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Capstone

Introduction

One of the most troubling facts concerning slavery was its association with Christianity. Christian beliefs and texts have been manipulated and utilized throughout history to gain power and control over certain groups of people, cultures, and races. In particular, history proves that the White man was and has been the main culprit of this manipulation and control towards the Black slaves. The white men I am referring to are the Europeans who sailed the Atlantic Ocean to Africa to capture and enslave Africans. They then traveled to the Americas to start their colonies and began the dehumanization of African/African-American peoples in many regions particularly Maryland. During this time Maryland held a prominent position as one of the primary tobacco plantation areas in the U.S., concurrently maintaining strong ties to Christian theology.

In this essay, I will analyze “Thomas Bacon’s Sermon To Negro Slaves,” which was given in 1749 at the Parish Church of Saint Peters in the province of Maryland. The purpose of this essay is to explain the rhetorical tactics Thomas Bacon used to manipulate and inform the slaves to fear not obeying their masters by conducting themselves and each other obediently. Using this text, I will explore how Christianity became a power tool for ethnocentric slave owners and preachers to maintain their social dominance over African/African American slaves. To guide this essay to provide an informative conclusion for my audience, I surrounded this project around two research questions. These research questions are: 1.) How did ethnocentric slave owners and preachers manipulate Christian teachings to justify and perpetuate the

institution of slavery, as indicated by the messages delivered by Thomas Bacon? 2.) How did the Christianizing of Black slaves in America become such a powerful force in history and what is the significance about this particular history?

This essay will be formatted with a context description section with historical information on my object of analysis, followed by a detailed literature review, and concluding with an actual analysis on my research object that addresses the research questions utilizing my approached methodology. The contextual description serves as a gateway to unravel the nuanced layers of meaning embedded in the sermon and forms the cornerstone of this research paper's exploration. The overall aim of the literature review is to explain why specifically "Thomas Bacon's Sermon to the Negro Slaves" is a valuable piece of history that's relevant today as a site of analysis and to authentically understand the importance of power dynamics between Black slaves and White hierarchy that over powered Blacks for centuries.

Methodology

In order to reveal informative results of my essays' research questions, this research utilizes the methodological approach of the metaphorical principles of the Panopticon as implemented through the lens of French philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault. The Panopticon was originally founded by Jeremy Bentham as an disciplining design suggested for institutions such as- prisons, hospitals, workhouses, schools, and madhouses Rose (2016). The Panopticon in Bentham terms was a tall tower, surrounded by an annular building. The latter consisted of cells, one for each inmate, with windows so arranged that the occupant was always visible from the tower. The tower was the location of the supervision but because of the arrangement of its windows, blinds, doors and corridors, the inmates in their cells could never be certain that they were under observation from the tower at any particular moment. Never certain

of invisibility, each inmate therefore had to behave ‘properly’ all the time; thus they disciplined themselves and were produced as docile bodies Rose (2016). The point of the panopticon was for each inmate to conduct themselves in a proper manner by disciplining themselves because they never know when they are being watched or not being watched.

Foucault’s approach, which is similar to Bentham’s in terms of ‘automatic functioning power,’ is coined as ‘surveillance’. Foucault argued that ‘since the Panopticon was an efficient means of producing social order, it became a dominant form of visibility Rose(2016). Foucault expanded upon the power of the Panopticon in which he argued how the principle of constant surveillance produces a profound internalization of power and subjugation. Although, Thomas Bacon’s sermon to Black slaves does not function as the physical Panopticon, the metaphorical principles of the Panopticon by Foucault is unique to this research because in the sermon Thomas Bacon informed the Black enslaved congregation of an ever-watchful deity, who knows both the actions and thoughts of all slaves. Specifically through these metaphorical lens, my overall analysis will explain the specific ways; Negro slaves were instructed to fear not ‘obeying their masters’, how they were encouraged to discipline themselves by adopting the role of holding each other accountable for their behavior because they were informed of constant surveillance from either God, masters, or fellow slaves. In other words, in this research metaphorically the Black slaves are to be looked upon as the inmates while the Slaveowners and God are to the surveillance tower of the Panopticon.

Context Description

To completely comprehend “Thomas Bacon’s Sermon to the Negro Slaves” given in 1749, there must be a clear understanding of background information about the time he was preaching, where, and why he was preaching there. The period in which Bacon delivered his

sermon represents a critical juncture in the history of slavery, demanding a meticulous examination of the prevailing societal norms, rhetoric, attitudes, religion, and power. Having a grasp of this contextual information as a first-time reader is crucial to understanding the message being conveyed in the sermon and in this research paper that will focus on analyzing the sermon itself. Understanding the historical backdrop, the location, and the motivations behind Bacon's sermon becomes pivotal for any reader approaching this material for the first time from a 21st-century vantage point.

Thomas Bacon

Contextualizing a text such as this sermon there must be clear knowledge of who presented the sermon and to whom. The sermon was delivered by an Episcopalian priest Thomas Bacon, who was a musician, poet, publisher, author, and Slaveowner of three to five Black slaves. Considered the most learned man in Maryland of his day, Bacon is still known as the first compiler of Maryland statutes. In the beginning of the biographical essay titled "Thomas Bacon", author Robert Micklus stated, "The Reverend Thomas Bacon, one of colonial Maryland's most prolific authors, is remembered today primarily for his sermons on charity schools and for his compilation *Laws of Maryland At Large*"(Page 1). This information emphasizes Thomas Bacon's multifaceted contributions to colonial Maryland, ranging from religious teachings to legal compilations, making him a notable figure in the historical context of that region. Little is known about the early life of Thomas Bacon other than him being born in England, so it has been difficult for historians to accurately piece together the episcopal priest's actual date and town of his birth. It has been inferred that he was born around 1711-1712 possibly in Whitehaven, a town and port on the northwest coast of Cumberland, Cumbria, England to his father and mother, William and Elizabeth Bacon. A Journal article titled "Rev.

Thomas Bacon" published by Whitehaven and Western Lake Land Co. stated that, "No record of his birth in Whitehaven can be found but his father William Bacon, a merchant captain resided here, his mother Elizabeth Richardson was from Whitehaven and his brother Anthony Bacon, the great merchant and industrialist was born here in 1716"(Page 1). This citation provides insight into how difficult it is to determine the early timeline of Thomas Bacon's life due to the lack of records and information available.

What is known about Thomas Bacon is that he must have been highly educated at an early age, because documents convey that during the 1730s he resided in Ireland and worked in the Royal Customs Services managing vessels in the coal trade between Whitehaven and Dublin while he also began publishing the Dublin Mercury, a biweekly newspaper, January 1742. By September 27, 1742, Bacon was printing the official newspaper of Ireland, the *Dublin Gazette*, which he published only until July of 1743 when he began preparing for the ministry(Micklus 1). In another Biography titled, 'Thomas Bacon' author K.J Kroha writes, "The Reverend Thomas Bacon was born in Dublin, Ireland around 1700. Little is known about Bacon's early life. Records show that he was working for the Customs House in Dublin by 1737 and that he began publishing the Dublin Mercury, a biweekly newspaper in January 1742. By September 1742, Bacon was printing the Dublin Gazette, which he published only until July 1743, when he began preparing for the ministry. He emigrated to America in June 1745, and was appointed rector of St. Peter's Church in Talbot County by Thomas Bladen, the governor of Maryland".

After migrating to America and being appointed rector of St. Peter's Parish in Talbot County, Maryland, Thomas Bacon's popularity grew and gained a name for himself by publishing numerous sermons and essays while living in Maryland. He was even involved in a scandal with a mulatto(mixed race) woman named Rachel Beck who accused him of rape and

being the father of her child, Thomas Bacon was troubled and sued the woman for defamation, and he won the case(Whitehaven and Westernlake Land Co). Now that I have discussed the background of Thomas Bacon and his journey into the ministry, it is now suitable to discuss the background/context of the sermon he preached and also the parameters of what was going on during the year 1749 for Negro slaves. The sermon notes document that the congregation of slaves Thomas Bacon was addressing existed at the Parish Church of Saint Peters(S.P.) in the Province of Maryland. The context of the sermon should be viewed from the perspective of the time period it was written.

Transatlantic Slave Trade

In 1749, there was much taking place, especially on the east coast of the United States in regards to the slave trade, slavery, and religion. For example, the Transatlantic Slave Trade was a big part of America and the economic system. The Transatlantic Slave Trade was essentially a triangular route from Europe to Africa, to the Americas, and back to Europe. In the era of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, approximately 13 million individuals of African descent were forcibly taken from their homes, abducted onto European and American vessels, and transported across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas. Subsequently, they endured enslavement, mistreatment, and separation from their families, ancestral roots, and cultural heritage. CEO of Equal Justice Initiative and author Bryan Stevenson discussed in the journal article titled ‘The Transatlantic Slave Trade’ that, “The Transatlantic Slave Trade represents one of the most violent, traumatizing, and horrific eras in world history. Nearly two million people died during the barbaric Middle Passage across the ocean. The African continent was left destabilized and vulnerable to conquest and violence for centuries. The Americas became a place where race and color created a caste system defined by inequality and abuse”(Introduction). This citation shows

the extent of the devastation and dehumanization of African slaves that were brought to the Americas which ultimately led to the success of the American economy. The Middle Passage is a term used to describe the journey from Africa to America and was historically accounted for and documented during the year of 1749. What took place during the Middle Passage was that enslaved Africans, numbering in the millions, were subjected to dehumanizing and overcrowded ship conditions. Shackled together in cramped spaces, they endured unsanitary environments, fostering the rapid spread of many diseases. The ships were a breeding ground for suffering, as the captives were often malnourished due to insufficient and even spoiled food supplies. The duration of the journey, often spanning several months, exacerbated the physical toll on the captives, leading to high mortality rates. An account of this tragedy can be found by author Olaudah Equiano, who was a former enslaved African who wrote about his horrific experiences during the Middle Passage in his autobiography titled 'The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano' he stated, "The stench of the hold, while we were on the coast, was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air; but now that the whole ship's cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocating us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers. This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now becoming insupportable; and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated"(Page 14). This passage is significant because it depicts an

account of an actual African former slave who actively experienced the horrors of the slave trade in the Middle Passage and was educated enough to document his accounts.

Another significant account that is documented in regards to slavery and the year 1749 is the sloop 'Rhode Island', which was owned by the 'Livingston Family', who were a prominent family that migrated from Ireland to the Dutch Republic, and then to the Province of New York in the 17th century. This ship was known to leave New York to Africa in 1748 acquiring 120 men, women, and children slaves, but by the time the vessel arrived back in New York in 1749, they buried 43 African slaves. This is known because Robert Livingston himself reported the incident in his letter to Petrus Dewitt stating, "We have thank God had the good fortune of having one of our Guinea Sloops come in, tho after a long passage of 79 days in which time they buried 37 Slaves & Since 3 more & 2 more likely to die which is an accident not to be helped, and which if had not happened we Should have made a Golden Voyage but as it is there will not be much left I fear unless the other Sloop meets with better Luck"(The Middle Passage 1749). This account from Robert Livingston who owned the sloop and ordered the captain to acquire slaves from the coast of Africa, is a prime illustration of the White slave owner t demonstrating the slave trade's emphasis on the financial loss rather than the cost of morality and humanity.

While slave ships were traveling constantly from the East American coast to the African continent during the 1700s, there was a turn in religious history in America that led to slave owners expanding their beliefs and practices of Christianity to the African/African American slaves. This reasoning may have been highly influenced by the Great Awakening period which was a religious revival when spirituality and religious devotion were revived. This feeling swept through the American colonies between the 1730s and 1770s. In the article titled 'Great Awakening ' the History organization stated, "The movement came at a time when the idea of

secular rationalism was being emphasized, and passion for religion had grown stale. Christian leaders often traveled from town to town, preaching about the gospel, emphasizing salvation from sins, and promoting enthusiasm for Christianity”(History.com). This information points to the impact the Great Awakening had on the American colonies from White preachers like Thomas Bacon traveling town to town, door to door, spreading the word of Christianity. Despite unfolding events in the colonies, Christian slave owners were often hesitant to convert their slaves to Christianity. This reluctance primarily stemmed from the fear that conversion might weaken their control over the enslaved individuals. Additionally, there was apprehension that allowing slaves to learn how to read and write could potentially fuel rebellion, especially as they gathered for preaching and worship. This reluctance reflected a complex interplay of social, economic, and political dynamics during this historical period.

Although slaveowners feared converting their slaves to Christianity, some slaveowners and slave congregations in Maryland and other more eastern colonies were influenced by the Great Awakening period, Thomas Bacon’s congregation of slaveowners and Negro slaves was a prime example. In the book ‘Masters & Slaves In The House Of The Lord’ author John B. Boles discussed how, “During the second quarter of the eighteenth century, Evangelicalism and Pietism swept across England and Europe, and the quickening of heartfelt religion soon leapfrogged to the New World in the person of George Whitefield. The resulting Great Awakening occurred primarily north of Maryland”(Page 7). This account from John B. Boles's book highlights the influence other White clergymen and evangelists had during the Great Awakening specifically in the regions and colonies of Maryland, which is the same colony and culture that Thomas Bacon and the congregation of Negro slaves were located. From the rhetoric used by Thomas Bacon and how he addressed the Negroes much can be learned about the knowledge and understanding

of Christianity these slaves had. The word use of Thomas Bacon in this sermon shows that the Negro slaves he was addressing knew a significant amount of Christian beliefs but not as much theological doctrine. I say this because Thomas Bacon uses the biblical teachings in a manipulative, contradictory, and hypocritical strategy in order to justify dehumanization and to keep control over the Negro slaves. He accomplishes this strategy by using the tactic of fear by citing lines such as 'GOD' will punish you and your soul if you disobey your 'Masters' or slave owners and misbehave. He also threatens the congregation with the terms 'Heaven and Hell' and that 'GOD' is always watching all slaves taking notice of their Behavior. Continuing with the concept of fear that Thomas Bacon utilized and along the terms heaven and hell, he also mentions an extremely antagonistic biblical being 'The Devil' or 'Satan' by informing the slaves to refrain from all lying unless GOD will hand them over to the Devil. These biblical terms and concepts were definitely taught to the Negro congregation as a fear tactic because Thomas Bacon knows these are gruesome topics that are typically feared when it comes to Christian thinkers and doctrines. Lastly, what makes this sermon so significant in terms of its meaning is that Thomas Bacon organized the sermon in a way that it was strongly influenced by the teachings of the Apostle Paul and the reformed theological Christian perspective of the Messiah and God himself Jesus Christ from the Bible. For example, from the context of the sermons he used scriptures Ephesians 6:8, Matthew 10:28, & Galatians 5:22-23. The importance of this information is due to each of those scriptures referring to obedience, self-behavior, fear, and slaves. This contextual exploration is imperative for readers unfamiliar with these historical elements in my research, providing a foundational understanding of the subject matter and ensuring an comprehensive interpretation of the linked dynamics at hand in the power structures between slaves and their owners.

Literature Review

As a communications major and religion minor, my hope for this project was to research something in which I am passionate about and have had a particular interest. During my time as an undergraduate student, my work has involved researching black history and historical movements, along with much work delving into religion in ways that have sparked my interest in knowing more about the history in which both meet. In communication studies, I was exposed to media and how media works as a discourse, and I was trained as a rhetorician to liberate marginalized communities. In my studies of religion, I was introduced to the various ways religion, or what Malory Nye labels in his book 'Religion: The Basics,' as 'religioning,' is performed in the world and how it has impacted all levels of life, both individual and societal (Page 8). Additionally, in having discussions with my peers regarding Christianity, there seems to be a recurring theme that is always brought up, specifically the narrative of Christianity as the religion that exploited slavery. Furthermore, the historical connections between Christianity and slavery have continued to have a lasting impact on contemporary society. Examining the literature review of this project sheds light on the significant relevance that a 16th century sermon has 279 days after it was written.

Lack Of Research On White Sermons To Black Slaves

Due to the lack of other research and scholarship in regards to other individuals analyzing sermons to slaves from centuries ago, I found it extremely challenging to find scholarship that directly correlates to my research. This problem is the need for further investigation into the role of sermons in shaping the religious, cultural, and socio-political consciousness of African slaves. The lack of scholarship that explains the importance of recognizing particular sermons to slaves

is extremely problematic and creates an ignorance of individuals in our current society. Even though we are past the era of Christianity being used as a tool against African Slaves in America, the remaining bones of this problem still dwells among us all. These remainings are churches, Bibles, reformed theological Christian preachers, and simply white Americans that ignore the fact that their ancestors and beloved religion constructed the history of African/African Americans forever. The truth of the matter is that the manipulation of religious teachings by ethnocentric slave owners and preachers to justify and perpetuate slavery is evident in the messages delivered to both white and enslaved congregations. Rosemary Carter (1926) highlights how slaveholders used religious teachings to keep slaves content with their status, often justifying slavery through the divine rights of masters and the inherent superiority of the white race. Charles Irons (2008) further explores the evangelical roots of the proslavery argument, revealing that white evangelicals' ideas about slavery were shaped by their interactions with black evangelicals. John Fajen (1969) adds to this by discussing the Scriptural justifications offered in defense of slavery, including assertions that slavery is part of the natural order and is "ordained of God," examples of slavery found in Scripture, and Scriptural injunctions to slaves to do their duty. These studies collectively demonstrate how religious teachings were manipulated to uphold the institution of slavery. From another perspective, if the life and positive influence of former slave and American social reformer Frederick Douglass is still relevant today then the functions of my research are right along the lines of the same relevance. Shelby Gary (2002) highlighted that Frederick Douglass used parody to address one of the abolition movement's most serious challenges, the belief that the Bible sanctioned slavery. Douglass strategically juxtaposed explicit claims to his status as a fugitive slave with a persona he enacted by mocking proslavery preaching in such a way that he confronted audiences with

what Kenneth Burke called “perspective by incongruity.” In this way, he forcefully undermined the proslavery religion’s claim to legitimacy.

Watered Down History Of Slavery In American Textbooks

Another reason this project is so important to understand today is due to the simplifying and inauthentic truths of African slavery portrayed in history textbooks. The simplification of slavery in American history lessons and textbooks leads to the condition of many students from middle school to collegiate level lacking accurate knowledge of African-American history. These modern day history textbooks that are being instructed to American students were present in my education as a highschool student as well. History teachers rarely discussed or elaborated on slavery including the fact that each course lesson taught were pulled from American and Texas history books written by White Americans scholars. Since our history textbooks and lessons being taught in American schools aren’t teaching true narratives on slavery in America, then this project is a staple of truth about the main tool that kept slavery intact. Kate Shuster conducted a survey on U.S. high school seniors and social studies teachers, while analyzing a selection of state content standards, and reviewed 10 popular U.S. history textbooks. The research results indicated that: High school seniors struggle on even the most basic questions about American enslavement of Africans and that teachers are serious about teaching slavery, but there’s a lack of deep coverage of the subject in the classroom. Moreover, popular textbooks fail to provide comprehensive coverage of slavery and enslaved peoples; States fail to set appropriately high expectations with their content standards Shuster (2018). These studies and findings bring to light the one perspective narrative of slavery that white scholars create for American history textbooks in order to keep the truth about Black slaves from the midst of American students.

Continuing with the problematic nature of white American scholars that write our American history books, now most students do not enter college-level history classes knowing much about the history of slavery and race relations. This fact is extremely controversial and is another reason that makes this project important to draw the attention of any audience. As James Loewen wrote in his textbook 'Lies My Teacher Told Me', most K-12 history textbooks and classes avoid controversy and therefore steer clear of discussions of slavery and its impact on American history Loewen (2005). However, Russell Owell discussed that a comprehensive understanding of slavery is essential to grasp the intricacies of North American colonization, the evolution of America's economy, the South's secession from the union, and the ensuing Civil War. Furthermore, it's crucial for students to recognize that slavery was a multifaceted and evolving institution, with its characteristics shifting over time and across different geographical areas Owell (2001). Timothy Lintner reiterated how school teachers, history textbooks, and white scholars who write these textbooks are the major sources that control what each student learns in course materials. The teaching of American history is not neutral; teachers and textbooks often define what is important and what is not. It is through this historical subjectivity that stereotypes and biases emerge and ultimately persist. With relevance to African Americans and American Indians, such stereotypes can be culturally, politically and economically crippling. By promoting Critical Race Theory, which seeks to reduce marginalization through the recognition and promotion of historically disenfranchised peoples, American history teachers can redress stereotyping and enhance plurality in their classrooms Lintner (2004). These collected research from scholars exemplifies how the narratives presented in history textbooks can shape students' understanding of the past and influence their perspectives on contemporary social issues. Therefore, it is imperative for educators to critically examine and supplement these narratives to

provide a more authentic and inclusive understanding of slavery and African-American history in America.

Nature of Religion & Church Leadership in Modern day

The prevalent nature of religion, church leadership, and influence in America today highlights the enduring significance of understanding their historical roles, particularly in relation to issues of race, power dynamics, and social justice. This context builds another bridge to why this project is relevant because those three elements—religion, church leadership, and influence—are major factors that have shaped and continue to shape societal attitudes, beliefs, and structures. By examining how these elements intersected in the past, particularly in the context of white preachers' sermons to African slaves in the 16th century, this project gained valuable insights into the ongoing complexities of religion's influence on social and political dynamics in contemporary America. Thus, understanding the historical interplay of religion, church leadership, and influence not only enriches our understanding of the past but also sheds light on contemporary issues and challenges, making this project particularly pertinent and timely. The role of modern churches in the pro-slavery movement is a complex and multifaceted issue that many scholars have researched. Johnson (1985) highlights the significant influence of religious institutions in shaping attitudes towards slavery, with the former focusing on the efforts of abolitionists to gain church support for their cause, and the latter examining the evangelical roots of the pro-slavery argument. Lofton (2007) further includes the role of church leaders, particularly in the Episcopal Church, in perpetuating the belief that African Americans were suited for slavery. Anstey (1979) adds to this discussion by emphasizing the role of religious forces, such as Arminianism and post-millennialism, in the formation of anti-slavery sentiments.

These studies collectively demonstrate the complex interplay between religion, church leadership, and the pro-slavery movement in the United States.

Recent Scholarship of Panopticon Metaphorical Principles

Another draw of relevance and significance my project has in present day is the detailed research that other scholars have conducted while utilizing the methodology of the metaphorical principles of the Panopticon much similar to the way I've applied it in my own analysis, further solidifying its credibility and applicability in contemporary academic discourse. Foucault's metaphorical principles of the Panopticon, as discussed by Zayani (2008), are rooted in the idea of power through transparency and subjection by illumination. This concept is further explored by Syeda (2020) in the context of George Orwell's 1984, where the Panopticon is depicted as a powerful apparatus of control. Cordenier (2020) delves into the suitability of the Panopticon as an analogy for power, particularly in relation to Foucault's conception of power as pervasive and belonging to no one. Peters (2020) extends this discussion to the current pandemic, drawing parallels between Foucault's description of plague towns and the use of a state of exception as a normal paradigm for government.

Analysis

In the opening statement of this sermon, Thomas Bacon employs the rhetorical device of 'ethos' to appeal to the moral ethics of the slaves, aiming to capture their attention. Bacon begins by stating, "Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be Bond or Free." This line is crucially important because it directly quotes Ephesians 6:8, a statement by the apostle Paul in the New Testament of the Bible. It's essential to note the contextual difference between Bacon's and Paul's use of this language. Paul addressed a

Christian audience in Ephesus around A.D 60-62, where ‘doulos,’ the Greek word for bondservants or servant-slaves, held a different connotation. In Ephesus, a bondservant was a citizen who was owned by a master to work and pay off their debt, devoid of the negative connotations associated with slavery in America. Thomas Bacon strategically leverages this biblical reference to establish his credibility and align himself with the moral principles of the Christian God. By invoking Ephesians 6:8, Bacon aligns himself with the teachings of Paul, a respected figure in the Christian community, thereby bolstering his ethos. While Paul addressed a community of bondservants in a specific historical and cultural context, Bacon adapts the message to resonate with the enslaved Black congregation in Maryland. The congregation is encouraged here to interpret the term “bond” not as a contractual work arrangement but as a representation of their harsh conditions of servitude. Looking at the details closely, that is in one way it seems as if he wants the slaves to not notice the original context, but in another he also wants to make them think that slavery isn’t that bad—that chattel slavery is not any different than indentured servitude.

Following his opening statement, Bacon's subsequent remarks suggest a historical connection with the Black congregation, indicating a past engagement and lectures he had previously made to them. Bacon stated, “When you were last here, I endeavored to show you that GOD made you and all the World and that he made you and all Mankind to serve him; that it is he who places every Man in the Station or Rank which he holds in the World, making some Kings, some Masters, and others Servants and Slaves.” By referencing a past meeting with the phrase ‘When you were last here,’ Bacon subtly implies an ongoing relationship in his interactions with this enslaved congregation. The choice of the term ‘endeavored’ suggests that he had previously made a conscious effort to impart knowledge or instructions to them,

indicating a sustained relationship and Bacon's continued and active involvement in sharing his teachings with this congregation on previous occasions. The repetition of Bacon addressing these concepts in this sermon not only reinforces his message but also suggests a perceived need for the congregation to continually reflect on these fundamental principles.

Bacon's implication of the divine order and purpose in the hierarchy of societal roles is crucial to understand. It not only conveys that the congregation was taught that God was the creator but also the authority responsible for assigning each person their earthly positions or roles in society. The statement "making some Kings, some Masters, and others Servants and Slaves" is Bacon's tactic to extend the belief of a hierarchical order established by God, where some individuals are destined to be kings, others masters, and others servants or slaves. This concept places the enslaved congregation in a subordinate position, affirming the notion that their current condition of slavery is a divine order from God alone.

Bacon then declares, "Every one of us is obliged to do the Business he hath set us about, and whoever is doing his Business quietly and honestly in the World is serving God, though his condition be ever so low and mean; and will be as much taken notice of, and as highly favored by God at the Last Day." Bacon's assertion that "Every one of us is obliged to do the Business he hath set us about" emphasizes individual responsibility and purpose. The use of the term "Business" expands the concept beyond mere occupation, suggesting that each slave's calling was a unique calling from God in their current life. This idea is another tactic by Bacon to encourage the congregation to find dignity in their roles as slaves, despite the challenges they face. Bacon's implication about conducting one's business "quietly and honestly in the World" continues the moral dimension of the message. Given the subordinate conditions faced by these slaves, this tactic implies affirmation, suggesting that the value of their honest labor and actions

is not unnoticed by God, and actually may please God.. Indeed, Bacon asserts that individuals who conduct themselves in this manner are “serving God,” regardless of their “Condition... ever so low and mean.” This serves to affirm the slaves, encouraging them to find solace and empowerment in serving God even within the confines of enslavement. Finally, the promise that those fulfilling their duties in this manner “will be as much taken notice of, and as highly favored by God at the last Day” provides a long-term perspective. Bacon assures the congregation of more divine recognition to come on the ‘last day,’ a reference to the end times or ‘eschatology’ in Christian traditions. For the Black congregation, this promise would have served as a source of spiritual resilience, inspiring perseverance in their duties with the hope of an ultimate reward communicated from Bacon, that God promises in the future.

Bacon then states, “I also laid before you, — That you ought to serve GOD for your own Sakes because you have Souls to be saved, That everyone who dies, must go either to Heaven or Hell; and that there is no other way of escaping everlasting Punishment in Hell, or being eternally happy in Heaven, but by serving GOD while he spares us Life upon Earth”. The caveats in the concepts of Heaven and Hell reside in the dichotomy announced. Contesting eternal happiness in Heaven against the prospect of everlasting punishment in Hell, Bacon lays out a stark contrast that allows no middle ground. This binary perspective heightened the fear associated with potential consequences, communicating that disobedience or resistance would lead to a fate more severe than the hardships of slavery. Emphasizing that the slaves should serve God “for your own sake because you have Souls to be saved,” personalizes the consequences, encouraging each slave to feel accountable for their eternal fate. Furthermore, Bacon continually links salvation directly to obedience and service, portraying compliance with their masters’ dictates not only as a temporal obligation but as a matter of eternal significance. Urgency

introduced by the phrase “while he spares us Life upon Earth” exerted pressure on the congregation to conform promptly, emphasizing the fleeting nature of the opportunity to secure divine favor. Exploiting emotional pity, Bacon intertwined the fear of Hell and the promise of Heaven with their immediate circumstances. The notion of eternal suffering would have created a deep-seated fear surpassing the physical hardships of their lives in slavery, reinforcing a sense of powerlessness and dependency that rendered them more susceptible to manipulation.

Similar to the opening statement, this part of the sermon employs one of Aristotle’s classical rhetorical devices. However, Bacon shifts from ethos to ‘pathos,’ appealing directly to the congregation's emotions by delving into profound themes such as salvation, eternal punishment, and everlasting happiness. The mention of facing a choice between Heaven and Hell, coupled with the urgency of escaping everlasting punishment, is the key to evoking an emotional response. The fear of divine retribution on any person's aims to serve as a constant reminder, fostering a psychological state of extensional fear conducive to compliance and obedience. In this way, Bacon strategically employs the concepts of Heaven and Hell through the device of pathos, to influence the behavior of the slaves, both in the present and by shaping their beliefs about the eternal consequences of disobedient actions. Moreover, by conveying that “God placed masters and slaves in their current ranks” and asserting that “everyone is obliged to do the business they set about honestly, and whoever is doing that business honestly in the world is serving God,” Bacon establishes a context for the enslaved congregation. This alignment between religious duty and obedience to their earthly masters becomes a pivotal aspect of Bacon’s message, shaping the slave's perception of their roles and reinforcing the idea that fulfilling their duties to their masters is, in essence, the way of serving God.

Bacon continues by stating, “That you ought to look upon Him as your great and chief Master, to whom you must one day answer for everything you have done in this Life:—That he is always looking upon you, and taking Notice of your Behavior so that if you could deceive all the World, you cannot deceive GOD.” This piece of Bacon’s sermon uniquely sheds light on the metaphorical principles of the Panopticon as implemented by the French Philosopher Michel Foucault.

When examining the metaphorical principles of the Panopticon through Foucault’s lens, the synergy of these elements becomes apparent. Although this sermon does not function as a physical institutional building with an inbuilt system of control, it does strongly argue the case for constant surveillance. For example, Bacon states, “That he(God) is always looking upon you, and taking Notice of your Behavior.” In other words, Bacon’s assertion that God is the ultimate observer and chief master, who intentionally placed slaves under the control of slave masters, functions as an inherent system of control through surveillance. In this context, the metaphorical aspects of the Panopticon unveil the mechanisms of power linked to the concept of God, aiming to produce disciplined slaves who embody the ethical norms and rules advocated by Bacon by literally taking on the subject position he is picturing for them.

In the next lines of the sermon, Bacon continues with surveillance but he conducts the concept with more theological tactics. He states, “That you ought to love GOD above all Things, or else He will not love you, which would be the most dreadful thing that could happen to you: that if the Love of GOD is not strong enough to keep you from doing what is bad, you ought, at least, to dread his terrible Judgments, for that he is able, not only to destroy your Bodies, and strike you dead in a Moment but also, to cast both Body and Soul into Hell.” Strategically employing fear as a powerful motivator in this statement, Bacon intertwines theological elements

to instill a profound sense of dread. While these elements are recurrent throughout the sermon, in this context, he utilizes the conditional nature of ‘God’s love’ as the driving force. Bacon declares, “That you ought to love GOD above all Things, or else He will not love you.” Here, the fear tactic operates by establishing a direct link between the slaves’ obedience, their love of God, and divine favor. Failure to prioritize their love for God is suggested to put them at risk of divine displeasure. Bacon heightens the atmosphere of terror by introducing the concept that if the love of God fails to prevent wrongdoing, then the slaves should ‘dread his terrible Judgments.’ This fear tactic exploits the notion that God possesses the power not only to inflict immediate punishments, such as ‘destroy your Bodies, and strike you dead in a Moment,’ but also to consign both Body and Soul to Hell. Manipulating these theological elements, Bacon distorts the Christian understanding of God’s love and justice, transforming it into a transactional relationship. As observed earlier, Bacon’s theological manipulation serves a specific purpose — to establish obedience as a prerequisite for divine favor and, consequently, to simultaneously maintain control over the enslaved congregation by making them the agents of their own control. The impact on the slaves was likely profound. Faced with the imminent threats of divine punishment, the congregation likely left the sermon in a state of terror. The fear of losing divine love, coupled with the dread of severe judgments, would have become a potent psychological tool that compelled the slaves to conduct themselves obediently. The potential consequences outlined by Bacon, both immediate physical harm and eternal damnation in Hell, created a compelling incentive for obedience born out of deep-seated fear.

In the next portion of the sermon, Bacon shifts the authoritative focus from obeying God to the concept of obeying slave masters. It also contains a critical paradox that reveals the authentic dreadful subjectivity the slaves could not escape. He begins by stating, “In the next

Place I endeavored to show you, how you ought to behave towards your Masters. That as GOD himself hath set them over you here in the Nature of his Stewards, he expects you will do everything for them, as you do for himself:—That you must be obedient and subject to them in all Things, and do whatever they order you to do.” In this segment, Bacon imparts more instruction on the conduct of slaves towards their masters, drawing a parallel between the authority of masters and the divine sovereignty of God.

Embedded within his instruction is a paradox, illuminating the religious duty of slaves to obey and submit to their masters, portraying the masters as conduits of God’s authority within the realm of servitude. The paradox is compelling, as it assigns a dual role to slave masters, akin to stewards appointed by God Himself. By framing masters as stewards, Bacon establishes a hierarchical structure that equates obedience to masters with obedience to God. This paradox becomes evident when slaves are instructed to serve their masters with the same devotion and reverence as they would serve God. This practice elevates earthly masters to a quasi-divine status within the context of slave obedience. Bacon strategically utilizes the divine authority of God to legitimize the unwavering obedience expected from slaves. The paradoxical nature of this directive potentially places slaves in a position where disobedience to their masters is equated with disobedience to God. The implication is clear – defiance or resistance to the commands of earthly masters would be construed as an act against God’s will, justifying severe disciplinary measures. By aligning the authority of masters with the divine sovereignty of God, Bacon reinforces the notion that slaves should not only obey but also revere and even love their masters in the same way they revere and love God. This theological manipulation solidifies the power dynamic between masters and slaves, exploiting Christian doctrines to establish unquestioning obedience and positioning masters in a near-divine authority.

Bacon then stated, “That you must not be Eye-Servants, that is, such as will be very busy in their Masters Presence, but very idle when their Backs are turned: For your head Master, Almighty GOD, is looking on you, and though you may escape being found out, or punished by your Owners for it, yet you cannot deceive GOD, who will punish you severely in the next World for your deceitful Dealing in this.” The parallel between the two lies in Bacon urging the congregation to be aware not only of their behavior from their perspective or the perspective of their masters but also from the divine perspective of God. This critical emphasis underscores the multiple perspectives through which the slaves must navigate their behavior and identity. In this segment, Bacon instructs the slaves not to succumb to the temptation of becoming ‘Eye-Servants’— individuals who exhibit diligence only when under the direct gaze of their masters but slacken their efforts when unsupervised. The essence of Bacon’s caution extends beyond the immediate consequences of deceit towards earthly masters. By repeating the framework of God as the ‘head Master,’ with an all-seeing and omnipotent presence, Bacon reiterates the inescapable nature of divine surveillance. Even if the slaves manage to elude discovery or evade punishment from their human owners, they cannot deceive the watchful eye of God. This dimension adds a profound layer of accountability, emphasizing that the slaves’ actions are subject to scrutiny not only in their earthly existence but also in their potential spiritual existence. This duality underlines the extending consequences of their behavior, highlighting moral accountability that reaches beyond the immediate and tangible repercussions within their earthly lives. The notion of escaping punishment on Earth but facing severe consequences in the next World serves as a powerful deterrent against deceptive practices. Bacon’s strategic use of Christian imagery aims to instill a sense of constant moral obligation and integrity, reinforcing the idea that true diligence should be an intrinsic quality, driven by an

unwavering commitment to righteousness that transcends earthly consequences. This segment also exemplifies the most powerful invocation of the Panopticon concept. As Bacon asserts that slaves may escape the surveillance of their masters on earth, but never their master in heaven. The constant surveillance that Bacon employs on the slaves highlights the inescapable earthly confines, urging the slaves to a conscious comparative that directly aligns with internalized surveillance of the Panopticon. Bacon employed this internalization likely to resonate as an awareness of potential scrutiny, even though Gods' physical presence is absent but his watchful gaze isn't.

The following portion of Bacon's sermon is pivotal and deeply exemplifies his rhetoric. He employs rhetorical strategies aimed at instilling a sense of moral obligation and accountability within the enslaved congregation. This particular portion revolves around Bacon's attempt to align the slaves' behavior with the expectations one might have of diligent and respectful servants. By posing rhetorical questions and urging the slaves to consider their actions from the perspective of imagining themselves as hypothetical masters and mistresses, Bacon strategically manipulates their mindset to reinforce his broader message of faithful servitude. He states, "Now, to suit this Rule to your particular Circumstances;—Suppose you were Masters and Mistresses, and had Servants under you, — would you not desire that your Servants should do their business faithfully and honestly, as well when your Back was turned, as while you were looking over them?—Would you not expect that they should take Notice of what you said to them?—That they should behave themselves with Respect towards you and yours, and be as careful of every Thing belonging to you as you would be yourselves?" In this segment also exists the idea of 'Double Consciousness' by Black American sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois can be

found. Du Bois's concept of double consciousness suggests that African Americans live with the constant awareness of how they are perceived by the dominant white society.

Bacon's use of rhetorical questions is evident as he asks the slaves to envision themselves in the position of masters and mistresses. The questions are tactical rhetorical devices to engage the slaves in self-reflection, prompting them to consider the standards they would expect from their servants. By asking, 'Would you not desire that your Servants should do their business faithfully and honestly, as well when your back was turned, as while you were looking over them?' Bacon is not seeking an actual answer but encouraging the slaves to acknowledge the universality of ethical expectations in service. Furthermore, Bacon's manipulation becomes apparent as he appeals to the slaves' sense of empathy and self-interest. By framing the hypothetical scenarios in which they are the masters and mistresses, Bacon aims to make the slaves recognize the inherent value of honesty, diligence, and respect in service. This unique strategy prompts the slaves to internalize these qualities as desirable virtues, subtly guiding them toward a realization that aligns with Bacon's message of faithful and conscientious servitude. Altogether, this segment like the others showcases Bacon's strategic use of rhetorical devices to manipulate the slaves' perspective, fostering a sense of personal responsibility and aligning their conduct with the moral standards he advocates.

In the following segment, continuing his tactical use of rhetorical strategies, Bacon reiterates moral imperatives such as obedience and respect, drawing a parallel between serving earthly masters and serving God. These reinforced patterns, detected throughout the sermon, contribute significantly to Bacon's main argument. In stating, "You are Servants—do therefore as you would wish to be done by and you will both be good Servants to your Masters, and good Servants to GOD. If, then, you love your neighbor as yourself, or would do by others, as you

could wish they would do by you.” He urges the slaves to adhere to a moral code that transcends the confines of their servitude. This continues his desired foundation for ethical behavior by invoking the universal moral principle known as the Golden Rule. The Golden Rule is highly valued in Judeo-Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism history, leading to its influence throughout the world. In Judeo-Christianity, it is referred to as the ‘Second Greatest Command,’ the most upheld law in Jewish culture and traditions. The inclusion of the reciprocal expectation within the Golden Rule, as expressed in “If, then, you love your neighbor as yourself, or would do by others, as you could wish they would do by you,” serves to reinforce the manipulative aspect of Bacon’s message. While the Golden Rule is generally a positive ethical principle, in this context, Bacon’s use of it remains a tool for manipulation. This repeated moral obligation tied to divine authority, reinforces the power structure, making the slaves more compliant as they see their actions as fulfilling both earthly and spiritual duties. The deliberate use of the term “neighbor” becomes a tactical linguistic device. In other words, Bacon employs the term ‘neighbor’ as a synonymous implication that the love, care, and consideration they are expected to demonstrate should be extended to their masters.

Bacon continues to exploit the moral imperative of respect as he states, “You will be as careful not to hurt anything belonging to a Neighbour, or to do any Harm to his Goods, his Cattle, or his Plantation, or to see it done by others, as you would be to hurt yourself, or any Thing you had of your own.” In this statement, the emphasis that slaves exhibit the same level of care for their masters’ possessions as for their own brings forth the facade of a moral code. However, upon closer examination, the inherent exploitation of this moral imperative becomes evident, exposing repeating complexities of control and manipulation. Bacon’s choice of language, particularly the mention of “Goods,” “Cattle,” and “Plantation,” goes beyond a mere

call for ethical behavior; it serves as a stark reminder the slaves were physical property on their master plantations. The parallel drawn between the slaves' obligation to protect their masters' belongings and the inherent instinct to preserve one's own, highlights the insidious manipulation at play. While on the surface, the sermon may seem to advocate for a moral code, Bacon perpetuates the oppressive system by equating the slaves' self-interest with the protection of their masters' property including themselves.

In the epilogue of this sermon, Bacon shifts back to the rhetorical device of pathos, by using vivid and emotive language to evoke feelings of fear, empathy, and concern. He states, "Suppose any of you to have been wicked Creatures,— idle, drunken, swearing, thievish, leud People;—and being at length overtaken by the Hand of GOD, and laid down on a painful, sick Bed, without any Hopes of Recovery, with all the Terrors of Conscience about you, and nothing before you but Death, and the fearful Apprehensions of being miserable forever,—what a dreadful State of Mind must you then be in." The description of a person being overtaken by the consequences of a sinful life, lying on a painful sick bed with no hope of recovery, experiencing terrors of conscience, and facing the prospect of death and eternal misery, employs the design to provoke a strong emotional response from the slaves. He aimed to instill a sense of urgency and empathy, molding the emotional state of the congregation to align with the overarching ethical message he relentlessly communicated. The use of pathos in this excerpt attempts to establish a powerful connection with the slaves. By prompting the congregation to envision the direct moral state, he consistently urges them to hold each other accountable for their behavior.

Directly following this evocative description, he finishes the sermon by stating, "And what would you then give, that you had been blessed with a true Friend, one that had so much real Love for you, as to have warned you of your Danger and have hindered you, by his kind

Advice, from running such Lengths of Wickedness as you had done? You have it in your Power to be such true Friends and Lovers of one another, you can help each other on in the Way toward Heaven, and you ought to check one another, when you see doing amiss: You can, on a Sunday Evening, talk about the good Advice you have heard in Church, and by telling it to such as could not be there, may do them much Good.” In this final segment exist recurring elements of manipulation embedded in a poignant rhetorical strategy used to advocate communal support and guidance among the congregation. This rhetorical strategy also exemplifies the crucial element of the metaphorical principles of the Panopticon. Commencing with a vivid description of the dreadful consequences of a sinful life, Bacon attempts to establish an emotional connection with the slaves, exploiting their fears and vulnerabilities. He then introduces a hypothetical scenario, prompting the audience to reflect on the hypothetical value of a true friend who could have prevented their descent into wickedness. As this segment unfolds, Bacon suggests the power to be “true friends” and advocates for each other lies within their grasp, thereby creating a sense of agency among the slaves. The call to actively support and check each other’s behavior enables a plantation of communal surveillance and control, where every slave is responsible not only for disciplining themselves but for surveilling their fellow slaves, reinforcing ethical norms and expectations. The manipulative aspect becomes more apparent as Bacon issues a practical injunction. Instructing the slaves to share the sermon’s moral guidance beyond the church walls, he positions them as agents of moral influence amongst other slaves. This recommendation to discuss moral advice heard in church on a Sunday evening amplifies the sense of communal scrutiny. It also contributes to a form of community policing, and one conducted not in the interests of the community, but in the interests of those who govern the community. In this way,

this segment subtly employs the final principles of the Panopticon, advocating for a plantation of internalized surveillance and communal responsibility.

Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, the purpose of this essay was to analyze “Thomas Bacon’s Sermon To Negro Slaves” given in 1749, by explaining the tactics the Episcopalian priest used to aim for manipulation and persuade the slaves to fear not obeying their masters by conducting themselves and each other obediently. Utilizing the metaphorical principles of the Panopticon through the lens of Michel Foucault, the analysis of this sermon discovered how Christianity justified slavery and maintained a power tool for ethnocentric slave owners and preachers to maintain their social dominance over African/African American slaves. This paper aimed to flourish smoothly with the functioning of a detailed contextual description that unraveled the nuanced layers of meaning embedded in the sermon due to it being given in the 16th century. Also with a literature review that employed why this project and object of analysis is particularly relevant and worthy for contemporary readers and conversation today.

Through the analysis, I discovered that Thomas Bacon implied intended manipulation of Christian theology and rhetorical strategies. That aimed to control and guide the behavior of the enslaved congregation, Bacon strategically leveraged the power of rhetoric, by employing ethos and pathos to appeal to the moral ethics and emotions of the slaves. By intertwining biblical references with the harsh reality of slavery, Bacon reinforced his authority through the teachings of Christian narratives, effectively bolstering his central message. This sermon’s recurrent themes of divine, self, and communal surveillance, coupled with the fear-inducing dichotomy of Heaven and Hell, exploited the slaves’ vulnerabilities. Which possibly created a potent psychological tool for compliance. Bacon solidified his control by framing earthly masters as

stewards appointed by God, establishing a parallel between the authority of masters and the divine sovereignty of God. The rhetorical device of asking slaves to envision themselves as masters subtly guides their mindset. Fostering a sense of personal responsibility and aligning their conduct with Bacon's moral instructions. Other moral imperatives, such as the Golden Rule, not only serve as ethical guidelines but also function as tools for manipulation. Bacon's repetition of the emphasis on obedience and respect subtly reinforces the power structure, making the slaves more compliant by intertwining their earthly actions with spiritual duties.

In conclusion, my targeted audiences for this capstone research project are the communities/cultures that are either morally or spiritually affected by the dehumanization of the African/African American peoples during the period of slavery. As for the defined audience of scholars, this research aims to grab the attention of those embedded in religious studies or the study of religion as a framework for a more concrete understanding of the world and humanity. This defined audience of scholars are those who hold the occupations of pastors, theologians, anthropologists, or religious scholars who study the dimensions of religion and understand that religion is and has been a key element of many cultural issues. This project speaks as a disciple because it explores the power dynamics that white hierarchy has had on the African/African-American peoples throughout history. Through this research I hope to unveil the historical roots of racism and its entanglement with religion, to provide a crucial insight into the oppressive dynamics that shaped the experiences of African-American slaves.

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