

Research & Writing Ch. 17

The image of slavery was predicated on the type of forced labor provided and was influenced by the perspectives of not only the slave owners but also those in servitude. It also depended on how the slaves were acquired as well as their placement in society, be it their level of education or gender. Stereotypes also existed, although short-lived. For example, Islamic domestic slaves were primarily of African descent, and therefore anyone with dark skin may have been assumed to be a slave. The same for Celts and their red hair during the Roman Empire. The civil development of society also played a role because if certain milestones, such as written law, had not yet been achieved, they could be considered convenient for subjugation by one that is "more advanced."

The first contributing factor to slavery's new construction was a significant increase in demand for slaves themselves. In Empirical societies, the peasant or commoner class was diluted into a form of pseudo-freedom due to the socio-economic controls of the philosophies and or religions imposed by those in power. However, in the region where the burgeoning Atlantic slave trade is growing, control over slaves begins with their omission from the cultural frame of society by design. The outcome being the reduction of their value as human beings to that of ordinary chattel. Resulting in high turnover rates due to death requiring constant fulfillment to meet demand. This need, driven by demand for commodities such as sugar and tobacco, which could not wait for the slave population to replenish itself naturally through breeding, placed an even greater demand for labor while simultaneously lowering the standards of care, which ultimately resulted in their increased dehumanization. Eventually, the slave population swelled to 90% on some of the Caribbean Islands, which further exasperated the need for control, which led to further brutalization because of the vicious tactics employed in order for the minority European elite to maintain control.

Ultimately a new racial construct was developed in the Caribbean and European Southern American colonies. One based on the idea of race, primarily driven by skin color, intrinsically categorizing a notion of inferiority to their white (European) counterpart, thereby creating a social hierarchy and division economically between the two. This, coupled with the subjugation of blacks, meant that the slave could be assimilated through language, religion, and culture but still remain compelled, negating even race mixing as a means of social mobility which was possible in Spanish-occupied South America with their caste system.

Eventually, this became the prevailing screen image through which the British colonies, which would eventually become the United States, would be seen through on the global stage and would remain so until the Emancipation proclamation. Unfortunately, this image was not taken down; it was merely replaced, drawn over, and amended just as the American Constitution with its 13th revision. Skin color, although it doesn't place African Americans, in the current state of the U.S., under the thumb of actual "slavery" as it was during the 18th and 19th centuries, it did not remove the hostilities experienced. Generations later, though strides have been made, the value of the life of an African American whose ancestors did not choose subjugation in this country is still treated as if uninvited.

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Works Cited

Morillo, Stephen. "17." *Frameworks of World History*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014, pp. 536-540.