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World Civilization

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### Research and Writing

- 1. What was the image of slavery before the 1500s?** Before the 1500s, the concept of race as we understand it today in the 21st century did not exist and the treatment of slaves was based on a number of factors, not just their perceived race. The image of slavery was created by both slaveholders and the slaves themselves, as slavery was a regular part of complex hierarchies at the time. These images varied tremendously depending on a variety of factors, such as, the type of slavery, whether it be domestic or agricultural, the source of slaves, the gender, and the social status of the slaves. For instance, Greek slaves who tutored elite Roman children and Islamic slave soldiers had much better images than common laborers. Agricultural slaves were seen by their masters as lazy and stupid. There were also many physical stereotypes of slaves that were much different back than as they are now. For example, Roman stereotypes of slaves were that they had red hair, Islamic stereotypes were that they had black skin.
- 2. What factors contributed to a new construction of slavery?** The conditions of slavery, the slave trade, and the slave societies that had developed in the Atlantic world after the 1500s is what contributed to a new construction of slavery. One of the major factors that led to this new construction of the slave image was that because the slave trade had increased so tremendously, the slave population had become so large that in some places the majority of the population were slaves. This required obvious reconstruction of

the image of slavery as they were making up a much larger portion of the world. Slaves in these places were seen as a key to plantation agriculture.

- 3. Why and how were American slave populations dehumanized?** American plantation slaves were intentionally excluded from the cultural frame of their rulers, so that harder exploitation of their labor could be justified. This led to such high death rates, which required constant imports of more slaves into the workforce that couldn't reproduce itself. This was acceptable to these plantation owners because their profits were so high. This led American slave populations to be extremely dehumanized, even more so than it had originally been.
- 4. Define the new racial construct which emerged, especially in colonial southern societies and the Caribbean, and the justification behind it.** Southern colonial societies believed that any alliance on legal-contractual cultural grounds between European and African workers could quite clearly threaten the social economic power of the elite. The Southern colonial elites spread the word that the crucial divide was racial, which involved inventing a new notion of whiteness. They reasoned that culture was what divided people, not race. This new concept of race was paired with the idea that some races were inherently inferior to others. This soon became known as black peoples being considered inferior to white people. This rapidly changed the views on slavery, as racial inferiority and the subjection to enslavement were no longer conditions that people could escape by acculturation to their owners. No matter what Black people did, whether that was learn to read or convert to a religion, they would remain being seen as less than human. If you were not purely white then you were considered to be black at this time.

This new construction of slavery quickly became a dominant screen image through the British colonies.

5. **Do you see remnants of this in 21st century America? Explain.** Since the 1500s there has been many revelations and scientific discoveries that prove that the equality of races is more prominent than the existence of races. I think the world today is much more accepting of racial equality and justice in that matter than it was back then. However, unfortunately white supremacy remains in the shadows as it was once what America was based on. The remnants of this racial inferiority are suppressed but still very much prominent in America today. For instance, racial injustice in the policing system, along with the medical system has been still prevalent time after time. Certain races choose to stay out of legal systems like medical insurance in order to prevent being racially discriminated against. There are many moments of racial injustice in America today and people are continuing to speak up about it like in the recent Black Lives Matter campaign. It is shown time after time that our history repeats itself, so we as a society must try to prevent that from happening and keep fighting to end racial injustice.