

Kunta kinte and gustavus vassa



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Among the most haunting features of the early American history was the debate on the issue of slavery. Slavery was indeed the major cause of the American Civil War that almost divided the whole United States (Polchin). The Black and White conflict persisted to exist until both sides had finally accepted a reconciliation that ended the long years of struggle to unify the whole America and consolidate its people (Anderson).

As how others have always said, there is really no winner in any war but only victims. The hostilities that slavery inflicted in the American history would not be disregarded for it would always remind the government and the people about the importance of unity and acceptance notwithstanding the differences the people may have.

On the other hand, no matter how people would assert that all participants of the American Civil War were victims, surely there was a party who absorbed much of the war's consequences. Between the Blacks and Whites, it was the Blacks who suffered and endured much of the implications of slavery. This was primarily due to the fact that the Blacks were the very ones who were discriminated, marginalized, tortured, demoralized and persecuted; the Whites were hailed as the superior ones (Anderson).

The Blacks had centuries of affliction and resistance against the by-products of slavery. They were not given the rights to decide for themselves. They were employed as mere properties that can be sold or traded by their masters (Polchin). They were flogged, brutally and cruelly mistreated. For the Blacks, slavery was a disease or much worse a curse - a curse that would continue to deteriorate their bloodline if they were not going to find a way to

cure it. Certainly, there were many attempts to obliterate slavery, of course, led by the Blacks. They did everything that they perceive to be effective in order to eradicate discrimination against their race and abolish laws that reinforced the evils of slavery.

Analysis between Lives of Kinte and Vassa

Obviously, the two protagonists were Blacks. The only difference was that Kinte was a character portrayed in a story while Vassa, whose real name was Olaudah Equiano was not a character drawn from a story or novel. They have the same roots (being Blacks) and same situation (where slavery was dominant). Both of them experienced being harshly discriminated.

Kinte was held captured by White men and was roughly dejected (Haley). The same thing happened to Vassa. They were physically injured. But what really wounded them was the fact that they cannot do anything but to endure their sufferings because there was no way that they can claim to alter what was happening in their lives –such as rights.

Thrashing, flogging, and battering were only the initial maltreatment and abuse that Kinte and Vassa experienced. What hurt them was the truth that anything can be taken away from them, even their lives and identities. Their names were changed upon they were sold or traded. Kinte's name was changed to Toby (Haley) while the name Gustavus Vassa replaced Olaudah Equiano (Equiano). They served and do everything that their masters told them to do so. They lived their lives the slave way.

Nonetheless, Kinte and Vassa had attempted to free themselves from slavery. Though Kinte was never really became successful in overcoming or liberating himself from the objects of slavery, he made sure that his daughter Kizzy (Keisha) would not forget their origins and their authentic identities.

Hence, when Kinte died, her daughter was so proud of his father and became determined to follow his father's ideologies (which was directed against slavery). The scene wherein Kizzy erased the slave name of his father (as Toby) and replaced it with his real name which was Kunta Kinte symbolized that even though Kinte did not really accomplished his political purpose, he was still become successful because he was able to make her daughter value his ultimate goal in life (Haley).

On the other hand, Vassa was more fortunate than Kinte because he was able to express his political ideologies against slavery. His writings narrated what slavery brought upon the Blacks and how it divided the United States. He used his works to enlighten the government and the people about the inequalities that the former America had been patronizing.

As an abolitionist, he strongly advocated for the abolition of the slavery, which was considered legal and was believed to be a right of the Whites (Equiano). Though his writings became effective tools in empowering America about the evils of slavery, he failed to see the dawn of the fall of slavery – just like how he failed to complete his journey back to his homeland.

Conclusion

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To sum up, Kinte and Vassa were both Black slaves. They had the same experiences and the same sentiments concerning the issue of slavery. Their ways in overcoming such slavery were somewhat performed in different ways but had the same impact. Their political stand against slavery was fundamentally directed towards the equality between the Whites and the Blacks.

Both believe that every one regardless of their color must be given equal rights and opportunities. To end, though Kinte and Vassa died without really being able to see the products of their endeavors, their legacy would remain in the hearts of their families and fellow people who were inspired by their remarkable examples.

Works Cited

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