarter might simply be said to have whipped a man for not working. Any action on the plantation that proves a certain act of "villainous laziness" by any enslaved was bound for some lashes in a public display for his or her failure to comply with his or her master's will[19]. Archaeologist and historian John Otto gives evidence of such physical violence of slaves when he states that slaves were punished with "a short whip with a heavy handle and a plaited, tapering thong." for refusing to work, stealing, or running away into a wood. (Cited in Paul Farnsworth, 148.) The whipping often resulted in "historic injuries, including torn skin blisters, bruises, blood loss, and permanent scars."[20] Todd Savitt describes the whipping as creating welts on the exposed back or buttocks, resulting in unimaginable agony, particularly as each lash delves deeper into pre-existing wounds.[21].

In *Brutality or Benevolence in Plantation Archaeology*, Paul Farnsworth lists some plantations that were known for the poor treatment of the enslaved: Great Hope Plantation presented the worst instance of cruelty to an enslaved individual in the colony's history occurred; the owners of Marine Farm Plantation and Promised Land Plantation were both charged with ignoring their "apprentices" during the transition from slavery to freedom (146). Some slaves were

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[18] Dusinberre, William. *Them Dark Days: Slavery in the American Rice Swamps* 126.
[19] Isaac, Rhys. *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom: Revolution and Rebellion on a Virginia Plantation 213.*
[20] Dickman, Michael. *Honor, Control, and Powerlessness: Plantation Whipping in the Antebellum* 11.
[21] Cited in Dickman 11.

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also amputated, hanged, or beheaded for attempting an escape (146). James Michie gives some historical evidence on how some physical violence on some slave plantations such as the Richmond Hill. These included "being sold, imprisoned, beaten…, put to death or being hanged or being tied to horses and pulled apart for attempting to escape" (148-149).

Frederick Douglass, in his autobiographical narrative[22], expresses his feelings of shame as a result of the whippings his master, Mr. Covey, gives him while he is a slave on his plantation: "Mr. Covey succeeded in breaking me- in body, soul, and spirit. My natural elasticity was crushed; my intellect languished; the disposition to read departed, the cheerful spark that lingered about my eye died out; the dark night of slavery closed in upon me, and behold a man transformed to a brute!" (152). Through his pain, Douglass feels like a man who has been dishonoured because his punishment denied him of the true sense of humanity. He spent the majority of the time in the woods, trying to hide from his master's physical torture: "I must stay here and starve; or go home to Covey's and have my flesh torn to pieces and my spirit humbled under his cruel lash. These were the alternatives before me" (165). Michael Dickman suggests that the whipping inflicted on all the enslaved Africans created physical and emotional scars that at some point rendered the victims hopeless. However, as Douglas fights back with his master, Mr. Covey, there was no longer a master-servant relationship or inferiority versus superiority because both men began to see themselves as equals before the law, and "the very colo[u]r of the man was forgotten" (67). Douglas himself admits that Covey never whipped him again (176-177).

To commemorate the memory of slavery in contemporary times, some agencies have renovated various slave plantations as museums. An example of such is the Whitney Plantation

[22] Douglass, Frederick. *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass: Written by Himself*.

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which is located in Wallace Louisiana on the Riverbanks in Mississippi. The Whitney Plantation, originally an indigo plantation in 1752, has been renovated to serve as a museum that focuses on the lives of those who worked there during slavery (107)[23]. Also, the 1811 Slave Revolt on Whitney Plantation where about 500 slaves rose and killed two white men has also been memorialised. The slaves who fought during this revolt were defeated after a battle against the local militia. Many slaves were beheaded and executed as punishments. Today, dozens of slaves who died during the revolts have been remembered through the creation of 63 ceramic heads on steel rods along the pond on the Whitney Plantation (*Slavery and Remembrance*).

Farnsworth affirms: "to speak of resistance, without discussing violence, is to ignore a significant cause of that resistance and only give one side of the story" (154). The reality of resistance must be integral to any study that seeks to interpret the lives of the enslaved people and their descendants for where there was constant abuse and violence, rebellion, most times, arose. Therefore, just like the castles and slave ships, the account on the slave plantations and the events that authors describe in plantations support the vitality of the present study in revealing resistance and healing in *Homegoing* and *Ama*.

2.3 Forms of Resistance on the African Continent, Castles, Ships and Plantations

When one is denied his or her freedom through any means, there is the possibility of the individual resisting such act. Resistance pertains to the diverse methods through which enslaved individuals challenged or opposed the various acts they deemed as forms of oppression by their slave masters. As Smallwood states: "Africans often tried their best to produce an African narrative of persistent and often lonely attempts among themselves to continue to function as subjective

[23] Phulgence, Francis Wiston "Monument Building, Memory Making and remembering Slavery in Contemporary Atlantic World."

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beings- persons possessing independent will and agency" (Smallwood 122). According to Rediker, enslavement produced swift resistance particularly in cases involving raiding or kidnapping of slaves. (100). Throughout the Transatlantic Slave Trade, Africans constantly resisted slavery both as an institution and a condition that took away the liberty every human is entitled to. The various forms of resistance began on the African continent and continue on slave ships through to the slave plantations in the New World. Naana Opoku-Agyemang and Kali Block-Steele, for instance, have examined how the people of two villages in Ghana; Sankana and Gwollu in the Upper West Region, adopted a lot of resistance strategies to avoid raiders from capturing them. Block-Steele, for instance, examines the use of baked bricks instead of thatch to build roofs in Gwollu. This was done carefully to avoid the slavers from using smoke to bring them out of their rooms. Doors were also narrowly built in their homes to prevent a lot of raiders from entering a room at a time. In Sankana, the village is situated among "huge rock formations and caves." These features offered some protection against raiders. There are also rocks called the Watch Towers where most guards were sent to watch day and night to alert the people of Sankana with a call of any person they saw as suspicious or raiders riding on the horsebacks[24]. These structures bear testimonies of resistance to slavery.

In *Forts, Castles, and Society*, Osei-Tutu states that historical depictions of West African forts and castles in the context of the Transatlantic Slave Trade often emphasize their role as both symbols of extreme suffering and instruments of oppression. Osei-Tutu suggests further that there is the stark contrast between what he describes as "eerie, suffocating slave dungeons below and the open, airy whitewashed civilized white spaces above consisting of a residential area, school,

[24] Opoku-Agyemang 22-28; Block-Steele 9-11.

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churches, and facilities with good drinking water all gently buffeted by fresh sea breeze" (4). One cannot just imagine that the word freedom and humanity existed in these dark and dreadful sites.

According to Edmund Abaka, the castles represent a Black Holocaust of unfathomable torment, misery, and death. They are also like ships at anchor permanently on the Euro-African frontier in West Africa (xvi-xxii). Notwithstanding the mighty walls of the forts and its horrors, resistance to the slave trade started on the shores of Africa even before slaves were transported. The enslaved Africans resisted slavery through escapes and the jobs assigned to them by the slave masters. In July 1682, during a shortage of corn, the sustenance provided for the enslaved, thirteen individuals out of fifty captives, as recounted by Mark Bedford Whiting, successfully escaped by undermining the prison (cited in Smallwood 41). Bedford again observes that jobs of such nature were given Arda slaves[25] or castle slaves but at times when they were short in supply, the captives were made to do these tasks (Smallwood 41). Escapes, in general, were possible through the little opportunities given such as jobs, personal strength, luck, or success that pushed some captives to emancipate themselves or resist slavery throughout the Atlantic crossing. Jobs assigned to the slaves became forms of escape and resistive strategies slaves used. Some captives were taken out of the dungeons to engage in tasks such as woodcutting, mud clay for the construction of European settlements, and stone gathering (Lawrence 90). During their outside work, slaves try their best to run away from their supervisors and slavery in general. Also, once captors chained slaves to be transported in canoes to the ship at sea, some enslaved attempted their escape. In his introduction to *The Slave Ship*, Rediker gives an account of a story of a woman, who jumped out of the canoe and started to swim for a sandbar while being transported from the castle to the canoe to be sent to

[25] Arda which was alternatively spelt as "Ardra" was "the English rendering of Allada, the Kingdom of Benin Region. Arda was the name given to the "castle resident slave labour force." Most castle slaves came from this region, so the name was used to refer to all slaves who were tasked to work in the castles (See Smallwood 37).

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the slave ship. Rediker's account is based on the narration of William Butterworth, who was a sailor on board the ship, Hudibras in 1786. This evidence also suggests that the enslaved used various forms of resistive strategies to liberate themselves from slavery.

Scholars such as Richard Price and Sidney Mintz in their 1976 essay, *The Birth of America Culture* explore strategies used by slave masters to prevent resistance among enslaved Africans before their Atlantic transport. Richard Price and Sydney Mintz on one hand argue that the deliberate mixing of captives while disrupting cultural ties, prevented solidarity and potential rebellions. Instance cited by John Thornton, Judith Carney and Gwendolyn Hall indicate strategic sourcing of slaves from one area based on expertise, aiming to minimize the likelihood of uprisings (Radburn 7). In her 2006 inaugural lecture *Where There is no Silence,* Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang elaborates on the significance of the slave forts and castles in Ghana. Opoku-Agyemang suggests that the slave castles mark a physical point in the construction of a definition of African diaspora and as a physical point in the construction of separation from the continent of those whose liberties were robbed. She further highlights that there is clear evidence of resistance over the very "thick walls of the structures" (slave castles) themselves. For instance, the cannonballs that are pointed outside of the castle, the desperate scrawls on the walls of the dank dungeons, and the trapdoors that led to the molestation of females are all indicators of resistance (2). Overall, these scholars offer varied perspectives on the intentional disruption of cultural ties and strategic practices slave masters employed to undermine resistance among enslaved Africans.

Revolt and suicide emerged as poignant forms of resistance during the transatlantic journey. Enslaved Africans, confined in slave ships revolted against their dehumanizing conditions, challenging the degrading classification of Africans. Instances of suicides, be it by refusing to eat or jumping off the ship, underscore the desperate measures taken to escape the

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clutches of slavery. Unsuccessful and successful revolts such as Captain Tomba's on *Robert* of Bristol and on Joseph Cinque's on the Amistad respectively, exemplify the courage and determination of those who dared to resist, even against formidable odds (Antonio Bly 182-184).

Also, in 1794, there was an onshore resistance by natives of Africa on *Jolly Bachelor* down the Sierra Leone River. This ship had slaves on board, but it was attacked by the natives. The battle led to the killing of the captain and two of his men. The Africans bared the ship of all its trading goods and set the Africans free. Though insurrections were planned with the hope of returning home, several slaves could not navigate the ship so they did what was termed as "collective suicide" where all slaves drown themselves in the seas with the belief that their souls will travel back to Africa (Bly 181, 185 ; Block Steele 16).

Upon reaching the plantations in the New World, resistance persisted. Field supervisors lived in constant fear of revolts, as slaves fought back against whipping and other forms of oppression by destroying crops, and engaging in acts of sabotage. Maroonage in Barbados and revolts in Jamaica and North America further underscored the unyielding spirit of resistance among enslaved individuals (Block-Steele 20; Handler 183). Gynaecological resistance, as explored by Caroline Elizabeth Neely, delves into the poignant acts of abortion and infanticide by enslaved women to spare their offspring from a life of bondage while working on the slave plantations An example used by Neely is the case of an enslaved woman Margaret Garner who, in 1856, tragically slit her own baby's throat with a knife to prevent being returned to the Kentucky plantation (46).

These instances of resistance suggest enslaved Africans were never in support of slavery and therefore, they tried their best to achieve autonomy and independence regardless of the punishments that came with them. These acts contributed greatly to the success of the abolishing

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movements. Just as historical works have elaborated on the tortuous nature of the slave castles, ships and plantations and the various forms of resistance during the slave trade, so have literary expressions. The role of literary expressions in representing castles, ships and plantations in narratives do not only depict these sites of horror, pain, and torture but also as places of symbolic and metaphorical significance. Through the analysis of these monuments and environments, it can be deduced that themes of resistance provide some source of solace and healing to the descendants of Africans who can be described as victims of a dark past like slavery.

2.4 Literary Sources on Representations of Slavery

Many scholars have re-interpreted the various monuments, sites and spaces that contributed to the Transatlantic Slave Trade. For instance, when Paul Gilroy proposes the significance of the "Black Atlantic"[26] in his seminal text[27], critical devotion is given to the Atlantic Ocean as a space open for hybrid, transatlantic, and diasporic cultures. Gilroy uses the term Black Atlantic to represent all the blacks who have found themselves in the West as a result of the Transatlantic Slave Trade (19). Gilroy uses texts produced by Pan Africanists, nineteenth to twentieth intellects and modern Black music to define black cultural identity and diaspora. Gilroy further highlights the slave ship as "a living, micro-cultural, micro-political system in motion" which transported the black cosmopolitans abroad in his *The Black Atlantic* (4). In this statement, Gilroy emphasizes the significance of the slave ship as more than just a means of transportation. The use of terms "micro-cultural" and "micro political" suggests that within the confined space of the slave ship, there were intricate social and political dynamics at play. This enables him to

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[26] See Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995 and Gow's Jamela *Debating Difference: Haitian Transnationalism in Paul Gilroy's Black Atlantic,* for more on Blank Atlantic).

[27] Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995.

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construct a collective identity for people who represent the Black Atlantic. In furtherance, Gilroy views the image of the slave ship as "a common identifier" or "an empty signifier" a term borrowed from Ernesto Laclau. Laclau explains the empty signifier as a collective identity that bonds people with differential demand. In this regard, Gilroy views all ships that crossed the waters as objects that do only represent dark pathway that transported enslaved Africans to the New World but became a medium through which themes of freedom, black intellectuals and other cultural expressions are obtained. The slave ship, therefore, becomes a metaphor of the unification of all blacks which was created as a result of the shared moments of oppression and subjugation through slavery.

In analyzing Equiano's narrative, *The Interesting Narrative Life of Olaudah Equiano*, Matthew Brown views the sea and the ship as the starting spaces of the terrors of enslavement in Equiano's slave narrative and Equiano's knowledge about the ship and the sea ensures him of his initial stride towards freedom (193). Jieun Park and Marcus Rediker emphasize the sea and the ship as "dynamic and multifunctional spaces," suggesting their fluid roles and functions. Rediker explores the isolation experienced by sailors at sea, emphasizing heightened awareness of power dynamics and the need for self-defense. Language, as argued by Rediker, holds special significance in this maritime environment, with mastery of the sea's unique argot equating to becoming a seaman. Acquiring and ultimately mastering the distinctive language of the sea was essential for becoming a skilled seaman. Equiano's proficiency as a seaman aligns with an abolitionist, as the sea's language equips him with the means for self-defense, enabling him to resist oppressive power structures and implement his own strategy of resistance. As Equiano gains knowledge, his yearning for liberty intensifies, culminating in a resolute declaration: "I thought

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now of nothing but being freed and working for myself," echoing his unwavering commitment to emancipation (Park 38).

Kofi Anyidoho in *National Identity and the Language of Metaphor* lists the slave castle as one of the key metaphors that dominates the cultural background and scenery of the contemporary state of Ghana. Anyidoho posits that various African writers[28] view the slave forts as "a modern prison" full of oppression, as "a central metaphor of betrayal and reconciliation, and of departure and return; a haunting edifice that rules by silence." Also, it signifies a key root of African resistance to slavery (13). Anyidoho further suggests that the new focus of slave forts must be placed within the context of a broad "cultural reawakening" called the Pan African Historical Theatre Festival (PANAFEST) which endeavours to bring all people of African descent around the issues on slavery that remains stifled (16). Also, Mawuli Adjei elaborates on how Ghanaian writers view some parts of the slave forts by stating that the "airless darkness within the dungeons" is a representation of trauma, blood and agonies leading to the creation of Africans in the diaspora (6). With this assertion, Adjei suggests that healing can never take place in these physical objects. This makes the present study worthy because the theme of healing will be analysed using the same castle that Mawuli reads as a bearer of trauma only. Anyidoho[29] again views the slave forts as constant reminders of the slave experience and as an important metaphor in providing healing answers to questions the world has learnt to forget or is afraid to ask in its location in time and space. Hence, the arrogant location of the slave castles becomes a key to unlock "those monumental gates that were once sealed to keep the storms of history from sweeping into the

[28] Anyidoho mentions Kwesi Brew, Kwadwo Opoku-Agyemang, Ayi Kwei Armah and Mohammed Ben Abdullah as some of the African writers.
[29] "Slave Castle, African Historical Landscape and Literary Imagination" *Drumspeak*, no. 1, pp. 21-32.

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oblivion" (26). The arguments make the current study relevant as it examines how resistance and healing are represented in these spaces the analysis selected two neo-slave narratives.

In his introduction to his award-winning anthology, *Cape Coast Castle*, Kwadwo Opoku-Agyemang describes slavery as "a living wound under the patchwork of scars" (1). The Castle, in his view, is a threat, an embarrassment and a breathing reminder of this society's victim status, and a perpetual provocation to the ideas and deeds that depend on the disintegration of a people's freedom (8-9). He again proposes that the Cape Coast Castle among all forts and castles in Ghana rules by silence, therefore, there is the need to always bring this monument into focus to prevent the world from hiding an atrocious act like slavery. Oyeniyi Okunoye[30] presents how the castle in Kwadwo Opoku Agyemang's poem *Eclipse*[31] depicts "a torture chamber, an indecent grave and an arrogant monument" that conceal the "atrocities of its interior by outwardly appearing as white" (68). Thus, the arguments of these scholars project multiplicities of meanings that surround ships and castles that aided the massive transfer of enslaved Africans through the concept of space, time and place. Their arguments validate the interrogations of how Gyasi and Herbstein present resistance and healing through the use of the slave castles, ships and plantations in the select set of texts for the present study.

Helena Woodard[32] notes certain writers have expressed interest in the Elmina and Cape Coast Castles in Ghana, as well as the House of Slaves at Goree Island in Senegal. Woodard asserts that many writers view monuments through the lens of tourism. According to Woodard, these writers have transformed these monuments into a collective cultural symbol, shaping them into a

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[30] See Okinoye, Oyeniyi. "Pan Africanism and Globalized Black Identity in the Poetry of Kofi Anyidoho and Kwadwo Opoku-Agyemang." 57-79.
[31] Opoku-Agyemang, Kwadwo. *Capecoast Castle: A Collection of Poems. Afram Publications, 1996.*
[32] Woodard, Helena. Migration Themes and Transnational Identities in Mohammed Ben-Abdullah's The Slaves, Haile Gerima's Sankofa, and Rachid Bouchareb's Little Senegal."

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space that encompasses both geo-political and public memory dimensions (1). Essentially, the monuments are seen not just as physical structures but as significant symbols embedded in a broader cultural and historical context. She, again, argues that the representation of slave forts in Gerima's film *Sankofa*, Bouchareb's film *Little Senegal* and Ben-Abdulla's novel *The Slaves* serve as a "mediative function" in connecting native Africans and slave-descendants in America who travel to these sites. The authors of the selected texts employ migration themes and transnational identities through descendants of African American protagonists. Woodard further states the slave fort in the openings of the *Sankofa* and *Little Senegal* depicts the slave fort as a "stone monster by the sea" (2). This metaphorical language here depicts the imposing and ominous of the slave forts and their roles in the dark history of the transatlantic slave trade. The dungeon within the slave castles also serves as a "foundational setting for the Atlantic slavery, a precursor to the Middle Passage journey, and a foreshadowing of tensions between Africans and slave descendant African Americans in contemporary society" (2). The two films *Sankofa* and *Little Senegal* are in conversations with the novel *The Slaves* in that their use of forts communicates a necessity for Africans Americans in the U.S to link with their African lineage and to know more about the Atlantic slavery in order to heal their wounds. It is also possible to concur with Woodard's assertion because her argument could be extended to the connections the descendants of Afro-Caribbean have with Africa. Afro Caribbeans constantly refer to Africa as their home and have also used castles and slaves in Reggae music to persistently remind Africans on the need to resist any form of oppressors' rule. This is evident in Burning Spear's *Slavery Days*, Bob Marley's *Redemption Song*, *Slave Driver* and *Zion Train*. Vivian Nun Halloran in *Family Ties: Africa as Mother/Fatherland in Neo-Slave Narratives* supports this assertion when she states: "To the people

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of the Caribbean, Africa is both a source of comfort and inspiration as well as an example for resisting oppression" (2).

Laura Murphy's book [33] engages the violence and terror of the slave trade insightfully. Murphy opines that the slave trade did not only bring violence and terror on African people who were victims or enslaved captives but affected all those Africans and descendants who remained in West Africa or on the African Continent (4). Her work focuses on how the distant past endures in West African literature in forms of "alternative memory" and "metaphorization such as tragic repetition, tropes of suffering, bondage, and also sexuality." For instance, Murphy brings out Ben Okri's use of the bush as a chronotope in *The Famished Road* to present a source of historical violence as well as his allusions to the useful narratives told by Azaro's mother. These narratives, according to Murphy, serve as indicators of the stifled history of the slave trade. However, as Taiwo Adetunyi Osinibi[34] suggests, such metaphorical readings would be much more insightful if Murphy delved into the relationship between the Atlantic slave trade, domestic slavery and abolition, and the colonial projects (152). Murphy's analysis would also have more historical grounding specifically on why Okri selects Azaro, a continental African, who was not directly affected by the slave trade, to signify the violence and terror of slavery in such a space.

According to Robert Beverly, most writings about the plantations in the New World are always full of images of "beautiful and bountiful terrain" at least for the planters and slave owners. From the planter's perspectives, life on the plantation is similar to the "Edenic garden" in the America because one was totally removed "from the trials of life to a beautiful landscape, full of

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[33] Murphy, Laura T. *Metaphor and the Slave Trade in West African Literature*. 1st ed., Ohio University Press, 2012. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1j7x98t. Accessed 16 June 2020.
[34] "The African Atlantic: West African Literatures and Slavery Studies." *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2016, 149–159. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/reseafrilite.47.1.149. Accessed 24 June 2020.

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rich soil, blooming flowers, twittering hummingbirds and sweet honeysuckle" (qtd. in Robyn Preston-McGee 8). A Virginia planter, William Byrd's of Westover in writing a letter to his friend observes the beauty of his own plantation by making reference to the natural air and all types of provisions without expense (qtd in Simpson 17-18). Bryd views the plantation as serene and peaceful even as the enslaved Africans are engaged in hard labour. To him having "flock and herds," names he gives to the enslaved and the other supervisors whom he refers to as bondmen and women mean that the planters enforced the racialized ideologies of Africans as the inferior race. By giving biblical supports through the use of Canaan and Egyptians, Byrd refers to enslaved Africans as Israelites who were equally trapped in Egypt for years in hard labour[35]. Bryd's account only suggests that the plantation represents a pleasant place if the African who worked on these fields are underrated just as the Israelites were treated in Egypt. In contrast to the description of the plantation by Byrd, Preston-McGee asserts that in the African American perspective, the plantation landscape is not as luxurious as have been represented by the planters. In reality, the relationship between the slaves and the plantation is one that is born out of "alienation, physical hardship, and trauma." The plantation only offered comfort to the white planters but for the blacks, it offered oppression (12). Preston-McGee supports this assertion when she quotes Eldridge Cleaver: "During slavery…. black people learned to hate the land. From sunup to sundown, the slaves worked the land: plowing, sowing, and reaping crops for somebody else, for profit they themselves would never see or taste" (59). The harsh conditions of the slaves contradict the "idyllic images" of the slave plantation by the white planters. In furtherance, Preston-McGee cites Olaudah Equiano's 1978 slave narrative:

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[35] See *NIV* Ex. 14.

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> I was a few weeks weeding grass and gathering stones in a plantation; and at last all my companions were distributed different ways, and only myself was left. I was now exceedingly miserable, and thought myself worse off than any of the rest of my companions, for they could talk to each other, but I had no person to speak to that I could understand. In this state, I was constantly grieving and pining, and wishing for death more than anything else. (13)

Here, Equiano shows the harsh conditions of the slave. The emotional and physical brutalities made him feel isolated on the plantation and at a point, he only wished for nothing but death.

Douglass in his 1845 autobiography similarly tells many brutalities that happened on the Lloyd plantation, his new home, for several years and the treatment he receives from his supervisor as such: "The field was the place to witness his cruelty and profanity. His presence made it both the field of blood and blasphemy. From the rising till the going down of the sun, he was cursing, raving, cutting, and slashing among the slaves of the field, in the most frightful manner" (261). For both Equiano and Douglass, the portrayal of the plantation as "idealized" field is only mythical because of the harsh treatments enslaved Africans received.

Anne Bailey in *African Voices on Transatlantic Story of Trade* postulates that the story of the slave trade has mostly been told by Europeans and rarely from the perspective of those who suffered the most which are the Africans. Bailey further highlights the essence of oral records in telling the story of slavery from the African perspective. This, Bailey argues, is a result of the silence of the slave subject in Africa. However, in the later part of the twentieth century and in the 21st century, Africans are no longer silent on the issue of slavery. There have been various scholarly explorations not only on the oral forms but also in written narratives on the theme of slavery in Ghana, for example (12-13). Indeed, the progressive emergence of the neo-slave narrative as a literary genre beginning, with Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's *Shehu Umar* (1967), is a clear indication that contemporary African writers and scholars are focused on exhuming for interrogating the

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history—actors, victims, incidents, monuments, locations—of the enslavement of Africans. This assertion suggests that African writers are actively engaging in the exploration and analysis of the history of African enslavement, by taking into focus all those involved in the trade in one way or the other. In *Construction of Female Identity*, Josephine Ekuwa Saighoe's engages in a comparative study of how female identity is represented in Toni Morrisson's neo-slave narratives *Beloved* and *A Mercy*. Saighoe explores the textual representation of race, gender, class and sexuality and how these representations portray the stereotypes attached to the African American identity. Saighoe argues that the body of the black women is associated with "primitiveness, savaging and sexual deviancy" inviting both sexual, gender and racial subjugation. Saighoe concludes that the body of the black woman becomes a sufferer of the life of the hardship slaves endured and this reveals both physical and psychological traumas associated with the Atlantic slave trade (12). Meisha Edwards-White's study also examines Alice Walker's The *Colored Purple* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* as neo-slave narratives and how these authors, through characters, explore the atrocities of slavery. Edwards-White argues that the black woman body has been abused through slavery, racism and sexism and the purpose of writing the novels of these authors as neo slave narratives is to give voice to the black feminine voice that has mostly been silent so many years in the history of slavery (72). It is evident from the above scholarly discussions that, the slave plantations, slave castles and slave ships played important roles in slavery, yet the deliberations have been limited to autobiographical novels, poetry, films and historical accounts while literary works such as neo-slave narratives remain underexplored. Authors of neo-slave narratives incorporate the lives of enslaved Africans in these sites, and these contribute to the addressing of themes such as racism, violence, sexism, gender, resistance and healing which are relevant contemporary issues. Scholarships on neo-slave narratives surround

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how authors represent women and their female identities. There has not been a spatial reading of the historical sites used in these neo-slave narratives to examine themes of resistance and healing, hence, this is the gap this study has identified and intends to fill. In effect, the re-evaluation of slave history by contemporary authors in neo-slave narratives is worth examining. Analysing the representations of castles, ships and plantation to reveal resistance and healing in the select set of texts will contribute significantly to existing literature by opening up new perspectives and areas of exploration in slavery studies.

2.5 Critical Perspectives on *Homegoing* and *Ama*

Yaa Gyasi's novel *Homegoing* has received several literary criticisms. While Laura Miller, on one hand, in her review of *Homegoing* maintains that Yaa Gyasi's novel "struggles to make her linked-story form suit her epic enterprise", Shringarpure Bhakti, on the other hand, posits that the novel's style is not a major challenge because it does not follow the traditional way of presenting slave narratives. This, Bhakti suggests, becomes another way of inviting the audience to read the text inspired by the digital storytelling and to reveal different ideologies that meet contemporary needs (5). Bhakti's argument, therefore, seems to propose that slave narrative style should not have a static style especially in the contemporary times for such yardsticks limit the essence of literature itself.

Iris Hinfelaar in *The Transmission of Trauma* argues that both Toni Morrison and Yaa Gyasi in confronting slavery in their novels, *Beloved* and *Homegoing,* respectively, open doors to analyze how traumas affect several generations being it direct or indirect. Hinfelaar proposes that in *Beloved,* Denver is troubled not only by her own subjugation but also by living with a mother who is haunted by slavery and the horrors of the black experience. In *Homegoing*, similar clues indicate how the tripes of the black fire and the fear of water in the stories indicate how collective trauma can be transmitted from one generation to the next (7). Heather Hewett in her review of

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Homegoing similarly suggests that the text foregrounds "the deprivations and violence of slavery" on those who were enslaved, those who sold their slavery and their descendants in general.

While Hinfelaar and Hewett look at the transgenerational trauma in *Homegoing*, Ava Laundry looks at the concept of racism through an analysis of migration theme in *Homegoing* in her article *Black is Black is Black?* Laundry opines that the concept of blackness has been repositioned due to the fast increment in voluntary African migration to the United States rather than the involuntary Transatlantic Slave Trade (127). This, Laundry contends, makes it difficult to describe what constitutes blackness. Landry maintains that most African immigrants come to realize that blackness is a societal construction that is projected onto them whether they agree to it or not. Landry exemplifies this by quoting what a white teacher says to Marjorie when she is hesitant in reciting a poem for a celebration of black culture in her school in America: "Here, in this country, it doesn't matter where you come from first to the white people running things, you are here now, and here black is black is black" (249). The relationship between Marjorie and Graham, the German student, is also not easily approved despite their connection because Graham is prohibited from going to prom with a black girl (138). It can also be deduced that though Marjorie's father, Yaw, chooses to relocate to America, it did not change the societal constructions white Americans have for Blacks who have migrated willingly because to them, black is black is black.

In his article *Sexuality and Healing*, Mar Gallego explores how gender, race and sexuality are mobilized in Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* and Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*. Gallego proposes that both African American authors project themes of resistance by speaking against definitions of female black bodies (1). By engaging in such misconceptions, the slave narratives, Gallego suggests, bring to bear new forms of identity construction that foster individual and generational

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healing as a way of protesting against hegemonic definitions of gender and sexuality (10). Even though Gallego's analysis touches on the theme of healing and resistance, it appears to be deficient. This study offers a more comprehensive analysis of how such themes are portrayed not only in the elimination of definitions against female bodies as argued by Gallego but in Gyasi's representation of both male and female bodies as they are situated in historical sites.

Herbstein's *Ama* has received a lot of reviews, but few scholarly articles exist on it. Shereen Essof notes that many reviews view *Ama* as "faction" because of Herbstein's ability to extensively and meticulously blend "research with abundant imagination to transport the reader into the violent world of the Atlantic slave trade." Essof also highlights the various themes *Ama* presents. These are the "violence of colonialism, patriarchy, female sexuality, racial difference and also resistance." In doing this, Essof advocates that Herbstein moves to the tradition of Haile Gerima's *Sankofa* as history and slavery resurface. To Essof, the Elmina castle has also become a site of pilgrimage for Ghanaians and all Africans and in this site lies "contested memories of the significance of space and place" in representing the past. Though Essof makes mention of various themes in the novel, he omits the theme of healing. This makes the present study important as it examines the theme of healing as a vital aspect of the impact of slavery in the contemporary world.

Tony Simoes da Silva notes that in *Ama*, Herbstein produces the collective drama of slavery through "the story of a single African woman by focusing on the brutalization of Ama's body" and "on the psychological scars of her experiences." Simoes da Silva states further that Herbstein challenges himself by novelizing the type of experiences Equiano talked about from his personal perspective in his autobiography. By creating a female protagonist, Simoes da Silva suggests that Herbstein juxtaposes his novel with Equiano's text. Though I concur with Simoes da Silva's argument that Herbstein's book centres on the brutalization of Ama's body, his argument

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is limited to the traumatic experiences in the neo-slave narratives. It can be argued that slavery goes beyond trauma in *Ama*. There is the need to assess how resistance and healing are also depicted through the use of slave castles, ships and plantations. This makes the present study relevant.

Senayon Olaoluwa in *Beyond Disability* contends that *Ama* provides a more critical perspective on this privileged assumption of trauma attached to slavery in the very sense in which it shows the multiple ways black female slaves suffered dehumanization within the context of slavery from space to space. There is an understanding that African historical subjugation, western imperial and capitalist machination extensively account for the metaphor of disability by which the continent is defined today (111). This is in relation to Africa's development in comparison to the world at large. The marginalization of the African masculinity in the narrative celebrates the resilience and resistance of the African man as an allegorical resistance of Africa herself. We can agree that Senayon joins Laura Murphy's argument that slavery survives through metaphors in contemporary Africa.

Oluyomi Oduyobi analyses *Ama* through a feminist lens by arguing that Herbstein in presenting sexual violence against women diverges from the stereotypical standard of the narration of rape of female slaves during the Transatlantic Slave Trade by giving graphic images of rape scenes (100). Oduyobi highlights that the perpetrators of rape cut across different men in different race and cultures during slavery. In doing this, Oduyobi suggests that Herbstein's way of addressing rape is a need to combat all forms of male violence in this contemporary world (110).

Per the ongoing scholarly reviews and arguments, no study has done a comparative study on the select set of texts as well as taking a critical look at how the historical spaces reveal themes of resistance and healing. There has also not been spatial reading of in *Homegoing* and *Ama*.

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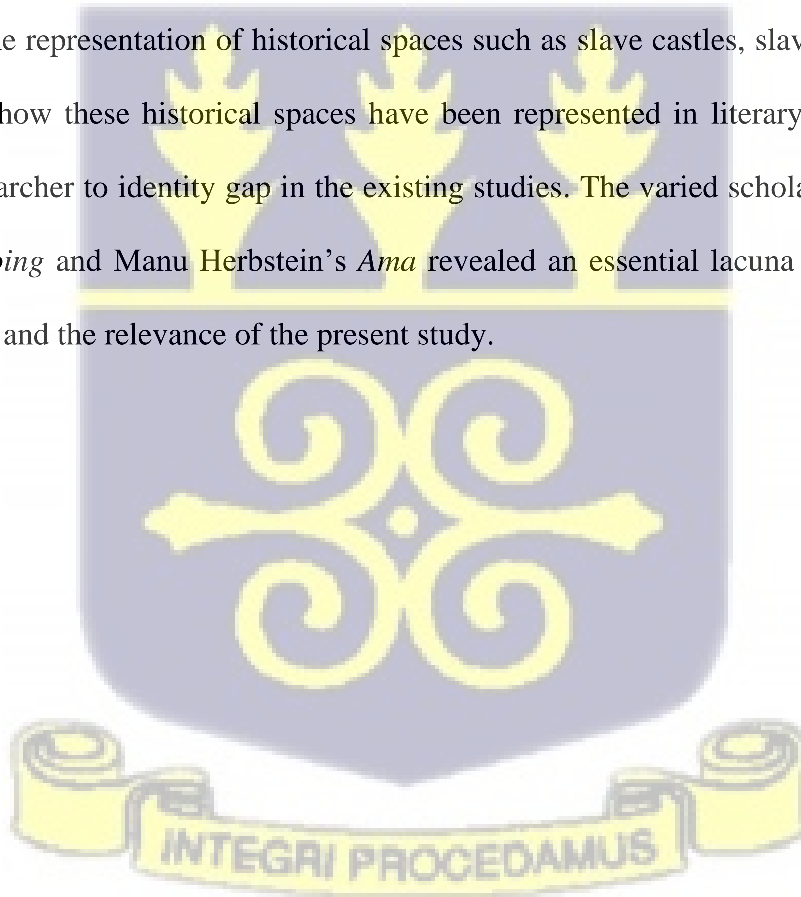
Indeed, when Sampa Diop[36] suggests that the symbolism of castle…must constantly be deconstructed to lay bare the multitudes of meanings and metaphors embedded within those historical monuments (60), it provides a basis for the analysis on the representations of such historical spaces in the selected texts. Hence, this study argues that the representations of castles, ships and plantations as characters interact in them portray themes of resistance and healing in *Ama* and *Homegoing*.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored some related scholarship on the history of slavery in Africa and the Transatlantic Slave Trade to provide a clear understanding of the scholarship available in this area. By examining the representation of historical spaces such as slave castles, slave ships, and slave plantations and how these historical spaces have been represented in literary texts, the review enabled the researcher to identity gap in the existing studies. The varied scholarly works on Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* and Manu Herbstein's *Ama* revealed an essential lacuna which provided a solid foundation and the relevance of the present study.



[36] Sampa, Diop. "Cutting Off Shackles of Bondage: Freedom, Redemption and Movement Back to Africa in Haile Gerima's Sankofa". *Journal of Media and Communication Studies,* vol. 6, no. 4, .2014, 59-68.

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CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE THEMES OF RESISTANCE AND HEALING IN *HOMEGOING*

3.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to examine how castles, ships and plantations have been constructed in Yaa Gyasi's neo-slave narrative *Homegoing*. The analysis explores the actions of the characters in these physical spaces. It also foregrounds how the textual representations of the castles, ships, and plantations and various symbols and metaphors portray the themes of resistance and healing.

3.1 Cape Coast Castle and Ships as Spatial Practices and Representations of Space in *Homegoing*

Marie-Laure Ryan in *Space* states that: "narratives are not only inscribed on spatial objects" but they are also "situated within real world spaces, and their relations to their environment go far beyond mimetic representation." Ryan goes on further to assert that the "spatial situations of … narratives often correspond to the real-world location of celebrated events" (Sec. 2.2). As it has been discussed in the literature review, castles, ships, and plantations are real historical items and their representations in *Homegoing* go beyond history. As chronotopes, the castles, ships, and plantations are used as specific settings that reveal the social and political worlds in *Homegoing*. These chronotopes form part of Lefebvre's definition of spatial practices because they represent physical and material sites through which routines, actions, and social and political relations of characters can be analysed. This section discusses Cape Coast Castle and the ship as Spatial Practices and representations of space.

Cape Coast Castle is one of the major settings Gyasi uses in the novel. The essence of the setting in defining social, political, religious, social and economic connections among characters

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is evident in the first chapter titled *Effia*. Readers are introduced to marriages between the Asantes and the British. The Asantes marry of their daughters in exchange for traded goods. For instance, Adwoa Aidoo is the first girl married to a British soldier who lives in the Cape Coast Castle so Adwoa relocates to the live there with her husband. The conversation between Baaba, mother of Effia, and another character also informs readers how life in the Castle is viewed by some of natives who are taken as wives of the British:

> "What was it like in the Castle?" Baaba asked Millicent's mother one day while the four women were sitting to a snack of groundnuts and bananas. "It was fine, fine. They take care of you, oh, these men! It is like they have never been with a woman before. I don't know what their British wives were doing. I tell you, my husband looked at me like I was water, and he was fire, and every night he had to be put out." (9)

From the extract above, Millicent's mother compares the love between her British soldier to water and fire and she thinks she plays a significant role in the soldier's life. Millicent's mother thinks she and her husband compliments each other but her presence in the life of the soldier rather suggests that the soldier uses her satisfy his sexual pleasure in the Castle. More of these marriages become evident when James Collins, the newly appointed governor of the Cape Coast Castle, comes to ask Effia's hand in marriage. James agrees to pay thirty pounds upfront and twenty-five shillings a month in tradable goods to Baaba as a bride gift (15). This marriage transaction is modelled on the slave trade so that Effia's marriage becomes an inverted 'slavery' because Effia is traded like a non-human commodity. This slavery could be seen as veiled because Effia, James and her parents are unaware that they are engaged in a pseudo-slave trade. This marriage request also provides a background information on some of characters who live in the Castle and help us to view the Castle as a spatial practice.

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The sections of the Castle are known when the narrator gives details of Effia's wedding in the chapel within the Castle (16). This provides the religious and social makeup of the Castle. Gyasi adds a church as a feature of the Castle to help draw attention to the architectural makeup of the setting and highlight the activities that go on there. It is not surprising Gyasi adds the church as feature to enable readers situate the setting in historical, social and religious context of slavery and to also allow meticulous spatial reading of the Cape Coast Castle.

Other details of the Castle are also given when James takes Effia on a tour of the Castle. Readers picture the interior divisions of the Castle:

> On the ground floor of the north wall, there were apartments and warehouses. The center held the parade ground, soldiers' quarters, and guardroom. There was a stockyard, a pond, a hospital. A carpenter's shop, smithy, and kitchen. The Castle was itself a village. Effia walked around with James in complete awe, running her hands along the fine furniture made from wood the color of her father's skin, the silk hangings so smooth they felt like a kiss… she breathed everything in, stopping at the gun platform that held huge canons facing out toward the sea, as she leans on one of the canon balls to rest, she hears some cries beneath the castles. (16)

In the extract above, it could be noted the narrator's description of the Castle as a village suggests that it is a well-furnished space because it has all that one needs inside it. There are apartments where British soldiers sleep. There are warehouses used for storage of goods traded. There is parade ground where soldiers meet for training purposes or summons from the British officials, carpentry shops for the creation and repair of wooden structures and kitchen to prepare food. The presence of gun platform and canon balls shows that security inside and outside of the Castle is very strong. The interior designs also allow readers to view Cape Coast Castle as a spatial practice.

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The narrator also notifies readers that ships are used to transport the slaves from the Castle to the New World. Though the ships are not given names, the little description Gyasi provides allows reader to view the ship as a spatial practice. Gyasi's first mentioning of the ship is when Effia moves in with James into the Castle. The narrator describes the various cargo ships on the sea as "black specks of dust in the blue" (18). This expression suggests that the ships at sea are innumerable. The narrator also informs readers that James Collins is the successor of the Collinses of Liverpool who had gained his wealth through slave ships (51). It is not startling then that thousands of ships are at sea around the Castle. With this, the ships are not merely chronotopes of physical mobility (for transportation of slaves), they are, equally importantly, metaphors for economic and social mobility enabling the slave traders to amass the financial leverage that propels them into reputable social circles in England. Simultaneously, those work inversely sail for the enslaved Africans because the movement of the ship towards Europe and the New World produces economic and social immobility for Africans: their economic, social, psychic and political activities in Africa are brutally ruptured.

The dungeon is also read as a spatial practice because readers get to know that it is a section in the Cape Coast Castle where the enslaved who are yet to be transported to the New World are kept. For instance, Esi has been a slave and has been put in the women's dungeon in the Cape Coast Castle for two weeks (28). Other characters such as (29) Tansi and Afua are also kept in the same dungeons as slaves. Smallwood, Osei Tutu, and Smith assert that there were "dungeonlike underground prisons" that were used to house Africans who had been captured as slaves in the Castle (4, 38). It is significant, therefore, that Gyasi makes the dungeon an important aspect of the Castle to provide a vivid spatial reading of the Castle as a whole.

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The roles of characters also help appreciate the Castle as a spatial practice. Readers are also introduced to Quey, the son of James Collins and Effia. Quey has his own office in the Castle during his father's reign. He works as a writer and the junior ranked officer responsible for logging captives that are sold in the Castle and serves as messenger between the Asante Chief Abeeku and new governor when James dies (50). This narrative also suggests that apart from the dungeons and governor's apartments, there are physical spaces that are designed as offices for some workers in the Castle. The descriptions of the Cape Coast Castle, the ships, and the roles of characters as slaves, wives, governor, messengers, officers, husbands, writers, and soldiers in the Cape Coast castle provide an overview for the analysis of the Cape Coast Castle and ships as spatial practices and representations of spaces.

3.2 Hell and Thomas Allan Stockham's Alabama Plantations as Spatial Practices and Representations of Space

Hell and Thomas Allan Stockham's plantations can be read as spatial practices and representations of spaces. Hell is the plantation where Esi, Ness, her daughter and her husband, Sam toil as slaves. Despite the narrative providing scant physical descriptions of Hell, this deliberate omission lets readers to engage their imagination and conjure a graphic yet peculiar image of the plantation. The scarcity of explicit details invites readers to project their own perceptions onto Hell, creating a dynamic space where the emotional and psychological dimensions take primacy over a fixed, concrete reality. Within this puzzling setting, Esi and Sam, relegated to the role of field slaves tasked with picking cotton, navigate the harsh realities imposed by the slave master known as the Devil. The absence of detailed physical descriptions prompts readers to explore the characters' experiences within the spatial confines of Hell, highlighting the psychological impact of their surroundings. The plantation, although veiled in narrative ambiguity,

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becomes a backdrop that intricately shapes the personalities and interactions of characters like Ness, The Devil, Sam, and Esi. The strategic use of limited flashbacks further amplifies the narrative choice to keep Hell ambiguous, serving as a prevailing tool to provide significant background information on the characters. By weaving the plantation into the characters' stories, the author crafts Hell as more than just a physical space—it becomes a psychological landscape that influences the characters' thoughts, actions, and relationships. This intentional narrative technique transforms Hell from a mere setting into a dynamic force that echoes throughout the storyline, showcasing how spatial practices and representations of spaces interweave both physical and psychological aspects of the narrative.

Similarly, Thomas Allan Stockham's cotton plantation emerges as a spatial practice and a representation of space. Ness, separated from Esi, is sent to Thomas Allan Stockham's plantation to work as a field slave, where she and others toil daily under the master, Thomas Allan Stockham. The narrative introduces the classification of slave duties into field and house slaves, where the house slaves enjoy comparatively better conditions, including more food, better clothing, and education. In contrast, the field slaves, like Ness, primarily engage in plantation work, viewed solely in terms of labor. The plantation itself is intricately structured, comprising cabins for sleeping and officers, as well as specific quarters for the slave owner, Thomas Allan Stockham, and his family. Notably, the roles of slave children, like Pinky, in carrying out tasks such as fetching water for the Stockhams' household, emphasize the complex dynamics within the plantation's spatial organization.

By exploring the spatial practices of both Hell and Thomas Allan Stockham's plantation, the narrative invites readers to consider how these settings go beyond physical descriptions, becoming integral components that shape the characters' views, actions, and relationships. This unique

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approach showcases the interconnectedness of physical and psychological aspects within the broader context of spatial representation in the narrative.

3.3 Castle, Ships and Plantation as Lived Space (Chronotopes of Solace, Torture, Pain, Shame and Violence)

As it has already been discussed in the theoretical framework, Lefebvre's concept of lived space is explained as a social space that highlights the experiences of characters. The lived space evokes memories and imaginations. In *Architecture Annual 2007*, Luisa Calabrese opines that while architects and planners focus on Lefebvre's concept of perceived and conceived space, "literary writers are capable of expressing aspects of lived space in their evocative descriptions of places and spaces" (66). Calabrese further states that the relationship between humans and their environment is given much emphasis and detail in novels and stories. Gyasi strongly gives detailed descriptions of the relationship between characters and spaces. In the next section of the study, we shall analyse how Gyasi centres that in *Homegoing*.

3.3.1 Representations of Castles and Ships as Lived Spaces in *Homegoing*

Effia's experiences in the Cape Coat Castle as a lived space and chronotope provide her with solace, peace and love, and a source of freedom but also reveal themes of inequality especially when the African wives are reduced to prostitutes and her religion is devalued. There is a clear description of the relationship between Effia and James Collins in settings within the Castle itself. The bond between James and Effia is represented as a pleasant one. As the wife of the governor, Effia enjoys a lot of privileges that workers of the Castle do not enjoy. Effia gets to know that life in the Castle is not all that pleasant for all people when she hears some cries beneath the castles:

INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS

> Then, carried up with the breeze, came a faint crying sound. So faint, Effia thought she was imagining it until she lowered herself down, rested her ear against the grate. "James, are there people down there?" she asked. Quickly, James came to her. He snatched her up from

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> the ground and grabbed her shoulders, looking straight into her eyes. "Yes," he said evenly. It was one Fante word he had mastered.
> Effia pulled away from him. She stared back into his piercing eyes. "But how can you keep them down there crying, enh?" she said. "You white people. My father warned me about your ways. Take me home. Take me home right now!"
> She didn't realize she'd been screaming until she felt James's hand on her mouth, pushing her lips as though he could force the words back in. He held her like that for a long time, until she had calmed. She didn't know if he understood what she said, but she knew then, just by the faint push of his fingers on her lips, that he was a man capable of hurting, that she should be glad to be on one
> side of his meanness and not another. (17)

Besides the marriages in this village, other members are also sold off as slaves to the Western society by the villagers to be put into the dungeons in the Castle and to be transported on ships to the New World. As Effia sits by the window in James' quarters, the narrator recounts that Effia could see the sea and the various cargo ships that appear like "black specks of dust in the blue" (18). The use of this simile suggests that the ships are uncountable and even Effia could not know the count number. The narrator further describes the sea as the "wet eye of the Atlantic." The use of this metaphor also reveals the sea as an important agent that made the ships worthy because without that there was no means the ships could sail to transport humans and goods to the Atlantic. It also makes the sea a witness to the horrible atrocities slavery put the Africans because the 'wetness' of the eye suggests the sea crying and mourning the enslaved. Effia also recognizes the strong link between the sea, ships, and castles when the narrator states: "the wet eye of the Atlantic floated so far out that it was difficult to tell how far away from the Castle the ships were." By using these chronotopes, Gyasi juxtaposes the historical (castle and ships), the cosmic (the sea and the wind) and the mythical (symbol of the weeping sea). Such a stylistic manipulation of space seeks to reflect the entrenched and ubiquitous nature of the slavery practice. It is a historical fact; it is a

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universal practice involving European powers appropriating African human resources; and it is so such as despicable act that nature itself cannot look without shedding tears. Gyasi, therefore, produces a remarkable literary representation of the appropriate chronotopes.

The narrator sheds light on the assigned roles for wives brought to the Castles, highlighting the expectation, as explained by Baaba to Effia, that these women must ensure their husbands are sexually satisfied. This revelation leads Effia to prioritize her obligations as the governor's wife over the distressing cries below the Castle and the numerous ships on the sea. When James approached her, apparent signs of nervousness manifested in his trembling hands and the visible accumulation of sweat on his forehead. The narration emphasizes the agency of the female character, who willingly positioned herself by laying her body down and taking the initiative to lift her skirt (18). This scene not only captures the physical actions of the characters but also invites analysis of power dynamics, agency, and consent within the context of the narrative. Gallego in *Sexuality and Healing* interprets James Collins' anxiety in approaching Effia as "a sign of [James] misgivings about sexual intimacy with a black woman." Gallego further elaborates that this particular scene illustrates the stereotypical images that were prevalent in the European imagination regarding black women (8).

The relationships between James Collins and Effia in the Cape Coast Castle conquer assumptions of an often stereotypical ideology that is seen in most of the relationship between and African women and European men. For instance, James not only gives Effia comfort but actively fosters a relationship that goes beyond social conventions. Most notably, he bestows gifts upon her and turns the black stone pendant that Baaba gave her into a sentimental memento by putting it on a string that Effia can wear around her neck (18). Their connection goes beyond simple gifts to include education. James spends the early mornings teaching Effia English, and she returns the

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favour by teaching her the Fante language at night (19). Even Effia admits that her feelings for James are growing. Their shared intimacy extends to the exchange of personal experiences, as James reveals his familial ties in England, including a wife named Annie and children, while Effia confides in him about Baaba's manipulative schemes to orchestrate her marriage beyond the confines of her village. Another instance of such ideal relationship is seen these lines:

> She helped him pull off his coat and shirt and she pressed her body against his, as Adwoa had taught her. Before he could register his surprise, she grabbed his arms and pushed him to the bed. Not since their first night together had he been this timid, afraid of her unfamiliar body, the full-figured flesh, so different from how he had described his wife. Excited now, he pushed into her, and she squeezed her eyes as tightly as she could, her tongue circling her lips. He pushed harder, his breathing heavy and labored. She scratched his back, and he cried out. She bit his ear and pulled his hair. He pushed against her as though he were trying to move through her. And when she opened her eyes to look at him, she saw something like pain written across his face and the ugliness of the act, the sweat and blood and wetness they produced, became illuminated, and she knew that if she was an animal tonight, then he was too. Once they had finished, Effia lay with her head on James's shoulder. (22)

Thus, within the apparent confines of a colonial context, the relationship between James and Effia emerges as an unconventional connection, challenging prevailing stereotypes and expectations.

Despite these unpleasant names Effia is called by the other Europeans, Effia escapes the gruesomeness of slavery as the African wife of a governor of the Castle. For instance, when she finally tells James she is pregnant, James picks her up and dances her around their quarters, bends and plants a kiss on "her barely bulged stomach" (25). It can be deduced from the above analysis that Effia's life in the Castle is represented as glamorous and comfort. Effia herself sees the Castle as a chronotope of escape from Baaba's constant beatings and hatred as her stepdaughter. Thus, the narrative at the Castle unfolds the intricate dynamics within this unique historical setting.

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The relationships between the European slave merchants and their African wives record both pleasant and unpleasant memories within the same setting. English soldiers in the castles keep calling their African wives "wenches" to prevent them from being punished by God for opting for a polygamous marriage (19). When Effia realizes that she is keeping long in bearing a child for James, she speaks to Adwoa, the wife of another soldier, who gives her a root to put under her bed to enhance her fertility. When James finds this, she tells her: "Now, Effia, I don't want any voodoo or black magic in this place. My men can't hear that I let my wench place strange roots under the bed. It's not Christian" (23). His description of Effia's religious beliefs also confirms the Eurocentric views of the African religion. To call Effia a wench also confirms the racial distinction that has been made by the White soldiers and governors who are married in England but take Africans as wives. The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines "wench" as "a girl or woman of a socially low class" and as another word for a "female prostitute" or "promiscuous woman." Prostitutes are people who engage in sexual activities with different people and sometimes take money from their customers after satisfying their sexual pleasure. For Effia to be addressed as both a wife and a wench indicates the simultaneous hatred and attraction the European has for the Black female body. Such attitude reflects the psychological inconsistency and character instability and, therefore, untrustworthiness of the European enslaver.

The whole experience at the Castle is a full of contradictions and ironic twists. When Esi and other characters are introduced in the second chapter, readers confirm the Castle is not only a chronotope of love, freedom, and solace but pain, torture, and violence. The life of Effia as an African wife to James Collins is contrasted with Esi, an African slave, in the same Castle. As Osei-Tutu opines, there is the stark contrast between what he describes as "eerie, suffocating slave dungeons below and the open, airy whitewashed "civilized white spaces" above consisting of a

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residential area, school, churches, and facilities with good drinking water all gently buffeted by fresh sea breeze" (4). The cries Effia hears during her tour with James in the Castle are also given attention though James conceals that there are slaves in the dungeons beneath his residence. When Effia and other African wives meet outside of the Castle to converse, there is confirmation of dungeons where Africans are kept as slaves:

> "My husband comes up from the dungeons stinking like a dying animal," Eccoah said softly. They all looked away. No one ever mentioned the dungeons. "He comes to me smelling like feces and rot and looking at me like he has seen a million ghosts, and he cannot tell if I am one of them or not. I tell him he must wash before he touches me and sometimes he does, but sometimes he pushes me to the floor and pushes into me like he has been possessed." … "There are people down there, you know," she said. "There are women down there who look like us, and our husbands must learn to tell the difference." (24-25)

Here, the use of simile in drawing a comparison between Eccoah husband's stinking body (after his visit to the dungeons) to dead animals/ "feces" connotes decay, putrefaction, and an overwhelming, offensive odour. The dungeon is not pleasant to be at all and this reveals the harsh treatments that were meted on Africans who were kept in the dungeons as slaves. The first paragraph of the chapter titled *Esi* reveals the nature of the dungeon and the conditions of some characters:

> THE SMELL WAS UNBEARABLE. In the corner, a woman was crying so hard that it seemed her bones would break from her convulsions. This was what they wanted. The baby had messed itself, and Afua, its mother, had no milk. She was naked, save the small scrap of fabric the traders had given her to wipe her nipples when they leaked, but they had miscalculated. No food for mother meant no food for baby. The baby would cry soon, but the sound would be absorbed by the mud walls, subsumed into the cries of the hundreds of women who surrounded it. (28)

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Here, readers picture the harsh conditions of an African slave woman and her child who is breastfeeding. The baby bringing out waste products means he will be hungry soon and will start to cry but the enslaved mother would have no milk to feed it. The mud of the walls would also absorb the baby's cry for food and with this, it could be noted that the life in the dungeon becomes unhealthy for the child due to excessive filth. In effect, the baby becomes equally enslaved and not likely to survive the inhumane conditions in the dungeon.

When the narrative shifts its focus to Effia's half-sister, Esi, it vividly underscores the harsh conditions within the slave dungeons. Esi, having spent two weeks in the women's dungeon at Cape Coast and celebrating her fifteenth birthday there (28), stands as a stark contrast to the privileged background she hails from. As the daughter of Maame and Big Man Kwame Asare, renowned as the best warrior in the Asante nation, Esi's familial wealth and status are evident. Big Man, even at the age of twenty-five, presides over a household with five wives and ten children, hosting elaborate feasts that last for multiple nights. The community's respect for Big Man further emphasizes Esi's family's prosperity (31). However, as Esi recollects these idyllic memories, the narrative reveals a stark difference when it transitions to her life in the dungeon. Despite her comfortable upbringing, the Castle becomes a haunting reminder that Hell, too, is a realm of recollection. Esi's attempts to escape the grim reality through memories of her father's house are thwarted by the Castle, turning her blissful recollections into a metaphorical fall – "passed through the mind's eye and falls to the ground like a rotten mango." The description of the dungeon's mud walls equalizing time, shrouding it in perpetual darkness, further amplifies the oppressive atmosphere. The narrator depicts the degrading conditions within the dungeon through occasional overcrowding, where "so many bodies [are] stacked into the women's dungeon that they all had to lie, stomach down so that women could be stacked on top of them." This powerful imagery

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exposes the dungeon as a repugnant and malevolent chronotope, stripping away human dignity. The use of this imagery invites readers to contemplate the profound impact of the Castle on individuals, transcending it from a mere physical space to a symbolic representation of the deprivation of human dignity endured by those trapped within its confines.

When the narrator shifts to a soldier who enters the dungeon, it is evident that the dungeon is suffocating especially when the soldier holds his nose “to keep him from vomiting” (29). When he begins to speak and sensing that the women in the dungeon do not understand him, he steps into the feces while cursing, takes Afia’s baby from her and when Afia begins to cry, she slaps her to keep quiet. Tansi, another slave, is convinced that the baby is going to be killed. Readers are informed of how some slaves ended up in the dungeons during a conversation between Tansi and Esi. Tansi narrates that Afia is sold into slavery because her “baby was conceived before Afua’s marriage ceremony” so as a form of punishment, she is sold to the slave traders. Tansi also ends up in the dungeon as an enslaved because she is captured by Northerners on her marriage bed while her husband was off fighting a war. As Paul Lovejoy emphasizes that some Africans were sold as slaves due to some crimes they committed in their societies while others were also captured during war, Gyasi also accounts of such events in *Homegoing*.

The narrator further recounts the treatment meted on some of the slaves by soldiers as new slave women are brought into the Castle and how the slaves are packed into the prisonlike dungeon:

> It was one of those days. Esi was kicked to the ground by one of the soldiers, his foot at the base of her neck so that she couldn’t turn her head to breathe anything but the dust and detritus from the ground. The new women were brought in, and some were wailing so hard that the soldiers smacked them unconscious. They were piled on top of the other women, their bodies deadweight. When the smacked ones came to, there were no more tears. Esi could feel the woman on top of her peeing. Urine traveled between both of their legs. (30-31)

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The vivid description of the dungeon as a chronotope of hardship is encountered when many women slaves are brought in. The enslaved women do not even have a toilet room nor a bathroom to clean and wipe themselves of bloodstains during menstruation. They sleep and defecate in this same dungeon. For instance, Esi notices that the waste in the dungeon is up to her ankles such that she struggles to catch her breath. She tries to adjust her shoulders so that she could get space to rest. She also finds the black pendant her mother gives her during the capture buried in "a river of shit in the dungeon" (46). Gyasi's use of faecal imagery further presents the dungeon as a chronotope full of disgust and unsuitable for humans to live there even for a minute.

The soldiers' frequent appearance in the dungeons, selecting women for sexual exploitation, prompts a collective cry of anger and fear from about "a hundred and fifty women." This reaction reflects the profound emotional impact of the soldiers' actions, underscoring the pervasive sense of dread and powerlessness experienced by the confined women. Esi's unsuccessful resistance against a soldier who singles her out for exploitation exposes the disturbing convergence of physical weakness and systemic abuse within the slave dungeon. The narrator states:

> Esi was so unused to light that now it blinded her. She couldn't see where she was being taken. When they got to his quarters, he gestured toward a glass of water, but Esi stood still. He gestured to the whip that sat on his desk. She nodded, took one sip of the water, and watched it slip out of her numb lips. He put her on a folded tarp, spread her legs, and entered her. She screamed, but he placed his hand over her lips, then put his fingers in her mouth. Biting them only seemed to please him, and so she stopped. She closed her eyes, forcing herself to listen instead of see, pretending that she was still the little girl in her mother's hut on a night that her father had come in, that she was still looking at the mud walls, wanting to give them privacy, to separate herself. Wanting to understand what kept pleasure from turning into pain. When he had finished, he looked horrified, disgusted with

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> her. As though he were the one who had had something taken from him. As though he were the one who had been violated. Suddenly Esi knew that the soldier had done something that even the other soldiers would find fault with. He looked at her like her body was his shame.
>
> Once night fell and the light receded, leaving only the darkness that Esi had come to know so well, the soldier snuck her out of his quarters. She had finished her crying, but still, he shushed her. He wouldn't look at her, only forced her along, down, down, back to the dungeons.
>
> Esi could do nothing but replay her time in the light. She had not stopped bleeding since that night. A thin trickle of red traveled down her leg, and Esi just watched it. She no longer wanted to talk to Tansi. She no longer wanted to listen to stories. (47-48)

Rape and the transatlantic slave trade were interwoven. Rape became a powerful tool that many slave officials, slave masters, and slave officials who came to the West African Coast to trade used to satisfy their sexual desire. According to bell hook[37] rape was used "as a common method of torture slavers used to subdue recalcitrant black women" (18). This assertion suggests that slave officials used rape to satisfy their sexual pleasures. The reference to her diminished strength due to malnutrition and the lingering effects of past beatings underscores the significant impact of these conditions on her ability to defend herself. The fact that she cannot summon the strength to even spit at the soldier highlights the overall vulnerability of individuals like Esi in the face of unrelenting oppression. The soldier's triumph in subduing Esi and taking her to his quarters for sexual assault underscores the harsh reality of power imbalances within this context. This specific incident serves as a poignant illustration of the dehumanizing consequences of systemic violence, where the physical and emotional toll on individuals becomes an instrument for further exploitation. The soldiers leave both mental and physical pain to the confined women. Readers are

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[37] See *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*

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also become struck by Esi's tragic rape experience in one of the soldier's quarters. The narrator highlights how shameful she feels after her rape and how the images of the rape keep flashing in her mind that she refuses to talk to her enslaved friend, Tansi, and refuses to listen to the stories that are shared among themselves. As Ken Donovan puts it, rape became a symbol of "dominance, control and power" of Europeans of Africans, thus, it becomes a fundamental theme in most slave narratives. Oluyomi Oduwobi affirms: "no story is complete without alluding, implicitly or explicitly, to the sexual assaults on female slaves that occurred from their points of capture in their respective villages to their death during the Middle Passage." Murphy also adds that rape and brutal abuse of women by the governors of the castles is repeated by tour guards of the slave castles in West Africa (16). In *Sexuality and Slavery*, Thomas Forest suggests that rape can serve as a metaphor of slavery because both violated masculinity of black men and women and deny them the ability to shield the vulnerable female dependents (124). Enslavement, thus, made Africans inferior while giving the whites dominance and control over the Africans. Gyasi's *Homegoing* as a neo-slave narrative portrays the castle as a physical space where rape is represented as a violent act that is meted on the enslaved African women to eliminate their sexual autonomy which is the ability of women to decide who they want have sex with as well as where they want to have it. In effect, the women who are raped are psychologically, physically and spiritually drained in themselves.

Quey, born to James Collins and Effia, undergoes a privileged and sheltered upbringing within some sections in the Castle, protecting him from the harsh realities of the dungeon. His friendship with Cudjo Sackee, the son of a chief involved in the slave trade, is established through playful activities within the Castle. At the age of fourteen, Quey's life takes a pivotal turn as he is sent to England for education, marking a significant shift in his experiences. During the sea

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journey, Gyasi employs flashbacks to vividly portray Quey's emotional turmoil, contrasting the haunting conditions on the lower deck, where slaves are confined, with the unsettling contrast of the ship's exterior. This narrative choice serves to illuminate the profound impact of the transatlantic slave trade, making readers confront the harsh conditions faced by slaves on the ships. As the narrative progresses, Quey returns from England after James Collins' death, but he realises his life in the Castle is not full of the blissful memories of the friendship he has with Cudjo and the love from his mother and father. When his Junior Officer rank in the Castle is reduced to the collector of slaves in the bush closed to Abeeku's village, Quey expresses his disgust for such a role. The weather that surrounds the bush is hot and humid. The narrator's vivid description of sweating and discomfort, imagining mosquitoes crawling on their body, creates a stark contrast to the pleasant memories of the cool breeze around the Castle (52). As a son of a governor who has been educated in England and raised among the whites in the Cape Coast Castle, Quey thinks he is supposed to have an easier life that will take him away from slavery activities. However, he has no choice than to fulfil the responsibilities given to him by his father. This makes him a perpetrator of slavery. Through his character, readers get to know some of the conditions of the slaves as they are brought into the cellars in the castles: "He pictured the prisoners being brought into the cellars by the tens and twenties, their hands and feet bound and bleeding. He wasn't made for this" (52). The cellars are the dungeons. Upon all Quey's time in the Castle, he now notices the treatment given to the enslaved are harsh by stating that he is not made for the job of seeing humans bleed due to chains. His role hence reveals the Cape Coast Castle as a chronotope of torture.

The last chapter of the book introduces Marcus as the last descendant of Esi's family branch. When Marjorie, Effia's last descendant, convinces Marcus to visit the Cape Coast Castle

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in Ghana, he observes a sharp contrast between the outward paintings of the Castle against the inner designs:

> If ever there was a place to believe was haunted, this was it. From the outside, the Castle was a glowing white. Powder white, like the entire thing had been scrubbed down to gleaming, cleansed of any stains. Marcus wondered who made it shine like that, and why. When they entered, things started to look dingier. The dirty skeleton of a long-past shame that held the place together began to show itself in blackening concrete, rusty-hinged doors. (298)

From the extract above, it could be noted that the painting of the Castle presents it as a serene and peaceful place one would ever doubt slaves are kept and are treated harshly. As he enters and learns more about the history through the tour guard, the darkness and the faint smell in the dungeons makes him makes him sick. It can be deduced that the Castle as chronotope presents pains and sufferings of the enslaved Africans and also the shame Africans must bear for allowing such artefacts to be built on their land.

Gyasi's use of flashback in sharing the brutalities and the traumatic impact of the enslaved on the slave ship is worth noting in the chapter titled *Ness*. Esi and her daughter, Ness are working as slaves on Thomas Allan Stockham's plantation and their painful memories as they are transported on the ship to the Atlantic are accounted:

> Ness's mother, Esi, had been a solemn, solid woman who was never known to tell a happy story. Even Ness's bedtime stories had been ones about what Esi used to call "the Big Boat." Ness would fall asleep to the images of men being thrown into the Atlantic Ocean like anchors attached to nothing: no land, no people, no worth. In the Big Boat, Esi said, they were stacked ten high, and when a man died on top of you, his weight would press the pile down like cooks pressing garlic. (70)

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Bedtime stories are mostly with happy endings and are supposed to coax babies to sleep but in this passage, it is evident that Esi's title for the bedtime stories "the Big Boat" represents the slave ship which only brought pain to Africans and will affect Ness' sleep. The stories that are narrated inform readers of the experiences of slaves as they are transported to the New World via the slave ship. Historians' account on the Ship *Brooks* and *Zong* inform readers on how slaves were packed on top of each other and how some were thrown into the Atlantic Ocean as a result of death or ailment. These bedtime stories do not make Ness have a peaceful sleep because the horrible images of humans being lying on top of each other, and some being thrown into the sea rather bring discomfort. The other slaves on the Big Boat even call Esi "Frownie" because she never smiles. The stories similarly tell readers the traumatic impact of the Middle Passage because Esi herself cannot share stories full of happiness with Ness and cannot live a happy life.

3.3.2 Hell and Thomas Allan Stockham's Alabama Plantations as Lived Spaces

Throughout the chapter title *Ness*, Gyasi makes references to three slave plantations through flashbacks, metaphors, and biblical allusions. The opening lines of the chapter give readers a hint at the harsh conditions of slaves on this plantation:

> THERE WAS NO DRINKING GOURD, no spiritual soothing enough to mend a broken spirit. Even the Northern Star was a hoax. Every day, Ness picked cotton under the punishing eye of the southern sun. She had been at Thomas Allan Stockham's Alabama plantation for three months. Two weeks before, she was in Mississippi. A year before that, she was in a place she would only ever describe as Hell. (70)

From the Biblical perspective, Hell is termed as a place designed for Satan, the devil, and other angels who disobeyed God. Hell is described as a "place of weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth,

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darkness, flames, burning, torments, and everlasting punishment"[38]. The actions of the masters of the slave plantations make them equals with the biblical devil because the punishments they give to the slaves are similar to what Hell offers. For instance, on another plantation in Mississippi, Esi receives five lashes for every Twi word she says (71). Ness says it is because the slaves are only allowed to learn and speak English, the slave master's language. Esi is also whipped for calling Ness, "Maame", the name of her own mother:

> Before the lashes, her mother had called her Maame, after her own mother, but the master had whipped Esi for that too, whipped her until she cried out "My goodness!"—the words escaping her without thought, no doubt picked up from the cook, who used to say it to punctuate every sentence. (71)

From the extract, it is evident that the whites constantly demonstrated their cruel supremacy over the blacks. Cañellas Bosch and Joana Maria,[39] for instance, note that forcing Ness and Esi to speak a different language rather than their own language suggests that language, as an essential unit of one's cultural identification, has been taken away from them (8).

The harsh conditions on the Hell plantation portray the setting as a chronotope of torture. For instance, Ness views the heat from the sun as she picks cotton as a punishment because it makes the "scorched cotton… hot" and this burns the palms of the field slaves who touch them. Even though the small white puff of cotton is burning in her hands, she is not to let it fall because her slave master whom she refers to as "the Devil" is always watching her (74). In *The Shadow of Slavery*, Nathaniel Welnhofer suggests that the slaves' reference to the plantation owner as the devil illustrates "the fear that the slave masters instilled in the slaves" (8). Welnhofer additionally

[38] Anni, Judkins, "Unquenchable Fire", 28; *NIV,* Matthew 8.12; 12.42; 13.50; 25.30, Isaiah 33.14, Luke 16.23.
[39] "Taking Away Your Name Is the First Step": The Transgenerational Trauma of Slavery and the Shaping of Identity in Yaa Gyasi's Homegoing." 2020. University of Belearic Islands, Thesis.

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opines that the whites pushed Christianity on African slaves but instead of serving themselves as good Christians, they rather "mirrored the actions of the devil" by torturing enslaved Africans (8). It can be added that the linking of the devil and Hell to slave plantations represents the cruelty of the slave trade on Africans who suffered the most. Also on Hell plantation, the slave Sam is whipped in front of everyone "until the blood on the ground is high enough to bathe a baby" when he engages in a fight with another slave. The exaggerative effect of this expression also depicts the torture and pain associated with slavery. Ness takes the blame and she is also beaten until "the whip snaps off her back like pulled taffy" (81) when her forced husband, Sam, destroys the slave quarters. Gyasi's use of biblical allusion, metaphor, imagery, and hyperbole also reveals the plantation as a place of torture and with conditions that are savagery and full of pain just like what Hell represents in the Bible.

As events unfold in the text, readers are moved to the present time when Ness is working in the field on Thomas Allan Stockham's Alabama cotton plantation. She has been there for three months. On Stockham plantation, The glass of water is even measured for the slaves (72). When the slave, TimTam, tries to engage Ness in a conversation, Ness only tells TimTam he asks a lot of questions. The conditions of the plantation have taken away Ness' interest in any friendly relationship with others. After spending years with her solemn mother, Esi, Ness realizes she never learns how to smile. When an older woman tries to talk to her in the fields, Ness attempts a smile, but it appears hesitant and fleeting, connected to the lingering sadness that once burdened her mother's heart (72). Tom Allan and Margaret are surprised by Ness's beauty, deeming her too attractive for the role of a field slave at first sight. However, when Ness is brought naked before Tom Allan and his wife Sarah Stockham, Sarah faints upon seeing the scars on Ness's body. This abrupt reaction highlights the stark disparity between initial superficial judgments and the

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profound impact of the visible scars, prompting a deeper reflection on the dehumanizing effects of slavery:

> Margaret rushed her into the back room and left in search of field clothes, and Ness stood in the center of that room, running her hands along her body, reveling in her ugly nakedness. She knew it was the intricate scars on her bare shoulders that had alarmed them all, but the scars weren't just there. No, her scarred skin was like another body in and of itself, shaped like a man hugging her from behind with his arms hanging around her neck. They went up from her breasts, rounded the hills of her shoulders, and traveled the full, proud length of her back. They licked the top of her buttocks before trailing away into nothing. Ness's skin was no longer skin really, more like the ghost of her past made seeable, physical. She didn't mind the reminder. Margaret came back in the room with a headscarf, a brown top that covered the shoulders, a red skirt that went all the way to the floor. She watched Ness put them on. "It a shame, really. For a second, I's thought you might a been prettier than me." She clucked her tongue twice and left the room. (72)

The scars on Ness' body are as a result of the whips she receives on the Hell cotton plantation. The comparison of Ness' scarred skin with a man hugging her from behind while his hands hang around her neck depict an image of an unpreventable trauma that Ness must bear forever. Indeed, for Sarah to faint at the sight of the scars suddenly creates an image of the horrors of slavery. This further reveals the torture and pain that were associated with the slave trade and the way the black body was just traumatized to the extent that their bodies became far away from beauty and human dignity.

3.4 Chronotopes of Resistance

Though slave owners demanded total submission from the enslaved, Colin A. Palmer in *Passageways: An Interpretive History of Black America* notes that that "unconditional submission" was, understandably, not easily achieved. (62). The slave owners had methods of preventing any resistance from the captives. These included whippings, murder, and putting enslaved in chains in

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shackles. The enslaved also "differ[ed] remarkably in their reactions to pain and suffering." Their resistant acts range from revolts, abortion, destroying of properties, and even suicide in their quest for a "sense of autonomy" and "out of servitude." This section analyses various acts of resistance in certain chronotopes in *Homegoing*.

3.4.1 Cape Coast Castle

Gyasi's *Homegoing* presents various acts of resistance in various chronotopes. These include Cape Coast Castle, Hell and Stockham plantations**.** Tears serve as a window to reveal some of the female slaves' innermost desires to share their sufferings in the chronotopes and to also resist slavery. As Afia hears Tansi shares her story of how she is captured Esi, tears drop. The slaves who are trapped inside cry so their voices might be heard by whoever is present. Though the narrator states that it is difficult to hear the cries of the women in the dungeons because the sounds are absorbed by the walls (31), the women never stop weeping. The women could "cry until the clay below them turned to mud." One night, Esi dreams that "if they all cried in unison, the mud would turn to river, and they would be washed away into the Atlantic" (29). The dream becomes a symbol of escape as it provides death as an option to end the harsh treatments in the dungeons.

Suicide became one of the forms of resistance that was used during the slave trade. Thomas Jefferson asserts that some slaves starved themselves, jumped overboard while aboard the ship and others took hold of their breath "to try and smolder" (cited in Vivian Yenika Agbaw 86). Gyasi similarly employs suicide as a form of resistance against the harsh treatments some slaves receive while in the Cape Coast Castle. Afua is a character whose baby is taken away from her by soldier. Esi and Afia hear her weeping most of the time for the loss of her baby and also to share her suffering. In order not to suffer anymore, Afua opts for suicide to end her predicament. The narrator tells: "…by morning, Afua had died. Her skin was purple and blue, and Esi knew that she

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had held her breath until Nyame took her" (30). This evidence shows how determined Afua is to save herself from cruelty of the slave trade.

3.4.2 Resistance on the Hell Plantation

In the oppressive environment of the Hell Plantation, the pervasive desire for freedom and resistance against the brutal conditions faced by slaves is a recurring theme in Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*. The plantation becomes a ground for various acts of defiance, with characters such as Ness, Sam, and Akua employing varied strategies to resist the dehumanizing authority of the Devil, the slave owner. A notable demonstration of resistance is seen in the forced marriages arranged by the Devil to assert control over rebellious slaves, as evidenced by Ness being wedded to Sam against their will. Despite the physical and psychological torment inflicted upon Sam for his steadfast refusal to conform to the Devil's demands, Ness perceives him as an indomitable 'African beast' who refuses to be subjugated (80). The metaphor here suggests that Sam is full of strength and have an untamed spirit, hence Gyasi uses him as a symbol to challenge Europeans' constant authority over Africans. Also, Sam's resilience, despite nightly beatings and lashings, reveals the strength of the human spirit in resisting the erasure of identity through imposed language acquisition.

The transformation in Sam's demeanor following the birth of their son, Kojo, underscores the profound impact of familial bonds in fueling the resistance against the plantation's tyranny. The desire to secure a better future for their child becomes a catalyst for Ness and Sam to contemplate and plan their escape, facilitated by Aku's previous success in liberating infants from the clutches of the Devil. Despite the inherent dangers and risks associated with fleeing, Ness and Sam recognize the necessity of breaking free from the hellish boundaries of the Devil's plantation for the sake of their son, Kojo (85). The night of their escape, marked by Ness's determination despite leaving a trail of blood from her cracked feet, epitomizes the determined spirit of those

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yearning for freedom. Although their escape is impeded, the impact of Ness and Sam's courageous attempt reverberates beyond their capture. Through convincing the Devil that Kojo is dead, Ness sacrifices herself to ensure her son's liberation while Sam faces a public hanging. Their brave actions, albeit ending in tragedy for the African couple, serve as potent indicators of resistance. The narrative of Ness and Sam, while not resulting in personal emancipation, becomes a symbol of defiance that saves their son and Aku from the cruel fate of the Hell Plantation. In essence, their story becomes a testament to the resistance of the human spirit in the face of systemic oppression and serves as a expressive exploration of the multifaceted nature of resistance in the context of enslavement.

3.4.3 Stockham's Plantation

An act of resistance against the racial hierarchy on Stockham plantation is exemplified during Ness's courageous defense of Pinky against Tom Jr.'s unjust punishment:

> Tom Jr., who had never been much for gallantry, decided to try it just then for his sister's sake. "Well, apologize to Mary!" he said to Pinky. The two were the same age, though Pinky was about a foot taller. Pinky opened her mouth, but no words came out. "She sorry," Ness said quickly. "I wasn't talking to you," Tom Jr. said. Mary had stopped crying and was staring at Pinky intently. "Tom, you know she don't talk," Mary said. "It's all right, Pinky." "She'll talk if I tell her to talk," Tom Jr. said, shoving his sister. "Apologize to Mary," he repeated. The sun was high and hot that day. Indeed, Ness could see that the two wet drops on Mary's dress had already dried. Pinky, eyes welling with tears, opened her mouth again and a wave of hiccups came out, frantic and loud. Tom Jr. shook his head. He went into the house while everyone watched and returned with the Stockham cane. It was twice his length, made of a dull birchwood. It wasn't thick, but it was so heavy that Tom Jr. could hardly hold it with both of his hands, let alone the one it would take to snap it back. "Speak, nigger," Tom Jr. said, and Margaret, who had long since stopped her ladling, ran into the house crying, "Ooh, Tom Junior, I'm gon' find yodaddy!" Pinky was sobbing and hiccuping all at once, the hiccups blocking whatever speech she might have given.

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> Tom Jr. lifted the cane in his right hand with great effort and tried to snap it over his shoulder, but Ness, who was standing behind him, caught the tip of it in her hand. It tore through her palms as she tugged so hard that Tom Jr. fell to the ground. She dragged him half an inch. Tom Allan appeared on the porch with Margaret, who was breathless and clutching her chest. "What's this?" he asked. Tom Jr. started crying. "She was gonna hit me, Daddy!" he said. (78-79)

The excerpt above reveals instances of resistance challenging the racial hierarchy at Stockham plantation, demonstrated through Ness' bold intervention to protect Pinky from Tom Jr.'s unfair treatment. Tom Jr.'s use of racial slurs, inherited from observing his white parents' behaviour towards African slaves, emphasizes the discriminatory status imposed on the black community. Despite the potential consequences for defending Pinky, Ness refuses to stand idly by, preventing Tom Jr.'s attempt to harm Pinky. Moreover, Tom Allan's recollection of Ness's scars serves as a deterrent, hinting at the potential repercussions for mistreating a slave who may have a history of resistance. These acts collectively symbolise a theme of resistance against oppressive structures prevalent on the Stockham plantation.

3.5 Theme of Healing in *Homegoing*

As Cassie Premo Steele in *We Heal from Memory*, "to heal from memory also implies a connection between "our dreams" and "our histories" to see how image and fears of our most personal visions are related to and constructed by collective histories" (8). Steele extends her argument by stating that memorizing and reconstructing "personal and collective traumatic memories" elicit transformation and healing. Per this assertion, it would be significant to analyse some metaphors and symbols that carry the memories of pain and suffering of the two family lines to enable them heal in specific chronotopes.

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3.5.1 Fire, Black Stone Pendant, and Water

The theme of healing in the selected chronotopes can be analysed successfully when Gyasi's use of metaphors and symbols is given careful attention. These metaphors or symbols are fire, the black stone pendant, and water. As Passalacqua Camille puts it, these connectors or elements become "reflection[s] of how memories of trauma pass[ed] to next generation are "perpetuated by the family member's collective memory" (cited in Bosch and Maria 13). Also, the chronotopes and these elements do not only represent the trauma but provide healing to characters. When the reader journeys into both the present and the past time in the novel, the significance of these elements and the chronotopes in representing both trauma and healing are noted.

Fire becomes a vital symbol throughout the novel. At the beginning of the novel, "a fire raged through the woods" of Cobbe Otcher's compound the night Effia Otcher, is born (3). This fire is set by Maame, Effia's mother, as a form of escape from enslavement by a Big Man who rapes her. Fire becomes a symbol of pain as it leaves Maame no option than to leave her first daughter, Effia, with Baaba. When Maame is married to another Big Man in another village, her daughter, Esi accounts how terrified Maame is at the sight of fire, and constantly, she warns Esi not to joke with it. Baaba gets Effia's suitor, Abeeku, convinced that Effia might be cursed by the fire set by her mother so there is no need for him to marry her. Cobbe Otcher, Effia's father, also becomes swayed that "that memory of the fire that burned, then fled, would haunt him, his children, and his children's children for as long as the line continued" (3) and this "premonition of the dissolution and destruction of the family lineage" (16) begins after Effia has been married to James Collins. Cobbe tries to repress this trauma by telling Baaba not to ever speak of it again, but this is not possible. The two half-sisters Esi and Effia and their generations are haunted by their past and must encounter them before they heal. Three of Effia's generation, Akua, Yaw, and Marjorie are the descendants who suffer the most. While Akua is happily married to Mr. Asamoah, the fire

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resurfaces in every aspect of her life. It begins from the day she hears "a whiteman being swallowed alive by fire" (177). Her nightmares are constantly filled with a firewoman in rage looking for her children:

> In her dreams, the fire was shaped like a woman holding two babies to her heart. The firewoman would carry these two little girls with her all the way to the woods of the Inland and then the babies would vanish, and the firewoman's sadness would send orange and red and hints of blue swarming every tree and every bush in sight. (178)

Akua's recurring nightmares, fueled by the relentless rage of the firewoman mourning her lost children, compel her to modify her sleeping positions strategically. Sleeping flat on her back or stomach becomes a defensive measure, preventing the haunting dreams from infiltrating through her growing ear and embedding themselves in her mind (178). The firewoman's haunting presence transcends the dream world, as Akua hears her voice during these nocturnal encounters, evoking fear upon awakening. Despite the evident trauma, Nana Serwah, Akua's mother-in-law, remains oblivious to the emotional impact, perceiving Akua's fixation on fire as mere distraction from her domestic duties. A critical analysis of one of Akua's dreams of the firewoman portrays fire as a symbol of pain and punishment of the family line that is indirectly involved in slavery:

> In dreamland, Akua walked to the edge of the rolling ocean. She dipped her toe into the water so cool she felt she could taste it, like a breeze hitting the back of the throat. Then the breeze turned hot as the ocean caught fire. The breeze from the back of Akua's throat began to swirl, round and round, gathering speed until it could no longer be contained within Akua's mouth, and so she shot it out.
>
> And the spit-out breeze began to move the fiery ocean, dipping down into the depths to collect itself until spiraling wind and fiery ocean became the woman that Akua now felt she knew so well. This time, the firewoman was not angry. She beckoned Akua out onto the ocean, and, though afraid, Akua took her first step. Her feet burned. When she lifted

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> one up she could smell her own flesh wafting from the bottom. Still, she moved, following the firewoman until she led her to a place that looked like Akua's own hut. Now in the firewoman's arms were the two fire children that she had held the first time Akua dreamed of her. They were locked into either arm, head resting on either breast. Their cries were soundless, but Akua could see the sound, floating out of their mouths like puffs of smoke from the fetish man's favored pipe. Akua had the urge to hold them, and she reached out her hands to them. Her hands caught fire, but she touched them still. Soon she cradled them with her own burning hands, playing with the braided ropes of fire that made up their hair, their coal-black lips. She felt calm, happy even, that the firewoman had found her children again at last. And as she held them, the firewoman did not protest. She did not try to snatch them away. Instead, she watched, crying from joy. And her tears were the color of the ocean water in Fanteland, that not-green, not-blue color that Akua remembered from her youth. The color began to gather. Blue and more blue. Green and more green. Until the torrent of tears began to put out the fire in Akua's hands. Until the children began to disappear. (196-197)

Akua wakes up in reality after this dream only to find out that she has set her hut on fire leading to the death of her two daughters and the scarring of her son Yaw. In *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, Caruth Carthy defines trauma as "overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event which occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucination and other intrusive phenomenon" (11). Carthy further observes that trauma might come on the body and comes later as "flashbacks, nightmares and other repetitive phenomena" but in some situations, "the traumatized people live [in] emotional anguish for a long time or maybe forever because it is difficult to cure the wound of the mind" (94). Visser similarly adds that "trauma [thus] denotes the reoccurrence or repetition of the stressor event through memory, dreams, narrative and/or various symptoms…" (8) Given these two assertions, the reoccurrence of fire in Akua's nightmares suggests that she is traumatized by

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an element that is haunting her family line. The death of her two children also suggests that she has given her two children to the firewoman whose children vanish in her dream (Hinfeelar 39). The firewoman in the dream represents Maame, her ancestor, since she starts a fire to save herself and the other people in the village from enslavement. The two children who disappear and comes back into Maame's arms are Esi and Effia who have been separated by slavery. The fire becomes a symbol of slavery (Bosch and Maria 14) since it leads to the separation of the two family lines and constantly haunts their generation. The ocean catching fire also represents the sea's role in the transportation of the enslaved Africans to the Atlantic and the brutality attached to it. The tears quenching the fire in Akua's arm foreshadows the bond that exists between two of the last descendants of each family line who are Marcus and Marjorie.

Yaw, the only surviving son of Akua, is also haunted by the family's trauma unknowingly. He does not even get a wife to marry early because the women think their children will be ugly. He has heard many stories concerning his scar and does not know the truth behind it. His father, Mr. Asamoah plans on telling him, but he dies when Yaw leaves for school. Believing the many stories that surround his scar, he refuses to even reply to the letters from her mother requesting his visit to her in Edweso (228). When Esther, Yaw's househelp and later wife, convinces Yaw of the need to go and see her mother, Yaw tries to find out the truth. Her mother's embrace during his visit makes him cry "more tears than he had ever cried before" (239, 240). Yaw asks his mother the story behind his scar and Akua replies: "How can I tell you the story of your scar without first telling you the story of my dreams? And how do I talk about my dreams without talking about my family? Our family?" (240). Akua tells Yaw of how the fetish man's son has helped in interpreting her dreams of a firewoman as a return of an ancestor who has come to reveal to him: "there was evil in their lineage." Akua is convinced of the traumatic effects of slavery on her family line when

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she states "Evil begets evil. It grows. It transmutes, so that sometimes you cannot see that the evil in the world began as the evil in your own home" (242). Though Akua apologizes for making Yaw suffer the consequence, it can be concluded that it is no fault of hers. The fire becomes a motif that haunts her generation because it symbolizes the pain and suffering slavery brings upon her family line hence, the generation pays for it at all cost.

Yaw's daughter, Marjorie, also experiences the trauma in her family's lineage. Her parents, Yaw and Esther, move together with her to Alabama in America. While in school in Alabama, she meets Graham, a German friend. The psychological effect of the fire on Effia's generation becomes evident when Graham lights a cigarette and Marjorie tells him to put the lighter away. Her knowledge of the dreams of the firewoman in her grandmother's dreams and scars on her father's face have made her terrified of fire. She begins to have a fear of the firewoman appearing in her dreams but when these thoughts wane, she feels at ease and believes they will never come back. However, the narrator states "… every so often she could feel her heart catch when she saw fire, as though the firewoman's shadow lurked" (274). Fire becomes an important symbol of slavery that haunts Maame's family line.

Water, also, becomes a significant symbol that reveals the pain associated with slavery and also the healing of descendants Esi's family branch. Marjorie visits her grandmother in her house along the Cape Coast Castle every summer and she confesses: "going to the beach with Old Lady was one of the favourite things in the world to do" (267). As Akua walks with her around the beaches surrounding the Cape Coast Castle, she tells her how their family line began in the Cape Coast Castle and how she used to imagine talking to her ancestors as she takes a walk around the waters surrounding the Castle:

> One day, I came to these waters and I could feel the spirits of our ancestors calling to me. Some were free, and they spoke to me from the sand, but some others were trapped deep,

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deep, deep in the water so that I had to wade out to hear their voices. I waded out so far, the water almost took me down to meet those spirits that were trapped so deep in the sea that they would never be free. When they were living they had not known where they came from, and so dead, they did not know how to get to dry land. (268)

The excerpt here informs readers of the slaves who were thrown overboard while they were shipped to the New World. As a result, their spirits haunt Effia's generation since she indirectly becomes a slave trader herself after marrying James Collins. Effia's marriage to James Collins makes her a perpetrator of slavery because while she enjoys in the Castle, her other half-sister suffers Consequently, her generation bears the traumatic weight of enslavement.

The last descendant of Esi's family line, Marcus, also has his share of the generational trauma. Having been told by his father, Sonny, that "the black people didn't like water because they were brought over on slave ships (284)," Marcus has developed a fear for water and just "didn't care for it." Whereas Marjorie enjoys going to the beach, Marcus does not. The narrator states: "There was something about the smell of the ocean that nauseated him. That wet salt stink clung to his nose and made him feel as though he were already drowning. He could feel it thick in his throat, like brine, clinging to that place where his uvula hung so that he couldn't breathe right" (284). It could be deduced that Marcus' nausea depicts the experiences of the slaves who were thrown into the sea because they couldn't breathe. To Marcus, "the ocean floor was already littered with black men" so there is no need for him to learn how to swim while in college. The imagery attached to the water being littered with black men represents the number of enslaved Africans who were thrown overboard while on the slave ship. Marcus' fear for water grows deeply that even as he showers, he never lifts his face with the fear of being drowned by the "water [that] beats over his head (286). In pursuit of his doctoral degree in Sociology at Stanford, he undertakes a research focus on the convict leasing system, a subject intimately linked to the unjust deprivation of his

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great-grandfather H's years. However, as he delves deeper into the research, he acknowledges the expanding scope of the project, confessing to its lack of progress and effectiveness at a certain point (289). He realizes that there is no way he can talk about his great grand father's life without talking about the history of his family's lineage. Marcus' slow progress (295) on his work coupled with his fear for water indicates the trauma of slavery in his life. His motivation stems from a profound desire to engage in a more intimate study and understanding of his family. In contemplating his family dynamics, he envisions an alternate space—a more complete and expansive family unit, occasionally visualizing this ideal scene in an African hut. This imaginative exercise reflects a poignant longing for a richer ancestral experience, intertwining personal aspirations with cultural roots. The zeal of his body to be healed from this trauma connects Marjorie and him at a party where both tell each other of their fears. Marjorie convinces Marcus to go to Ghana to share her family history with them. In Ghana, they visit the Cape Coast Castle where Marcus learns about how his ancestors were trapped in the dungeons. Marcus feels uneasy and starts to run to the beach while Marjorie follows him to find out what is wrong with him. Marcus sees "two men with dark, gleaming, shoe-polish skin who were building fire with flames that licked out and up, crawling toward the water" (299). There, Marcus watches the water splash up toward his feet and invites Marjorie to join him. On seeing the fire, Marcus remembers Marjorie's fear but persuades her not to worry. The narrator states: "She walked to where he stood, where the fire met water." The anxiety Marcus feels inside the Castle does not fade but on getting closer to the beach, "he knew it was like fire, a wild thing that could be controlled, [and] contained" (300). As Marjorie runs into the "crashing waves of the water and dips her body into her water, Marcus realizes it is his turn to get rid of what he fears most. His movement towards the waters is indeed a remarkable and memorable scene that would stay in the minds of readers for a long time:

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> He closed his eyes and walked in until the water met his calves, and then he held his breath, started to run. Run underwater. Soon, waves crashed over his head and all around him. Water moved into his nose and stung his eyes. When he finally lifted his head from the sea to cough, then breathe, he looked out at all the water before him, at the vast expanse of time and space. He could hear Marjorie laughing, and soon, he laughed too. (300)

As Sylvia Zofia Hartowicz[40] opines "finding access to ancestral stories of trauma and resilience has the potential of allowing healing and transformation on the individual, communal, and collective level" (33). Marcus and Marjorie's visit to the Cape Coast Castle contribute significantly to providing healing to their fears. By splashing the sea water all over their bodies, and going close to the fire, it can be concluded that Marcus and Marjorie share the burden of slavery with their ancestors. The binding together of these two fears between the two-family lines around this chronotope signifies both individual and generational healing.

The black stone pendant is also an important symbol to foreground the separation between the two-family lines as a result of slavery. Maame has carved two of the black stone pendant for her two daughters; Esi and Effia. Baaba gives Effia hers on the day she is married off to James Collins as a "piece" of her mother, Maame, to her (16). Effia's half-brother, Fiifi also confirms to her that it was Maame who leaves the stone Effia wears around her neck (27). Esi's black pendant is given to her by Maame on the day they are attacked by slave raiders while in a village Maame settles after she escapes from enslavement. Maame tells Esi: "I have been keeping this for you...I wanted to give it to you on your wedding day. I—I left one like this for your sister. I left it with Baaba after I set the fire" (42). Whereas James Collins helps Effia to keep hers safe, Esi's pendant is buried in the dungeon in the Cape Coast but on the night she is about to be shipped to the

[40] Hartowicz, Sylvia Z. *Bringing Intergenerational Trauma And Resilience To Consciousness: The Journey Of Healing and Transformation for the Wounded Healer Exploring Ancestral Legacy.* 2018. California Institute of Integral Studies. PhD dissertation.

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Americans, she could not retrieve her black stone pendant. This loss signifies the separation of the family as a result of slavery. Akua goes for this piece of her mother after Effia's death from the new governor in the Castle. It is her visit to the fetish man's son that she is told that it is through the black stone necklace that Akua will get to know about her ancestors and where they come from (241). As Gallego suggests, the black stone indicates the motherly love Maame feels for her two daughters and also identifies Maame as a strong woman "who successfully fought against an unjust situation of enslavement and was able to break free and control her body and life from then onwards" (10). The last of Effia's lineage, Marjorie, gets the black stone pendant after Akua has given it to her son, Yaw. Marjorie grows up with lots of details on the history of her family lineage hence she becomes a carrier of the family's burdened memories. This burden is represented by the black stone pendant because she knows that "it had belonged to Old Lady, and to Abena before her, and to James, and Quey, and Effia the Beauty before that. It had begun with Maame, the woman who had set the great fire. Her father had told her the necklace was part of their family history…" (267). It would be important to note the weight of slavery on Effia's family branch is represented on the psychological level because of the "symbolic weight" of the necklace on her generation. Though Esi's family branch never gets to wear the necklace, they encounter the physical and direct weight of the black stone pendant as Esi and Ness are sold as slaves to work on the plantations. However, when Marjorie puts the necklace around Marcus' neck and says to him "welcome home" while they are at the beach around the Cape Coast Castle, it can be interpreted that Marcus also takes on the burden of his ancestral past. Hinfeelar asserts that Gyasi's use of "weight" as Marcus expresses his surprise, sounds ambiguous because readers cannot decipher how heavy or light the necklace is. Hinfeelar further argues that the heaviness of the necklace may depict the "centuries of trauma" that are attached to it and how it has been passed

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on from one generation to another. The lightness of the necklace also indicates that Marcus and Marjorie have been released from the trauma. For Laundry, she asserts that the gift of the black stone necklace symbolizes Marjorie's connection to her home, and Marcus's "willingness to receive the necklace represents a joining in and acceptance of the multiplicity of black identity" (144, 145). The passing of the necklace to Marcus, the splashing of water on Marcus, and Marjorie's passing by the fire to dip herself in the waters, suggest their connection with the ancestral past as have been suggested by Laundry. Also, these acts represent symbolic victory over the traumatic impact of slavery on the two family branches. As the novel ends with both Marjorie and Marcus laughing together, it can be concluded that individual and generational healing has been established between the two-family lines.

In *Importation, Adaptation, and Creolization of Slave Leisure Forms in the Americans*, Stephen Doster asserts that whenever there was an opportunity for the enslaved to have some leisure time, they engaged themselves in various forms of recreational activities such as storytelling, music, and dance. This enabled the slaves to "break the routine of …harsh daily existence, and at the same time, create social unity with others in bondage" (2). This makes tales an important recreational activity that provided slaves with solace and healing from all the pains slavery brought of them. In *Homegoing*, storytelling becomes an important recreational activity as some characters who are trapped in the dungeons within the Cape Coast Castle use it as a form of entertainment. When the narrator takes readers to the past time into the dungeons when Esi, Tansi, and other slaves are kept, storytelling becomes a therapeutic agent for the slaves. Tansi shares Ghanaian traditional stories such as how Kente cloth came to be part of the Ghanaian culture with the younger ones such as Esi. This enables the captives to entertain themselves while forgetting the dreadful nature of the dungeons (29). The narrator also informs readers that while on the slave

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plantation Ness "had met warm slaves on other plantations, black people who smiled and hugged and told nice stories (71)". This makes storytelling an important activity in representing the theme of healing in slave narratives. From the above discussion, it can be concluded that in *Homegoing,* the theme of resistance and healing are represented. These themes are depicted through the use of metaphors, symbols and characters' actions in chronotopes such as Cape Coast Castle, ships, Hell plantation, and Stockham plantation. These representations inform readers of the significant role that historical items play in neo-slave narratives.

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CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE THEMES OF RESISTANCE AND HEALING IN *AMA A STORY OF THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE*

4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter examined how castles, ships and plantations have been constructed and how their representations reveal themes of resistance and healing in Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*. Manu Herbstein, for instance, foregrounds Ama these physical spaces to portray themes of resistance and healing in his neo-slave narrative, *Ama a Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade*. The present chapter uses Lefebvre's concept of Spatial Triad and Bakhtin's concept of Chronotope to examine the roles and actions of characters in castles, ships, and plantations in Herbstein's *Ama*. Other literary techniques that Herbstein uses to construct the themes of resistance and healing in *Ama* are explored.

4.1 Castle, Ship, and Plantation as Spatial Practices and Conceived Spaces in *Ama*

Considering Lefebvre's theory of spatial triad, spatial practice represents the material /physical objects, activities, roles of people/characters who reside in spatial objects in the real or imaginary world. The conceived spaces are the designs/makeup of the physical spaces as presented by architects (Lefebvre 38-9). As chronotopes, the castles, ships, and plantations are used as specific settings that reveal the social and political worlds in *Ama*. Manu Herbstein gives detailed descriptions of the relationship between characters and chronotopes such as the Elmina Castle, the ship, The Love of Liberty, and the sugar field plantation, Engenho de Cima. This section seeks to analyse how Manu Herbstein uses these chronotopes to explore the themes of resistance and healing in *Ama.*

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4.2 The Elmina Castle as a Spatial Practice and Conceived Space

In *Ama*, castles, ships, plantations are represented as chronotopes through which actions or events occur. Nandzi, the female protagonist, and her friend, Esi are sold into slavery. Other women, men, and children are taken as captives and are to be taken to the Elmina Castle. This historical background informs readers of how Africans were captured and sold as slaves internally or externally. The shores of Elmina are given vivid account as the slaves journey into the Castle:

> A scene of the utmost strangeness and beauty presented itself to them. In the middle distance, row upon row of coconut palms; beyond the palms a strip of white sandy beach; beyond the beach, the great white-flecked expanse of the Atlantic bounded only by the curve of the horizon; above the horizon the paler blue tropical sky decorated with brilliant white fluffy clouds. The breakers rolled in upon the shore with a distant roar. Beyond the breakers, stretching far into the distance were canoes, some moved by sails, some stationary. In the canoes, they saw tiny figures. (135)

The description creates wonderful and pleasant imagery. The ocean became one of the important ways through which ships could sail from Europe to carry goods and slaves to the New World. In contrast to the beautiful and serene appearance of the ocean, Ama notices how the hot sand burns the soles of her bare feet. The pain stemming from the hot sun foreshadows the worst experiences the slaves have in the Castle. Ambassador Akyeampong, the man in charge of trade between the Dutch governance and Asantes, informs Ama and other slaves that the setting, where the Dutch governor lives is referred to as the "Elmina Castle" (136). The narrator describes the setting as a "great white edifice" that sparkles in sunlight and dominates everything else in sight (136). At the first appearance, one would view the Castle as pleasant place to live. With its dominance, it indicates the power or authority of the governor in that space.

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When a guard pulls Ama to a dark narrow passage and locks her inside, another division of the Elmina Castle is read. The dungeon as a chronotope within the Castle is where the slaves are kept before they are finally transported via ships to the Americans. In *The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, Rebecca Shumway asserts that the dungeons were initially designed to store goods brought to Africa to be exchanged for gold. However, when the demand for slaves increased, the dungeons in the castles were converted into slave holds to keep Africans who had been taken as captives. The enslaved were sometimes held in there for months until they were purchased by slave traders (62). The omniscient narrator reveals that the dungeon is a place full of darkness for there is no light or air. All Ama sees as she is in the dungeon is "white of many pairs of eyes." This draws a contrast between the stone floor of the courtyard that is drenched in sunlight while the enslaved are kept in darkness even in daylight. The narrator adds that women are seated "shoulder to shoulder with backs to the walls of the room" and the sound of the cry of a child also reveals that children are also kept in this darkness (138). This description creates an image of how packed the dungeon is.

Other characters in the Castles are also introduced. Pieter de Bruyn is the appointed Director-General of the Elmina Castle. De Bruyn informs Ama that the Dutch took over the Castle from the Portuguese in 1637 and he represents the Assembly of Ten who regulates the United Dutch West India Company" (157) which had its headquarters in "Amsterdam." Herbstein in presenting *Ama* as a historical fiction explores the political struggles that surrounded the slave castles in Ghana among the European countries. The Portuguese almost held the Gold Coast for a century, but the Dutch captured Elmina from them in 1637 and drove them permanently from the coast in 1642. This buttresses Blommaert's assertion that chronotopes evoke political and social worlds that surround a specific setting. On De Bruyn's first appearance, he is seen leaning against

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"one of the plastered arches which framed the second floor balcony" after spending some time at the church in the Castle (143). This also informs readers of some of the divisions in Elmina Castle. The narrator adds that De Bruyn has "sold tens and thousands of slaves and had six hundred locked up in dark and filthy dungeons" (198-9). As a leader of the Castle, his role to sell and transport slaves is achieved. Other activities in the Castle are also revealed when some officers are seen breaking the rules set in the Castle. Though the Company does not permit the senior and junior officers to take any slave as a concubine, the officers flouted this rule. This becomes evident when Pieter tells Sven Jensen: "I hope you have a better selection for me than last week…Emaciated, ugly bitches. I took the best of a bad lot but she turned me off. I sent her back to her hole unused" (144). Some of the Castle guards are also sent to get some of the female slaves so Pieter can do his selection for his Sunday evening. Readers note that there are also courtyards within the white walls of the Castle, and this is where the guards assemble slaves for De Bruyn to make a choice:

> …De Bruyn put the telescope to his eye and focused on the first female slave. Satisfied that the women would give them no trouble today, the guards relaxed; but kept their eyes on Jensen. They could not see De Bruyn, who was concealed in the gloom, but they knew he was there. De Bruyn did not fancy the first woman: she was scrawny and ugly. He examined each female slave in turn. Most of them were dressed in torn and ragged cotton wrappers, wound around the waist or under the arms, with the loose end tucked in to hold it in position. Their heads had been shaved. De Bruyn waved the back of his hand dismissively to Jensen who conveyed the message with a sign to the guards. (144)

The quote above tells a reader of the kind of leader De Bruyn is. Instead of becoming a paragon to his subordinates to follow, he is rather seen breaking the rules in the Castle. It is not surprising his officials also infringe on the rule. Referring to an enslaved as "scrawny and ugly" as well as

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assembling the women in the presence portrays him as a character who has no respect for the African women and his dominance over the enslaved.

Aside the slaves and the governor, there are other characters in the Castle whose roles assist readers in analysing the setting as a spatial practice or a representation of space. Vroom is a guard in the Castle because his Dutch father once worked in the Castle (146). His ragged scarlet trousers portray him as a character of less relevance in the Castle though he is the son of Dutch. Kakraba is also a guard who is instructed to carry a copper basin on his head to Pieter's quarters (147). Hendrick Van Schalkwyk is the Minister of Religion in the Dutch Reformed Church and Chaplain to the European residents of the Elmina Castle (173). He comes to De Bruyn's quarters to drink, eat, play chess, and have conversations with him. His character as Minister of Religion will be discussed in detail in another section.

David Williams is the captain of *The Love of Liberty* (220). In chapter 19 of *Ama*, the narrator informs of his visit to De Bruyn to discuss matters concerning the trade in the Castle. During their tour, the narrator describes for other partitions in the Elmina Castle. There is "orchards and vegetable gardens which lay behind Coenraedsburg;" "Council Chamber" where officials take their meetings; "West Bastion" which is section which provides strong defense for the characters inside the Castle during battle; "fine brass twelve-pounders and other armaments" and "deep arched recesses filled with grilles of iron" for protection against attackers (212). One can conclude that it is the omniscience of the narrator helps readers to critically examine the roles of the characters and to appreciate the physical features of the setting. The narrative style helps readers to provide comprehensive overview of Elmina castle as a spatial practice and conceived space and to view it as a chronotope of power/dominance of some characters over others.

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4.2.1 The Love of Liberty

As Marcus Rediker states, the slave ship is seen as "the material setting and a stage for the enactment of the high human drama of the slave trade" (47). In *Ama*, De Bruyn hints at the cannon shot as a signal of the arrival of a ship to carry slaves (154). The ship, *The Love of Liberty*, becomes the chronotope that is used to transport some of the main slave characters to South America. On Pieter's tour with governor Brew together with Ama on the north bastion of the Elmina castle, the narrator describes *The Love of Liberty* as a "wooden structure with …pulleys and ropes" (213). There is gunwale for protection against external attacks and a ladder which Butcher uses to get into the holds to check on the slaves. The slaves, while still in chains, are allowed to come outside of the hold onto the deck for a few minutes to eat and to enjoy the breeze by using the ladder. The captain of the ship, Captain Williams, also has a cabin for himself while his crew sleeps on the deck no matter the weather. The slaves are overcrowded in the quarters below the deck. The slaves under the command of Butcher, the surgeon, have their clothes stripped off and re-examined before being sent into the ship. The shackles that bind their feet and hands are also examined. For easy identification of the slaves by the crew, "a piece of tin embossed with a unique number [is] fixed to each leg-iron" (268). Knox gives the male slaves a coarse blue cloth and cheap wooden spoon while the women are given a "loin cloth" and "wooden spoon" for these are the only items they are to use throughout their journey to the New World. When Butcher is done with the inspection, the slaves are sent to the centre of the main deck to meet Captain Williams who informs them on what is expected of them:

> I am the Captain of this ship. On this vessel my word is law and subject to no appeal. But I am a just man. I pride myself on my fairness. My crew will tell you that I am a hard and demanding master. That is true. But I do not believe that any of them will accuse me of being unjust. If you follow the rules, you will have no trouble from me. "If you break the rules, if you try to escape, if you refuse to eat, if you raise a hand against any white man,

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> you will feel the full impact of my anger. Tomba, over there, has been punished because he is a stiff-necked fellow and refuses to do what he is told. He has chosen the wrong adversary, I can tell you. I will tame the beast. By the end of this voyage, he will either be as gentle as a lamb or he will be dead. "These two new arrivals have been given a good beating because they tried to escape. That I will not tolerate. If any of you should jump overboard and survive the teeth of the sharks, you will feel the teeth of my cat, I can assure you. You are now in my charge and I will deliver you to your destination, safely and one in piece, come hell or high water. (269)

From the above quote, it could be deduced that Williams being the white captain of the ship exerts his control over the enslaved characters in this chronotope by any means possible. His expectation from the crew and slaves reveals a master-servant relationship where the servants have no power to manage their affairs or lives. This narrative also makes a point on racial ideologies the Europeans have towards the blacks especially as Williams warns the slaves not "to raise a hand against any whiteman." Herbstein, through his novel, therefore, addresses the persistent effects of cultural appropriation of black bodies as readers view the Castle as a spatial practice and a conceived space.

During Ama's walk with Butcher in the holds to cater for the slaves who are sick, the narrator recounts other divisions in the ship:

> Ama observed Butcher carefully. He was a creature of habit. He carried a bunch of large keys on a chain fastened to a ring in his leather belt. With one key he opened the door from the main deck to the female hold; another unlocked the door to the steps which led down to the boys' room and the sick bay; others were for the hatch covers. (301)

The above quote suggests that there are different holds for both females and males and also a sick bay to cater for those who might fall sick. The ship has all that it takes to make one stay on them for days without going too far to search for their needs. However, the experiences of the characters

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are different. The analysis of *The Love of Liberty* as a lived space in another section will reveal the effects of these experiences.

4.2.2 Engenho de Cima

Engenho de Cima can be read as a spatial practice and a conceived if attention is paid to the details the narrator gives for the Engenho de Cima and the roles of the characters in this setting. Captain Williams' first conversation with the new slaves informs readers of the roles of the slaves in the New World: "tilling the soil" (270). This gives a hint that the slaves will be made to work in fields upon their arrival in the New World. Ama and the rest of the slaves in *The Love of Liberty* are sold to various plantation fields in Bahia in Brazil. When Joseph Vasconcellos takes Ama to her plantation owner after her purchase, he tells how the lives of the slaves are ruled by the "beautiful cane" (362) as they walk around one of the plantation fields. His description of the nature of the jobs confirms that Ama is to work on the sugar plantation. The narrator states:

> …clear the land for it; hoe the massapé for it; plant it; weed it; cut it; send it to the mill; mill it; boil the juice; turn it into sugar; pack it; send it to Salvador and from Salvador to Portugal. And then start all over again. Day in day out; week in week out; year in year out. Sugar cane and sugar until the day you die. (362)

There is also a general manager, Jesus Vasconcellos, who works for the Senhor. He assigns new slaves new names for easy identification. For instance, Ama is renamed for the third time in the novel as "One-eye" (369) because she has lost her right eye. Jesus oversees giving the field workers their tasks for the day and makes sure everyone works. In *Ama*, the field workers are also grouped into planters, weeders, and cutters. The overseer sometimes will pair the slaves: "a man to cut and a woman to bundle and load" the canes to be taken to the mill on the plantation (370). Ama is a field slave since she is sent to work on the field while Maria Cabinda is a house slave

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since she is the cook (440). The narrator also recounts for the gathering of other house slaves "infront of the kitchen yard" during one of their morning devotions while the field slaves work on the cane field. These descriptions help reader to classify the Engenho de Cima plantation as a spatial practice and a conceived space.

4.3 Castle, Ship, and Plantation as Lived Spaces (Chronotopes of Torture, Solace, Pain, and Violence)

Lefebvre's concept of lived space has been explained as the "mental inventions, imaginary landscapes … built environment, and material constructs" by artists, writers, and philosophers that allow "new meanings or possibilities for spatial practices[41]" (39). In *Park Spaces: Leisure, Culture and Modernity*, Andrzej Jan Leon Zieleniec adds that Lefebvre's concept of lived space has "the potential for challenging dominant spatial practices and perceptions" through the imaginative use of space (219). As Herbstein places characters in the selected chronotopes, the meanings or events become contestable. Some users or characters of the chronotopes tried various means to redefine the physical spaces that try to oppress them. Herbstein stresses on the torture, pain, shame associated with the chronotopes; Elmina Castle, *The Love of Liberty*, and Engenho de Cima. Also, the various resistance and healing strategies that characters employ to gain their freedom from oppression are portrayed. This section seeks to discuss how Herbstein presents varied themes in *Ama* through the characters' interaction with the selected chronotopes.

4.3.1 Chronotopes of Solace, Torture, Pain, Shame, and Violence in *Ama*

The Elmina Castle

The Elmina Castle is set as a chronotope where characters who are captured as slaves are kept. Upon Ama's and Esi's arrival at the Elmina Castle, they are taken to a dungeon. Ama notices

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[41] Lefebvre 39; Harvey David, "The Conditions of Post Modernity" 218-219.

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how throttling the place is: “The air she inhaled was pervaded with a foul smell of unwashed bodies and old shit and piss.” There is no “single glimmer of light in the dungeon” (138). As she and Esi try to find a spot to sleep, the reader notices how obnoxious the space is:

> When Ama woke, there was not a single glimmer of light in the dungeon. The smell struck her and she wanted to vomit. The air was unpleasantly hot and humid, yet the floor she lay on was cold and damp. She was thirsty and she wanted to piss. She screwed up her eyes but she could see nothing. She could hear the sleep sounds of many women and children. (138)

The narrator recounts how Ama must step on captives’ bodies to reach her spot to sleep because of the darkness in the dungeon (139). The imagery Gyasi creates here is full of disgust and disregard for human dignity. Ama reminisces the wonderful breeze from the salt air outside the Castle as against the choking smell in the dungeon. To her, the dungeon is “a place worse than death” and as a “place for damnation” that it is not even suitable for her to communicate with her ancestors and to the ghost of her dead boyfriend, Itsho (138). It can be noted from the above narration that the dungeon is spiteful and is never an appropriate space for adults let alone children.

Having been selected as a concubine of the governor for a day is not the only burden Ama carries but the experiences she goes through before being taken to Pieter’s quarters is worth noting. Ama stands naked while her legs are forcefully open apart before Vroom inserts his index finger into her vagina to check if she is qualified to be concubine. De Bruyn, on seeing Ama through his telescope “felt his rising penis straining against the tight trousers of his dress uniform.” Discerning his lustful desires towards Ama, De Bruyn prays to God to forgive him of his carnal desires (146-7). This narrative points out that there was no respect for the black female bodies and their dignity during slavery. Herbstein, in addressing this, brings to focus the racial ideologies against Africans during slavery.

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The portrayal of sexual encounters within the narrative serves as a lens through which the dehumanizing effects of rape are explored, with Esi experiencing brutal degradation and Ama navigating a complex dynamic of coercion and privilege. Before the selection process, Esi discloses to Ama the harrowing details of her rape by Jensen, emphasizing the brutal nature of the assault and the subsequent devaluation of her humanity, likened to being treated "like a dog" (145). This comparison underscores the profound degradation inflicted upon Esi. When sent back to the dungeon, her anguished cries reflect the silence surrounding the traumatic experiences of the enslaved. In contrast, Ama's encounter with Governor Pieter reveals a different facet of sexual dynamics. Despite initial resistance, she becomes a concubine, enjoying privileges in the de Bruyn's quarters. This narrative shift highlights the power dynamics and privileges associated with sexual encounters in the context of slavery. Ama's life in the quarters is juxtaposed against the dismal conditions of the dungeon, emphasizing the stark contrast between darkness and misery versus calmness and peace (152). Ama's sexual experiences with Pieter further challenge the conventional master-servant relationship, presenting an unusual equality that stands in contrast to her encounter with Abdullah. The distinction between her encounters reflects the varying manifestations of power within the chronotope of the narrative. Additionally, her designation as "Pamela" by De Bruyn symbolizes an identity transformation and foreshadows a potential love story, providing a nuanced perspective on the complexities of relationships within the confines of slavery (174).

Ama's seemingly serene moments of admiration and recitation in the Castle's quarters, juxtaposed with the harsh realities experienced by others, underscore the dualistic nature of the chronotope, revealing varying manifestations of power dynamics within the confines of slavery.

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Ama's contemplative moments, as she gazes at coconut palms by the Castle shores, practices the Lord's Prayer, and admires the moon at night, serve as a contrast to the oppressive experiences of others within the Castle. (154, 172, 190). While she finds solace and even considers herself fortunate due to De Bruyn's perceived kindness, she reflects on Esi's harsh fate and acknowledges that not everyone shares in her perceived fortune (157). The juxtaposition of these experiences within the Castle highlights the stark dualism inherent in this space. This duality in experiences within the Castle's confines suggests a complex interplay of power dynamics. Ama's submission to De Bruyn, despite its apparent consensual nature, raises questions about agency and choice within the context of slavery. The varying degrees of suffering and fortune experienced by individuals in the same physical space further emphasize the multifaceted nature of the Castle's chronotope, where moments of peace and brutality coexist, revealing the intricate dynamics shaping the lives of those confined within its walls.

The Castle though provides Ama with the comforts she needs equally exposes characters who appear to counter the evil deeds of other characters. An example is Chaplain Van Schalkwyk. As a minister of God, he is expected to go by the principles of the Company and Christianity but the narrator recounts that he "had a reputation in the Castle as something of a dirty old man who grabs the buttocks and breasts of female slaves" (174). Though he feared he is breaking Company rules and has the fear of being condemned eternally for fornication, Van constantly leads a "secret life of unconsummated sexual fantasy" (174). This is evident in Chapter 17 of *Ama* when he tries to sexually assault Ama even though he knows the governor of the Castle does not joke with her:

> Van Schalkwyk watched her unobserved. He saw her profile, her round bare shoulders: he looked down the exposed cleavage between the swell of her breasts. He was moved. Astonished at her miraculous skill in reading, he felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, he was struck by the beauty of the girl's young body. He felt his penis come

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> erect. He loved this black girl. He wanted to touch her, to stroke her, to hold her. Automatically he helped her over a word when she hesitated. Her concentration was intense. He looked down. She was sitting with her legs apart, her cloth hanging between them, outlining her thighs. Unable to control himself any longer, he placed his hand on the inside of her thigh near the crotch and squeezed. Ama sprang to her feet in surprise. Her chair fell over backwards. The flesh had fled the Minister's hand, leaving it clutching a handful of cloth. The loose material unwrapped itself from Ama's body and fell to the ground, leaving her clad only in her beads. For a moment, Van Schalkwyk saw her naked body. It was a vision which would return to haunt his dreams. In an instant, Ama had grabbed the cloth, wrapped it around her, and tucked the end back in where it belonged. Her heart was thumping. She took a step back and stared at her teacher, old, ugly, obese, and now contemptible. Van Schalkwyk stared back for a moment, hardly believing what he had done. Then he bowed his head, put his palms together in prayer, and closed his eyes. Oh, Father, he whispered to himself in Dutch, What have I done? Forgive me, forgive me this abominable sin. A vision of the lake of fire and brimstone came to him. What shall I do, what shall I say? he prayed. He opened his eyes. Ama had moved to the other side of the table and was watching him warily, ready to slip away should he pursue her. "Pamela, forgive me, I beg you. I don't know what came over me. I lost control of myself. Forgive me, please. I promise you that that will never happen again. I beg you. Please tell Mijn Heer nothing of this. (196)

The extract above informs readers of the varied representations of the Castle. While some sections in the Castle provide Ama comfort since she is the concubine of the governor, other sections are unsafe and perilous. Though the extract exposes the perilous nature, it also portrays the bravery of Ama to refuse to be sexually harassed. Ama could have used her body to her advantage by playing two major leaders of Elmina but she realises that constantly satisfying the sexual urges of all these men will make her a mere sexual object.

Another representation of the Castle as a chronotope full of despair and torture is when Ama sits at the north window in Bruyn's quarters to observe the happenings outside the castle.

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The narrator details that Ama, through De Bruyn's telescope sees a long procession of slaves taken out from canoes and being marched into the Castle. This also affirms the Castle as the big trading centre of slaves of different sexes and ages:

> Slaves! In the lead were musicians, beating drums to the slow rhythm of the march, blowing horns, singing, and chanting. They were followed by the merchants, responding in a condescending manner to the greetings of the townspeople who lined their route. The male slaves wore only loin cloths. Ama could see the dust-streaked sweat on their naked torsos. They walked in pairs, shackled, chained and heavily loaded, taking one deliberate, painful step at a time, driven by the beat of the drummers and the occasional flick of a manatee-skin whip. The female slaves followed, their condition much the same as the men's. Next were the children, boys, and girls, stolen from their parents or forfeited by them, the unredeemed security for some trivial debt. (199)

The narrator does not only inform readers of the slaves who have been taken out of the dungeons to be sold but their emotional statuses are also highlighted. The slaves carry loads while in shackles and as Ama looks into their faces, she thinks of searching for some "sign of dignity, and courage, for some pride which had survived through suffering, but all she saw was sullen fear, despair and infinite weariness, or worse, a blank, devoid of expression, as if they have been drained from all humanity" (200). Herbstein's striking use of imagery here makes readers picture the atrocities associated with slavery. As Ama sees the flash of hatred in one of the slave's eyes in response to the flick of a whip on a naked back, Ama draws the link between the vivid description of the Biblical Hell Van has described to her and the conditions in the slave dungeons. To her, the slaves are already in hell but are still alive so she refers to them as the "living dead" (200). The reference to Hell suggests that Herbstein makes use of Biblical allusion to describe the cruel conditions of slaves. Hell is described as a "place of weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth, darkness, flames,

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burning, torments, and everlasting punishment"[42]. The dungeon is also portrayed the same way the Biblical Hell is described. The "living dead" here can be considered as an oxymoron that portrays the slaves as living characters who look like dead people because of the harsh conditions they go through in the Castle. Ama thinks that both African characters and European characters are guilty of allowing people to suffer like that. She weeps and sees herself as the guiltiest of all victims and victimizers because while she lives in delight at the top of the Castle, her fellow Africans "have languished in the dungeons below her feet" (200). On the night of seeing her fellow Africans perish, she turns away from de Bruyn's advances (201). The narrator's description of Ama's guilt also affirms Kwadwo Opoku Agyemang's assertion that in contemporary Africa, Africans are ashamed to talk about the subject of slavery because they were covertly also involved in it.

The Castle as a chronotope of torture, despair, and pain also becomes evident when De Bruyn falls ill. Losing hope of his survival from high fever, he writes a will that will render Ama her freedom after his death: "to the female slave, my dear Pamela, who has lived with me as my wife for the past two years, I give her freedom" (239). Jensen, the successor burns the will immediately Van Schalkwyk brings it to him to read and tells Ama: "you will sleep tonight where you came from and where you belong" (241). Before she is taken to the female dungeon, Jensen rapes her in the presence of his wife Rose:

> He threw her face down over the bed. She felt his trousers slip to the floor and heard him kick them aside. "Itsho! Itsho! Help me," she cried, then, "Rose, Rose." "Rose you come and watch this performance," commanded Jensen. Then he entered her, not her vagina but her anus."Shit-arse, eh? Pig, eh?" he said again and again keeping time with his driving. When he had finished he rested in her for a moment. "Rose, my darling," he commanded his wife, "fetch me something to wipe my shit-arse prick with. "Rose opened a drawer and

[42] Judkins, 28; *NIV,* Matt. 8.12; 12.42; 13.50; 25.30, Is. 33. 14, Lk. 16.23.

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> found there Ama's oldest cloth, her only painful memento of home. Jensen withdrew and without waiting to clean his organ, threw Ama to the floor. Ama had been raped before, twice, but never had she been so humiliated. She wanted to die. "Who's a pig, now, shit-arse?" he demanded. He pulled up his trousers. Then he kicked her in her naked ribs. She screamed in pain. "Speak." He threw the cloth at her and went to look at his dim candle-lit image in the mirror. "Rose, shut your fucking mouth." The girl was whimpering. Jensen washed his hands. "Unlock the fucking door," he commanded. (243)

Jensen's act erases Ama's dignity as a woman and also offers her pain as a result of sexual exploitation. In *Writing the Wrongs*, Miya Hunter-Willis contends that the tales of "rape and forced concubinage" put enslaved women in countless acts of cruelty both mentally and physically (91). The narrator's commentary on Ama's state after her rape and being sent to the female dungeon portray rape as a form of torture that affects an individual's physical and psychological state:

> She had a vague recollection of being carried down the stairs, one man at her feet, another holding her under the armpits. She had lain motionless for hours, just where they had thrown her, in the female dungeon. Her whole body had been suffused with pain, her violated anus, her bruised ribs and her back and buttocks, where she had been bumped on the steps. But she had not groaned. She had just lain there, on the cold stone floor, her mind blank. Numbed, without fear, she had waited for death. She had felt no emotion of any sort, seen no vision of Itsho or her mother Tabitsha. Nothing. No hunger, no thirst. Only a void; only the pain. She had not felt the damp rising from the bare stones. She was not aware of the other women in the dungeon and none of them had paid any attention to her. Each was drowning in a private quagmire all her own. (263)

A little girl offers to share Ananse stories with her, but Ama hears nothing. Even when the surgeon examines her body while his assistant brands her right breast with red hot iron, Ama does nothing. The narrator describes her as a "living corpse" (264). This oxymoronic phrase depicts a person who is alive yet has been denied the joy of living or participating in life activities. With this, readers see dumbness as an effect of a violent rape. Oloyomi Oduwobi in *Rape Victims and Victimisers*

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similarly opines that rape was used "to violate, dominate and inflict punishment on their female slaves." Oduwobi advances his assertion by stating that Herbstein's novel for instance "reveals the physio-psychologic dimensions of rape and how slave masters employed rape to achieve sexual gratification while inflicting physical and mental pain on the enslaved women" (104). Per these assertions, it can be deduced that Ama's rape and humiliation by Jensen does not only reveal his desire to satisfy himself sexually but displays Jensen's zeal to exert his control or dominance over the two females: Ama and Rose in this chronotope.

4.3.2 The Love of Liberty as a Chronotope of Violence

The ship, *The Love of Liberty* also presents lots of torturous events in the lives of most characters. This makes the name of the ship ironical especially when the liberties of so many Africans are taken away from them. Fred Knaggs, one of the seamen, is tasked to administer punishment to two slaves who try to escape during their transition from the canoe to the ship. Fred uses his instrument "cat o'nine tales" to whip the two slaves to deter other slaves from doing the same. The narrator's description of the physical appearance of the slaves who are whipped reveals one out of the many brutalities associated with the trade: "The victims' back was soon a mess of blood and raw flesh" (267). Knaggs's punishment of the slaves provides an insight into the mentality of the slave traders against the enslaved. The name of the ship is to provide solace to the Africans, but it rather gives slave traders the "liberty" to mock the enslaved Africans as well as defiling them of the most basic sense of property, morality and prudence to satisfy their capitalist ego.

When the narrator describes the harsh conditions in the slave quarters on the ship, readers visualize the cruelty associated with the trade. Captain William admits: "Life on the ship is not going to be pleasant due to overcrowding" (270). The atmosphere in the hold is "still, hot, humid and foul." Light penetrates the "only four tiny vents above each platform from the open door." The

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women are restless and are seen either squatting, lying in the filth or "just grazing the boarding above" while the men lay or sit "half naked" and constantly fall sick because they seldom get good air to breathe. Butcher even covers his nose when he checks on the slaves for few minutes, but the enslaved spend "their days and nights immersed in this fetid witches brew of sweat and shit and foul smell" (273). Herbstein's use of simile by drawing a comparison between the condition in the hold and the sinners suffering eternal torment depict the atrocities of the trade. Also, there is the use of Biblical allusion as Hell is viewed as the place of "eternal torment." The narrator further gives details of the conditions in the hold and how the slaves have been restrained the liberty of breathing good air freely:

> Conditions on board had steadily worsened. There was little ventilation in the female hold. More and more women were crowded into the small space. By midnight the air became so foul that it was difficult to breathe. By the early hours of the morning the smell from the buckets was overpowering. The women, at least, were allowed to spend the day in the light and fresh air. For the men it was much worse. They were kept constantly in irons and allowed up only for a short time twice each day. Loaded guns pointed at them as they ate. Tomba's men who had already been on board for several weeks, looked really bad. Ama could see how they were suffering. (282)

The perils, torture, and punitive situations connected with the journey to the New World through the slave ships made Europeans sailors, captains, and surgeons refer to these machines "as slaughterhouses", "coffins" or "floating tombs"[43] that simply buried enslaved Africans alive. The imagery that is associated with the description of the women's quarters adds to the descriptions of slave ships as "coffins, floating tombs and slaughter" due to the lighting condition, the heat, and the death it results in.

INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS

[43] Miller, J. C, *Ways of Death*, 314; Rediker, *The Slave Ship* 274 and Smallwood, *Saltwater* 137.

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Being denied the liberty to enjoy the breeze at sea is not the only harsh condition the slaves endure on *The Love of Liberty*. Some crew members take advantage of the vulnerability of the female slaves and rape them. A clear incidence of such is when Knaggs and two other crew members rape a girl:

> The two white men dragged the black woman down the steps and over to the main mast. They forced her to stand against it. Knox's accomplice pulled her arms round to the back of the mast. Ama could see that the woman was wide-eyed with terror. The gag prevented her from crying out loud, but Ama sensed her muffled scream as her arms were brutally twisted. Knox fumbled with his trouser cord for a moment and then he was inside her. But she twisted to one side and in that movement expelled his organ. He took a step back and slapped her face so violently that her head struck the mast. She stopped resisting. Joe re-entered her. His mates cheered. "Fuck," they cried in unison at every thrust, "fuck, fuck, fuck . . ." (283-4)

According to Oduwobi, the occurrence of rape during the Transatlantic Slave Trade means that rape must be central in slave narratives. Oduwobi goes on further to assert "no story is complete without alluding, implicitly or explicitly, to the sexual assaults on female slaves that occurred from their points of capture in their respective villages to their deaths during the Middle Passage or in the New World." (104). Herbstein in exploring rape as one of the components of trade equally suggests its centrality in this history since rape puts enslaved characters in subjugation or as objects of constant abuse.

The conditions on the ship do not favour slaves. As a result, many slaves die and have their bodies thrown into the sea for the sharks to feed on:

> Ama was awoken by the noise of a splash. Struggling to her knees and looking over the gunwale, she was just in time to see the last body hit the water. Five female corpses floated naked on the surface of the sea, sightless eyes staring at the sun. The gentle swell washed over them, jostling them against each other and bumping them against the ship. One of

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> them was Nana Esi. Ama closed her eyes and retched. The fin of a great white shark sliced the water. She caught a glimpse of a mouthful of teeth fastening onto a leg. Then the first body was dragged down into the depths, leaving just a little crimson whirlpool in its wake. Ama screamed. All at once the water was alive with sharks, tearing the remaining corpses apart in a frenzied orgy of competition. The sea was threshed red; severed heads, limbs, and human guts were everywhere as they tore the flesh apart. Ama sank back onto the deck and beat her head against the boards, unable to contain the violence of her sobbing. (312)

Death is not the only punishment slaves get but those who try escaping or causing a revolt face lot of cruelties. For instance, after Ama and Tomba's failed insurrection leads to the killing of two white crew, Butcher on Captain William's instruction is told to take out the livers and heart of the two dead white crew, Hatcher and Baker. The accomplices who are made to eat the human flesh are Ama, Tomba, and two other enslaved African men who took part in the revolt. William's reason for making the slaves consume the organs of the dead white men is stated:

> "The good doctor tells me, he continued, "that this punishment does not conform to the norms of civilised society. I have explained to him that this is not a civilised society. These people are barbarians, devil-worshippers, cannibals no doubt. It might well be that consumption of a white man's organs will have some beneficial effect upon them. I have said my say. Mister Butcher, please proceed." (326)

The above quote confirms Oduwobi's assertion that Herbstein's *Ama* tackles certain key postcolonial themes such as racism. William's descriptions of the enslaved Africans as barbaric, cannibals and devil worshippers reveal the pessimistic perceptions the colonizers had about Africans, a colonized continent. However, Ama's response to Williams claims could be viewed as a resistive strategy against "the myth of power, race classification" and the "image of subordination" (Oduwobi 101) where Africans are the most victims:

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> "Williams," she screamed, "It is you who are the barbarian, the cannibal. It is you whites who eat the body and drink the blood of your god. It is you who buy human beings and sell them, sell us, as if we were sheep or cattle. It is you . . ." William's face turned a livid purple. (326)

Ama refuses to take the flesh of the white men and her refusal attracts forceful eating of the liver from Knaggs through the use of the speculum oris:

> … Knaggs cut one of the livers into slices. He held up a piece of the meat between finger and thumb displaying it to the assembly. "Let's 'ave no trouble now, miss. Open yer mouth." Ama clenched her teeth. Knaggs put the meat down and tried to force her mouth open. He failed. "She won' open er mouth, sir," he told Williams. "Butcher," said the captain, "give him your speculum." With a wan look, the surgeon opened his instrument case and took out the speculum oris. "Do you know how to use it, Knaggs?" asked Williams. "Yessir," replied Fred Knaggs. He turned the thumb screw, bringing the two steel prongs together. "Old er 'ead firm, now," he told his assistant as he forced the pointed ends between her teeth. There was a murmur of protest from the watching slaves. It was silenced by a threatening flick of the cats. Ama strained every muscle in her body to resist but her strength was no match for the three men who now held her. Knaggs turned the thumb screw. The prongs forced her jaws open. "Old hit now," said Knaggs, turning to the table. Ama had been clenching her muscles tightly against the irresistible force of the speculum. With Knaggs' back turned, she relaxed; then she opened her mouth wide. The speculum fell to the floor. She clenched her teeth again. There was a cheer from the slaves. "Knaggs, you idiot," said Williams, "I thought you said you knew how to use the cursed thing." Knaggs unscrewed the speculum and tried again. "Go easy, man," said Butcher, "You'll break her jaw." Ama closed her eyes. She was on the point of losing consciousness. Her head was forced back and she felt the raw meat slither down her throat. Involuntarily she retched. The piece of liver shot out of her mouth and hit Knaggs in the face. The seamen laughed at his discomfiture. Ama's body sagged and Knaggs' assistants had to hold her up. (327)

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The imagery that is created in such an obnoxious act discloses the spitefulness of the trade. The narrator adds that Ama herself preferred to be "shot," "hanged" or "eaten alive by sharks" rather than to be subjected to such torture of "being forced to eat human flesh" (326). The options Ama brings out are not any better. For Ama to even prefer other violent forms rather than eating human flesh suggest slavery changed people's emotional, physical, and psychological ways of reacting to violent acts. As if having Ama and Tomba eat human flesh is not enough, the victims under William's command, are made to kiss the lips of the corpses and are bound to the forecastle and whipped by many of the crew members. The narrator's description of the nature of the whipping represents the ship as a chronotope of violence and pain:

> They took their time. Sometimes five minutes elapsed from one lash to the next. The first lash hurt Ama most. Some of the knotted ends of the whip drew blood from her back; some wrapped themselves around her and struck her naked belly and breasts. While she waited for the next she closed her eyes and tried to discipline her mind, forcing herself to concentrate on Itsho, num bing herself to all else. Then Knaggs threw a bucketful of sea water over her. She had not seen it coming and she screamed at the sting of the salt. Ama tried to keep count. She was telling herself, *fifty, fifty, fifty* when Knaggs' turn came round again. He twirled the cat around and swung high, aiming at her head. One knot tore at her left ear. A bunch struck the back of her head. The knot on the longest strand took out her right eye. (330)

William Junior, the nephew of Captain Williams, also says that as he looks at Ama he could see "the ugly geography of lacerations on Ama's tortured back, welts criss-crossed with weals" (335). The use of imagery further portrays the gruesome acts associated with the trade. The narrator states that after the beating she refuses to talk to anyone. Butcher even admits that though as a doctor, all he can do is to get Ama physically healed, he admits that the psychic wounds [were] "beyond the compass of his skill" (333). The harsh conditions did not only affect the enslaved physically but put them in a traumatised mood.

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The harrowing spread of the bloody flux disease, the drastic reduction of the crew's food ration by Captain Williams, and the desperate plea of starving crew members to slaves for sustenance on *The Love of Liberty* create a horrendous chronotope. As detailed in *Ama*, the tumultuous events, exacerbated by a storm, lead to corpses being cast into the sea for sharks on page 339, vividly illustrating Herbstein's deliberate construction of *The Love of Liberty* as a chronotope designed to expose the brutal realities of the slave trade.

4.3.3 Engenho de Cima as a Chronotope of Violence

Just as the castles and ships dehumanize individuals in the narrative, the plantation emerges as another locus of brutality, subjecting characters to harsh and torturous conditions. The portrayal of slaves enduring relentless physical strain, with sweat pouring and backs aching under the scorching sun as they toil until daybreak (372) in the Engenho de Cima plantation, reveals a distressing depiction. Many women field slaves lose their fertility as a result of "poor food; long hours of exhausting work; the widespread incidence of venereal and other diseases; and the absence of any form of medical treatment beyond that which the other slave women could provide" (423). This suggests that life on the field is unpleasant for the enslaved. Jesus, the slave master, reduces the resting days from every Sunday to one Sunday in two weeks when his predecessor, Sengor. The slaves work for tediously for several hours. Kwame, Ama and Tomba's young son, is sent to the cane field to weed. The constant labour result in loss of lives (438). This narrative reveals a thematic continuity in the dehumanizing impact of different settings within the narrative, underscoring the pervasive cruelty that defines the characters' experiences throughout various contexts.

Sexual violence is also one of the excruciating acts that occur on the field. For instance, when Jesus Vasconcellos gets drunk, he rapes Ama on the cane field:

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> He rose and grabbed her at once by the shoulders, pulling her towards him. She struggled to free herself but he was too strong. He forced her lips apart and drove his tongue into her mouth. She tasted the foulness and the rum. Pulling her arms free she thrust his head from her. Then, almost instinctively, she attacked him at the only place where he was vulnerable: she sank her teeth into his lower lip. He screamed in agony and threw her away so violently that she fell backwards. Her head struck the stone floor. She lay there immobile, stunned. He dropped onto her and ripped her cloth off. Then he was inside her, thrusting away his hatred and frustration. (441)

Ama after the rape lies on the floor weeping but Vasconcellos kicks her buttocks which makes her lose consciousness. This incidence equally reveals that the name, Jesus, has been ironically used because as an overseer, Jesus Vasconcellos is to lead a good life, be a saviour just as Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, lived but his actions rather go contrary to what Jesus represents. His actions also help readers to analyse the plantation as a chronotope of violence, pain and torture, and shame.

4.4 Chronotopes of Resistance

> Any ship, once it puts to sea, becomes a world of its own: a mobile community bounded by water. For those on board, the ship becomes the world, if only until the voyage ends. Thus a slave ship was not simply a thing of timber and sails, it was also a social space. Those confined together within that space lived according to – and sometimes challenged and tried to resist – the routines and rules specific to it. The wooden world of the slave ship was a temporary one, of course, and its rules were hastily and unwillingly learned for the most part. But even so, it is possible to consider these vessels as social spaces, in which members of a community learned and practiced a specific way of living. Jane Webster "Voyage Through Death" (248)

It has been stated earlier that though slave owners demanded total submission from the enslaved, Palmer stresses that "unconditional submission was, understandably, not easily

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achieved." The quote above by Jane Webster confirms Palmer's assertion that resistance becomes one of the key themes in defining or describing a ship as a social space. The slave castles and plantations can equally be described as social spaces since different people with different cultural backgrounds were kept in them. Therefore, any person whose freedom was limited in anyway tried to rebel through any means possible. The acts of resistance included revolts, suicide, and sexual exploitation. Herbstein similarly highlights different forms of resistance strategies in *Ama* and this section seeks to analyse such forms.

4.4.1 The Elmina Castle

The Elmina Castle features lots of resistive acts. When the guards take the women into the courtyard for a final selection of a concubine for the governor, acts of resistance are evident. An instance is when enslaved women "[murmur] in sullen confusion and resistance when Vroom prods a female slave with the butt of his whip while urging all the women to stand upright" (145). When Ama is selected, "they all [raise] their voices, in a Babel of languages and in a mixture of fear, anger, sympathy for Ama[44]" (146). The language uproar becomes an indicator of collective resistance of the enslaved against such abuse.

Ama's ways of survival or resistance against slavery are numerous in the Elmina Castle. De Bruyn offers to bathe her and have sex with her in his chambers, but Ama refuses: "At the same time Ama's outstretched arm swung round and her clenched fist struck him. Already off balance, De Bruyn toppled over backwards. As he fell, the back of his head hit the corner of a table, drawing blood, and causing him to cry out in surprise and pain" (150). Realizing the danger of going back into the dungeon, she cries, apologizes, and allows de Bruyn to have sex with her. In subsequent

[44] Nandzi is renamed Ama while she is a domestic slave (86) and Pamela when she is taken as a concubine of the Pieter de Bruyn in the Elmina Castle (150).

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times, Ama does all that de Bruyn asks her to do for in her thoughts, this will become a way of escaping the brutalities in the dungeons. She says to herself:

> Itsho or no Itsho, I have no choice. I am lucky this man selected me for his pleasure. I have had two good meals and a bath; he has given me a fine new clean cloth to wear; I have slept in his bed. It is true that he has used me, that he did not ask my consent, that I am his chattel to deal with as he chooses; but he did not take me by force, he did not hurt me. If I am honest with myself, I have to admit that I have missed having a man all this time. Kwame Panin didn't really count, for all his boyish passion. Old and ugly as he is, this scrawny man is surely my only chance of survival. If I could only make him love me and need me, perhaps one day he would even let me go back home. (159)

Ama's survival strategy in the Castle acknowledges women's role in resisting the harsh conditions of slavery through their bodies. It can therefore be stated that Herbstein in his selection of Ama, an African female slave, as the protagonist in *Ama* eulogizes the role of African women as allegorical resistance of Africa herself against any subversion or subjugation.

De Bruyn's conversation with Captain on the buying of slaves also hints that the enslaved Africans tried anyways possible to resist slavery:

> "I have been frank with you, Captain," continued De Bruyn. "I am overstocked. Ever since the Asante opened the road from the north, there has been a veritable flood of slaves. My dungeons are full. Yet if I were to refuse to buy, the dealers might take their business elsewhere, even to your countrymen at Cape Coast. So I am prepared to offer you a special deal: a bargain rate of six ounces of gold for a male, four for a female and three for a child. You make your own selection. What's more I'll take all your trade goods. There is only one condition and that is that you fill your holds here at Elmina. Accept my offer and you could be on your way to Barbados within a week." "You tempt me," replied Williams, "but you must allow me to sleep on it. We can talk about price when my surgeon reports to me on his inspection of the stock. As to buying four hundred slaves at a go, most of them Cormantynes, I shall have to think about that very carefully. (209) You know the problem.

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With so many of them all from one place and many probably speaking the same language, trouble is almost inevitable." (209)

In *The Birth of America Culture,* Richard Price and Sidney Mintz proposed that there was the possibility of mixing Africans who spoke different languages for the fear of revolts (14). It is not surprising Captain Williams expresses that same fear of not having slaves who speak the same language on one ship. The portrayal of fear of revolts reveals that the victims of the trade did not make it easy for the slave traders, therefore, some slave owners also adoptive a defensive strategy of not keeping Africans who speak the same language in one ship.

4.4.2 The Love of Liberty

According to Bakhtin, Language as the "treasure house of images is fundamentally chronotopic" (251). The name of the ship *The Love of Liberty* connotes the theme of resistance because loving liberty reveals one's desire for freedom from oppression. The title of the slave ship foreshadows the various characters' resistive acts against violence while on the ship. For instance, when Fred Knaggs punishes two slaves for attempting an escape during their transition from the canoe to *The Love of Liberty*, the women on the ship "set up a moaning and groaning which rose in protest at each stroke of the lash and fell as they flinched in anticipation of the next" (267).

Ama, though a slave, endeavours to save herself and a young girl whose breasts "were barely formed" from being raped by the white punisher of slaves, Fred Knaggs. The narrator states:

> Ama struggled to make her way through the crowd of women. They were protesting vociferously but doing nothing else to prevent the outrage. Ama saw that she would not reach Knaggs in time to try to drag the girl from his clutch. Without thinking, she called out, "Fred Knaggs!" He paused, astonished at hearing his name called out in a female English voice. "Who called me name?" he demanded. "I did," said Ama, "Unhand that girl at once, you villain. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. She is young enough to be your daughter." …. It is now or never, Ama thought and, mustering all her strength, she drove

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> her knee upwards into his crotch, crushing his balls. Knaggs staggered back, bellowing with agony. He was doubled up, his trousers around his ankles. Now Ama was white with anger. She felt her heart pumping. If she had had a knife she would have driven it into him and ripped his belly open. Seeing that he was defenceless, at least for a moment, she took the only chance she had to drive her advantage home. She grabbed his penis and wrenched it as if to pull it off his body. The man screamed. (284)

One of the crew members, George, praises Ama for displaying such a brave act by challenging Fred Knaggs: "I seen how you dealt with Fred Knaggs," he said. "E ad it comin to im, the bastard. I ony wish it ad bin me wot give im is cumuppance. You wasvery brave. Ain't many a man on this ship wot'd tackle Fred Knaggs; an you on'y a girl an all" (292). Ama's exemplary courage positions her as a heroic African woman character and her role, as Herbstein presents, strategically challenges and defies the dominance of white supremacy over the black female body.

Ama's fortuitous role as an interpreter, tasked with conveying Butcher's messages to the captives, serves as a pivotal narrative device that not only advances the plot but also unveils deeper layers of power dynamics and communication strategies within the context of the story. Ama realising she could use this responsibility to her own advantage misinterprets Butcher's messages. An instance is when Butcher tells her to inform the slaves that he is their doctor and is responsible for ensuring they get good food and stay healthy, Ama tries to convince the male slaves to rise and revolt against the white men on the ship:

> "We have all lost our families. We have to be family to one another. The women and children in the female hold are depending on you men. You must rise against the white men and send the ship back to the shore so that we can escape. Now I see the white man is becoming anxious. I will speak to you again. Pray to our ancestors for help." She paused. "That took you a long time," said Butcher. "That is how our languages are," replied Ama. "I have told them in one language but only a few understood, I think. Shall I try another?" (295-6)

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In Ama's conversation with Captain Williams, she reveals that a female slave hangs herself in the slave hold on the ship the previous night (317). Other slaves being freed from their shackles after a heavy storm try to dive into the sea to escape without taking into consideration the perils associated with it:

> A sudden cacophony of voices drew her attention back to the scene on deck. The fit and curious women joined her at the barricade. As they watched, one male slave and then another sprang onto the port gunwale and dived overboard. The guards lashed out with their whips and swung their pikes and cutlasses, forcing a way through; but the other slaves did their utmost to obstruct their passage, all the time shouting encouragement to those who had escaped. Before the crew could take up their stations and enforce order, six men had leapt into the sea…The slaves, free of their shackles, their spirits roused by the intrepid behaviour of their comrades, barred the way and jostled the crew. (313)

One of the slaves on board says to Ama to tell Williams: "Tell him that we would rather die than succumb to his wickedness" (315). These actions, in effect, indicate acts of resistance against slavery.

Tomba's presence on the ship introduces a compelling narrative dimension as a former village leader engaged in persistent rebellious acts, thus providing a lens through which the story explores themes of resistance, escape, and the yearning to return enslaved individuals to Africa. Because of the sexual relationship between Ama and Captain Williams, Ama is the only female who has access to his cabin. Ama on realising how fruitful this relationship could be in obtaining her freedom steals the keys to the slave holds while captain Williams sleeps as a result of excessive alcohol. She goes to the male hold to unshackle Tomba and other male slaves who tried their best to revolt. However, the revolt becomes unsuccessful when Knaggs Fred is forgotten and is left unkilled, so he screams to draw the attention of the guards who are asleep to fight the male slaves.

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Tomba and his crew succeed in killing some of the white guards but are defeated in the end. Butcher confesses that though Ama and Tomba's backs have "a mass of scar tissue… they have survived" (333). As Herbert Aptheker asserts "one's very fact of survival connotes resistance" (cited in Bly 178). Tomba and Ama's survival after the defeat of their revolt, whipping, and scars symbolize their triumph over their abusers.

4.4.3 Engenho de Cima

This plantation also produces acts of resistance particularly among the women field slaves whose conditions are worse. Rather than put their new babies in bondage, most women slaves practice what Neely describes as gynaecological resistance. Neely explains that the gynaecological resistance represents any action a slave woman takes in "opposition to her owner's authority over her reproductive life or her role as a mother" (1). These forms of resistance include "birth control, abortion, infanticide as well as avoiding the master's sexual advances" (1). Most female field slaves in *Ama* "induce abortions as soon as they become pregnant; the others often miscarried anyway; some of those who went to term abandoned their new born babies in the cane fields or the surrounding bush, leaving them to die in infancy rather than have them under bondage." Slaves out of hunger and illness adopt "go-slow tactics" (439). They sabotage the ox-carts, poison the oxen, or adulterate the sugar with sand while knowing that the inspectors will reject it. When Vascondellos rapes Ama, Tomba goes to his room to cut his tongue and penis with "a pair of tongs" (444). The other slave men and women come together to escape with Tomba and Ama. Olukoya, their leader tells them: "Remember just one thing as you fall asleep. We are no longer slaves. We have thrown off our chains. We are free men and women." (446). After days, the run-away slaves realise they are running out of food and might be caught by the militiamen, so Tomba sacrifices his life to return to the plantation to confess and to speak on behalf of all the slaves since

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they have no in hand in Vasconcellos' death. Tomba's act of challenging Vasconcellos and his death indicate his victory over his oppressors.

Oluyoma, another field slave, during one of their prayers to the gods of the lands of Africa adds that the enslaved Africans must acquire "reading and writing, making sugar and building ships" and to take away the notion that the Africans are "natural slaves" because this indicates a loss of battle which has not been started (397). Alexandre, the Senhor's son, similarly states that reading and writing will enable the slaves to gain their freedom because it is the only way to defeat the whites from conquering all the time. The significance of these quotes highlights the role of postcolonial literature and African Literature in general, in eliminating colonialist discourse of "myths of power" and the imagery of constant black subordination to the whites.

4.5 The Theme of Healing in *Ama*

Images of physical, psychological, and sexual torture, scars, and abuse are associated with Ama and other characters and yet it is through memory of these traumatic events that healing is obtained. There are events, characters, symbols that evoke the theme of healing. For instance, field workers sing songs to entertain themselves as they engage in hard labour on the field. The field slaves have been given some Sundays as their rest days to work on their allotted plots to plant various vegetables. Though Senhor uses this to his advantage to buy vegetables at lesser prices, the slaves gain some income (376). Ama, for instance, grows red pepper, groundnuts, and some European vegetables and she always does this with joy (378). The narrator states that "this is the only activity in which the Senhor granted the slave some independence, some control over their own lives" (378). After the fieldwork, slaves do not sing work songs but "sing songs remembered from home, songs of love, lullabies and poetry put to music" to comfort themselves (378). According to Carrie Louise Sheffield in "Native American Hip-Hop and Historical Trauma,"

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music as a genre is useful for enacting change and bringing healing… (97). As the field slaves sing, they engage in a therapeutic act to heal their souls from the harsh conditions on the field.

In one of Ama's conversations with Alexander, a slave driver on the plantation, Alexander, wonders why Ama though being baptized does not see herself as a Christian. She enjoys reading Bible stories for pleasure and begins to question its authenticity, as the theme of slavery appears in some of the stories. Ama's response when Alexandre asks her who she is if not a Christian reveals her total liberation from servitude and any other belief that puts her in subversion: "I am a human being; I am a black woman; I am an African. Once I was free; then I was captured and became a slave; but inside me, I have never been a slave; even today, inside me, here, and here, I am still a free woman" (381). As suggested by Cassie Premo Steele, to accept and recognize one's memories helps one to heal (8). It is the recognition of memories that also contribute to the healing of Ama's psychological wounds from slavery.

Ama's quote after Tomba has been hanged further portrays the theme of healing: "When I die, my spirit will fly like a bird, back over the sea back to Africa" (480). Emma Christopher observes "those who were closest to slavery knew only too well what the absence of freedom meant and valued all the more both the abstract ideal of liberty…" (227). The significance of the bird representing the return of Ama to Africa connotes reconciliation, hope and healing. A similar instance of the return to one's home is made evident by Ebony Coletu, an African American scholar, who embarks on a trip to Cape Coast in Ghana to do a reburial service for Bessie Graham Abokuma Taylor a century after her death in the United States of America. Bessie was a Ghanaian born on 15 August 1897 but was sent to Maine in the United States by her father, J.D. Taylor, to study in a Bible school. Though Bessie had always hoped to return home, she never got the chance while alive (3). On 23rd-24th October, Coletu led a memorial and thanksgiving service in her honour

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in Cape Coast after the sand from Bessie's grave had been obtained. In the funeral itinerary, Coletu affirms: "reconciliation requires telling the story of what happened, acknowledging the suffering and making an offer to repair that is acceptable to the person harmed" (8). Such repatriation connotes healing especially when considering Bessie's desire to return home. The evidence of the importance of return in bringing healing is also written on the plaques in the Elmina and Cape Castle presently:

> IN THE 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

Plague found in Elmina and Capecoast Castles

It can there be deduced that in *Ama*, there is such reconciliation and healing when Ama decides to share her life experiences with her son Kwame and to also fly like a bird back to join her family in Africa. In the sequel to Ama *Brave Music of the Distant Drum*, Kwame himself heals when he hears the traumatic events in his mother's life. His healing is reinforced when he tells of his childhood memories of seeing his father, Tomba's dead body hanging on a tree. Speaking up and confronting the enslaver about the truth about his father and his own falsified identity helps to expunge the pain from his psyches. The Year of Return has been set up in Ghana since 2019 as a "major landmark spiritual and birth-right journey" inviting Africans in all parts of the world to remember the 400 years of slavery ("About the Year of Return, Ghana 2019"). This suggests that Africans in all parts of the world continue to share their spiritual connection with Africa, their home and to seek healing from such a horrible past.

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4.6 Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that in *Ama,* Manu Herbstein presents the theme of resistance and healing. These themes are depicted through metaphors, symbols, and characters' actions in chronotopes such as the Elmina Castle, *The Love of Liberty*, and the Engenho de Cima. Their representations notify readers of the vital role that events in historical spaces play in representing themes of resistance and healing in neo-slave narratives.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The first four chapters have discussed the significance of literature in representing the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The construction of the themes of torture, pain, resistance, and healing in historical sites has been discussed in the selected texts. The present chapter presents the findings in *Homegoing* and *Ama: a Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade*. Lastly, it provides the closing arguments which reflect our observation from the study as well as recommendations for further research.

5.1 Findings in *Homegoing* and *Ama: a Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade*

In pursuit of a broad understanding of the representations of historical sites of slavery in *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi and *Ama* by Manu Herbstein, this study attempted to address two primary research objectives. Firstly, the study examines the portrayals of castles, ships, and plantations within the narratives, aiming to uncover the authors' varied perspectives on these significant locations in the context of the transatlantic slave trade. Secondly, the study sought to explore the thematic undercurrents of healing and resistance embedded in the depictions of these spaces, particularly focusing on their impact on individuals of African descent in *Ama* and *Homegoing*. The research questions guiding this exploration employ a multi-faceted approach, considering recurring tropes—whether metaphoric, symbolic, metonymic, or psycho-spiritual—in the representation of spaces of enslavement and memory. Additionally, the study investigates how these representations function as agents of resistance and therapeutic agency within the narratives of *Homegoing* and *Ama*. The theoretical frameworks used were Bakhtin's concept of Chronotope

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and Lefebvre's concept of Spatial Triad. Through these research objectives, questions, and methodology, the study aimed to provide spatial readings to help understand the complexities surrounding the portrayal of historical sites of slavery in African literature.

The study findings reveal significant similarities and differences between *Homegoing* and *Ama a Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade*. Both novels share common themes of resistance and healing within the context of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, portraying characters intricately connected to the history of enslavement. The settings of castles, ships, and plantations emerge as crucial elements in depicting the harsh realities of the slave trade in both narratives. Characterization in both novels presents a spectrum of roles, from victims to victimizers and victim-victimizers, with characters straddling between complicity and suffering.

The thematic content of torture and resistance serves as a convergence between the two works, where both Gyasi and Herbstein employ literary devices such as biblical allusion, simile, metaphor and imagery to emphasize the horrors and impacts of the slave trade. Instances of rape and physical punishment illustrate the shared brutality faced by the characters in *Ama* and *Homegoing*. The analysis further identifies resistive acts as a common thread, where characters attempt to liberate themselves from the bondage of enslavement.

However, divergences also surface, particularly in narrative time and structure. Homegoing spans from the 18th to the turn of the 21st century, adopting an episodic style with distinct character-focused chapters. In contrast, Ama unfolds in linear time, following Ama's life from capture to adulthood, employing a third-person omniscient narrative style. The construction of the theme of healing differs as well, with *Homegoing* depicting a physical return to Cape Coast Castle for Marjorie and Marcus, while *Ama* symbolically associates Ama's spiritual return to Africa as a source of comfort, hope, and healing for the enslaved Ama.

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The study emphasizes the significance of literature in portraying historical events, showcasing how two distinct narratives on the same theme can converge on certain aspects while diverging on others. These findings contribute to an overall understanding of the representation of the Atlantic Slave Trade in literary works and highlight the varied approaches employed by different authors to convey the complexities and impacts of this historical atrocity.

5.2 Summary

In revisiting the past era of slavery, the neo-slave narrative writers have revisited and reinterpreted the slave narrative genre to project varied perspective into the old historical sites of slavery. Through their representations, the authors of neo-slave narratives invite readers not only to celebrate African Americans or Africans who battled against slavery, but to also encourage descendants of enslaved Africans to make sure that such an atrocious act never happens again. In confronting this traumatic history, the neo-slave narratives and the act of writing become therapeutic agencies as they help heal the wounds of history and soothe the scars of the past.

In this study, the first chapter presented the role of literature in representing slavery and the essence of situating characters and events in historical spaces such as castles, ships, and plantations. The distinction between classical slave narratives and neo-slave narratives and the theoretical framework used for the analysis of the selected texts were also discussed.

The chapter two reviewed related literature on the history of the slave trade from medieval times to the Transatlantic Slave Trade and how castles, ships, and plantations became necessities to push the slave trade. Forms of resistance on the African continent, in castles, ships, and various plantations, were also discoursed. Finally, literary representations of the Transatlantic Slave as well as existing scholarship on the two chosen neo-slave narratives were discussed.

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Chapters three and four explored the representation of resistance and healing in Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* and Manu Herbstein's *Ama*. Taking into consideration the theoretical frameworks for the study-Bakhtin's concept of chronotope and Lefebvre's theory of spatial triad, there was a need to analyse the settings in *Homegoing* which included the Elmina Castle, Hell, and Stockham plantation and in *Ama*: Cape Coast Castle, The Love of Liberty, and Engenho de Cima as "spatial practices" and "conceived spaces." The roles of characters and the various divisions in the chronotopes were also discussed. These chronotopes as lived spaces or as chronotopes of torture, pain, shame, and power were also explored. These effectively provide the causes of resistance and do not provide only one aspect of the stories. The last sections of these two chapters analysed the construction of the themes of resistance and healing. One would note that it became a necessity for characters to appreciate their past to shape their future decisions. Again, having knowledge of their history, through symbols and the concept of return contributed to the healing of characters who were affected by the trauma of slavery.

5.3 Conclusion

By creating characters such as Effia, Esi, Ness, Kojo, James Collins, Ama, de Bruyn, Tomba, and Fred Knaggs whose lives are situated in specific places, both Herbstein and Gyasi represent slavery as a theme in both texts. Both authors have shown that events/actions in historical sites such as castles, ships, and plantations in literary representations do not only display the traumatic impact of slavery on both continental Africans and Africans living in the diaspora; but they also demonstrate how themes of resistance and healing can be foregrounded to bring some hope to the people of African descent. Thus, both Gyasi and Herbstein explore the role of literature in the reconstruction and re-imagination of past memories to bring some transformation into the present in their respective texts, *Homegoing* and *Ama: a Story of the Atlantic Slave* Trade.

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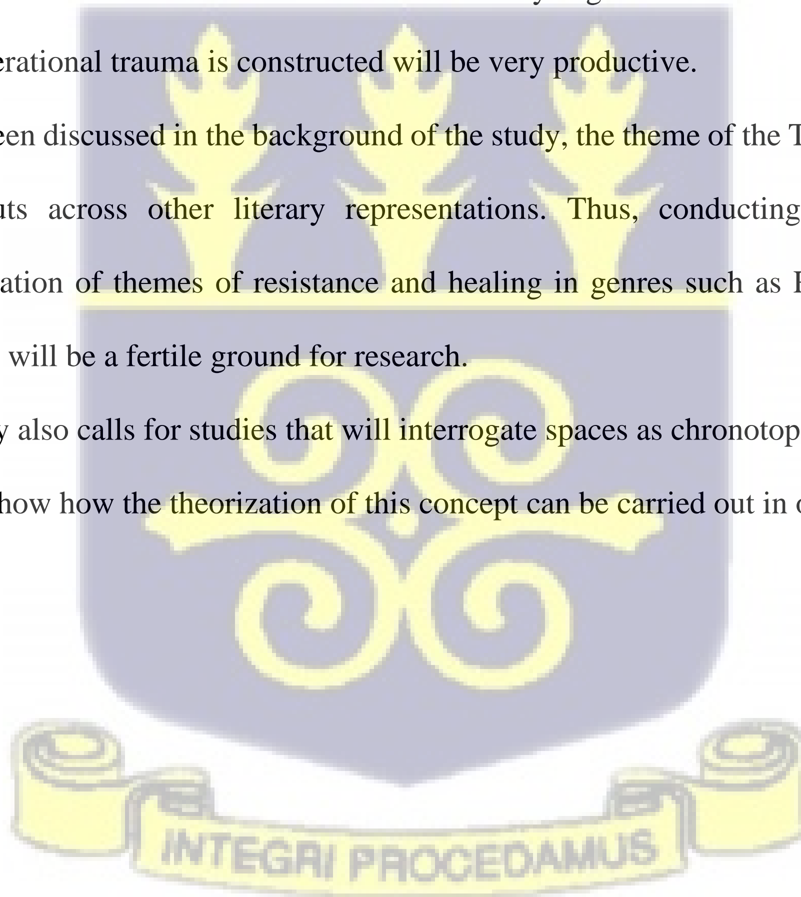
5.4 Recommendations

The following are some recommendations the researcher makes for further studies:

- The present study examined the construction of resistance and healing in two neo-slave narratives. It is recommended that a study be done to research on resistance and healing in other neo-slave narratives by both African and non-African authors. For instance, Manu Herbstein has published a sequel to *Ama*, which is titled *Brave Music of a Distant Drum.* This story recounts the relationship between Ama and her son, Kwame, and how the story of slavery is passed on from her to her son. Thus, conducting research on the comparison between *Ama* and *Brave Music* while analysing the diverse ways in which transgenerational trauma is constructed will be very productive.
- As has been discussed in the background of the study, the theme of the Transatlantic Slave Trade cuts across other literary representations. Thus, conducting a study on the representation of themes of resistance and healing in genres such as Reggae music and paintings will be a fertile ground for research.
- The study also calls for studies that will interrogate spaces as chronotopes in other literary texts to show how the theorization of this concept can be carried out in other studies.



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