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Writing Assignment Week #4  
World Civilization II

This week, instead of following the "Frame it Yourself" in the textbook, we will concentrate on the section of your text, Slavery & Race starting on page 536. The results of American slavery and identity tragically still remain with us today & there are opposing viewpoints as to how this history should be addressed in our society. Re-read this section on pages 536 - 540 then address the following questions:

**What was the image of slavery before 1500?**

Prior to 1500, slaves were treated with more dignity and humanity than after 1500. Greek slaves even tutored elite Roman children and Islamic slave soldiers were placed higher on the social ladder than common laborers. In comparison, after 1500 slavery took a turn for the worse. According to the text, there appeared to be more slaves in the agricultural industry after the 1500 than before. This led to a loss of dignity because the structure of agricultural slavery usually held no incentives for slaves to work hard or try to improve their status. "Stupidity" could sometimes lead to a reduced workload. Before 1500 the color of a slaves' hair or skin had no bearing on how a slave was treated. After 1500 it was not unheard of for certain ethnic characteristics to become associated with agricultural slavery in some societies: Roman stereotypes of slaves at some point included red hair when Celts made up a large proportion of agricultural slaves. Another example of this stereotyping is the Islamic stereotypes that associated black skin with slaves because most domestic slaves in that area at that time were of African origin.

**What factors contributed to a new construction of slavery?**

A new construction of slavery started when European conquerors came to the now Latin Americas and they conquered the land. They then began to force the Natives that they conquered

to adapt to their traditional cultural qualities. They did this because they saw the Natives as uncivilized barbarians because they didn't read or write and their culture was completely different. Those that they could not be "tamed" were enslaved and often killed.

"In the Caribbean the very vastness of slave populations—up to 90% on some islands, with a small European elite over them—meant that brute force and near-total dehumanization rather than theorizing about social structure were the rulers' tools of choice for controlling a potentially explosive labor force. The racial divide here remained (at first) a social fact rather than a cultural image."

**Why & how were American slave populations dehumanized?**

**Define the new racial construct which emerged, especially in colonial southern society & the Caribbean, and the justification behind it.**

The American slave population that worked on plantations in the southern/ eastern states of Virginia, The Carolinas and parts of Georgia, was mostly made up of African slaves and a considerable number of poor Europeans. Many of the poor Europeans were initially indentured servants of which they were never granted freedom.

The plantation economies that were created by the European elite landowners dehumanized the slaves by physically injuring them through beating them. Slaves also suffered from the chronic conditions caused by overwork, meager rations and insufficient clothing. This is in addition to them being ripped from their home and their culture. Many were stripped of their names and given a new more "appropriate name".

**Do you see remnants of this in 21st century America? Explain.**

Yes.

"Among all racial groups, Black Americans are second most likely to experience poverty, with 21% living below the poverty threshold, following Native Americans at 25%. Black Americans

in particular have only ten cents for every dollar in wealth that white families have “(Naeh, 2021).

I believe that the Black/ African Americans haven't truly ever been given a chance to have the same opportunity for training and education. As stated above, they are also generally paid less. This shows that some people still think of certain races as less than other races. This is terrible. People should be paid based on the quality of their work, not the color of their skin. All races should be treated the same and allowed the same opportunities.

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