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SECULAR DAMNATION: THOMAS JEFFERSON AND THE IMPERATIVE OF RACE

"Jeffersonian Democracy : From Theory to Practice"

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The American dilemma is encapsulated in five words: "All men are created equal." As a Virginia slaveholder, Thomas Jefferson had reason to fear the currents of freedom set loose by the American Revolution; as the author of the Declaration of Independence, he faced a more personally existential dilemma. As long as the American narrative of liberty encompassed "all men," two options existed: either Jefferson's words must be read as championing the destruction of slavery, and with it his livelihood and the privileged existence of the entire class of Southern slaveholders, or they were hollow and empty, condoning the persistence of the supreme injustice of slavery, and revealing slaveholding Americans to be infinitely worse tyrants than George III, and Jefferson himself to be perhaps history's greatest hypocrite.

These problems disappeared, however, if the slaves of America were not counted among "all men." The logic of this postulate is so self-evident that most Americans today confidently assume that neither Jefferson nor (by extension) the other Founders *could* have considered Africans to be "men" in the normal sense of the word. This view is so firmly established among all but a few specialists that those historians who defend the Founders' belief in the humanity of blacks are frequently excoriated by the profession as conservative ideologues bent on

whitewashing the reputations of the Founders, as in many cases they are. Nor is it new; it is the foundation upon which the Dred Scott case of 1857 is based.

What is overlooked by scholars who cite *Dred Scott* as "good history, if bad law," is that the decision ignited a firestorm of outrage in the North and came to be seen as one of the triggers of the Civil War. "Five years ago," Abraham Lincoln asserted in 1859, "no living man expressed the opinion that the negro had no share in the Declaration of Independence."[1] Two years later, Alexander Stephens, the Vice President of the Confederacy, asserted that his government was "the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth": "that the negro is not equal to the white man"—a truth, he recognized, "not generally admitted" even as recently as "twenty years ago."[2] Thomas Jefferson himself acknowledged in 1785 that though Americans had "had under our eyes the races of black and of red men" for "a century and a half," they had "never yet been viewed by us as subjects of natural history"—i.e., as races.[3] The novelty of the doctrine of black inferiority is a commonplace trope in early polemics on race, even as its proponents proclaim its eternal verity.

But it is not enough to demonstrate that Anglo-American racial discourse is new. Any scholar who would challenge the conventional wisdom—the *Dred Scott* interpretation of race—must also describe what existed before. This is epistemologically very difficult.

The advent of race as way of apprehending the world constitutes an apparent paradigm shift in the strictest sense as defined by Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* It is, in fact, a demonstrably false paradigm, erected on false premises; that is to say, blanket inaccurate assertions about the nature of Africans. Typical of Kuhn's paradigm shifts, however, the new paradigm of race effectively answered so many intractable questions (although these

were political and ethical, not scientific questions), and performed its function (at least its ideological function) so successfully, that it *ipso facto* conferred the status of truth on the spurious evidence on which it was constructed. True to the Kuhnian model, the outmoded paradigm of human equality that race replaced was quickly rendered invisible, and only work that contributed to the new dogma (the heterodox speculations of Voltaire, Kames, Monboddo, and Hume, for example, as well as the comparativist researches of Linnaeus, Blumenbach, and Buffon), found a place in historical accounts of the rise of anthropological science:

> For reasons that are both obvious and highly functional, science textbooks (and too many of the older histories of science) refer only to that part of the work of past scientists that can easily be viewed as contributions to the statement and solution of the texts' paradigm problems. Partly by selection and partly by distortion, the scientists of earlier ages are implicitly represented as having worked upon the same set of fixed problems and in accordance with the same set of fixed canons that the most recent revolution in scientific theory and method has made seem scientific.[4]

Thus not only are earlier understandings rendered obsolete, the revolution in thought itself is rendered invisible.

What was the paradigm that race replaced? This essay is an effort to formulate an answer to this question. It must necessarily do more than that, however, because as Kuhn's work suggests, few things are more inaccessible than the *Weltanschauung* of an outdated paradigm. "Why dignify what science's best and most persistent efforts have made it possible to discard?"[5] We now understand, intellectually, that race is a false paradigm; but almost inevitably, the world view that it replaced appears to us as even more antiquated and outdated, to the extent that it is visible at all.

In his famous study of the sources and meaning of the Declaration of Independence, Garry Wills cites a plethora of sources from the field of eighteenth-century moral and natural philosophy to demonstrate that "Jefferson believed in a literal equality much more far-reaching than most educated people recognize today."[6] Wills has accurately described the views of Jefferson's generation (though not their origin), but by requiring Jefferson to be the exemplar and representative of his era's thinking about human nature, he has viewed that school of thought through a distorting lens and failed to detect the momentous paradigm shift concealed in the speculations in *Notes on the State of Virginia.*

Thomas Jefferson is neither a representative figure in the development of race, nor an incidental one. Although his views on blacks have often been read as the epitome of Enlightenment racial theorizing, it is instead the case that Jefferson redirected the course of Enlightenment thought regarding race, reversing decades of the rising status of Africans in the West. Jefferson leveraged his virtually unmatched authority as a Revolutionary *philosophe* to import the slaveholder's sense of slaves as chattel into an Enlightenment world view. In the process, he set in motion a paradigm shift in the human sciences—and ultimately in society as a whole—as momentous as those of Copernicus in astronomy and Kant in cognition. It may justly be termed the Jeffersonian Turn.

Any accurate discussion of early racial attitudes must be placed squarely in the context of a society that had few qualms about prejudice or about rigid class stratification. Winthrop Jordan has assembled a damning catalogue of hatred, contempt, dehumanization and fear of blacks; but Edmund Morgan has shown that the members of the English aristocracy applied nearly identical stereotypes to the English laboring classes, and John Merriman has recorded similar attitudes

toward the displaced French urban poor of the nineteenth century--thus strongly suggesting that "race" *per se* may not be the operative category in such situations.[7] While few of the leading figures of the eighteenth century would have considered blacks their social equals, neither would they have so considered most whites.

In any discussion of the place of Africans in early American thought, the figure of Thomas Jefferson, though the best-known and the most studied, is paradoxically an outlier. Viewed from a modern perspective, Jefferson's speculations about blacks in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* are troubling and unattractive, but hardly unfamiliar and in no way surprising. As Winthrop Jordan observed, "Against the backdrop of changing attitudes and actions concerning Negroes and Negro slavery," Jefferson's writings "become a fixed and central point of reference and influence. In the years after the Revolution, the speculations of Thomas Jefferson were of great importance because so many people wrote and reacted to them."[8]

It is no coincidence that the concept of race, the basic tool of subversion of the principle of universal equality, emerged at nearly the same time as the Declaration of Independence. In fact, as I intend to show here, the two things have the same author. In this essay, I will seek to demonstrate that Thomas Jefferson was the key architect of the "social construction" of race: that it was he, in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, who crystallized the components of the concept in both language and practice, and consciously and with great adeptness worked to implant these principles within the transatlantic Enlightenment of which he was an integral part.

Why would the author of the Declaration of Independence, perhaps the most eloquent spokesman for liberty and equality of the founding generation, if not all of American history, deliberately condemn a portion of the human race to an inferior status? In part, because the

contradiction between these founding principles and his own dependence upon slavery threatened his stature as a great man both in his own times and in history—a pointed and specific threat for which he was willing to take what were, for him, desperate measures to address, as we shall see.

But Jefferson's dilemma was not his alone. He understood better than any of the Founders that it was the nation's dilemma in microcosm; that slavery was already so intractably enmeshed in the fabric of American society that it could not be removed without unspeakable violence—an analysis that ultimately proved correct. Jefferson perceived only one solution in the face of this insoluble quandary: to invoke what I am calling the "racial imperative."

The first move was to stigmatize the victims of slavery, Africans and their descendants, as a group apart, different from other humans and from other slaves; and to efface them thereby from the narrative of history, to render them, in Ralph Ellison's terms, invisible. This stigmatization of blacks, while common—though not ubiquitous--in earlier generations, flew in the face of contemporary informed opinion, which increasingly regarded Africans as the spiritual and intellectual equals of Europeans. As I will show below, even perennial skeptics of blacks' capacity such as Voltaire and Blumenbach were forced to revise their opinions in light of compelling contrary examples.

Nowhere in Jefferson's public writings does he *defend* slavery; in his milieu, it would be unthinkable. But by branding blacks as suitable "subjects of natural history" and purporting to demonstrate that "nature," not slavery, is responsible for their degradation, he accomplishes something far more subtle and effective: he breaks the problem of African slavery into two separate questions, that of slavery and that of Africans. Once blacks are removed from the state

of human fellowship and classified as scientific specimens, their plight is of only incidental concern. Slavery is still an evil, but its victims of consequence are the slaveholders, whose "morals" and "industry" it destroys. Slavery must and shall be ended, but only with the removal of the freed blacks—a condition that Jefferson's own proposals brand as impracticable and essentially contrary to reason.

The irrationality of Jefferson's emancipation plans—and indeed of most of his assertions concerning blacks—point to his second strategy in implementing the "racial imperative": turning the irrationality of his argument into an asset. Jefferson chose to implement his judgment against blacks by a rhetoric of authority that explicitly rejected appeals to reason, logic, or law; that indeed by its very irrationality excluded blacks from the jurisdiction of reason, while incorporating the reader as part of the "we" thus exclusively embraced within reason's domain. This is the linguistic aspect of the "racial imperative"—the invocation of a grammatical inflection or mood, to be employed in relation to matters of "race," rendering the speaker's judgment rhetorically "self-evident," while offering the reader, by his assent to the mystery, salvation from "skin depravity" and membership in the sacred circle of the racially elect. "Reason," then, was more than an enlightened method of perception and analysis; it was itself a source of salvation, serving the same role that faith had in traditional religion. As Diderot's Encyclopédie proclaimed, "Reason is to the *philosophe* what grace is to the Christian."[9] Thus to be excluded from Reason—to be outside the pale of its saving embrace—would be to be condemned to secular damnation.

To be sure, Thomas Jefferson did not invent prejudice against blacks; he was certainly not the first to regard Africans with contempt, nor even to consciously employ the "racial

imperative" mood. But in the face of a rising tide of equalitarian and antislavery thought, action, and legislation, Jefferson harnessed existing prejudices, his own prestige as a statesman and philosopher, and his self-created stature as the image and embodiment of the American Revolution, to divert the course of pro-African sentiment and activism; to tilt the balance, as it were, back toward subjection, but now established on a modern, "enlightened" foundation.

Because they are so familiar and influential, it is exceedingly difficult to view Jefferson's passages on blacks through the eyes of his contemporaries. In the context of his own time and intellectual milieu, however, Jefferson's remarks were indeed extraordinary: they constituted, Winthrop Jordan asserts, "the most intense, extensive, and extreme formulation of anti-Negro 'thought' offered by any American in the thirty years after the Revolution."[10] More importantly for our purposes, they are probably the most extreme anti-black speculations yet penned by an American.[11] Jordan's acknowledgement of Jefferson's writings as the "fixed and central point of reference" concerning blacks points to Jefferson as the author of a Kuhnian paradigm shift; Jordan's inability to perceive the pre-Jeffersonian racial world confirms it.

Jefferson's *Notes* runs to 382 pages, and only a handful are concerned with blacks. Yet it is undeniable that these passages are the best-known, and have been the most influential, sections of the book. Jefferson must have been aware that his doubts concerning the equality of blacks would be controversial, as they were set against the tide of informed opinion. Indeed, Jefferson's laudatory and respected biographer, Merrill D. Peterson, describes them as "thinly disguised folk belief about Negroes."[12] At the same time, however, *Notes* offers a passionate, even apocalyptic denunciation of slavery: "Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: that his

justice cannot sleep for ever" – the only place in his writing that Jefferson invokes a wrathful God; indeed, the only place in which he invokes a God who can intervene in human affairs at all.

This passage in Query XVIII is justly famous, immortalized on the wall of the Jefferson Memorial. It has offered convincing evidence to believers in divine providence that its author was among their number. Ironically, however, other passages in *Notes* – particularly a highly technical speculation on fossilized limestone and the scientific impossibility of a flood that could cover the whole world (Query VI)–won the warm approbation of deists and freethinkers, while inflaming orthodox Christians who branded Jefferson an infidel. Rather than seeking an underlying consistency in Jefferson's wildly divergent theological stances, we might more meaningful view them as "dog-whistles" intended to send specific messages to a variety of distinct constituencies.[13]

We must seek consistency in *Notes* not in its content but its function. In evaluating it, we should keep in mind the insight of Barbara Fields, that "race" is a fiction, and that its deployment is intended to divert attention from a material interest. In other words, we should recognize that Jefferson's discussion of blacks is not really "about" blacks at all. Race, Fields instructs, is a "thimblerig," a shell game.[14] Recognizing this fact, Jefferson's sleight-of-hand becomes visible, and his intentions can become manifest.

According to Jefferson's "Advertisement," or preface, *Notes on the State of Virginia* is a hasty and imperfect "somewhat corrected and enlarged" version of his response to a set of queries put to him "by a Foreigner Distinction," François Barbé de Marbois. As numerous scholars have demonstrated, the volume as ultimately published is nothing of the kind.[15] Instead, it is a carefully considered, finely-wrought treatise designed to present Jefferson's interpretation

of Virginia (subtly and ambiguously conflated with America) to several distinct "philosophical" audiences: in Britain, France, and the northern and southern sections of the United States. At the literal center of the work—embedded in the chapter on the laws—is Jefferson's masterful codification of the concept of race.

Jefferson's goal in *Notes* is to establish and enforce difference. As Jeremy Engels notes, from its first sentence delineating the boundaries of Virginia, "the theme of boundary writing was subsequently a dominant one in the volume, especially with regard to racial distinction."[16] In so doing, Jefferson is combating both the Pauline understanding of human nature of Galacians: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28) and the developing Scottish Enlightenment discourse (itself built on a tacit Christian foundation) of the unity of human nature as explored in Ferguson, Hutcheson, and Adam Smith.

In place of these discourses of human unity, Jefferson fosters a doctrine of separation. In keeping with the spirit of the age, he endorses gradual emancipation, but only on condition of the removal of the freed blacks. Whites' on-going prejudice and "new provocations," and the blacks' smoldering desire for vengeance, along with "the real distinctions which nature has made," will separate blacks and whites "into parties, and produce convulsions which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race." In addition to these "political" objections to coexistence, Jefferson proceeds to articulate a set of fundamental, even Manichean distinctions, "Physical & Moral," between blacks and whites.

"[T]he first difference which strikes us is that of colour," Jefferson asserts, rehearsing an erudite-sounding catalogue of scientific hypotheses of the source of the "black of the negro": "in

the reticular membrane between the skin and scarf skin, or in the scarf skin itself," the blood, the bile, or "some other secretion"—in any event, "the difference is fixed in nature; and is as real as if it's seat and cause were better known to us." In other words, the distinction is not so much physical or physiological, as aesthetic or metaphysical: "And is this difference of no importance? Is it not the foundation of a greater or lesser share of beauty in the two races? Are not the fine mixtures of red & white…preferable to that eternal monotony, which reigns in the countenances; that immoveable veil of black which covers all the emotions of the other race?" In essence, Jefferson is inviting the (white) reader to strike off the path of science and embrace his visceral and subjective sensations of superiority and revulsion.

Jefferson's relentless focus on color reverses a notable trend: by the last quarter of the eighteenth century, informed Anglo-American opinion tended to downplay its significance, and by the time of his writing, color prejudice was viewed as a mark of reaction, ignorance, or infidelity. Even on the continent, research into the cause of blackness appeared increasingly irrelevant, even brazen, in the face of a mounting critique of the slave trade and enslavement.[17]

Recognizing that the cause of the blacks' color is unknown and perhaps unknowable, Jefferson turns to "other physical distinctions proving a difference of race," rehearsing two centuries of speculations of natural philosophy and introducing some new hypotheses of his own:

> They have less hair on the face and body. They secrete less by the kidnies, and more by the glands of the skin, which gives them a very strong and disagreeable odor. This greater degree of transpiration renders them more tolerant of heat, and less so of cold, than the whites. Perhaps too a difference of structure in the pulmonary apparatus, which a late ingenious* experimentalist [author's footnote: "Crawford"] has discovered to be the principal regulator of animal heat, may have disabled them from extricating, in the act

> of inspiration, so much of that fluid from the outer air, or obliged them in expiration, to part with more of it.[18]

Jefferson's purpose, in any event, is not anthropological or ethnographic; unlike earlier researchers, he has no interest in blacks' intrinsic qualities: "It would be unfair to follow them to Africa for this investigation." Rather, blacks function for Jefferson as an antithesis to the ideal of a refined person of rationality, taste, and sensibility:

> In general, their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection…. Comparing them by their faculties of memory, reason, and imagination, it appears to me that in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior…and that in Imagination they are dull, tasteless & anomalous….never yet could I find that a black had uttered a thought above the level of plain narration; never see even an elementary trait of painting or sculpture.[19]

Thus far, Jefferson is on safe ground with the better part of his audience, who are unlikely to have sufficient direct experience with blacks to contradict him. Seemingly recognizing, however, that certain achievements of blacks that are common knowledge are likely to call his sweeping judgments into question, he tackles them head on: "In music they are more generally gifted than the whites with accurate ears for tune and time," he acknowledges, and they have been found capable of imagining a small catch." Here he inserts an artful footnote: "The instrument *proper to them* is the Banjar, which they brought hither from Africa…"[20] [Emphasis added]. Having recognized the area in which they are perhaps most likely to engage with whites and demonstrate significant talent, Jefferson affixes blacks to their "proper" exotic and alien station, imposing "racial" separation on the most universal of human activities.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to Jefferson's affirmation of blacks' inferior imagination and intellect is the phenomenon of Phillis Wheatley, the young African slave whose *Poems on*

Various Occasions, Religious and Moral (1773) made her a transatlantic literary superstar. Under other circumstances, one could envision Jefferson introducing Wheatley in refutation of Abbé Reynal's smug assertion that "America has not yet produced one good poet"; after all, her "very good English verse" forced Voltaire to backtrack from his own assertions of black inferiority.[21] Jefferson's present task, however, is to neutralize Wheatley's impact on his own sweeping anti-black claims. Once again, he confronts it directly:

> Misery is often the parent of the most affecting touches in poetry.—Among the blacks is misery enough, God knows, but no poetry. Love is the peculiar oestrum of the poet. Their love is ardent, but it kindles the senses only, not the imagination. Religion indeed has produced a Phyllis Whately [sic]; but it could not produce a poet.[22]

This last sentence—on one level Jefferson's closest approach to a joke—expresses an integral component in the emerging racial paradigm, the Jeffersonian Turn. Its application extends far beyond Wheatley or even blacks as a whole. In a single passage, the realm of religion has been identified with blacks, and divorced from poetry. This is a key to Jefferson's method, but also a clue to his very real tone-deafness to the spiritual dimension of life. This incapacity, in an individual otherwise so extraordinarily gifted, has had a momentous impact.

Confronted with a black author whose work had been universally celebrated (including by François Marbois, the Frenchman who originally circulated the "Queries" that inspired *Notes*), Jefferson resorts to imperious dismissal: "The compositions published under [Wheatley's] name are beneath the dignity of criticism," he declares disdainfully.

A similar principle is applied to Ignatius Sancho, whose letters were published posthumously in 1782. Sancho, Jefferson asserts, "has approached nearer to merit in

composition; yet his letters do more honour to the heart than the head… They breathe the purest effusions of general philanthropy, and shew how great a degree of the latter may be compounded with strong religious zeal." Establishing a trope that will be integral to racist discourse, Jefferson marks Sancho's work as intrinsically irrational and tasteless:

> his imagination is wild and extravagant, and escapes incessantly from every restraint of reason and taste….His subjects should often have led him to a process of sober reasoning: yet we find him always substituting sentiment for demonstration. Upon the whole, though we admit him to the first place among those of his own colour…, yet when we compare him with the writers among the class whom he lived…we are compelled to rank him at the bottom of the column.[23]

Jefferson should have left it at that, but he could not restrain himself from appending an interlineated insertion: "This criticism supposes the letters published under his name to be genuine, and to have received amendment from no other hand; points which would not be of easy investigation."[24] This gives away the game, and invalidates Jefferson's critical judgment of Sancho's letters, suggesting that if they *had* been written by a white author, Jefferson would not have been "compelled" to rank them "at the bottom of the column." It is because Sancho is black that his writing is irrational and tasteless.

Having presented this catalogue of defects and deficiencies of "the blacks," Jefferson appears to retreat from his assertions in a remarkable paragraph that acknowledges that his concerns are neither scientific, nor amenable to scientific determination:

> The opinion, that they are inferior in the faculties of Reason & Imagination must be hazarded with great diffidence. To justify a general conclusion, requires many observations, even where the subject may be submitted to the Anatomical knife, to Optical glasses, to analysis by fire, or by solvents. How much more then where it is a faculty, not a substance, we are examining; where it eludes the research of all the senses;

> where the conditions of its existence are various and variously combined; where the effects of those which are present or absent bid defiance to calculation; let me add too, as a circumstance of great tenderness, where our conclusion would degrade a whole race of men from the rank in the scale of beings which their Creator may perhaps have given them.[25]

This phrase has rarely if ever been read for its plain meaning. It has been construed as Jefferson's endorsement of a scientific analysis of blacks—or, alternatively, as a caution that such an investigation, if undertaken, might result in the discovery of their inferiority, thus degrading the race from the rank of whites. In the context of the passages surrounding it, replete with invocations of scientific studies and reproachful of their neglect, it is not surprising that the passage has been so understood; such an interpretation is in congruence with the rest of the chapter and indeed with the nature of the book itself. But that is not what the text says. A closer look at Jefferson's language yields a surprisingly different sense.

Demonstrating a good Baconian appreciation of the scientific method and a familiarity with the research methods of the day, Jefferson emphasizes the difficulty inherent in making a general assertion even when the subject under investigation is a physical substance, and can be dissected and examined under the microscope. When it is a *faculty*, however—an intangible, ultimately subjective phenomenon, such as "inferiority"—the inquiry is far more daunting.

To begin with, "it eludes the research of all the senses." This is confounding; what can we know about the world that we do not obtain through our senses? According to Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, published at almost exactly the moment that Jefferson was composing *Notes,* the answer is "nothing."[26] One would assume, moreover, that a rationalist such as Jefferson would be loath to credit "extra-sensory perception" in a matter of this import.

Beyond this already insuperable difficulty, the cascading layers of complexity, of combinations and permutations involved in the comparison of faculties such as reason and imagination among whole classes of people—even if the membership of such classes could be definitively resolved—"bid defiance to calculation." This would seem to close off all possibility of scientific determination of the question. It is not a problem that science can solve.

An examination of the original manuscript of the *Notes* underscores this conclusion still more indisputably. After this list of insurmountable difficulties, Jefferson had added, "an infinitude of observations are therefore necessary to justify a decisive conclusion"—a phrase which he later struck out, and which no edition of *Notes* has printed.[27] Plainly, then, Jefferson has framed a set of conditions for the scientific determination of black inferiority that can never be achieved—much like the impossibly stringent requirements laid down by the Talmud for the execution of the "stubborn and rebellious son," from which the sages ultimately conclude that "there never was and there never will be such."[28]

The sentence concludes: "let me add too, as the circumstance of great tenderness, where ~~it would~~ ^our conclusion would degrade a whole race of men from the rank in which the scale of beings which their Creator may perhaps have given them." [29] This clause must be parsed carefully. What is it actually saying? What Jefferson is *not* saying is that science has, or may, determine that blacks are inferior to whites; he has just shown the practical impossibility of employing the tools of the experimentalists to prove the presence or absence of an intangible faculty. Nor can it be believed that the rationalist, freethinking Jefferson could believe that science could be used to read the mind of the Creator. Setting aside Jefferson's specious "great tenderness," one can only conclude that it is the very premise itself, with its determination to reduce "a whole race of men"

to the status of specimens to be investigated by *philosophes,* that "may perhaps" degrade blacks from the top link of the Great Chain of Being—a height which would then be filled by the whites alone.

With this understanding, we may now grasp Jefferson's meaning. It is not that "our researches" may disclose the troubling fact that the Creator assigned blacks to a rank below whites, as it is universally read. Rather, it is the researches *themselves* that "would degrade a whole race of men" from the rank assigned them by their creator. And of course this is true: to place a fellow human under a microscope, to regard them as specimens to be studied, is most certainly to degrade them, if not in the sight of God, at any rate in the eyes of men, to a rank below ourselves, their fellow creatures. In Martin Buber's terms, it is to relegate them to the status of objects, to the realm of "I-It."[30]

The next passage would seem to negate Jefferson's tortured assertion that science is incapable of comparatively evaluating human nature: "To our reproach it must be said, that tho' we have had under our eyes the races of red and of black men under our eyes for a century and a half, we have not yet viewed them as subjects of natural history"—that is, as topics of scientific investigation. This is a particularly adroit and devious statement—yet another example of Barbara Fields' "thimblerig." The tender-hearted reader, fully prepared to share in the "reproach" regarding the 150-year relationship with "the races of red and of black men," learns that the grounds for such reproach are not dispossession, double-dealing, genocide, kidnapping, enslavement, and brutalization, but *neglecting to treat them as objects of scientific study*.

This rather astonishing fact—that Jefferson chooses to single out the failure to study them scientifically above all the other reprehensible things that Virginians have done to Indians and

blacks—establishes the context for Jefferson's well-known conjecture: "I advance it therefore as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind."[31] Jefferson has already established the basis for such inferiority: not scientific investigation, for it "eludes the research of all the senses," but their abstraction from human equality as fit subjects for such investigation.

The essential interpretive tool here is a simple pronoun: who is the "we" whom Jefferson is addressing? Who is embraced in the "our" in "our reproach"? "It is not against experience to suppose, that different species of the same genus, or varieties of the same species, may possess different qualifications," Jefferson suggests, inarguably. "Will not a lover of Natural history then, one who views the gradations in all the races of animals with the eye of philosophy, excuse an effort to keep those in the department of man as distinct as nature has formed them?"

Having advanced the principle that the pursuit of "Natural history" is the highest human calling—an idea that is underscored throughout the book, and to which the book itself is a testament—Jefferson admits the reader into the elite fraternity of lovers of natural history, of those lofty beings who gaze down upon "all the races of animals with the eye of philosophy," whose noble object is to vindicate and sustain the "superior beauty" of the white race, even at the cost of their passionate commitment to universal liberty:

> This unfortunate difference of colour, and perhaps of faculty, is a powerful obstacle to the emancipation of these people. Many of their advocates, while they wish to vindicate the liberty of human nature, are anxious also to preserve its dignity and beauty. Some of these, embarrassed by the question "What further is to be done with them?" join themselves in opposition with those who are actuated by sordid avarice only.[32]

This is a selfless sacrifice indeed: to lay down one's precious love of liberty for the greater good of human "dignity and beauty," and thereby to submit oneself to be falsely associated with those greedy, grasping, brutal and intemperate slaveholders whom Jefferson will excoriate in Query XVIII. Alas, there is no alternative:

> Among the Romans emancipation required but one effort. The slave, when made free, might mix with, without staining the blood of his master. But with us a second is necessary, *unknown to history*. When freed, he is to be removed beyond the reach of mixture. [33] (Emphasis added.)

Jefferson acknowledges that the step he is proposing—that the former slaves must be banished from their homes—is without historical precedent. But emancipation without removal, Jefferson affirms, will contaminate the blood of the master class. We may be inclined to find Jefferson's argument risible. Every Southerner, certainly, knew that freedom was no requirement for intermixture with blacks; the proof could be found on innumerable plantations. Much psychological speculation has gone into striving to understand how Jefferson could display such horror and repugnance at intermixture with blacks, and yet engage in a decades-long relationship with his slave Sally Hemings. Looking past the fact that Hemings was fair-skinned and smooth-haired (thus incidentally exploding Jefferson's entire binary distinction), we must not overlook an essential component of Jefferson's revulsion: he is horrified by the prospect of intermixture with *free* blacks, but not with slaves. Removal is only necessary as a consequence of *emancipation*. To be sure, blacks are intrinsically inferior: "The improvement of the blacks…in the first instance of their mixture with the whites, has been observed by every one, and proves that their inferiority is not the effect merely of their condition of life."[34] Note that while Jefferson stresses the improvement of the blacks by intermixture, he does not here show any concern about

"staining the blood" of the whites. As long as the blacks remain in slavery, the problem of contamination appears to be moot.

I have been able to find only one example before 1787 of a work by a white American advocating large-scale relocation of blacks: a bizarre vision of a coming American golden age vouchsafed in a dream to one "Celedon," writing in 1785, by an angel. But Celedon's vision of a separate western Negro nation, "Nigrania," did not extend to the blacks alone; the native tribes would have their own, "Savagenia"; "and in all those vast spaces westward to the great ocean, there may be a French, a Spanish, a Dutch, and Irish, and English, &c. yea a Jewish State here in the process of time."[35] Evidently, this was not a considered plan of colonization, nor one that singled out blacks.

Indeed, the earliest serious advocate of total or large-scale expulsion of the blacks appears to have been Thomas Jefferson, in an otherwise-unreported bill or amendment he may have offered to the Virginia Assembly in 1778 or 1779 that he discussed in *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Jefferson's plan called for slaves to be emancipated, presumably at birth, raised "at public the expense" to adulthood, then "colonized to such place as the circumstances of the time should render most proper," to be fostered as "a free and independent people."[36] The cursory nature of this proposal and Jefferson's vagueness in describing its legislative history call into question the seriousness of Jefferson's commitment to the project.[37] In practice, it seems chiefly to have been intended to undercut the legitimacy of blacks' claim to membership in Virginian society rather than to present a viable alternative to slavery. Jefferson denied this claim more explicitly, though couched as an attack on slavery, in Query XVIII: "if a slave can have a country in this world, it must be any other in preference to that in which he has been born to live

& labour for another."[38] As we have seen, Jefferson's exclusionary strictures toward Africans apply even to music: "The instrument proper to them is the Banjar…"—certainly not his beloved violin.[39]

Significantly, Jefferson seemingly had no interest in impugning Africans *qua* Africans: "It would be unfair to follow them to Africa for this investigation."[40] In another passage of the same section on "Laws," Jefferson proposed that slave criminals be punished with transportation "to Africa, or elsewhere… there to be continued in slavery." But Africa, for Jefferson was principally a rhetorical destination for blacks; the operative word was "elsewhere." He uniformly linked emancipation with removal: "Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate, than that these people are to be free," he wrote, in words inscribed on the wall of the Jefferson Memorial; but in a clause not cited there he added: "nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government."[41] Once again, we see Jefferson's certitude that blacks must enjoy their freedom "elsewhere," in "any other" country than this one. But the key word here was "*if* "—"*if* a slave can have a country in this world"; and the implicit answer to this rhetorical question was that he cannot. At no time in his life did Jefferson propose anything resembling a practical scheme of colonization—thus tacitly condemning African Americans to a permanent state of enslavement.[42]

Logic clearly dictated that if American slaves were to obtain the freedom that was their right by nature, they would have to do so in America and under American institutions. Other options were simply not practical; even if the overwhelming logistical problems of transporting a million blacks to Africa were overcome, by now they had so little connection to the continent that, as Anthony Benezet remarked, it would require "a conductor from heaven, as in the case of

the Israelites," to transplant them successfully there. Yet, insists Donald L. Robinson, "Few white men in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries could accept, or even imagine, the only realistic alternative" to slavery: "a racially integrated society."[43]

Robinson's study of the role of slavery in American politics is a powerful work of historical reconstruction; his painstaking research into the insidious effects of slavery on the formation of the new nation remains essential reading today. Yet his reference to "racial integration" marks his book as a product of the modern paradigm of race (specifically, of the civil rights era in which it was written). "Segregation" is not a workable description of pre-emancipation race relations – nor indeed is "race" itself. Was the inferior position of Africans on account of their color? Jefferson would certainly have it so; but as we have seen, it is a mistake to assume that he spoke for his generation, even though his voice was deafening.

The early scientific literature of Africans was composed by scholars whose principal objects of study were slaves—or cadavers. Unsurprisingly Africans' physical appearance preoccupied continental researchers, since they had no access to their minds. Confronted with the eloquence of Wheatley, Sancho, Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, and a growing roster of others, serious thinkers such as Voltaire and Buffon reconsidered their earlier assumptions of African inferiority. Thomas Jefferson, publishing in France, revalidated the materialistic approach of his hosts and colleagues, and expelled the "race of negroes" from the domain of polite consideration.

All studies of human difference written after 1785 had to contend with Jefferson's Manichean strictures against blackness in the *Notes on the State of Virginia*. On matters American, for European philosophes, Jefferson was the supreme authority; he was even invited to correct Abbé Reynal's draft entry for "America" in the *Encyclopédie méthodique*.[44] Even for

those authors who disagreed with his opinions on blacks (before 1800, almost certainly a majority), Jefferson set the terms of the debate, and the argument could not be won if his premises were accepted.[45]

Certainly a long Anglo-American tradition equated physical and moral "blackness." Some Enlightenment figures, such as David Hume, derisively denigrated blacks' ability, and others, such as Kames and Monboddo, even seemed to raise the possibility that Africans might not be fully human.[46] Yet such suggestions are entirely absent from familiar earlier works, such as Addison's celebrated *Tragedy of Cato* (1713), whose true hero is Cato's African disciple, Juba. Five decades later, in his *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, Adam Smith did not raise the question of color at all.[47] Much work remains to be done to understand the variety of eighteenth-century racial thought, who held what opinions, and why; what is evident, however, is that the range of elite opinion regarding Africans included the acceptance of their full humanity and even equality, and that this view was gaining ground, particularly among the religious.

The Quaker abolitionist John Woolman, writing in 1762, argued that the long association of blacks and slavery made it "needful to speak in Relation to Colour," although he did not introduce the issue until well into his treatise. Drawing upon principles of Lockean psychology, Woolman argued that "the Idea of Slavery [is] connected with the Black Colour, and Liberty with the White: and where false Ideas are twisted into our Minds, it is with difficulty we get fairly disentangled."[48] By the time of the Revolution, Woolman's understanding of the circularity of arguing the inferiority of blacks from their status as slaves had become commonplace, and the continued belief in such inferiority outdated. "The eyes of the nations of the earth are fast opening," asserted Elias Boudinot in his address to his fellow members of the Order of the

Cincinnati, "and the inhabitants of this globe, notwithstanding it is 1700 years since the promulgation of that invaluable precept 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' are but just beginning to discover their brotherhood to each other, and that all men, however different with regard to nation or color, have an essential interest in each other's welfare."[49]

If Boudinot downplayed the significance of race, he strongly emphasized the importance of rank. While Boudinot asserted that "The first great principle established and secured by our revolution...is the rational equality and rights of men," he vehemently rejected "the absurd idea charged upon us, by the enemies of this valuable principle, and which contains in it inevitable destruction to every government, 'that all men are equal, as to acquired or adventitious rights.'" All men might be brothers, but social stratification was necessary, salutary, and ordained by God:

> Men must and do continually differ in their genius, knowledge, industry, integrity, and activity. Their natural and moral characters--their virtues and vices--their abilities, natural and acquired--together with favorable opportunities for exertion, will always make men different among themselves, and of course create a pre-eminency and superiority one over another....We are all the workmanship of the same Divine hand....'order is Heaven's first law,' and He has made it essential to good government and necessary for the welfare of every community, that there should be distinctions among members of the same society, yet this difference is originally designed for the service, benefit, and best good of the whole and not for their oppression or destruction.[50]

Eighteenth-century figures like Boudinot, with a powerful sense of social hierarchy, could hardly "accept or imagine" a society in which white members of the lower orders would presume themselves their equals on the basis of their skin color, even if, as his theological writing

indicated, he "believed in a literal equality"—the descent of all humanity from a single set of parents—"much more far-reaching than most educated people recognize today."[51]

Boudinot and other members of his class found it essential to believe that their high position ensured the preservation of society, and their patrician self-image required that they practice benevolence as a fundamental obligation of their rank. Many other Americans deeply resented such aristocratic presumptions. But black Americans, struggling on the margin of survival, on the whole willingly embraced Boudinot's qualified definition of equality and accepted the humble but relatively secure status offered by a traditional, class-based division of society. A curious alliance thus developed between upper-class whites and free blacks in which the former provided a measure of protection and paternalistic support while the latter offered them the kind of deference and gratitude they took to be their due, and that they received so rarely and so grudgingly from whites. Aristocratic whites could afford to regard blacks as "brothers," to affirm their "equality as men and citizens," since blacks would never – indeed could not – take advantage of such ideas to challenge their patrons' right to their position at the pinnacle of the American social pyramid.[52]

Ironically, then, blacks had a real stake in defending a stratified system of class, one in which their humble station carried no special stigma. This outlook can be clearly seen in those communities where they possessed the franchise: Black voters tended to be Federalists. "I am the same genuine, undeviating, unshaken lump of Federalism, that I ever was," the black North Carolina preacher and teacher John Chavis asserted stoutly, as late as 1832. "I believe that Federal policy, to be the best, that ever was adopted, in this or in [any] other Country, of a free

and elective Government," he went on, sounding a theme that could have issued from the pen of ultra-Federalist Fisher Ames:

> [T]here is no other policy that can stand the shock & vicissitudes of human nature. I do not believe that mankind are capable of living under, either a Democratic, or a Republican Government. The bonds of such Governments are not sufficient to restrain the corruptions of human nature. The volcano will burst. & the lava spread far and wide its destructive ruins.[53]

Such sentiments have not won much of a following for the remarkable Chavis among modern scholars either of North Carolina politics or of Southern free blacks, but his views should hardly be surprising.[54] They take on greater import, moreover, in view of the evidence that black political power was on the increase in the years after the War of 1812, when, not coincidentally, the first generation of blacks freed by northern gradual emancipation statutes were coming of age. A British traveler in America during the late 1810s observed that

> In spite of the many disadvantages under which the African has hitherto laboured, instances are not wanting where he has risen to considerable wealth and respectability, particularly, I believe, in the New-England states. Nothing indeed is here necessary but his own exertions to raise him in the scale of being. His political rights must in time awaken in him political ambition, in which he has as yet been usually found deficient. In some of the states, the blacks now frequently exercise their right of suffrage....[55]

The war itself had done much to promote this tendency. In 1807, British naval officers of the H.M.S *Leopard* ignited the long-burning fuse that launched the war by impressing three American seamen from the U.S.S. *Chesapeake*. The act provoked a stirring speech by John C. Calhoun in the House of Representatives denouncing this grave injustice against American *citizens*--the Congressman was clear about the question of citizenship, since it was the crucial

point at issue--two of whom were African Americans.[56] In the wake of this incident, although "the whole country cried for war with a revolutionary fervor," the race of the abducted American citizens, although apparently generally known, did not become an issue, even among the Southern "War Hawks" who led the call for hostilities.[57] As in the Revolution, blacks fought side by side with whites; Andrew Jackson famously recruited the aid of the free black militia of New Orleans in the greatest American victory of the war, in which they took a central part. According to James and Lois Horton, many African Americans were convinced that the well-known feats of blacks in arms at New Orleans entitled them to full American citizenship, including the franchise.[58]

The black vote constituted "an important factor" in New York City politics in the early nineteenth century, as Glover Moore observed: "Massed in doubtful wards, where it constituted a balance of power, it had actually swung the state to the Federalists in 1813 in spite of anything the Democrats could do."[59] It is no coincidence—nor necessarily evidence of modern "racist" views—that many of the state constitutional conventions of the 1810s through the 1830s which introduced manhood suffrage or abolished property qualifications for whites also explicitly barred blacks from voting.[60] In Connecticut, blacks routinely voted for Federalist candidates until they were deprived of the franchise by the new constitution of 1818, drafted by the victorious Republicans (or "Tolerationists," as they were there styled). In Tennessee, the constitutional convention of 1834 stripped blacks of the vote on the basis of "*policy and expediency*," as one delegate put it, while the provision excluding blacks from voting in the revised North Carolina constitution of 1835—passed by an achingly narrow margin—eliminated a small but reliable pocket of solidly Whig votes. Proponents of black disfranchisement in the Pennsylvania state

constitution of 1838, as Nicholas Wood has convincingly demonstrated, justified the measure as a necessary sacrifice to southern sensibilities in order to preserve the Union, rather than on the basis of black inferiority.[61] The pattern could work in the other direction, as well; after Rhode Island blacks helped conservatives to put down the Dorr Rebellion in 1842, Dorr's successful opponents rewarded them, and secured a base of electoral support, by including a provision for black suffrage in the new Rhode Island constitution.[62]

This pattern of social and political allegiances ought to put us on guard against accepting a simplistic notion of "racial antipathy" as an explanation for the disabilities under which blacks labored. If race seemed relatively unimportant to those white Americans who believed in maintaining a rigid system of class distinctions, the reverse also held true: to many whites, the subordination of blacks came to seem increasingly important to maintaining white equality. Indeed, this principle came to be the "foundation" and "cornerstone" of Southern society, as the future Vice-President of the Confederacy, Alexander H. Stephens, was later to proclaim (a truth which he acknowledged "was not generally admitted" within the memories of many of his listeners) .[63]

Here again, we should recognize the role played in such attitudes by "policy and expediency," as Ira Berlin suggests. To begin with, blacks could constitute a real political force. When the Federalists fell from power, the new Republican majorities lost no time in "punishing their enemies"—including the Federalists' allies among the blacks. More surprising, perhaps—and for our purposes most significant—such conventions appealed to no doctrine of black inferiority to justify their actions: "whites did not need to degrade free Negroes on the scale of being to deprive them of their rights....They denied free Negroes the right to vote for the same

reason they barred women from the polls: it contradicted the 'manners and habits' of the country." Nevertheless, as we have seen, the votes in convention to deny blacks the franchise were by no means unanimous: even in the slave states of Tennessee and North Carolina, the measures passed by slim majorities.[64]

Stalwart allies of Jefferson were placed in a difficult position by the racial theorizing of their chief. With the exception of Franklin, Jefferson probably outranked every other American both as a *philosophe* and as a republican. Moreover, he was thin-skinned and responded badly to criticism, particularly in relation to slavery. One figure strongly under Jefferson's spell was his close friend and fellow member of the American Philosophical Society, Benjamin Rush.

In 1773, Rush penned one of the strongest early attacks on slavery, in which he dispensed with "the vulgar notion" of blacks "being descended from Cain, who was supposed to be marked with this color" as "too absurd to need a refutation." There was no need to investigate "the Cause of this blackness," Rush argued, asserting "that so far from being a curse, it subjects the Negroes to no inconveniences, but on the contrary qualifies them for that part of the Globe in which providence has placed them." Indeed, "when we exclude the variety of color from our ideas of Beauty, they may be said to possess every thing necessary to constitute it in common with the white people."[65]

After Jefferson's imperious judgment that the "immoveable veil" of blackness constituted an insuperable barrier to the slaves' emancipation, Rush revised his relativist view of color: the cause of blackness, he suggested to the American Philosophical Society in 1792, was the disease of leprosy. He defended this diagnosis with a chain of reasoning so preposterous as to leave no

little doubt that it had been constructed in desperation to bolster a theory of much more than scientific importance to him. To identify the blacks' condition with leprosy, the Biblical manifestation of ritual uncleanness, accomplished many things. It exonerated the victims from culpability for their condition: "If the color of the negroes be the effect of a disease, instead of inviting us to tyrannise over them, it should entitle them to a double portion of our humanity, for disease all over the world has always been the signal for immediate and universal compassion." At the same time, it justified their ostracism: "The facts and principles which have been delivered, should teach white people the necessity of keeping up that prejudice against such connections with them, as would tend to infect posterity with any portion of their disorder." But now, this prejudice would be applied purely in the defense of hygiene, "without offering violence to humanity, or calling in question the sameness of descent, or natural equality of mankind."

Moving squarely into unintentionally Swiftian territory, Rush called upon "science and humanity" to "combine their efforts" to "endeavour to discover a remedy" for the "disease" of blackness. Success in this effort would "destroy one of the arguments in favor of enslaving the negroes, for their color has been supposed by the ignorant to mark them as objects of divine judgments, and by the learned to qualify them for labor in hot, and unwholesome climates." In addition, "We shall add greatly to *their* happiness, for however well they appear to be satisfied with their color, there are many proofs of their preferring that of the white people." Most rewarding of all, "We shall render the belief of the whole human race being descended from one pair, easy, and universal, and thereby not only add weight to the Christian revelation, but remove a material obstacle to the exercise of that universal benevolence which is inculcated by it."[66] It should come as no surprise to those familiar with the biography of Dr. Rush that the prescribed

cure for negro "leprosy" consisted of his typical "heroic" regimen of massive bloodletting and purging.[67]

Benjamin Rush's desperate and misguided attempt to hold onto the Christian doctrine of universal equality, while at the same time acknowledging the Jeffersonian doctrine of the fatality of blackness, led him to the threshold of Foucauldian horrors of social engineering. But following Rush's reasoning to such a conclusion eloquently illustrates the intractability of the dilemma that Jefferson had grasped more profoundly than any other founder: that slavery was so intractably enmeshed in the fabric of American society that it could not be removed without unspeakable violence—an analysis, it must be acknowledged, that ultimately proved correct. If the equality of Africans had to be sacrificed on the altar of "philosophy" to preserve the "dignity and beauty" of humanity, the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and, not incidentally, the reputation of its author—that was a sacrifice that most Americans were willing to make.

Notes

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[1] Roy Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 8 vols. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 3:470.

[2] Henry Cleveland, *Alexander H. Stephens, in Public and Private: With Letters and Speeches, Before, During, and Since the War* (Philadelphia, 1886), 721.

[3] Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (London: John Stockdale, 1787), 239.
[4] Thomas S. Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 138.
[5] Kuhn, *Structures*, 138.
[6] Garry Wills, *Inventing America* (London: The Athlone Press, 1978), 228.
[7] Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975), 320-327; John Merriman, *The Margins of City Life: Explorations on the French Urban Frontier, 1815-1851* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 59-83; on the question of race as an "underlying theme" of American history, see Barbara J. Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," in J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson, eds., *Region,*

Race and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 143-77. Professor Fields' work is seminal to my understanding of these issues.

[8] Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), 426.

[9] César Chesneau Du Marsais, "Philosopher." *The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project.* Translated by Dena Goodman. Ann Arbor: MPublishing, University of Michigan Library, 2002. Web. 16 Jun 2011. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.001>. Trans. of "Philosophe," *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers,* vol. 12. Paris, 1765.

[10] Jordan, *White over Black*, 481.

[11] Exclusive of West Indians; Edward Long's *History of Jamaica*, 3 vols. (London: 1774) is a well-known forerunner. The frequently-invoked exception to this statement in fact proves the rule: the anonymous 1773 pamphlet *Personal Slavery Established*, almost universally interpreted as a serious proslavery argument, is in fact a well-crafted antislavery satire, as would have been evident to contemporaries from the cover page alone. See Lester B. Scherer, "A New Look at *Personal Slavery Established*, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d series, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Oct. 1973): 645-52.

[12] Merrill D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation* (1970), 262.

[13] The classic exposition of the transmission of coded messages to specific audiences in political speech is Josh Fear, *Under the Radar: Dog-whistle Politics in Australia* (The Australia Institute, 2007), www.tai.org.au/documents/downloads/DP96.pdf (accessed 26 December 2011).

[14] Barbara J. Fields, "Whiteness, Racism, and Identity, *International Labor and Working Class History*, 60 (Fall 2001), 48.

[15] Examples include Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 118-132; William Scheick, "Chaos and Imaginative Order in Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia,*" in *Essays in Early Virginia Literature Honoring Richard Beale* Davis., ed. J.A. Leo Lemay (New York: Lenox Hill, 1977), 221-22, 132; Robert A. Ferguson, "'Mysterious Obligation': Jefferson's Notes on the State of Virginia," *American Literature*, 52 (Nov. 1980), 381-406; Floyd Ogburn, Jr., "Structure and Meaning in Thomas Jefferson's 'Notes on the State of Virginia,' *Early American Literature*, 15 (Fall 1980), 141-150; Alexander O. Boulton, "The American Paradox: Jeffersonian Equality and Racial Science," *American Quarterly* 47 (Sept. 1995), 467-492 ; Peter Onuf, *Jefferson's Empire: The Language of American Nationhood* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 65-70, 147-69, and David Tucker, *Enlightened Republicanism: A Study of Jefferson's* Notes on the State of Virginia (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2008).

[16] Jeremy Engels, "Friend or Foe?: Naming the Enemy," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, Volume 12, No. 1 (Spring 2009), 42.

[17] See, e.g., Andrew S. Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in the Age of the Enlightenment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 181-206.

[18] Jefferson, *Notes,* 230-31.

[19] Jefferson, *Notes*, 233.

[20] Jefferson, *Notes*, 233.

[21] Guillaume-Thomas-François Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des étaablissemens et du commerce des européeens dans les deux indes,* vol. 7 (Maestricht: Jean-Edme Dufour & Philippe Roux, 1774), 92; Voltaire quoted in Edward Derbyshire Seeber, *Anti-Slavery Opinion in France during the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1937), 57.

[22] Jefferson, *Notes*, 234.

[23] Jefferson, *Notes*, 335.

[24] Massachusetts Historical Society, *Notes on the State of Virginia* [manuscsript], mss. p. 85, attachment 1 *recto.* http://www.masshist.org/thomasjeffersonpapers/notes/nsvviewer.php?nav=con&results=1&q=bottom%20of%20the%20column&page=85.

[25] Jefferson, *Notes*, 238-39.

[26] Immanuel Kant, *Kritk der reinen Vernunft* (Riga: J.F. Hartknoch, 1781).

[27] Jefferson, *Notes*, mss. p. 86. http://www.masshist.org/thomasjeffersonpapers/notes/nsvviewer.php?page=86.

[28] Babylonian Talmud, Tractate *Sanhedrin*, 71A.

[29] Jefferson, *Notes*, mss. p. 86.
[30] Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).
[31] Jefferson, *Notes*, 239.
[32] Jefferson, *Notes*, 240.
[33] Jefferson, *Notes*, 240.
[34] Jefferson, *Notes*, 235.
[35] "Celadon," *The Golden Age; or, Future Glory of North-America Discovered by an Angel to Celadon. In Several Entertaining Visions. Vision 1* (n.p., 1785), 9-13. The narrator's name in the text is spelled "Celedon." See Onuf, *Jefferson's Empire*, 226 n.63.
[36] Jefferson, *Notes*, mss. p. 84. Note that every printed edition has the spelling "independant."
[37] Finkelman, "Treason Against the Hopes of the World," in Peter S. Onuf, ed., *Jeffersonian Legacies* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993), 196.
[38] Jefferson, *Notes*, 271.
[39] Jefferson, *Notes*, 233.
[40] Jefferson, *Notes,* 232.
[41] Jefferson, "Autobiography," *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson,* ed. Albert Ellery Bergh (12 vols., Washington, DC: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1904), vol. 1, 72.
[42] Peter S. Onuf works through the alternatives that Jefferson entertained—Africa, the American West, Haiti—and demonstrates that he rejected them all as too great a threat to the security of the American nation. Onuf, "'To Declare Them a Free and Independant People': Race, Slavery, and National Identity in Jefferson's Thought," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 18 (1998), 1-46.
[43.] . Ellen Gibson Wilson, *The Loyal Blacks* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), 15-16; Donald L. Robinson, *Slavery in the Structure of American Politics 1765-1820* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1971), 51.
[44] William Howard Adams, *The Paris Years of Thomas Jefferson* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 147, 151.
[45] See Bruce Dain, *A Hideous Monster of the Mind: American Race Theory in the Early Republic* (Cambridge: Havard University Press, 2002), 30-58.
[46] Jordan, *White Over Black,* 245, 236-3. Jordan notes that the eccentric Monboddo, who argued that orang-outangs [*sic*; probably chimpanzees] could mate with human females was arguing for the humanity of orangutans, not the degradation of Africans; 237.
[47] Robert P. Forbes, "Slavery and the Evangelical Enlightenment," in *Religion and the Antebellum Debate Over Slavery,* eds. John R. McKivigan and Mitchell Snay (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 74-76,
[48] Quoted in Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Baltimore: Penguin Books Inc, 1968), 274-75.
[49] Elias Boudinot, *The Life, Public Services, Addresses and letters of Elias Boudinot, LL.D., President of the Continental Congress* (2 vols.; Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1896), 2:363. On the influence of the Revolution in dampening proslavery ideology, see Larry E. Tise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America, 1701-1840* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 33-37.
[50] Boudinot, *Life*, 2:361-63.
[51] Wills, *Inventing America*, 228.
[52] Glover Moore has astutely recognized this alignment and described it in typically caustic terms: "It would scarcely be amiss to say that in 1819 the Democrats in New York were those who favored universal white suffrage, while the Federalists advocated a restricted franchise but liked to indulge in acts of private philanthropy and usually had a kind spot in their hearts for minority groups such as Indians and Negroes." Concerning John Jay, Moore observes derisively that "for all his aristocracy and Federalism, [he] had a heart as big as the Empire State Building as far as Negroes were concerned..." Moore, *The Missouri Controversy, 1819-1821* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1953), 77.
[53] John Chavis to Willie P. Mangum, September 3, 1831, in Henry Thomas Shanks, ed., *The Papers of Willie Person Mangum, Volume 1: 1807-1832*, 3 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950), 1:413.
[54] See Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York: Pantheon, 1975), 276. See also Harry Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second American*

Party System in Cumberland County, North Carolina (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 44-5, 95, 191, 197.

[55] [Frances Wright Darusmont,] *View on Society and Manners in America* (New York: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1821), 56.

[56] The two impressed African American seamen were Martin Ware, a freed slave from Maryland, and Daniel Martin, a free black from Massachusetts. John Bach McMaster, *A History of the People of the United States*, 6 vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1883-1906), 3:255. This is a point overlooked by virtually all recent historians, with the noteworthy exception of Samuel Eliot Morison (see his *Oxford History of the American People* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1965], 373), who identifies one of the seamen as of American Indian rather than African ancestry. He may well have been both.

[57] Reginald Horsman, *The Causes of the War of 1812* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, Inc., 1962), 103. The British Secretary of Legation noted that Irish Americans were among the most vociferous advocates for a declaration of war--not surprising, given their hostility toward England, but evidencing a solidarity between the Irish and black working classes that was a frequent feature of the early national period, even though rare later.

[58] James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, "The Affirmation of Manhood: Black Garrisonians in Antebellum Boston," *Courage and Conscience: Black And White Abolitionists in Boston*, ed. Donald M. Jacobs (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press for Boston Athenaeum, 1993), 132-33.

[59] Moore, *Missouri Controversy*, 37; also see Dixon Ryan Fox, "The Negro Vote in Old New York," *Political Science Quarterly*, 32 (1917), 253-67. For free blacks in New York who supported Republican candidates, see Robert J. Swan, "John Teasman: African-American Educator and the Emergence of Community in Early Black New York City, 1787-1815," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 12 (Fall 1992):331-356.

[60] "Just as whites, South and North, began to think self-consciously about race in the early nineteenth century, so political democracy, as that century defined the term, arrived on the scene at about the same time....the advance of political democracy in most of the South matched that of the rest of the nation." Robert F. Durden, *The Self-Inflicted Wound: Southern Politics in the Nineteenth Century* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1985), 41.

[61] Nicholas Wood, "'A Sacrifice on the Altar of Slavery': Doughface Politics and Black Disenfranchisement in Pennsylvania, 1837-1838," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 31 (Spring 2011), 75-106.

[62] Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 77-84; Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*, 190-91; Watson, *Jacksonian Politics*, 44-5.

[63] Alexander H. Stephens, "Corrnerstone Address, March 21, 1861," in Cleveland, *Alexander Stephens in Public and Private*, 721.

[64.] Berlin, *Slaves without Masters*, 190-91. For black voting in Tennessee, see James W. Patton, "The Progress of Emancipation in Tennessee, 1796-1860," *Journal of Negro History*, 17, No. 1 (Jan., 1932), 67-102; Chase C. Mooney, "The Question of Slavery and the Free Negro in the Tennessee Constitutional Convention of 1834," *Journal of Southern History*, 12 (Nov. 1946), 487-509; also see J. Merton England, "The Free Negro in Ante-Bellum Tennessee," *Journal of Southern History* 9 (Feb. 1943), 37-58. *The Journal of the Convention, Called by the Freemen of North-Carolina, to Amend the Constitution of the State*…(Raleigh,1835) has been published on line by the Documenting the American South Project of the University of North Carolina at *http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/conv1835/conv1835.html* (accessed 19 Jun 2011). For the termination of black voting rights in Pennsylvania, see Wood, "Sacrifice,'" 75-106. For a general overview of the subject, see Charles H. Wesley, "Negro Suffrage in the Period of Constitution-Making, 1787-1865," *Journal of Negro History* 32 (April 1947), 143-168.

[65] "A Pennsylvanian" [Benjamin Rush], *An Address to the Inhabitants of the British Settlements on the Slavery of the Negroes in America,* 2d ed. (Philadelphia: John Dunlap, 1773), 3-4.

[66] Benjamin Rush, "Observations Intended to Favour a Supposition That the Black Color (As It Is Called) of the Negroes Is Derived from the Leprosy," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 4 (1799), 295, 297.

[67] Rush, "Observations," 296. For a chilling and poignant discussion of Rush's applied theorizing, see Ron Takaki, *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 16-35.

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