

Will Whitaker

Letter of Dom João III to the King of Kongo, 1529

1. Trade in merchandise as well as enslaved people posed a major threat to Afonso I's rule in multiple ways. A big way would include the corrosion of his authority. As goods from Portugal continued to flow in, those under Afonso were able to gain wealth and power independently from the king. Ultimately, this weakened the dependence and support that Afonso received from those under him. On the other hand, the slave trade led to people from Kongo being captured and sold. Even people in authority were at risk of being captured. Through the depopulation and destruction of the social order, it further tore apart Afonso's rule.
2. King Joao used multiple arguments to convince the King of Kongo to continue in the trades. One of them would be when he devalued the significant impact the slave trade had on Kongo. He argued that because of Kongo's great size, the negative impacts would not be detrimental. And contrary to what Afonso said in his letter, King Joao argued that the slave trade was needed for the overall health of the kingdom. Plus, King Joao pointed out just how many countries had been involved in the slave trade in attempts to justify it. He implied that Afonso would be doing his kingdom a disservice if they excluded themselves from the slave trade. His overall argument was that trade is what Kongo needs to remain a great and stable nation.
3. From what I gathered in both of these letters I would have to conclude that they do not. It seems that King Joao writes with superiority towards Afonso. Afonso's desire and attempt to leave the slave trade demonstrates his awareness of its calamitous effects and Joao still doesn't take it seriously. Instead Joao enforces his opinion that Kongo needs the trade from Portugal rather than listening to Afonso. Through defending Kongo's need for Portugal trade, Joao implied that Kongo wouldn't hold up without them. While Afonso tried to assert some authority by controlling the trade, Joao pretty clearly suggested that Portugal was still on top. These letters clearly show that these kings didn't treat each other as equals but rather Portugal proclaiming dominance.

Source 16.1 The Middle Passage of Olaudah Equiano

1. He was captured while he was at home with his sister. They were captured by two men and women who had climbed over their wall. The story doesn't clarify but these robbers were most likely part of a larger group of slave traders. As stated in the story, he was moved through many different countries before finally arriving at the sea coast. When he got on the boat he was overwhelmed with all the awful smells and sights, which made him prefer death over living on that boat. He got very sick and had no desire to eat, but some of the ship's crew forced him to eat regardless. They likely did this because they needed their slaves to be healthy enough to be able to sell.
2. I believe that they did this to put fear into the other slaves. They were likely punishing them so that the others wouldn't do the same. If the others were too scared to jump, then there are less problems for the crew. Additionally, there is more profit to be gained. If they are constantly losing slaves to suicides, they will lose a large amount of their profit. As well as that, they probably did it to demonstrate their dominance and authority. As slave traders they never want the slaves to hold the upper hand or have a choice to stay or leave.

Source 16.2 A Narrative Of The Most Remarkable Particulars In The Life Of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw

1. Falconbridge's account does not contradict Equiano's account but instead provides a different perspective on the events. Falconbridge gives his perspective as an observer while Equiano gives his perspective of actually experiencing the terrible conditions himself. Falconbridge even went into more detail on a few things than Equiano did, further aligning their accounts. Equiano spoke of the time in which he was forced to eat and Falconbridge described similar things in which the slaves had their lips burned with coal if they would not eat. Falconbridge provides a very detailed view of the events that took place on the ship but was still in some ways loosely connected. He later became an abolitionist and gave important and impactful accounts of the trade. So while he can absolutely be trusted, Equiano would have had a better understanding of both the psychological and emotional impact on the slaves.
2. Although we can't be certain of his training, his medical background absolutely impacts the way we read his account. His position as a physician would have given him a unique

and deeper understanding of the things going on around him. It would especially increase the depth and accuracy of his descriptions of the awful conditions the slaves lived in on those ships. His medical intuition would also prove insightful when describing the many health issues soaring during the Middle Passage. His medical background gives much credibility to his account. While this gives credibility, we also shouldn't disregard the fact that he was still involved in the slave trade. Although he eventually shifted to an abolitionist, he started in the same place as everyone else involved in the trade. While we do trust him because of his eventual change of heart, it's not wrong to have slight criticism as we read through his writings.

Source 16.3 Story of Omar

1. He was captured in the midst of a military raid. A large army attacked his home and brought him to the great sea. He was sold into the hands of Christians, who bound him up and sent him on the seas for a month and a half. His religious background would be that of a Muslim, and a highly educated one as well. He spent many years in his studies, which suggests that he came from a religious and likely very exclusive social background in Senegal. It is very clear that he came from a deeply rooted Muslim background, being involved in their religious activities and studies. This definitely gives him a unique perspective on all of these events.
2. He seems to remember quite well the beginning of his enslavement. He describes the man he was first sold to as a "small, weak, and wicked man". He also recalls his first escape well by giving details of what he did after and how he got caught. It seems that his time and interaction with Jim Owens, who eventually became his owner, stood out as well. It seems that the most impactful things on him were his loss of freedom and being thrown into a mostly Christian society. Especially with his Muslim background, this Christian community was quite the culture shock for him. The least impactful thing would likely be his labor under Jim Owens. In describing his time with Jim, Omar mostly focuses on the religious side of things.

Source 16.4 Mary Prince

1. When describing her relationship with her parents and siblings, she looks back on it with the fondest of memories. Her family was very impactful to her and a source of deep emotion. She recalls the separation from her family with much sorrow and weight. We

see this connection and emotion at its peak when she is being sold along with her sisters. Secondly, she was able to relate to some of the people she was sold to. She greatly loved and enjoyed Mrs. Williams and had a very positive relationship with her. On the other hand she detested Mr. Williams who proved himself to be very different from Mrs. Williams. In terms of her influence, we see that she had little to no authority, which made it hard for her to have any impact at all.

2. Prince seems to vividly remember the separation from her family. She explains her grief in detail and emphasizes on the trauma of being sold. She describes the intense fear she felt not only when sold but the anticipation of it too. As she recalled the men examining her she in some ways felt like an animal. She felt a unique sense of humiliation considering that no person should be handled or treated in such a manner. Despite all of the inhumane treatment we see her trying to remind herself of her humanity. She truly showed the depth of the impact these events had on slaves mentally and psychologically.

Questions For Comparison

1. When comparing these accounts thinking of the different genders of the writers, multiple differences as well as similarities arise. It's fair to say that both the men and women experienced extreme levels of pain and dehumanization in the time of their enslavement. We see a similar consistency in these accounts of being taken away from family at the time of enslavement. Mary, Olaudah and Omar all had tragic experiences of being forcefully separated from their families. On the other hand, Mary faced further persecution sexually that the men did not experience. But the men faced more stress physically as they had intense labor and beatings. There are many similarities between all of these accounts but also some undeniable core differences.
2. There are many consistencies and similarities between all of these accounts. One of the most prominent ones would include separation. We commonly see the emotional trauma that arises from being separated not only from their families but the homeland as well. Secondly, we see the theme of dehumanization. In every account they were treated in ways that no human should be. Finally, resistance against oppression was quite significant. This can specifically be seen in Omar's resistance through maintaining his religious beliefs.

3. The background of each author does indeed influence the way each of their accounts were written. The timing especially can further alter not only the way the accounts were written but also how they are read. Since Falconbridge wrote his so close to when he actually experienced those things, he was able to capture more in the moment observations. On the other hand, Omar and Equiano wrote about their experiences many years after, which gave them a lot of time to reflect and process everything that happened. So while these may not capture as many of the in the moment emotions, they absolutely get to write their stories from a birds eye view. In doing so it gives these stories a huge amount of reflection, adding to the depth of their stories. Ultimately, each of these different backgrounds adds a uniqueness and a depth to each account.
4. When reading these different accounts, understanding the place of the author is very important. For Falconbridge he was a mere observer and had a position far from that of the other two accounts. He was even in a place of authority, which needs to be taken into account when reading. While he hated what he saw and gave great detail to the torment of the slaves, the extent of his story was observational and wasn't personal. Equiano's story is that of great physical suffering and torment. Omar explores more of the impact his experiences had on his mind and identity. While each of these writers went through the slave trade differently, their positions give them a unique perspective, each forming together a greater picture of the time.