



**CRITICAL  
RACE  
CONVERSATIONS**

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Research

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### Premodern Race and Religion

DESCRIPTION: Dialogue with Kathleen Lynch, M. Lindsay Kaplan, Mayte Green-Mercado, Rachel Schine

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**KATHLEEN LYNCH:** Hello. Welcome to Critical Race Conversations. This is an online monthly series hosted by the Folger Institute and supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. I'm Kathleen Lynch. I'm the executive director of the Folger Institute and I thank you for joining us. That goes whether or not you've been with us for this whole yearlong series or if this is your first time joining us in this conversation. It has been a monthly series of online sessions featuring scholars who are offering new insights into the prehistory of modern racialized thinking and racism.

**LYNCH:** Our speakers are addressing the deeper and more complex roots to the enduring social challenges and they are conducting more inclusive investigations of our contested pasts, all with the goal of creating a more just academy and society. The Folger Institute has been providing the framework and the platform for these conversations but as is our practice, we turn to scholars across disciplines and career stages to lead discussions from their experience and expertise.

**LYNCH:** We have been listening and we have been learning from those who are more knowledgeable about the field of critical race conversations, the critical race theory than we are. Across this series, we've also been learning how to foster dialogue and present content through new technologies. You may be joining us live on YouTube. If so, please use the chat function to ask questions. You may be live tweeting. Our speakers welcome that. If so, please use the hashtag #FolgerCRC.

**LYNCH:** We will collect questions from both the YouTube chat and Twitter and we will make room for them towards the end of our conversation. Also, you should know this conversation is being recorded and we will post it on the Folger's YouTube channel as soon as it is processed and that will include then close captioning enabled and a verified transcript uploaded. So, to today's conversation, premodern race and religion.

**LYNCH:** I cannot imagine having hosted this series of conversations without looking at religion, without looking at people's senses of self, people's belief system, people's understanding of what's right and wrong and who belongs in a society and who needs to be excluded from it. So, I'm especially grateful to our panelist, this session to be dealing with this topic.

**LYNCH:** And it is a topic which includes violence, martyrdom, punishment, and we will be seeing some images that depict these disturbing practices. So, with that said, again, I welcome you. I welcome our panelist. They include today M. Lindsay Kaplan from the English department at Georgetown, Mayte Green-Mercado from the history department at Rutgers, and Rachel Schine who is moving from the Arabic literature and culture program at University of Colorado, Boulder to a humanities research fellowship at NYU Abu Dhabi this fall.

**LYNCH:** We are not delivering extensive introductions to these scholars and their work. They have agreed to forego that but please do consult our webpage and I know we're gonna be putting some links to that information in the chat function on YouTube. So, welcome again, everybody. Thank you for joining us and I'm gonna turn our conversation over to Lindsay, Mayte, and Rachel.

**RACHEL SCHINE:** Hi, everyone and thank you for having me. So, we're actually going to speak about each of our topics in somewhat chronological order, which means since I'm talking about sort of the beginning of Islam through the Abbasid Period, so through roughly the 13th century, I'm going to go first. So, let me just share my screen. Okay, so, first of all, once again thank you so much for having me. And before diving into the topic of Islam, and race. I wanted to set this up by explaining how I think about race in my research and teaching.

**SCHINE:** So, first of all, because race is something that we continuously construct, I follow the philosopher Adam Hochman in talking about race and racialization side by side. Identifying process of racialization rather than just categories of race is also important because it helps us understand race in languages where a single word for it doesn't exist like in classical Arabic. In Arabic, a concept of race emerges from multiple terms that create a field of meaning. This fielded meaning echoes in important ways with some of the ways that we think of race today. Each of the terms on the slide invoke the idea of biological and cultural inheritance in terms of one's place and or people of origin.

**SCHINE:** So, for example you have words about your kind or type like jins and 'unsur, words about your point of origin like your 'irq, your root or asl, seed. And as I see most often in my work, terms indicating your line from those origins that is your nasab or your lineage. In other words, race in the medieval Arabic speaking Muslim world was as now a covert construction. It's something that society makes though you make race using technical scientific vocabularies that mask, sorry, that make our categories sound like they're objective facts.

**SCHINE:** As with many social norms, we hide racist constructed-ness in plain sight. Because of this, I'm particularly interested in how the highly intertextual and very literate practices of medieval Muslims sketch the boundaries of racial logic, making what Claudia Rankine and what Beth Loffreda have called a racial imaginary. Arab Muslim epistemology's blended racialized ideas of lineage and place in ways that are visible in and beyond the collection of terms that I just described. As with the Christian framework, in much Islamic thought, the world's varied people trace their beginnings to Noah's sons, Shem, Japheth and Ham.

**SCHINE:** These genealogies were also part of the emerging Arabic science of mapping the known world that really took off under Abbasid imperialization in the 9th and 10th centuries. At that point, they became combined with Greco-Roman geography and humoral pathology. In this combined model, Noah's descendants settled the globe's various climate zones, usually divided by latitude as you can see here. Each zone differently affects the body's constitution and therefore one's external look as well as one's intellect. As generations progressed, with Shem's descendants inhabiting the world's temperate Mediterranean zones, Japheth's in the world's north, and Ham's in the world's south, differences of local nature produced by climate solidified the brothers' descendants into different human types.

**SCHINE:** In the case of Ham especially, complementing his unique backstory, a particular racial geographic formation developed, called the lands of the blacks or Bilād al-Sūdān which connoted in some cases the world's entire south. So, in the Islamic world's mapping, stretching from West Africa to roughly Indonesia and in some cases just Sub-Saharan Africa. The lands of the blacks and the black people who live there occupy a particular place in understandings of identity, race, and even religion in the medieval Muslim world. So, what I want you to get out of this roughly 15-minute presentation is how perceptions of black people in the Muslim world were a product of several interrelated institutions and how these were produced and represented in literature.

**SCHINE:** Under the conceptualization of global lineages taken from Noah's genealogy, words like nasab that in the pre-Islamic period were used for granular local distinctions of tribe and clan, became generalized to all of humanity in what some have called a universal genealogical chart. This is at odds though with what the Quran and Hadith or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad seem to say about nasab's importance. The Prophet for example in the third quote on the slide discusses nasab as a holdover from the pre-Islamic Era that his community somewhat to his chagrin is persisting in using.

**SCHINE:** Similarly, the Qur'an makes the case, and you can see this in the second quote, that lineage is only a source of earthly prestige while righteousness is how you accrue prestige in the hereafter. So, it says on that day when the trumpet is blown, i.e. the day of judgment, the kinship ties between you and nasabs between you won't have meaning. Moreover, as shown in the first quote, the Qur'an stresses that human difference and implicitly differences of descent, because people and

tribes were both construed as large familial groups, are precious signs of God's created genius.

**SCHINE:** At the same time, the Muslim community or ummah is individualized in the Qur'an frequently as one giant growing family that absorbs different lineages. One is advised to speak of Muslim people who've been deracinated through slavery, orphanhood, and other things that mean their parentage is unknown, as one's brothers in faith or one's dependents, mawali, you can see that in the final quote. [Finding?] the ummah through familial structures also becomes a major part of Islamic law in which taking a mala, singular from mawali, meaning a dependent, which is to say engaging in a relationship of Wala', comes to mean taking a non-Arab into an Arab family through manumission or clientage.

**SCHINE:** Muslims cannot enslave fellow Muslims, which is mentioned throughout most of history, slavery is predicated on both ethnic and religious differences in the Muslim world. Within slavery, provisions evolve to ensure assimilation for women, too, though in different ways from how Wala' works after you are freed. Children born to slave concubines and their owners took their father's nasab, or family name and they were freeborn and their mothers couldn't be separated from them because they became an umm walad or mother of the child.

**SCHINE:** Ali Mazrui has referred to this gendered access to Arab ethnicity as quote end quote, ascending miscegenation, in which relationships between foreign women and Arab men are encouraged but the opposite are not. In these structures, having an advantaged nasab, which early on usually means having an Arab nasab, continued to matter because of the assimilating benefits it let you confer to others. And so in the early period of Islam, being a [INAUDIBLE] Arabian also gets rarified as the social ideal, as the target culture and legal identity into which one wants to be absorbed.

**SCHINE:** Early sources tell us that this absorption was easier in some situations than in others. Arabic literary sources from throughout the Abbasid period, roughly the 8th through 13th centuries, frequently conflate blackness and slavery, despite many slaves also coming from places like Eastern Europe and Central Asia into the Islamic world. And despite East Africa's early religious importance for Muslims, consolidating figures like Bilal [PH], an Ethiopian former slave who's actually in the image there who first called Muslims to prayer, and the Negus or King of Ethiopia, who embraced the first Muslim refugees, the lands of the blacks or bilād al-sūdān are often associated with paganism and the supernatural.

**SCHINE:** It's not uncommon to see black people described in literature as djinn which is to say demons who coexist with humans or a class of being described in the Qur'an. black people out in these rituals are chronicled in a number of travelogues and geographies. The Abbasid Era in which this is occurring is tellingly a period in which the Trans-Saharan slave trade reached some early peaks as well as when Islamic lands first acquired paper and witnessed a big literary boom on the whole,

often via imperial patronage. At a more day to day level, blackness and its association with slave ancestry means that in social arrangements like marriage, which legally prioritized parity with one's bride, partners raised as black were sometimes considered unequal in class to non-black ones even if everything else was identical on paper.

**SCHINE:** Meanwhile the children of black women and Arab men, though ethnically Arab and religiously Muslim, were not always read as such in society and struggled with the tension between their perceived race and their legal status. This was less true seemingly for relationships, excuse me, between Arabs and Persians or Turks. But each of these groups also has its own complex history of incorporation that we can discuss more in the Q&A if you'd like. This web of associations with black people continues to have influence in the early modern period. When despite the rise of Islamic empires in Sub Saharan Africa like the Songhai, and famed Islamic intellectual centers like Timbuktu, people raised as black were sometimes considered categorically non-Muslim and enslaved despite their professed faith.

**SCHINE:** This is of course complicated and compounded by European colonialism. Well, before then though, we can see that black was a racial moniker in the Islamic world that had implications for one's social rank. As a function of lineage, that was coextensive with class and degree of legal freedom. blackness was also viewed as biobehavioral originating in specific world regions and prehistories and transmitting attitudes across time and space. Though these ideas mostly came from outside of Scripture, especially from Jewish and Christian thought, Greek sciences and Middle Eastern political economies, some people saw in the Qur'an a basis for whiteness being better than blackness.

**SCHINE:** And you can see that in this quote by the famous Exegete, al-Razi, in which he takes literally the Qur'an's statement that the saved will be white-faced and the damned will be black-faced. Though there are phrases that link black and White metaphorically with shame and blessing across various Semitic languages. Representations like al-Razi and similar excerpt below it from the 1,001 Nights, better known to some people as the Arabian Nights, in which a White slave girl says to a black one that people with black faces will quote end quote crowd into hell, further propounded the idea that blackness was somehow related to unbelief.

**SCHINE:** The fact that this understanding shows up not only in the writings of the scholarly elite but also in popular literature made by and for the masses, shows how pervasive racializing discourses were in the medieval Muslim world. In fact if anything, black people show up more frequently and prominently as characters in popular stories than they do in works in elite literature. This is especially the case in the genre that I work with most closely namely Arabic epics, the first appearance of which coincides with early chivalric literature from Byzantine and the Latin West. These epics tell tales of heroes of Arabian tribal conflicts and the Islamic conquests.

**SCHINE:** But because the stories are aspirational histories about successful expansionism, some of which hasn't in fact happened yet, they often imagine the ummah as diverse and accepting of diversity. And true to this vision, Arabic epics have heroes of different genders, ages, ethnicities, and races. And in particular, they include a lot of black and Afro Arab protagonists. Sometimes these black heroes are born black unexpectedly to Arab parents who self-designate as white, as many Arabs did throughout the medieval period. And in those situations, we can really see the process of racialization occurring in real time.

**SCHINE:** I have just a few passages to show you that will demonstrate what I mean by this and then I'll toss it to my fellow speakers. All of these passages are taken from the 12th century epic, *The Tale of the Princess Dhat Al-Himma*, whose main plotline is the wars between Arabia and Byzantium in the 7th through 9th centuries. Unexpectedly, the tale's heroine has a son named Abd al-Wahhab who was born black because he was conceived while his mother was menstruating, which leads to a paternity case in which a leader descended from the Prophet Muhammad gives the judgment that you see here.

**SCHINE:** In this passage of, a few of the associations with racial difference that we've seen so far are all brought to bear. God's genius shows in the various ways that He composes His creations. And at the same time, these differences can also be scientized through reproductive biology. Moreover, despite the fact that human difference testifies to God's power, blackness is still being given a taboo ritually impure origin here. One's essentially told that if you don't want a black child, you shouldn't engage in illicit sex.

**SCHINE:** Another example of the tension between appreciating and policing human difference is this child Abd al-Wahhab's manumission and conversion of a Sub-Saharan African warrior who was conscripted by the Byzantines, whose name was Abu'l-Hazahiz. After converting him, Abd al-Wahhab takes Abu'l-Hazahiz to meet Abbasid caliph who's no other than the famous Harun al-Rashid. But the meeting goes off the rails when Abu'l-Hazahiz refused to bow and claims that the caliph must only serve whites, he says if you're the caliph of the whites, then you know, Abd al-Wahhab gets to be caliph of the blacks, right? This shows us a few things. One, Abu'l-Hazahiz's time serving in both Byzantine and Muslim armies has taught him that the world is segregated into black and white.

**SCHINE:** So, a caliph in his estimation can't possibly serve everyone. The second thing that shows us is that the way to disrupt that understanding and make Abu'l-Hazahiz submit to Muslim power structures is by having an intermediary authority who has a foot in both racial worlds, teach him about Islam's universality. And third, is that this assimilation process takes a paternalistic shape. Abd al-Wahhab's relationship to Abu'l-Hazahiz as his freed mala or dependent is like that of a father to a child. And finally, these stakes of converting black men like Abu'l-Hazahiz are heightened by how Sub-Saharan Africa or the bilād al-sūdān are themselves described in the epic.

**SCHINE:** For example, when the Christian villains and Muslim heroes in the texts travel to Ethiopia, they're confronted by a king who's as big as a buffalo and who's flanked by Central African cannibals. That's why they have the locked muzzles as it says, who are said by one character to be like the Zabaniyah, beings mentioned in the Qur'an who take souls to hell. At the same time, this king is an imperial participant in lucrative routes of trade. This is evoked by the ebony litter on which he sits, an import according to contemporaneous Arabic geographies from either India or West Africa

**SCHINE:** It's also evoked by the fact that both Muslim and Christian delegations are coming to him. Sub Saharan Africa is rendered here as a culturally remote space that nonetheless has resources and connections Arab Muslims are interested in. Its peoples are portrayed simultaneously as hardy fighters and as profound pagans which shores up grand narratives that justify not only Islamic proselytism, but also obliquely the slave trade. So, just to sum up, in principle, Islam is a universal faith that can and does absorb a wide range in human membership.

**SCHINE:** For much of the medieval period, the reach of the Islamic world span from Morocco to Uzbekistan. I've only focused on Islam's early centuries here through around the 1200's and only on Arabic sources. In them, we see a productive tension emerge between ideas about the Muslim community's future and the facts of its present in which people come into Islam primarily by attaching themselves to ethnically Arab members who have the oldest claim on being Muslim. New Muslims often assimilate via disenfranchising structures like concubinage, clientage, and slavery, or manumission.

**SCHINE:** This tension is especially pronounced in popular epics racial imaginaries, which at once envision a world in which everyone can be a hero for the faith but also anticipate the pathways to this are different for different people, with black characters being special test cases for whether the rest of the system is working. And now I will give it over to the next person. Thank you, everyone.

**M. LINDSAY KAPLAN:** Thank you very much, Rachel, for that fascinating talk. I'm looking forward to discussing it further. I'd like to begin my talk with the land declaration. I'm speaking from the land that was and still is the homeland of the Nacotchtanke or Anacostine and their descendants, the Piscataway-Conoy people. I acknowledge that these people and others were forcefully removed by colonization, the consequences of which continue to affect indigenous communities. I offer my gratitude for the land and for the people. I'm gonna share my screen.

**KAPLAN:** So, in my talk today, I'm gonna discuss the racialization of both Jews and Muslims in medieval Christianity. And while Rachel's talk did focus on color, I argue that premodern racism doesn't necessarily focus on color as far as racism tends to do although it often does attempt to it. Because color is not necessarily the defining element of all racism, I begin with a broad definition that encompasses both early

and later forms. Racism at its most basic level creates a hierarchy in which one group is represented as inherently inferior to another.

**KAPLAN:** This hierarchical construction makes use of authoritative systems such as law, science, or theology to substantiate the position of the dominant group relative to the subordinated one. While modern racism emerges out of pseudoscience and legal systems, medieval racism appears in the context of one of the most powerful discourses of the era, that of religion. Racist ideas about religious others occur in different religious teachings, including Judaism and as Professor Schine has pointed out, Islam, my research focus is on medieval Christianity.

**KAPLAN:** My recent work makes the case that theological discourses can produce a racist status as evidenced by the concept of the *servitus judaeorum* that is enslavement of the Jews, an idea developed in Christian Biblical interpretation that imagines Jews in a cursed servitude to Christians. Unlike the kinds of enslavement that Rachel discussed, this concept does not indicate chattel servitude but instead describes an inner condition. It constitutes a form of racism and positing perpetual enslavement, a permanent hereditary state of inferiority inflicted on the Jews as a result of their alleged participation in the crucifixion of Jesus.

**KAPLAN:** This racializing process relies on the interpretive strategy of Biblical figures in which events and persons of the Hebrew Bible are reinterpreted allegorically as expressing a prophetic truth about Christian history. In the case of Jewish enslavement, figures associated with sin and slavery in the Hebrew Bible, including Cain, Ham, as Rachel also mentioned, Hagar, and Ishmael are also understood as predicting God's punishment of the Jews with servitude as a consequence of the crucifixion. Just as in this case where are more than one figure can represent the same people or event, similarly, one figure can offer multiple meanings.

**KAPLAN:** In particular, the figure of the enslaved woman, Hagar, and her son, Ishmael, are also employed in medieval exegesis and law, not only to indicate Jewish but Muslim hereditary inferiority. In Christian Scripture, Paul's epistle to the Galatians innovates allegorical interpretation of the Genesis figure, Hagar, by identifying her and her offspring as enslaved people associated with Jewish law. She is the woman from Mt. Sinai engendering slavery. Paul creates an influential hierarchy that subordinates the enslaved followers of the law to the free followers of Jesus.

**KAPLAN:** The church father, St. Jerome, and his commentary on Galatians states the consensus on Hagar's significance here. Nearly all the commentators on this passage interpreted to mean that the slave woman, Hagar, represents the law and the Jewish people. In the 13th century, Pope Innocent III cites Galatians in his canonical ruling, *Etsi iudaeos*, this pronouncement racializes Jews by presenting their punishment as rendering all Jews permanently and inherently inferior to all Christians. The figure



of Hagar implied in the context of the slave woman with the free one proves the perpetual enslavement of the Jews.

**KAPLAN:** Innocent prohibits the Jews' employment of free Christian servants because, or rather lest the children of a free woman should be slaves to the children of a slave, he's referring to Hagar here, but that rather as slaves rejected by God and whose death they wickedly conspired, they shall, by the effect of this very action, recognize themselves as the slaves of those whom Christ's death set free at the same time that it enslaved them. So, lots of slavery going on there.

**KAPLAN:** The historical [oppression?] of the Jews at the time of Jesus, his death subjected their descendants, not only them, but their descendants to an inherent persisting state of inferiority that I argue is a racial one. However, there's an alternative interpretation of Ishmael that identifies him as the progenitor of the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula. In a different commentary, the same church father, Jerome, and his commentary on Ezekiel, alludes to the Galatians' contrast of free and enslaved women.

**KAPLAN:** Ishmaelites and Hagarites, who are now called Saracens, falsely assume for themselves the name of Sara that is the freeborn mistress whom they would seem to be born. While Saracens should be called Hagarites from Hagar, they falsely derived their name from Sara in order to hide their descent from an enslaved woman. And I should say that term Saracen is a term that Christians imposed on Muslims later. It's not a self-defining term. So, in Jerome's time, it couldn't refer to Muslims but later by the medieval period, it does.

**KAPLAN:** In the medieval period, the logic that translates this figure from Scriptural to legal discourse to racialized Jews, also constructs Muslims as hereditary inferiors to Christians. In 1179, the Third Lateran Council ruling entitled "Regarding Jews and that Christians not be made their slaves" states Jews and Saracens shall not be permitted to have Christian slaves in their homes for the only fitting condition is that Jews be placed below Christians. While the ruling includes both infidel groups, the organizing idea of Jewish inferiority established by the doctrine of the *servitus judaeorum*, effectively subordinates Muslims here as well.

**KAPLAN:** By the second half of 13th century, Urban IV, the Pope Urban IV, fully articulates the rationale of the servitude shared by both Muslims and Jews. It is neither convenient nor honest that these same Jews and Muslims whose proper guilt submitted them to perpetual servitude should exercise strength and power in regard to Christians, although chronologically impossible, Muslims are also condemned to slavery like Jews by their own proper guilt, the term used by Innocent in *Etsi iudaeus* to refer to the participation of the Jews in the crucifixion of Jesus.

**KAPLAN:** Perpetual servitude, a condition initially applied to Jews, similarly racializes Muslims. My book also demonstrates how the visual images of New

Testament accounts of Jesus's betrayal, torture, and crucifixion in *English Psalter Illuminations* supplies a racist construction of Jewish identity. Representations of the Jews' participation in the Passion emphasize their violence against Jesus as indicating their continued rejection of Christianity to the contemporary moment and thus also their enslavement. They employ a range of distorted features and associations with the demonic to portray Jews as hereditarily distinct from subordinate and hostile to Christians.

**KAPLAN:** As in the Biblical commentaries and legal text, Muslims also appear in iconographic roles ascribed to Jews. Scenes from the Passion such as the betrayal, scourging, and mocking of Jesus, even though this is chronologically impossible, the theological view in the context of the Crusades understands contemporary Jews and Muslims as enemies of the faith. This is an image of the betrayal from *the Winchester Psalter* as a collection of Psalms, many were illuminated or illustrated in the medieval period. This one shows the scene of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas in the New Testament.

**KAPLAN:** And he's also being arrested, you can see the arrestors. This image uses a lot of derogatory features to show, to visualize the Jews' inherent sinful inferiority. There's a lot of kind of bestial things, distorted features, the portrayal in profiles, another way, Judas's red hair, the red hair of some of the arrestors is also derogatory image.

**KAPLAN:** These signs are similar, or demonic signs, the ways in which the devils in the Winchester Psalter are portrayed, are also very bestial with animalistic claws and fangs and similar kind of strange curly hair. The illustration of the trial and scourging of Jesus continues the Jewish violence against Jesus that we saw in the arrest and betrayal, this image, on the far left, we see Pilate who's represented as a Jewish king, although he's not a Jew in the New Testament.

**KAPLAN:** There's a little brown demon hovering at his ear suggesting he's under demonic influence. We have again a figure on the right who looks like the figures in the arrest above, and then we see this figure on the left portrayed with dark skin, curly dark hair, stereotypically African features, and I have a whole other explanation that I don't have time to go into here but there is as Rachel talked about, that kind of imaginary. There is an African Muslim imaginary that gets developed in the medieval period as well.

**KAPLAN:** So, sometimes because of the monastic understanding of Islam is being located in Africa and North Africa, sometimes medieval illumination uses African feature to depict Muslims. But not always. So, how do you tell? If you look at this depiction, you see that there is a thin white headband surrounding this figure on the left's head. This is called a tortil and this is a sign used in Christian iconography to depict Muslim identity.

**KAPLAN:** We see it in this 12th-century bas relief. The figure on the left has a kind of twisted tie. It also covers his head with a twisted tie around his head. This is actually an image of a Muslim and a Jew and an image of the last judgment. The Muslim torturer above, however, otherwise resembles the Jewish enemies of Jesus. He's presented in profile with pointed, distorted nose and upturned eye and a shadowed gaping mouth.

**KAPLAN:** So, I wanted just look a little bit more at some other images of what happens as these scenes are portrayed throughout the later medieval period. These psalter images represent the historical enemies of Jesus in order to vilify his contemporary ones, Jews as well as Muslims. The scenes of the passion that only vividly illustrated text currently directed against the faith and its doctrines by Jews and Muslims but also racialize them and depicting their rejection of Jesus that calls down upon them the punitive curse of hereditary servitude.

**KAPLAN:** And we see continuation of, this is an image from France in the 13th century. Most of the images are English but there's exchange of artists between France and England at the time. So, we see a single dark figure. Sometimes these figures are represented with gray skin which can also be a sign of damnation. This is the betrayal and here we have a scourging. We see that these images have, these figures, seems to be one lighter skinned on the right and darker skinned on the left. They have wings on their head.

**KAPLAN:** Ruth Melinkoff has talked about that these represent either pagan or I would argue Muslim. They can also represent Muslim identity. But it seems like both possibly the Jewish and the Muslim figure are wearing these headdresses. This later 13th, early 14th century psalter has a mixture of figures with white skin, light skin, gray skin, dark gray skin.

**KAPLAN:** In order to kind of distinguish Jews from Christians, we see again the use of derogatory facial features to indicate Jewish identity. Here again, we get this pattern of a figure of a Muslim, I would argue, and a Jew, distinguished by color distinction, participating in this violence against Jesus. And then finally we turn to *the Latrel Psalter*, 14th century, where again and this is a mocking of Jesus and then also the scourging where we get figures with distorted features as well as color differential, I would argue, representing Muslims and Jews.

**KAPLAN:** However, by the early modern period, while Jews and Muslims were sometimes depicted in visual representations, they do not always appear in the derogatory theological iconography of infidel violence against Christians. In Nicolas de Nicolay's navigation it's originally a French text but these images were copied from the original by an English artist, we see this representation, pretty neutral representation of a merchant of Arabia. And then a few pages later, we see a merchant Jew, Jews living in Constantinople would obviously possibly take on the clothing of the dominant culture.

**KAPLAN:** We know that that happened in medieval Europe as well. That's very striking that there's not a lot of distinction or colorization of either of these. So, we're moving out of a kind of hostile iconographic context into a more kind of ethological which can sometimes be less derogatory. However, I argue that the earlier theological and racial ideas nevertheless persist in the common inclusion of both Jewish and Muslim characters together in early modern English drama. I'm gonna close with this quotation from Christopher Marlow, *The Jew of Malta*.

**KAPLAN:** And I can talk about this more because literally almost any plain early modern period that contains a Muslim also contains a Jew or vice versa. There are a few exceptions but it's a familiar co-representation. In this speech, Barabas the Jew and Ithamore the Muslim have spent the last several speeches talking about all the terrible crimes they perpetuated against Christians. And Barabas closes this discussion, make account of me as of thy fellow, we are villains both, both circumcised. We hate Christians both.

**KAPLAN:** While the more evident theological racialization of both religious groups may subside in favor of systems of racism based on geography and physical features in early modern period, these older ideas still circulate in early modern text. Thank you very much.

**MAYTE GREEN-MERCADO:** Well, thank you, Lindsay. This is kind of the perfect closing and for me to start. First I wanna thank the Folger Institute for hosting us today and for facilitating this conversation. I will very quickly try to share my screen with you all. And excuse me. Today, I will be talking about conversion and racialization in early modern Iberia.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** Excuse the typo on the slide here. And I will focus on this question of religious conversion and processes of racialization as it pertains to the Iberian Peninsula. And I will not define race for you today because my two colleagues have done so already. And I appreciate that very much. But I will just say that I will be talking about race both as a tool of social classification and also as a mechanism of domination. And I kind of wanna keep thinking about this question of mechanism of domination.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** I don't necessarily have an answer today but perhaps in the conversation, we can keep talking about it more. So, I will give a very brief overview of the processes of conversion of Jews and Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula. And then I will focus on Moriscos. Moriscos were Muslims and their descendants who were forced to convert to Catholicism in the early 16th century. But before I begin, I will say that until that moment of mass conversions in the Iberian Peninsula, in the very, very end of the 14th and in the 15th century, religion was primarily understood as a legal category.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** With the Christian conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, that saw its apex in the 12th and 13th centuries, Jews and Muslims came to occupy the place

of religious minorities within the dominant Catholic Christian society and they were held as the king's treasure. Therefore Jews and Muslims had certain rights. They were allowed to continue practicing the religion and to be judged according to their religious law but they also had certain obligations, primarily economic as subjects of Christian kings.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** As is well-known, the mass conversion of Jews in the Iberian peninsula began as the result of the pogroms that took place in different parts of the Iberian Peninsula during the 1390's. These mass conversions created what David Nurenberg has described as a classificatory dilemma for Christians and also for Jews. If conversion was carried out by force, en masse, how was it possible to know who had converted sincerely and whether those conversions were valid? Jews and conversos as these new Christians came to be known continued to cultivate familial, friendship, financial ties.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** And these converts were now to be classified as new Christians as opposed to old Christians who could trace back their lineage to Christian ancestors. As such, this classificatory system developed along genealogical lines. In the mid-15th century, the exclusionary ideas implied by these distinctions were put into practice through mechanisms that sought to scrutinize and restrict both the public and private lives of conversos.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** The statutes of purity of blood, estatutos de limpieza de sangre, though not implemented at the royal level but rather locally, banned newly converted Jews and their descendants up to the third generation from holding public offices or benefices and gaining access to certain professions, guilds, and religious, and military orders. The original sentencia-estatuto of Toledo of 1449 claimed that despite having converted to Catholicism, the conversos kept their quote original rights and ceremonies, end quote, in this way, harming the Christian faith and making them enemies of the old Christians.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** So, with the conversion of Jews and these new statutes of purity of blood, religion no longer was thought of in legal terms but rather we begin to see religion conceived as a biological fact. Not only could religion be traced backed back through one's lineage but all the sins associated with the old religion were also transmitted by blood, thus baptism did not constitute redemption. At the heart of the question of conversion was a vexing element that baptism implied.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** All doors have been opened for the total social integration of these new Christians with all its appendant benefits. Thus, the statutes of purity of blood and the process of racializing religious minorities reflected the wishes of those groups that sought to curb the social and political integration of conversos in order to reserve for themselves, the exclusive benefits of prestige, honor, social quality, and ultimately power. In that sense, the process of racializing a religious identity must be understood within the context of an anxiety over religious purity but more importantly in the context of social competition.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** The processes of conversion of Muslim populations in the Iberian Peninsula took place at different moments and for four different reasons that unfortunately I don't have time to elaborate at this brief intervention. Suffice it to say that by 1525, all Muslims at the Iberian Peninsula had been forcibly converted to Catholicism and therefore, at least in theory, there was no longer a Muslim religious-political presence in Iberia.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** The same concerns about lineage and purity of blood applied to the new converts from Islam known as Moriscos, a derogatory term that is the diminutive of Moors. So, it means something like little more. The measures of acculturation on Moriscos that took place throughout the 16th century came to be tied to racialized ideas of religion. In that sense, according to this Iberian Christian schema, Muslim converts to Catholicism would always have tainted blood.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** And I'm gonna actually show now some depictions of the conversion of the Moriscos or the Muslims, sorry, of Granada. And here, as you can see, the facial features of these different converts are very varied. According to my colleague and art historian Borja Franco, in this very early period, we don't necessarily see an attempt to identify Moriscos with a particular race. I will talk about this a little bit later.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** But it's just to give you a sense of the depiction of Moriscos. This is from the 1520s. So, by this moment, the Muslim communities had already converted. And the early modern vocabularies... actually, let me go back a little bit, and I'm sorry. So, this measure of forced acculturation on Moriscos can be tied to ideas of racialized ideas of religion.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** And in that sense, according to this Iberian Christian schema, Muslim converts to Catholicism would always be seen as having tainted blood. I would like to pause here to examine some of the terminology that was used at the time, which will help us understand how religion was racialized in early modern Iberia. The early modern vocabularies of identification of race in Iberia are, and I just wrote it here, *Raza*, *raza*, *linaje*, *lineage*, *nacion*, *casta* or *stock*.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** And these categories were associated with particular religious groups or minorities, and they were intimately linked to notions of descent and lineage that harked back to the processes taking place in the late Middle Ages which I described earlier with the conversion of Jews. As I explained, conversion brought about an anxiety over lineage and terms such as *raza* and *casta*, which had been in use since the early 15th century emerged as important denominators of ethnoreligious identification.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** Conceptually, these terms were closely associated with notions of lineage and together, they made descent the primary category of inclusion or exclusion. The marker against which all groups were measured was that of old

Christian, Cristiano viejo. In his 1611 dictionary, Sebastian de Covarubbias expressed the intimate connection between purity of blood and old Christianity, that an old Christian could be defined as a clean man, an hombre limpio, with no Moorish or Jewish race.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** [SPEAKS SPANISH]. Thus making limpio, clean, the obvious term of choice to refer to old Christians. And I should say that the earlier term used for limpio was lindo which also carries notions of beauty. Old Christians prided themselves in having a lineage that they claimed had never been tainted by Jewish or Muslim blood. Behind the idea of clean or stained races laid this concept of lineage which according to Covarubbias was the unbroken and recognized link that tied people to a common ancestor.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** In the early modern period, the discourse on genealogy was firmly established as a form of historiographical and theological speculation. As for the term race, a term that began to enter into common usage in the late 15th century but had acquired by the 17th century certain very negative associations, Covarubbias noted that, and I quote, related to lineage, race is understood as having a negative connotation such as having some race of Moor and Jewish.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** So, here Covarubbias is making the direct link between race and religion. So, in this case, race is understood as blood. So, religion is transmitted through blood. As such, terms as such as linaje and casta became the main categories in the exclusionary practices taking place in early modern Iberia and they tied moral, religious, and cultural traits to the notion of genealogy inherited through blood.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** I wanna return to the Moriscos and I should note that when I'm talking about Moriscos, I'm talking about different communities. We cannot talk about one Morisco community but rather of different Morisco communities that responded to their local geographical space, local traditions and also history. So, for example, not all Moriscos spoke Arabic, Moriscos in Granada and Valencia did but not in Castille and in Aragon.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** Or not all Moriscos dressed in this fashion as we see the Muslims of Granada dressing. Nonetheless as Jose Maria Perceval suggested almost 20 years ago in his book, Todos Son Uno, all are one, the Catholic authorities, for the most part, and here I'm speaking particularly of the inquisition and after 1568, the council of state and the royal authorities saw all Moriscos as one as crypto Muslims who are also a potential fifth column of the Ottomans.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** Not only was their blood tainted, but they were potential enemies of the church and the Spanish monarchy. This is why they were ultimately expelled from the Iberian Peninsula in 1609. In terms of their visual representation Borja Franco, as I already explained has argued that there seems to be a shift in the way in which Moriscos were depicted in portraits and wood cuts in the very early

period and this is particularly in the period of the reign of Charles V. Moriscos are portrayed as a very diverse community.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** Some of them look like old Christians, others, as we can see in this image we see here, Sub Saharan black African who is represented as a Muslim receiving baptism and then others, some wearing a turban, for example, while others are not. So, here, the artist is here trying to represent the diversity of Moriscos. But according to Borja Franco, we really do see a shift in the way that Moriscos are portrayed.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** And this particularly has to do with the two-year Morisco rebellion in the Alpujarras Mountains of Granada that took place between 1568 and 1570, which was the direct result of policies that were aimed at eroding any trace that was identified with Morisco culture in Granada in particular. It was the use of the Arabic language spoken or written, Morisco dress, traditional baths, music, etc.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** And Franco says that this really changed the way in which Moriscos are represented and here I'm gonna show you a 17th century depiction of the rebellion in the Alpujarras and you'll see what I mean. So, here we have a representation of the war, the rebellion, Morisco rebellion in the Alpujarras and this is from the *Historia Eclesiastica de Granada* of Francisco Heylan from the first decades of the 17th century.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** And what we see here, again, is a representation of the war and the artist is representing the war as a Christian, a scene of the war as a scene of martyrdom. Okay, so we have here tied to a tree, a Christian who is being martyred and here we have Moriscos and remember the last image that Lindsay showed us, this is aimed to quote end quote, Orientalize or even Turkecize Moriscos through their dress.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** And this is really after the rebellion in the Alpujarras, the first time that we begin to see this type of visual representation. This is according to Borja Franco. In my own work, an ideal with Morisco political culture, I actually do see the same kind of shift in the attitudes of the Christian authorities towards Moriscos and I see the rebellion in the Alpujarras as a watershed moment in the treatment of Moriscos in the Iberian Peninsula.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** That we begin to see an increased surveillance of the religious and social practices of Moriscos by the inquisitorial authorities and also by the Royal authorities as well. There is an increased concern over the movement of Moriscos and more importantly, the potential collaboration with the Ottomans and here, again, we see the representation of Moriscos as Turks. And this is actually very much, I think, linked to this whole genre of literature of turning Turk. So, it's actually quite interesting that Moriscos are being seen at like that at this time.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** So, some of this was based on the rebellion experience, this was a very fierce two-year rebellion that the Moriscos managed to carry out. And we see



in the sources degree of paranoia on the part of the Catholic authorities that Moriscos were gonna seek the help of the Ottomans and were gonna rebel again, some of this was actually based on reality. Some Moriscos did actually intend to carry out rebellions that were intended to resist the processings of forced acculturation that were taking place.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** So, to conclude, the mass conversion of Jews and Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula precipitated a process of viewing religious minorities in terms of race and this racialization process resulted in the surveillance, marginalization, and the final expulsion of a large number of new Christians from the Iberian Peninsula. Thank you. So, I kind of leave my talk here with a lot of questions that I perhaps like to address but I'm gonna take my privilege as being the last one to speak to kind of start our conversation today.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** I'm gonna stop sharing and I hope that we can engage in a conversation between the three of us and then we will take questions from the audience. And I would actually like to start with a question for both of you of disciplines and how your particular disciplines, literature, Islamic studies, Middle Eastern studies, deals with ideas of race. We know that particularly English literature is very much at the vanguard of studies of race and racialization.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** But I was wondering how your disciplines deal with it.

**SCHINE:** Thanks, I guess I'll answer that first because we talked about it a little bit amongst ourselves and as Mayte noted because she also teaches classes that span Islamic studies, when she looks for sources on race in sort of the period that I talked about today for the Islamic world, there's kind of very little to work with and I think there are a few main reasons why that's happening. The first is that if you look at the sort of initial masterworks on race in the Islamic world, especially by people like Bernard Lewis, race was almost always being viewed as like the litmus test for whether or not it existed was through the lens of enslavement.

**SCHINE:** So, on the one hand, you have people saying well, you know, slavery in the Islamic world can affect anyone and yes, it's predicated on ethnic difference but that's not necessarily racialized because they're from everywhere. And on the other hand, you have people like Bernard Lewis who, as I kind of picked up in my talk or picking up on, you know, there being differential treatment even within enslaved populations and there being significant anti-blackness. And just to go to Lindsay's point about race not always being tantamount to color in the premodern world, we also have new work on that in terms of race and slavery in the Islamic world by Hannah Barker, who's doing a really interesting project right now on the enslavement of Tatars by both Italians who are Christians and Mamelukes who are Muslim and how on both sides, they were racialized through perceived religious difference where the Tatars were perceived as being Christian by the Muslims and Muslim by the Christians and so on and so forth.

**SCHINE:** So, I think that's one of the big points. The other point is that the Muslim world, because it was so big and because it was so cosmopolitan, is looked at as so inherently diverse that people have sometimes said well, it kind of transcends questions of race or questions of race don't really come into bare in part because of what Islam says about itself and its own views of human difference that I discussed during my talk. So, there's the sense that maybe, you know, oh, these are questions that matter for the west, both in pre-modernity and obviously modernity but maybe not as much in an Islamic studies context. So, yeah. I'm sure Lindsay has great thoughts on this too though.

**KAPLAN:** Thank you. So, yeah. So, yes, you know, the English studies have... my discipline has really been, I think, at the forefront of thinking about premodern race starting with the groundbreaking work of Kim Hall, but a lot of that until pretty much until very recently has focused more on early modernity and it's only been in the last several years that the medieval period... I think there was a lot of resistance, there was a very strong sense that they're kind of focusing on anti-Judaism, not anti-Semitism in the early periods.

**KAPLAN:** And the notion particularly in the question of conversion as Mayte was focusing on her talk that conversion meant that it was impossible to be racist, right? Because you can, you know, transform from a Muslim or a Jew into a Christian. So, Geraldine Heng, with her groundbreaking really expansive study of medieval race and racism has, you know, definitely put the lie to that idea that there's no such thing as racism in the premodern period.

**KAPLAN:** But I think that in my particular work, I wanted to move... and she focuses on a lot on literature as well as other archives but I wanted to move out of the archive of literature because I felt like that we had to understand why was there a racialization of these figures of religious identity. That just doesn't come only from geographical ideas or, you know, I mean, it can be absorbed into it as we see in Rachel's work. But there had to be a theological kind of underpinning or structure that was driving this move into other fields in terms of biology, law, etc.

**KAPLAN:** So, I moved out of literature in basically to theology and, you know, I think that it's very important not to demonize Christianity because, you know, religion... the word religion means to bind together. So, there are all kinds of strategies and different religions that bind the faithful together against an inferior face. So, it happens certainly in Judaism but, you know, particularly given the way in which white supremacy today still draws on a lot of these medieval Christian ideas.

**KAPLAN:** I think it's really important to locate these issues in theology and not just simply in state law or in biology, those areas that are more comfortable that are more legible to us, but to see how theological concepts are driving some of these ideas.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** Yeah, that's super interesting. I suppose I'm between fields, I was trained as an Islamicist. I worked on early modern Iberia but I also work on the Mediterranean but also just talking about Iberian studies, I think as a field that's catching up, I think there has been quite a lot of resistance to studying race or looking at race in the medieval and early modern periods.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** I think that there is a sense that that question is kind of solved but there is all... there is definitely new work that is being done like a couple of names that I mentioned, Jose Maria Perceval 20 years ago but also now Borja Franco, Nicholas Jones working on Africans in the Iberian Peninsula and others that are really starting to open up the field. I think there's quite a lot to be done.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** For Morisco studies in particular, there seems to be an attention right now to questions of representation, literary and visual. One thing that still needs to be done or that the field is still starting and it's kind of where I wanted to move the conversation today is looking at the praxis and also looking at the infrastructures. So, what were the modes of economic relations that produced these processes of racialization?

**GREEN-MERCADO:** Those are answers that I don't yet have but that I am slowly starting to think about it and I think starting with the question of conversion and the anxiety that conversion produced is one of the ways in which we can move this conversation forward.

**KAPLAN:** I don't know, we're a little bit past 4:00 mark. So, I think this might be a good time to see if anybody has any questions they want to pose to the panelists and I will be checking chat to see. Okay, so I have a question right here. Was there a cross fertilization of ideas between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam on topics like lineage, climate, and human difference? Was there a continuum of thought on these subjects across large swathes of the African continent and Eurasia? Great question.

**KAPLAN:** I will just say that in a chapter of my book where I look at ideas about Jewish humoral makeup and just kind of imagined the idea of kind of Jewish leading as another sign of their punishment for the crucifixion, that definitely draws on Muslim ideas about how melancholy functions and so there's a reception of Greek and Islamic medical... and some Jewish treatises to [oddities?] into European Christianity at that time and shared Avicenna's ideas or shared notions about humoral imbalance and illness get integrated into theological ideas of Jewish inferiority.

**KAPLAN:** So, I definitely see that happening in the work that I do.

**SCHINE:** Yeah, I mean the Islamic world kind of is a node in this feedback loop in interesting ways because on the one hand, in terms of ideas about lineage, things like the Noahic genealogies that I talked about and that Lindsay also discussed a bit come into Islamic consciousness through the sort of late antique acumen of okay,

we're going to go around and collect something called *isrā'iliyyāt* the, you know, stories of the Jews and Christians and use these as a heuristic alongside the Qur'an, sometimes sort of flesh out our stories of the prophets and mission if you will [LAUGH].

**SCHINE:** And so that's where the idea that Noah has these three kids, you know, Ham has his own specific history comes into Islamic thought initially. It's not the story of Ham... the story of Noah's three sons is not in the Qur'an of itself. Then on the other hand you have Islam is sort of... or the Islamic world, I should say, the places where Muslims are as the places where massive translation efforts of these sort of Hellenistic works like Galen's work, like Aristotle's work are happening as well as interpretations and building off of them.

**SCHINE:** And it's in that sort of built up form that they're making it back into where Lindsay is reading them from in Western Europe. So, there absolutely was a sort of... I think the questioner actually phrased it very nicely, a continuum of thought that was transcontinental on these topics. Oh, I think you're muted, Lindsay [LAUGH].

**KAPLAN:** No, I just said that's a great question. I don't see another question yet. Oh, here, okay, good. Dr. Green-Mercado brought up conversion and its own unique influence upon constructions of race. Dr. Kaplan and Schine also discuss if or how conversions shape the naturalization of racial and ethnic categories according to place. Do you wanna start Rachel [LAUGH]?

**SCHINE:** Okay. Yeah. So, as I was mentioning before in my talk, a bit, in principle anyone can... and Lindsay said this as well and so did Mayte, anyone can become a Muslim, anyone can become a Christian, these are sort of self-espoused universal traditions. But in terms of how conversion was naturalized across certain frontiers in the Islamic world as things are shifting, especially in the formative centuries of Islam, the sort of period that I was discussing, you have a sort of sense in which newcomers are expected in certain venues to look certain ways.

**SCHINE:** And this is completely understandable, you know, when you have in the early conquests, the Umayyads basing their capital in the Levant and primarily targeting subjects of formerly Byzantine for conversion, you know, there's an expectation of okay, so we're gonna get a lot of like Syriac speaking, Greek speaking people who maybe look a certain way. These are our, you know, *mawali*, for the most part in this part of the world and then, of course, when the Abbasids take over via Khorasan and move the capital to Baghdad, you have a very, very Persianizing sort of set of new converts.

**SCHINE:** And this does result in some amount of tension. I mean, we have the *entireshu'ūbiyya* movement, this movement of popular writing that the Persians sort of bureaucratic secondary potentate class in the Muslim world was engaged in both as a way of Roy Mottahedeh says you know, vying to have... for the high status

ones amongst the Persians equal high status to the high status Arabs and also as a way of sort of containing a sense of Persian Muslim predestination of, you know, our history has lead us here just like Arabians history lead them to Islam.

**SCHINE:** And this is, you know, sort of an accident of history, this is something that we're agents in. So, that's not necessarily something that had total racialized force but certainly people would have referred to this as like a proto national consciousness as a way of forming identity.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** And there's actually, Rachel, because I was thinking about what you had presented this status of mawali and conversion and attaching yourself to an Arab tribe is also very strong. So, there is... there seems to be a hierarchy, of course whereby conversion in the early periods just by itself is not enough but rather you also have to attach yourself to an Arab tribe. So, that is also something that should be noted. And I should say that when I'm speaking of conversion in the early modern Iberia, I'm talking specifically about forced conversion, which, I think, is different from voluntary conversion.

**SCHINE:** Yeah.

**KAPLAN:** I don't know that I can speak specifically to the idea of naturalization and ethnic categories according to place with regards to conversion but I think the anxiety that emerges out of conversion that we see happening in the Iberian context is precisely because they're in that category confusion is because you have two different competing imperatives. On the one hand, you must keep Jews and also Muslims inferior to Christians. That's been an established doctrine.

**KAPLAN:** On the other hand, you know, you wanna make everybody Christian. And there are forced conversions obviously throughout Western Europe. So, the ideal is that the whole world will be converted to Christianity at some point. And where problems really emerge is when converts are moving into positions of higher status in society which is what happened in the Iberian context particularly. But even a very famous case that people have written about a lot is the case of Anaclet who was a candidate for the papacy whose great, great, great grandparents had converted from Christianity voluntarily I think to, converted from Judaism to Christianity.

**KAPLAN:** And there was this big uproar about his candidacy and he was charged with maintaining a kind of persistent Jewish identity, a blackness like a Muslim or a Jew said, and it's a very odd example but it's precisely 'cause you're talking about the pope here, I mean that was upsetting for people even for someone who had been many generations a Christian, whose family, had his lineage had been Christian for many generations was still perceived as somehow maintaining and they didn't even talk about it necessarily in kind of the purity of blood ideas yet.

**KAPLAN:** But was somehow maintaining a Jewish essence that could then put them in a position of superiority over Christians which was very disturbing. So, I think the

impossibility of squaring that circle is part of what, you know, creates these problems after conversion. I'm gonna have to see if there's any more questions or if we're out of time [LAUGH].

**LYNCH:** Yeah, well, I'm going to ask you, the three of you to ask a few more questions. We are getting to the end of our time. Thank you so much. We charged you with addressing some complex issues and deep roots from a multidisciplinary set of perspectives. And you have brought it, everything we asked for. And you have given us so much to think about. Just this last example of the popes of lineage and identity is amazing.

**LYNCH:** You have left us all with so much to think about. But I wonder if we could give you a chance to give us a few questions that you think might help guide our thinking as we go away and sit with these rich presentations and conversations. 'Cause Mayte, you said you were gonna end with a lot of questions and you've given us many.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** In my own field I'm thinking about not just representation but of processes and I really do think that we, I was thinking when Rachel was presenting what, how did this play out socially or for Lindsay as well, we're talking about literature. We're talking about theological ideas. And then what do we see happening in the day to day to people who look different from let's say an Arab or...

**GREEN-MERCADO:** So, those were some of the questions that I had for them but I don't know if right now is the appropriate moment to answer them or to attempt to think about them or if that's what you were asking.

**LYNCH:** You know, just to frame them, just to frame them so we all go forward with a new way of digging into some of this material.

**GREEN-MERCADO:** You know, I was having a conversation yesterday on this with someone who was asking me and I think this is something that we can think about and leave with is what lessons can we learn from the examples that we've given of forced acculturation, of forced conversion, of racialization today when we were living in societies that are as diverse as the ones we study, right, so those are some of the things that we should be thinking.

**LYNCH:** Yeah.

**KAPLAN:** For me I really want us always to keep our eye on where our differential hierarchy is being established and how they're being established. We don't tend to focus as much today even though we know that there's Islamophobia and anti-Semitism in addition to anti-black racism and racism against other peoples of color, indigenous people. But I think it's really important, you know, just one of my most hated and favorite terms is the term upity, that was used to talk about President

Obama and really any person, a black American who is seen to be moving out of their proper position of inferiority.

**KAPLAN:** And so, all those places where you see that there's a kind of attempt to reinscribe a group as inferior, an attack on them or criticism of them based on a kind of place in society is something that we should always be alive to as kind of process, a racial process. So, any kind of attempt to kind of reinscribe some of, in the place of inferiority is something that we need to be alert to.

**SCHINE:** Yeah, and I think going back to the points that I think everyone has made about race being partly a structure of domination and about these sort of ossified hierarchies that Lindsay was just discussing, I bring into that sort of Cord Whitaker's idea of contrariety, the idea that our racial categories, especially in the medieval period did interpenetrate and that that was part of their co-constitutive-ness, the idea that someone could be between Muslim and Christian, could be a Morisco for example, as something that you really get very strongly in premodernity and don't see quite as much according to our sort of modern categories of these things.

**SCHINE:** So, I would say and as part of my work, I think it's important to think about not just when these things work on a principled exclusion but also when they work on a principle of inclusion. When is for example blackness and Arabness in tension but not mutually exclusive? And what does that do to our understandings of race? And then the second thing I would just say based on being the sort of Muslim world representer for this talk, is that I think it's really interesting to have seen the sort of curvature and movement between the way that people are racializing one another across all of our presentations.

**SCHINE:** In particular to see the way in both Spain and in medieval sort of the Latin West in general, Muslims are codified through Africanity in the sort of visual register increasingly and to think back to how would a majoritized Muslim living in the Middle East have understood and thought of that representation, how they have understood and thought about black Africans. And so, just yet another thing to never lose sight of is, you know, how this movement is working [LAUGH].

**LYNCH:** Yes, well, thank you. I love that. I love that you've given us things to always be on the lookout for because of course that's the point of digging deep into history and bringing these perspectives together and all of these expertise's and you know, languages and points of geography and points on the temporal continuum, it's been a very exciting session. We thank you, Rachel Schine, Lindsay Kaplan, Mayte Green-Mercado, we thank you for this conversation today.

**LYNCH:** And we thank our audience. We think of you as part of our ongoing community building at the Folger Institute and at the Folger more generally. This series of conversations has been an amazing opportunity for us to open doors of scholarly conversation to those far beyond, people who normally get into the seminar room. So, we've brought many Folger audiences together and we're looking

forward to meeting new members of our communities as we take some of the transformative scholarship out into the world.

**LYNCH:** So, again, thank you. You've given us so much to think about and to think with. And thank you to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for their support of this series. I do have one request to end with and that is this simple reminder that we at the Folger, a nonprofit organization are dependent on support, various kinds of support. And if you are in a position to contribute to our work, we're very grateful for it. Our institution was founded on philanthropy.

**LYNCH:** And your philanthropy today helps continue again these transformative scholarly conversations that we bring to much wider audiences. And then finally, finally, we hope that we will see you back on Thursday, June 17th, for our session on race, philosophy, and political thought. It is the concluding session in this series. It's really hard to say that. It's been such a great series for us. Our moderator next month will be Sharon Achinstein.

**LYNCH:** And she will be talking with Charles Mills from CUNY, Jennifer Morgan from NYU, and Robert Bernasconi from Penn State University. So, again, please do join us and thank you all for being with us this afternoon.