



CHAPTER

Introduction: Theology, Inferiority, Racism

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Abstract

This intellectual history focuses on racism: discriminatory concepts and practices that produce, accompany, or follow the (fictive) idea of race. The author identifies inferiority as a primary category of analysis, arguing that the creation of a hierarchy in which one group represents itself as superior to another constitutes a necessary element of racism. Attending to the tropes of subordinating differentiation helps trace racism's history in drawing a line from medieval forms to contemporary white supremacy. The figural concept of cursed Jewish slavery developed in medieval Christian theology serves to construct racial inferiority. The introduction stresses the importance of theology in the history of race: the many studies of medieval discourses that articulate racial identities for Jews and Muslims do not focus on the theological texts from which these constructions emerge. Medieval Christian theology creates a status of hereditary inferiority, a concept that continues to shape modern racism.

Keywords: racism, inferiority, slavery, medieval, Christian theology, typology, Jews**Subject:** Religious Studies, History of Christianity

FIGURING RACISM IN Medieval Christianity demonstrates the formative role that the trope of Jewish enslavement, developed in Christian theology, plays in the construction of modern racism. The continuing and necessary contestation of racism—a virulent, multifaceted, and constantly morphing ideology—benefits from examining the various strands in its historical development. Many factors contribute to racism, including recent phenomena; identifying older elements provides an understanding of its larger organizing ideas that may help us better grapple with contemporary manifestations of the problem. I contend that focusing on inferiority as a category of analysis sharpens our understanding of this history as well as our current moment. This study shows how medieval religious discourses give rise to a racist idea of hereditary inferiority, developed through figural interpretations of Cain, Ham, and Ishmael as representing the enslavement of Jews to Christians. Against the older critical commonplace that race does not exist prior to the development of the modern discourses of nationalism and biology, my project contends that this concept of cursed inferiority, developed within medieval Christian theology, produces a racial status that functions like and anticipates modern racism.

In demonstrating how inferiority contributes to the history of racism, my project moves the scholarly conversation beyond the question of whether cultural discourses such as religion can operate like biological ones in the construction of racial identity. The damaging power of race lies in ascribing inferiority to a set of traits and not in the fact of bodily or cultural difference. Furthermore, while modern iterations locate inferiority in skin color or blood, we should not assume that all racism begins with these signs. A study of the processes by which some groups of people are rendered inferior to others helps us understand the history of racism without focusing on a particular set of signs or authorizing discourses.¹ Since the beginning of the modern era, the powerful discourse of biology has provided “evidence” for the “natural” inferiority of one group to another. I argue that for the medieval period the discourse of theology holds the

same authorizing power to pronounce hierarchical relations, in this case as reflecting divine will. An analysis of the medieval Christian doctrine of Jewish enslavement, *servitus Judaeorum*, reveals a concept of hereditary inferiority that shapes the emergence of modern racial ideologies.

My project distinguishes itself from other analyses of early forms of racism by placing theological discourses at the center of its analysis. I examine the *servitus Judaeorum*, a concept developed in a range of Christian religious texts that initially adumbrates an inferior spiritual status, but evolves into an enduring cursed enslavement visited upon Jews as a consequence of the crucifixion. The archive for this work includes the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, with particular focus on Paul's citation of the former to produce new, tropological meanings in the latter. His readings of the Genesis narratives of Esau and Hagar simultaneously develop a figural interpretive practice and employ that hermeneutic to construct a servile spiritual status. The Church Fathers adopt and adapt the Pauline concept and practice; Augustine's writings, in particular, sharpen the definition of Jewish servitude and expand its figures to include the characters of Cain and Ham. His readings profoundly influence the understanding of Jews in later Christian exegesis, which reformulates their theological status as denoting perpetual servitude, citing Matthew 27:25, "His blood be upon us and our children" as evidence of its hereditary and enduring nature. The concept of Jewish perpetual servitude, secured by the authorizing warrant of a biblical figure, circulates widely in the medieval period, not only in biblical exegesis but in the texts of canon law, natural philosophy, and medicine, influencing visual representations as well.

The practice of figural interpretation provides the foundation for my analysis of the racial implications of Jewish servitude. Figures employ the divine texts of the Bible to express a prophetic truth about historical events. They serve as evidence of the fulfilment of God's will in the past as well an imperative to realize it in the present and future. Figures also create hierarchy in subordinating the message of the Hebrew Bible to Christian scripture, the former offering mere "shadow" or prefiguration of the truth expressed in the latter. This tiered logic shapes Augustine's figural development of Jewish enslavement on several levels: in reinterpreting texts from the Hebrew Bible in the context of Christian scripture, he develops figures that define Jews as punished with slavery; this slavery functions as a figure or metaphor for the degraded status of the Jews after their expulsion from Israel; and finally, his reading transforms the Jews themselves into figures who, in their adherence to the Law do not prove the veracity of Judaism, but serve as unwitting witnesses to Christian truth.² This influential formulation of figural hierarchy moves beyond its scriptural development to help shape the status of Jews in medieval Christendom. Beginning in the thirteenth century, figures of Jewish enslavement enter into the authoritative corpus of canon law through papal rulings. The popes' citation in law of Cain and Hagar as figures of the Jews' ontological inferiority seeks a transformation of society that reflects this hierarchy between Christians and Jews. They thus create a racial status of inherent Jewish subordination, which, in its articulation of divine will, empowers both church and state to enforce that position. The development of this racial construction within the multivalent system of typology enables the reapplication of these figures to similarly justify and subordinate other infidels: Muslims and the pagan inhabitants of Africa.³ Thus figural logic serves as a prototype of racial thinking in developing authoritative discourses that project signs of essentialized inferiority onto groups to rationalize their oppression and exploitation.

This study joins the recent trend in medieval and early modern scholarship to argue for the existence of racism in premodernity. Because work on the subject of race is vast and continues to burgeon, I restrict my analysis to a few topics relevant to my argument in order to make a specific contribution to this ongoing debate.⁴ First, my research focuses on the development of racism, that is, discriminatory concepts and practices that produce, accompany, or follow the (fictive) idea of race.⁵ Second, I focus on inferiority as a primary category of analysis to argue that the creation of a hierarchy in which one group represents itself as superior to another constitutes a necessary element of racism. While this claim might seem an obvious one, many discussions of racism assume inferiority rather than interrogate its structure and function; attending to the tropes and effects of subordinating differentiation helps trace racism's history in drawing a line from medieval forms to contemporary white supremacism. Third, I examine how the concept of slavery—in particular, a figural status of unfreedom—serves to construct inferiority in premodernity; this analysis contributes to the ongoing examination of the relationship of slavery to racism. Finally, I argue for the importance of analyzing not only religious identity, but also theology, for understanding the history of racism. Many studies consider how discourses outside of religion articulate racial identities for Jews and Muslims, but they do not focus on how theological texts contribute to these constructions. The claim that religious intolerance absolutely differs from pseudo-biological race, while increasingly challenged, still circulates; I demonstrate that a theological notion of cursed inferiority shapes the (il)logic of both religious and pseudo-biological racism.

The ascription of inferiority by one group to another provides a particularly helpful lens for exploring the early history of racism when somatic markers and permanence did not always obtain. For many scholars, the establishment of hierarchy might seem so obvious as to preclude discussion, but attention to its presence reveals it to be a pivotal aspect of racism. Even those who argue that racism does not develop until the modern period cite subordination as one of its distinguishing features; as Kwame Anthony Appiah observes: “Ideas about race could, in principle, have developed without a commitment to the view that some races were superior to others; but they did not. . . . By the middle of the nineteenth century the notion that all races were equal in their capacities was a distinctly minority view” (280). Although he recognizes the presence of relative inequality in the development of race, he does not focus on its function. George Kelsey offers an explanation of this phenomenon:

Racism erects a system of status by ascription. . . . The racist affirmation of superiority points to a cluster of physical traits and claims that the superiority of a group of persons inheres precisely in that cluster of physical traits. . . . The correlate of this claim is that inferiority is present in all persons who do not share the cluster of physical traits of the favored race. (241)

While his definition notes a preoccupation with physical traits, Kelsey contends that the attribution of relative superiority and inferiority to these characteristics and groups effectually produces racism. In his study of classical antiquity, Benjamin Isaac argues that an analysis of inferiority can help locate premodern racist discourses that do not attach themselves to somatic features. Isaac quotes the work of Robert Miles, who posits that “any argument which suggests that the human species is composed of discrete groups in order to legitimate inequality between those groups of people” produces racial distinctions, even absent “biological” referents (20). The postulation of relative superiority/inferiority thus constitutes a defining element of racism.⁶ As Isaac concludes: “Racism[’s] . . . aim is always to prove that the other group is inferior and the racist superior, and that these qualities are permanent and cannot be changed” (22; see also 23, 35, 37). Although Isaac’s own analysis of racism defines it as manifesting in physical characteristics understood as immutable, he argues that its aim and essence lie in the ascription of relative inferiority to one group by another. More recently, Bethencourt affirms the centrality of inferiority to racist discourses, although he maintains that racism does not emerge until early modernity. His definition of racism includes religious as well as ethnic others and notes the counterintuitive ascription of subordinating qualities to groups perceived as equal or even superior (7–8). Attention to the development of discourses imputing inferiority enables the identification and analysis of early iterations of racism, which also allows us to follow its trajectories to the present moment.

An early, powerful means of defining and ascribing inferiority that provides an effective model for racist hierarchy can be found in discourses about slavery.⁷ Isaac argues for the racist implications of ancient theories of natural slavery beginning with Aristotle’s influential writings. This concept “asserts that slaves

are different, physically and mentally, from free men through inherited characteristics. . . . The claim that some members of humanity are born to be slaves could be described as the ultimate form of proto-racism” (46; see also 169–224, 248–51). Natural slavery comprises the crucial elements of modern racism in positing that the inferiority of enslaved people inheres in hereditary and unchanging physical, intellectual, and moral qualities. Attention to discourses that ascribe slavery in order to establish inferior status discloses the logic of racism at work.⁸ While Aristotle’s theory influences some patristic and medieval Christian thought, the idea of natural slavery conflicted with Christian teaching that God created humans equal and free. Slavery results from sin, but since all participate in original sin, this servility does not appear to create a hierarchy. However, the elaboration of Christian freedom through salvation, in contrast to the *servitus Judaeorum*, creates a category of cursed hereditary slavery that subordinates Jews to Christians, thus producing a theological type of inherent inferiority.⁹

p. 6 The growing scholarship on race in the middle ages productively considers the topic of religious identity from a variety of perspectives. In an early contribution, Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi argues that a racialized religious identity, identical to the modern definition, developed in late medieval Iberian blood purity statutes, which marked the bodies of converts to Christianity as retaining a trace of their inferior Jewish or Muslim status: “the very fact that the consequences of Jewish ancestry, however remote, were considered by so many to be indelible, perpetual and *unalterable*, is already sufficient to indicate the racist mentality at work” (15).¹⁰ But Yerushalmi pressed for a more expansive understanding of the racist implications of medieval religious identity, one that moves beyond locating race in physical features that remain even after conversion. He notes a number of examples—predating the Iberian laws, sometimes by as much as seven centuries—which assume that converts to Christianity preserve some type of Jewish essence (6–7).¹¹ Although he carefully distinguishes between religious and racial antisemitism, he calls for an investigative study of “latent *racial* anti-Semitism” in medieval Christianity, arguing that “any hostile conception of the Jews which implies that their negative characteristics are permanent must already be considered as essentially, or at least potentially, ‘racial’ ” (19, 21). Yerushalmi makes a strong case for a racist inflection in the formation of non-Christian religious identity and expands racial traits beyond the corporeal, while insisting on permanence as a defining feature of racism.

Étienne Balibar theorizes the call for the study of racism to move beyond somatic traits. Balibar argues that a cultural or neo-racism not only functions like but also replaces somatic racism in our contemporary moment: “*culture can also function like a nature*, and it can in particular function as a way of locking individuals and groups a priori into a genealogy, into a determination that is immutable and intangible in origin” (22). Arguing that the pseudo-biology previously sustaining racist discourse has been discredited, culture now functions to create immutable hierarchical difference. However, this “new” racism that encompasses religious identity—Muslim identity in particular—has, in fact, very old roots in antisemitism, a “culturalist” racism that he claims has “always existed,” or emerges at least in the late medieval Spanish state (23–4). As such, it functions as a kind of prototype for nonsomatic racism: “Anti-Semitism is supremely ‘differentialist’ and in many respects the whole of current differentialist racism may be considered, from the formal point of view, as a *generalized anti-Semitism*” (24).¹² Balibar thus claims that

p. 7 antisemitism ↳ provides a model for culturalist racism that attaches to religious identity; however, he locates his analysis within a political state or national context, and argues that theological anti-Judaism is not racist (23–4).

Scholars of premodernity have found Balibar’s formulation of a nonsomatic racism particularly productive, but have also emended his ideas in important ways.¹³ Ania Loomba’s intervention challenges the distinction Balibar and others make between theological anti-Judaism and culturalist racial antisemitism to argue that religion is not a “preracial form of difference” but “has been central to the development of modern forms of racism all across the globe” (2009, 508).¹⁴ A fuller study of the history of racism thus requires that we examine the contribution that constructions of religious identity make to it. Loomba rejects the apparently opposing categories of “cultural” and “scientific” racism to offer a persuasive reformulation of these ideas:

Balibar’s phrase for neoracism—‘racism without race’— . . . can reconfuse matters by continuing to equate the term “race” with ideologies of difference that center around color or pseudobiological classifications. As a result, a theological or culture-centered notion of difference becomes a special kind of racism . . . but not racism per se. . . . Early modern histories of difference, by illuminating the centrality of religion and culture to the development of the idea of race, can help us retheorize the idea of racial difference in a much more radical way. (508)

She powerfully concludes that “biology” and “culture” have always been mutually constitutive (509). My project takes up Loomba’s call to retheorize racial difference by focusing not simply on religious identity, but on the work that medieval Christian theology performs in the formulation of racist ideas about Jews and Muslims.¹⁵

p. 8 Some important recent work on the modern formulation of racism also argues for the centrality of theology in this process. J. Kameron Carter’s theoretically rigorous analysis of Kant’s contribution to the development of race in the eighteenth century contends that “modernity’s racial imagination has its genesis in the theological problem of Christianity’s quest to sever itself from its Jewish roots” (4).¹⁶ He situates the Kantian development within a longer historical moment, one that dates back to the fifteenth-century Iberian establishment of the Atlantic trade in enslaved persons; although it is beyond the scope of his project to attend to this ↪ earlier period, his suggestion of a medieval theological racialization of Jews provides support for my analysis.¹⁷ Willie James Jennings’s perceptive exploration of race in relation to theology, however, does consider the racial implications of Jewish and Muslim convert identity developed in Iberia. He argues that the logic of supersession animates the development of racist thinking in early modernity and “begins with positioning Christian identity fully within European (white) identity and fully outside the identities of Jews and Muslims” (33). The authenticity of conversion is crucial to a process of identity formation which contrasts Christians to Jews and Muslims and produces “an ecclesial logic applicable to the evaluation of all peoples” (33). Jennings derives his argument from an analysis of the *Sumario de las cosas de Japón*, authored by the sixteenth-century Jesuit missionary Alessandro Valignano. In a comparative discussion of the receptivity to salvation of different peoples, he ranks as most hopeless converts from Judaism and Islam: “At the bottom, chained to the deepest suspicion of incapability, are the conversos (or marranos) and moriscos. Valignano locates Africans with these New Christians and Christian Moors as those he strongly doubts capable of gospel life” (34). Religious identity here secures, rather than prevents, the imposition of a racist inferiority in mistrusting the efficacy of conversion. The incapacity of Jews and Muslims to be saved thus provides a model for constructing the imperviousness of Africans that Jennings identifies as racist: “Through a racial calculus, comparative analysis becomes the new inner logic of how one deploys supersessionist thinking” (36).¹⁸ Far from being the test case of a nonracial status, religious identity is increasingly understood by scholars as contributing powerfully to the history of racism.¹⁹

p. 9 The growing critical consensus on the centrality of religion for the historical—as well as the contemporary—construction of racism additionally challenges the claim that true racism imagines the inferior status as permanent. Although Yerushalmi and Balibar have respectively argued that biological as well as cultural formations of religious status give rise to an immutable racist identity, scholars have subsequently contended that premodern as well as later racist discourses rely on ideas of both fluidity and fixity.²⁰ Denise Kimber Buell’s account, developed with recourse to the work of Ann Laura Stoler, argues for the necessity of both elements in the construction of race, a concept “to which fixity is attributed but that [is] nevertheless malleable” (6–7, author’s emphasis). Ascribing fluidity to an identity, according to both Stoler and Buell, makes racist discourses more, not less effective.²¹ In her exploration of the circulation of Iberian ↪ pure blood discourses, María Elena Martínez demonstrates how these ideas defined religious identity both in terms of fixity and fluidity, nature and culture. The process of certifying *limpieza* drew on conflicting standards of purity of faith and purity of blood: “The two definitions of purity of blood—as descent and practices—created a deep ambiguity in the concept of *limpieza* as a ‘natural’ condition” (83). This early iteration of racism combined what appear to be contradictory accounts of its etiology, but Martínez, like Buell and Stoler, demonstrate the increased force of this double definition: “This slippage between biology and culture, rather than destabilizing the concept of *limpieza*, made it more powerful . . . [in producing] a discursive flexibility that facilitated the preservation of social hierarchies and structures of inequalities” (84). The interplay of nature and culture works to secure even more effectively hierarchies that position some groups as inferior. Loomba extends the implications of this argument to contend that the supposedly fluid and fixed qualities of religious identity and color in medieval and early modern representations of conversion in effect serve to construct both as permanent.²² Focusing on the trope of the futile washing of the “Ethiope” used to signify the inefficacy of conversion, she cites an instance in which “black skin is fixed as permanent by comparing it to the ‘indurate heart of heretics,’ but the comparison in turn anchors the heart of the unbeliever as also unchangeable” (504–5). Thus, some early discourses understand the ostensibly mutable category of religious faith to be equally as durable as physical characteristics.

However, this argument must still answer the counterexamples posed by other medieval texts that represent physical characteristics as susceptible to change through conversion. As many have noted,

medieval literature includes representations of black Muslims who become white upon converting to Christianity, suggesting the theological view of the impermanence of both of faith *and* physical characteristics (Hahn, Lampert, Heng, Whitaker). Loomba points out that even in the case of these “successful” Muslim converts, color operates to reinforce the association of blackness with Islam and whiteness to Christianity.²³ Hence the transformation reinscribes religious difference even as it appears to erode it. A similar logic operates in the Christian construction of Jewish identity, albeit largely outside of somatic markers. Even while noting the mutability of Jewish identity in doctrines upholding the efficacy of baptism, Yerushalmi suggests that other Christian theological attitudes simultaneously support the construction of Jewish identity as inherently resistant to change (22). As noted earlier, a number of subsequent studies have provided further evidence, much of it prior to the Iberian example, of the perception of a persisting Jewish identity even after conversion. Although these examples do not constitute a medieval consensus on the inefficacy of conversion in all cases, or even in most, the claim that conversion enables Jews to transform their status from negative to positive suppresses the fact that a convert is no longer a Jew, but a Christian: the condition of a Jew remains a degraded one. Even if some Jews could escape their inherent inferiority through conversion, God’s curse nevertheless rendered all Jews, as long as they remained Jews, subordinate to all Christians. Hence conversion actually preserves a racist status for Jews rather than providing an escape in leaving intact the view that understood Jews, qua Jews, as cursed with a hereditary enslavement that rendered them permanently inferior to Christians. This debased Jewish status emerges initially and primarily in the context of medieval Christian theology.

Figuring Racism

Given their importance for an analysis of racism, figures organize the argument of the book. The first chapter identifies the biblical characters from which Jewish servitude is derived, with particular focus on Cain, Ham, and Ishmael. The second and third chapters focus on the ways in which Cain’s identification with the cursed primal scene of Jewish abjection, the crucifixion of Jesus, shapes discourses about Jewish bodily function and images that color Jews with dark and demonic colors, literalizing their inferiority as a relegation to the infernal regions through eternal damnation. The last two chapters trace the histories of the figural discourses on Ham and Ishmael to demonstrate how they produce a racial logic of cursed hereditary inferiority subsequently applied to justify the subordination of Muslims and Africans to European Christians.

Chapter 1, “*Servitus Judaeorum*: Biblical Figures, Canon Law, and the Construction of Hereditary Inferiority,” draws on Eric Auerbach’s influential formulation of figural interpretation to demonstrate its importance for developing the concept of Jewish enslavement. Scholarship on Jewish servitude has largely sought to determine the exact nature of this status in civil law and its effect on medieval Jews.²⁴ I focus instead on how it gives rise to a status of hereditary inferiority through the interpretation of the Biblical figures of Esau, Hagar/Ishmael, Cain, and Ham as representing Jewish servitude or subjection to Christians. Paul’s foundational figural reading of the servile status of Esau and Hagar imagines a lesser spiritual status, relative to the faithful, that likely applies to unbelievers rather than to all Jews. Augustine builds on and diverges from Paul in developing an etiology that identifies these figures as Jews who have been enslaved to Christians as punishment for the rejection and (alleged) crucifixion of Jesus. Furthermore, he views this punishing servitude as not only fulfilled at the time of the deicide, but as continuing to be visited upon contemporary Jews, deprived of dominion in their own land and subject to the power of a Christian Roman empire. His formulation thus includes not only the spiritual but the political consequences of this enslavement. Medieval exegetes draw on Matthew 27:25 as a scriptural proof-text to emphasize the hereditary nature of this cursed inferiority, reformulating Augustine’s figures of the *servitus Judaeorum* to the *servitus perpetua*, perpetual servitude. In emphasizing the generational consequences of this condition, these texts develop a racial idea of hereditary enslavement, one that derives its authoritative force from biblical warrant. Papal letters, or decretals, explicitly cite the figures of Cain and Hagar/Ishmael as evidence of Jewish perpetual servitude in directives requiring secular rulers to enforce the subordination of Jews to Christians in a variety of legal and social contexts.²⁵ These ecclesiastical rulings deploy the racist status of perpetual enslavement to define all Jews as ontologically inferior to all Christians and to justify the temporal realization of this degraded condition in a range of discriminatory laws.

While the papal construction of Jewish servitude created a racial status that could be legally enforced in social and economic contexts, its figural logic also shaped representations of degraded Jewish bodies in

medieval texts and images. Although hereditary inferiority initially defines a Jew's position in Christian society absent a corporeal effect, the figure of Cain, marked by God, provides a means by which his subjection could be embodied. Chapter 2, "The Marking of Cain and Embodying Inferiority," explores how medieval Christian theologians, natural philosophers, and physicians employ the marked and cursed figure of Cain in the invention of a divinely inflicted curse of bleeding that functions to humiliate and subordinate Jewish bodies. The context of hereditary inferiority helps clarify critical controversies in the scholarship on the medieval fabrication of a Jewish male bleeding disease. Does this discourse originate in theological or "scientific" contexts? Is the bleeding construed primarily as menstrual, an attempt to feminize Jewish men, or as hemorrhoidal in nature? Some of the earliest accounts of Jewish bleeding evolve in the theological context of the mark of Cain, Jewish guilt for the deicide, and Jewish servitude. My analysis is the first to demonstrate that Jacques de Vitry's account of this disease, articulated in his influential thirteenth-century *Historia Orientalis*, very closely traces the logic of papal decretals referencing Cain and Jewish servitude. Following the objective of legal attempts to enforce Jewish inferiority, the discourse of Jewish bleeding, whether described as menstrual or hemorrhoidal, seeks to embody inferiority by means of demeaning disease. De Vitry introduces a paraphrase from Psalm 77:66 to demonstrate the degradation this malady imposes on Jewish bodies: "And [God] smote his enemies on the hinder parts: he put them to an everlasting reproach." While some subsequent discussions of Jewish bleeding in natural philosophy represent this ailment in humoral, not theological terms, the underlying religious logic returns in later elaborations. This is evident from the citation of scriptural warrants, including Psalm 77 but also Matthew 27, as well as the direct ascription of the disease to God, who inflicts it on contemporary Jews as a continuing punishment for the crucifixion. The theological concept of *servitus Judaeorum* influences the discourses of natural philosophy and medicine to render Jewish bodies as materially inferior through the shaming force of physical infirmity.

Cain's figuration of cursed servitude resulting from the Jews' crime of deicide not only shapes ideas about the punishing malfunction of their bodies, but also influences denigratory representations of their appearance in visual images. Rather than focusing on tropological images of Cain that prefigure the Jews' murder of Abel/Jesus, I analyze depictions of the Passion that materialize the consequences of their enslaving punishment in the Jews' physical attributes. The third chapter, "Making Darkness Visible: The Colors of Subjection in Medieval English Psalter Illuminations," considers how figural inferiority, a result of Jewish deicide, accounts for the representation of dark-skinned Jews in New Testament scenes of the Passion in which Jews betray, accuse, and torture Jesus. These portrayals in thirteenth-century English illustrated psalm collections emerge in the context of a rise in affective piety in the eleventh through fourteenth centuries that, in emphasizing Jesus's suffering, correspondingly exaggerates the cruelty of his enemies. During this period, passion narratives and images increasingly equate Jews with these enemies, and identify them with a range of negatively charged physical characteristics. English psalter illuminations introduce dark-skinned attackers with caricatured "Jewish" markers, such as hats and/or distorted facial features. Scholars have cited the negative patristic association of the dark-skinned "Ethiopian" with sin, hell, and the devil to explain these images. While traditional anti-black discourses are operating here, I argue that attendant associations of the colors black, blue, and gray with death and damnation provide an additional explanatory context. I consider representations of the damned and of devils portrayed in these shades to interpret the earliest images of similarly toned Jews that appear in several psalters produced in early thirteenth-century Oxford. The passion illustrations depict dark Jews as attacking Jesus, whose death secures redemption from the eternal death of damnation. In rejecting and crucifying Jesus the Jews bring upon themselves not only the curse of a servile life, but also the damnation of the soul that leads to everlasting death. The images embody the Jews' spiritual abjection by representing it as dark and infernal: not only hellish, but inferior.

The last two chapters of the book trace the history of the figures of perpetual servitude developed with recourse to the Jews, demonstrating how they create powerful tropes of inferiority that are redeployed to justify the subordination of other peoples. Chapter 4, "Jewish Ham: Developing a Discourse of Hereditary Inferiority," focuses on the curse of slavery imposed by Noah on Ham's offspring and its figuration of the Jews' punishment for the crucifixion. Many scholars demonstrate how the Genesis text serves as a justification for the enslavement of the inhabitants of Africa, but in seeking the origin of the association of Ham with blackness they overlook the formulation of hereditary inferiority that develops initially with regard to Jewish guilt. The identification of Jews with Ham helps explain the scholarly confusion over Noah's cursing of his grandson, Canaan; the imposition of slavery on the offspring figures its perpetual nature, continuing to effect the subordination of contemporary Jews. Jewish Ham also clarifies the

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otherwise perplexing conflation of Cain and Ham that frequently occurs; since both figures represent the Jews' enslavement as resulting from the crime of deicide, exegetes understand them as essentially exchangeable. I demonstrate the evolution of this idea in Christian biblical commentaries, including the *Glossa Ordinaria*, the definitive medieval commentary on the Bible. I also show its wider popular circulation in medieval visual arts, poetry, and the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, a frequently illustrated text of typology that appears in numerous Latin and vernacular manuscripts and printed editions. The association of Ham with Africa also develops during this period, though largely in discussions of the geographical significance of the Genesis text. In this context, commentators do not consider Noah's curse as applying to African Ham and his offspring. However, the idea of cursed servitude developed with reference to Jews begins to intersect with considerations of African peoples in medieval exegesis, paving the way for a transfer of hereditary inferiority from one group to the other. While the association of Jews with Ham survives into the early modern period, it subsides in the wake of the Reformation as the imperative to subordinate Jews gives way to intra-Christian enmity. The figure of Ham as representing a curse of Jewish perpetual slavery is eclipsed by its more profitable, opportunistic application to the inhabitants of Africa to justify their enslavement.

The final chapter, "Cain, Ham, and Ishmael: The African Travels of Perpetual Servitude," demonstrates how these fully developed ideas of Jewish hereditary inferiority, supported with evidence of Biblical typology, translate and reattach to Muslims and other inhabitants of Africa. An analysis of this process revisits the important role played by canon law, functioning as an early iteration of international law. I consider how the intersection of the Roman law of slavery with early patristic accounts of servitude contributes to just war theory's discussion of the enslavement of captured enemies. The canon law formulation of Jews as the original enemies of Christendom, and the punishment of *servitus Judaeorum*, underlies and ramifies attitudes toward other infidels; ecclesiastical law and just war theory combine in the law in support of the Crusades. Biblical figures play a central role in this process, since the figure of Ishmael, applied from the time of Paul as signifying the Jews, also connotes the peoples occupying the geographic area of Arabia and, in subsequent associations, Islam. Anachronistically, popes and canonists begin describing Muslims as cursed with perpetual servitude for the crime of deicide, thus subjecting them to the same rationale that secured Jewish subordination to Christians. Crusader logic also provides the legal justification for the European expansion into Africa, which begins in North African territory frequently associated with Islam. With the rise of the trade in enslaved Africans, the figures of Cain and Ham are introduced as justifying examples in travel literature and apologetic treatises. The language of papal bulls transfers the figural concept of hereditary inferiority through the inclusion of the term "perpetual servitude" in edicts that not only authorize the Iberian appropriation of African lands, but also license the trade in enslaved peoples by representing Africans as already inferior enemies of Christendom.

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While this analysis focuses on figural and not chattel slavery, it draws on the racist implications of "natural" slavery, already articulated in the works of Aristotle. I therefore do not argue for an origin or invention of racism in medieval Europe, but for a particular articulation of it that powerfully influences the subsequent history of race. The theological formulation of Jewish servitude incorporated the idea that chattel slavery created a status subordinate to free persons. While not always understood as permanent, the condition served to degrade the person as long as she or he remained a slave. The Augustinian development of enslavement, whether chattel or figural, as resulting from sin, explained the condition as a punishment justly merited by the recipient's transgression. His expansion of servitude to include all Jews, including their descendants, suggested its persisting effects for the group as a whole. However, Augustine offers what he takes to be an empirical account of Jewish enslavement, basing his claims on the fact of the domination of the Christian Roman empire over the Jews. Medieval popes and clerics advanced the racial potential of figural servitude by understanding it as requiring enforcement by the medieval church and state, thus justifying discriminatory temporal practices in order to realize what was already theologically true: Jewish inferiority relative to Christians. Figural servitude articulates a condition of hereditary inferiority, a rationale which defines some humans as lesser than others. I argue that this process—the development in authoritative discourses of an ontologically inferior status—lies at the heart of racism. This category can be articulated as an inherent quality, as requiring legal enforcement, and/or as a physical manifestation. While inferiority also supplies the foundation for other hierarchical systems, such as gender, class, and sexuality, and therefore is not a sufficient element of racism, it is nevertheless necessary to its derogating process.²⁶

A study of the *servitus Judaeorum* makes multiple contributions to critical race theory and the history of racism. In its subjugating operation, hereditary permanence, divine warrant, and physical manifestations, perpetual servitude creates a racial status: "a highly malleable category which historically has been

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deployed to reinforce existing social hierarchies and create new ones” (Loomba 2002, 3). By establishing that religious texts define and implement a status of Jewish hereditary inferiority, I show that theological discourses can produce a racist identity not reliant on the body. A focus on the discursive process by which bodies, and thus peoples, are degraded emphasizes the work racism performs rather than the attributes to which it attaches. Any authorizing narrative that imputes an essentialized inferiority to a group rendering it susceptible to discriminatory practices and violence must be interrogated and challenged as racist. The development and transmission of Jewish hereditary inferiority also reveals the extent to which racial histories are intertwined; once established with respect to one group, racial tropes of inferiority can be easily reassigned to degrade another. Biblical figures’ capacity for various ascriptions enables an almost endless reappropriation; because perpetual servitude does not rely on a specific somatic marker, even as it can be easily located in the body, hereditary inferiority can be attributed to diverse categories of people. Jews themselves become a kind of figure for the enemy of the faith, and the subjugation of the Jews extended to others so identified. Hence we find the canon law use of the figure of Hagar/Ishmael to prove Muslim servitude to Christians, the application of perpetual servitude to justify the Crusades against Islam, and the appropriation of the figures of Cain and Ham to denote the inferiority and support the trade of enslaved inhabitants of Africa. Medieval theological discourses about Jews thus create a racial rationale that renders not only them, but through the multivalent capacity of figures, Muslims and Africans as well, subordinate to Christians. This history of theological racism makes legible the ways in which it continues to circulate in contemporary white supremacist discourses that similarly seek to subordinate these groups to whites.

In tracing the development and history of a concept of hereditary servitude in medieval Christian theology, exegesis, and canon law, this project does not delineate the medieval Jewish experience of subjection. Rather, it charts the articulation of an idea that is variously redeployed to imagine the inherent inferiority of Jews, Muslims, and Africans.²⁷ I follow the lead of other recent work on the history of racism in employing an intellectual history approach to the study of hereditary servitude. As Isaac contends:

Racism is a phenomenon that can assume many apparently different shapes and forms while preserving a remarkable element of continuity which is undeniable, once it is traced over the centuries. . . . If we recognize only one variety that belongs to a restricted period, we may fail to recognize it as it emerges in an altered guise. (3)

In focusing on inherent inferiority, a particular articulation of a constitutive element of racism, I hope to lend a greater analytical precision to our study of racism’s history.²⁸

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However, the benefits of intellectual history must be counterbalanced by an acknowledgment of their limits and misuse. One potential error would be to extend in a facile manner the claims of this study beyond the period under analysis. I do not trace a continuous line from medieval racializing ideas to the racial antisemitism of Nazi Germany.²⁹ Evidence from the early modern period reveals a redirection of religious animus from Jewish to Christian enemies of the faith during the Reformation, an increasing emphasis on somatic markers in racial discourses, as well as the invention of Jewish whiteness in the seventeenth century (Schorsch 2004), thus indicating ruptures in the development of a Jewish racial identity.³⁰ Focusing on the development of a single idea has the additional disadvantage of precluding consideration of the multiplicity of views that exist during the period under consideration. While I cannot attend to the range of varying attitudes toward Jews, Muslims, and Africans in medieval Christian theology, this project does not argue that the Church is responsible for the development of racism. Christianity is not a monolith; my book traces only one particular strand out of many in medieval Christian discourse.³¹ Finally, in arguing for a shared discourse of inferiority that initially shapes the construction of Jewish, Muslim, and African inferiority, I do not make comparisons between its divergent effects in the histories of these three groups. Nevertheless, the benefits of making visible the figural logic applied to these different identities contributes to our understanding of the intersections among them in both the past and present moment. ↵

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Notes

1. Many studies of medieval race privilege modern racism’s focus on the body; while this approach produces important work, it tends to obscure the racist content of nonsomatic constructions of religious identity. Isaac’s analysis of race in classical antiquity considers ethnic and somatic discourses as well as the religious identity of Jews, but argues that the mutability of faith nullifies the possibility of Jewish race in that period. The collection that he coedited with Eliav-Feldon and Ziegler includes essays on religious identity, but the introduction emphasizes the importance of somatic discourses

and permanence for the construction of race. Akbari similarly focuses on the body in her discussion of how discourses on climate and geography shape medieval ideas of Muslims and Jews. The *JMEMS* special issue “Race and Ethnicity in the Middle Ages,” edited by Thomas Hahn, includes essays that theorize medieval race in terms of ethnicity, color, and religious identity, but Jews are largely overlooked. Lomperis and Jordan (2001) argue for the importance of analyzing medieval constructions of Jewish race, but do not undertake this study themselves. Lampert’s essay (2004a) addresses the question of medieval racial constructions of Jews but focuses on how color marks Muslim identity; her book (2004b) considers Jewish racial identity largely in the early modern literary context. Ramey focuses primarily on color, which she sees as intersecting with religious as well as other identities. Whitaker analyzes the productive intersection of religious identity and color, but distinguishes between racial and religious identities on the basis of their im/mutability as marked on the body (2009). Resnick provides an extensive consideration of the racial implications of a range of medieval scientific and medical discourses that distinctively identify the Jewish body (2000, 2012). My work overlaps with that of Krummel, in her consideration of figures and visual representations of Jews, but her account of racism also focuses on the body. See also Green. The medieval reception of Pliny’s texts on the monstrous races provides another important discourse for thinking about race; while the work that explores the racial implications of the monstrous focus primarily on the body, some scholars also attend to the ways in which religious discourses incorporate these ideas. John Block Friedman’s *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* lays the groundwork for this line of thinking, although he does not theorize race. See the important work of Strickland (2003 and 2012); Joan-Pau Rubiés (2009, 379–415); Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (1999, 1–61; 2003 and 2006); Bildhauer and Mills (2003, 97–112); and Mittman (2006, 11–26).

2. I rely here on Jeremy Cohen’s full and careful explanation of Augustine’s “doctrine of witness” (1999, 23–71).
3. While a number of scholars have noted overlapping identities or “imaginaries” between and among these groups, they do so primarily in the context of modernity. Harrison-Kahan employs the term “imaginary” in her exploration of Black-Jewish identity in twentieth-century American literature; she surveys the considerable field of scholarship that explores the intersection of African American and Jewish identities. Other representative work on the intersecting identities of blacks and Jews include that of Gilman (1991); Shell; Karp; Parfitt; Bruder and Parfitt; Schorsch (2004); Kaye/Kantrowitz; Anna Deavere Smith; Lerner and West; and Lester. Anidjar’s work on Jews and Arabs as occupying the same category, Semites, similarly registers the history of a Muslim–Jewish imaginary (2003, 2008); see also Majid; Arjana; Akbari; and Burton. For orientalism and the Jews see Trubowitz; Brunotte et al.; Kalmar and Penslar; and Librett, who also considers the figural. While medieval and early modern scholarship has already undertaken a consideration of the black–Muslim imaginary in literary and visual representations, more work needs to be done on this construct of coordinated as well as conflated identities. The scholarship on this question is too large to cover, but some important studies includes Hahn; Heng; Lampert (2004a); Loomba; Whitaker; Ramey; Patton; Strickland; Monteiro Arias; Hall (2007); and Bartels. For other significant work, not always focused on the question of racism, that studies the ways in which discourses developed around one group are projected onto another, see Jonathan Boyarin; Burton; Matar; Loomba (2002); Fuchs; and Schorsch (2009).
4. Some important work on medieval race and religion includes: Akbari; Anidjar (2014); Altschul; Bale (2006, 2011); Hahn; Whitaker (2009, 2013, 2015); Lavezzo (2010, 2013, 2016); Bassett and Lloyd; Beckett; Blurton and Johnson; Calkin; Cawsey; Jeffrey Cohen (2001, 2008, 2013a & b); Dagenais and Greer; de Weever; Eliav-Feldon, Isaac, and Ziegler; Epstein; Frakes; Frojmovic and Karkov; Goldenberg (1999, 2003, 2009); Heng (2003, 2007, 2011a & b, 2015a & b); Keita (2006, 2011); Kim; Kinoshita; Kruger; Krummel; Lampert (2004a & b); Loomba (2002, 2007, 2009); Michaelis and Yekani; Mirrer; Nadhiri; and Thomas. I was unable to consult Geraldine Heng’s most recent book, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*, before my manuscript went to press. This is a very partial list; the scholarship on medieval race that considers the topic from other perspectives is beyond the purview of this book. I am grateful to the Medievalists of Color group for the ongoing labor of compiling a bibliography on this subject; it can be accessed through the blog “In the Middle” at <http://www.inthemedievalmiddle.com/2017/06/morevoices-citation-inclusion-and.html>, *Postmedieval: A Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies* (2017), 8, 500–31, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41280-017-0072-0>, and at <http://medievalistsofcolor.com/>.
5. Eliav-Feldon et al. make the case for focusing on racism not race: “If we want to understand the history of racism we must concentrate on the question of how one group saw another. Also, we discuss *racism*, not race” (6). I also follow their view, shared by numerous others writing on the subject, that “race” is an imagined category without biological basis: “There is no conceptual basis for race except racism” (7–8, quoting Hirschman, 2004: 385–421, 401). See also Isaac (16ff) and Nirenberg (2009, 235–36). Loomba makes a similar point that includes an important word of caution: “To say that race is socially constructed is not to imply that it is a delusion; ‘false’ as they may be, ideas about race have nevertheless had very real effects on people’s lives” (2002, 2–4). See also Heng’s definition: “*Race is a structural relationship for the articulation and management of human differences, rather than a substantive content*” (2011a, 268).
6. Isaac cites definitions of racism and racialism that emphasize the importance of relative superiority for their meaning (21–2).
7. For considerations of slavery in the texts of classical antiquity and early Christianity, absent a discussion of race, see Garnsey’s *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* and Glancy’s *Slavery in Early Christianity*.
8. Relevant to this discussion is Patterson’s analysis of chattel slavery as effecting “social death,” a profoundly abjected form of inferiority. As Sweet points out, scholars have debated the extent to which modern chattel slavery contributed to racism (Sweet 1997, 143). David Brion Davis agrees with Sweet that the answer is complex, but that ideas of slavery probably did contribute to racism (1997, 16). Bartels cautions against viewing slavery as contributing to racism in the early modern English context (1997, 47). See also Akhimie’s note on this issue: “For a discussion of the justifications for the slave trade or the effects of its reduction of bodies to chattel as the crucial catalyst for changes in the concept of race, see for

9. Muldoon notes the reception of Aristotle’s natural slave theory in medieval Christian thought, but argues that “the general medieval conception of slavery was that slavery was not a consequence of biological inferiority, but rather a result of the fall of man and a consequence of sin” (2005, 74). See also David Brion Davis’s discussion, cited by Muldoon (1966, 88–98). Pagden traces elements of Aristotle’s natural slave theory in early modern discourses of empire, but concludes that race plays no part in these ideologies (2009, 312).
10. Studies of the medieval period have largely supported Yerushalmi’s view that a racist construction of Jewish and Muslim religious identity located in the body develops in Iberia in the latter part of this era. Nirenberg offers a fine-grained analysis of medieval Iberian discourses by focusing on the term “race” and the development of pure blood laws. Martínez persuasively demonstrates the extent to which the Iberian categories of pure blood, developed with regard to Jewish and Muslim religious identity, profoundly shape racial “caste” when redeployed in the New World. See also Fredrickson (31, 33); Bethencourt (61); Burk; Martínez et al.; Mariscal; Root; Friedman (1987); and Hess.
11. A number of studies, some focusing on locales and periods prior to late medieval Iberia, have provided further evidence of the persistence of Jewish or Muslim identity even after conversion, including Stroll; Stacey (1992); Elukin (especially 1994, 174–252, but see also 1997 and 2001); Haverkamp; Heng (2011a & b); Jordan (2001); Kruger (2006); Loomba (2009, 503–6); Nirenberg (2004 and 2009); Tartakoff; Resnick (2012, 2013b); and Ziegler.
12. Balibar develops his theory in response to European anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiment already prevalent in the late 1980s and early 1990s (24). I will consider, as other scholars have also noted, the imbrication of Jews and Muslims in racist discourses that already exist in medieval Christianity. While Balibar’s analysis offers support for my discussion of early racism, I differ from his view on Jewish inferiority. As he argues:

In anti-Semitism, the theme of the inferiority of the Jew is, as we know, much less important than that of his irreducible otherness. Chamberlain even indulges at times in referring to the “superiority” of the Jews, in matters of intellect, commerce or sense of community, making them all the more “dangerous.” And the Nazi enterprise frequently admits that it is an enterprise of *reduction* of the Jews to “subhuman status” rather than a consequence of any *de facto* subhumanity: this is indeed why its object cannot remain mere slavery, but must become extermination. (28, n. 8)

I understand premodern engagement of the problem of Jewish inferiority in Christian theology as similarly activated by a perception of improper Jewish superiority relative to Christians; Jews must be forced into a position of subordination in their social, political, and economic dealings with Christians precisely because this subjection matches their inherent spiritual subjection to Christians. See also Bethencourt (7–8) as well as Yerushalmi’s point that racist ideologies, like the purity of blood statutes, emerge as a means of reinforcing the subordination of converts who were gaining access to privileges previously accorded to Christians but prohibited to Jews in both the Iberian and German contexts (10–12, 18).

13. Lampert critiques Balibar’s use of antisemitism as a prototype for culturalist racism, arguing, based on the work of Southern and Cohen, that “Medieval Christianity’s encounter with Islam was not simply an echo or a generalization of Christian encounters with Jews; rather, it played a crucial role in shaping the history of anti-Semitism” (Lampert 2004a, 399). This claim is not supported by scholarship on canon law attitudes toward Jews and Muslims, as I explore in chapters 1, 3, and 5. However, she makes a strong case for considering early iterations of race in medieval literary representations of Muslims to help us understand contemporary racism (410).
14. Other scholars argue for foregrounding the place of religious identity and theology in analyses of the history of race. Buell demonstrates that an ethno-racial identity based on religion emerges within early Christian communities; however, she does not focus on racism or the body, but on race as a category of self-definition that comprises both fluid and fixed elements. The special issue of the *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (Jan. 1997), *Constructing Race*, called for the examination of the “religious dimensions of racism and racist dimensions of religion” (5); essays by Blackburn and Sweet included in the volume consider variously ways in which theology contributes to emerging racist ideas. Lampert takes theology into consideration in her analysis of Jewish difference, but considers Jewish race primarily in the early modern context of Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* (2004b). Heng’s expansive work contends that racism ascribes immutable, essentialized differences, somatic and/or cultural, to create hierarchies. She argues for the importance of religion, “the paramount source of authority in the Middle Ages,” in this process and notes that theological difference functions both “socioculturally and biopolitically”; while her analysis centers on Christian self-definition, she privileges the political theology of the Christian state, rather than theology per se (2011a, 267–68). Kruger makes an invaluable contribution to this conversation through an intersectional exploration of race in medieval Europe, inflected through deconstruction and psychoanalytic theory, to explore the formation of Christian identity in terms of religion, gender, and sexuality, focusing on Jews, but also considering Muslims and heretics. Jonathan Boyarin’s important work on how “the troubling instability of Jewish difference shaped both Christian Europeans’ self-image and their reactions to those they encountered in the course of exploration and conquest” aligns with the work of Heng and Kruger (2009, 1). His analysis anticipates my project in exploring how Christian constructions of Jewish identity inflected ideas about Muslim and Native American identities. However, neither racism nor inferiority is central to his analysis. Martínez does focus on race in her analysis of the same period; she demonstrates how constructions of Jewish and Muslim identity in the pure blood laws informed the formation of the caste system in Mexico.
15. Loomba includes medieval texts in her exploration of the history of religion as a racial category (2007).
16. He analyzes the process as a sequential one in which race first emerges, followed by racism:

This severance was carried out in two distinct but integrated steps. First, Jews were cast as a race group in contrast to Western Christians, who with the important assistance of the discourses of Christian theology and philosophy, were also subtly and simultaneously cast as a race group. . . . Second, having racialized Jews as a people of the Orient and thus Judaism as a “religion” of the East, Jews were then deemed inferior to Christians of the Occident or the West. Hence, the racial imagination (the first step) proved as well to be a racist imagination of white supremacy (the second step). Within the gulf enacted between Christianity and the Jews, the racial, which proves to be a racist, imagination was forged. (4)

His work resonates with Buell’s discussion of the self-formation of early Christian racial identity, although he attends to the necessary work inferiority performs in the support of racism.

17. As he explains:

The Kantian racial-cosmopolitical vision, which was also a theological vision predicated on the extirpation of Jewish flesh, is . . . only the discursive maturing of the racial colonialism inaugurated in the mid-to-late fifteenth century. And again it must be said that in the middle of it all was theological discourse, mainly of a Thomist-Aristotelian sort, coupled with the discourse of canon and civil law, which also functioned in relationship to theology. I was unable to engage these important pre-Enlightenment matters here without ballooning even further an already big book. (5–6)

I build on his suggestions here in taking up the medieval theological discourses of canon law on Jews.

18. My work follows Jennings’s in tracing how the subjection of Jews into inferiority is a supersessionary act insofar as it removes Jews as God’s elect and replaces them with, while placing them beneath, Christians. The imposition of servitude operates to subordinate not only Jews, but Muslims and Africans as well.
19. A similar trend in the scholarship of early modernity considers the intersection of religion and race: see the work of Kidd, Britton, Loomba (2002), Loomba and Burton, Adelman, Shapiro, Harrison, Bartels, and Lampert (2004b). The study of early modern race is too large for me to cover here, but some important works include Erickson and Hall; Hall; Hendricks and Parker; Feerick; Akhimie; MacDonald; Floyd-Wilson; Royster; Ian Smith; Thompson (2006, 2008); Little; Chapman; Coles et al.; Iyengar; and Spiller.
20. Numerous scholars have rejected religious identity as racial on the basis of its mutability. In his recent analysis of race in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century English literary and physiognomy texts, Whitaker continues this line of thought. While he contends that “racial ideology emerges from and competes with religion in medieval English literature,” he maintains the longstanding distinction that religious identity, because of its mutability, does not constitute race (2009, iv):

When blackness persists despite the black figure’s spiritual state, racial discourse is shown to be a separate entity from religion, even though blackness may not be entirely dissociated from its negative metaphorical and spiritual implications. When blackness does not survive a black figure’s conversion to Christianity, then racial discourse is shown to be at the service of religious discourse. In the latter case, race supports the suppositions of religious inferiority and superiority but by no means is it the same thing. (227–28)

Ultimately, for Whitaker, racial discourse differs from religious ideas of inferiority.

21. She argues that while modern conceptions of ethnicity and race imagine them as fixed, they are also marked by a fluidity that contributes to their efficacy (7). Isaac similarly allows that some ideas about hereditary characteristics include notions of change (38). However, in his definition of racism, he ultimately insists on immutability as a necessary element.
22. Although she emphasizes how discourses of on color draw upon a nexus of faith and biology, she also considers the similar functioning of blood purity laws in an argument akin to that of Martínez (Loomba 2009, 506). For an important recent contribution to the debate over fluidity and fixity, see Akhimie.
23. As Loomba argues:

While such transformations can be legitimately interpreted as the sign of a somewhat fluid notion of identity, at another level they can also be seen to tighten the association of particular skin color and bodily attributes with particular faiths or moral qualities, which is a central feature of racial ideologies. The equation between a particular kind of body and a particular kind of religious belief is underlined when a black Muslim is depicted as being transformed into a white Christian. (2009, 504)

See also Kinoshita and de Weever on whitened Muslim women.

24. Sapir Abulafia offers an important exception in her excellent discussion of the role of Jewish *service* as well as *servitude* in a synchronic historical analysis across a number of communities in Western Europe of this medieval Jewish-Christian dynamic (2011; see also 2013).
25. Strikingly, the rulings of popes and ecclesiastical councils redeploy figures of Jewish servitude in their anachronistic application to Muslims, rendering the latter as similarly subordinated to Christians. See chapter 5.
26. See Loomba’s analysis of early modern racism in which she demonstrates the ways in which it draws on other discourses of social hierarchy, including class, gender, and sexuality (2002, 22–44); see also Stepan.
27. Isaac makes this point his analysis of racism in classical antiquity: “This work is not concerned with the actual treatment of foreigners in Greece and Rome, but with opinions and concepts encountered in the literature. It traces the history of discriminatory ideas rather than acts, although [it also] traces the impact such ideas may have had in the sphere of action” (2).

28. Eliav-Feldon, Isaac, and Ziegler make a similar statement in the coauthored introduction to their collection *The Origins of Racism in the West*: “It is intellectually sound and morally justified to study racism as a topic in the history of ideas . . . to study its conceptual development over time, rather than its practical application or the social relationships which lay at the root of the phenomenon” (2009, 4). Bethencourt flatly disagrees: “Racism . . . cannot be understood within the confines of intellectual history. Instead, political and social practices are crucial” (2). The necessity and value of both approaches seems obvious to me.
29. For differing opinions on the comparison of negative ideas toward Jews in late medieval Iberia and Nazi Germany see Tal and Yerushalmi. For intellectual histories on ideas about Jews, see Nirenberg (2013) and Baker.
30. However, persisting claims of Jewish enslavement continue to circulate in early modernity, as I demonstrate in chapter 4. See also Trubowitz.
31. Other religions also develop racist discourses in their theological texts; for considerations of racist ideas developed in Judaism and Islam see Schorsch (2004, 16–49) and Goldenberg (1999).