

Reflection paper on the movie “amistad”

[Sociology](#), [Human Rights](#)



REFLECTION PAPER ON THE MOVIE " AMISTAD" Amistad was based on the true story of a group of Africans that were kidnapped and sold as slaves. They revolted against their captors and win, but are later defeated by a group of Americans. Upon arrival for their " trial", they are represented by an attorney who wins their case several times over but due to corruption and fear of civil war, they are constantly denied their victory until they finally win out at the supreme court as they were represented by once President of the USA, John Quincy Adams and are sent back home, to Africa. The movie focused on slavery. Slavery has always been the most shocking phenomena of our world. Slavery was the first human rights issue to arouse wide international concern yet it still continues today. Slavery like practices remains a grave and persistent problem today. Slavery, by itself seems very unnatural and provokes mixed feelings from the heart of each person. Some people are descendants of those who used to be slaves years ago. Some faced " slavery" even in the contemporary times. And some people just simply do not understand the possibility of one human being considering another human being its slave. Slavery, by definition, is the first historical form of exploitation, under which a slave along with different implements of production becomes the private property of the slave owner. So, in other words slavery converts an individual human being into a " thing" or even some kind of consumer item. This phenomenon has done a lot of harm to millions of people, taking away lives and destroying the fate of the people who could have been happy. The majorities of those who suffer are the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalized social groups in society. Fear, ignorance of one's rights and the need to survive do not encourage them to

speaking out. Slaves might belong to a different race, religion, nationality, or ethnic background. By focusing on such differences, slave owners felt they could deny basic human rights to their slaves. As what stated in the Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, " All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. " It means that all people are equal and that there is no superior and we should respect this freedom. We must treat them as a people not as an animal. Aristotle said that to overpower people does not mean that we are superior to them in nature. Article 4 of the UDHR states that " No one shall be held in slavery or servitude: slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their form" and Article 3 Section 18(2) of the Philippine Constitution states also that " No involuntary servitude in any form shall exist except as a punishment for a crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted. " This two provisions simply prohibits forced labor that no person shall be forced to work for the payment of a certain debt or gratitude. Slavery is the product and the extension of unjust act. We have these laws to ensure us and protect our rights. Perhaps the most blatantly cruel and most obvious element of slavery is the fact that the slave loses his/her freedom. Slavery is the possession of another person as one's own property, thereby relieving them of their basic liberties and freedoms. This total disrespect for humanity was shown in a variety of ways. The slave had no rights whatsoever. The living and working conditions of slaves and their food were extremely poor. Those were inhuman conditions in which the slaves had to survive. Endless executions of the slaves made the situation even worse. Slavery was a

period of time when one race treated the other race as animals, things, property, but not as people. And despite many efforts to end slavery, it still exists today. Some 27 million people worldwide are enslaved or work as forced laborers. That's more people than at any other point in the history of the world. In order to effectively eradicate slavery in all its forms, the root causes of slavery such as poverty, social exclusion and all forms of discrimination must be addressed. In addition, we need to promote and protect the rights of all especially the most vulnerable in our society. Where human rights violations have already been committed, we are called upon to help restore the dignity of victims. These people were brutally treated, experienced inhuman pain and still had the strength to try to learn to read or at least to listen to somebody reading. It is necessary to pay tribute to all these people who in spite of the cruelty in their lives managed to remain kind inside and some of them even tried to understand their masters. As what Aristotle said, " Liberty should be always held out to them as the reward of their services. " ROGELIO F. REYES JR. 3-ABPOLSCI