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ATLANTIC SLAVERY: LOST IN TRANS-LATION

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Abstract

“Who benefited more from the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: Ghanaians or Europeans?” That’s the test question on the official government syllabus/standards for Ghanaian schools. The syllabus also lists the benefits of colonization and that list far outweighs the detriments. The lack of a broader understanding about the devastation brought on by the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (TAST) is not exclusive to Ghana, but proves similar in the United States and likely throughout the world. Generally, the TAST appears lost in *Trans-lation* in secondary schools. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade forms the most transnational exchange surrounding Africa and the African Diaspora. The TAST to the Americas relocated millions of people, killed untold more, and treated those who survived as property based on their melanin, causing many wars that affect the world to today. To broaden our understanding of the pedagogies of the TAST, Ghanaian secondary teachers were interviewed; textbooks and the national standards were reviewed along with Ghana's role at the heart of the TAST with Cape Coast as a central embarking point. We discovered a lack of instruction about the transnational and contemporary impacts of the TAST at the secondary level. Through our study of the TAST’s instruction in Ghana’s secondary schools a need to expand how teachers inform students about the breadth of the TAST was discovered. This article will focus primarily on Ghana’s lack of transnational reach at the secondary school level due to the limits of standardized testing, the Ghana Educational Service’s syllabus, the textbooks utilized, assessments, poverty, teacher awareness and neocolonialism. This study also examines why transnational exchange in teaching the TAST proves essential in the secondary school classroom in Ghana and beyond.

Introduction

“Who benefited more from the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: Ghanaians or Europeans?” (Ghana Ministry of Education 2008, 17). That is the test question on the official government syllabus and standards for Ghanaian schools. The syllabus also lists the benefits of colonization and that list far outweighs the detriments. The lack of a broader understanding about the devastation brought on by the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (TAST) is not exclusive to Ghana, but proves similar in the United States and likely throughout the world. The teaching of the TAST in Ghana needs nuance that places more blame on the European intruders and their continued legacy in Ghana and Africa. The axiom for Ghanaian “capture or be captured” originated from Europe’s drive for slavery. Generally, the TAST appears lost in *Trans-lation* at the Ghanaian secondary school level.

This article, which came out of our 2011 presentation at “The Black Atlantic: Colonial and Contemporary Exchanges” conference at Stanford University and at Grand Valley State University’s 2012 African Diaspora Series, focuses primarily on Ghana’s lack of transnational reach at the secondary school level due to the limits of standardized testing, the Ghana Educational Service’s syllabus, the textbooks utilized, assessments, poverty, lack of teacher awareness, and neocolonialism (Stabler and Owusu 2011, 2012). Though the Ghanaian syllabus for secondary schools covers a lot of social studies topics, the authors believe the transnational exchange in teaching the TAST proves essential in the secondary school classroom in Ghana and needs more emphasis.

It is an understatement that a broader outlook of the TAST is imperative. The authors emphasize the standardized exams, teachers, syllabus and the textbooks because they believe that a person is as good as what he knows. In the case of Ghanaian youth, they are and will be as good as what their teachers teach them. The authors posit that broadening assessment and giving more local control of assessment will aid in the understanding of the TAST by Ghanaians. Only one question on the standardized exam, that all British former colonized West African countries’ secondary students take, *might* deal with the TAST. This lack of focus on the standardized exam trickles down to the government syllabus, textbooks, study guides, and teachers. In Ghana a minority of senior secondary school students take history courses. The TAST gets little attention in the 3rd year class in the course, “Coming of the Europeans.” This is the only course in Ghana’s secondary system that addresses the TAST and very narrowly at that. Students do take some history at the junior high school level that deals with the TAST. However, our main focus entails the lack of contextualization of the TAST at the senior secondary school level.

Owusu and Stabler focus on Ghana due to logistics and history. There is no assumption that the situation in Ghana is unique to West Africa in both the impact of the TAST and the teaching of it. Rather Ghana fits a model for other countries in Sub-Saharan West Africa that can inform the legacy of the slaveholder and enslaved and the colonized and colonizers. The authors hope to educate the diaspora (Manning 2002, 117).

The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade forms the most transnational exchange surrounding the African Diaspora, yet the history seems lost on Ghana’s secondary students. The TAST for the Americas relocated millions of people, killed untold more, and treated them as property based on their melanin, which caused many wars and continues to affect the world today. To broaden our understanding of the pedagogies of the TAST, Ghanaian secondary teachers were interviewed; and textbooks and the national standards were reviewed. A lack of instruction about the transnational and contemporary impacts of the TAST was discovered. Through this study of the

TAST's instruction in Ghana's secondary schools the authors realized a great need to expand how teachers inform students about the devastation and breadth of the TAST. David Northrup, historian of the African slave trade underscores its importance in his statement, "The Atlantic commerce in African slaves has attracted more attention than any other slave trade because of the magnitude of its historical legacy" (2002, xiii). The TAST serves as a conduit and a sample of transnational history. The TAST impacts the world, but most directly the populations of the Americas, Europe, and Africa and its Diaspora. Educating students about the latitude and consequences of the TAST will not only erase ignorance, but also present a case for a broader understanding of their world, country, community, personal heritage, and inequalities that still hold sway. Teaching the complexities of the slave trade will expand higher thinking and nourish the appreciation for our collective past.

Our study, as well as others, reveals how little the TAST's transnational character reaches Ghanaian students. Teachers, the syllabus, and textbooks in Ghana's secondary schools fail to reach beyond the slave ships' departures and do not scratch the surface of the contemporary impact of the TAST. Though a plethora of historical documentation exists and is readily available, the textbooks, teachers, and syllabi mention next to nothing about what happened to Africans when they arrived in the Americas.

The lack of a broader understanding about the devastation brought on by the TAST is not exclusive to Ghana, but proves similar in the United States. Even after the popular 1977 television mini-series *Roots* raised Americans awareness of slavery's foundations in The Gambia, K-12 history courses still lack almost any focus or understanding of the historical context of the TAST. For example in Michigan, the impact of the slave trade on Africa is presented at the 5th grade level (*History Alive*, 2003, pp. 78-80). According to Michigan's state standards, secondary school students should understand "the diffusion of Africans in the Americas." In addition, pupils ought to do some "comparing and contrasting the trans-Atlantic slave system with the African slave system and another system of labor existing during this era." Nevertheless, nothing in Michigan's Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs), which details the content related to the standards, mentions the impact of the TAST upon Africa (Michigan High School Social Studies Content Expectations, nd, p. 17). Though Ghana's standards/syllabus mention Africans in the diaspora, the term appears nowhere in any secondary school literature or standards for Michigan. Finally, in close to 1,000 observations of secondary social studies classrooms reviewed for this study, there was no observed discussion enmeshing the TAST with Africa or the African diaspora. Generally, the TAST is lost in Trans-lation in the United States that leaves Africa on the margins, while in Ghana it leaves the impact in the America's out of the curriculum. It is therefore significant that most Ghanaian teachers stop at the slave ship, the place where most American teachers start. The authors hope this article can begin a discussion across boundaries so the human cargos on those horrendous slave ships have a base and a legacy grounded in contemporaneous relevance.

The Study

Teachers who teach near the location of the two most infamous slave castles, Cape Coast and Elmina, were interviewed; neither the castles nor the schools' curriculum, seemed to enlighten the locals about the TAST. Though the castles form a central landmark and tourists from across the globe frequent them, the local population seems to care little about the history

they represent. Anthropologist Bayo Holsey in her work *Routes of Remembrance: Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana* confirms this lack of historical memory and interest in the TAST in the same area (2008, 1-2). The local students were no different. This point was made evident, as the authors sat outside the History Department at the University of Cape Coast and two local teenagers in school uniforms walked by them. Owusu asked them what they knew about the slave trade in both English and Twi and neither of them knew anything.

In Cape Coast, the two authors spent five months researching how TAST is taught in Ghanaian secondary schools. First, the Ghanaian national syllabus and standards for the TAST were reviewed which revealed that neither a transnational context nor TAST's relevance to contemporary Ghana. The national standards or syllabus discuss nothing about what happened to Ghanaians when they reached the Americas or how the slave trade impacts students today. The textbooks fell into a similarly limited framework. In relation to the TAST, the textbooks did not involve Europe or the Americas explicitly, but only Europeans in Africa. Finally, the authors interviewed senior secondary school teachers in some of the purportedly best schools in Ghana about their content. The conversations found a majority of the teachers rarely or barely reach beyond the standards. Interestingly, many teachers and textbooks disproportionately blame African forbearers for the TAST. The overarching cause of this involves how standardized testing drives Ghana's curriculum. However, a legacy of interethnic rivalries also forms an unspoken cause of the TAST's contextual suppression. These quandaries are addressed and the importance to all educational levels in this article.

Transnational Background

The historical importance of the TAST is undoubtedly transnational. Just consider the origins of Barack Obama and John Mills. Obama, of African and American descent, is President of the United States, while John Mills', recently deceased President of Ghana, name bears witness to British influence in Ghana. Only a transnational understanding of history and its correct translation can make sense of this seeming dichotomy. The authors of this study, one Ghanaian and the other American hope to add understanding to the TAST transnational context.

Ghana and the United States have a more symbiotic relationship than just presidential visits. Ghana's first post-colonial president, Kwame Nkrumah, was also a founder and spokesperson for Africa's Pan-African movement. Before Nkrumah only a few African leaders pushed to unite Africans across the Diaspora so effectively. Nkrumah remains the most conspicuous Ghanaian besides perhaps former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Anan. Nkrumah studied in the United States and helped free Ghana from British control. Most significant Nkrumah abetted the formation of the African Union. He was a pioneer in independent African politics.

While studying in the United States (1935 to 1945), Nkrumah learned a lot about the African diaspora. He gained some of his ideas about Pan-Africanism from Jamaican Marcus Garvey who promoted black unity in early 20th century through the United Negro Improvement Association. The Black Star Line Shipping Company serves as Garvey's attempt to help blacks return to Africa and break Euro Americans stranglehold on merchant shipping. Garvey's "back to Africa" and black pride mantras became imbedded in Nkrumah so much that the black star at the center of Ghana's flag symbolizes Garvey's movement.

The connection with the United States and the Diaspora continued under Nkrumah's presidency (1957-66) to the benefit of African Americans. He welcomed Muhammad Ali and Malcolm X to Ghana along with Richard Wright, Maya Angelou, and Martin Luther King Jr.

The country served as a beacon of freedom to African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement. In order to support Pan-Africanism and out of frustration with the lack of progress for civil rights in the United States, American historian and activist W.E.B. Du Bois migrated to Ghana at Nkrumah's urging in 1961. He died there two years later at the age of ninety-five, the day before Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. From the same podium during the March on Washington many people learned of Du Bois' death. Another African American activist, Stokely Carmichael, studied under Nkrumah during Nkrumah's forced exile in Guinea. Carmichael, leader of the Black Panther and Black Power movement eventually changed his name to Kwame Ture, the forename to honor Kwame Nkrumah. The connection between Ghana and the United States demonstrates the multiple connections within of the African Diaspora. This Diaspora to a large extent originates from the TAST, so making Ghana an appropriate starting place.

Ghana's Background

Ghana, formerly the Gold Coast, was a British colony from 1874 until 1957 when it gained independence. Like most African countries, the basis of Ghana's borders evolves mostly around the geography of colonization. Therefore, Ghana's population is far from a homogenous. At least forty ethnic groups and over fifty language families reside within its borders. No less than five of these ethnic groups remain dominant. At the time of the TAST, those living within the borders of contemporary Ghana would not describe themselves as Africans or Ghanaians and likely did not have these words in their vocabularies. Race and nationality fit nowhere in the peoples' lexis prior to the arrival of Europeans, and up to the late 19th and into the 20th century, identities as African or even Ghanaian lay at the margins if at all (Holsey 2008, 122). Within Ghana national identity is still not strong compared to ethnic identification.

Slavery in Ghana

Well before Nkrumah, colonialism, or Trans-Atlantic slave trade, the area now known as Ghana had a rich history. Slavery forms only a slice of that history. Slavery has long existed in West Africa though the terms servant, serf or subject would probably fit better. At some point in a West Africans' life almost all were probably labeled a "slave" unless they were royalty. The practice of slavery or indenture in Sub-Saharan West Africa varied greatly throughout its history from pawning to panyeeing to human sacrifice. For example, much of slavery in pre-European Ghana solved problems. People would sell themselves or family members in order to pay debt. This was often called pawning. The pawn would likely rejoin their family or gain adoption in to their new household. Though initially held in lower esteem, the prospect always remained for pawns to better their lot. The idea of chattel slavery was rare, as was involuntary separation of families. The virtual lack of any hope for a change in slave status proved uncommon in Sub-Saharan West Africa.

TAST Arrival in Sub-Saharan West Africa

A major difference in slavery between indigenous African systems and the Americas' chattel slavery was reflected in the immense wealth that traders could accumulate from European slave traders. Thus, with time, a lucrative business venture evolved (Blackburn 2011, pp. 82-84; Davis 2003, 30-31). Historian David Brion Davis described the TAST as, "The peoples of West Africa,

as well as those of every maritime nation in Western Europe and every colony in the New World played a part in the creation of the world's first system of multinational production for what emerged as a mass market" (2006, 2). Both lucrative and dehumanizing, the TAST was a business venture.

To many Africans, the TAST provided another avenue for continuing an existing practice, but with the ability to gain greater wealth and power. Historians have long debated the driving force for the TAST. Was the TAST's impetus African or European? Generally two schools of thought exist. Historian John Thornton, who primarily focuses on Angola, follows the "emergent Africa" theory. He writes, "The preexisting social arrangement [African slavery] was thus as much responsible as any external force for the development of the Atlantic slave trade" (2002, 131). Walter Rodney, Patrick Manning and authors of this article follow the historiography of "Afrique engage". This group supports the idea that the TAST had a devastating and lasting impact on the continent and the Europeans drove it. Rodney writes, "The European slave trade was a direct block, in removing millions of youth and young adults who are the human agents from whom inventiveness springs" (2002, 109). European capitalism served as the TAST's stimulus. This perspective is generally ignored in Ghanaian schools.

The great African slave exportation began in 1532 when 200 slaves left the island of Sao Tome to Santo Domingo and San Juan. The 16th century saw about 125,000 human exportations increasing to almost 1.3 million by the 17th century and heightening at almost 6.3 million in the 18th century. An estimated 11 million Africans arrived in the Western Hemisphere with a little more than half coming from West Africa. The statistics become even more astounding when one considers that for every slave arriving alive, two probably died in transport, capture or war. The growth in the TAST traces directly to the sugar trade in the Caribbean and South America, and rice and cotton production in the United States (Okyere 2000, 24-27; Hansen 2002, 42; Miller 2002, 48).

Over one million slaves boarded ships from the coast of Ghana. For Ghana, the average slave numbers leaving approximated 7,000 a year for the first decade of the 18th century, rising to about 7,500 a year until the 1750s, 10,500 until the 1780s, and about 9,000 per year until the 1790s. A majority came through the infamous Cape Coast and Elmina castles that are only separated by ten miles (Okyere 2000, 24-27; Hansen 2002, 42). Human trading served as the Gold Coast's number one economic endeavor in the 18th century. As demand for African slaves in the Americas almost always exceeded supply, the trade proved lucrative and competitive. The exchange in the 18th century reached a value of \$1 million a year or over \$30 million a year in 2011 dollars, though the financial cost proves hard to calculate in dollars (Lovejoy 2000, 57-58; Boahen 1975, 89; Blackburn 2011, 86).

The TAST brought mayhem. The 18th century saw many violent inter-ethnic wars known as the Ashante Wars partly based on expansion and wealth made from the TAST. This all led to excessive conflict previously unknown in the area (Okyere 2000, 27; Blackburn 2011, 86). The Dutch and British proved the primary perpetrators in Ghana due to governmental support, their merchant capital, and excellent navies (Okyere 2000, 24-27; Hansen 2002, 42). They brought guns and alcohol, which in turn wrought violent conflicts unseen in the country before their arrival. Between 1796 and 1805 over 1.6 million guns came to West Africa from England and England controlled about 45 percent of the trade (Inikori 2002, 52-53). By the end of the 17th century the Dutch had sold 20,000 tons of gunpowder in Ghana alone. Alcoholism also increased leading to more violence. The Ghanaian workers at Anomabo's slave fort demanded brandy for

its completion. Rebecca Shumway (2011), in her new work on slavery and the Fante said the TAST “was a business steeped in alcohol and violence” (2011, 1).

The Blame Game

The common Western detraction that “Africans sold Africans into slavery” forms a miniscule part of the truth. That contextual inaccuracy, Africans sold Africans, has strong connotations not only in the West, but also in Ghana today. No doubt Africans and Ghanaians did most of the kidnapping, capturing, and selling of slaves to the Europeans, but this description is without adequate historical context.

Europeans did not enter the interior of Africa. In travelling inland whites faced great dangers partly because of hostilities and disease. However, most did not trek inland because Africans controlled most trade into the interior (regardless of its type). Some did profit from the slave trade, nevertheless European demand completely drove the TAST leading to Africans giving up other forms of trade and industry to sell people for the West’s wealth. The West’s introduction of a cash economy through merchant trade and later forced cash economies through colonization plays a significant part in Ghana’s teaching of the diaspora.

The increase European trade that includes TAST created a thriving network of employment for Africans, especially along the coast. For example, the village of Cape Coast had twenty houses in 1555, but by 1680, when the TAST peaked, it had 500 or more. In the eighteenth century the population of Elmina averaged 14,000, larger than most North American cities at the time. Employment went beyond just the trading of humans, but included an array of related professions. African canoe men ferried goods, longshoremen loaded and unloaded ships, warehousemen stored goods, European traders used local guides and interpreters, inn keepers housed visitors, skilled tradesmen repaired everything from firearms to ship riggings and they all “benefited” from increased European trade, unfortunately this included Trans-Atlantic slave trade (Holsey 2008, 3-5).

Indigenous slavery never resulted in anything like the complete devastation the TAST wrought. The enormous loss of labor and productive industry relates to one thing-TAST. When the European demand for human chattel ended, slave markets in West Africa continued to capture humans for sale, but the market evaporated almost instantly in the region. The trade did nothing to develop domestic economies and created sizeable inequalities. Though some Africans gained wealth from the TAST, its end, determined just like the beginnings by Europeans, left West Africa’s economy in shambles. A commercial, cultural, political, and societal revolution occurred, but not for the betterment of Africans (Davis 2006, 100; Berlin 1980, 18-22).

The Akan and the TAST

The Akan ethnic group has long held sway in Ghana. They are monarchical, matrilineal in inheritance, and share common naming and marriage institutions, as well as a common calendar and religious beliefs. The Akan include among others the Fante, Asante (Ashanti or Ashante), and Assin ethnic groups. These groups did not always get along and were never completely unified or homogeneous, but in their collective they proved to be some of the most powerful traders in the region. Their traditions, especially among the Asante, including the king, gold, matrilineal inheritance, and slavery, date from the beginnings of the Trans-Saharan trade and continued through the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and beyond. The Akan, as a group, took

advantage of other groups in trade with both North African groups and Europeans. Gold trade and later the slave trade made them the richest of the ethnic groups in Ghana (Boahen, Ajayi, and Tidy 1986, 56-59; Flynn 2002, 132-33; Shumway, 2011, 16-19).

It remains doubtful that the Akan knew or really cared what happened to their captives when they sold them to Europeans. However, the Akan certainly knew “slavery”. It existed among them before and after the TAST. The Twi language has six different categories to describe slavery or subjugation. Before European arrival, “slaves” in the Akan region had rights and could marry a free woman. Children were born free. Slaves could own property, swear an oath and serve as a witness in court. Pawned “slaves” mostly became members of the family to which they had been pawned. Masters’ families adopted many slaves. Subject states also sold “slaves” as tribute payments. Such slaves mostly served in the court of kings (Ward 1991, 169-70). In the 17th century and beyond the Akan ethnic group dominated most of the conflicts involving the TAST. They used guns traded by Europeans to vastly expand their empires and capture more slaves to gain wealth, but the trade with Europeans marked a cultural and political change among the Akan (Shumway 2011, 2).

Wealth and military victories amassed during the TAST made the Akan the most prominent ethnic group in Ghana today. They make up at least 40 percent of the Ghanaian population and occupy roughly two-thirds of the country. Though the Akan, especially the Asante, share authority in a democracy their influence is unrivaled. Again, the Akan include many divergent ethnic groups. The Fante benefitted from trading on the coast and the Asante dominated the interior trade. These two groups fall under the Akan ethnic group, but have as many differences as similarities. Nevertheless, the Akan dominance in the slave trade remains without question, but is not discussed or included in the TAST’s pedagogy. This factor will be expanded on later.

The Asante ruled the slave trade in the Ghanaian area. African historian Walter Rodney wrote, “Ashante was in this process using its strength to insulate itself from the worst consequences of slaving, for those consequences were transferred beyond its boundaries” (1969, 25). Nevertheless, to blame the Asante ignores the question of choice. If the Asante chose not to participate another ethnic group likely would have and that group would become the power brokers and the Asante the enslaved. European greed, not Africans, Ghanaians, or the Asante, served as the impetus for TAST. Again, the adage of “capture or be captured” serves as indispensable instigator of conversations in Ghana. This understanding is lacking in the country’s classrooms today.

The Context and Conflicts in Teaching the TAST

Another area of contextual importance to the teaching of the TAST involves the legacy of colonization. The basis of the TAST did not entail colonies in West Africa, but in the Americas. The purpose of European trade initially involved primarily human chattel. However, to find more wealth after the TAST, the British and other Europeans began to colonize West Africa in earnest. The British colonization of Ghana still shapes much of the country. From the form of education and government, British style, to the affection shown towards white people, to the statue of Queen Victoria near the Cape Coast slave castle, it remains undeniable that neocolonialism affects how Ghanaians view the TAST. The national language is English. All government business and schooling is done in English even though it is not the first language of any Ghanaian. Even in Christian religion, the authors noted that pictures and portrayals of Jesus

continue as white regardless of education or class. Also Ghanaian dolls and mannequins are for the most part all white. Colonialism and neocolonialism impact TAST's legacy today.

Neocolonialism's relation to the TAST comes partly in the fact that Ghanaians have a colonial education system installed by their colonizers. There exists little balance in the teaching of colonization. Most textbooks reference colonization as a positive that brought many "good" things to the country such as infrastructure, modern medicine, Western-style education, and especially Christianity. Even one of Ghana's most famous historians and activists, Albert Adu Boahen, portrays missionary activity as positive. A personal beneficiary of a missionary education, Adu Boahen emphasizes that missionaries, who primarily arrived after the European slave trade ended, discouraged indigenous slavery and tried to set up legitimate business enterprises. The undue emphasis placed by Ghanaian scholars on the positive contributions of colonialism indoctrinates secondary school students and much of the country's populous in a fashion that definitely resonates neocolonialism, thus complicates the contemporary teaching of the TAST's detriments (Teaching Syllabus for Social Studies, 2007).

Ghanaian schools and the curriculum overwhelmingly emphasize the colonization period and the struggle for independence and not the TAST. In the classroom, the TAST does not go beyond the country's coast or the slave ships that docked there. Virtually no instruction exists about the large numbers of Ghanaians that died or were raped on these tight packed feces-filled dreadful vessels that made the trek across the Atlantic Ocean some 43,000 times between 1550 and 1870 (Blackburn 2011, 85). While independence from colonialism remains important, the authors suggest that the foundations lie in the TAST. Slavery in the Americas, like the Trans-Atlantic voyage, are lost in translation.

Secondary School System in Ghana

In regards to colonialism, a key area of importance involves the confines of the Ghanaian education arrangement. Ghana's school curriculum, pedagogy and structure are all based on their colonizers system – the British.

Another constraint in reaching Ghanaians with TAST content or any educational content comes in the fact that poverty plays a big role in Ghanaian's education. While 76 percent of Ghanaians attend primary school through junior secondary school, only 31 percent ever attend senior secondary school, which is translated as grades 10 through 12 in the United States. Thus, though the country spends between 20 and 40 percent of its budget on education, there are eleven-times more junior than senior secondary schools (Ghanaian Embassy, Education Information). Secondary schools receive limited support from the government and require tuition payments that most Ghanaians cannot afford. Access to higher education proves even more limited with only about 3 percent of Ghanaians attending one of the four national universities and eleven small private universities (Ghanaian Embassy, Schools and Universities). Even more exaggerated than in the United States, the well off obtain the best education in Ghana.

The top Ghanaian secondary schools' structures entail many similar characteristics. They are largely segregated by gender and board their pupils. These students spend three years away from their parents. All schools in Ghana require uniforms and all students, including girls, must have closely cropped hair. Corporal punishment, though publicly denied, remains in use nearly everywhere, as experienced by one of the authors' children, who received corporal punishment while in Ghanaian schools. Though the country's syllabus advocates against using "rote

learning” and promotes the ideal that application forms the key element of learning, this is not reality. Pedagogy is rote and geared towards high stakes standardized testing.

The breadth of the TAST’s teaching faces sober limitations throughout schools. The focus here is only on the top secondary schools in the country that are reserved for the upper class. Some work has already been conducted on junior secondary school history teaching. Bayo Holsey’s study (2008) affirms the lack of teaching about the TAST at the junior secondary school level, “school textbooks are the prime example of how the slave trade is minimized as an element of national history” (123). She goes on to affirm the notion of “beneficent” rule by the British and that the junior secondary school syllabus give little agency, but disproportionate amount of the blame, to Africans for the TAST (Holsey 2008, 123-27 & 205-08).

Another limitation to teaching the TAST entails the tracking system (generally six tracks from home economics to business to general arts) at the senior secondary schools. This means only a minority of the secondary students takes history as part of their course load. Thus, it can be safely stated that even educated upper class Ghanaians have little understanding of the context of the TAST itself. This study focuses on senior secondary schools, as they produce the teachers and leaders of Ghana’s future. Most importantly the focus is on upper secondary school education’s lack of a transnational approach that serves to highlight how far all Ghana’s schools have to go in providing a fuller approach to the TAST (Teaching Syllabus 2007, 6; Boahen 1975, 82).

Standardized Testing

All Ghanaian students, to advance in their education, have to pass standardized exams that cover a variety of subjects. The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) conducts the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) exam for all West African countries colonized by the British. Sixteen countries make up West Africa, but the British colonized countries include Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia. These countries all use the high stakes WASSCE standardized tests in their schools. Students must pass these exams to move on to senior secondary schools and to university. The WAEC itself is a product of colonialism. The organization was formed in 1948 in London by two British universities and West African educators trying to standardize education in the African commonwealth countries. Though now controlled by West Africans the format has changed little in it more than sixty years of existence.

One of the five compulsory examination areas includes social studies. Social Studies comprises everything from history to family formation to sex education. The exam questions may involve the TAST or domestic slavery, but never assess the TAST beyond Ghana or its contemporary impact. As one will see, the syllabus, textbooks, and teachers are all geared towards helping students pass the WASSCE. Assuring the WASSCE exam covers the TAST should form the primary short-term goal in increasing the understanding of the TAST.

The Syllabus

It goes without saying that the heart of secondary education the world over includes the syllabus (national level in Ghana) and standards (state and national in the USA). In Ghana, this important teaching and learning guide is put together by the Ghana Education Service (GES). The GES is in charge of primary and secondary education including the primary and secondary teachers and is administered by the Ministry of Education and Sports. The GES works in partnership with

West African Exams Council to set the syllabus for Ghanaian schools at the junior and senior school levels.

In year 3 of senior secondary school, the “Coming of the Europeans” forms one unit in the national syllabus that does address some of the dilemmas of slavery. The syllabus (2008) speaks to the creation of the African diaspora. It also asks teachers to tackle, “The nature and volume of the slave trade and its contribution to the creation of Africans in the New World” (p. 17). However, these topics did not find their way in to classrooms, textbooks or even the syllabus’ details.

The syllabus also wants students to consider the effects of the TAST, both positive and negative. According to the government syllabus there were positives to the TAST. The syllabus portends that the positive effects of the TAST outweigh the negative in number. This list comes directly from the syllabus (2008) include: “Positive effects: Introduction of new crops, European cloths, home and work equipment, literacy, religion and employment opportunities in office and factory type work. Negative effects: Intensification of the inter-ethnic wars, depopulation and the displacement.” The final portion of the unit asks students to evaluate, “Who benefited more from the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: Ghanaians or Europeans?” (p. 17). The question itself proves astounding. To believe that the Ghanaians out-benefitted the Europeans in the TAST boggles the mind. Noting the “positives” of the TAST in seeming balance with the negatives demonstrates the dearth of transnational or contemporary context of the GES syllabus and the lasting effects of colonialism.

This fashions a perfect place to show the benefit of potentially merging the teachings of the TAST in the United States and Ghana. As stated earlier, the term African Diaspora would be foreign to most K-12 students in the United States and, for example, is not mentioned in the Michigan “Grade Level Content Expectations,” which gives the details of the state standards (Michigan High School Social Studies Content Expectations, n.d., 17). The GES syllabus’ question involving a value judgment about African versus European benefit from the slave trade would never appear in a standardized test in the United States. There is a high probability that no teacher in the United States would ever consider the TAST a positive for Africans. The contrast elucidates the nuances involved in interpreting history in which the “right” answer is non-existent. The two points above demonstrate some of the complications involved in making the TAST transnational, but also the necessity for students to understand their and the world’s past.

The Textbooks

Due to the curricular limitations of the WASSCE and the syllabus, the textbooks used in Ghanaian classrooms only reinforce the lack of breadth in teaching the TAST. Though better than in the past, contemporary textbooks generally reinforce neocolonialism and do not approach history transnationally.

After the GES and WAEC have collaborated to prepare the syllabus, the former contracts textbook authors to prepare textbooks based on the accepted examinable areas. This statement from Vincent Okyere’s textbook (1996) demonstrates the WASSCE’s importance, “Topics treated have been handled with great care to meet what is expected of candidates for the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) conducted by the West African Examinations Council” (i). Due to the WASSCE, the current textbooks, written by Ghanaians, have limited the slave trade to Ghana with only a minimal amount of time on the Europeans’ role

in slavery and nothing about its transnational impact. They also often try to prove the positive affects on Ghana of both the TAST and British colonialism.

The textbooks play a crucial function as all Ghanaian secondary schools generally use the same two to three textbooks that are geared towards the passing of the WASSCE. Most upper-class schools provide textbooks for individual students, but poorer ones often rely on a class set or less. According to the GES, for every 100 students in Ghana there are 57 social studies textbooks (Report on Basic Statistics 2010, 11). Even the senior secondary school “study guides” for the WASSCE, that most local bookstores sell, list the rote information that will be tested (Gadzekpo 2003; Duah n.d.). For Ghana’s schools the study guides feed directly from the textbooks that feed directly from the syllabus that derives its content directly from the WASSCE.

Colonial textbooks. An old, but long-used textbook that demonstrates the foundations of colonialism in student learning in post-colonial Ghana is Godfrey N. Brown’s *An Active History of Ghana, From the Earliest Times to 1844*. Brown, who was British, a few years after Ghanaian independence in 1961, published a Eurocentric view of Ghana. A Ghanaian, Philip Mamondo was the illustrator for this book. Brown sought help from a female history professor at the University of Ghana, who was also of British descent. The author had assistance from two other British professors. The book’s publisher was headquartered in Norwich, so there is little doubt that Brown’s work did not reflect Ghanaian historical perspectives (Brown 1963).

Brown (1963) dedicates a chapter to the slave trade and handles the TAST ably. He does not sugarcoat the issues surrounding the TAST and even notes the existence of contemporary slavery. He highlights the triangular trade, the sale of slaves by the Asante to European traders for “cloth, iron bars, gunpowder, and strong drink” and discusses the horrid conditions on the slave ships. He concludes by pointing out the auctions and inspections, the broadsides, the branding and the other horrors of slavery (58-63). Brown states the reason for the TAST was sugar (Brown 1963, 72). He does not discuss slavery in the Americas, but neither do the contemporary Ghanaian textbooks.

Brown’s Chapter 10 begins the Anglo-centrism in the history of Ghana, even when it comes to the TAST. The entire chapter titled “Granville Sharp and the Abolition of Slavery” tells the story of British abolitionist Granville Sharp’s re-colonization of slaves back to Africa by having them reside in the country of Sierra Leone. How 400 freedmen “returned” in 1787 to Sierra Leone related to Ghana is difficult to envision, except that some of them were originally from Ghana, but were not returned to their homeland. Finally, the failure to mention the freed African American former slave Thomas Peters that introduced the re-colonization idea, while glorifying a white, British man makes the already tainted perspective more overt (Brown 1963, 72-77). This scenario is just the type of transnationalism that is not advocated in this study.

England, not Ghana, forms a common focus in the textbook. A later chapter reverts back to Great Britain with an exposé of Englishman William Wilberforce. Brown goes through parliamentary debates over slavery even laying out a map of the parliament’s chamber. The chapter reveals the near-decade deliberation over the abolishment of the TAST, but the word Ghana never appears (Brown 1963, 86-92). The next chapter “Thomas Buxton and the Abolition of Slavery in the British Colonies” discusses how slavery ends in British colonies, but again, Ghana gets no mention. The chapters illustrate how “good” the British were for abolishing the slave trade (93-97).

Brown’s book lays the foundation for assuaging Europeans from culpability for the TAST because they did so much to try to redeem them. The textbook also promotes British colonialism as a common good. This may seem preposterous, but the current strength of

neocolonialism in Ghana makes Brown's work a good overview of a bad problem—lack of contextual understanding of the TAST and colonization. This textbook, used in classrooms until the 1990s, illustrates how the secondary curriculum helped to perpetuate a colonial mentality amongst Ghanaians.

Mary Owusu's article, "The Mis-education of the Ghanaian" confirms colonial education's influence in Ghana. In the chapter she recalls her secondary education experience in the 1990s in two Catholic missionary schools in Ghana, St. Louis Secondary School and St. Rose Secondary School. As part of her education, she actually experienced a name change in order to "fulfill" the apparently pious requirement of a Christian first name and a paternal surname. Upon entry into the school she acquired a "good" baptismal name, Mary, and her father's surname, Owusu (even though children lineage is identified through the mother). Both these name changes were imposed on her through a Christian Western education system. Thus, she entered school as Akosua Seiwaa, her Ghanaian forename and maternal surname, and left Mary Owusu her Christian and paternal name (Owusu, 2007).

In addition, Owusu's secondary school, based on the British system, gave her two experiences with history as a subject. In order to participate in the Ordinary Level Exams (O Levels) administered by WAEC, history students were required to study British and European history for one part of the exam. The second part assessed student knowledge of West African history in two segments. The first segment essentially portrayed British colonial activities in West Africa as positive. The second segment covered Ghanaian independence. Advanced level history formed a continuation of the European and British histories with a slight variation in the African component, which included her specializations in both Christianity and Islam's influence in West Africa. She gained little knowledge in the history of her own country, Ghana, before entering the university (Owusu, 2007). Owusu experienced neocolonial indoctrination.

In addition, all of Owusu's knowledge of her Asante ethnicity came outside formal schooling. Anything on ethnic identity or history finds little coverage in the syllabus or textbooks and nothing in the post-colonial era. Her knowledge of the Asante's role in the TAST came at the university level. As discussed in more detail later, this is perhaps in hoping to maintain, or advance, Ghanaian national unity.

Contemporary textbooks. Though contemporary textbooks focus more on Ghana they do not address the TAST or colonialism with much breadth or context. Professor Bayo Halsey (2008) writes Ghanaians around Cape Coast and Elmina "are regularly assailed with European popular and academic historical narratives about the slave trade" (8). The textbooks, though written by Ghanaians, assail students with a similar neo-colonial mentality.

Vincent Okyere, a Ghanaian, wrote *Topics on Early African and Ghanaian History for Senior Secondary Schools*. It serves as one of early textbooks for senior secondary schools written in 1996. Mr. Okyere, Ghanaian educated, teaches at a senior secondary school in Accra. He previously taught at Mfantsiman Girl's Secondary School in Saltpond, which the authors visited. In *Topics*, Okyere amazes in his language involving the European slave castles and forts along Ghana's coast. Okyere (1996) writes, "These structures were meant to protect the inmates from attacks by their enemies – black or white, and to serve as warehouses where their goods were safely kept. Apart from goods, the castles at Cape Coast and Elmina served as bases for slaves" (222) How passé can one be about these structures? In the eleven pages covering the "Coming of the Europeans" slavery gains mention two times, once in the above sentence and the

other offhandedly, “Hawkins [explorer John Hawkins] took home some slaves.” He carefully notes the friction the “trade” brought to the Gold Coast and he specifies what people in Ghana “gained” from the slave trade like sugar cane, avocado, etc., but never mentions the TAST until the end. In his final section, “The Slave Trade” Okyere addresses the TAST and some of its injustices, but not until the last page of the book (Okyere 1996, 222-26 & 240).

The textbook currently used by many schools is Okyere’s *Ghana: A Historical Survey* (2000). Okyere takes on the slave trade and its impact very early in this work. He differentiates between African and chattel slavery and spends time noting its impact on the country. He ably narrates how the TAST made many Ghanaian merchants wealthy, but also how it negated the pursuit of other economic activity. The slave trade, when ended, would not only deprive the country of labor, but also of other productive economic activities, such as gold production and the training of craftsmen. The trade also eliminated a lot of farmers who found the slave trade more lucrative (Okyere 2000, 28-31). Okyere’s book does not address the violence related to the trade, the slave trade’s history beyond Ghana’s coast nor the contemporary impact of the TAST such as the Diaspora or its impact on global economics. Nevertheless, his second text serves as a vast improvement over the first and is still widely used even though it is over a decade old.

Though Okyere’s second text does a good job of showing the economic devastation of the TAST on Ghana he does not do the same in dealing with post-TAST colonization. His narrative reflects the influence of colonization on Ghanaian educators. He, as do many indigenous authors, portray missionary activity as positive for helping enforce the 1874 slave emancipation ordinance, promoting western-style education, putting native languages in written form, and introducing Western-style medicine and hygiene (Okyere 2000, 48-49). Nothing negative comes out about the loss of culture, racism, violence, economic disadvantage, environmental impact from the mining of natural resources or loss of indigenous tradition due to colonial occupation. Even though Okyere’s recent work came out in 2000, only two of the books in his small bibliography come from the 1990s and most of the works come from the 1960s, all written by Europeans. The text is colonial in its main approach to the British occupation of Ghana (Okyere 2000, 292-93).

Not nearly the most popular, but the most Afrocentric text is J. K. Flynn and R. Addo – Fening’s *History: For Senior Secondary Schools*. The authors pronounce the lack of indigenous writing of Ghanaian history as “racist” (Flynn 2002, 116). The first part of the text gives an in-depth look at the origins of Africa and its West Coast. They start the book’s section on the “Coming of the Europeans” with “We now know that the people of the ancient West Africa Kingdom [Ghana] had a civilization at a time when other peoples in Europe were backward and primitive” (99). The authors note the many sources and academic disciplines used to compose history beyond the written word to affirm the extensive history in West Africa (Flynn 2002, 103). The text gives a balanced history of all forms of slavery that affected the country. They point out the positives and negatives of colonialism, but not the long-term impact of the TAST in Africa or the Americas. Even this most historically balanced text disregards the effects of the TAST and colonialism that remain so apparent, yet so ignored, in Ghanaian society today. Despite these concerns this text proves a big advancement over Brown’s and Okyere’s books in the past few decades.

The Teachers

Teacher interviews were conducted in the Cape Coast Municipal District in the Central Region, which holds reportedly the best schools in the country, save Achimota in Accra. The Central

Region has the highest number of secondary schools with the largest enrollments even though it is not the most populous region. The region also has the highest percentage of university-trained teachers of all regions, except the sparsely populated Northern and Upper West Regions. The Central Region also has the greatest number of classrooms and writing places in all the country's secondary schools. The Cape Coast Municipal District serves as the epicenter of top class secondary school education in Ghana.

Though full of secondary schools and a major university, ironically the Central Region forms one of the poorer areas in the country. Its school population is augmented by an influx of wealthy students both at the secondary and college level during the school year, particularly at the University of Cape Coast (UCC), which enrolls 24,000 students and serves as the country's primary teaching college.

Students who attend UCC to become educators receive quite adequate training. They take classes in content and pedagogy, and complete student teaching requirements. However, many education students have little desire to enter teaching because the Ghanaian upper class does not respect the profession. Any college student is upper class by Ghanaian standards. Students' university education mostly serves as a launching pad for graduate school or working in a family business. Because of the shortage of students of university educated students in the teaching field, a majority of Ghanaian teachers have only a secondary school education and many university graduates teach for only one-year as part of their post college graduation national service requirement. However, since the authors interviewed teachers at schools placed in the top echelon of the nation, they all held university degrees mostly from UCC.

The teacher interviews were conducted at local schools. The edifices are generally large cinderblock buildings surrounding a dirt courtyard. They contrast with American high schools in the general disrepair, large campuses (more like a small college), lack of computers, lack of security or need for it (at one school a hunter walked through the campus shouldering a rifle), student deference to adults, and massive stacks of papers in the teachers' lounges. Each of the schools visited had other similarities, such as admission requirements based on standardized exams. The vast majority of students did not come from the Cape Coast area and boarded at or near their schools. Due largely to tradition, the Cape Coast Municipal District holds many boarding schools that draw top students from all areas of Ghana, except the largely Muslim northern part of the country. Adisadel College is a typical example of the typical Cape Coast "college" as some secondary schools in Ghana are called. The all male boarding school has 2,000 students with only 5 percent coming from the area and only 20 percent of the student body taking any history. Adisadel's website lists WASSCE scores, which are statistically some of the nation's highest to aid its prestige.

Within the Cape Coast Municipal District of Ghana, eleven history teachers at eleven different secondary schools were interviewed. Those questioned included a wide range of age and experience. Though all the teachers were Ghanaian, about one half were new (1 to 3 years) and the other half had over a decade of teaching experience. The gender breakdown was 50/50. In general out of the teachers interviewed, only one had travelled abroad (to the United States), almost all lived on the school campus, and all were classified as middle class.

The interviewers asked the teachers a standard list of questions about how they taught the TAST. The authors made specific inquiries about: slavery's different variations, slavery in the Americas, the transnationalism of the slave trade, and the TAST's contemporary impact. The

questions also focused on the interactions between Europeans and Ghanaians in the trade. The interviews took about 1 to 1.5 hours each. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, the interviewers did not ask about colonialism.

A variety of information was garnered from the interviews. They all teach slavery because it is a common question on the WASSCE exam. Teachers, especially the younger ones, stated any subject not on the syllabus was not covered. All but one of the educators understood the basics of slavery in Ghana and could differentiate between chattel and indigenous slavery. Several believed the necessity for African slavery came from “weak Indians” who had died from disease in the Americas. Some teachers, particularly those with more experience, claimed to cover all the wreckage the TAST brought. One listed eight negative effects of the TAST without mentioning a single positive. Only one teacher addressed the TAST beyond Ghana’s borders or its contemporary impact.

Responses to one question demonstrated that the “blame the African” theory has credence. The question asked was “On a scale of 1 to 10, one being Ghanaians being completely to blame for the TAST and ten being Europeans completely to blame, what number would you give.” Most gave twos and threes, putting the blame on their African predecessors. One instructor who gave an 8 to the Europeans did so because Europeans were more “enlightened and should have known better.” Another stated, “The Africans masterminded everything.” One teacher’s objective includes students “recognizing the positive and negative effects...on Ghana arising from contact with Europeans.” Another teacher did the same. This comes straight from the GES syllabus. The responses faulting their ancestral countrymen reflect the neocolonial mentality of the WASSCE exam, the syllabus, the teachers, and the textbooks.

The interviews shape a gloomy echo of the obvious inadequacies of the Ghanaian education system. The lack of in-depth instruction of the TAST exhibited by most teachers reflects a general paucity of appreciation in Ghana for the effects of the TAST on their own nation, Africa or even how the TAST led to the creation of the Atlantic World and its resultant globalization. Even the country’s most famous historian, Albert Adu Boahen, gives a nuanced perspective of responsibility, “The slave trade did not confer any benefits of any kind on West Africa,” but he blames African greed for the TAST without indicting Europeans (Boahen 1986, 109).

Discussion: Diaspora Lost?

Academics deserve some blame. Professors may be the most erudite, but where is the hegemony? Do professors surfeit themselves for the sake of the masses? University professors have responsibility to train future secondary school educators and even more to edify the citizenry. It was therefore sobering to see the ‘protégé’ and discover that the context of the TAST was lost. Those at the university often too narrowly focus their research. The impact of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade has to be passed down from the universities - for now that translation seems lost outside of African Studies programs which remain on the fringes of university enrollments.

Tourism has become a major effort by the government in order to attract foreign dollars, but also to enlighten the world about the TAST through the slave castles and forts. Over a hundred slave castles and forts dot the largely undisturbed Ghanaian coastline. Ironically, one of the castles, the Christiansborg Castle, remains the working office and residence of the Ghanaian president.

In the Cape Coast Municipal District, most teachers took their classes on field trips to the Elmina and Cape Coast slave castles. In 2000, just over 34,000 visitors toured the Cape Coast Castle with Elmina Castle's guestbook nearly parallel. Seventy percent of the visitors were nationals with students making up 60 percent of the Ghanaian sightseers. The government and even the Smithsonian Institution have made the castles major centers of TAST education. The tours do not sugarcoat the TAST and the horrors that took place there (Holsey 2008, 178). Though Ghanaian students visit the castles, especially those enrolled in schools located within Cape Coast; the GES syllabus makes no mention of them (Shumway 2011, 9). Though the two historical sites are outside the classroom, the impetus for TAST education has begun.

To broaden the importance of transnationalism and the TAST and colonialism's impact one should understand contemporary problems/issues. The contemporary impact of the TAST becomes obvious when one looks at the statistics on poverty, infant mortality, life expectancy, etc. Ghana ranks fairly low worldwide in these areas and well below Western countries that forced the migration of an estimated 11 million enslaved Africans. Though Ghanaian teachers and textbooks mention the fact that the country lost an entire generation of able workers due to the TAST who would have contributed to the economy, they fail to connect this to poverty in Ghana and for that matter Africa. For all intents and purposes the syllabus, the textbooks, and most teachers interviewed seemed unaware of the undeniable evidence in existing scholarly literature of the magnitude or of the demographical impact on Africa of the TAST. Historian David Northrup's extensive work on the slave trade in Africa clearly makes the connection from the TAST to current day tribulations in West Africa (Northrup 2002, xiii).

Teaching the TAST from a broader worldview will only help students in comprehending how slavery and colonization still affects them. The wreckage the TAST left upon Ghana and Africa served to bolster and industrialize the West. For example, explaining how slaves added to the wealth of the United States and how that has helped make the United States fiscally prosperous to this day would be transnational and important. That consideration can aid students in comprehending how the capitalism of human chattel brought upon their continent was not advantageous. The TAST and the oppression it created have not been overcome.

Today capitalist and neocolonial encroachment continues. The West has injected and injects itself all over Africa, mostly for self-interest. For example, Western and Eastern corporations have for years extracted gold from Ghana's interior mines. One South African family living in Ghana for five years serves as a practical example. The husband works for an American gold mining company. The family had sold everything they owned in South Africa and were banking his entire salary because all his living expenses and a stipend were paid while he worked in Ghana. His job involved repairing, monitoring and ordering tires for mining vehicles. Could not a Ghanaian be employed to carry this out? Another example of neocolonialism or neo-imperialism comes in how the Ghanaian government has decided to allow foreign oil companies to help in the extraction of the country's newly found offshore oil reserves. This has led to Ghana receiving a much smaller percentage of revenues in order to remove the oil immediately rather than wait for their own people to gain the technical knowhow to extract the petroleum. These examples serve to illustrate how apt the TAST's history is when informing Ghanaians about their own agency. Relevance of the past must reach the Ghanaian classroom to enrich and empower the youth of Ghana by educating them on the dangers of slavery, colonialism and neocolonialism.

The Dialogue Most Ghanaians Won't Have

The contemporary effects lead to another point of present-day significance, that of intertribal tensions. As discussed earlier, the most powerful and largest ethnic group in Ghana today is the Asante. For almost the entire 18th century the Asante rulers primarily, Osei Tutu and Opoku Ware, conquered and controlled vast swaths of what today forms modern Ghana. The Asante still have large sway in Ghanaian politics, and their language, Twi, dominates the market economy. This dominance in one respect directly relates to the Asante “success” in the TAST. Historians generally agree that the Asante became very wealthy and powerful because of its gold reserves and the ingenuity of its leadership, but also largely because of their control of interior slave trade during the TAST in Ghana. The Asante proved the best at supplying the Europeans with human beings partly because they received the best guns in return. Those guns were then used to capture more humans for export often through bloody wars with other ethnic groups that are today also Ghanaian. Early on many of these war captives were traded north through the Trans-Saharan trade routes, but as the TAST grew more captives were traded to the coast.

Because of the Asante’s “success” in the TAST, it took British colonizers until the early 20th century to militarily conquer them. The British became so desperate for conquest that they resorted to kidnapping and exiling the Asantehene (Asante king). None of this, the Asante basis for power or British military aggression, gain note in the classroom, the textbooks or the syllabus (Brown 1963, p. 70; Shumway 2011, 7; Boahen 1975, 18).

The TAST obviously caused a great amount of conflict among the peoples of Ghana and left tensions that still linger. Other ethnic groups, including some from the Akan cluster who are not Asante, today live in fear of Asante dominance. The same legacy left tensions between the Peki ethnic group and its neighbors in the Volta and Northern Regions of Ghana and the Dagomba and its neighbors. This unhealthy suspicion continues to cause tensions that are manifested in individuals’ choice of political parties and voting patterns. Ghana, like most other African countries, has experienced tensions and pockets of violence during elections that often breakdown along ethnic or regional lines.

The geographic integration of boarding schools, as discussed earlier, may also account for the lack of context and content involved in teaching the TAST. Though boarding schools have existed since the colonial era, the government of Kwame Nkrumah emphasized them so that wealthy students from all over the country would school together. Nkrumah thought this melding of students from a variety of ethnicities would quell interethnic tensions. He believed that this lessening would then filter down to the lower classes when students returned home. However, the Ghana education system does not address these interethnic apprehensions. They lie just beneath the surface and the foundations relate directly to the history of the TAST.

The problem of education involving the contemporary context of the TAST is nuanced. Despite the fact that Ghana is a stable nation when compared to most other African countries, the unhealthy misgivings handed down through generations owing to the role played by these erstwhile dominant groups during the TAST cannot be overlooked. The authors hypothesize that many Ghanaian leaders fear that if educators share with students how the Asante dominated the TAST, accrued wealth, gained influence and how that legacy still exists, it could create interethnic strains within the school and even the country. Asante dominance maybe one reason for the palliating of the TAST and colonialism in Ghana’s education system. Fully informing the populace about the history of TAST would be cathartic, but could also spark confrontation or at least that seems the trepidation of those in power. The solution is not silence. Ignorance has

never erased violence. It is for this reason that the TAST cannot be papered over in the formation of the Ghanaian child. A civil dialogue must begin so that Ghana's entire history gains comprehension. Schools form a good place to start the conversation.

Conclusion

The lack of contextual understanding of the TAST and colonialism are entrenched in Ghana's schools. Even the Europeans of the era knew the devastation brought upon Africa through the TAST. A 1730 Dutch memorandum announced, "The great quantity of guns and powder that Europeans have brought here [West Africa] has caused terrible wars...there is very little trade among the coast negroes except in slaves" (Blackburn 2011, 86).

The authors believe the following five actions would aid in a better understanding of the TAST in Ghana:

1. Schools, at all levels, should encourage a dialogue that addresses the issues of the TAST and colonialism and their impact.
2. Promote continuing education and professional development for teachers.
3. Encourage more local control of what is assessed and how students are assessed.
4. A broader liberal arts education at the secondary level that does not use tracking based on the interests of a teenager.
5. A better connection at the university level between content (history departments) and pedagogy (schools of education) for students.

These points will not be easy to instill in Ghana, but the authors hope that at least they can spark a dialogue that will bring about change in how the TAST is taught.

Though the article promotes a broader teaching and discussion of the TAST, Ghanaians have made strides. The relatively newly minted celebrations of PANAFEST and Emancipation Day lead to increased nationalism. The authors of Ghana's textbooks are nationals and are more nationalistic. The amplification of the castles' importance, along with other sites like the slave trading posts at Assin Manso and Salaga that seek to elevate the memory of the TAST demonstrates the agency of peoples impacted by the very event they seek to enlighten.

There is no denying the fact that knowledge of the TAST is central to understanding the interactions that have existed between Europe, Africa, and the Americas. It is about human society on these four continents and how it has come to be what it is. This article seeks to make a claim for full and well-rounded knowledge of the TAST because the danger of not knowing fully can make present and future generations victims of that evil, slavery. In the words of the historian A. L. Rowse, "the trouble with human beings has always been not that they ate of the Tree of Knowledge but that they did not eat enough of it" (1963, 8). It is our view that teaching a fuller version of the TAST forms the only way for educational institutions to contribute properly to preventive knowledge. The message must not get lost in translation--never again should humanity visit such evil on itself.

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