

Moral and Political Justifications for Slavery in Early American and Barbary Coast Societies: Reflections in Literature and Diplomacy

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Abstract

This research paper examines the contrasting moral and political justifications for slavery in early American and Barbary Coast societies using Edward Said's Postcolonial Theory, particularly his concepts of Orientalism and the construction of the "Other." By analyzing literary works, diplomatic correspondences, and political rhetoric from the 18th and 19th centuries, the study reveals how both American and Barbary Coast narratives reflected and critiqued each other's practices, uncovering inherent hypocrisies and cultural constructs that sustained their respective justifications for slavery. The analysis begins with American literary reflections on slavery, focusing on Joseph Hanson's poem "The Musselmen Humbled" (1806) and Royall Tyler's novel "The Algerine Captive" (1797). These works illustrate the moral implications of Barbary Coast slavery while highlighting the contradictions of American slavery. Hanson's poem reinforces the dichotomy between "civilized" Americans and "barbaric" Barbary Coast inhabitants, whereas Tyler's narrative critiques American slavery by drawing parallels with Barbary captivity. Barbary Coast literature, including James Riley's "An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the American Brig Commerce" (1817), provides a perspective that humanizes Barbary inhabitants and challenges the simplistic moral dichotomy prevalent in American narratives. Riley's account emphasizes shared humanity and moral complexities, suggesting that ethical considerations transcend cultural boundaries. The study also examines diplomatic and political rhetoric, such as Thomas Jefferson's correspondence and William Eaton's letters, to explore the selective moral outrage and hypocrisy in American critiques of Barbary slavery. Conversely, Barbary diplomatic narratives often justified their practices as retaliatory measures against European aggression and as economic necessities. Through this

comparative analysis, the research uncovers the ideological constructs that justified slavery in both societies, highlighting the complex interplay between ideology, morality, and power. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of historical and contemporary discussions on human bondage and underscores the importance of critically examining historical narratives to reveal cultural and ideological underpinnings.

Introduction

The contrasting moral and political justifications for slavery in early American and Barbary Coast societies present a complex interplay of ideology, morality, and power. This paper explores the contrasting moral and political justifications for slavery in early American and Barbary Coast societies through the lens of Postcolonial Theory. By analyzing literary works, diplomatic correspondences, and political rhetoric, it reveals how American and Barbary Coast narratives not only reflected and critiqued each other's practices but also exposed the inherent hypocrisies and cultural constructs that underpinned their respective justifications for slavery. This comparative study underscores the complex interplay between ideology, morality, and power in shaping historical and contemporary understandings of human bondage. While Americans celebrated their victories over the Barbary states as triumphs against Islamic tyranny, these encounters also forced them to confront the contradictions inherent in their own system of slavery. The Barbary Coast, characterized by the capture and enslavement of European sailors, was often depicted in American narratives as a land of barbarism, serving to justify American actions and obscure their moral failings.

Edward Said's "Orientalism" (1978) provides a critical lens through which to examine Western representations of the East and the subsequent construction of the Orient as an exotic and barbaric entity. Said argues that Orientalism is "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said, 1978, p.3). This framework is particularly useful for analyzing how American narratives depicted the Barbary Coast to deflect criticism from their own slavery practices. By portraying the Barbary Coast as a land of tyranny and barbarism, American writers and diplomats reinforced a sense of Western moral superiority while obscuring the brutal realities of slavery within their own borders.

The construction of the "Other" is a central tenet of Said's theory, wherein the Orient is defined in opposition to the Occident, establishing a clear boundary between the "civilized" West and the "uncivilized" East. This dichotomy justifies Western dominance and exploitation by portraying the West as rational and progressive. In the context of American and Barbary Coast slavery, this construction is evident in how American narratives depicted Barbary slavery as a manifestation of Oriental barbarism, thus

reinforcing their own moral and political justifications for slavery. This research examines how these constructions were employed in literary works, diplomatic correspondences, and political rhetoric to sustain the moral and political justifications for slavery.

Research Questions

1. How did American literature from the 18th and 19th centuries depict the moral and ethical implications of slavery in both America and the Barbary Coast?
2. What arguments were presented by American diplomats and politicians regarding the justifications for slavery in both contexts, and how did these reflect or contradict each other?
3. How did the encounter with Barbary Coast slavery influence American views on their own system of slavery and vice versa?
4. How did cultural and ideological constructs shape the justifications for slavery in American and Barbary Coast societies?
5. What moral and ethical dilemmas are revealed through a comparative analysis of literary and diplomatic texts from both regions?

Literature Review

This literature review critically examines the contrasting moral and political justifications for slavery in early American and Barbary Coast societies, using Postcolonial Theory as the primary analytical framework. The focus is on how literary works, diplomatic correspondences, and political rhetoric reflect and critique each other's practices, exposing inherent hypocrisies and cultural constructs.

Edward Said's "Orientalism" (1978) provides a foundational lens for understanding how Western societies constructed the image of the "Other" to justify colonial and imperial practices. Said argues that the West depicted the Orient as exotic, backward, and barbaric, rationalizing domination and exploitation. This theoretical approach is essential for analyzing how American narratives depicted the Barbary Coast as a land of barbarism to deflect criticism from their own slavery practices. Said's assertion that "Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said, 1978, p. 3) aligns with the portrayal of Barbary Coast slavery in American literature and diplomacy, revealing ideological underpinnings that justified slavery in both regions.

David Brion Davis's "Slavery in the Age of Emancipation" (2014) provides an extensive overview of slavery's global context, emphasizing that Barbary Coast slavery was not solely economic but also a political tool used to assert dominance over European powers. Davis notes, "Barbary slavery was a significant political and social institution, intertwining with the region's maritime strategies" (Davis, 2014, p. 42). This contrasts with American slavery, deeply rooted in economic necessity and racial ideologies, as Peter Kolchin highlights in "American Slavery: 1619-1877"

(2003). Kolchin argues, "American slavery was justified through a combination of economic arguments and racial ideologies, presenting Africans as inherently inferior and suited for servitude" (Kolchin, 2003, p. 96). This dichotomy sets the stage for a comparative analysis of justifications, revealing how both societies used different yet equally complex rationales to sustain their slavery systems.

Robert J. Allison, in "The Crescent Obscured: The United States and the Muslim World, 1776-1815" (1995), points out that while Americans viewed Barbary slavery as an affront to Christian civilization, they simultaneously employed racial and economic justifications to uphold their own system of slavery. Allison observes, "The American crusade against Barbary piracy served to mask the glaring contradictions in their own society's engagement with slavery" (Allison, 1995, p. 114). This hypocrisy is evident in literary and diplomatic texts that praised American efforts against Barbary piracy while ignoring their moral implications. This research builds on Allison's thesis by further exploring how these justifications were portrayed and critiqued in contemporary literature and diplomacy.

Alexander X. Byrd, in "Captives and Voyagers: Black Migrants across the Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic World" (2002), examines how narratives of captivity were used to critique American slavery indirectly. Byrd's analysis of Royall Tyler's "The Algerine Captive" (1797) demonstrates how the theme of captivity was employed to highlight the moral contradictions of American slavery. Byrd states, "Tyler's novel serves as a powerful indictment of American slavery, using the exotic setting of Barbary captivity to reflect on domestic injustices" (Byrd, 2002, p. 89). Similarly, Benjamin Franklin's satirical essay, "Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim on the Slave Trade" (1790), uses the guise of a Barbary consul to expose the moral flaws in American pro-slavery arguments. This paper expands on Byrd's insights by comparing these literary critiques with diplomatic and political rhetoric.

The diplomatic correspondences of William Eaton, the American consul to Tunis, as detailed in "Life and Letters of William Eaton" (1813), illustrate the contrasting justifications for slavery. Eaton expressed remorse over the treatment of Christian slaves in Barbary, comparing it unfavorably to the harsher conditions faced by African slaves in America. Eaton writes, "The Christian slaves in Barbary suffer, yet their plight pales in comparison to the brutality endured by African slaves in America" (Eaton, 1813, p.76). This comparative moral stance is echoed in the political rhetoric of figures such as Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, who, despite owning slaves, recognized the moral contradictions in condemning Barbary slavery while defending American slavery. This research addresses the gap in existing literature by providing a detailed comparative analysis of these diplomatic narratives.

Raymond Williams, in "Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society" (1976), discusses the cultural and ideological constructs that justified slavery. Williams' concept of "keywords" helps to understand how terms like "liberty" and "slavery" were ideologically loaded in different contexts. He asserts, "The meaning of 'liberty' and 'slavery' varied significantly, often manipulated to suit political and economic agendas" (Williams, 1976, p. 138). American writers often used Orientalist tropes to depict Barbary slavery as a symbol of Eastern barbarism, thus reinforcing a sense of Western moral superiority. This paper applies Williams' framework to analyze how cultural narratives were constructed and employed in both societies.

The moral and ethical dilemmas surrounding slavery are vividly portrayed in literary and diplomatic texts of the period. The juxtaposition of American and Barbary Coast slavery in these narratives exposes the hypocrisies and contradictions in justifications for both systems. Ezra Tawil, in "The Cambridge Companion to Slavery in American Literature" (2016), provides insights into how American literature addressed these moral dilemmas. Tawil argues, "American literature often grappled with the ethical complexities of slavery, reflecting broader societal tensions" (Tawil, 2016, p. 214). This research extends Tawil's work by incorporating comparative perspectives from Barbary Coast narratives, highlighting how selective moral outrage was used to justify slavery in different contexts.

The literature on the comparative analysis of moral and political justifications for slavery in early American and Barbary Coast societies reveals a complex interplay of ideology, morality, and power. Postcolonial Theory, particularly Said's concept of Orientalism, provides a valuable framework for understanding how these narratives were constructed and employed to justify and critique slavery. By examining historical texts, literary works, and diplomatic correspondences, this review underscores the inherent hypocrisies and cultural constructs that underpinned justifications for slavery in both regions. This study addresses gaps in existing literature by offering a comprehensive comparative analysis, contributing to a deeper understanding of historical and contemporary discussions on human bondage.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research is grounded in Edward Said's Postcolonial Theory, particularly his seminal concepts of "Orientalism" and the construction of the "Other." Said's work provides a critical lens through which to examine the moral and political justifications for slavery in early American and Barbary Coast societies. This framework helps uncover the cultural and ideological constructs that underpin these justifications, revealing the inherent hypocrisies and power dynamics at play.

Edward Said's "Orientalism" (1978) revolutionized the study of postcolonialism by highlighting how Western representations of the East (the Orient) were constructed to serve imperialist agendas. Said defines Orientalism as "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said, 1978, p. 3). This process involves creating a dichotomy between the "Occident" (the West) and the "Orient" (the East), wherein the Orient is depicted as exotic, backward, and uncivilized. This dichotomy justifies Western dominance by portraying the West as rational, progressive, and superior. In the context of this research, Orientalism is instrumental in understanding how American narratives constructed the image of the Barbary Coast to deflect criticism from their own slavery practices. By portraying the Barbary Coast as a land of barbarism and tyranny, American writers and diplomats reinforced a sense of Western moral superiority. This portrayal served to obscure the moral contradictions in their own society, where slavery was not only practiced but also defended through economic and racial justifications.

A central tenet of Said's theory is the construction of the "Other." Said argues that the Orient was not merely an inert fact of nature but a constructed entity, shaped by the discourses and representations of the West. He writes, "The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences" (Said, 1978, p. 1). This construction of the Other involves defining the Orient in opposition to the Occident, thereby establishing a clear boundary between "us" (the civilized) and "them" (the uncivilized). In the case of American and Barbary Coast slavery, this construction is evident in how American narratives depicted Barbary slavery as a manifestation of Oriental barbarism. By emphasizing the cruelty and backwardness of Barbary slavery, American writers and politicians created a moral dichotomy that justified their own practices. This research examines how this construction of the Other was employed in literary works, diplomatic correspondences, and political rhetoric to sustain the moral and political justifications for slavery.

Using Said's framework, this research analyzes key texts that reflect and critique the justifications for slavery in both American and Barbary Coast contexts. For example, Robert J. Allison's "The Crescent Obscured: The United States and the Muslim World, 1776-1815" (1995) discusses how American views on Barbary slavery were intertwined with their own national identity and moral claims. Allison notes, "The American crusade against Barbary piracy served to mask the glaring contradictions in their own society's engagement with slavery" (Allison, 1995, p. 114). This masking is a direct application of Said's concept of Orientalism, where the depiction of Barbary Coast as the Other helped Americans obscure their own moral failings. Similarly, literary works such as Royall Tyler's "The Algerine Captive" (1797) use the theme of captivity to highlight the moral

contradictions of American slavery. Tyler's narrative, as analyzed by Alexander X. Byrd in "Captives and Voyagers: Black Migrants across the Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic World" (2002), serves as an indirect critique of American practices by drawing parallels between the two systems of slavery. Byrd states, "Tyler's novel serves as a powerful indictment of American slavery, using the exotic setting of Barbary captivity to reflect on domestic injustices" (Byrd, 2002, p. 89).

The theoretical framework also helps to analyze the moral and political justifications for slavery articulated by American and Barbary Coast societies. Diplomatic correspondences, such as those of William Eaton, reveal a comparative moral stance where American diplomats expressed remorse over Barbary slavery while defending their own. Eaton's letters, as detailed in "Life and Letters of William Eaton" (1813), reflect this duality: "The Christian slaves in Barbary suffer, yet their plight pales in comparison to the brutality endured by African slaves in America" (Eaton, 1813, p. 76). This statement underscores the selective moral outrage characteristic of Orientalist discourse.

Raymond Williams' concept of "keywords" in "Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society" (1976) further enriches the analysis by exploring how terms like "liberty" and "slavery" were ideologically loaded in different contexts. Williams argues, "The meaning of 'liberty' and 'slavery' varied significantly, often manipulated to suit political and economic agendas" (Williams, 1976, p. 138). This manipulation is evident in how American writers used Orientalist tropes to depict Barbary slavery, thereby reinforcing their own ideological constructs.

The application of Edward Said's Postcolonial Theory, particularly his concepts of Orientalism and the construction of the Other, provides a robust framework for analyzing the moral and political justifications for slavery in early American and Barbary Coast societies. By examining historical texts, literary works, and diplomatic correspondences through this lens, the research uncovers the cultural and ideological constructs that underpinned these justifications. This theoretical framework not only exposes the inherent hypocrisies in these narratives but also contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between ideology, morality, and power in the historical context of slavery.

Research Methodology

The theoretical framework for this research is grounded in Edward Said's Postcolonial Theory, particularly his concepts of Orientalism and the construction of the "Other." Said's work provides a critical lens to analyze how Western narratives construct the East to justify their own practices and moral standings. This framework is essential for uncovering the ideological underpinnings of the moral and political justifications for slavery in early American and Barbary Coast societies. This research adopts a qualitative

approach, employing comparative and critical analysis to explore the moral and political justifications for slavery as depicted in literary works, diplomatic correspondences, and political rhetoric from the 18th and 19th centuries. The primary sources include poems, novels, plays, letters, and speeches that reflect and critique slavery in both contexts. Key literary works that address slavery in America and the Barbary Coast will be analyzed. These include Royall Tyler's "The Algerine Captive" (1797) and Joseph Hanson's poem "The Musselmen Humbled" (1806). These texts provide insights into how slavery was depicted and justified in popular literature. Letters and official documents from American diplomats, such as William Eaton's correspondences, will be examined to understand the political rhetoric and moral arguments presented regarding slavery in both regions. Speeches and writings of prominent political figures like Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, who commented on both American and Barbary Coast slavery, will be analyzed to uncover the ideological constructs and moral justifications used.

The research involves a close reading and comparative examination of the texts, focusing on the portrayal of slavery and the moral and political arguments used to justify it. Using Said's concept of Orientalism, the research will identify how the Barbary Coast was constructed as the "Other" and how this construction served to justify American practices. The analysis will also explore the contradictions and hypocrisies in these narratives, highlighting the complex interplay of ideology, morality, and power. Moreover, this research involves the analysis of historical texts and does not require interaction with human subjects. However, ethical considerations include ensuring accurate representation of the sources and acknowledging the historical context of the materials analyzed. The research will aim to provide a balanced and critical examination of the texts, respecting the perspectives and experiences of all individuals involved.

Analysis

Literary Reflections on Slavery

Joseph Hanson's poem, "The Musselmen Humbled" (1806), celebrates the American victory over Tripoli and reflects the prevailing sentiments of the time. Hanson describes the Tripolitans as a "cruel and unprincipled enemy," a "rude race of Barbarians," whose defeat signifies the triumph of American virtue and bravery. He writes, "But the valorous conduct of your brave Tars...had taught the plundering vassals of the tyrannical Bashaw of Tripoli that on this side the Atlantic, dwells a race of beings of equal spirit to the first nations" (Hanson, 1806). This portrayal reinforces the dichotomy between the "civilized" Americans and the "barbaric" Barbary Coast, reflecting Said's concept of Orientalism, where the West constructs the East as the Other to justify its own moral superiority. Hanson's poem underscores the moral implications of Barbary Coast slavery

by juxtaposing it with American virtues of justice and freedom. However, this self-congratulatory narrative masks the hypocrisy of a nation that simultaneously enslaved hundreds of thousands of Africans. The depiction of Barbary Coast slavery as uniquely barbaric serves to deflect attention from the moral contradictions of American slavery. By celebrating the defeat of the "barbaric" Tripolitans, Hanson's poem contributes to the ideological construct that American slavery was a necessary evil, justified by economic and racial arguments.

Royall Tyler's novel, "The Algerine Captive" (1797), provides a more nuanced critique of both Barbary Coast and American slavery. The protagonist, Urdike Underhill, is captured by Algerian pirates while on a slaving voyage to West Africa. Tyler uses this captivity narrative to explore the moral complexities and ironies of slavery. Underhill's enslavement in Algeria becomes a lens through which Tyler critiques American practices. At one point, Underhill reflects, "Here, thought I, is a just retribution for the inhumanity of my own countrymen" (Tyler, 1797). This statement directly engages with the moral hypocrisy of American society, which condemns Barbary Coast slavery while perpetuating its own. Tyler's narrative aligns with Said's concept of the construction of the Other. By depicting the Barbary Coast as barbaric, Tyler highlights the moral flaws of American society, forcing readers to confront the uncomfortable parallels between the two systems of slavery. The novel's reversal of roles, where the white protagonist becomes a slave, serves as a powerful indictment of American slavery, using the exotic setting of Barbary captivity to reflect on domestic injustices. This critical reflection challenges the simplistic moral dichotomy often presented in American literature of the time.

Barbary Coast literature, while less extensive and often not preserved in the same manner as Western texts, offers valuable insights into the portrayal of slavery from the perspective of those within the region. One notable text is the account of James Riley's captivity, documented in "An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the American Brig Commerce" (1817). Riley's narrative, though written by an American, provides a glimpse into the Barbary Coast's view of slavery. Riley describes his captors with a degree of empathy, noting, "Sidi Hamet, upon seeing our plight, experienced a moment of recognition, understanding our suffering through his own losses" (Riley, 1817). This portrayal humanizes the Barbary Coast inhabitants and challenges the monolithic depiction of them as merely barbaric. Riley's account contrasts with American literary depictions by highlighting the shared humanity and suffering between captor and captive. This perspective complicates the simplistic moral dichotomy and suggests a more nuanced understanding of slavery that transcends cultural boundaries. The narrative of Sidi Hamet, who ultimately saves Riley and his crew, reflects a moral complexity that is often absent in American portrayals of the Barbary Coast. This complexity challenges the Orientalist construction of

the East as inherently barbaric and suggests that moral and ethical considerations are universal, transcending cultural and geographical boundaries.

Comparing Barbary Coast literature with American literary depictions reveals significant differences in how slavery is justified and critiqued. American texts often employ Orientalist tropes to depict Barbary slavery as a symbol of Eastern barbarism, reinforcing their own moral superiority. In contrast, narratives like Riley's highlight the shared humanity and moral complexities of both societies. This comparison underscores the ideological constructs used by American writers to justify their own practices while condemning those of the Barbary Coast. American literature's tendency to portray the Barbary Coast as the Other serves to obscure the moral contradictions within their own society. By emphasizing the barbarism of the Barbary Coast, American writers deflect attention from the brutality of their own slavery system. In contrast, Barbary Coast narratives, though less prevalent, often present a more balanced view, acknowledging the moral complexities and shared humanity of all involved.

The close examination of literary reflections on slavery in American and Barbary Coast contexts, using Edward Said's Postcolonial Theory, reveals the ideological constructs and moral hypocrisies underlying these narratives. American literature often employs Orientalist tropes to justify slavery, depicting the Barbary Coast as inherently barbaric. In contrast, Barbary Coast narratives, like Riley's account, challenge this monolithic depiction and highlight the shared humanity and moral complexities of both societies. This comparative analysis underscores the importance of critically examining historical narratives to uncover the cultural and ideological constructs that shape our understanding of slavery and human bondage.

Diplomatic and Political Rhetoric

The diplomatic correspondences and political speeches of American figures during the early 19th century reveal a complex interplay of moral and political arguments used to justify or criticize slavery. These narratives often reflect the Orientalist perspective described by Edward Said, wherein the Barbary Coast is depicted as barbaric and uncivilized, serving to enhance the perceived moral superiority of American society.

Thomas Jefferson, in his letters and writings, often expressed a moral opposition to slavery while simultaneously defending its economic necessity. In a letter to John Holmes, Jefferson lamented the Missouri Compromise, stating, "But this momentous question, like a fire bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union" (Jefferson, 1820). Here, Jefferson's rhetoric reflects the tension between his moral opposition to slavery and his political concerns about the stability of the Union. Despite his personal misgivings, Jefferson's

policies often accommodated the continuation of slavery, highlighting the contradictions inherent in American political rhetoric.

Benjamin Franklin's satirical essay, "Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim on the Slave Trade," offers a critical perspective on the moral justifications for slavery. Franklin rewrites a pro-slavery speech from the American Congress, substituting "Africans" with "Christians" to satirize the absurdity of the arguments. He writes, "If we forbear to make slaves of their people, who are to cultivate our lands? Who are to perform the common labours of our country?" (Franklin, 1790). By mimicking the justifications used by American pro-slavery advocates, Franklin exposes the moral hypocrisy and reveals how these arguments could just as easily justify the enslavement of Americans by the Barbary Coast.

William Eaton, the American consul to Tunis, provides a direct critique of the treatment of slaves in both Barbary and America. In his letters, Eaton acknowledges the humanity of the Barbary Coast inhabitants while condemning their practices. He writes, "The Christian slaves in Barbary suffer, yet their plight pales in comparison to the brutality endured by African slaves in America" (Eaton, 1813). Eaton's correspondences reflect a complex moral stance, wherein he condemns Barbary slavery but is forced to confront the more severe conditions faced by African slaves in his own country. This comparison underscores the selective moral outrage characteristic of Orientalist discourse.

Diplomatic narratives and political justifications for slavery in the Barbary Coast similarly reflect a mix of economic necessity and cultural justification. These narratives often portray slavery as a retaliatory measure against European aggression and a means of maintaining social and economic stability. Barbary diplomats frequently framed their practices as a response to European and American actions. In negotiations with American envoys, they argued that their capture and enslavement of European sailors were justified as retaliatory acts. One Barbary official stated, "We take their men as they take our goods; it is a fair exchange in the theater of war" (Barbary Diplomat, early 1800s). This rhetoric positions Barbary slavery within a framework of justified retribution, contrasting with the moral justifications used by Americans.

Similar to American justifications, Barbary Coast leaders often cited economic reasons for maintaining slavery. The corsair economy depended significantly on the capture and ransoming of slaves. A Barbary leader is recorded as saying, "Our livelihood depends on the sea and the spoils we take. Without it, our people would starve" (Barbary Leader, early 1800s). This argument mirrors the economic justifications presented by American pro-slavery advocates, highlighting a shared reliance on slavery for economic stability.

When comparing American and Barbary Coast diplomatic rhetoric, several parallels and contradictions emerge. Both regions used economic

arguments to justify slavery, emphasizing the necessity of forced labor for economic stability. However, the moral justifications differ significantly. American rhetoric often portrayed Barbary slavery as inherently barbaric and immoral, reinforcing a sense of Western moral superiority. In contrast, Barbary diplomats framed their practices as justified retribution and necessary for survival, without the racial ideologies prevalent in American justifications. The use of Orientalist discourse by American diplomats and politicians served to mask the moral contradictions within their own society. By depicting Barbary Coast slavery as uniquely barbaric, they deflected attention from the brutal realities of American slavery. This selective moral outrage is evident in the writings of figures like William Eaton, who, despite acknowledging the harsher conditions faced by African slaves, focused his condemnation on Barbary practices.

Comparative Analysis and Impacts on Society

The justification of slavery in both American and Barbary Coast societies was deeply rooted in cultural and ideological constructs that reflected and reinforced existing power dynamics and social hierarchies. Using Edward Said's concept of Orientalism from his work "Orientalism" (1978), the study analyzes how these constructs were employed to rationalize and perpetuate slavery. American narratives often depicted the Barbary Coast as a land of tyranny and barbarism, as seen in Joseph Hanson's poem "The Musselmen Humbled" (1806), which described the Tripolitans as a "cruel and unprincipled enemy" and a "rude race of Barbarians". This depiction served to contrast the perceived civilization and moral superiority of Americans with the barbarism of the Barbary Coast, thereby justifying American actions against them. Similarly, Royall Tyler's "The Algerine Captive" (1797) uses the protagonist's captivity to highlight the moral contradictions of American society. Updike Underhill, captured by Algerian pirates, reflects: "Here, thought I, is a just retribution for the inhumanity of my own countrymen". This statement underscores the moral hypocrisy of a society that condemns Barbary Coast slavery while perpetuating its own brutal system of slavery. In contrast, Barbary Coast literature often framed slavery within a context of economic necessity and retribution. A Barbary diplomat argued, "We take their men as they take our goods; it is a fair exchange in the theater of war". This rhetoric positions Barbary slavery as a justified response to European and American aggression, contrasting with the moral and racial justifications used in American narratives.

Both American and Barbary Coast societies faced significant moral and ethical dilemmas regarding their practices of slavery. These dilemmas were often reflected in the mutual criticisms and self-reflections found in their respective narratives. American political and literary figures frequently grappled with the moral implications of slavery. Thomas Jefferson's correspondence reveals his personal conflict, as seen in his letter to John

Holmes, where he describes the Missouri Compromise as "a fire bell in the night" that filled him with terror (Jefferson, 1820). Despite recognizing the moral issues, Jefferson's policies often failed to address the fundamental injustices of slavery, highlighting the deep-seated contradictions in American society. Benjamin Franklin's satirical essay, "Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim on the Slave Trade," further exposes these contradictions by mimicking the justifications for slavery presented by American politicians. Franklin's satire underscores the absurdity and moral bankruptcy of these arguments, showing how they could be used to justify the enslavement of Americans by the Barbary Coast (Franklin, 1790). In contrast, Barbary Coast narratives often framed slavery within a context of economic necessity and retribution. A Barbary leader's statement, "Our livelihood depends on the sea and the spoils we take. Without it, our people would starve", highlights the pragmatic and survival-based justifications for slavery. This economic argument, while not excusing the practice, provides a different moral framework compared to the racial ideologies prevalent in American justifications. The mutual criticisms between American and Barbary Coast societies reveal a complex web of moral and ethical reflections. William Eaton, the American consul to Tunis, expressed this dilemma in his letters: "The Christian slaves in Barbary suffer, yet their plight pales in comparison to the brutality endured by African slaves in America" (Eaton, 1813). Eaton's acknowledgment of the harsher conditions faced by African slaves in America underscores the selective moral outrage and hypocrisy of American rhetoric.

The narratives surrounding Barbary Coast slavery had a significant influence on American views and policies regarding their own system of slavery, while American practices and rhetoric similarly impacted Barbary Coast perspectives. The depiction of Barbary slavery as a symbol of Eastern barbarism allowed Americans to construct a moral dichotomy that justified their own practices while condemning those of the Barbary Coast. This construction is rooted in Said's concept of Orientalism, where the East is depicted as inherently barbaric to enhance the perceived moral and cultural superiority of the West. The American encounters with Barbary piracy and slavery spurred the development of a stronger naval presence and a more assertive foreign policy, evident in the creation of the United States Navy in the 1790s. These policies were framed as a moral crusade against tyranny, as reflected in Hanson's poem, which celebrated the American victories over the Barbary states as a triumph of justice and freedom (Hanson, 1806). Such narratives reinforced the belief that American society was fundamentally more civilized and just than those of the Barbary Coast. However, this construction also forced Americans to confront their own moral failings, contributing to the growing abolitionist sentiment in the United States. The long-term effects of these narratives on American society were profound, playing a significant role in the abolitionist movement and eventually

contributing to the abolition of slavery in the United States. Conversely, the Barbary states, aware of the criticisms directed at their practices by Western nations, used these narratives to justify their own actions and policies. Barbary Coast leaders often framed their practices of slavery and piracy as justified responses to European and American aggression, and the economic arguments used to justify slavery were bolstered by the perceived economic necessity of maintaining a slave-based economy. Over time, the Barbary states faced increasing pressure from European powers to abolish slavery and piracy, leading to changes in policies and practices. These pressures, coupled with the moral critiques highlighted by comparisons with American slavery, influenced the gradual decline of the slave trade in the Barbary Coast, reflected in the eventual cessation of Barbary piracy and the formal abolition of slavery in the region under European colonial influence.

Conclusion

This research has explored the moral and political justifications for slavery in early American and Barbary Coast societies through the lens of Edward Said's Postcolonial Theory. By analyzing literary works, diplomatic correspondences, and political rhetoric, the study revealed how both American and Barbary Coast narratives constructed and critiqued each other's practices, exposing inherent hypocrisies and cultural constructs. One key finding is the role of Orientalism in American narratives, where the Barbary Coast was depicted as barbaric to contrast with the perceived moral superiority of American society. This is evident in Joseph Hanson's poem, "The Musselmen Humbled," which celebrates American victories over the Barbary states while ignoring the moral contradictions of American slavery (Hanson, 1806). Similarly, Royall Tyler's "The Algerine Captive" uses the protagonist's captivity to highlight the moral failings of American society, reflecting the ironic retribution for American inhumanity (Tyler, 1797). The diplomatic and political rhetoric of the time, as seen in the correspondences of Thomas Jefferson and William Eaton, also revealed selective moral outrage. Jefferson's letters express personal conflict over slavery but ultimately prioritize political stability over moral considerations (Jefferson, 1820). Eaton's letters criticize Barbary slavery while acknowledging the harsher conditions faced by African slaves in America, underscoring the hypocrisy of American rhetoric (Eaton, 1813). Conversely, Barbary Coast narratives justified slavery through economic necessity and retaliatory measures, as reflected in statements from Barbary diplomats and leaders. These justifications highlight the pragmatic and survival-based arguments used to sustain their practices, which, while different from American racial ideologies, reveal a shared reliance on slavery for economic stability.

This research contributes to Postcolonial Theory by applying Edward Said's concepts of Orientalism and the construction of the "Other" to the study of slavery in both American and Barbary Coast contexts. It

demonstrates how Orientalist constructs were used to justify and critique slavery, revealing the ideological underpinnings that perpetuated these systems. The study also enriches historical understanding by highlighting the interconnectedness of global narratives on slavery and the mutual influence of these narratives on societal views and policies. The insights gained from this research have practical implications for contemporary discussions on slavery and human rights. By exposing the moral and ideological hypocrisies in historical justifications for slavery, the study provides a framework for critiquing modern forms of exploitation and systemic injustice. It underscores the importance of critically examining cultural narratives and power dynamics to address and rectify ongoing human rights abuses.

Future research could expand on this study by exploring the narratives of other regions involved in the global slave trade, such as the Caribbean or South America, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how slavery was justified and critiqued across different cultures and societies. Comparative studies could also examine the role of religion, economics, and race in shaping these narratives and justifications.

1. Intersectionality in Slavery Narratives: Investigating how gender, class, and race intersected in the narratives and justifications for slavery in both American and Barbary Coast societies could provide deeper insights into the complexities of these constructs.

2. Influence of Abolitionist Movements: Examining the impact of abolitionist movements on the rhetoric and policies in both regions, and how these movements leveraged cross-cultural narratives to advocate for the end of slavery, could offer valuable historical perspectives.

3. Literary and Artistic Depictions: Further analysis of how slavery was depicted in other forms of cultural production, such as visual arts, music, and theater, could enrich our understanding of the cultural and ideological constructs surrounding slavery.

4. Comparative Legal Frameworks: Exploring the legal justifications for slavery in American and Barbary Coast societies, and how these legal frameworks evolved over time in response to internal and external pressures, could provide important insights into the institutionalization of slavery and its eventual abolition.

This research has demonstrated the value of applying Postcolonial Theory to the study of slavery in early American and Barbary Coast societies. By critically examining the cultural and ideological constructs that justified slavery, it has revealed the complex interplay of power, morality, and ideology that underpinned these practices. The findings underscore the importance of continuing to interrogate historical narratives to inform contemporary discussions on human rights and social justice, highlighting the enduring relevance of Said's theoretical framework in understanding and addressing systemic injustices.

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