# Rethinking Thomas Jefferson's Writings on Slavery and Race

## Rethinking Thomas Jefferson's Writings on Slavery and Race

"[God's] justice can not sleep forever"

By

M. Andrew Holowchak

Cambridge Scholars Publishing



Rethinking Thomas Jefferson's Writings on Slavery and Race "[God's] justice can not sleep forever"

By M. Andrew Holowchak

This book first published 2020

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2020 by M. Andrew Holowchak

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-5275-4448-6 ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-4448-2 To my dear and cherished friend, Vivienne Kelley a talented artist and lifelong learner in the manner of Thomas Jefferson.

### **Contents**

| Prefaceix |
|-----------|
| Chapter 1 |
| Chapter 2 |
| Chapter 3 |
| Chapter 4 |
| Chapter 5 |
| Chapter 6 |
| Chapter 7 |
| Chapter 8 |
| Afterword |

#### **Preface**

Larly In September 2017, the statue of Thomas Jefferson in front of the Rotunda of the University of Virginia was covered by a black shroud. A message, "Black Lives Matter: Fuck White Supremacy", was affixed to the tarp and there were in addition several signs that characterized Jefferson as "racist" and "rapist". Not too many persons expressed botheration of the incident. There was no counter-demonstration in defense of Jefferson. To rush toward Jefferson's defense might have meant that defenders too were, like Jefferson was, racists.

Jeffersonian animus has today, fueled by partisan scholarship, become a movement. It would likely surprise no one to see both all statues of the former president soon removed from University of Virginia and then denial that Jefferson, the man who dedicated the last two decades of his life to birthing the university, was ever even remotely connected to the institution.

The 2017 incident is symptomatic of a definite neurotic tension, extant today at numerous institutions, which distance themselves from Jefferson, lest they be linked with the avowed racist. Such distancing occurs on account of the extreme left, the Jeffersonian revisionists, who take themselves today to be the sole "repositors" of historical truth vis-à-vis Jefferson. Jeffersonian revisionists force compliance with their denigrative take on Jefferson. If you express doubt concerning Jefferson's racism, you too are likely racist. However, the question of historical truth gets swept under the rug. That is a parlous precedent.

Revisionism has been the historical vogue, a tsunami of a movement, for well over two decades, concerning Jefferson scholarship. It begins with posits of Jefferson's hypocrisy and racism, ferrets out evidence for those posits, and ignores evidence inconsistent with, as well as arguments against, them. So rife is the Jeffersonian revisionist vogue in history that it is difficult for scholars with a different take to find published avenues for expression of that take—especially in American presses. Yet failure to allow open discussion has led to scholarly vegetation apropos of the life and legacy of Thomas Jefferson—a vegetation that has rooted itself at Monticello in the past 20 years under the "direction" of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation (see chapter 8). Jeffersonian scholarship has become an exercise in battology—a useless, fatuous repetition of the same claims but with a slightly different twist. "Jefferson was a racist but he really loved

x Preface

Sally Hemings" versus "Jefferson was a racist and he raped Sally Hemings", and so on. Those twists are what merit publication. The collision of radically different but historically reasonable ideas, needed for advances in historical scholarship, has become anathema.

In short, Jeffersonian revisionism, I maintain, has become a radical movement indifferent to historical truth. What is gained by scotching truth? Those many involved in the movement, as Sigmund Freud notes in *Group Psychology*, gain a sense of "invincible power", because being involved in a large and powerful group, they give vent to unconscious impulses, gain a sense of anonymity by losing themselves in the group, and "the sense of responsibility which always controls individuals disappears entirely". Consequently, the same axial impulses that drive members of the Ku Klux Klan also drive the most radical Jeffersonian revisionists—a large, but reasonable claim. Hatred is hatred. The KKK's hatred of Blacks is supplanted by the most radical revisionists' hatred of Thomas Jefferson, and several scholars are not shy about their hatred.

It is not so much that Jeffersonian revisionists—and Thomas Jefferson Foundation, in pushing the issues of race and Jefferson's "paternity", is the driving force behind the revisionists—as a group are indifferent to historical truth, but that they consider themselves the sole arbiters of that truth. Freud continues: "Since a group is in no doubt as to what constitutes truth or error, and is conscious, moreover, of its own great strength, it is as intolerant [of] as it is obedient to authority. ... It is entirely conservative, and it has a deep aversion to all innovations and advances and an unbounded respect for tradition".<sup>2</sup>

That is the situation in which we today find ourselves concerning Jefferson's life and legacy.

The question of Jefferson's racism, like other issues related to the life and legacy of Jefferson, ought not to be cavalierly assumed. It ought to be discussed openly and intelligently, as the prickly problem of championing the equality of all people and yet owning slaves deserves full discussion. If Jefferson was earnest about human equality, then we must get clear apropos of his decision not to free his slaves. That discussion must begin with a definition of "racism" and it must situate Jefferson in his time, not ours, when assessing Jefferson. What would it mean to be racist in Jefferson's day? The answer to that question is different for Jefferson in his time than it is for us in our time, for the understanding of "race" was radically different in his time. Without historical situating, we wind up indicting as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1959), 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, 15.

racists the majority of people in Europe and America in Jefferson's day and that is as historically availing as noting that most Greeks in Aristotle's day were misogynists because they failed to recognize fully the attributes of women that we today recognize.

The scenario is even more complex. Slavery is known to have been practiced in Ancient China as early at the 18-century B.C. and continued to be practiced till the twentieth century. Slavery was also practiced in India, parts of Asia, the Middle East, and even in Africa, where Blacks enslaved other Blacks. So prevalent was the institution that it was taken for granted prior to the American Revolution. Said John Jay, "Prior to the great revolution, the great majority or rather the great body of our people had been so long accustomed to the practice and convenience of having slaves, that very few among them even doubted the propriety and rectitude of it". It is mostly with the ascendency of Enlightenment thinking, with its twin postulates of liberty and equality, that slavery has become vital in scientific, moral, and political discussions.

A historian's role comprises description and explanation of a historical person or event, not clamorous moral assessment. That is, at least, my opinion. Normative assessment has been practiced in history since early Greek and Roman antiquity—e.g, Tacitus and Plutarch—and I suspect, we are no better today because of it.

Yet what of my own normative assessment of the revisionist literature on Jefferson? I undertake normative assessment of revisionist Jeffersonian history in some measure to make a historiographical point, but in doing so, I don my philosophical, not my historical, cap—that is, I am doing metahistory or philosophy of history.

The tack of this book—*Rethinking Thomas Jefferson's Writings on Slavery and Race: "[God's] justice can not sleep for ever"*—is, thus, a clearer understanding of the thinking of Jefferson on the nature of Blacks and the issue of slavery without *prior* condemnation. To those ends, there are eight chapters. Chapter 1 looks at the harshly critical secondary literature and several of the arguments on behalf of Jefferson's racism. I return to analyze those arguments in later chapters of the book. Chapters 2 and 4 expiscates Jefferson views of Blacks and slavery in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* and in other writings. I argue that he likely considered Blacks defective in mind and that he was always anti-slavery. The third chapter examines the science of race, which certainly considerably influenced Jefferson's thinking, in his time. In chapter 5, I address the issue of Jefferson's notion of the cause of Blacks' inferiority: Was it natural or nurtural? Chapter 6 is a study of Jefferson's actions on behalf of eradication of slavery. Did he really do little or much less than he could have reasonably

xii Preface

done? The next chapter is a critical analysis of Jefferson's arguments that Blacks could never be integrated in white American society. Were those arguments reasonable for his time and shared widely by others or were they prejudicial? In the final chapter, "The Politics of Race at Monticello", I investigate the reasons why race and racism have been and continue to be the largest issues at Monticello. Why is Jefferson, at his own residence, being minified and marginalized? Is Sally Hemings, very likely a relatively insignificant figure in the eyes of Jefferson, becoming the focal point? Does Thomas Jefferson Foundation, the agency which own Monticello, have a political agenda which it promotes at the expense of the life and legacy of Thomas Jefferson?

The aim of this undertaking—and this is a point I cannot underscore enough—is not so much a revision of revisionism apropos of Jefferson. Critical appraisal of the literature concerning Jefferson's racism is merely an invitation for today's Jeffersonian scholars to adopt an evidence-based approach to Jefferson that examines the figure by the normative standards of his day, not ours. That is what I have tried to do in this book.

Scholars need to have courage sufficient to leave the safe, warm womb of political correctness in an effort to advance our understanding of Jefferson on issues such as slavery and race. The simply syllogism—Slavery is bad; Thomas Jefferson owned slaves; So, Thomas Jefferson is bad—is laughably sophomoric and historically unavailing, but that is where many of today's scholars are and where they have been for decades on the issues of Jefferson on slavery and race. The simple syllogism exemplifies, with due consideration for hyperbole, the quality of and blinkered approach to Jeffersonian scholarship in the past several decades.

The climate of today's Jeffersonian scholarship is inhospitable, and toxically so. Disagreement with the conclusions of Annette Gordon-Reed on slavery or race and those of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation makes one racist, and that epithet is the kiss of death for a promising scholar. So, few scholars dare to disagree. Jeffersonian biographies are replete with claims of Jefferson's racism and of his affair with Sally Hemings. Proof is usually shown by a citation to the sentiments of Gordon-Reed. Q.E.D.! Few scholars have the courage even to display agnosticism, and that is unhealthily frightening.

Thomas Jefferson Foundation, for instance, boasts of historical consensus on Jefferson's involvement with Sally Hemings. Yet we have arrived at historical consensus, because of today's heated racial climate in America, in a bizarre manner: through fear, not rational persuasion. If you disagree, you might be racist. Yet that is a suffocative climate, not one of healthy history, where collisions of ideas lead to critical assessment and

critical assessment leads to advances in historical understanding. Sound historical scholarship requires sedulousness, study, situatedness, imagination, and even nuance. There needs to be more than assertion or proof through citation of other sources that claim that Jefferson was racist. Jeffersonian scholarship on slavery and race for decades has been mired in the muck of fear. It is time for scholars to extricate themselves from that muck

That is what this book is about. It is intended to be a challenge to today's stale, inertial literature on Jefferson and race and slavery that works on assumption that no one who earnestly believed in racial equality in Jefferson's day would have owned slaves.

Nonetheless, in aiming to exculpate Jefferson from the charge "racist" by critical analysis of the literature on Jefferson's racism and situating Jefferson in his time, not ours, this book will certainly prove offensive to many calumniating Jeffersonian scholars. Yet I hope that it will be seen by many others, through exposure of the hyperbolic assertions and argumentative non sequiturs, as a plea for reevaluation of and open discussion on Jefferson's views on race and slavery.

Before closing, I add a few addenda. First, I use "expatriation" and "deportation" and their cognates—and Jefferson uses both—when referring to Jefferson's plan of sending Blacks away from North America e.g., to the West Indies or to Africa. While the former connotes a removal of one who belongs to a country and the latter connotes either forcible removal or removal of someone who does not belong to a country, neither word is strictly speaking a good fit to describe what Jefferson aims to do. though deportation is preferable. Second I generally avoid sic when a word used by Jefferson had a different spelling in his day than in ours (e.g., "it's", used possessively) or when Jefferson misspells a word (e.g., "Lord Kaimes"). Third, as is frequently the case concerning my books on Jefferson, I sometimes include relatively lengthy quotes from Jefferson. That might prove stylistically clumsy and detract from fluidity of prose, but it allows readers access to what Jefferson actually stated. So many of the difficulties we have today concerning confusion about Jefferson and his legacy are on account of paraphrase or contextomy—that is, misquoting or quoting out of context. Finally, I cite no sources for Jefferson's letters. only for other of his writings. There are numerous readily available sources with his letters, many online, such as Founders' Online (https://founders.archives.gov/).

### Chapter 1 "A peculiarly cramped kind of hatred"

#### The Case for Racism

"At Jefferson's core there lay a fundamental belief in the righteousness of his power. Jefferson wore racism like a suit of armor, knowing that it would always break the sharpest swords of the idealists". ~Henry Wiencek

N JULY 8, 2017, SOME 30 MEMBERS of the Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan rallied in Charlottesville in protest of the city's commitment to remove a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee from Emancipation Park, formerly called Lee Park. The protestors were given a police escort to Justice Park, and they were followed by some 1,000 counter-protestors. Though there was plenty of tension, the event ended with the arrests of only 22 persons. The KKK got what it wanted: attention, that is, a large group of counter-protestors and national exposure.

The event is noteworthy for a few, not-so-obvious reasons. First, it invites consideration of the question: How do we as a nation deal with our past? Second, because it was held in Charlottesville, it once again turned attention to Jefferson and his views of race. One scholar wrote loudly and late in the twentieth century that Thomas Jefferson himself could be considered the father of the KKK.<sup>3</sup>

Though Jefferson penned the timeless words, "all men are created equal," in his Declaration of Independence, he was a lifelong slave-owner who likely thought Blacks were physically, emotionally, and intellectually inferior to others. Though Jefferson consistently championed the cause of abolition of the institution of slavery, he also consistently maintained that the issue of slavery was not for the federal government, but for individual states, to decide—a strange sentiment, given his firm belief in the moral equivalency of all persons. Claims with the universal backing of nature ought not to be decided by individual states.

It is today customary for Jeffersonian biographers to dub him "racist". How else does one explain someone who "ostensibly" champions equality of all persons and yet owns slaves? Yet labeling Jefferson racist is typical-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Long Affair: Thomas Jefferson and the French Revolution*, 1785–1800 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

ly done uncritically. The expression of Jefferson's racism is so prevalent in the secondary literature and so much a part of the landscape at Monticello that almost everyone writing on Jefferson cavalierly adds a line or two concerning his racism. Critical discussion, leaning toward skepticism, is overpassed because in today's racial climate in America, it is dangerous. Anyone who even openly addresses the issue runs a considerable risk of being called racist. Who else but a fellow racist would consider open discussion? Being dubbed racist is the kiss of death in academic circles, so scholars avoid critical discussion and take the safe, uncritical route.

Discussion of Jefferson's views of Blacks is prickly. Because of the entrenchment of the Jefferson-as-racist view—it is customarily iterated even by historians who have never read Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*—whoever essays to exonerate Jefferson of the charge is often deemed racist.

Consider some of the difficulties facing scholars who wish to exonerate Jefferson of the charge that he had a lengthy sexual affair with his slave Sally Hemings. For instance, in a review of Andrew Burstein's early book Jefferson's Secrets-here Burstein was convinced that Jefferson could not have had an affair with slave Sally Hemings on account of his character—Cynthia Kierner states, "Some attempts [by Burstein] to defend a contextualized Jefferson are eerily reminiscent of white supremacist arguments of the civil rights era". 13 Thus, it seems, only white supremacists aim to situate Jefferson in his time. Professor Robert Turner—who edited the Scholars Commission Report, which reexamined the issue of Jefferson's involvement with Sally Hemings-notes elsewhere that "anyone who spoke out publicly on the issue of Jefferson not being involved with Heminas was likely to draw fire in the form of allegations of racism".4 David Mayer agrees. He lists political correctness, multiculturalism, and postmodernism as reasons for uncritical acceptance of Jefferson's involvement with Hemings. "Among many proponents of the Jefferson paternity claim there has emerged a truly disturbing McCarthy-like inquisition that has cast a pall over Jefferson scholarship today". Scholars merely accept the view of Jefferson's paternity so as not to be considered racists.5

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Robert Turner, "Foreword", Framing a Legend: Exposing the Distorted History of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2013), 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> David N. Mayer, "The Thomas Jefferson-Sally Hemings Myth and the Politicization of American History: Individual Views of David N. Mayer Concurring with the Majority Report of the Scholars Commission on the Jefferson-Hemings Matter", April 9, 2001, 20–23, http://www.ashbrook.ort/articles/mayer-himings.html, accessed 30 June 2013.

What is said of Jefferson's putative involvement with Hemings can be said also of his views on Blacks in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Henry Wiencek, in a review of my book, *Framing a Legend: Exposing the Distorted History of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings*, considers consigning me "to the outer darkness of 'racists'". <sup>6</sup> The metaphorical and emotive language, typical of Wiencek in his book on Jefferson, <sup>7</sup> is language atypical of even-handed scholarship. In my book, I argue that anti-paternity is the most plausible position, given available evidence, but ultimately take the stance of agnosticism. Yet it seems that agnosticism is scholarly reprehensible. Thus, I iterate that any scholar who argues that Jefferson's investigation of Blacks is not racist runs risk of being dubbed "racist", independently of assessment of the arguments for non-racism. That is scholarship driven by trepidation, not regard for truth.

There is urgent need for open critical discussion of the issue. The reason is, as I have indicated, truth. If Jefferson was not racist, then disclosure of that mistake is a significant historical gain. If he was racist, then we need to know just what it would mean for someone in Jefferson's day to be racist. It is not sufficient to use modern methods of assessment, based on greater scientific understanding of human beings, to decide the issue.

Why is that the case?

We on the whole today have much larger access to scientifically reliable information and are much smarter than people in Jefferson's day. Hence, we have more scientifically reliable methods of evaluation. Thus, should we assess Jefferson by today's standards of evaluation, we would wind up accusing most of the people of Jefferson's day, including most Blacks, of being racist. Most people at the time, Blacks included, thought African Americans were inferior to others. We know better today.

In this first chapter, I begin with a look at the case for Jefferson's racism by looking selectively at arguments over the decades on behalf of it. That begins, unsurprisingly, in the 1960s, when the United States was grappling with its numerous decades of mistreatment of Blacks—mistreatment that applied also in the past to Italians, Poles, Jews, Arabs, Asians, the Irish, Native Americans, and women, among other groups. Thomas Jefferson then became, and today continues to be, an especially attractive target.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The number of Wiencek's misstatements and exaggerations are too numerous to list, but suffice it to say his review of my book amounts to a straw man. Henry Wiencek, "The Hemings Wars", *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 2013, 630–32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See my review of Wiencek's book, "Review: Henry Wiencek's *Master of the Mountain"*, *History News Network*, http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/157297.

### The "Limousine liberal" Jefferson's Large Living

In 1969, William Cohen in "Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Slavery" wrote, "Jefferson's practical involvement with the system of black bondage indicates that, while his racist beliefs were generally congruent with his actions, his libertarian views about slavery tended to be mere intellectual abstractions". His refusal to manumit his own slaves, in spite of his protestations concerning the evils of slavery, was the result of unwillingness to change his lavish manner of living. Jefferson, crapulous and extravagant, liked to live sumptuously and large, and he needed the labor of slaves to do that. Moreover, "there was a significant gap between his thought and action with regard to the abolition question. He fully believed that it was morally and politically evil to hold another man in slavery, but he continued to do so".8

The rhetoric was upped in the 1990s.

In 1991, Garrett Ward Sheldon stated that Jefferson's Epicureanism—*viz.*, his egoistic hedonism—kept him from manumitting his slaves. It was a matter of hierarchy of values. Jefferson recognized the wrongness of slavery, but worried about the difficulties that living without the labor of slaves might bring. "In Jefferson's hierarchy of values", said Sheldon, "the emancipation of slaves occupied a lower position than either his personal lifestyle or the ideal republic". 9 Consequently, Jefferson refused to manumit his slaves.

In 1993, Robert Dawidoff argued the same thesis, but with Cohen-like force, in "The Jefferson Option". Dawidoff dubbed Jefferson a "limousine liberal"—"someone whose principles, especially where other people are concerned, did not interfere significantly with his own life". Jefferson claimed to be a man of the citizenry, a lover of simplicity, and a man who was violently opposed to slavery, yet he was a man who championed his own cause, who wallowed in extravagancy, and who refused to manumit his own slaves. Having disparaged Jefferson for embracing the truths of his Declaration of Independence and for living contrary to them, he stated, "White liberalism starts with Jefferson's blithe hypocrisy". 10

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> William Cohen, "Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Slavery", *Journal of American History*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (1969): 506–25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Garrett Ward Sheldon, *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 139.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Robert Dawidoff, "The Jefferson Option", *Political Theory*, Vol., 21, No. 3, 1993, 438.

The argument from living large for Jefferson may be summed, in the form of a dilemma, as follows. Jefferson acknowledged the turpitude of slavery, but was also wedded to large living and realized that freeing his slaves would make impossible large living. He decided that his and his family's happiness was more important than the happiness of his slaves. So, manumission of his slaves was not an option.

# "A peculiarly cramped sort of hatred" The Argument from Inimical Consequences

In 1968, Winthrop Jordan, in *White over Black*, wrote flatly of Jefferson's enmity of Blacks. According to Jordan, Jefferson's abhorrence of the institution of slavery was not based on the dehumanization of Blacks, but on the corruptive effect the institution had on Whites, owning slaves. <sup>11</sup> Jordan later writes of two puzzles vis-à-vis Jefferson, both psychological in nature: his "uncommonly great stress on the physical distinction between Negroes and whites" and his predilection for bifurcation—of breaking down things in terms of "black and white". Those psychological quirks led to his distorted views of the differences between Blacks and Whites. <sup>12</sup>

In 1994. Paul Finkelman stated that assessment of Jefferson must not impose contemporary normative standards. "The question is not how Jefferson measures up to modern concepts of race and slavery, but, rather. how he compares to three other standards: first, the portraval of him offered by most of his biographers; second, the ideology and goals he set for himself; and third, the way his contemporaries dealt with the slavery in the context of Jefferson's ideals". 13 When measured against those standards, Jefferson overwhelmingly passes the test of racist. In addition, Jefferson claimed to hate slavery. Yet he also claimed to hate the British Empire. religious intolerance, primogeniture and entail, cruel punishment "at least for whites", and the Sedition Act. He successfully acted on each of those, but not on slavery. Thus, "Jefferson's 'hatred' of slavery was a peculiarly cramped kind of hatred. It was not so much slavery he hated as what it did to his society. First, he hated what slavery did to whites. Second, he hated slavery because he feared it would lead to a rebellion that would destroy his society. Third, he hated slavery because it brought Africans to America

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro White over Black: 1550–1812* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), pp. 429–31 and 453

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Winthrop D. Jordan, White over Black, 474–75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Paul Finkelman, "Thomas Jefferson and Slavery: The Myth Goes On", *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 102, No. 2, 1994, 197–199.

and kept them there. None of these feelings motivated him to do anything about the institution". <sup>14</sup> He adds, "Jefferson's hatred of slavery resulted from his profound racism. He had little empathy for those who allowed themselves to be reduced to 'degrading submissions'. He assumed their inferiority, based on their race. Absurdly, he suggested blackness might come 'from the colour of the blood'". <sup>15</sup>

The main argument by Jordan and Finkelman is consequentialist. Jefferson found nothing inherently wrong with the institution of slavery. He merely noted that the institution had deleterious consequences for Whites. In short, Jefferson's abhorrence of slavery was real, but not on account of it being a dehumanization of one race of men by another. Its viciousness lay in the fact that it had inimical effects on Whites and white culture.

For Jordan and Finkelman, there is no hypocrisy. Jefferson noted that slavery was overall a morally objectionable institution, though not because there was anything <code>inherently</code> morally objectionable about it. There might be times when it would be reasonable and morally unobjectionably for one race to enslave another—e.g., when one race is superior to another. Yet Jefferson observed that the practice of one race ruling over another had inimical consequences for the superior race—his own race of Whites. Only in that regard was slavery for Jefferson to be considered a moral abomination. Finkelman adds that hatred of slavery is due to hatred of blacks. Insistency on elimination of the abominable institution and hatred of Blacks led to the inevitable conclusion that they had to be expatriated.

#### 'Demonstrably a Racist" Jefferson as Father of the KKK

Another tack is to argue, as we saw with Finkelman, for Jefferson's inveterate racism.

Pearl Graham, in "Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings" (1961), writes of Jefferson as a strict segregationist and theoretically "not so far from Hitler, with his concept of a Master Race". Because of the depraved effects of slavery on Whites and Blacks over the decades, any attempt to live together would result in the extermination of one of the races, "and, reluctantly no doubt, he would decree that the blacks must be the race to be exterminated". Firm in his belief that the two races could not live side by side, "Jefferson would sanction South African apartheid, as well as Negro hegemony in central Africa, and the expulsion of whites from that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Paul Finkelman, "Thomas Jefferson and Slavery", 203.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Paul Finkelman, "Thomas Jefferson and Slavery", 208.

territory". <sup>16</sup> There is no problem for her in projecting Jefferson's execration of Blacks into the twentieth century. Execration is execration.

In 1996, Conor Cruise O'Brien linked Jefferson to the founding of the KKK. Populist leader Tom Watson of Georgia had put out a magazine titled *The Jeffersonian*, which spread the parochial racism of the South to future generations. "*The Jeffersonian* ... propagated in crude emotive forms ideas to which the master [Jefferson] had given discreet and overtly unemotional expression. And in the southern states in the years after the Civil War the whites who most practiced what *The Jeffersonian* was preaching were members of the Ku Klux Klan". Since, "the Ku Klux Klan was ideologically descended from Thomas Jefferson", Jefferson might be called the father of the Klan.<sup>17</sup>

In "Thomas Jefferson: Radical and Racist", O'Brien said, "Jefferson was demonstrably a racist, and a particularly aggressive and vindictive one at that". Yet it was not that he owned slaves, as one could "own slaves in the conditions of the eighteenth century without being a racist". It was Jefferson's account of the nature of Blacks in Query XIV of Notes on the State of Virginia—which is the subject of chapter 2—that marked him racist. Jefferson there described black males' supposed preference for white women, orangutans' lust for black women, and the overall identification of black characteristics that show them to be, in his opinion, genetically inferior. That genetic inferiority was inconsistent with Jefferson's view in his Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal". The tension disappears once we recognize that Jefferson was the "draftsman", not the author, of the Declaration. Thus, for O'Brien, it is gratuitous to ascribe the notion of human equality to Jefferson.

In 1999, Nicholas Magnis said, "From a politician who fought hard to establish a republican government in the new republic, [Jefferson's] political efforts to end slavery were insignificant by comparison". 19 Like Finkelman, he intimates that Jefferson could have done much more, had he chosen to do much more. He did not, and the reason was obvious. Magnis

 $<sup>^{16}</sup>$  Pearl M. Graham, "Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings",  $\it The Journal of Negro History, Vol. 46, No. 2, 1961, 103.$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Conor Cruise O' Brien, *The Long Affair: Thomas Jefferson and the French Revolution, 1785-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 316–8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Conor cruise O'Brien, "Thomas Jefferson: Radical and Racist", *The Atlantic*, Oct., 1996, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1996/10/thomas-jefferson-radical-and-racist/376685/, accessed 26 Nov. 2018.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Nicholas E. Magnis, "Thomas Jefferson and Slavery: An Analysis of His Racist Thinking as Revealed by His Writings and Political Behavior", *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 4, 1999, 506.

summed, "It is abundantly clear that Jefferson intended the United States to be a society of free White men because of his overwhelming prejudice toward Blacks, who he regarded as inferior in body and mind".<sup>20</sup>

By the turn of the century, it became commonplace to accept Jefferson as a hater of Blacks. E.M. Halliday in 2001 wrote of Jefferson as a "slave master" and "racist"—a "militant abolitionist" and "active slave master for ten years". 21 Ari Helo and Peter Onuf in 2003 wrote, "The idea that Jefferson's 'observations' about his slaves could warrant the 'suspicion' that their faculties were naturally inferior was clearly racist or, to use his own term, hopelessly biased". 22 They hint at another sort of defect of vision: that of prejudice. So convinced was Jefferson of Blacks' inferiority that those prejudaments colored what he saw. Finally, Helo in 2014 wrote: "Morally speaking, the historian's professional obligation is to depict the past as correctly as possible, whereas the historian's moral judgments have no more authority than those of anyone else. After all, moral judgments should mainly apply to the living". 23 Yet Helo did not shy away from speaking of Jefferson's "racist convictions", 24 "notoriously outspoken racial prejudices", 25 and "clear-cut racist assumptions", 26 He adds strongly that Jefferson's "ethical position [is] embarrassingly reminiscent of that of modern neo-Nazis".27

### "They will have to pursue *their* happiness elsewhere" The Great American Experiment

Jefferson unquestionably thought of his version of republican government—that is, his political philosophy (hopefully) to be played out in America—as an experiment. That notion was shared by numerous others of his day who saw America as the new Promised Land. Recognizing the abominable abuses of the various forms of "aristocracies" over the centuries, Jefferson championed government of and by the people through

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Nicholas E. Magnis, "Thomas Jefferson and Slavery", 507-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> E.M. Halliday, *Understanding Thomas Jefferson* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 148.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Ari Helo and Peter Onuf, "Jefferson, Morality, and the Problem of Slavery", *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. LX, No. 3, 2003, 610.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Ari Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics and the Politics of Human Progress: The Morality of a Slaveholder* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Ari Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics and the Politics of Human Progress*, 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Ari Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics and the Politics of Human Progress*, 49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Ari Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics and the Politics of Human Progress*, 56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ari Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics and the Politics of Human Progress*, 12.

elected and recallable representatives. Republican governing entailed wholesale educational reforms, thin government, and morality-abiding and intelligent governors. It also entailed full and intelligent participation in governing by all citizens, insofar as their talents and time would allow.

Given Jefferson's vision of his new nation, another line of argument is that Jefferson's insistency on expatriation was based on a deep worry concerning miscegenation of Blacks and Whites. He thus maintained that Blacks, once freed, would have to be expatriated. What was his fear? He feared that miscegenation of Blacks with Whites posed a real threat to the experiment of republican government. The "mulatto" offspring would be physically inferior to the offspring of Whites and thereby place in jeopardy the experiment of Jeffersonian republicanism.

In 1964, Robert McColley published *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia*. Having noted Jefferson's assessment of the inferiority of Blacks and his unwillingness to free his slaves, McColley maintained that Jefferson was Janus-faced. While he tacitly embraced the institution of slavery, and his praxis showed that to be true, he spoke out against it. He opposed emancipation by individual owners because he feared that that would lead to a greater likelihood of black uprisings—a sentiment shared by Finkelman years later.<sup>28</sup> Yet in such matters, Jefferson, McColley acknowledges, differed little from other fellow Southerners in that regard.<sup>29</sup>

In 2007, Peter Onuf said in *The Mind of Thomas Jefferson*, "If his Declaration calls on a free people to burst the chains of despotism, [Jefferson's] *Notes* tells black people that they will have to pursue *their* happiness elsewhere". Thus, racial separation was "inextricably linked to his conception of American nationhood". Blacks did not belong, because they could not belong. They posed a profound threat to the experiment of Jeffersonian republicanism and so they had to be removed from the continent.

Johann Neem argued in 2013 that Jefferson's racism "trumped his other beliefs"—an enormous claim. He elaborated in language somewhat garbled: "Jefferson needed to prove that blacks were intellectually inferior and thus incapable of ever becoming full members of the American politi-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Paul Finkelman, "Thomas Jefferson and Slavery", 203.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Robert McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Peter Onuf, *The Mind of Thomas Jefferson* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), 206.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Peter Onuf, *The Mind of Thomas Jefferson*, 208.

cal nation".<sup>32</sup> The sentiment is that Jefferson, wishing to exclude Blacks from the growing nation, deliberately depicted them in false colors in order to show they needed to be expatriated. Neem suggests strongly psychological shortcomings of Jefferson.

Neem's argument leads neatly to the notion of Jefferson's scientific racism—the misuse of science to serve racist ends. In 2005, Andrew Burstein, in *Jefferson's Secrets*, acknowledged, and rightly so, that "racist", applied to Jefferson and others of his day, was anachronistic, as "the ideology we know as racial tolerance ... did not exist until the twentieth century". Burstein concluded that there were other, more germane words to describe the state of racial misunderstanding. Yet in spite of the caveat, he freely employed "racism" thereafter. For instance, Burstein wrote immediately after his caveat, "Class background or regional identity was not the only determinant of Jefferson's racism; his attachment to the books in his library mattered, too". Thus, Jefferson appealed to many books in his library—the flawed scientific literature—that reinforced the notion of black inferiority and the need for their exclusion and deportation. The implicit conclusion is perhaps that he ought to have known better.

### "Land and negroes ... bring a silent profit" The Argument from Revenue

"Thomas Jefferson's mansion stands atop his mountain like the Platonic ideal of a house: a perfect creation existing in an ethereal realm, literally above the clouds". Henry Wiencek thus begins his introduction to *Master of the Mountain: Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves* in 2012.<sup>33</sup> The language employed—supernal, even sublime—is more evocative than it is descriptive. The thesis that he defends in the book is that Jefferson refused to manumit his slaves because of a discovery with felicitous financial consequences: owning slaves could be profitable.

The oft-repeated sentiment that Jefferson would have freed his slaves had he not fallen hopelessly into debt can no longer be maintained, says Wiencek.<sup>34</sup> Having spoken out abundantly on the evils of slavery in works like Summary View of the Rights of British America and his draft of the Declaration of Independence, "somewhere in a short span of years during

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Johann N. Neem, "Developing Freedom: Thomas Jefferson, the State, and Human Capability", *Studies in American Political Development*, Vol. 27, 2013, 46.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Henry Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, 3. Plato's Forms are non-temporal and non-spatial realities, so it is unclear how the simile relates to Plato.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> See also Henry Wiencek, "Thomas Jefferson: Slave Master", *American History*, October, 2012, 26–29.

the 1780s and into the early 1790s, a transformation came over Jefferson". The became immensely silent on the issue of slavery and thereafter did nothing to eradicate the institution of slavery—a sentiment Wiencek constantly repeats as a disclosure of his own, though he is not the first to utter it. "Some very powerful motive was at work". The same very powerful motive was at work".

What was that very powerful motive? Wiencek turns to some interpolative comments of Jefferson in a letter to George Washington (18 June 1792) in which Jefferson writes of Blacks as property. "What Jefferson set out clearly for the first time was that he was making a 4 percent profit every year on the birth of black children. The enslaved people were yielding him a bonanza, a perpetual human dividend at compound interest". 37 He cites also the statement in a letter to grandson John Wayles Eppes (30 June 1820): "I consider a woman who brings a child every two years as more profitable than the best man of the farm. What she produces is an addition to the capital". 38 Wiencek turns to Jefferson's comments concerning "an acquaintance who suffered financial reverses". 39 The letter is to Madame Plumard de Bellanger (25 Apr. 1794), who told Jefferson about money she aave to friends that was subsequently lost. Jefferson writes, "[They] should have been invested in negroes", for "land and negroes ... bring a silent profit of from 5, to 10, per cent in this country by the increase in their value".40

The gist of Wiencek's argument is that Jefferson, who had championed the emancipation of Blacks, had at some point in the 1780s or early 1790s a kairotic moment in which he recognized the profitability of owning Blacks. Thereafter, slavery was no longer such an evil institution, so long as Jefferson could monetize the labor of Blacks. And so, Jefferson began to think of and treat his slaves not as humans, but as cattle or land.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Henry Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain: Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012), 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Henry Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Henry Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Henry Wiencek, "Thomas Jefferson: Slave Master", 29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Henry Wiencek, Master of the Mountain, 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> The letter is to and it concerns the fate of a certain relative of Bellanger, Mr. Derieux, who used a monetary gift of Bellanger to invest in West India goods, which resulted in complete loss due to a revolution on the islands. Jefferson writes of Derieux, "I may, from the confidence he is pleased to repose in me, venture to affirm, that the whole should have been invested in negroes and cattle, or in good land, not leaving a shilling of it to the risk of any casualty, and that with his prudence and turn for agriculture, he would have been placed out of the danger of want".

We can no longer say that Jefferson was handcuffed by slavery, thinks Wiencek. "Jefferson's 4 percent theorem threatens the comforting notion that he had no real awareness of what he was doing, that he was 'stuck' with or 'trapped' in slavery, an obsolete, unprofitable, burdensome legacy. The date of Jefferson's calculation lines up with the waning of his emancipationist fever". <sup>41</sup> In short, Jefferson, because of his kairotic moment, became "silent" on the issue of slavery, and used his slaves for his own profit. <sup>42</sup> Jefferson, consequently, was a greedy racist.

#### "A serial rape" Jefferson's Lust for Black Women

Winthrop Jordan in his classic book *White over Black* acknowledged Jefferson's hatred of Black, but added a twist. That hatred was merely one side of ambivalence to Blacks. It was the product of "libidinous energy" toward black women. 43 How Jordan has come to know that he does not state, but it seems to be a matter of turning the tables on scientists, of Jefferson's day, who maintained, following the *Scala Naturae* of Jefferson's day (see chapter 3), that black women lusted after white men.

Jordan's libidinal-energy thesis was taken to another level by Robert Parry. Referring to a recent *Washington Post* essay on the restoration of Sally Hemings' room at Monticello (see chapter 8), "which was next door to Jefferson's bedroom", he added, "but the Post could not bring itself to state the obvious. It described Jefferson imposing himself sexually on his female slave as a 'relationship', rather than a serial rape that apparently began when Hemings was around 14 years of age". It is grotesque, acknowledges Parry, to depict Jefferson's involvement with Hemings as a relationship. Jefferson was a "powerful man" and Hemings was a "young female slave who had little choice but to submit to his predations and bear his children". 44 Consequently, Jefferson was not only a racist, but also a rapist. That suggestion is etched on a plaque at Sally Hemings' new room in the South Wing at Monticello, which reads: "Was it rape? Was compliance part of her agreement with Jefferson? Enslaved women had no legal

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Henry Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain*, 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Jefferson was never silent on the issue of slavery—he consistently throughout his life spoke of it as an evil—but he did become relatively inactive.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro*, 1550–1812 (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), 429–31 and 453.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Robert Parry, "Was Thomas Jefferson a Rapist?" *Consortium News*, https://consortiumnews.com/2017/02/20/was-thomas-jefferson-a-rapist/m, accessed 23 Nov. 2018.

right to consent. Their masters owned their labor, their bodies, and their children".

# "A convenient defect of vision" Eyes on the Future and not the Present

MerriII Peterson, in his watershed biography of Jefferson in 1970, *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation*, maintained that Jefferson's views on Blacks were confused. "Honest, disinterested, and no doubt true to his personal observations and knowledge, Jefferson's opinion was also a product of frivolous and tortuous reasoning, of preconception, prejudice, ignorance, contradiction, and bewildering confusion of principles". <sup>45</sup> There is much to unpack in that sentence, as much is being attributed to Jefferson. Peterson, unfortunately, does not expatiate.

In 1977, John Chester Miller published a book considered by many as the most comprehensive account of Jefferson's views of Blacks and slavery—The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery. Miller spoke of the "convenient defect of vision" that kept Jefferson from "seeing black". Jefferson was so immersed in the possibilities of the future, so immersed in aiming to actualize his vision of sound republican governing, that he sometimes wrote about slavery as if it had already been abolished. In thinking so about slavery, Jefferson could keep his own slaves and could rationalize his overall inaction apropos of slavery without a sense of guilt. Though it might not happen in his day, it would soon happen—it was written in the stars, as it were. Moreover, Miller added, had Jefferson pushed too hard and fast on the issue, then that might have proven to be the end to his political career. 47

### "A white nation was being referenced" Not All Men Are Created Equal

Peter Thompson argues that Jefferson's Declaration of Independence was never meant to include Blacks. When Jefferson writes of the necessity of "a people" to dissolve its ties to "another", the "a people" does not include Blacks because there is no reference to Blacks in the Declaration.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Merrill D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation: A Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 262.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> John C. Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1977), 96–97.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> John C. Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears*, 89.

As David Armitage has acutely noted, the formulation 'one people', reinforced by the absence in the Declaration of any reference to black Americans or native Americans (other than as potential insurgents or exponents of savage and uncivilized warfare, respectively), meant that white Americans alone were figured at the nation's founding as the people of a territory constituted as a sovereign body and covered by the law of nations. Hence when the Declaration spoke subsequently of the right and duty of "the people" to alter, abolish, or organize governments to safeguard "their" safety and happiness, a white nation was being referenced.<sup>48</sup>

The argument—i.e., Jefferson did not specifically mention inclusion of Blacks in his Declaration of Independence, so we must assume that they were not included—is one of omission.

#### Upshot

In this chapter, I have offered merely a sample of arguments concerning Jefferson's racism, extant in the secondary literature. The notion of Jefferson's racism is so replete in the literature—it is, I believe, taken to be factual, and so any apologia of Jefferson might seem to be insane, or at least risky—that a comprehensive account is not possible. Hence, though my sample is small, it is representative of the sort of arguments given by those who still feel the need to argue for his racism.

The remainder of this book is a critical analysis of those arguments. Assessment takes the form of detailed investigation of Jefferson's writings on Blacks and slavery. I answer questions such as these. Did Jefferson really believe that Blacks were inferior to non-Blacks, and if so, in what ways? Was his abhorrence of the institution of slavery based only on the inimical effects of that institution on Whites? Did he lust after black women? Was his concern about a slave uprising sufficient reason for not manumitting his slaves? Was his interest in Blacks only pecuniary? Was his plan of expatriation of Blacks based on a concern that they posed a threat through miscegenation to his vision of a thriving republic? Can Jefferson be called racist if he merely followed the racial assessments of the leading scientists of his day?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Peter Thompson, "David Walker's Nationalism—and Thomas Jefferson's", *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 37, 2017, 51–52.

## Chapter 2 "Numerous instances of the most rigid integrity"

### On Blacks and Slavery in Notes on Virginia

"In his only published book, Jefferson recorded information about the natural history, inhabitants, and political organization of Virginia, including his most extensive discussion of his views on race. Like many other 18th-century thinkers, Jefferson believed blacks were inferior to whites". ~Thomas Jefferson Foundation

Samuel Whitcomb, Jr., a Young Book-Peddler, ascended the monticule to Monticello in an effort to sell a new book by a certain Mitford to the sage of the mountain. The year was 1824. With the household manners of a true democrat, Jefferson himself met the man at his door and invited in him. Knowing of the "very bad work", Jefferson would not purchase it, but he somewhat reluctantly entered into conversation with the peddler on a variety of topics, including Blacks. When the man put what he recalled of the conversation to paper on May 31, he entered these thoughts of Jefferson on Blacks.

[He] says the south agrees with the Negroes best—that the experiment now making at Hayti [a republic of free blacks] is very interesting. He hopes well of their minds though has never seen evidence of genius among them, but they are possessed of the best hearts of any people in the world. Great levity of character, etc. On account of the prejudice of our Nation against the black, he would defer treating the haytians as long as possible, but we must certainly acknowledge their independence.<sup>49</sup>

The entry is significant for two reasons. First, it is given by someone whose impression of Jefferson was perhaps more unfavorable than favorable—Jefferson, after all, let him immediately know that he thought little of the book he was peddling—and so if the account is skewed at all, it is skewed negatively. Secondly, his account of Jefferson's views on Blacks is remarkably consistent with what Jefferson said decades earlier in Query XIV of *Notes on the State of Virginia*—the only time when Jefferson made Blacks an object of his own critical investigation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Samuel Whitcomb, Jr., "A Book Peddler at Monticello", *Visitors to Monticello*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1989), 94.

This chapter is an expiscation and analysis of Jefferson's views on Blacks and slavery in his sole book, *Notes on the State of Virginia*. That takes us to investigations of the apposite text in his lengthy Query XIV, which concerns the nature of Blacks, and of Query XVIII, which is wholly devoted to the ill-effects of slavery.

# "Numerous instances of the most rigid integrity" Political, Physical, and Moral Objections

Query XIV, titled "Laws", is lengthy and somewhat divergent. Well into the query, Jefferson begins a summary of the plan for revisal of the laws of Virginia. One hundred and twenty six bills were drafted by him, Edmund Pendleton, and George Wythe in a project that was begun in 1776. To Bill 51, there is an amendment concerning the emancipation of slaves. The amendment states that each child of a slave will be with their parents to a certain age, and "then be brought up, at the public expense, to tillage, arts and sciences, according to their geniusses". When females reach 18 and males 21, they will be equipped with arms, household and handicraft implements, seeds, and pairs of useful domesticated animals; separated from their parents; sent to an appropriate colony; and declared a "free and independent people". They shall also be given the protection of the United States until they are capable of protecting themselves. With their expatriation, there will be inducements to bring in an equal number of white inhabitants to replace them. <sup>50</sup>

The proposition of educating, equipping, expatriating, and colonizing Blacks and then inducing Whites to replace them is prodigiously costly. Why go through such expense, when it is possible to retain and incorporate Blacks into the state?

Jefferson replies by listing certain "political objections". He says, "Deep rooted prejudices entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections, by the blacks, of the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances, will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race".<sup>51</sup>

It is profitable to expound on each of those political objections.

First, there are Whites' deep-rooted prejudices. The suggestion here is that Whites in Virginia will not allow integration. They harbor inveterate

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. William Peden (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), 137–38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, 138.