



BLACK VERSUS WHITE: THE ORIGIN OF MODERN RACISM IN AMERICAN SLAVERY

A thesis that explores the shift in exclusion mechanisms used by slaveholders in American slavery with the goal of linking this to the origin of modern racism.



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Introduction

“The voices of patriotic representatives boasting of freedom and equality, and the rattling of the poor slave's chains, almost commingled. A slave pen within the very shadow of the Capitol!”¹

This quote is from the narrative of runaway slave Solomon Northrup. Northrup became famous in recent history through the film adaptation of his narrative. The movie was called ‘Twelve Years a Slave’ and was named after the title of Northrup's narrative. The film fired up another public debate on transatlantic slavery, but more importantly, it remembered people of a great issue in our time: racism. The quote shows a hypocrisy that was prevalent in the United States and other (former) European colonies. Slavery could exist next to freedom and equality. In order for this hypocrisy to work, slaves would have to be excluded on very strict mechanisms. Nowadays this dualism is still prevalent in some way in the United States. The United States, a country built on freedom and equality, is also the poster child of racism in our modern era. Segregation of black and white people is still one of the main issues and racist hate crimes are still very much a part of American life. However, the United States is not the only country in the world that is facing problems with racism. We have to acknowledge that the consequences of slavery are still present in the modern world and that race relations are still predominantly determined by the racial tensions that originated from American slavery. It still has an impact on black people's lives everywhere in our time.

This thesis will contribute to a better understanding of the process of exclusion for minority groups, specifically black slaves, and the shifts that can be a part of this process when the exclusion mechanisms are not sufficient anymore. It will also contribute to the debate on the origin of modern racism by pinpointing a more specific geographical location than has been done before. Furthermore, the thesis will help to outline the process during which modern racism developed in order to explain why the racial tensions we see nowadays still exist and why it can be such an aggressive and stubborn part of certain societies.

Some historians argue that modern racism already existed before the transatlantic slave trade and others believe that its origin lies somewhere else. However, most historians agree that modern racism finds its origin in slavery and to be more specific: in the enslavement of black

¹ David Wilson, *Twelve Years a Slave: Narrative of Solomon Northrup, a Citizen of New-York, Kidnapped in Washington City in 1841, and Rescued in 1853* (London 1853) 42–43.

Africans by white Europeans. The transatlantic slave trade will be forever known as black versus white, European versus African. Historian Howard Winant concluded: “Slavery was only racialized in a definitive fashion with the rise of the Atlantic system”.² This historical period marked the beginning of racism, but the exact process is still unclear. Some historians state that racism was constituted in the judicial system and therefore has a clear start and others believe that it was a long process. This thesis works within the context of it being a long process and agrees with the words of historian George M. Fredrickson who wrote that he took the: “[...] cautiously hopeful stance that racism is not an incurable hereditary disease of human nature but rather the product of historical circumstances”.³

This thesis will prove that modern racism originated from American slavery. It will also try to pinpoint the origin more specifically to British America. This will be done by answering the following question: how and why were black slaves excluded by slaveholders and slave traders over time? To answer this question the thesis will look at the exclusion mechanisms that were used by British and Iberians during the period of 1492-1865. In the case of slaves it is very important for the enslaving group to justify why they can enslave the other group. Therefore, diving in to these mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion should give us an idea of how white Europeans justified having black African (or African American) slaves. Based on these mechanisms we can then determine how racism started and roughly where it started, since we will be comparing two of the most powerful colonisers, Spain and Great Britain. The chosen time period for this thesis is a little bit troublesome, because we are looking at these two colonisers who follow different timelines. In order to incorporate all of the important events we have to start in 1492, the year of Columbus’ discovery of the Americas and the year of the Spanish *Reconquista*, which both set the stage for the future exclusion mechanisms for black slaves. This is our starting point so we can follow the changes in these mechanisms in order to find the origin of modern racism. But then we come to another issue, where does the timeline end? There is no single law that states that racism is the dominant exclusion mechanism, so there is not really an obvious ending point. The entire process was, like we have stated above, a long and gradual one, which consists of two periods with a transition period in between. So, if there is no law that can determine racism as the dominant mechanism than the only other option is to follow society’s ideas on racism and the dominance of it as an exclusion mechanism. But here lies another issue: who defines when racism is the dominant factor? The slaveholders,

² Howard Winant, *The World Is a Ghetto: Race and Democracy Since World War II* (New York 2001) 54.

³ George M. Fredrickson, *The Arrogance of Race: Historical Perspectives on Slavery, Racism, and Social Inequality* (Middletown 1988) 7.

the community or the slaves themselves? Because all these different timelines intertwine and determining a good ending point is quite hard, the thesis will set 1865 as the last year of the researched period. In 1865 the American Civil War ended, which marked the abolition of slavery in British lands and even though it did not mark the end of racism, it should allow us to follow the institutional exclusion mechanisms of slaves long enough to determine where and how racism finds its origin and to discover the possibly most ironic and hypocritical contradiction in history. An American nation build on freedom and equality that also happened to be a nation with the largest number of slaves in the Western world.⁴

In the first chapter of this thesis we will be taking a look at the beginning period and we will establish a context to start with. We will explore the important events and how they determined future justifications for American slavery. In the second chapter we will dive deeper into the justifications and exclusion mechanisms used by the Europeans and we will zoom in on the transition period and what it meant. In the third and final chapter, the thesis will try to explain and clarify why the changes we will explore happened. That being said, we first have to explain some of the terms that people might interpret differently than the thesis is using them.

Terminology

First off, it is important to understand what is meant by modern racism in this thesis. Sociologists and historians have been debating about definitions of racism for a long time, so it is important to clearly pick a stance here.⁵ This thesis understands modern racism as it was defined in ‘A Dictionary of Psychology’, written by Andrew M. Colman. It defined modern racism as: “Covert or symbolic opposition to policies or practices designed to help a specific racial group, arising from negative affect towards members of that group. It is distinguished from overt prejudice, discrimination, stereotyping, or condescension on the basis of race (racialism), and also from overt belief in the intrinsic superiority of one particular race (racism)”.⁶ This is based on race and racial features and not on factors like religion, culture and nationality. In a sense it is more of a biological construct than a social one. Biological traits like skin colour and facial features are important here. The term racism was apparently not used

⁴ David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York 2006) 175.

⁵ Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 49.

⁶ Andrew M. Colman, *A Dictionary of Psychology* (Oxford 2009).

before 1936, so it was not used during the period of American slavery itself.⁷ It is also very important to state that this is not the same as discrimination. Although discrimination and racism are often used in similar ways, the terms have very different meanings. Discrimination can be done on any base possible, whereas modern racism is based on racial features. They might sometimes overlap, but they are not the same. This is very important since some historians have described discrimination based on culture or religion as racism. Lastly, we have to understand that anti-slavery is not the same as anti-racism. There were a lot of anti-slavery abolitionists who did not want to have equality for black and white people. This actually is one of the biggest differences in black and white abolitionists. Where most white abolitionists only wanted slavery to be abolished, black abolitionists like W.E.B. Du Bois saw it as a chance to become equals. Ex-slave Henry Bibb even wrote about this issue in his narrative stating: “And I here pledge myself, God being my helper, ever to contend for the natural equality of the human family, without regard to color, which is but fading matter, while mind makes the man”.⁸

When we are discussing racism, we also have to define what we understand as race. The term race, like racism, has many definitions and was used in many different ways through time. Like we discussed above, this thesis will use the modern version of race that is based on biological features and not on social ones. This is due to the nature of the thesis that searches to explain modern racism. In order to do that, we need to use the modern meaning of race and project it upon the black slaves, since they are an integral part of the process during which modern racism came to existence. However, terms like ‘race’ will always be problematic to work with and some people even argue that race is “a modern invention”.⁹ At the very least we can determine that terms like ‘race’ and ‘racism’ are changeable and we have to be careful how to use them. Historian Ronald Sanders even goes as far to say that even to this day we do not fully understand the meaning of the word ‘race’.¹⁰

Lastly, we will also have to discuss the use of certain words that are often used in sources describing slavery and racism. In most sources, both primary and secondary, the word ‘black’ is used to describe coloured people. Even though some might find it a negative word, this thesis will follow the original use of the word to keep it understandable and clear what we are talking

⁷ Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 48.

⁸ Henry Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (New York 1849) 204.

⁹ Ashley Montagu, *Man’s Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race* (Revised Edition; New York 1974) 21–22; David Nirenberg, *Neighboring Faiths: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in the Middle Ages and Today* (Chicago 2014) 170–171.

¹⁰ Ronald Sanders, *Lost Tribes and Promised Lands: The Origins of American Racism* (Boston 1978) preface viii.

about. This is in no way a moral decision, but a scientific one. If it comes to the word ‘Negro’ however, this thesis will agree and follow the method used by Sanders¹¹: the thesis will abstain from using that word, unless it is used in direct quotation from a primary source. In line with these choices the thesis will speak of ‘black slaves’ and will not use other terms like ‘enslaved black people’. This is, again, a scientific decision, since most other historians still use ‘black slaves’ as their main term of distinction.

Historical Debate on Racism

The question which came first, slavery or racism, is a question that has been asked by lots of historians. One of these historians is Eric Williams, who is famous for his economic approach to slavery research. As a true economic historian, Williams tried to explain slavery as a purely economic phenomenon. Williams saw racism as a by-product of slavery stating: “Slavery was not born of racism: rather, racism was the consequence of slavery”.¹² Although this thesis does not agree with the purely economic view on slavery that Williams takes, it does agree with his notion on racism coming forth out of slavery. Other historians believe that racism already existed before American slavery. One of these historians is James H. Sweet who stated that modern racism originated from Iberian roots.¹³ This thesis will discuss these Iberian roots and why it should not be considered modern racism in the first chapter.

But let us now zoom in on the racism and slavery debate throughout the years. Around 1900 the scientific debate about American slavery started and racism was brought into the debate around 1936, when the term was first used.¹⁴ However, this does not mean that modern racism did not play a part in the debate from the start. One of the most important writers around 1900 was Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, who believed in the so-called plantation myth. This idea revolves around the thought that black slaves in America were inseparable from the plantations. In Phillips’ words: “The characteristic American slave, indeed, was not only a negro, but a plantation workman”.¹⁵ In his book ‘American Negro Slavery’ that was published in 1918,

¹¹ Sanders, *Lost Tribes and Promised Lands*, preface ix.

¹² Eric Williams, *Capitalism And Slavery* (Richmond 1944) 7.

¹³ James H. Sweet, ‘The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought’, *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54:1 (1997) 143–166.

¹⁴ Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 48.

¹⁵ Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Régime* (New York 1918) vii.

Philips tried to explain the phenomenon using racist arguments. Even though Philips tried to be as objective as possible, in our time his book is seen as a pseudoscientific racial slur. This is mostly due to the fact that in his time scientists actually believed in a human hierarchy and used racial features to explain this hierarchy. It is interesting to note here that modern racism at one point was used as a tool for scientists to explain a scientific ideology. Philips and his fellow scientists used arguments like: “[...] a negro was what a white man made him”¹⁶ and “Negroes are by nature tyrannical in their dispositions, and if allowed, the stronger will abuse the weaker”.¹⁷ These types of arguments are racist at heart and Philips’ work and similar books tend to use these arguments and couple them with arguments of white supremacy.

This idea of the plantation myth hung around until the 1950s when historians like Kenneth Milton Stampp started to search for evidence that black people were not inferior to white people. This group argued that slavery was a cruel system and that slaves were traumatised by this system in such a way that they could not elevate themselves. For the first time, scientists pointed the finger at racist white masters and the system of slavery itself. This became known as the Sambo-thesis.¹⁸ Stampp tried to prove U.B. Philips wrong in his racial description of the primitive black people who lagged behind the white man. Stampp incorporated evidence from biologists, psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists to prove that black people were not inferior to white people.¹⁹

When we take a few steps forward in time we arrive in the 1970s where the scientific debate started to shift and focus more on the slave experience itself. Two groups of historians entered the stage with their own hypotheses. These groups were the revisionists and the cliometricians. The revisionists focused mostly on the incredible perseverance of black slaves and the way they survived in a cruel system like slavery. They solely focused on the positives and their continuous praise for slaves. This would become the main criticism, because the revisionists’ positive bias seemed to make them forget the problem that slavery as a system posed on these black slaves. The cliometricians were a group of historians who tried to explain slavery and racism using a capitalist viewpoint. In their eyes, capitalism formed American slavery and offered chances to the black slaves. This group tended to focus purely on the economic side of slavery with quite a narrow view on any other factors. For instance, they

¹⁶ Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, 291.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 278.

¹⁸ Jeff Forret, *Race Relations at the Margins: Slaves and Poor Whites in the Antebellum Southern Countryside* (Baton Rouge 2006) 1; Damian Alan Pargas, ‘Boundaries and Opportunities: Comparing Slave Family Formation in the Antebellum South’, *Journal of Family History* 33:3 (2008) 316.

¹⁹ Kenneth Milton Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York 1956); Robert William Fogel, *The Slavery Debates, 1952-1990* (Baton Rouge 2009) 9–12.

explained that black slaves could only maintain families, because white masters saw the economic benefits of these families. By doing so, they took out the slave as an actor himself. In short, they did not leave any room for a slave's own agency.²⁰

One of these cliometricians was Eric Williams whom we already discussed. Another leading author for the cliometricians was Robert William Fogel. In 1974, he wrote a book together with Stanley Engerman which was titled 'Time on the cross: The economics of American slavery'. In this book Fogel and Engerman argued that slavery as an economic system was not as bad as people first thought. Even though they only focused on the economic side of American slavery and clearly stated that: "We have attacked the traditional interpretation of the economics of slavery not in order to resurrect a defunct system, but in order to correct the perversion of the history of blacks — in order to strike down the view that black Americans were without culture, without achievement, and without development for their first two hundred and fifty years on American soil"²¹, the book was welcomed with outrage. This shows that you cannot see American slavery and racism apart from each other. In their book, Fogel and Engerman stated that the scientific myth of black primitiveness was introduced by U.B. Philips. They also stated that the idea of slave labour being inferior to payed labour started here.²²

Nowadays, most historians agree that racism originated from American slavery. One of these historians is George M. Fredrickson. He also stated that racism survived the abolishment of slavery and lived on to become even stronger afterwards.²³ In his view, English ethnocentrism changed into anti-black racism during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This was due to circumstances in America.²⁴ This thesis will argue that racism was already forming before that. However, both theories assume there was a period of transition, therefore it is hard to pinpoint an exact year. Fredrickson also argued that: "Explicit racism, a public ideology based on the doctrinaire conception of the black man as a natural underling, developed therefore directly out of the need to defend slavery against nineteenth-century humanitarianism".²⁵ This thesis disagrees with this idea, since racism was already forming before that period. Racism became an even more important focus when humanitarianism came into play, but this thesis argues that racism already existed for earlier practical reasons.

²⁰ Forret, *Race Relations at the Margins*, 1; Richard J. Follett, *The Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana's Cane World, 1820-1860* (Baton Rouge 2005) 6; Pargas, 'Boundaries and Opportunities', 316.

²¹ Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Slavery* (London 1974) 258.

²² Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross*, 227–231.

²³ Fredrickson, *The Arrogance of Race*, 3.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, 185–186.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, 204.

Methodology and Primary Sources

In order to answer the questions that this thesis is trying to answer it will make use of a variety of primary sources, twenty-three in total, the most important ones being traveller accounts and slave narratives. All sources have been selected based on criteria. These criteria were set as: period, relevance, objectivity, validation and geography. All selected primary sources are from the period that we are studying in this thesis (except for two translations of sources that themselves were from the relevant period). They are all found relevant to our theme and by comparing them to known facts and other primary sources we can prove their objectivity. For the validation of the sources the thesis looked at the comparison again, but it also took into account the use of the sources in other scientific work. Doing this we can better understand who wrote these sources and why and therefore validate the use of them. Lastly, the sources were selected on their geographical setting. The thesis uses sources on the American continents, mostly from Northern America and Brazil. It is important to note here that Brazil officially was not a Spanish colony, but a Portuguese one. The Portuguese mind-set towards American slavery however was quite similar as the Spanish one if it comes down to justifications for it. This has to do with the Iberian mind-set which we will discuss in the first chapter. Furthermore, during our time period Portugal mostly functioned as a puppet state under the Spanish Crown and for the period of 1580-1640 Portugal was the junior member in an Iberian union with Spain. Therefore, almost our entire research period Portugal (and their colonies) had to answer to the Spanish Crown.

With every primary source we have to establish its worth for scientific purposes by acknowledging the problems that it might have and finding a way around those problems. The two most important source types in this thesis are the slave narratives and the travellers' literature. Let us start with explaining the latter. Traveller journals and accounts are part of a genre called travellers' literature. This genre contains many different works and it is very important to know who wrote the source and why. Some authors in this genre wrote books purely for entertainment and others kept well organised journals of their travels. All can contain useful information, but filtering it can be a problem, especially with the more entertainment focused ones. The journals used for this thesis are not written for entertainment purposes, but some of them have been written for an abolitionist cause. Another thing that we have to keep in mind. Most of these accounts were also written by outsiders, so it is an outside view of a certain society or theme. In our case, most of these writers were anti-slavery, which gives a

certain direction to these works. However, it is of the utmost importance to immediately state that anti-slavery is not the same as anti-racism. Most white abolitionists during this period wanted to abolish slavery on humanitarian grounds, but were not rooting for equality.²⁶ The traveller accounts that this thesis uses were studied using the comparative method. Any used statements were cross-referenced with other sources from the era and/or known facts.

In order to study the slave narratives, we must understand mostly the same things. Who wrote them and why? Slave narratives in itself is a problematic genre, since they are one of the few sources made by slaves themselves, or at least based upon their stories. Who else can better inform us of the historical facts on slavery than the slaves themselves? The problem here is that slaves were not allowed to learn to read and write, so many of these narratives were written down by abolitionists based upon the slave's story. Because of that, these sources were seen as highly problematic in former historical approaches. U.B. Philips wrote about them that they: "[...] were issued with so much abolitionist editing that as a class their authenticity is doubtful".²⁷ Historian Stanley Elkins mostly agreed with Philips that slave narratives were useless for scientific research, although he was a bit more lenient towards some works of ex-slave Frederick Douglass. That being said, Elkins did completely dismiss 'My Bondage and My Freedom', written by Douglass, stating: "[...] obviously not the work of an ordinary slave".²⁸

Around the 1950s historians started to agree that the scientific world urgently needed data from the slaves' perspective. Kenneth Stampp was one of the forerunners on this topic, but he also concluded that most of the works by slaves themselves were "hopelessly inadequate".²⁹ Not long after Stampp, Eugene Genovese and John W. Blassingame argued that the slave narratives were useful. They argued that every personal narrative was limited in a way and that slave narratives were not different. Genovese saw potential in the narratives, but stressed that we needed to handle them with tremendous care.³⁰ Blassingame saw huge potential within the slave narratives, but admitted that narratives from ordinary slaves could pose problems. However, he also argued that these problems would only be minor ones, since according to him,

²⁶ For more information on humanitarianism: Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (New York 2011). Especially the part on saving slaves in Part 1: 57-76.

²⁷ Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *Life And Labor In The Old South* (Boston 1929) 219.

²⁸ Stanley Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago 1959) 3-4.

²⁹ Frances Smith Foster, *Witnessing Slavery: The Development of Ante-Bellum Slave Narratives* (2nd Edition; London 1994) xvii; John W. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge 1977) xi.

³⁰ Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaveholders Made* (New York 1974) 675-676; Fogel, *The Slavery Debates*, 16-18.

most narratives were from exceptional slaves. Blassingame also admitted to the problematic influences of abolitionists on the genre, but stressed that these abolitionist writers were known for their integrity.³¹

Another important notion to keep in mind while studying slave narratives, but also the aforementioned traveler journals, is that we cannot forget that these works were written based on memory. This can be problematic since the human memory tends to be flawed and subjective. James Olney wrote on this subject: “Exercising memory, in order that he may recollect and narrate, the autobiographer is not a neutral and passive recorder but rather a creative and active shaper. Recollection, or memory, in this way a most creative faculty, goes backward so that narrative, its twin and counterpart, may go forward: memory and narration move along the same line only in reverse directions”.³² Olney explained that memory is a constructive process in which the actor does not necessarily follow the chronological order of the events, but it is based on patterns of significance. Olney argued that: “It is in the interplay of past and present, of present memory reflecting over past experience on its way to becoming present being, that events are lifted out of time to be resituated not in mere chronological sequence but in patterned significance”.³³ Apart from the flaws of human memory, we also have to think about self-consciousness. When someone writes down their story, they tend to construct a positive representation of themselves for their audience. This is human nature and sociologists call this impression management. Erving Goffman was the first to use this term in his book ‘The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life’. He explained that people continuously try to influence the image that others might have of them. This happens on purpose, but also subconsciously. Goffman even goes as far to state that life itself is one big dramatic play and that this is where the human need for acceptance comes from.³⁴

Today slave narratives are seen as valuable, insightful and important resources for historical research.³⁵ But if they were seen as such problematic items, how do we then justify using them for our research? Different historians have come up with systems and models for using the slave narratives and the model that this thesis will follow was introduced by Walter Johnson. He introduced a three step model to work with the narratives. Johnson’s first step is to work with these sources together with other primary sources to compare and validate them.

³¹ Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, xvii–xxiii; Fogel, *The Slavery Debates*, 16–18.

³² James Olney, “‘I Was Born’: Slave Narratives, Their Status as Autobiography and as Literature”, *Callaloo* 20 (1984) 47.

³³ Olney, “‘I Was Born’”, 47.

³⁴ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York 1959); Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (London 1999) 10.

³⁵ Foster, *Witnessing Slavery*, xvii–xx.

Similarities could prove authenticity. The next step is to look for “the experience of slavery” as Johnson called it. The idea here is to search for small, seemingly unimportant details that abolitionists would probably have left out. This is to test the amount of abolitionist influence on the sources. Lastly, Johnson underlines that it is important that some events in these narratives do not come from actual memory. There are narratives where slaves tend to “memorize” events that were quite similar to other narratives. It is hard to prove if these events really happened or if they were made up by the slave in question. However, even if the events were made up, Johnson stressed that we can still use these narratives as a form of collective memory among slaves.³⁶

³⁶ Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, 10–11; For more information on collective memory among African-Americans and slavery: Ron Eyerman, ‘The Past in the Present: Culture and the Transmission of Memory’, *Acta Sociologica* 47:2 (2004) 159–169.

Chapter 1: '*Limpieza de Sangre*'

In this chapter we will take a look at the beginning period of the transatlantic slave trade. We will briefly discover the actual beginnings in 1441 and then move on to 1492 where our research truly starts. How and why did it start and why did the Europeans choose African slaves? These two questions are crucial to understand why African slaves ended up in America and why they were treated the way they were. In this period we can find the clues for the basis on which these African slaves were excluded.

The Beginning of the End

In 1441 a young Portuguese captain named Antam Gonçalvez tried to please his employer, Prince Henry the Navigator, by kidnapping an African couple on the Western Saharan coast. He was knighted for his actions and just four years later the Portuguese built a fort on Arguin island of the west coast of Africa. The fort was built for the purpose of trading slaves and gold. At this point the main focus of the trade was on gold, but the slaves were not just a by-product of trade.³⁷ In the years to come, slaves would become one of the main trading products on the Western African coast and it marked the beginning of centuries of abuse by white Europeans over black Africans. But did the transatlantic slave trade just evolve out of thin air? The answer to this question is no, it did not.

After the kidnapping of the African couple by Gonçalvez in 1441 and the building of the fort on Arguin island the Portuguese encountered a vast African trade network that had been there for hundreds of years. Slaves were already a part of this trading network for a long time, so the Portuguese, and later on other Europeans like the British and the Dutch, merely tapped into this existing market. The idea that Europeans went inland to enslave Africans themselves has been debunked by historians, although the European demand for African slaves probably did indirectly contribute to more enslavement in Africa. The Portuguese and their European counterparts would not go further inland than their trading forts, also called *feitoria*'s. These trading forts were built on the coast and Europeans often had to get the approval of local African leaders to do so. The same African leaders would forbid the Europeans from getting further

³⁷ John Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent* (2nd Edition; Cambridge 2007) 131.

inland and would threaten them with war if they did. Besides the fear of African repercussions for going further inland, the Europeans had more reasons to not do so. Fear of diseases and the extreme climate kept the Europeans operating mostly from their coastal forts. It is important to acknowledge and to understand that this slave trade was a two-way interaction and that Africans had good reasons to trade slaves with Europeans. The African slaves were in high demand among Europeans, the Europeans paid well for them and they had products for trade that the Africans wanted themselves, like iron and weapons. It is also important to understand that Africans were not selling their fellow men. The slaves that were sold to Europeans were mostly outsiders in Western Africa too. They were enslaved during war times or they were kidnapped in so-called slave raids. Individuals could also sell themselves into slavery and this happened mostly during times of crisis, such as famines. Historians argue that it is difficult to know the slaves' ethnicity. This is due to the raids and the captive status that most enslaved had before being sold to Europeans. In short, the slaves were most of the time castaways and not part of the communities to which the African slave traders belonged. Another reason for the big supply of slaves in Africa had to do with a demographic issue. Africa suffered regularly from periods of under population which meant that finding payed labour was difficult. This made enslavement a realistic option. All these factors put together created a situation wherein the transatlantic slave trade could start and grow.³⁸

As stated above, slaves became one of the main products of trade in Western Africa, but we also have to understand that this was not all about trading and making a profit. For Europeans it was important to get slaves for more than just trading reasons. In the same period Christopher Columbus (re)discovered the New World. In this so-called newly found paradise European countries like Spain and Great Britain started colonising new-found land. To grow these colonies and make them profitable the Europeans needed a lot of labourers. The huge growing demand for labour quickly outgrew the migration numbers of Europeans to the colonies. With this growing problem at hand Europeans turned their sight elsewhere in their search for cheap labour. The African slaves that were sold in Western Africa were seen as a realistic option to help out in the New World colonies. Europeans also experimented with forced migration and forced labour, but keeping other Europeans as slaves was not really an option. There were two different reasons for this. The first reason was that even though Europeans were

³⁸ Iliffe, *Africans*, 50, 131–133; John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800* (2nd Edition; Cambridge 1998), 98–99; Gad Heuman and Trevor Burnard ed., *The Routledge History of Slavery* (London 2011) 83; Linda A. Newson and Susie Minchin, *From Capture to Sale: The Portuguese Slave Trade to Spanish South America in the Early Seventeenth Century* (Boston 2007) 54–55.

not all the same and were part of different groups or nations, they still saw each other as more or less part of the same general group. They saw other Europeans as closer to themselves than non-Europeans. Slaves were basically never part of the same group as their masters, so Europeans enslaving other Europeans (except through taking prisoners of war) was not very common. The second and arguably more important reason for not enslaving fellow Europeans was of a religious nature. Christians prohibited the enslavement of fellow Christians. The Muslims had a similar practice within their belief system. Not enslaving fellow religious members was a general rule for a long time and even in the days of American slavery we still see that this played a role. Runaway slave Charles Ball even spoke about an encounter with a Muslim man in his narrative stating: “The people who had taken him prisoner, professed the same religion that he did; and it was forbidden by its precepts, for one man to sell another into slavery, who held the same faith with himself”.³⁹ Because of these reasons African slaves became the solution for the high demand for labour in order to make the European colonies profitable and sustainable. The high demand for labour from the European side and the supply of slaves from the African side created a starting point for a slave trading network on a scale the world had never seen before.⁴⁰

The Iberian Situation

As described above, the Portuguese were the first to make contact with the slave trading network in the Western African region via their fort on Arguin island. This is of great importance for the rest of our story since the Iberian situation during this period will lay the foundation on which African slaves would be excluded and it explains the justifications for doing so. To understand this we need to delve deeper into the Iberian situation.

For a long time, the Iberian Peninsula was inhabited by Christians, Muslims and Jews. The Christians and Jews were mostly found in the Portuguese and Spanish communities, whereas the Muslims were mostly found within the Moorish communities. During this period Spanish rulers often waged wars against their Moorish counterparts in the southern regions of the peninsula. These wars were based on two different claims. The first claim had to do purely

³⁹ Charles Ball, *Slavery in the United States: A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Charles Ball, a Black Man, Who Lived Forty Years in Maryland, South Carolina and Georgia, as a Slave Under Various Masters, and Was One Year in the Navy with Commodore Barney, During the Late War* (New York 1837) 168.

⁴⁰ Heuman and Burnard ed., *The Routledge History of Slavery*, 80–82.

with land. Spanish rulers wanted to take back the last remaining parts of land on the Iberian Peninsula in Moorish hands, because they felt that the land was rightfully theirs and should fall under their rule. The second claim was religious of nature. Spanish rulers wanted to cleanse the peninsula of Muslim influences and restore the Spanish lands as a Christian state. The Spanish thought that the Christians and Muslims could not peacefully live together so they decided that there was no place for other religions on the peninsula. Historian Ronald Sanders went even as far to state that this was already a form of racism, although he also mentioned that race as a term was not really used during this period. This thesis however, takes the stand that religion is not the same as race and since the *Reconquista*, as it was called, was mostly about cleansing the Iberian Peninsula from Muslim influences and taking those lands back for Christianity and Christian rulers this thesis does not agree with Sanders' statement of an underlying racial dispute.⁴¹

The *Reconquista* was finished on the second of January of 1492 after the successful capture of Granada, which was the last Moorish stronghold on the Iberian Peninsula. Some historians nicknamed this event "the other 1492", since it is often overshadowed by the discovery of the New World by Columbus in the same year.⁴² The fact that these two big events happened to coincide in the same year is actually rather important for our story. The Iberian mind-set that was developed over a long time during the *Reconquista* and the discovery and colonisation of the New World would greatly determine the justifications for the exclusion mechanisms used for African slaves in the future. We will dive deeper into this idea further along this thesis, but for now it is of the utmost importance to understand that religious cleansing became a highly important feature within the Iberian (mostly Spanish) communities.

After the *Reconquista* was finished and Moorish lands were restored under Spanish rule, we see another expression of this idea of religious purity, which was dubbed '*limpieza de sangre*', which can be translated to purity of blood. For most people, purity of blood would be seen within a class context. Pure blood mostly means 'of noble descent'. In this situation however, purity of blood or *limpieza de sangre* translated into religious purity of blood. A true Christian was pure of blood, which meant that for several generations the family existed of devout Christians. We can see that religion played a huge role within the Iberian community and this will continue to do so for the biggest part of our story. After finishing the *Reconquista* the religious lens of the Spanish Crown focused on another group of people who were living

⁴¹ Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain* (Philadelphia 2003), 7–11; Sanders, *Lost Tribes and Promised Lands*, 17–19.

⁴² Sanders, *Lost Tribes and Promised Lands*, Chapter 7.

under Spanish rule. The Jews were the next target of the Spanish Inquisition and like the Muslim Moors, the Jews should be converted or expelled from the Spanish lands. The expulsion of the Jews from Spanish lands happened in the same year as the Conquest of Granada (1492) and is sometimes seen as a by-product of the *Reconquista* by historians.⁴³

Not long after the conquest of Granada, Columbus was invited for an audience with the Spanish sovereigns just outside the newly conquered city. During this audience Columbus was granted approval for his ideas to find a way to India by sailing westwards.⁴⁴ Later that year, on the twelfth of October, Christopher Columbus discovered the New World which meant that Europeans came into contact with new peoples and cultures. These first contacts were shaped by the mind-set we have just discussed. Columbus landed that day on the island that they would name San Salvador. Soon after landing they came into contact with a tribe of people at which point Columbus decided to bestow them with simple gifts commenting on his reasons for doing so: “[...] that we might form great friendship, for I knew that they were a people who could be more easily freed and converted to our holy faith by love than by force”.⁴⁵ So the first contact with this new tribe was shaped mostly by concerns from Columbus on how to convert these people. Another sign that religion played a huge role within the Iberian mind-set during this period. Columbus further mentioned: “They should be good servants and intelligent, for I observed that they quickly took in what was said to them, and I believe that they would easily be made Christians, as it appeared to me that they had no religion”.⁴⁶ This is an important remark, because it shows the true agenda of Columbus towards these newly met people. He sees them as potential servants and feels superior to them, which is an important feature of racism too. However, when he called these people potential servants, primitive and poor he mostly based this on the fact that he thought they did not have any religious beliefs. Some historians argue that there was already a form of racism apparent here since Columbus described the natives as: “[...] the color of the Canarians”.⁴⁷ However, Columbus did not criticize their racial features. In fact, Columbus reported: “They are very well made, with very handsome bodies, and very good countenances”.⁴⁸ Again, it is not their appearance or racial features that Columbus saw as primitive or inferior, it is their culture. He perceived them as intelligent, but

⁴³ John P. McKay ed., *A History of Western Society* (10th Edition; Boston 2011) 247–248, 285; Sanders, *Lost Tribes and Promised Lands*, 83.

⁴⁴ Sanders, *Lost Tribes and Promised Lands*, 81.

⁴⁵ Julius E. Olson and Edward Gaylord Bourne ed., *The Northmen, Columbus, and Cabot, 985-1503* (New York 1906) 110.

⁴⁶ Olson and Bourne, *The Northmen, Columbus, and Cabot*, 111.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, 111.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, 111.

primitive. Columbus also stated that they would easily be made Christians like we stated before. All this taken together shows that Columbus was more concerned about religious motives than racial ones. He felt superior because he was a Christian and not because he was lighter skinned. This idea of religious superiority was also used by Iberian people to justify them having African slaves later on, which we will see a bit further on in this thesis.⁴⁹

From the comments of Columbus on first meeting the tribes of the New World we can certainly see that the Iberians had a superior feeling towards these new peoples and that given the chance they would make them servants. Some historians argued that Europeans came to the New World already focused on enslaving the inhabitants, even though there is an important difference between enslaving someone and making them a servant. One of these historians was Howard Winant who argued that the Europeans came to the New World to enslave the people they met there. Winant also argued that this was already based on racial prejudice.⁵⁰ Even though he is not entirely incorrect, we should mention here that race and racism were very different during this period. The term ‘race’ meant something else back then as it does now, and the term ‘racism’ did not even exist at that point in time. Racism as we know it now is therefore not really applicable in this case and the “racism” that Winant saw in his work was mostly based on religion, which is not a racial feature. People who were not Christian were automatically seen as less. When we take another look at Columbus’ comments we can see that religion was the first and most important factor, not race.

As we have seen multiple times before now, religion played a massive role within the daily lives of the Iberians. It is to no surprise then that religion would also be an important factor on the morality of slavery. When the Portuguese brought back the first black slaves from Western Africa they had to justify why they could do this. Normally slaves were prisoners of war or criminals. Portuguese intellectuals discussed the issue and agreed that this was part of a Holy war against heathens. It was said to be in the favour of spreading Catholicism.⁵¹ And when the Spaniards started to enslave the inhabitants of the New World, almost immediately people in Spain started to question why they could or could not do this. One of the first answers came from the Holy See itself. For this answer we have to examine a series of papal bulls which together were seen as a justification for colonialism and slavery. The first is the *Dum Diversas* which was issued on the eighteenth of June in 1452 by Pope Nicholas V. This papal bull authorized the king of Portugal, King Alphonso V, to conquer lands in Africa and to enslave

⁴⁹ Sanders, *Lost Tribes and Promised Lands*, 93.

⁵⁰ Howard Winant, *The World Is a Ghetto: Race and Democracy Since World War II* (New York 2001) 55–56.

⁵¹ Sweet, ‘The Iberian Roots’, 157.

the people since they were non-Christians.⁵² The second bull was the *Romanus Pontifex*, which was issued on the eighth of January 1455. This papal bull confirmed the *Dum Diversas* and for the first time granted Portugal exclusive rights to regions in North Africa. It also granted the Portuguese with trading licenses to trade with the North African communities, even though it prohibited the trade of weapons, iron and wood to the Africans.⁵³ The third one is the *Inter Caetera*, which was issued on the thirteenth of March 1456. This bull confirmed the *Romanus Pontifex* and gave even more claims to Portugal in African lands.⁵⁴ The last bull of importance to us was issued by Pope Alexander VI on the fourth of May 1493. Via this bull the pope declared that all lands west of a hundred leagues line from the Azores and Cape Verde islands were exclusively given to Spain, unless they were to be under Christian rule already.⁵⁵ This bull together with all the others would be the basis for the Treaty of Tordesillas which basically split up the New World in Spanish and Portuguese exclusive claims and it would serve as a justification for the Spanish to try and enslave the indigenous people.

Even though we can argue about whether or not the Popes really supported slavery and enslavement of black Africans and the people in the New World based on these papal bulls, we can see how it was used as a justification for Iberian colonists. However, there was also fierce opposition on the idea of enslaving the indigenous people. A Spanish priest by the name of Bartolomé de las Casas was openly against these practices. Being part of the order of Preachers, better known as the Dominican Order, de las Casas wrote a book about the inhumane enslavement of Native Americans in the New World. He stated that this form of slavery was inhumane and that the Spanish should stop it. As a solution however, he opted to go for African slaves.⁵⁶ It is important to mention here that a Catholic priest determined that Africans were less than Native Americans, but why is this the case? We can argue that this might have been due to the different ways of perception of the two groups. Like Columbus, the Catholic Church saw the Native Americans as people who could be converted easily and were deemed worthy for conversion. This was not the case for the black Africans. This explains the position taken by de las Casas on the subject.

⁵² Frances Gardiner Davenport and Charles Oscar Paullin, *European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and Its Dependencies to '648* (Washington 1917) 12; Sweet, 'The Iberian Roots', 157.

⁵³ Davenport and Paullin, *European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States*, 12, 20–26; Sweet, 'The Iberian Roots', 157.

⁵⁴ Davenport and Paullin, *European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States*, 27, 30–32; Sweet, 'The Iberian Roots', 157.

⁵⁵ Davenport and Paullin, *European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States*, 71, 75–78.

⁵⁶ Winant, *The World Is a Ghetto*, 56.

Africans as the “ideal” slave

Why did the Europeans choose African slaves? This question has been the central focus of many articles and books over the years, because there are so many different plausible answers. As described above there was a decent possibility for Europeans to buy slaves in Africa, since there already was an established slave trading network. This meant that the Europeans did not have to enslave these people themselves, but they could just buy them. One of the justifications for keeping African slaves is than actually rather simple: Africans are selling African slaves to us, so why should we not be allowed to buy and use them? Even though it sounds very harsh it is a human way of thinking which, if we place it within the timeframe, could definitely explain why this was used to justify African slaves to some Europeans back then. So the accessibility and the huge number of available slaves for purchase in Africa itself was already a justification for buying and using African slaves among Europeans. It was also, to some extent, a diplomatic move to use African slaves and buy them of the Western coast of Africa. This improved the Iberian relations with the Moorish kingdoms in Northern Africa, since they did not have to enslave people from those regions during wars.⁵⁷

Besides rather easy access and a huge supply, religion was another important factor to justify the slave trade among Europeans. It actually was the most important factor for the acceptance of this practice in the beginning period of our story. We have already seen this when we discussed the papal bulls and the Iberian mind-set. Since it was mostly the Iberians that started to tap into this African trading network, partly because they were gifted this exclusive trading privilege by the Holy See, their mind-set truly formed the early justifications on why African slaves should be fine to buy and use. Because their mind-set was basically entirely religious of nature it is only fair to say that exclusion of African slaves and the justification for having and using African slaves was mostly formed by this religious worldview. Inherent to this religious mind-set was that Christians automatically were supposed to be higher in the human hierarchy than non-Christians. This was immediately apparent when Columbus wrote his letters to the Spanish Crown stating that the newly met people on San Salvador would be easily converted since they seemed to be primitive, poor and had no religion themselves.⁵⁸ It is also important to note that Europeans would rank other religions, even though this was probably not done purposely and more subconsciously. Even though there was a lot of hostility between

⁵⁷ Iliffe, *Africans*, 50, 131–133; Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, 98–99; Heuman and Burnard ed., *The Routledge History of Slavery*, 83; Sanders, *Lost Tribes and Promised Lands*, 63.

⁵⁸ Olson and Bourne, *The Northmen, Columbus, and Cabot*, 110–111.

Muslims and Christians there was also mutual respect. Christians and Muslims understood that both religions were powerful and were followed by the masses. In the eyes of Christians, Muslims were rated as less primitive than for example nature religions, which were very common in Central Africa where a lot of the African slaves came from. The map underneath clearly shows that a lot of regions in Africa had indigenous religions. This probably enhanced

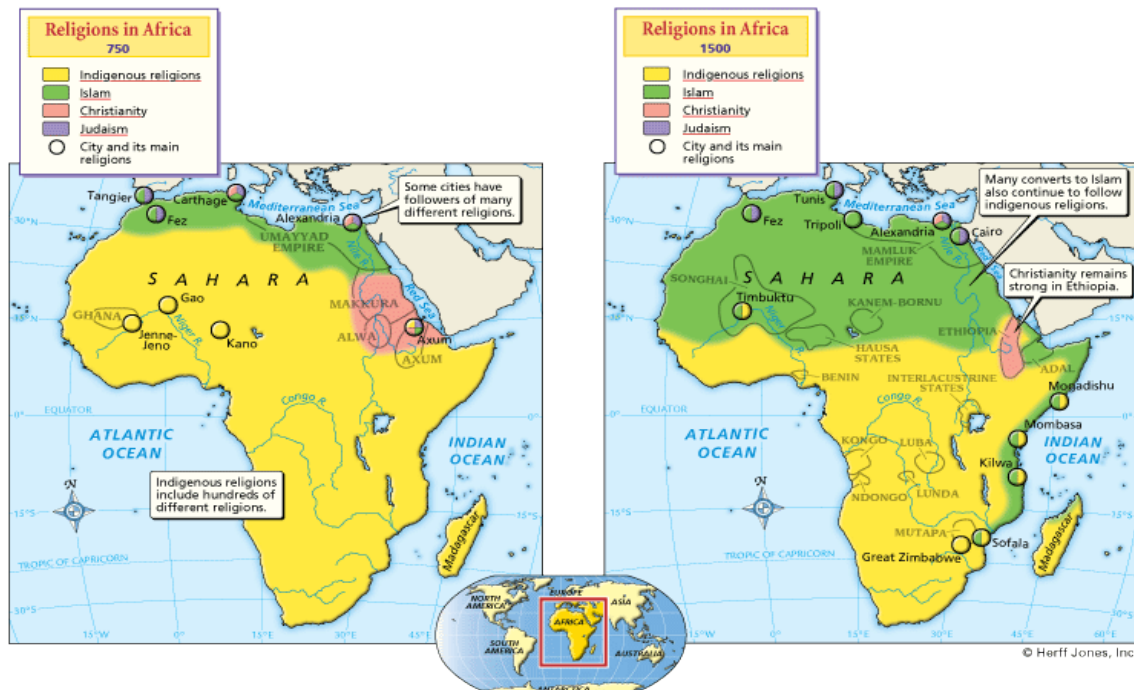


Figure 1: Religious map of Africa in 750 and 1500, Source: http://www.worldhistoryatlas.com/U05/AWHcom12_Q_U05_ReligionsAfrica.html Checked on: 21-04-2020.

the idea of primitiveness of the African slaves that were bought by the Europeans and it also makes the justification for buying and using them stronger in the eyes of Christians during this time period. Historian James H. Sweet also mentioned that the Muslims had black African slaves and that the Iberian Christians saw Muslims as infidels, whereas the people that serve those infidels were seen as even less. In his words: “[...] they were the Muslims’ servants, the heathen’s heathen, doubly cursed by their status as nonbelievers and by their servile condition”.⁵⁹

So, religion was the most important exclusion mechanism and justification in the beginning period for African slavery among Europeans. One historian who definitely understood this is David Brion Davis who wrote about it in his book ‘Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World’. On the theme of religion and slavery he wrote: “Turning to the influence of religions, the long struggles between Christianity and Islam and

⁵⁹ Sweet, ‘The Iberian Roots’, 149.

the cultures they generated have seldom been given sufficient attention with respect to the changing sources of slave labour. For well over a millennium, the ultimate division between “Us” and “Them”, or “The Other”, a paradigm for the polarity between masters and slaves, was nourished by the Muslim invasions of eastern and western Europe; by the Christian reconquest of Portugal, Spain and the Mediterranean islands”.⁶⁰ Under English people, religion (or lack of) was also the main justification for black slavery during this period.⁶¹

Because there was a huge supply and there was already an existing trade market for them, African slaves were easy to access for Europeans. This mixed together with the papal bulls, the Iberian mind-set of *limpieza de sangre* and the fact that these African slaves could easily be seen as more primitive than the Europeans themselves made the African slaves the “ideal” slave for Europeans. One fact that also strengthened the usefulness of African slaves in the New World was that they were as foreign to the New World as the Europeans themselves, making it easier to keep them at bay.

⁶⁰ Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 77–78.

⁶¹ Winthrop D. Jordan, *Historical Origins of Racism in the United States* (New York 1974) 50–51.

Chapter 2: Transitioning from Religion to Race

In the previous chapter we established that the Iberian mind-set mostly shaped the exclusion mechanisms that were used to justify the use of and trade in African slaves during the beginning period. Spain would become the major player in forming these mechanisms during this period, since they would become one of the main colonisers within the New World and therefore one of the main users of African slaves. We also established that their main point of exclusion was religion. Any non-Christians were seen as less than Christians themselves and any unknown religions would be seen as primitive by the Iberians and Europeans in general. In this chapter we will take a look at the transition period in which the main point for exclusion of African slaves started to shift from religious arguments to racial ones. This mostly happened within the British colonies, but it happened elsewhere too.

Religious Arguments and the Transition Period

Genesis 9:25

“And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren”.

The quote above from Genesis not only shows one of the most important religious arguments for the exclusion mechanisms that were used for African slaves by Europeans. It was also used by Europeans to explain racial arguments for exclusion of black African slaves. It is one of the best ways to show how the transition period worked. As we established in the first chapter, religion was the most important factor for justifying African slaves in the New World. However, this would start to shift, and racial arguments became more and more important, especially in the British colonies. The answer to why these racial arguments became more important is actually quite simple: religion as the main excluding factor was not cutting it anymore. Slaves were converting to Christianity and like we discussed previously, Christians could not have Christian slaves, so they should be given manumission. When slaves learned about this, more and more slaves tried to convert to Christianity even though their masters tried to make this very difficult for them. This was described by Richard Ligon who moved from England to Barbados in 1647 in search of fortune. In his narrative he wrote about a black slave called Sambo who asked him to teach him how to be a Christian. Ligon replied that he would do his

best and ask permission from Sambo's owner. Ligon described the conversation with the owner: "I promised to do my best endeavour; and when I came home, spoke to the Master of the Plantation, and told him, that poor Sambo desired much to be a Christian. But his answer was, That the people of that Island were governed by the Lawes of England, and by those Lawes, we could not make a Christian a Slave. I told him, my request was far different from that, for I desired him to make a Slave a Christian. His answer was, That it was true, there was a great difference in that: But, being once a Christian, he could no more account him a Slave, and so lose the hold they had of them as Slaves, by making them Christians; and by that means should open such a gap, as all the Planters in the Island would curse him".⁶² This shows that slave owners were very wary about spreading religion among their slaves.

Slave owners did encourage slaves to learn about Christianity, which sounds contradicting, but this was mostly because slave owners wanted to control that aspect of slave life too. Furthermore, slaves were not allowed to learn how to read or write and this was mostly so that they could not read the Bible themselves or preach from it. This meant that they could basically only learn what was taught to them by their masters and these masters were quite creative with their interpretation of the Bible. The sentence: "if you disobey your earthly master, you offend your heavenly master" was a much used rhetoric among slave owners.⁶³

Edward Strutt Abdy was an English legal academic and abolitionist who wrote about race relations in the United States in his traveling journals. He also wrote that he believed that the feeling of superiority that white people had over black people came forth from a religious standpoint, as he stated: "The black, it is said, is naturally inferior to the white [...]. The logic is worthy of the morality. He who is accustomed to see or to infer benevolent design in everything around him, will not doubt that the diversities of form and complexion, which distinguish the various tribes of men, have the accommodation of the species for their object, as they have the divine goodness for their Author. He would laugh at the folly, if he were not indignant at the impiety, which would make an assumed superiority of mind a reason for employing the physical powers of the victim for its own purposes".⁶⁴ On the subject of religion and controlling slaves Abdy wrote: "[...] he approves of teaching religion to the slaves by oral communication alone, and speaks with complacency of the law that recently enacted in Georgia,

⁶² Richard Ligon, *A True & Exact History of the Island of Barbados* (London 1657) 50.

⁶³ Dwight N. Hopkins and George C. L. Cummings, *Cut Loose Your Stammering Tongue: Black Theology in the Slave Narratives* (2nd Edition; Louisville 2003) 35; Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619-1877* (Revised Edition; New York 2003) 116, 143-144.

⁶⁴ Edward Strutt Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States of North America, from April, 1833, to October, 1834* (London 1835) 52.

that no colored person shall engage in preaching or exhortation or as a class reader”.⁶⁵ This quote is in line with what we discussed earlier: slave owners were preaching religion to their slaves, but black people were not allowed to preach themselves by law. This made it a lot easier for slave owners to control their slaves and their beliefs. Making sure that their slaves could not read and write was another important aspect of controlling their beliefs and this was enforced by laws for schooling. Ex-slave William Wells Brown mentioned this in his narrative as he quoted a law from a Virginia law book that states: “Any slave or free colored person found at any school for teaching reading or writing, by day or night, may be whipped, at the discretion of justice, not exceeding twenty lashes”.⁶⁶ These laws existed throughout the United States, but slaves searched for ways to undermine them. Frederik Law Olmsted, an American journalist, touches upon this in his traveling journal when he recollected a conversation with a slave owner. Olmsted asked about the conditions for slaves and if they (as a race) were improving. The slave owner answered: “Yes; certainly. [...] They are treated much better, they are fed better, and they have much greater educational privileges”.⁶⁷ Upon hearing this, Olmsted was surprised and asked the slave owner what he meant with educational privileges. The slave owner responded: “I mean by preaching and religious instruction. They have the Bible read to them a great deal, and there is preaching for them all over the country. They have preachers of their own”.⁶⁸ Olmsted then responded by saying that he thought that it was not allowed by law for black people to preach, to which the slave owner replied: “Well, it is not—that is, they are not allowed to have meetings without some white man is present. They must not preach unless a white man hears what they say”.⁶⁹ However, the slave owner also admitted to Olmsted that on his own plantation his slaves held meetings on Sundays and that his overseers were not always there for the entirety of the meetings.⁷⁰ Slaves holding their own religious meetings was a common thing as we will see a bit further in this thesis when we take a look at the work of Charles Ball.

The sermons that were preached by their owners were carefully chosen to control them and some slaves were very interested in this façade. However, most slaves wanted to praise their God in different ways. Ex-slave Cornelius Garner did an interview with American federal employees after the abolishment of slavery and told about these religious teachings stating:

⁶⁵ Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States*, 52.

⁶⁶ William Wells Brown, *Narrative of William W. Brown, a Fugitive Slave* (Boston 1848) 137–138.

⁶⁷ Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States: With Remarks on Their Economy* (New York 1856) 106.

⁶⁸ Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 106–107.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, 107.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, 107.

“Dat ole white preacher jest was telling us slaves to be good to our marsters, [...] We ain’t keer’d a bit ’bout dat stuff he was telling us ‘cause we wanted to sing, pray, and serve God in our own way”.⁷¹ Other slaves, like the grandfather of runaway slave Charles Ball found that Christianity as a religion was fairly simple. Ball recollected: “My grandfather said, that the tenets of this religion were so plain and self-evident, that any one could understand them, without any other instruction, than the reading of a small book, a copy of which was kept in every family, and which contained all the rules both of faith and practice, necessary for any one to know or exercise. No one was permitted to expound or explain this book, as it was known to be the oracle of the true God, and it was held impious for any person to give a construction to his words, different from that which was so palpably and manifestly expressed on the face of the book”.⁷² Especially the last part is striking, since slave owners interpreted the Bible continuously in their favour in order to justify what they did to their slaves. Ball also tried to explain the idea of religion among slaves: “It is impossible to reconcile the mind of the native slave to the idea of living in a state of perfect equality, end boundless affection, with the white people. Heaven will be no heaven to him, if he is not to be avenged of his enemies. I know, from experience, that these are the fundamental rules of his religious creed; because I learned them in the religious meetings of the slaves themselves”.⁷³

Just like Olmsted mentioned, we can see from Balls account that slaves held their own religious meetings, where they talked about their own beliefs and ideas. Furthermore, it is an interesting quote, because it shows segregation in heaven and an idea of revenge on white people in the afterlife. Ball himself thought that the white slave owners would be punished by their Maker when they died, stating: “The idea of a revolution in the conditions of the whites and the blacks, is the corner-stone of the religion of the latter; and indeed, it seems to me, at least, to be quite natural, if not in strict accordance with the precepts of the Bible; for in that book I find it every where laid down, that those who have possessed an inordinate portion of the good things of this world, and have lived in ease and luxury, at the expense of their fellow men will surely have to render an account of their stewardship, and be punished, for having withheld from others the participation of those blessings, which they themselves enjoyed”.⁷⁴ This is a prime example of why white slave owners did not want slaves to be able to read the Bible. Slaves learning about Christianity outside the controlled environment of the plantation

⁷¹ Charles L. Perdue, *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves* (Indiana 1980) 100.

⁷² Charles Ball, *Slavery in the United States*, 22.

⁷³ Charles Ball, *Fifty Years in Chains, or, The Life of an American Slave*. (New York 1859) 150.

⁷⁴ Charles Ball, *Fifty Years in Chains*, 150–151.

became a problem for slave owners, since they did not want them to know the full extent and meaning of the Bible as this would mean that they could convert and therefore had to be released from slavery or they could rile up other slaves and organise a revolution. Christian religion was on the verge of not cutting it anymore as the dominant exclusion mechanism.

With this problem in sight the British and other European colonisers started to experiment with other exclusion mechanisms for their slaves. As we mentioned before, slavery is basically always based on the otherisation of another group. The more differences there are between two groups of people, the better it works for the enslavement of one by the other. Where religion was the first main difference between African slaves and their European masters during the beginning period, Europeans now started to look elsewhere. They needed an exclusion mechanism that would differentiate between themselves and their African slaves, but it needed to be something inescapable too. The Europeans did not want the same thing happening with this new justification for enslavement of Africans as what happened with the religious argument. Therefore, one of the easiest and simplest arguments was race, especially skin colour. You cannot change your race or skin colour and it was one of the most obvious differences between Europeans and their slaves, ergo, it was perfect. The downside to this was that the Europeans could not change this mechanism from one day to the next. It would be a rigorous change that would bring problems to both slaveholders and the society they lived in. We therefore see a transition period during which the exclusion mechanisms shifted from purely religious arguments to a mix of religious and racial ones. Most racial arguments during this period tend to be explained within a religious context as we will see a bit further on. Most European colonisers used a mix of these in the end, but for the British colonies the main focus would be on the racial arguments as we will see later on in this thesis.

Let us now go back to the quote from Genesis at the start of this chapter. As explained before, this quote or the story that is told here is one of the most important religious pro-slavery arguments that was used back then. Within slavery debates it is often referred to as the curse of Ham.⁷⁵ This part of Genesis tells the story of Noah and his sons. Noah planted a vineyard and drank from the wine with him getting drunk as a result. He then proceeded to fall asleep uncovered in his tent. Noah's son Ham went into the tent and saw his naked father and instead of covering him he told his brothers about it. As a response his brothers Shem and Japheth covered their father up and when Noah woke up he knew what Ham had done. He then proceeded to curse not Ham, but his son. Ham's son called Canaan was cursed by Noah to be a

⁷⁵ Sweet, 'The Iberian Roots', 148.

“[...] servant of servants”.⁷⁶ What is very important to note here is that nowhere in the Bible Ham or his son Canaan are described as black or dark-skinned. However, since most interpreters of the Bible during this period were white Europeans who in some way could benefit from slavery in the New World, the idea was spread that Ham and Canaan were both black. This meant that the story took a turn and that all black Africans suddenly were descendants of Ham and his son Canaan who was cursed to be a servant to his brethren. Europeans saw this as a justification to use black Africans as slaves and this was also one of the reasons why Europeans placed themselves higher among the human hierarchy than black people.⁷⁷

Examples of people who thought the black Africans to be lesser than white people and used the curse of Ham as one of the main reasons for it are quite easily found. One of them was John Jacobus Flournoy who lived from 1808 until 1879. He was an advocate for the expulsion of all black African Americans from the United States. In his campaign he even sent several letters to famous ex-slave and black abolitionist Frederick Douglass.⁷⁸ Flournoy also wrote a lot of essays about why black people are supposed to be inferior to white people stating in one of those essays: “The blacks were originally designed to vassalage by the Patriarch Noah”⁷⁹, referring to the curse of Ham. In the heads of writers like Flournoy the curse of Ham was placed upon all black people of which there is no evidence in the Bible itself. However, many writers back then and even nowadays perceive the curse as a curse that was inflicted on all the descendants of Ham and Canaan, sometimes seen as all black people.⁸⁰

Another writer who held similar beliefs was James A. Sloan, who was a Presbyterian minister. He wrote: “Ham deserved death for his unfilial and impious conduct. But the Great Lawgiver saw fit, in his good pleasure, not to destroy Ham with immediate death, but to set a *mark of degradation* on him”.⁸¹ This mark of degradation is explained as the blackness of Ham’s skin, which is later used by Sloan to justify the enslavement of black Africans and to place them on the lowest tier within the human hierarchy. Sloan explained: “[...] all Ham’s posterity are either *black* or dark colored, and thus bear upon their countenance the mark of

⁷⁶ Genesis 9:20 – 9:27.

⁷⁷ David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (New Jersey 2003) 157, 168; Heuman and Burnard ed., *The Routledge History of Slavery*, 70; Sanders, *Lost Tribes and Promised Lands*, 63; Sweet, ‘The Iberian Roots’, 148.

⁷⁸ Frederick Douglass, *The Frederick Douglass Papers: 1842-1852* (Edited by: John R. McKivigan; Yale University Press 2009) 360–365.

⁷⁹ John Jacobus Flournoy, *A Reply to a Pamphlet, Entitled Bondage, a Moral Institution Sanctioned by the Scriptures and the Saviour. So Far as It Attacks the Principles of Expulsion with No Defence, However, of Abolitionism* (Athens 1838) 16.

⁸⁰ Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, 157.

⁸¹ James A. Sloan, *The Great Question Answered; or, Is Slavery a Sin in Itself (per Se?) Answered According to the Teaching of the Scriptures* (Memphis 1857) 75.

inferiority which God put upon the progenitor”.⁸² Sloan even goes one step further with his theory when he said: “*Black, restrained, despised, bowed down*, are the words used to express the condition and place of Ham’s children. Bearing the mark of degradation on their skin, they are *restrained* from being on an equality with their more favoured brethren”.⁸³ This is a very clear explanation of how the curse of Ham would affect all black people and it even is racist at heart since Sloan believed that it also puts dark-skinned people on the lowest tier of human hierarchy. We can see this clearly from his comments on equality.

The last writer we will take a look at to see the impact of the curse of Ham is Buckner H. Payne, also known as Ariel. He wrote a book in which he tried to explain the ethnological status of black people. At the very start of his book he wrote: “It will be admitted by all, and contradicted by none, that we now have existing on earth, two races of men, the *white* and the *black*”.⁸⁴ Afterwards, Payne went on to explain the racial features of white and black men, linking this to the curse of Ham when he stated: “The curse denounced against him, that a servant of servants should he be unto his brethren [...] that this curse was to do so, and did change him, so that instead of being long, straight haired, high forehead, high nose, thin lips and white, as he then was, [...] he was from that day forth, to be kinky-headed, low forehead, thick lipped and black skinned; and that his *name*, and this *curse*, effected all this”.⁸⁵ Based on this we can state that Payne believed that Ham was born as a white man, but due to him being cursed he changed into a black man. Payne seems to search for the origin of black people within this biblical story as he also found “proof” of the curse when he wrote: “And truly, to answer their assumptions, it must have done so, or the case would not fit the negro, as we now find him. And they adduce in proof, that Ham’s name in Hebrew means *black*, the present color of the negro, and that therefore Ham is the progenitor of the black race”.⁸⁶ Once again we see the link being made between the curse and it affecting all black people.

These writers who used the curse of Ham as a justification for racism against black people are therefore prime examples of how religious arguments shift to racial ones. In fact, they do not only shift, but they enable the racial arguments. The religious arguments mix with racial prejudice and create an environment in which racism could and would develop. Besides that, the curse of Ham and its justifications for enslaving black people has a direct link with the civil order within society. Some historians like David M. Goldenberg even called it “[...] the

⁸² Sloan, *The Great Question Answered*, 78.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, 80.

⁸⁴ Buckner H. Payne, *The Negro: What Is His Ethnological Status?* (Cincinnati 1867) 4.

⁸⁵ Payne, *The Negro*, 4–5.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, 5.

ideological cornerstone for the justification of Black slavery”.⁸⁷ It also shows how much slavery and the justification of it was apparent in society during this period. It was a real issue which was spoken about publicly and was seen as a hot topic. This all points to the transition period where the exclusion mechanisms for black slaves were changing from religious to racial.

Another religious argument that played a massive role in explaining and enabling racism was the story of the tower of Babylon. This part of the Bible that was written down in Genesis 11:1 tells the story of the first settlement that was built by the progeny of Noah. Their leader was called Nimrod and he opted to build a grand tower in the settlement that could reach the heavens to make a name for themselves. God did not want them to do such a thing so he cursed them with speaking different languages, which resulted in the failure of building the tower of Babylon.⁸⁸ On first sight, this story does not really have a link to slavery or racism, but it was later enhanced by religious interpreters to encompass these two themes within it. The new interpretation was based on the idea that Nimrod alone was responsible for the idea of building the tower and that none of the other offspring of Noah agreed with his idea. Nimrod was portrayed as Satan for going against the will of God by still trying to build the tower. Still we do not really see the link with slavery and racism, but all of a sudden, Christian priests agreed that Nimrod and his followers were all descendants of Ham. The two curses were linked and the link with slavery and racism towards black Africans once again was legitimised through a religious view. This entire story should also give an insight on the “natural” antipathy towards black people according to these priests and slaveholders.⁸⁹

As we have seen above, the passages from Genesis in the Bible were used to enable racial arguments and to explain the human hierarchy based on race and racial features. We can see that these religious arguments mixed with racial ones show that there was a transition period. This transition period can mostly be found in the British American colonies and can be characterised by slow integration of racial arguments with the help of religious arguments within society. This helped legitimising the use of black Africans as slaves. Religion and the Bible played massive roles to enable this transition, but there were also racial arguments that were not introduced through a religious lens.

⁸⁷ Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham*, 175.

⁸⁸ Genesis 11:1 – 11:9.

⁸⁹ Stephen R. Haynes, *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (New York 2002) 107.

Racist Exclusion Mechanisms

During and after this transition period we just discussed, more and more racist arguments were invented to exclude black slaves. These racial exclusion mechanisms are one of the things that made American slavery so unique. The racial remarks created a true contrast between black and white, but also European and African. White supremacy went hand in hand with the idea that Europeans were more powerful and superior to Africans, who were seen as primitive and inferior. This idea was already there but was enhanced when it got linked to the racial features. Because of this, European became a synonym with white and African with black.⁹⁰ Howard Winant explained this as follows: “Those who were not European, not white, were presumptively permanently subjected, ineluctably distinguished from those who were “free”: the possessors of European-derived identities”.⁹¹ He also explained another important ideology among Europeans during this period. Europeans were seen as humans, whereas black people were seen as: “[...] chattel: property, animal-like beings, semi-human at best, they were subject to white will and enjoyed few legal protections or rights”.⁹² Skin colour became one of the most prominent mechanisms in the American South to exclude black people. The word ‘black’ had a lot of negative connotation to it for the British. Black was seen as the embodiment of evil, sins, danger and the devil itself. In contrast, white was seen as the embodiment of purity. This idea was also applied by the British on Native Americans. Native Americans were seen as red and were categorized in different categories of the darkness of their skin. Heuman and Burnard wrote that the British saw what they wanted to see. A clear difference between themselves and others, who could be seen as inferior.⁹³

Black people were placed lowest on the human hierarchical ladder by white Europeans. Consequently, Europeans (mostly the British) saw no potential in trying to civilize these black slaves. This is an important difference between the Native Americans and black slaves, since the Native Americans were deemed worthy of civilization from the beginning. Later on, this changed and slaveholders started to teach their slaves about religion like we have discussed above. In the American South this was mostly done under the ideology of paternalism. This ideology consisted of the idea that the white master was the *pater familias*, or head of the household, and had to take care of his extended family. His black slaves also belonged to this

⁹⁰ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 5–6, 28–29.

⁹¹ Winant, *The World Is a Ghetto*, 54.

⁹² *Ibidem*, 54.

⁹³ Heuman and Burnard ed., *The Routledge History of Slavery*, 68–70.

family. This all sounds as an improvement for slaves, but in reality paternalism was mostly used to justify having black slaves and to strengthen the idea that black people could not elevate themselves to be a better human. It also gave another reason for slaveholders to dabble with everyday slave life, making their control over their slaves even stronger.⁹⁴ William Howard Russell was an Irish journalist who wrote about his travels through the United States. He remarked that this paternalistic view was very common in the American South. He illustrated this with a conversation he had with Edmund Rhett who was a slaveholder and part of a very influential and political active family. Rhett told Russell: “We have a system which enables us to reap the fruits of the earth by a race which we save from barbarism in restoring them to their real place in the world as laborers”.⁹⁵ In this case the paternalistic view did not expand much further than believing that they did the black slaves a favour by giving them “their real place” back.

With the clear contrast between white and black we also see that a certain identity was created along the lines of this contrast. White became synonyms with free, whereas black became the same as enslaved. American identities got derived from this opposition and black people were seen as slaves until proven differently. This form of identity construction is seen in many facets of society. Scottish traveller Basil Hall described an event where a black female who was working as a servant for a white family was left behind on their travels, because she gotten ill. She was left behind to recover and would catch up with the family when she was feeling better. Even though the woman was free, she was thought to be a slave whilst recovering and was apprehended, locked up and eventually sold into slavery. Learning about the apprehension, a respectable man from the region wrote a letter to the jailor. Hall commented on this letter: “A short time after the sale, a letter was received from a gentleman, well known in this city, which was believed to establish the fact of her freedom. But it was too late. She had, probably, become the victim of some merciless slave dealer, and had been transported far beyond the reach of humanity or justice”.⁹⁶ This shows how powerful this construction of identity had become and how strong the public idea was that black people were seen as slaves. This also became embedded in the law system.

The law in the American South stated that every black person had to be able to identify themselves as being free or slave, if any white person should ask. This basically gave every

⁹⁴ Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill 1998) 257–284; Richard J. Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, 152–155; Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 111–118; Heuman and Burnard ed., *The Routledge History of Slavery*, 70.

⁹⁵ William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South* (Boston 1863) 147–148.

⁹⁶ Basil Hall, *Travels in North America in the Years 1827 and 1828* (2nd Edition; London 1830) 45.

white person the right to police over black people. William Howard Russell acknowledged this in his journal stating: “The system has made the white population a police against the black race”.⁹⁷ Charles Ball touched upon this in his narrative when he wrote: “The law gives him the same authority to arrest the person of a slave, seen travelling without his pass”.⁹⁸ This law was written so that black people could be questioned when there was a suspicion of them being runaway slaves. However, the law was abused by white people to the point that they arrested free black people and sold them into slavery. In some states, laws were enacted to support these practices as we can see from the narrative of William Wells Brown who gave an overview of some of these laws. In 1799 a law was enacted in North Carolina that stated: “Any slave set free, [...], may be seized by any freeholder, committed to jail, and sold to the highest bidder”.⁹⁹ Brown also remarked that in South Carolina any person could seize a free black person and keep him or her as his own property.¹⁰⁰ Charles Ball also came into contact with such a law in Georgia when he was caught himself while on the run. He was taken to court and the judges there declared that: “The law was well settled in Georgia that every negro was presumed to be a slave, until he proved his freedom by the clearest evidence. That where a negro was found in the custody or keeping of a white man, the law declared that white man to be his master, without any evidence on the subject”.¹⁰¹ Whilst Henry Bibb was on the run he described that he was fearful of being “[...] seized and bound hand and foot by any white man, and taken back into captivity”.¹⁰² He tried to stay out of the light on his journey by steamboat in the hopes that people would not see he was black.¹⁰³

Another example of this is given by Frederick Law Olmsted who inserted a few advertisements in his journal. These advertisements were advertising the apprehension of black persons so that their owners could come forth and recollect them. One of the advertisements that Olmsted included was about a black boy called Jordan Artis. He was apprehended but told the jailor that he was born free. The advertisement read: “The owner is requested to come forward, prove property, pay charges, and take the said boy away, within the time prescribed by law; otherwise he will be dealt with as the law directs”.¹⁰⁴ In short, the boy would be sold to the highest bidder if no one would come and collect him. Another advertisement that Olmsted

⁹⁷ Russell, *My Diary North and South*, 147.

⁹⁸ Ball, *Slavery in the United States*, 288.

⁹⁹ Brown, *Narrative of William W. Brown*, 136.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, 136.

¹⁰¹ Ball, *Fifty Years in Chains*, 398–399.

¹⁰² Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb*, 48.

¹⁰³ *Ibidem*, 48–49.

¹⁰⁴ Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 162.

shared with us is about a black male in his thirties, called Edward Lloyd. This man stated that he was a free man who worked as a mason in Alexandria. Nevertheless, he was apprehended and taken in as a runaway slave. The advertisement again asked for an owner to come forth and come and collect him. In the event that no owner comes forth the man: “[...] will be dealt with as the law directs”.¹⁰⁵

These laws and the construction of identity along the lines of white versus black were mostly based on prejudice. Whilst constructing an identity people want to be part of a certain group, but there are also groups they do not want to be a part of because these groups are seen as bad or inferior. It is quite easy to understand why slaveholders held racist beliefs towards black people, since they owned black slaves and had a lot to lose if these black people would be freed. However, poor white people who did not own any slaves themselves also constructed their identities along these same lines. Being a poor white still was perceived as better than being black, even better than being free and black. Charles Ball wrote about poor white people in the Carolina region. Ball stated that the poor white people would never work on the plantations because of two things: “The white man, however poor and necessitous he may be, is too proud to go to work in the same field with the negro slaves by his side; and the owner of the slaves is not willing to permit white men, of the lowest order, to come amongst them, lest the morals of the negroes should be corrupted, and illicit traffic should be carried on, to the detriment of the master”.¹⁰⁶ This is an interesting notion, since it clearly shows that poor white people without slaves placed themselves higher on the evolutionary ladder than black people. However, it also shows that slaveholders saw the poor white people as potentially dangerous for their slaves. They did not want to mix the poor white people and their slaves out of fear that the first group would entice the second group with certain ideas that were prohibited by their masters. According to Ball, the slaves in general would agree with the notion that they were better off than the poor white people who were free. This comparison was often used by the slaveholders to keep their slaves under control and downplay the worth of freedom. Ball wrote: “The slaves generally believe, that however miserable they may be, in their servile station, it is nevertheless preferable to the degraded existence of these poor white people. This sentiment is cherished by the slaves, and encouraged by their masters, who fancy that they subserve their own interests in promoting an opinion amongst the negroes, that they are better off in the world

¹⁰⁵ Ibidem, 162.

¹⁰⁶ Ball, *Slavery in the United States*, 290–291.

than are many white persons, who are free, and have to submit to the burthen of taking care of, and providing for themselves”.¹⁰⁷

The same sentiment from poor white people towards black people was observed by traveller Frederick Law Olmsted. In his journals he wrote about the poor white people, stating: “They seem, nevertheless, more than any other portion of the community, to hate and despise the negroes”.¹⁰⁸ In the early stages of his journals, Olmsted seemed to agree with the notion of black inferiority. We can clearly see this in the way he described certain situations and events. Later on in his life Olmsted could be characterized as an abolitionist who stated that slavery was a defunct system, both economically and socially. This is interesting, because we can see this transition in his works. He truly tried to see the black people as equals, but it shows that the ideology that was present in his direct environment was pressing him to believe in the racist arguments of exclusion. For example, Olmsted wrote about the plantation slaves that: “[...] the great mass, as they are seen at work, under overseers, in the fields, appear very dull, idiotic and brute-like; and it requires an effort to appreciate that they are, very much more than the beasts they drive, our brethren – a part of ourselves”.¹⁰⁹ He tried his best, but could not hide his own racist feelings towards black people. On the subject of black freedom Olmsted wrote: “[...] they are sincerely attached, in a certain way, to the white race. At all events, they do not incline to live in communities entirely separate from the whites, and do not long for entire independence from them”.¹¹⁰ White supremacy shines through this argument and Olmsted showed here that he believed that black people could not fend for themselves. He also mentioned that black people could not govern themselves and that they lack the self-confidence to even do so.¹¹¹

Even though Olmsted started his travels buying into the racist ideology that he encountered in the American South, we can also see that he changed his attitude over time. We can see this in simple compliments that he started to give to black people. In one of these instances he discussed their craftsmanship stating: “The accuracy with which the lines are made straight is said to be astonishing; and this, as well as the plowing, and many other operations performed by negroes, [...], indicates that the race generally has a good “mathematical eye”, much more so at least than the Irish”.¹¹² Olmsted here compared black people to the Irish and

¹⁰⁷ Ibidem, 291.

¹⁰⁸ Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 85; Frederick Law Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveller's Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States: Based upon Three Former Volumes of Journeys and Investigations by the Same Author* (New York 1861) 83.

¹⁰⁹ Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 18–19; Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, 39–40.

¹¹⁰ Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 131.

¹¹¹ Ibidem, 130–133.

¹¹² Ibidem, 470.

commented that they have a better eye for mathematics. This is a huge compliment during this time period and it shows that Olmsted is changing his thoughts after experience. He also complimented black people on their musical talents, stating: “I think, also, that sweet musical voices are more common with the negro than with the white race – certainly than with the white race in America”.¹¹³ Again, Olmsted gave a nice compliment to black people based on one of their talents. However, Olmsted also noted that he himself never had any musical education and that one Dr. Cartwright argued that: “[...] the negro is a race of inferior capabilities” and he said that: “[...] the negro does not understand harmony”.¹¹⁴ Olmsted acknowledged this argument from Dr. Cartwright, but mentioned that he himself has a different opinion. He does the same thing when he meets a young black boy who was trying to tell time from a clock and could not do so. The boy’s owner said that black people were not intelligent enough to make the simple calculation that was necessary, but Olmsted noted that he did not think it was based on the “[...] general deficiency of the race”.¹¹⁵ We can clearly see that Olmsted changed his prejudice towards black people based on experience. The more he sees from black people, the more he started to believe that they could be equals, or at least they are not inferior to white people in every aspect.

But why is this so important? It shows that racist prejudice was so prevalent and so strong in the American South that even outsiders would succumb to the arguments that were constantly apparent. This could be one of the factors why abolitionists never really wanted equality. They wanted slavery to be abolished, but racial prejudice would withhold them from wanting equality. We used Olmsted as an example, but many more can be found. If we take a look at the work of Basil Hall we can see a similar transition. Hall mentioned that: “In the mean time, it is in vain to deny that—circumstanced as they are now—the negroes belong almost to a different race—so different, that no philanthropist or abolitionist, however enthusiastic, pretends to say that an amalgamation can take place between them and the whites”.¹¹⁶ Hall basically argued that white and black people cannot be mixed, because they are too different from one another. Like Olmsted, Hall changed his views on black people when he had more experience with them. He described an event in which he spoke to a black blacksmith who surprised Hall with his good behaviour and craftsmanship. Hall explained that the smith called Caesar raised his opinion on the entire black race. Generalisation tends to work in both ways

¹¹³ Ibidem, 552.

¹¹⁴ Ibidem, 552.

¹¹⁵ Ibidem, 553.

¹¹⁶ Hall, *Travels in North America*, 158.

and this time it was positive for the black race in the eyes of Hall. Hall also acknowledged his own prejudice as he stated: “I left the smithy, with my opinion of the whole black race raised in the scale by this trivial incident. Of such flimsy materials is prejudice built!”.¹¹⁷ Hall actually has a similar transition towards the Native Americans.¹¹⁸

But how was it that an ideology could be so prevalent in a society that even outsiders could not ignore it? This was the result of a certain Southern lifestyle where everyone was constantly reminded of the racial differences of black and white. The public was fed racist arguments by governing officials and slaveholders, white people were taught by society to see black people as inferior and as scapegoats, and children were brought up learning about the racial differences. This was so prevalent in the American South that even black slaves came to understand these practices. Ex-slave Solomon Northrup explained in his narrative that he tried to convince his master’s son that God does not look at skin colour, but the man saw his black slaves as no more than animals. Northrup then explained that he understood why this man thought in such a way as he stated: “The child is father to the man”, referring to the man’s upbringing.¹¹⁹ Edward Strutt Abdy also mentioned this upbringing telling a story about a white and a black boy who lived in the same household. The white boy being one of the owners’ sons and the black boy being a young slave. Abdy wrote that he saw the white boy tie a piece of wood to a cat’s tail. When the culprit was caught, a lecture followed by his parents, but in the end all agreed that the black boy was responsible. Abdy then decided to talk to the young black boy, who ensured Abdy that he was not guilty. The boy also mentioned that he was often blamed and punished for things that the white boys did. Lastly Abdy noted: “His word would never be taken against that of a white boy”.¹²⁰

Using black people as scapegoats and by belittling them on simple things, the white people of the American South pretty much always found a way to blame black people for something they did. In the case of Charles Ball, he was blamed for sitting on a bench outside a tavern while waiting for his master. His master took him with him to the tavern and ordered him to wait outside while he would go in to enjoy himself. Whilst his master was inside the tavern, ironically toasting in honour of liberty and independence, Ball had to wait for several hours until his master came back out. During these hours, Ball sat down on a log and stood in front of the door waiting. At one point he saw a bench at the side of the tavern and decided to

¹¹⁷ Ibidem, 189–190.

¹¹⁸ Ibidem, 299.

¹¹⁹ Wilson, *Twelve Years a Slave*, 260–262.

¹²⁰ Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States*, 68–69.

sit down and wait on his master. Soon he was strongly told to not sit down on that bench by a white passer-by who told him that if he caught Ball on the same bench again: “[...] he would cut my head off”. The man also let Ball know that the bench was for use by white people only.¹²¹

All these events were very common in the American South, so it will come to no surprise that William Wells Brown was shocked during his time on the run to find out that white people would help him. To show how strongly this idea of white versus black was embedded in Southern society we can look at what Brown said about the white persons that helped him out: “The only fault I found with them was their being too kind. I had never had a white man to treat me as an equal, and the idea of a white lady waiting on me at the table was still worse!”¹²² Brown even mentioned that he could not eat sitting at the same table and that he thought: “[...] if I could only be allowed the privilege of eating in the kitchen I should be more satisfied!”¹²³ This shows how strongly this ideology was embedded in the American South, not only among white people, but among black people too. Brown firmly believed that the white persons who helped him were making a mistake and were being too kind.

On the subject of how this ideology of black versus white became so prevalent in the American South we already discussed the upbringing, the laws that enabled white people to police over black people and the construction of identities from different groups alongside these lines. One factor we did not discuss yet is the way in which this ideology was brought to society by public media and the constant reminder of how people should perceive black and white. In the American South there were scheduled lectures and discussions about slavery and the image of black people. Because most of the ruling class in this region consisted of slaveholders, those were the ones to mostly speak during these lectures and public debates. These served as a constant reminder but were not as important as broader media sources. Newspapers were also used to report and discuss the Southern lifestyle. Frederick Law Olmsted shared some of these newspaper articles in his journals. He shared an article from the *Richmond Enquirer* from 1855. Olmsted first explained that this newspaper had a lot of subscribers and was well read in this region. The article discussed the system of slavery and the debate with the Northern states if black people would be better off with or without slavery. In this public article it was said that: “[...] Slavery is the best condition of the black race in this country, and that the true philanthropist should rather desire that race to remain in a state of servitude, than to become free, with the privileges of becoming worthless”. On the subject of free black people the article

¹²¹ Ball, *Fifty Years in Chains*, 100–101.

¹²² Brown, *Narrative of William W. Brown*, 100–101.

¹²³ *Ibidem*, 101.

argued: “There are some few honorable exceptions—but, as a class, they are the most despicable characters our State contains”. The article ends with the words: “[...] Slavery everywhere—is a blessing to the laboring classes, [...], to the black race of the Union it is a blessing, and perhaps the greatest blessing we can now confer upon them”.¹²⁴ This is a very public display of racism and it served as a constant reminder of how to think in the American South.

Entire states would take up defence for their Southern lifestyle, which mostly included slavery and racism. William Howard Russell tried to explain the reasoning of the state of South Carolina in the debate on slavery. This was again a very public display of racial exclusion mechanisms and how they should be understood. The state of South Carolina took a more capitalistic view on slavery as a system, stating that they needed to maintain the production of products that were in high demand in Europe. It was their duty to do so, but in their opinion white people could not live on the land for certain seasons and therefore their ancestors brought in the black slaves. It was also mentioned that it was the law of God and that to a slave: “[...] he is happier far in his state of servitude, more civilized and religious, than he is or could be if free or in his native Africa”.¹²⁵ This is a very good mix in which we can see the effects of the transition period. Slavery as a system is explained in the form of capitalism and the use of black slaves is justified through a mix of religion, paternalistic and racist arguments.

These very public displays of the exclusion mechanisms for American black slaves created a society wherein black people were seen as inferior in every single way to white people and this society was constantly remembered to these beliefs. This could be why some abolitionist travellers had such a hard time to not fall for the racist arguments in these Southern parts. The whole society was made to strongly believe that black and white people could not be equal. Olmsted gave us another example of this when he described a conversation he had with a capitalist slaveholder. Olmsted mentioned that black people were working in cotton factories in Charleston, but the slaveholder replied that they would have to give that up. The slaveholder argued that black people could not be taught judgement, which would result in the breaking down of the machinery since black people would just neglect it. He also argued that a punishment and reward system would not work and that black people did not want to work at all.¹²⁶ This was an idea that was spoon-fed to the white Southerners of America. Sometimes these ideas would create rather uncomfortable dualities for white persons working with slaves.

¹²⁴ Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 298–299.

¹²⁵ Russell, *My Diary North and South*, 181.

¹²⁶ Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 104–105; Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, 100–101.

William Howard Russell gave an example of this when he described a conversation he had with a white overseer on a sugar plantation. Whilst walking past a new sugar house that was built by black slaves Russell commented: “It would have been amusing, had not the subject been so grave, to hear the overseer’s praises of intelligence and skill of these workmen, and his boast that they did all the work of skilled laborers on the estate, and then to listen to him, in a few minutes, expatiating on the utter helplessness and ignorance of the black race, their incapacity to do any good, or even to take care of themselves”.¹²⁷ The overseer in question was in an uncomfortable situation here. It was expected of him to make the slaves work as efficiently and as productively as he could. In order to prove that he was up for the job, he boasted about the abilities of his slaves. However, these slaves were black and therefore the overseer also had to take in account that he could justify why these black people were working under him. That was done using the racist arguments. It is interesting to see that white people themselves had a rather strange relationship with these racist exclusion mechanisms. Basil Hall encountered a slaveholder and discussed the topic of slavery with him. The slaveholder told Hall: “You have no idea, sir, how we are cursed with our servants”.¹²⁸ Hall asked the man what he meant by that and the man replied: “[...] suppose I have a slave who is a drunkard and a thief—and, really, almost the whole race are dissipated and dishonest—how can I get rid of him?”.¹²⁹ The slaveholder was complaining that he could not sell the bad slaves, since no one would buy them and that by law he could not make him turn about his business. Another example of the strange relationship that white people had with the exclusion mechanisms.

Animalistic Justifications and Scientific “Proof”

All the racist arguments we have discussed so far were based on the idea that black people were lowest in the human hierarchy. Black people were seen as semi-human, but human nonetheless. However, there were some other arguments that were made for the inferiority of black people that stated that black people were not even humans. These exclusion mechanisms argued that black people were animals, not humans. Earlier travel journals from Europeans visiting Africa helped attribute to these arguments. In these journals people spoke of cannibalism, which was a very animalistic feature. African tribes were perceived as animals and the same thing

¹²⁷ Russell, *My Diary North and South*, 273.

¹²⁸ Hall, *Travels in North America*, 125.

¹²⁹ *Ibidem*, 125.

happened later on to the black African Americans. A variant of these arguments was also prevalent, which was the child variant. In this variant, black people were seen as young children, not capable of living good lives on their own. This idea very much inspired the already mentioned ideology of paternalism. But the animalistic variant of these arguments created truly racist justifications for the use of black slaves.¹³⁰ Charles Ball encountered this when he mentioned: “It was manifest that I was now in a country where the life of a black man was no more regarded than that of an ox, except as far as the man was worth the more money in the market”.¹³¹ This idea of black people being chattel or animals and not humans persisted in the minds of the American Southerners. In Solomon Northrup’s narrative we can see a similar notion when he described a conversation between his master called Epps and a Northern traveller called Bass. Bass asked Epps: “[...] what is the difference, Epps, between a white man and a black one?”.¹³² Epps then replied saying: “All the difference in the world [...]. You might as well ask what the difference is between a white man and a baboon”.¹³³ Bass then rephrased his question and asked Epps if all men were not created free and equal. Epps responded with: “Yes, [...], but all men, niggers and monkeys ain’t”.¹³⁴ It is clear that this animalistic view of black people could circumvent the idea of freedom and equality on which the United States were built, which made it into a very strong argument, even though it had no scientific merit. Edward Strutt Abdy had a similar conversation with a Southern planter. This man, according to Abdy: “[...] maintained, or rather asserted, that the negro was a species of ourang-outang, and ought not to be considered, and, consequently, not to be treated, as belonging to the human race”.¹³⁵ Again, no scientific proof was given for this argument.

The animalistic argument of black people being animals and not humans led to some scientists doing research on the merits of this hypothesis. We can find evidence in the sources that shows that this research was being done in the American South and that these ideas were projected onto the public. Of course, we have to remember that these experiments were mostly pseudoscience and actual proof was never found, even though scientists proclaimed they had found proof for the theory. In his journal, William Howard Russell mocked the ideas of “scientific proof” of the inferiority of black people. Even though he was mocking these ideas, he does sum them up quite well for us. Scientists from the American South would proclaim

¹³⁰ Heuman and Burnard ed., *The Routledge History of Slavery*, 70; Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 52.

¹³¹ Ball, *Fifty Years in Chains*, 49.

¹³² Wilson, *Twelve Years a Slave*, 266.

¹³³ *Ibidem*, 266–267.

¹³⁴ *Ibidem*, 267.

¹³⁵ Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States*, 377.

that: “The negro skull won’t hold as many ounces of shot as the white man’s”.¹³⁶ This was seen as proof that black people were not as intelligent as white people and therefore would be better off if they served the more intelligent white race. The scientists also argued that: “He is plantigrade, and curved as to the tibia! Cogent demonstration that he was made expressly to work for the arch-footed, straight-tibiaed Caucasian”.¹³⁷ Russell gave a lot more of these pseudoscientific arguments, but the idea should be clear. Pseudoscience tried to find proof, that did not exist, in anatomical differences between black and white people, and they paraded the conclusions in public.

Lastly, we will take a look at Olmsted again. Olmsted wrote about an interesting conversation he had with the aforementioned Dr. Cartwright. Dr. Cartwright was working for the University of Louisiana and was doing research on the different illnesses that were contracted by black slaves. First, Dr. Cartwright mentioned a sickness he called *Drapetomania*, which was described as a propensity for running away. He goes on to explain the symptoms of the illness as he stated: “Before negroes run away [...] they become sulky and dissatisfied”.¹³⁸ According to the doctor, owners need to take away the cause for this sulkiness and dissatisfaction. If they do not do this the slave in question is liable to running away. As another cure, Dr. Cartwright was in favour of: “[...] whipping them out of it”.¹³⁹ This is all described as a sickness only contracted by cats and black slaves and Dr. Cartwright was not done yet. He goes on to explain different “diseases” that were common among black slaves. Most of these diseases that were mentioned were not really diseases, but more inconveniences for slaveholders. Dr. Cartwright mentioned *Dysaesthesia Athiopica*, which was also referred to as “Hebetude of Mind and Obtuse Sensibility of Body”. In short, this was a “disease” that made slaves vulnerable to misbehave.¹⁴⁰ This form of misbehaving is seen by historians as a silent form of protest. Slaves would break tools, pretend to not understand orders and would feint injuries or sickness. What is interesting is that Dr. Cartwright also mentioned a contagious disease that he called *Frambasia*. He does acknowledge here that white people can also contract this disease from black people, but that for white people it is seen in a modified form that resembled: “[...] pseudo syphilis, or some disease of the nose, throat, or larynx”.¹⁴¹ In this way, Dr. Cartwright kept the two races apart from each other and dealt with this as a sort of

¹³⁶ Russell, *My Diary North and South*, 265.

¹³⁷ *Ibidem*, 265.

¹³⁸ Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 191.

¹³⁹ *Ibidem*, 191.

¹⁴⁰ Olmsted *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 190–193; Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, 122–124.

¹⁴¹ Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 193.

interspecies contact. He saw black people as a different species and tried to illustrate this with his research.

Chapter 3: The Transition Explained and Compared

In this last chapter the thesis will clarify and explain the changes in exclusion mechanisms for black slaves in the American South that we observed in the second chapter. It will also compare these changes and clarifications with the Iberian colonies of Spain and Portugal to show that there are differences between the British and Iberian exclusion mechanisms.

American Slavery and its Unique Position

One of the main explanations for the way American slavery developed can be found in its unique position and setting. Transatlantic slavery centred on the importation of black slaves from Africa to the New World in order to build up the colonies and make them profitable. Most colonies kept importing these slaves to have a steady workforce, but the British colonies were among the first to abolish the slave trade. This meant that slaves could not be bought from Africa, but they could still be traded within the colonies themselves. This became a problem because the number of slaves needed could not be brought in anymore. However, the milder climate of the North American continent gave slaves the chance of surviving that little bit longer than their Caribbean and South American counterparts. This combined with the British past of importing an almost equal sex ratio of slaves led to a natural growth in slave population within the British colonies and later in the United States. This is unique, because it was the only place in the New World where this happened.

Based on estimates of the total amount of Africans being transported to the New World and sold as slaves, the British colonies that would later become the United States only imported 600.000 – 650.000 Africans. It is still a big number, but it only accounts for about six percent of the total amount. Natural growth however would elevate this number to the highest number of slaves in the Western Hemisphere, growing to an estimate of 4 million slaves at the moment of emancipation in 1865. This is more than six times larger than the number of slaves that were imported.¹⁴² The uniqueness of the American South compared to other New World colonies was also underlined by primary sources. Edward Strutt Abdy wrote about this in his journal stating that the Spanish had come up with a system to only buy male slaves for their colonies.

¹⁴² Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 22–23; C. Vann Woodward, *American Counterpoint: Slavery and Racism in the North-South Dialogue* (Boston 1971) 82, 84.

He also mentioned that: “Population is discouraged in Cuba, because it is cheaper to buy than to rear slaves”.¹⁴³ Abdy also gave us some numbers on Cuba stating that: “In 1820 there were, on the island, but five female blacks to nine males of the same race”.¹⁴⁴ These ratios were even more unequal during the start of the transatlantic trade, since Spanish planters around the 1820’s had seen the positive growth within the American colonies and changed their system to be more adequate for forming slave families.

These circumstances on their own can already give an explanation for the changes in exclusion mechanisms. The fact that within British American colonies the slave population grew naturally and quite rapidly gave the black slaves the opportunity to form families more often. This combined with the fact that bringing in slaves from Africa directly was not legal anymore since the Slave Trade Act of 1807, made for a situation in which slaves would mostly be born in America itself and were brought up with the new African American culture that was developed within this time period. Due to this own culture and slaves living their entire lives within American society black people became a much more prevalent group within that same society. This does not really show in the numbers, but it shows up in the mind-set of the people. Racism became much more aggressive within the American colonies compared to anywhere else. In other New World colonies, slaves would be continuously imported and died relatively quickly, so there was much less of a chance to really form a bond and a culture as a group. The uneven sex ratios also had an impact on this.

Slavery, Racism and the Law System

One of the more prevalent factors to study the change of exclusion mechanisms within the New World is the law system. Within the law system, free black people and black slaves were treated differently than their white counterparts. However, we also see a big difference between the different law systems in place within the British and the Iberian colonies and their view on, especially, manumission laws. But let us start with the basic laws that were mostly the same in the New World colonies.

First off, slavery was seen as hereditary, perpetual and complete by British and most other Europeans, but what does this mean? It means that slavery as a condition was seen as the

¹⁴³ Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour*, 50.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, 51.

complete loss of freedom. This goes as far that even the future offspring of a slave would be inheriting the slave's condition, hence it was thought of as hereditary. This hereditary status was reserved for black Africans. Even though slavery itself did not mean lifetime labour, it was often thought off in such a way. This made it perpetual, in contrast to servitude, which had a definitive term of years. Because this was a complete loss of freedom and liberty, it soon would become somewhat similar to the loss of humanity, which can be an important ingredient to racism.¹⁴⁵ This immediately made manumission a lot harder than in any other form of slavery. This view also became very prevalent in the different laws on slavery and black people.

One of the most devastating things in American slavery was the hereditary status of slave children. The child would become the property of the mother's owner. This issue is seen in basically every slave narrative that is out there and we shall look at a few instances of this practice. Allen Parker was a former slave who started his narrative with the anecdote: "I was born in the town of Chowan on the Chowan River, in the northeastern part of North Carolina, only a short distance south of the Virginia line. My mother, whose name was Millie, was a slave formerly owned by one Peter Parker; and as children born in slavery followed the condition of their mother, I was of course claimed as Peter Parker's property, and have always gone by the name of Allen Parker".¹⁴⁶ So Parker did inherit the condition of slavery from his mother, immediately becoming the property of one Peter Parker. He also inherited the name of his owner, even when his owner was not his real father. This was actually a very common custom. William Wells Brown had a similar thing to say as he stated: "The man who stole me as soon as I was born, recorded the births of all the infants which he claimed to be born his property, in a book which he kept for that purpose".¹⁴⁷ And the same thing happened to Henry Bibb: "I was born May 1815, of a slave mother, in Shelby County, Kentucky, and was claimed as the property of David White Esq.". ¹⁴⁸ It is clear that this was very common and basically universal in the American South, but it was very common in other colonies throughout the New World too.

We can also see this from statements made by travellers like Abdy and Olmsted. Abdy wrote about a slave woman who lived with her master and had given birth to nine of his children. Abdy than commented on the children: "[...] all slaves, destined to share the fate of their mother, and be sold, perhaps in the same way, by their father".¹⁴⁹ This comment is quite striking,

¹⁴⁵ Jordan, *Historical Origins of Racism*, 31–32, 36.

¹⁴⁶ Allen Parker, *Recollections of Slavery Times by Allen Parker* (Worcester 1895) 7.

¹⁴⁷ Brown, *Narrative of William W. Brown*, 13.

¹⁴⁸ Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb*, 13.

¹⁴⁹ Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States*, 191.

because it shows that masters would often have children with their slaves and afterwards claim the children as their property. Olmsted also commented on the laws that made slavery hereditary and explained how the laws came into being. According to Olmsted, in Virginia in 1662 there were so many children of mixed race (mulatto) that a law was enacted that stated that the children would follow the condition of their mother and not their father. Olmsted also stressed the idea that this was going against the common English Law, since that law system stood for liberty.¹⁵⁰ It is an intriguing comment, but what is more interesting is what Olmsted wrote after that passage: “In the French, Dutch, Danish, German, Spanish, and Portuguese colonies, the white fathers of colored children have always been accustomed to educate and emancipate them, and endow them with property. In Virginia, and the English colonies generally, the white fathers of mulatto children have always been accustomed to use them in a way that most completely destroys the oft complacently-asserted claim, that the Anglo-Saxon race is possessed of deeper natural affection than the more demonstrative sort of mankind”.¹⁵¹

This is a very interesting comment for multiple reasons. First, Olmsted mentioned the Anglo-Saxon race in comparison to other European races. Here we can see the way in which generalisation worked during this period. Europeans were all white, but nevertheless were seen as different races when compared to each other, whilst black people were seen as one entire race. Secondly, Olmsted openly stated that other European colonisers had the same law for hereditary slavery, but in practice it produced a very different situation for the slaves in question. Granted, this is only for slaves that were proven children of the master himself, it still is an important difference between the colonisers. One can imagine that achieving manumission would become far more likely for slaves who were taught important skills and were seen as worthy to emancipate by their owners in comparison to a normal slave that would just be seen as property.

In Olmsted’s journal we can also see that the law system changed due to the exclusion mechanisms. During the transition period the laws that were enacted were becoming much more racially focused and tried to step away from religion as the dominant factor. One of these laws was based on the hereditary status of slavery being: “[...] it was formally enacted that the Christian offspring of all slaves might be used as property, by the owners of the mothers of it”.¹⁵² Olmsted mentioned that this law, enacted in 1669, made no account of colour, but we can see how this was used to couple race with slavery and its hereditary status.

¹⁵⁰ Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 231.

¹⁵¹ *Ibidem*, 232.

¹⁵² *Ibidem*, 232.

More laws would be passed soon afterwards to discourage the emancipation and manumission of black people. Olmsted mentioned that free black women had to pay taxes, where white women did not have to. He also wrote that slaves were denied trial by jury, unless they were charged with a capital crime in which case a special commission was to judge them. If they were sentenced to death the owners would get a payment for their loss from the public treasury. Laws for killing slaves were also made suppler when done by white masters or slave hunters, who hunted for runaway slaves.¹⁵³ William Wells Brown also mentioned a law that was enacted in Tennessee in 1813. This law was similar to the law Olmsted mentioned about the jury on slave trials. The law stated: “In the trial of slaves, the sheriff chooses the court, which must consist of three justices and twelve slaveholders to serve as jurors”.¹⁵⁴ Slaves were also not permitted to speak or defend themselves in court. Charles Ball wrote about this in his narrative when he was on trial, stating: “He stated in my presence that he had purchased me, with several others, at public auction, in the city of Baltimore, and had paid five hundred and ten dollars for me. I was not permitted to speak to the court, much less to contradict this falsehood in the manner it deserved”.¹⁵⁵

These combined with other laws would give the black slaves a massive disadvantage. However, this disadvantage was also passed on to free black people, based on racial prejudice. Since slave and black were seen as synonyms in the American South during this period, free black people were often handled in the same way as if they were slaves. One way of clearly defining this is to look at criminal cases and laws. The culprits for something petty as theft for instance were seen by slaveholders as part of one of two groups. The first group were poor white people and the second group were black people. Theft would be seen as a natural part of the behaviour of black people. Slaveholders also mentioned that it was not about the reward, but it was about the thrill of the deed. Therefore slaveholders tended to agree that moral education would not solve this “biological” trait.¹⁵⁶ Abdy wrote in his journal about the discrepancy between the number of white and free black people that were caught and punished for criminal activities. On this subject he quoted a reverend named R.J. Breckenridge from Baltimore who stated: “It is true, [...] that the proportion of convictions of free persons of color is greater than that of white people”.¹⁵⁷ The reverend also said that this was to be taken with allowance, since it does not prove criminality. He also admitted that: “[...] their offences are

¹⁵³ Ibidem, 232–233.

¹⁵⁴ Brown, *Narrative of William W. Brown*, 137.

¹⁵⁵ Ball, *Fifty Years in Chains*, 398.

¹⁵⁶ Kathleen M. Hilliard, *Masters, Slaves, and Exchange* (New York 2014) 106.

¹⁵⁷ Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States*, 94.

more narrowly looked after; and therefore a greater proportion are detected, and of those detected a greater proportion are convicted, by reason of their possessing less public sympathy, smaller opportunities of escaping, and less means of blinding, seducing or bribing justice".¹⁵⁸ In short, racial prejudice enabled policing on black people which then resulted in greater numbers of black persons being convicted for crimes. But this is also another point where we can see the segregation of race within the law system. The reverend also mentioned: "In addition to all of this, the very code of offences in the slave-states is more stern as to them than to the whites; and the very principles of evidence are altered by statute so as to bear most rigorously against them".¹⁵⁹ This shows the segregation that was happening within the law system during this period. Even though free black people were better off than slaves, they were still far from equal to white people.

On the subject of criminality among black people, Olmsted reacted to a historian called Howison who shared these racial prejudices. The historian claimed that: "The free negroes and mulattoes are, unquestionably, [...], the most vicious and corrupting of the varied materials composing our social system".¹⁶⁰ Howison claimed this on the basis of a study he did on criminal convictions. He stated that 1 to about 328 white persons were convicted for criminal activities where the numbers for coloured convicts was said to be 1 in 67. Olmsted then reacted: "The criminal law, as to free colored persons and slaves, differs widely from that applied to whites. The free negroes occupy an equivocal and most unhappy position between the whites and slaves, and the laws affecting them partake of this peculiarity".¹⁶¹ Again, we see segregation based on race. Lastly, in most southern states segregation went even further when laws were enacted that prohibited marriages between black and white persons. Abdy quoted a southern author: "Marriages are forbidden between them and whites in some of the States; and, when not actually contrary to law, they are revolting, and regarded as an offence against public decorum".¹⁶² This quote does not only show that laws were in place to forbid these intermarriages, but it also shows the southern mind-set to these mixed marriages. It shows that within the southern society segregation was praised and black people were not equal, free or slave, to white people.

Now that we have established that segregation was an important factor within the American South and its law system, let us now take a look at the differences between the Iberian

¹⁵⁸ Ibidem, 94.

¹⁵⁹ Ibidem, 94.

¹⁶⁰ Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 125.

¹⁶¹ Ibidem, 125.

¹⁶² Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States*, 209.

colonies of Portugal and Spain and the British colonies and the United States based upon their law systems. Immediately it is of the utmost importance to underline that both used different systems. The Spanish used the Justinian law code, more often referred to as Roman law, whereas the British used the common English law. It is claimed that both law codes were produced with freedom and equality in mind, but the Justinian law code had very early laws for slavery, stemming from the Roman period. Within these slavery laws, men were seen as equal even when they were enslaved.¹⁶³

Historian Frank Tannenbaum researched the differences between the American South and Brazil affecting the opportunities for slaves to achieve manumission. He concluded that black slaves had a far better chance of elevating themselves from slavery in Brazil than they had in the American South. Historian Jane Landers even mentioned that this was due to the idea that Spanish slavery was not based on race exclusively.¹⁶⁴ Tannenbaum and Landers especially pointed at the manumission laws that were in place. As we already established, both regions used their own respective code of laws and Tannenbaum stated that those differences would become the main reason for these milder manumission laws within the Brazilian context. This is also the case for other Iberian colonies, since they followed the same law system. Landers explained that Spanish Florida was no exception. Tannenbaum explained that Spanish law was based upon the Justinian law code, which was based upon equality and that Spanish law was highly influenced by Catholicism. Slaves were seen as humans instead of property. One of the most important results of this was that mixed marriages were legal within Iberian colonies, whereas they were not in most American states. And like we have seen before, even if they were legal it was judged by society. Within the Iberian colonies this was much more of a normal thing. Slaves were allowed to marry free persons and they could not be forbidden by their masters as long as they would stay and work for them. Once they were married, they could not be sold apart from each other.¹⁶⁵ Traveller Thomas Ewbank also mentioned that he saw mixed marriages more often in Brazil than elsewhere. He wrote: "I have passed black ladies in silks and jewelry [...]. Several have white husbands".¹⁶⁶ This gave the slaves in the Iberian colonies a higher chance of manumission since they were shielded from one of the most traumatising experiences of slavery: being separated from their families. These families could provide

¹⁶³ Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 43; Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen; With an Introduction by Franklin W. Knight* (3rd Edition; Boston 1992) 45.

¹⁶⁴ Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen*, 4; Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Chicago 1999) 7–8.

¹⁶⁵ Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen*, 48–49; Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 7–8.

¹⁶⁶ Thomas Ewbank, *Life in Brazil; or A Journal of a Visit to the Land of the Cocoa and the Palm* (New York 1856) 267.

opportunities for manumission, for example, having more free time to work and earn some money to buy that freedom. Mixed marriages could also result in their freedom being bought by their spouse.

Tannenbaum even goes as far as to state that the Spanish law system favoured manumission based on its Catholic doctrine of equality of men in the sight of God. Due to this it facilitated manumission, according to Tannenbaum, since the law itself was more lenient towards the practice and the church saw it as their work to elevate slaves and convert them to Catholicism. Landers agreed with Tannenbaum that the Spanish Church was trying its hardest to convert black slaves in Spanish Florida.¹⁶⁷ Again, we can see that religion was the most important exclusion mechanism within the Iberian mind-set. Henry Koster, who travelled through Brazil, seemed to agree with this notion that Brazil was a place where manumission was achieved easier by slaves than in other places and that religion had a great deal to do with it. In his journal he wrote: “The Brazilian slave is taught the religion of his master, and hopes are held out of manumission from his own exertions”.¹⁶⁸ William Hayne Simmons was a physician, poet and speculator from Charleston who moved to St. Augustine in 1821. There he wrote a journal on his life in Spanish Florida. Simmons concluded that the Spanish were indulgent of their slaves and that they enacted a code of laws that served for the protection of black people, free or slave. Simmons also compared this to the American South when he stated: “It is, however, a fact [...] that the laws in the Southern States, respecting slaves, are most lamentably imperfect, and but little operative, bearing no comparison with the legislation and conduct of the Spaniards”.¹⁶⁹ Robert Walsh was an Irish reverend who studied history and journeyed through Brazil in 1828 and 1829. He even mentioned that there was a law in Brazil where a slave should be freed after ten years of work for his master, but that this law was always evaded.¹⁷⁰ By law, this would make Spanish slavery in Brazil more like indentured servitude, since it was supposed to have a fixed term. However, because it was never followed it is only worth mentioning.

Let us now zoom in on those manumission laws that Tannenbaum and Landers were stressing to be so important for creating a climate for easier manumission within Iberian colonies. First off, slaves were allowed by law to purchase their own freedom. While this also was the case in the American South there is an important difference. In the American South the

¹⁶⁷ Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen*, 53; Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 9.

¹⁶⁸ Henry Koster, *Travels in Brazil* (London 1816) 402.

¹⁶⁹ William Hayne Simmons, *Notices of East Florida, with an Account of the Seminole Nation of Indians* (Charleston 1822) 42.

¹⁷⁰ Robert Walsh, *Notices of Brazil in 1828 and 1829* (London 1830) 318.

price a slave would have to pay for his freedom would be negotiated with their masters which is obviously a disadvantage for the slave in question. It also meant that masters did not have to keep their word on the sum and could change their thoughts any minute if that suited them better. In the Iberian colonies there were laws that specifically stated the way in which the sum for freedom was calculated. It could be paid in instalments and thus slavery became more of a contractual status in a way which, according to Tannenbaum, also helped to degrade the importance of racial inferiority.¹⁷¹ Henry Koster touched upon this subject many times within his journal of his travels in Brazil. He explained: “Slaves are permitted to purchase their own freedom, on tendering to the master the sum of money which he originally gave for them”.¹⁷² He also gave an interesting example by telling us of a slave who bought freedom for his wife: “[...] with the intent that if she should still have any more children, they might be free”.¹⁷³ The man, according to Koster, afterwards went on to purchase his own freedom and that of his children that were born into slavery before.¹⁷⁴ Not only do we see that this happened, but we also see that slaves used strategies to make sure that newly born children were following the status of their free mother, thereby using the law system in their favour. Robert Walsh also mentioned the law that permitted slaves to purchase their own freedom stating: “[...] and by law he could compel his master to liberate him, by paying him his original cost”.¹⁷⁵

In order to purchase their freedom slaves had to earn money. The law system and the mind-set within the Iberian colonies would also give more opportunities for this compared to the situation in the American South. We already mentioned that marriage was allowed and that slave families could therefore more easily work together as a unit to bring in money. However, there were more possibilities for slaves to earn money in these parts of the world. This mostly had to do with time constraints. Where the slaves in the American South were mostly working and had little spare time to work for themselves, the slaves in the Iberian colonies profited from more free time. Henry Koster wrote about this: “Slaves, however, in Brazil, have many advantages over their brethren in the British colonies. The numerous holidays of which the Catholic religion enjoins the observance, give to the slave many days of rest or time to work for his own profit”.¹⁷⁶ Robert Walsh also mentioned this: “All holidays were allowed him, [...] as a time he might dedicate to industry on his own account, and in accumulating money to

¹⁷¹ Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen*, 54–56.

¹⁷² Koster, *Travels in Brazil*, 228.

¹⁷³ *Ibidem*, 228.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, 228.

¹⁷⁵ Walsh, *Notices of Brazil*, 342.

¹⁷⁶ Koster, *Travels in Brazil*, 403.

purchase his freedom”.¹⁷⁷ It also helped that laws and public opinion on black people were more lenient within Iberian colonies. Taking a look at the jobs of black slaves and free black persons in the American South, Edward Strutt Abdy wrote: “The fact is, they are generally to be found in menial employments, because there are few, and hardly any, other open to them”.¹⁷⁸ This was due to the fact that black people, free or slave, were seen as inferior. Better jobs were secured for white people only in the American South with a few exceptions. However, this was not the case in the Iberian colonies. Black slaves were able to find better jobs in their spare time and free black people were often seen in high positions within society. Thomas Ewbank mentioned this in his journal where he wrote: “The first doctor in the city is a colored man, so is the President of the province”.¹⁷⁹ Ewbank also provided us with evidence that in Brazil black people were allowed to go to schools and learn how to read and write, whereas this was not the case in the American South. Ewbank wrote on this subject: “In the school-room were two hundred lads, [...], whites, blacks, mulattoes, and Indians [...]. They are taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and drawing”.¹⁸⁰ Even though this probably was not allowed for slaves, it still gave free black people a chance to elevate themselves and to earn money to purchase the freedom of family members. It also points out that racism and segregation was less prevalent within Iberian colonies than within the American South.

Last but not least, we have to go back to the Iberian mind-set we have discussed so many times before. Religion was the main drive for almost every aspect of Iberian society. Slaveholders were encouraged by the Catholic Church to convert their slaves and many of them felt that this was their duty as a devout Christian. This feeling was quite well explained by Henry Koster when he wrote: “The religion of the master teaches him that it would be extremely sinful to allow his slave to remain a heathen; and indeed the Portuguese and Brazilians have too much religious feeling to let them neglect any of the ordinances of their church”.¹⁸¹ Conversion was one of, if not, the most important aspects of Iberian slavery. We can see this when Koster explained the practices of the slave trade: “The Africans who are imported from Angola are baptized in lots before they leave their own shores, and on their arrival in Brazil they are to learn the doctrines of the church, and the duties of the religion into which they entered”.¹⁸² This was only the case for slaves that were traded from Angola, but Koster also

¹⁷⁷ Walsh, *Notices of Brazil*, 341–342.

¹⁷⁸ Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States*, 68.

¹⁷⁹ Ewbank, *Life in Brazil*, 267.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, 73.

¹⁸¹ Koster, *Travels in Brazil*, 410.

¹⁸² *Ibidem*, 409.

explained that slaves that were imported to Brazil unbaptized were immediately taught certain prayers on arrival in order to baptise them as fast as possible.¹⁸³ All this would enable slaves to fully convert to Catholicism when they learned the right pre-sets, thereby making themselves eligible for release since Christians may not have Christian slaves.

Taking into account that conversion and the growth of the Catholic population was an important aspect, we can also speculate about the reasoning behind some other laws that were created for manumission within the Iberian colonies. According to Koster and Walsh there was a law enacted in Brazil that stated that when a slave had produced ten children for his or her master, they should be given manumission. However, they also mentioned that this law was mostly evaded and most women could not bear ten childbirths.¹⁸⁴ The law itself might be enacted as a reward for growing the Catholic population, since all new-borns were baptised and enjoyed a Catholic upbringing from their masters. Another idea that might have to do with the Iberian mind-set and manumission was that of manumission upon death. Koster and Walsh explained that it was a custom in Brazil to release your slaves via testament upon your death.¹⁸⁵ This was probably as a form of atonement in order to go to heaven. Walsh even mentioned this in his journal: “It is usual with people, at their deaths, to emancipate their slaves, [...], as if to make an atonement for having kept them in that state”.¹⁸⁶ This was not the case in the American South, where upon death most of the time slaves would be passed on to heirs. We can clearly see that the combination of mind-set and law system created differences between Iberian and British colonies, not only in the difficulties for manumission, but also in the way that black people, free or slave, were perceived within society.

Weakening the Enemy From Within

There were also some diplomatic and political factors in play that could explain the transitions in exclusion mechanisms and the differences regarding those transitions between the colonisers. These factors were playing a much smaller role than the aforementioned factors, but they are still noteworthy. The most important factor on the diplomatic and political front was the competition for land to colonise in the New World. This competition meant that many new

¹⁸³ Ibidem, 409.

¹⁸⁴ Walsh, *Notices of Brazil*, 342; Koster, *Travels in Brazil*, 406–407.

¹⁸⁵ Walsh, *Notices of Brazil*, 350; Koster, *Travels in Brazil*, 195.

¹⁸⁶ Walsh, *Notices of Brazil*, 350.

conflicts arose. The power struggle between the Spanish and the British came to a breaking point, regarding our subject, when more and more black slaves tried to flee from slavery in the American South to Spanish Florida. The slaves learned that they could become free in Spanish territories if they converted to Catholicism, which was not the case in the British colonies. This law was enacted in 1693 by the Spanish Crown and it offered freedom to all fugitive slaves that converted to Catholicism. For the officials in Spanish Florida this was part of a bigger problem. They saw the rapid expansion of the British colonies around them and were in search of good allies in case of a war. Weakening the enemy from within was also part of that scheme. In 1686 a Spanish raid party performed a first raid of a small town in South Carolina, taking back a few dozen slaves. When the governor of South Carolina asked for their return, the Spanish officials refused. They put the freed slaves to work for a small wage, taught them everything about Catholicism and allowed them to marry. They gave them all the tools they could to successfully reach manumission. From this moment on these raids would become a much more regular thing and most of the time the Spanish officials refused the pleas from the South Carolina officials to return those slaves.¹⁸⁷

These raids were also noticed by black slaves in the area and as a result the number of runaways increased. This became such a big problem for the Southern states that in 1738 they sent a messenger to the governor of St. Augustine, which housed a lot of free black people and Seminole Indians, of which a lot had fled from the British lands to escape slavery. American attorney and abolitionist Joshua Reed Giddings wrote about this in his book on the crimes that were committed by the American government against runaway slaves and the Seminole Indians in Spanish Florida. Giddings stated that the governor was informed of the practice of slaves running away to his lands and was asked to return them to their rightful owners. However, under the law system of the Spanish, these black people were free and had civil rights. They were acknowledged as free subjects under the Spanish Crown and therefore enjoyed its protection. The governor refused and the runaways were included within St. Augustine.¹⁸⁸ More of these negotiations would follow, with refusals from the Spanish side every single time.

The Spanish were actively using propaganda against their British enemy too. They tried to teach black people and the Seminole Indians in Spanish Florida that the British and Americans were not to be trusted. This ties in with the idea that the Spanish were searching for

¹⁸⁷ Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge 2004) 43–44.

¹⁸⁸ Joshua Reed Giddings, *The Exiles of Florida: Or, the Crimes Committed by Our Government Against the Maroons, Who Fled from South Carolina and Other Slave States, Seeking Protection under Spanish Laws* (Columbus 1858) 2–3.

allies against their enemies in the region. William Hayne Simmons mentioned that: “The Indians and Negroes had been taught by the Spaniards, to view the Americans with jealousy and distrust; and thought, that every one whom they saw from the states, came among them with objects more or less hostile and designing”.¹⁸⁹

The diplomatic and political landscape made it that the Spanish Crown had more incentive to stay with religion as the main exclusion mechanism, since that would harm their enemies more than it would harm themselves. Besides that, religion was always the dominant factor within Spanish territories and it made sense from a legal standpoint too, which we have seen in the part before this. It also meant that the British and American colonies had to make sure that it would be even harder for their slaves to be freed, since they had to deal with this diplomatic problem too.

¹⁸⁹ Simmons, *Notices of East Florida*, 44.

Conclusion

The term racism might not have existed during the period of American slavery, but the meaning was everywhere. In this thesis we have researched the origin of modern racism and we pinpointed it to a geographical location. All of this was in order to better understand the way in which racism developed, the circumstances that moulded it and to determine why it still plays such a massive role within our modern day world.

It is clear that modern racism finds its origin within transatlantic slavery and many historians agree with that notion. Walter Rodney wrote it down in a very compelling way when he stated: “The simple fact is that no people can enslave another for centuries without coming out with a notion of superiority, and when the colour and other physical traits of those peoples were quite different it was inevitable that the prejudice should take a racist form”.¹⁹⁰ However, that racist form can have different iterations. This thesis showed that there were important differences between the Iberian exclusion mechanisms and the British ones. This thesis argues that racism became the most important factor for exclusion within British colonies, after a transition period, whereas religion always stayed the dominant factor for exclusion within the Iberian colonies. This is not to say that there was no racism in the Iberian colonies, because there was, but it took a less dominant place within society. This comparison was necessary in order to pinpoint a more specific location for the origin of modern racism and to explain why the United States seem to be the posterchild for racism in our time. The more aggressive form of racism and the dominance of it as an exclusion mechanism in British America compared to a less aggressive and less dominant version of it in Iberian colonies explains the bigger consequences we see in the United States in our time. This also has to do with the more public expression of racism as the number one factor for justification of black slavery, which can be seen as a form of indoctrination.

The reason that racism became the dominant factor within British America was quite simple. Due to multiple factors religion was not an effective means anymore to hold the slaves in their servile position. This resulted in a transition period wherein British slaveholders and slaveholding states began to experiment with other exclusion mechanisms. Racism immediately became popular, since it was easy to see the difference in skin colour and it was something that could not be changed by the slaves in question. They could change their religion, but not their skin colour. Racism slowly took over as the dominant factor of exclusion within British

¹⁹⁰ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London 1973) 88.

America and we can see this in the transition period. During this period, we can see a shift from religious arguments to racial ones and the religious arguments were changed to enable this transition and ease the transition into society. The curse of Ham was one of the primal examples here.

After the transition period it became clearer that racism was now the dominant exclusion mechanism. The old religious arguments were still used, but new racial arguments were implemented into the American South. The society of the American South was constantly reminded that race and racism were important, and that humanity had a hierarchy based upon these two things. It made the idea of white over black even stronger within this region and racism became a normal everyday thing. This very aggressive public form of racism also led to pseudoscientific studies to “prove” the inferiority of black people or the superiority of white people and it even enabled the old view of black people not even being humans at all. This idea was not new, but was more aggressively used at this point, using the pseudoscientific studies to justify it.

But why did racism become so much more aggressive in British America? There are multiple reasons for this and therefore the comparison with the Iberian colonisers was made. First off, British America was in a unique position within New World slavery. The natural growth of slaves and the relatively early abolition of slave trade from Africa meant that it became far more important to British slaveholders to keep their slaves in their position, which resulted in worse chances of manumission. Secondly, the law systems played a massive role here. The Spanish law system was much more inviting for manumission than its British counterpart. It offered more possibilities to slaves to become free and the idea of religion as the most important exclusion mechanism reinforced these laws. The last reason was that Spain was trying to weak their enemy from within. By promising black slaves freedom when they fled to Spanish territories, and sometimes even actively raiding plantations to take slaves back, the Spanish Crown tried to create an unlikely ally against the British. This was purely diplomatic, but it also contributed to a milder attitude towards racism and black people in general.

To solve the problem of racism in our world we need to understand how and why it developed. The American South was the place where racism became the most dominant and aggressive factor for exclusion and we can still see the consequences of that in our modern time. Racism is at its strongest in the American South and the same can be said for segregation. In 2008 a study was done on the convictions per racial group that resulted in the death penalty within the American South and the results were baffling. From all the convictions 73% of the

persecuted belonged to a minority group and 59% was African American.¹⁹¹ These results are eye-opening and within this thesis we also discussed similar studies on convictions during the period of American slavery and the discrepancy between these numbers. Today, not much has changed, and racial prejudice is still there.

In order to combat racism we have to understand how it developed and why it still has such an enormous impact on our modern day society. The answers provided by this thesis can contribute to a better understanding of the process of racism and how and why it developed. It also explains why it developed more aggressively in certain areas compared to others. This can help us understand and predict where ideologies like racism can become a dominant, and in many ways harmful, practice. The thesis also contributes to a better understanding of the development of exclusion mechanisms and the shifts that can occur when these mechanisms do not suffice and what the deciding factors for these shifts may be. The fact is, even though slavery has been abolished a long time ago, racism, as a child of American slavery, still prohibits us from true equality. Our world is still, more or less, divided in black and white.

¹⁹¹ Joe R. Feagin, *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, and Future Reparations* (3rd Edition; New York 2014) 160–161.

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Figures

Figure 1: Religious map of Africa in 750 and 1500, Source:

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