

AFRICAN HISTORY FILM ANALYSIS



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African History Film Analysis

My choice of the film to analyze and review is “Slavery - A Global Investigation” by filmmakers Kate Blewett and Brian Woods. I selected the film because authorities want citizens to understand slavery as an old practice banned across the nation, yet it is still alive in the society. The film exposes forms of modern day slavery as exercised in the leading industries across the globe. In Cote d'Ivoire, for instance, the cocoa industry thrives on free labor offered by young men. The workers work for eighteen hours in a day with no pay besides facing physical assault from their masters for making escape attempts.¹ Whereas there is a misconception that slavery only exists in the developing countries, the film exposes how the developed world exploit people by subjecting them to long working hours, unpaid labor, and cruelty from the powerful beings in the major cities such as London and Washington, DC.²

The film relates to the history class because slavery is an old practice that started many years back and targeted the blacks. Some of the public figures studied today in learning institutions derived their fame from contributing in the fight against slavery. Nelson Mandela, for instance, spent many years behind bars for fighting for the inclusion of blacks in South Africa.³ The film portrays the forms of slavery well, such as working with no pay and for extended periods besides facing physical violence.⁴ However, the film fails to document the history of

¹ Amy Bell. “Slavery A Global Investigation”. Filmed [October 2012]. YouTube video, 1:17:57. Posted [October 2012]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-mgXSojRuo>.

² Amy Bell. “Slavery A Global Investigation”. Filmed [October 2012]. YouTube video, 1:17:57. Posted [October 2012]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-mgXSojRuo>.

³ Maanga, Godson S. "The relevance and legacy of Nelson Mandela in the twenty-first century Africa: An historical and theological perspective." *African Journal of History and Culture* 5, no. 5 (2013): 87-95.

⁴ Amy Bell. “Slavery A Global Investigation”. Filmed [October 2012]. YouTube video, 1:17:57. Posted [October 2012]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-mgXSojRuo>.

slavery well as it omits scenes of freedom movements and unions formed to free the blacks from slavery.⁵ Influential figures in history fought hard to bring slavery to an end, but the film does not include this information.

The film raises some questions such as whether governments know about the existence of slavery in their countries and fail to act. If the two filmmakers conducted their research by interviewing a sample of employees, the government could also apply a similar approach to confirm if slavery exists or not. States continually report that their countries do not practice slavery, but research by outsiders prove otherwise. It thus demonstrates the lack of commitment by the authorities to keep slavery away since it is easy to get the offenders and punish them.

The filmmakers want to enlighten the audience that despite the conviction that slavery existed in the past and governments have since banned it, there are victims today and there is need to rescue them. The film is a wake-up call for human rights activists to act and find the perpetrators. The most significant lesson I drew from the film is that slavery is still a big challenge across the world. However, authorities are reluctant to bring it to an end, hence their affirmation to the world that their states do not tolerate these heinous acts.

I believe the film puts both Africa and world powers to act fast in bringing the drivers of slavery to book. The interviews the filmmakers had with workers from different industries are proof that slavery exists both in Africa and the West, but the authorities do not want to acknowledge its existence. The film increases the search for offenders as a strategy for the affected countries to prove their innocence in supporting slavery. At first, I believed only whites

⁵ Wantchékon, Léonard, and Omar García-Ponce. "Critical junctures: independence movements and democracy in Africa." (2013).

keep black slaves due to the conviction that people of color are an inferior race.⁶ However, the film confirmed that even blacks turn against their own and enslave them, thus the conclusion that there is no relation between slavery and racism.



⁶ Acharya, Avidit, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen. "The political legacy of American slavery." *The Journal of Politics* 78, no. 3 (2016): 621-641.

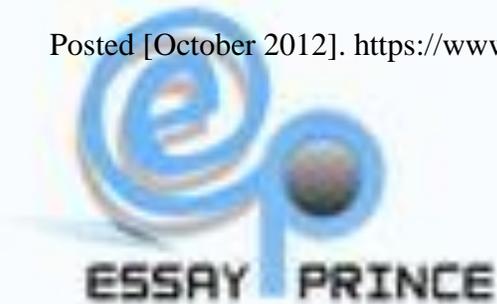
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