

CHAPTER III

WITHIN THE "BOWELS"
OF THE REPUBLIC

While an enemy is within our bowels, the first object is to expel him.

—Thomas Jefferson,

Notes on the State of Virginia

As he called for the expulsion of the British "enemy" from the "bowels" of the emerging nation, Jefferson used rhetoric strikingly similar to the language of Dr. Rush to express his concern for moral purity in the new republican society. His role in the overthrow of the king and the removal of the British had been even more crucial than Rush's: While the doctor had helped Paine write *Common Sense*, Jefferson had authored the Declaration of Independence. Many years after the British had been forced out, President Jefferson told James Monroe that he looked forward to distant times when the American continent would be covered with "a people speaking the same language, governed in similar forms, and by similar laws." Beneath this vision of America's future, which would shortly lead him to expand the republican nation through the purchase of the Louisiana, lay a rage for order, tidiness, and uniformity which made him recoil with horror from the possibility of "either blot or mixture on that surface."¹ The purging of the British only created greater pressures to expel other "enemies"

from within the "bowels" of American society, as we shall see in an analysis of Jefferson's republican ideology, his insistence on black colonization, and his views on the assimilation of the Indian. Impinging on all three areas was his concept of the moral sense.

Head over Heart

During the Revolution, Jefferson tried to explain to the Indians what the war meant to white Americans. "Our forefathers were Englishmen, inhabitants of a little island beyond the great water, and being distressed for land, they came and settled here," he told the chief of the Kaskaskias. "As long as we were young and weak, the English . . . made us carry all our wealth to their country, to enrich them; and, not satisfied with this, they at length began to say we were their slaves. . . . We were now grown up and felt ourselves strong; we knew we were free as they were . . . and were determined to be free as long as we should exist." To be "free" involved more than independence. In their overthrow of the monarchy, Americans had to establish a republican government and to exercise republican self-rule. Indeed, Jefferson asserted, "every individual" who composed the mass of society must now participate in the "ultimate authority."²

Jefferson thought such responsibility both possible and imperative because of his belief in moral sense—a view he shared with eighteenth-century Scottish Common Sense philosophers. For Jefferson, man possessed the power of moral discernment, which enabled him to distinguish between right and wrong. This quality was inherent in man's nature, and it compelled him to do what was right and to feel a "love for others" and "a sense of duty to them." Moral sense was the "something" man felt "within" him, which told him what was wrong and ought not to be said or done. It was, in short, his "conscience." Moral sense operated in relation to the other faculties of the self. While it could, by itself, enable man to recognize justice and injustice, conscience relied on reason or the "head" to devise ways in which to respond to this moral awareness. And whether both moral sense and reason acted harmoniously depended to a significant extent on man's social environment—his relationship to his work, his community, and his physical surroundings.³

An environmentalist, Jefferson believed that the possibilities of achieving moral perfection were greatest in America, for the New World offered something Europe could not—an abundance of uncultivated land. Americans would remain "virtuous" as long as agriculture was their principal objective, and this would be the case as long as there were "vacant lands"

in America. But, he warned, "when we get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, we shall become corrupt as in Europe, and go to eating one another as they do there." Thus, the survival and success of republicanism required the preservation of America as an agrarian society. This view led him to write to Dr. Rush regarding disease and death in the cities. "When great evils happen, I am in the habit of looking out for what good may arise from them as consolations to us, and Providence has in fact so established the order of things, as that most evils are the means of producing some good. The yellow fever will discourage the growth of great cities in our nation, and I view great cities as pestilential to the morals, the health and the liberties of man." It is remarkable how easily in Jefferson's mind the cities themselves became a disease. Thus the environment had to be controlled and agriculture preserved as the way of life. In his comparison between America and Europe, agricultural utopia and industrial/urban society, Jefferson eloquently observed:

Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever He had a chosen people, whose breasts He has made His peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue. . . . Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phenomenon of which no age nor nation has furnished an example. It is the mark set on those, who, not looking up to heaven, to their own soil and industry, as does the husbandman, for their subsistence, depend for it on casualties and caprice of customers. Dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition. . . . [Let] our workshops remain in Europe. . . . The mobs of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government, as sores do to the strength of the human body.⁴

The agrarianism Jefferson advocated was derived not only from America's rejection of European urban society but also from Lockean theory, which was rebelling against European feudalism—the view of men as members of a community governed by traditional authority. Jefferson believed that men as free individuals labored on the land, transforming it into private property or extensions of themselves. This ownership of property would provide the basis of social stability and civilization, and would be particularly important in a republican society where men had to be self-governing. Jefferson made this clear in his comparison between the Old World and America. "Here every one, by his property, or by his satisfactory situation, is interested in the support of law and order. And such men may safely and advantageously reserve to themselves a wholesome control over their public affairs, and a degree of freedom, which, in the hands of the canaille of

the cities of Europe, would be instantly perverted to the demolition and destruction of everything public and private."⁵ The problem, for Jefferson, was that not everyone in America was a Lockean: Not everyone owned property and was interested in the support of "law and order."

Republicanism, in Jefferson's view, required a homogeneous population. Unless everyone could be converted into Lockeans or what Dr. Rush called "republican machines," the republic would surely disintegrate into anarchy. Like Dr. Rush, Jefferson believed peace with England did not mean the end of the Revolution. The people themselves still had to be made uniform and a consensus of values and interests established. This homogeneity might be achieved by discouraging the rapid increase of immigrants into the country. The members of the new republican nation, Jefferson wrote in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, must "harmonize" as much as possible in government where administration must be conducted by common consent. Immigrants, if they came from countries under the rule of absolute monarchies, would bring with them the principles of monarchy which they had "imbibed" in their early youth. And, if they were able to throw off those principles, they would do so "in exchange for an unbounded licentiousness." In proportion to their numbers, they would participate in the making of legislation and "infuse into it their spirit, warp and bias its direction, and render it a heterogeneous, incoherent, distracted mass."⁶ Thus the new republic had to insulate itself from the Old World and keep out immigrants potentially capable of corrupting government in America.

But what should be done to render the people already here into a more "homogeneous" body? Like Rush, Jefferson placed much of his faith in education. Public schools must be established to diffuse knowledge more generally through the mass of the people, lay the principal foundations of future order, and instill into the minds of children the first elements of morality. Education must teach the masses how to work out their own greatest happiness by showing them that it did not depend on the condition of life in which chance had placed them but was always the result of a "good conscience, good health, occupation, and freedom in all just pursuits." Thus education would render the people—"the ultimate guardian of their own liberty"—independent and self-controlled.⁷

Such education was indispensable in a society where the people ruled. Unless they were properly educated and unless they were trained to restrain vigilantly their passions, they would constitute the greatest threat to order. Indeed, like the immigrants whom Jefferson feared, they could even explode into "unbounded licentiousness" and bring down the curtains of the new republic. After independence had been won, Jefferson noticed a

"spirit of luxury" springing up, and he worried about whether his countrymen would be able to maintain the self-denial and ascetic control which they had demonstrated during the war. Referring to "my extravagant countrymen," he urged them not to procrastinate in the "reformation" of American morality and conduct. He regretted how Americans in the new nation were accumulating debts and ruining themselves, and remembered how the Virginia farmer had been in a happy condition during the war. Blessed with a healthy occupation, reliant on the food he produced, and satisfied with ordinary apparel, the farmer had exercised great "self-denial" and postponed purchases until he could pay for them. Condemning the postwar extravagance as "a more baneful evil" than Toryism had been during the years of conflict, Jefferson impatiently exclaimed: "Would a missionary appear, who would make frugality the basis of his religious system, and go through the land, preaching it up as the only road to salvation, I would join his school. . . ." Jefferson even welcomed the destruction of American credit in Europe, for he could see nothing else which could restrain Americans' disposition to luxury and reform those manners necessary for the preservation of republican government.⁸

Such reformation required Americans to be industrious and active. A busy man, burdened with enormous responsibilities, Jefferson governed himself severely; like Rush, the Virginia planter devised rules to regulate conduct. "Determine never to be idle. No person will have occasion to complain of want of time, who never loses any. It is wonderful how much may be done, if we are always doing." If men acquired a habit of idleness and an inability to apply themselves to business, they were useless to themselves and their country. Years before the publication of Dr. Rush's *Diseases of the Mind*, Jefferson had warned: "Of all the cankers of human happiness, none corrodes it with so silent, yet so baneful a tooth, as idleness. Body and mind both unemployed, our being becomes a burden. . . . Idleness begets ennui, ennui hypochondria, and that a diseased body. No laborious person was ever yet hysterical."⁹

Constantly pressing from below against the rule of reason, the passions had to be governed. For Jefferson, women represented a particularly distressing threat to control and order. In his opposition to a European education for young American men, Jefferson warned that Americans studying abroad would acquire a fondness for European luxury and dissipation, and would be led by "the strongest of all human passions" into a "spirit for female intrigue" or a "passion for whores." Thus not only should immigrants and other foreigners be kept out of America, but young men of the republic should be kept away from European women with their "voluptuary dress and arts." Jefferson described women in general as "objects of

our pleasure," "formed by nature for attentions." Seductive, they never forgot "one of the numerous train of little offices" which belonged to them. He noticed that women in France, even while working, wore some tag of a ribbon to show that the desire to please men was never suspended in them. Thus, men must guard themselves against the "objects" of their "pleasure." How far Jefferson thought this vigilance must be extended may be seen in his remarks regarding the revision of legislation for the punishment of rape. "In the criminal law," he wrote to James Madison from Paris in 1786, "the principle of retaliation is much criticized here, particularly in the case of rape. They think the punishment [castration] indecent and unjustifiable. I should be for altering it, but for a different reason: that is on account of the temptation women would be under to make it the instrument of vengeance against an inconstant lover, and of a disappointment to a rival."¹⁰ Thus, in the case of rape, as Jefferson viewed it, the real aggressor could be the woman.

Little wonder the behavior of women in Paris alarmed him. There the breakdown of distinct behavioral roles threatened to undermine self-control in relations between the sexes. Jefferson uncomfortably noticed how French women had developed an interest in politics, an area he assigned to men. They were different from American women, who were "too wise to wrinkle their foreheads with politics," "contented" instead "to soothe and calm the minds of their husbands returning ruffled from political debate." Women in Paris lacked what Jefferson admired in American women—"the good sense to value domestic happiness above all other." Instead they "hunted" pleasure in the streets and in the assemblies. "Compare them with our own countrywomen occupied in the tender and tranquil amusements of domestic life, and confess that it is a comparison of Amazons and Angels." Both men and women had to have their respective places. As long as women were in the domestic sphere, they were "Angels"; once they stepped out of it, they became "Amazons"—hunting pleasure and undermining sexual order. Women, Jefferson cautioned years later, "could not mix promiscuously in the public meetings with men," or else there would be "depravation of morals and ambiguity of issue."¹¹

Jefferson's fear of "the strongest of all the human passions" was not based merely on philosophical abstractions or observations: It was profoundly rooted in his own experiences and the personal doubt that his head would always be able to control his heart and his own passions. Jefferson admitted that, as a young man, he had offered "love to a handsome lady." She was already married, and Jefferson eventually acknowledged "its incorrectness." Years later, in the 1780s, he felt again the "strongest passions" pounding at the walls of rationality when he fell in love with another

married woman, the delicately sensuous and captivating Maria Cosway. The intensity of his passions was expressed in his reference to himself as an "oran-ootan." "How have you weathered this rigorous season, my dear friend?" he wrote to her. "Surely it was never so cold before. To me who am an animal of a warm climate, a mere oran-ootan, it has been a severe trial." There had been moments when Jefferson had yielded to his passions and found himself enjoying the pleasure he feared. "I am but a son of nature, loving what I see and feel, without being able to give a reason, nor caring much whether there be one," he exclaimed to Maria. But their intimacy had nowhere to go, as both of them were aware, and the inevitable separation was painful. "Overwhelmed with grief," Jefferson turned from his heart to his head for punishment and advice. In his letter to Maria known as the "Dialogue of the Head and Heart," Jefferson had his head declare: "I have often told you during it's [sic] course that you were imprudently engaging your affections. . . . This is not a world to live at random as you do. . . . Everything in this world is a matter of calculation."¹²

Unless men in America obeyed their moral sense and exercised self-control, Jefferson feared, they would "live at random" and destroy republican order. This was an especially frightening prospect in a slaveholding society where white men like Jefferson had to guard themselves not only against "the strongest of all human passions" but also against "the most boisterous passions." The possessor of inordinate power over black men and women, Jefferson recognized the need for slavemasters, free from the king and external authority, to exercise great vigilance against their own despotism. Both passions, he anxiously believed, would continue to undermine republican self-control as long as the new nation lacked complete purity and as long as blacks remained within the "bowels" of republican society.

Black Colonization

Slavery was a most perplexing and anxious problem for Jefferson. A "driver of slaves," he also gave in the Declaration of Independence one of the "loudest yelps for liberty." The contradiction disturbed him. "The love of justice and the love of country plead equally the cause of these people [slaves]," he confessed, "and it is a moral reproach to us that they should have pleaded it so long in vain. . . ." In a letter to his brother-in-law Francis Eppes on July 30, 1787, Jefferson made a revealing slip. Once "my debts" have been cleared off, he promised, "I shall try some plan of making their situation happier, determined to content myself with a small portion

of their ~~liberty~~ labour."¹³ Aware he was violating the human rights of blacks, he had written *liberty*, then crossed it out of his letter and possibly his consciousness for the moment, and excused himself for appropriating only their "labour."

Not only did slavery, in Jefferson's view, violate the black's right to liberty, it also undermined the self-control white men had to have in a republican society. In *Notes on the State of Virginia*, he described what he believed was the pernicious influence of slavery upon republican men:

There must doubtless be an unhappy influence on the manners of our people produced by the existence of slavery among us. The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it; for man is an imitative animal. This quality is the germ of all education in him. From his cradle to his grave he is learning to do what he sees others do. If a parent could find no motive either in his philanthropy or his self-love, for restraining the intemperance of passion towards his slave, it should always be a sufficient one that his child is present. But generally it is not sufficient. The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives a loose to his worst of passions, and thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances.¹⁴

A republican committed to the idea of liberty as a natural right and concerned for the need for self-control, Jefferson believed slavery should be abolished. As a member of the House of Burgesses, he had supported an effort for the emancipation of slaves. And in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, he recommended the gradual abolition of slavery and the elimination of "principles inconsistent with republicanism." In a letter to a friend written in 1788, Jefferson asserted: "You know that nobody wishes more ardently to see an abolition not only of the [African slave] trade but of the condition of slavery: and certainly nobody will be more willing to encounter every sacrifice for that object."¹⁵

Yet, Jefferson was not willing to "encounter every sacrifice" to free the 200 slaves he owned. During the 1780s, after the enactment of the Virginia manumission law, some ten thousand slaves were given their freedom; Jefferson, however, did not manumit his own bondsmen. To have done so would have been financially disastrous for this debt-ridden planter. "The torment of mind," he cried out, "I will endure till the moment shall arrive when I shall not owe a shilling on earth is such really as to render life of

little value." Dependent on the labor of his slaves to pay off his debts, Jefferson hoped he would be able to free them and "put them ultimately on an easier footing," which he stated he would do the moment "they" had paid the debts due from the estate, two-thirds of which had been "contracted by purchasing them."¹⁶ Unfortunately, he remained in debt until his death.

As a slavemaster, Jefferson personally experienced what he described as the "perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions." He was capable of punishing his slaves with great cruelty. He had James Hubbard, a runaway slave who had been apprehended and returned in irons to the plantation, whipped and used as an example to the other slaves. "I had him severely flogged in the presence of his old companions," Jefferson reported. On another occasion, Jefferson punished a slave to make an example of him in "terrorem" to others, and ordered him to be sold to one of the slave traders from Georgia. "If none such offers," he added, "if he could be sold in any other quarter so distant as never more to be heard among us, it would to the others be as if he were put out of the way by death."¹⁷ Clearly, Jefferson himself was no "prodigy," able to retain his manners and morals unimpaired by the brutalizing circumstances of slavery.

Like his fellow slaveholders, Jefferson was involved in the buying and selling of slaves and viewed them in economic terms. "The value of our lands and slaves, taken conjunctly, doubles in about twenty years," he observed casually. "This arises from the multiplication of our slaves, from the extension of culture, and increased demands for lands." His was not a merely theoretical observation: Jefferson's ownership of land and slaves made him one of the wealthiest men in his state. Yet he continued to expand his slave holdings. In 1805, he informed John Jordan that he was "endeavoring to purchase young and able negro men." His interest in increasing his slave property was again revealed in a letter to his manager regarding "a breeding woman." Referring to the "loss of 5 little ones in 4 years," he complained that the overseers did not permit the slave women to devote as much time as was necessary to the care of their children. "They view their labor as the 1st object and the raising of their children but as secondary," Jefferson continued. "I consider the labor of a breeding woman as no object, and that a child raised every 2 years is of more profit than the crop of the best laboring man."¹⁸ Little wonder that, by 1822, Jefferson owned 267 slaves.

Yet, despite his view of slave women as "breeders" and slave children as "profits," Jefferson insisted he would be willing to make a sacrifice and free all of his slaves, if they could be removed from the United States. "I can say," he asserted, "with conscious truth, that there is not a man on earth

who would sacrifice more than I would to relieve us from this heavy reproach, in any practicable way. The cession of that kind of property . . . is a bagatelle which would not cost me a second thought, if, in that way, a general emancipation and expatriation could be effected." But how could a million and half slaves be expatriated? To send them all off at once, Jefferson answered, was not "practicable" for us, or expedient for them. He estimated such a removal would take twenty-five years, during which time the slave population would have doubled. Furthermore, the value of the slaves would amount to \$600 million, and the cost of transportation and provisions would add up to \$300 million. "It cannot be done in this way," he decided. The only "practicable" plan, he thought, was to deport the future generation of blacks: Black infants would be taken from their mothers and trained in industrious occupations until they had reached a proper age for deportation. Since a newborn infant was worth only \$25.50, Jefferson calculated, the estimated loss of slave property would be reduced from \$600 million to only \$37.5 million. Jefferson suggested they be transported to the independent black nation of Santo Domingo. "Suppose the whole annual increase to be sixty thousand effective births, fifty vessels, of four hundred tons burthen each, constantly employed in that short run, would carry off the increase of every year, and the old stock would die off in the ordinary course of nature, lessening from the commencement until its final disappearance." He was confident the effects of his plan would be "blessed." As for the taking of children from their mothers, Jefferson remarked: "The separation of infants from their mothers . . . would produce some scruples of humanity. But this would be straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel."¹⁹

Africa, it seemed to Jefferson, would be "the most desirable receptacle" for colonized blacks. Such removal, if it could be achieved, would benefit both races. Not only would the black population be drawn off from the United States, but the colonized blacks might be the means of transplanting the "useful arts" among the inhabitants of Africa and carrying the "seeds of civilization" there. Thus colonization, Jefferson added, might render the sojournment and suffering of blacks in America a "blessing" to Africa. As President, he asked Rufus King, the minister to Great Britain, to look into the possibility of establishing an African company designed to colonize American blacks in Sierra Leone. Jefferson also considered the West Indies for the relocation of American blacks. "Inhabited already by a people of their own race and color; climates congenial with their natural constitution; insulated from the other descriptions of men; nature seems to have formed these islands to become the receptacle of the blacks transplanted in this hemisphere."²⁰

Why not, Jefferson asked in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, emancipate the blacks but keep them in the state? "Deep-rooted prejudices entertained by the whites," he fearfully explained, "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." Unless colonization accompanied emancipation, whites would experience the horror of race war. Yet, unless slavery were abolished, whites would continue to face the danger of servile insurrection and the violent rage springing from "ten thousand recollections" of injuries. "As it is," Jefferson declared, "we have the wolf by the ears, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other." The slave revolt in Santo Domingo intensified his anxieties. "It is high time we should foresee," he wrote to James Monroe in 1793, "the bloody scenes which our children certainly, and possibly ourselves (south of Potomac) have to wade through, and try to avert them." Four years later, referring to the need to get under way some plan for emancipation and removal, Jefferson cried out to William and Mary College Professor St. George Tucker, a critic of slavery: "If something is not done, and soon done, we shall be the murderers of our own children." The dread of slave rebellion, which Jefferson and other whites felt, was evident in the violent suppression of the Gabriel Prosser conspiracy of 1800. During the hysteria, twenty-five blacks were hanged. Five years later, Jefferson observed that the insurrectionary spirit among the slaves had been easily quelled, but he saw it becoming general and more formidable after every defeat, until whites would be forced, "after dreadful scenes and sufferings to release them in their own way. . . ." He predicted that slavery would be abolished—"whether brought on by the generous energy of our own minds" or "by the bloody process of St. Domingo" in which slaves would seize their freedom with daggers in their hands.²¹

Yet Jefferson could understand the violence of slave revolt. He viewed it as a natural and seemingly inevitable response to oppression, and he even tried to imagine what it must be like to be a slave. He projected himself into the slave's situation as he observed how slavery had transformed the master into a "despot" and the slave into an "enemy," the black's rights being "trampled on" and his "amor patriae" destroyed. The slave must prefer any other country in the world to America, where he was "born to live and labor for another." Unable to contain the guilt he felt, Jefferson exclaimed: "Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever; that considering numbers, nature

and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation is among possible events. . . ." Still he hoped emancipation would be achieved through the "consent" rather than the "extirpation" of the oppressors.²²

Even if emancipation could be achieved peacefully, colonization would still be required as one of the conditions for the liberation of slaves. Though Jefferson regarded blacks as members of humankind, endowed with moral sense, he believed that blacks and whites could never coexist in America because of "the real distinctions" which "nature" had made between the two races. "The first difference which strikes us is that of color," Jefferson explained. Regardless of the origins of the Negro's skin color, this difference was "fixed in nature." "And is this difference of no importance? Is it not the foundation of a greater or less share of beauty in the two races? Are not the fine mixtures of red and white, the expressions of every passion by greater or less suffusions of color in the one, preferable to that eternal monotony, which reigns in the countenances, that immovable veil of black which covers the emotions of the other race?" To Jefferson, white was beautiful. Even blacks themselves admitted so, he thought: "Add to these, flowing hair, a more elegant symmetry of form, their own judgment in favor of the whites, declared by their preference of them, as uniformly as is the preference of Oranootan for the black woman over those of his own species." Given these racial differences, colonization of blacks was a way to preserve white beauty and "loveliness." Commenting on the breeding of domestic animals, Jefferson asked: "The circumstance of superior beauty is thought worthy of attention in the propagation of our horses, dogs, and other domestic animals; why not in that of man?"²³

White "superiority," for Jefferson, was also a matter of intelligence. He acknowledged that the "opinion" that blacks were "inferior" in faculties of reason and imagination had to be "hazarded with great diffidence." Evaluation of intelligence was problematical: It was a faculty which eluded the research of all the senses, the conditions of its existence were various and variously combined, and its effects were impossible to calculate. "Great tenderness," he added, was required "where our conclusion would degrade a whole race of man from the rank in the scale of beings which their Creator may perhaps have given them." Thus, Jefferson advanced it as a "suspicion" only that blacks "whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances," were "inferior" to whites in the endowments of both body and mind. Jefferson stated he was willing to have his "suspicion" challenged, even refuted. To the French critic of slavery Abbé Henri Gregoire, he wrote: "Be assured that no person living wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a complete refutation of the doubts I have

myself entertained and expressed on the grade of understanding allotted to them by nature, and to find that in this respect they are on a par with ourselves." In 1791, Jefferson received from Benjamin Banneker a copy of an almanac the black mathematician had compiled, and responded enthusiastically: "Nobody wishes more than I do to see such proofs as you exhibit, that nature has given to our black brethren, talents equal to those of the other colors of men, and that the appearance of a want of them is owing merely to the degraded condition of their existence. . . ." Here was "proof" demanding attention, and Jefferson promptly sent the almanac to the French scientist Marquis de Condorcet.²⁴

In his investigation of the black's "inferior" intelligence, however, Jefferson was more interested in "proofs" which supported rather than refuted his "suspicion." Actually he did not take Banneker seriously, and thought the mathematician had "a mind of very common stature." While he admitted Banneker had enough spherical trigonometry to make almanacs, he suspected the black scholar had aid from Andrew Ellicot, a white neighbor who "never missed an opportunity of puffing him." Unlike Rush, Jefferson did not view black "inferiority" as a consequence of slavery or as a social rather than a biological condition. Instead he seized evidence which set blacks apart as "a distinct race," and which emphasized the importance of biology over conditions or circumstances in the determination of intelligence. In a comparison between Roman slavery and American black slavery, Jefferson remarked: "Epictetus, Terence, and Phaedrus, were slaves. But they were of the race of whites. It is not their condition then, but nature, which has produced the distinction." Evidence to support this assertion, Jefferson added, could be found closer at hand. "The improvement of the blacks in body and mind, in the first instance of their mixture, has been observed by every one, and proves that their inferiority is not the effect merely of their condition of life."²⁵ Thus, miscegenation itself appeared to provide "proof" of the black's racial intellectual "inferiority."

Nor did Jefferson's "suspicion" and his plea for "tenderness" restrain him from cataloging what he thought were the qualities of black inferiority.

In general, their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection. To this must be ascribed their disposition to sleep when abstracted from their diversions, and unemployed in labor. An animal whose body is at rest, and who does not reflect, must be disposed to sleep of course. 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, as I think one could scarcely be found capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid; and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous.

Jefferson's descriptions of the Negro involved more than the assertion of black intellectual inferiority: They depicted blacks as dominated by their bodies rather than their minds, by their sensations rather than their reflections. They appeared to be a libidinal race. "They [black men] are more ardent after their female; but love seems with them to be more an eager desire, than a tender delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation."²⁶ Blacks, in Jefferson's mind, represented the body and the ascendancy of the instinctual life—those volcanic forces of passions he believed whites had to control in republican society.

Here, for Jefferson, in the midst of the society which had destroyed the authority of the king, expelled the enemy from its "bowels," and established a republic of self-governing men, was the presence of a race still under the rule of the passions, created with moral sense but without sufficient intelligence to serve the conscience. This was hardly the foundation necessary to create a "homogeneous" society. What worried Jefferson was evidence showing that blacks were proliferating at a faster rate than whites. In 1782, he noted, Virginia had 567,614 inhabitants, 270,762 slaves to 296,852 "free inhabitants," a ratio of nearly ten to eleven. "Under the mild treatment our slaves experience, and their wholesome, though coarse, food, this blot in our country increases as fast, or faster, than the whites." To Jefferson, the future of the republic seemed grim as long as it contained a "blot"—a growing one—and as long as a large segment of its population was inferior in intelligence and incapable of being self-governing.²⁷

What distressed him most profoundly was the danger that the black "blot" would lead to "mixture" and the "staining" of whites. Thus he asked:

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? This unfortunate difference of color, 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. . . . 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.²⁸

Unlike Rush of Pennsylvania, Jefferson did not live in a state where blacks constituted only a small proportion of the population and an insignificant part of the work force. Feeling guilty for depriving blacks of their liberty, surrounded by them and fearful of slave insurrection, Jefferson called for

their exclusion from America rather than for the formation of black colonies within the country. Where Rush proposed to segregate blacks in order to reform and assimilate them eventually into white republican society, Jefferson insisted on their complete removal.

Still, regardless of whether blacks were to be included or excluded, Jefferson was articulating a general fear. If the republican experiment were to succeed and if the new nation were to realize the vision of a "homogeneous" republic, it had to preserve what Franklin described as the "lovely White." It must not allow its people to be "stained" and become a nation of mulattoes. "Their amalgamation with the other colour," Jefferson warned, "produces a degradation to which no lover of his country, no lover of excellence in the human character can innocently consent."²⁹ If this mixture were to occur, it would surely mean that whites had lost control of themselves and their lustful passions, and had in their "unbounded licentiousness" shattered the very experiment in self-government which they had undertaken during the American Revolution.

This was precisely why the Thomas Jefferson/Sally Hemings relationship, whether imagined or actual, was so significant. If the philosopher of republicanism could not restrain what he called "the strongest of all the human passions" and if the author of jeremiads against miscegenation were guilty of "staining" the blood of white America, how could white men in the republic ever hope to be self-governing?

In a crucial and symbolic sense, the controversy during Jefferson's lifetime over whether or not he had fathered slave children was a means by which white men—his critics as well as his defenders—could reaffirm their faith in their republicanism. "It is well known that the man, *whom it deligheth the people to honor,*" declared James Callender in the *Richmond Recorder* in 1802,

keeps and for many years has kept, as his concubine, one of his slaves. Her name is Sally. The name of her eldest son is Tom. His features are said to bear a striking though sable resemblance to those of the president himself. The boy is ten or twelve years of age. His mother went to France in the same vessel with Mr. Jefferson and his two daughters. The delicacy of this arrangement must strike every portion of common sensibility. What a sublime pattern for an American ambassador to place before the eyes of two young ladies!

Callender's attack evoked a defense of Jefferson as a sublime pattern. Years later, protesting the charge that Jefferson had had "commerce with female slaves," Colonel Thomas Randolph insisted that his grandfather had been "chaste and pure—as 'immaculate a man as God ever created.'"³⁰

Throughout the controversy, Jefferson displayed a curious comportment. He remained silent on the entire issue, except for an oblique denial in a letter to James Monroe in 1801. After describing how Callender had "intimated he was in possession of things which he could and would make use of in a certain case" and how he had demanded "hush money" and expected "a certain office," Jefferson stated: "He knows nothing of me which I am not willing to declare to the world myself." Strangely, Jefferson acted as if the controversy did not exist at all, and as if there were no mulatto children resembling him on his plantation. Even Randolph had to admit that the Hemings's children resembled Jefferson so closely that at some distance or in the dusk one of the grown slaves "might have been mistaken for Mr. Jefferson." The likeness between master and slave was "blazoned" to all the visitors. Amazingly, Jefferson himself "never betrayed the least consciousness of the resemblance."³¹

Yet, he could not have been oblivious of it. Colonel Randolph was so aware of the resemblance that both he and his mother "would have been very glad to have them thus removed," but they "venerated Mr. Jefferson too deeply to broach such a topic to him." It is doubtful Jefferson would have behaved in such a puzzling way, unless he was the father of the children or unless he thought his Carr nephews were. There is, as historian Fawn Brodie pointed out, "excellent documentary evidence" that Jefferson was "on hand" nine months before the birth of each child. But what about his nephews? While it cannot be documented that either Peter or Samuel Carr was present at Monticello during those times, it likewise cannot be documented they were *not* "on hand." And evidence does exist implying they were present. According to Colonel Randolph, on one occasion a visitor at Monticello dropped a newspaper from his pocket or left it accidentally. Randolph opened the paper and found some insulting remarks about Mr. Jefferson's mulatto children. Provoked, he showed the article to Peter and Samuel Carr, who were lying under a shade tree. "Peter read it, tears coursing down his cheeks, and then handed it to Samuel. Samuel also shed tears. Peter exclaimed 'ar'nt you and I a couple of _____ pretty fellows to bring disgrace on poor old uncle who has always fed us! We ought to be _____, by _____!' " The fact that "by 1800 the Carr brothers had plantations and slaves of their own"—a fact which Brodie used to imply either that they were responsible gentlemen or that they had their own slave women to exploit sexually, and to exculpate them—apparently did not mean that they behaved discreetly on their uncle's plantation.³²

Yet, as Brodie noted, one must not forget the "fact" that Sally Hemings's oldest son had been conceived in France. Clearly, the Carr brothers were

not "on hand" there. In 1873, many years after the controversy itself, one of her sons—Madison Hemings, born in 1805— wrote:

He [Jefferson] desired to bring my mother back to Virginia with him but she demurred. She was just beginning to understand the French language well, and in France she was free, while if she returned to Virginia would be re-enslaved. She refused to return with him. To induce her to do so he promised her extraordinary privileges, and made a solemn pledge that her children should be freed at the age of twenty-one years. In consequence of his promises, on which she implicitly relied, she returned with him to Virginia. Soon after their arrival, she gave birth to a child of whom Thomas Jefferson was the father. It lived but a short time. She gave birth to four others, of whom Thomas Jefferson was the father.

Madison Hemings was referring to Tom, born in 1790. Yet the facts about Tom remain unclear. According to Madison Hemings, the child "lived but a short time." Callender, however, reported in 1802 a son named Tom, "ten or twelve years of age." In his new slave inventory in 1794, Jefferson listed Sally Hemings; but he did not list her son, raising the possibility that Tom had never existed, or had already died.³³

Yet what Jefferson did or did not do in his private life mattered little as his critics attacked him with a rage and a language suggesting that more was at stake than the conduct of one man. In their poetic descriptions of Jefferson's passions and Sally Hemings's sensuality, they exposed the libidinal fires burning within themselves.

In glaring red, and chalky white,
Let the others beauty see;
Me no such tawdry tints delight—
No! black's the hue for me!

Thick pouting lips! how sweet their grace!
When passion fires to kiss them!
Wide spreading over half the face,
Impossible to miss them.

Oh! Sally! harken to my vows!
Yield up thy sooty charms—
My best belov'd! my more than spouse,
Oh! take me to thy arms!

Actually Sally Hemings was a quadroon. Her mother, Betty Hemings, was a mulatto, and her father was John Wayles, Jefferson's father-in-law. Two of Sally Hemings's offspring were so white in complexion they were able to run away and "pass" into white society. Sally herself, according to slave

Isaac Jefferson, was "mighty near white," "very handsome" with "long straight hair down her back." She was, in reality, hardly the "black Sally" described in the poem. No matter. What counted, for Jefferson's critics, was the Sally of their own sexual fantasies. Indeed, in their condemnation of Jefferson, they betrayed how little faith they had in their own power to control the instinctual pressures within them.

You men of morals! and be curst,
You would snap like sharks for Sally.

She's *black* you tell me—grant she be—
Must colour always tally?
Black is love's proper hue for me—
And white's the hue for Sally.

What though she by the glands secretes;
Must I stand shil— I shall— I?
Tuck'd up between a pair of sheets
There's no perfume like Sally.

In an almost ritualistic way, the detractors turned against Jefferson to curb and punish the instincts which all men had. Thus, they lashed out against this "metaphysician"

Whom the world might take to be
a man whose blood
Is very snow-broth; one who never feels
The wanton stings and motions of the female,
But doth rebuke and blunt his natural edge
With profits of the mind, study and fast.

It was fearful for white men to think that one of them, especially one whose passions were in a state of frozen purity, had failed to blunt his "natural edge." One critic calculated that if the eighty thousand white men of Virginia did as much as Jefferson and each fathered five mulatto children, then there would be "FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND MULATTOES in addition to the present swarm. The country would be no longer habitable, till after a civil war, and a series of massacres. We all know with absolute certainty that the contest would end in the utter extirpation both of blacks and mulattoes. We know that the continent has as many white people, as could eat the whole race at a breakfast."³⁴ As republicans, white men had to be self-governing and subordinate their libidinal desires to the authority of rationality, or else they would have to do something extraordinary.

The President's unrestrained critics were not allowed to assault and de-

grade him unchallenged. The editor of the *Richmond Examiner* dared Callender to publish his correspondence with Jefferson. "I am too much of a republican, and have too much faith in Mr. Jefferson's virtuous actions and designs to be tremulous for his fame in a case like this," he declared. "If he has acted improperly, which no man less wicked and designing than yourself believes, let us see to what extent the evil goes: whether it is venial [*sic*], or whether it is so heinous, as to cut him off from the love of the people." A week later, while again demanding that Callender bring forward his evidence, the editor advanced a curious defense of Jefferson's integrity:

In gentlemen's houses everywhere, we know that the virtue of unfortunate slaves is assailed with impunity. White women in these situations, whose educations are better, frequently fall victims: but the other class are attempted, without fear, having no defender, and yield most frequently. Is it strange therefore, that a servant of Mr. Jefferson's at a house where so many strangers resort . . . should have a mulatto child? Certainly, not—And if Callender had not sworn to wickedness, he never would have twisted this occurrence into a serious accusation.

Mr. Jefferson has been a Bachelor for more than twenty years. During this period, he reared with parental attention, two unblemished, accomplished and amiable women. . . . In the education of his daughters, this same Thomas Jefferson, supplied the place of a *mother*—his tenderness and delicacy were proverbial—not a spot tarnished his widowed character. . . .³⁵

Here was an admission of the failure of white men to control their sexuality as well as an assertion of Jefferson's purity—his supreme control for more than two decades.

Everywhere in the controversy, there was irony. Both Jefferson's critics and his defenders were demanding what Jefferson himself had also demanded: White men must vigilantly guard themselves against their own "strongest passions" and must not "stain" the blood of the white republic. The code of white racial purity required that violators be severely punished. Black men convicted of raping white women were subjected to the cruel penalty of castration. White men guilty of violating the code should also be punished: To use the words of the *Examiner's* editor, they should be "cut off" from the love of the people. In a republican society, men had to have self-control and virtue. This was the faith the editor of the *Boston Gazette* hoped to renew during the controversy over the Jefferson/Hemings relationship. "We feel for the honour of our country," he declared. "And when her Chief Magistrate labours under the imputation of the most abandoned profligacy of private life, we do most honestly and sincerely wish to see the stain upon the nation wiped away, by the appearance on it at least of some colorable reason for believing in the purity of its highest character."³⁶ Yet, there was nothing Jefferson could have done to wipe away the

"stain" upon the nation: He had become the receptacle of the nation's guilt as white men imputed to him the passions they could not contain and the sins they could not confess. In this process, they were reaffirming in their own minds the principles of republicanism, determined to expel the "enemy"—interracial sex and impurity—from the "bowels" of the new nation.

Red Lockeans

After all, had they not fought a war to establish a virtuous republican society? The American Revolution also compelled Jefferson and his fellow Americans to resolve the question of race in relation to the Indian as well as the black. According to Franklin's delineation of the different racial groups in America, there were three based on color—white, black, and "tawny." The question of the relationship between race and republican society could not ignore the presence of the native American. Jefferson knew this, and his racial concerns did not revolve exclusively around blacks. Still, studies of Jefferson, including even Fawn Brodie's biography, which focuses largely on race, often completely overlook the Indian, almost as if he did not exist in America or in Jefferson's life or mind. As a white expansionist and an agrarian philosopher in search of "vacant lands," Jefferson was fully conscious of the Indian's existence.

During the struggle to expel the British, Jefferson had two views of the Indian's future in the new nation: He could be civilized and assimilated, or he could be removed and possibly exterminated. Thus, Jefferson declared to the chief of the Kaskaskias that he hoped "we shall long continue to smoke in friendship together," and that "we, like you, are Americans, born in the same land, and having the same interests." Yet, at the same time, Jefferson did not hesitate to advocate removal of hostile Indians beyond the Mississippi and even total war upon them. "Nothing will reduce those wretches so soon as pushing the war into the heart of their country," he wrote angrily in 1776. "But I would not stop there. I would never cease pursuing them while one of them remained on this side [of] the Mississippi." And he went further. Quoting from the instructions the Congress had given the commissioners to the Six Nations, he continued: "We would never cease pursuing them with war while one remained on the face of the earth."³⁷ His two views—civilization and extermination—were not contradictory: They were both consistent with his vision of a "homogeneous" American society.

To civilize the Indian meant, for Jefferson, to take him from his hunting way of life and convert him into a farmer. As President of the United States, he told the Potawatomies:

We shall . . . see your people become disposed to cultivate the earth, to raise herds of the useful animals, and to spin and weave, for their food and clothing. These resources are certain: they will never disappoint you: while those of hunting may fail, and expose your women and children to the miseries of hunger and cold. We will with pleasure furnish you with implements for the most necessary arts, and with persons who may instruct you how to make and use them.

After the purchase of the Louisiana, Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark on an expedition to explore the western territory, and instructed them to collect information on the Indians which could be useful in the effort to educate and civilize them. To the Shawnee chiefs, Jefferson explained why the Indian had no choice but to accept civilization. "When the white people first came to this land, they were few, and you were many; now we are many, and you few; and why? because, by cultivating the earth, we produce plenty to raise our children, while yours . . . suffer for want of food, are forced to eat unwholesome things, are exposed to the weather in your hunting camps, get diseases and die. Hence it is that your numbers lessen." In order to survive, Indians must adopt the ways of the white man. They must enclose farms, acquire a knowledge of the value of property, and learn arithmetic and writing in order to calculate the value of property and keep accounts. Jefferson pointed to some wealthy Cherokees as models of success for all Indians. They had raised more cattle and corn than they needed for their own use; instead of allowing this surplus to be eaten by their own "lazy" people, they carried it to the market in Knoxville, sold it to whites, and then used the money to purchase clothes and comforts for themselves.³⁸ Thus, as civilized people and as farmers, all Indians would be brought into the market economy.

While Jefferson argued that humanity enjoined whites to teach agriculture to the Indian, he also recognized the important control function the civilizing process served. Commenting on Indian-white conflicts in 1791, Jefferson wrote to Charles Carroll: "I hope we shall give them a thorough drubbing this summer, and then change our tomahawk into a golden chain of friendship. The most economical as well as most humane conduct towards them is to bribe them into peace, and to retain them in peace by eternal bribes." As President, Jefferson did not use the term *bribe*. But he did urge Congress to use agriculture and commerce among the Indians rather than military force as a "more effectual, economical, and humane instrument for preserving peace and good neighborhood with them." In his request to the Senate to ratify a treaty which would authorize the federal government to establish an ironworks on land purchased from the Cherokees, Jefferson stated:

As such an establishment would occasion a considerable and certain demand for corn and other provisions and necessaries, it seemed probable that it would immediately draw around it a close settlement of the Cherokees, would encourage them to enter a regular life of agriculture, familiarize them with the practice and value of the arts, attach them to property, lead them of necessity and without delay to the establishment of laws and government, and thus make a great and important advance toward assimilating their condition to ours.

The "assimilation" of Indians was a way to pacify them. As Indians became more civilized, they appeared to become more placid. "The great tribes on our Southwestern quarter," observed Jefferson in his annual message of 1807, "much advanced beyond the others in agriculture and household arts, appear tranquil," identifying "their views with ours in proportion to their advancement."³⁹ Clearly, Jefferson's efforts to civilize Indians and attach them Lockean-like to property were related to a strategy designed to control them.

Jefferson's efforts to civilize Indians involved more than moral and strategic concerns: It reaffirmed Jefferson's definition of civilization and his idea of progress. It enabled him to identify "savagery" and to measure how far he and his society had advanced from the time when "the selfish passions" were dominant.

Let a philosophic observer commence a journey from the savages of the Rocky Mountains, eastwardly towards our sea-coast. There he would observe in the earliest stage of association living under no law but that of nature, subsisting and covering themselves with flesh and skins of wild beasts. He would next find those on our frontiers in the pastoral state, raising domestic animals to supply the defects of hunting. Then succeed our own semi-barbarous citizens, the pioneers of the advance of civilization, and so in progress he would meet the gradual shades of improving man until he would reach his, as yet, most improved state in our seaport towns. This, in fact, is equivalent to a survey, in time, of the progress of man from infancy of creation to the present day.⁴⁰

To Jefferson, "progress" meant the advance from "savagery" to pastoral and urban civilization, from the past to the present. In this view, the Indian was identified with nature, the West, and the past; and the past had to be dominated. The reason why this had to be done was obvious enough to Jefferson: In the beginning, had not all the world been like America, and was not the white experience in America the struggle for freedom from the past, from the earliest stage of human existence? Thus the Indian had to be civilized and integrated into the movement of "progress" or be pushed farther westward and eventually destroyed. The Indian's survival depended on his ability to become a part of the expanding "civilization."

This ability, for Jefferson, depended on whether or not the Indian was equal to the white man. Jefferson believed that Indians, like blacks and all humankind, were endowed with an innate "moral sense of right and wrong," which, like the "sense of tasting and feeling" in every man, constituted "a part of his nature." But while Jefferson assigned conscience to both the Indian and the black, he made a crucial distinction between them in the area of intelligence. "I am safe in affirming," he wrote to the Marquis de Chastellux in 1785, "that the proofs of genius given by the Indians of N. America, place them on a level with whites in the same uncultivated state. . . . I believe the Indian then to be in body and mind equal to the white man. I have supposed the black man, in his present state, might not be so." Thus, what made the Indian "equal" or potentially so was his intelligence. "The Indians . . . will often carve figures on their pipes not destitute of design and merit," Jefferson observed. "They will crayon out an animal, a plant or a country, so as to prove the existence of a germ in their minds which only wants cultivation. They astonish you with strokes of the most sublime oratory; such as prove their reason and sentiment strong, their imagination glowing and elevated. But never yet could I find that a black had uttered a thought above the level of plain narration; never saw even an elementary trait of painting or sculpture." The implications of these remarks are clear: He thought the Indian, unlike the black, could be educated and allowed to live among whites. "Before we condemn the Indians of this continent as wanting genius," he insisted, "we must consider that letters have not yet been introduced among them." If the Indians' circumstances could be changed, white Americans would "probably" find that the native Americans were "formed in mind as well as body, on the same module with the 'Homo sapiens Europaeus.'" ⁴¹ Thus, in Jefferson's mind, Indians had a potential blacks did not have: They had the intelligence capable of development which could enable them to carry out the commands of their moral sense.

This meant that Indians did not have to be a "problem" in America's future: They could be assimilated and their oneness with white America would reaffirm the republican civilization and the "progress" Jefferson hoped to realize. Time and again President Jefferson called upon the Indians to intermarry and live among whites as "one people." To the Delawares, Mohicans, and Munries, he declared:

When once you have property, you will want laws and magistrates to protect your property and persons, and to punish those among you who commit crimes. You will find that our laws are good for this purpose; you will wish to live under

them, you will unite yourselves with us, join in our Great Councils and form one people with us, and we shall all be Americans; you will mix with us by marriage, your blood will run in our veins, and will spread with us over this great island.

In 1803 President Jefferson urged Colonel Benjamin Hawkins to encourage the Indians to give up hunting and turn to agriculture and household manufacture as a new way of life. Indians must learn how a little land, well cultivated, was superior in value to a great deal, unimproved. He offered a grisly analogy to illustrate his point: "The wisdom of the animal which amputates and abandons to the hunter the parts for which he is pursued should be theirs, with this difference, that the former sacrifices what is useful, the latter what is not." The wisdom to "amputate" their land and culture would make it possible for "our settlements and theirs to meet and blend together, to intermix, and become one people."⁴²

The contradiction between Jefferson's acceptance of red/white amalgamation and his abhorrence of black/white intermixture was grounded in the different sociology and material conditions of red/white *vis-à-vis* black/white relations. As slave laborers, blacks lived in white society in a hierarchically integrated situation—white over black—and amalgamation between white men and slave women was in fact happening. The presence of large numbers of mulatto children betrayed the sins of white men. Not only did whites classify the mulatto as "Negro" and thereby try to deny that sexual intercourse had ever taken place between whites and blacks; they also transferred their own lusts and their anxieties of black male retaliation to their fear of black men as sexual threats to white women. Unlike blacks, Indians lived apart from white society and had their own tribal identities; they were far from close physical and cultural contact with whites. Red women were not the victims of white male sexual exploitation as were black women, and red men did not provoke the sexual anxieties of white men as did black men. Jefferson confidently claimed that the red man would not "indulge himself with a captive taken in war." Generally, Indians were not viewed as a threat to white racial purity. These important differences enabled Jefferson to offer Indians an invitation he could never extend to blacks. Furthermore, he viewed blacks in terms of an increasing population, while he saw Indians as a population in decline. In *Notes on the State of Virginia*, he pointed out that the 1669 census indicated that Indian tribes had been reduced to about one-third of their former numbers in the space of sixty-two years.⁴³ Thus, for Jefferson, Indians did not seem to represent the growing "blot" blacks did: They were already the vanishing American.

The decimation of the Indian population led Jefferson to comment on its causes and at the same time defend the correctness of the transfer of lands from Indians to whites.

Spiritous liquors, the small pox, war, and an abridgement of territory to a people who lived principally on the spontaneous productions of nature, had committed terrible havoc among them, which generation, under the obstacles opposed to it among them, was not likely to make good. That the lands of this country were taken from them by conquest, is not so general a truth as is supposed. I find in our historians and records, repeated proofs of purchase, which cover a considerable part of the lower country; and many more would doubtless be found on further search. The upper country, we know, has been altogether acquired by purchases made in the most unexceptionable form.⁴⁴

If Jefferson's denial of guilt contained a quality of shrillness, there was a reason for it. In the original manuscript for *Notes on the State of Virginia*, he had written and then crossed out: "It is true that these purchases were sometimes made with the price in one hand and the sword in the other."

Even if the Indian population did not continue to decline, assimilation as Jefferson had defined it would be in one direction only. In the process, Indians would adopt white ways. They would be converted into Lockean people: They would own private property, obey written laws, and live in a state of society rather than in a state of nature. To the chiefs of the Upper Cherokees, Jefferson spelled out the requirements for citizenship. "My children, I shall rejoice to see the day when the red man, our neighbors, become truly one people with us, enjoying all the rights and privileges we do, and living in peace and plenty as we do. . . . But are you prepared for this? Have you the resolution to leave off hunting for your living, to lay off a farm for each family to itself, to live by industry, the men working that farm with their hands . . .?" Thus, if the Indian wished to live among whites and be an "American," and if he wished to survive and spread with whites over "this great island," he would have to "amputate" his way of life.⁴⁵

What the Indian would be required to amputate was not only his identity and culture but also his land. The civilizing of the Indian was a crucial part of Jefferson's strategy to acquire Indian land for white settlement and the expansion of white agrarian society. As President, he gave Indians assurances that whites would respect Indian possession of land. "Our seventeen States compose a great and growing nation," he told the Choctaw Nation in 1803. "Their children are as the leaves of the trees, which the winds are spreading over the forest. But we are just also. We take from no nation what belongs to it. Our growing numbers make us always willing to

buy lands from our red brethren, when they are willing to sell." Again in 1808, he declared to the Ottawas, Chippewas, Potawatomes, Wyandots, and Senecas that "your lands are your own; your right to them shall never be violated by us; they are yours to keep or to sell as you please. . . . When a want of land in a particular place induces us to ask you to sell, still you are always free to say 'No'. . . ." While he offered these assurances, President Jefferson worked to create conditions which would make the Indian "willing to sell." In a "Confidential Message" to Congress in 1803, he outlined how this could be done.

First: to encourage them to abandon hunting, to apply to the raising stock, to agriculture and domestic manufactures, and thereby prove to themselves that less land and labor will maintain them in this, better than in their former mode of living. The extensive forests necessary in the hunting life will then become useless, and they will see advantage in exchanging them for the means of improving their farms. . . . Secondly: to multiply trading-houses among them, and place within their reach those things which will contribute more to their domestic comfort than the possession of extensive but uncultivated wilds. Experience and reflection will develop to them the wisdom of exchanging what they can spare and we want, for what we can spare and they want.

So, for whites to obtain western lands the Indians must be led to agriculture, manufactures, and thus to civilization.⁴⁶

Jefferson's strategy involved more than the conversion of Indians into farmers and encouraging them to exchange "spare" lands for "spare" manufactures. The United States government, he explained to Andrew Jackson on February 16, 1803, must keep agents among the Indians to lead them to agriculture and advise them to sell their "useless" extensive forests in order to obtain money and purchase clothes and comforts from federal trading houses. Eleven days later in a letter to Indiana Governor William Henry Harrison, designated "unofficial and private," President Jefferson wrote: "To promote this disposition to exchange lands, which they have to spare and we want, for necessities, which we have to spare and they want, we shall push our trading houses, and be glad to see the good and influential individuals among them run in debt, because we observe that when these debts get beyond what the individuals can pay, they become willing to lop them off by a cession of lands." To destroy financially "the good and influential" Indians, Jefferson emphasized the greater effectiveness of federal trading houses over private traders. While private business had to make profits, government enterprise could sell goods to Indians at prices "so low as merely to repay us cost and charges. . . ." By this process, he explained to Harrison, white settlements would gradually "circumscribe"

the Indians, and they would in time either "incorporate" with whites as "citizens" or "remove beyond the Mississippi."⁴⁷

The purchase of the Louisiana Territory in 1803 offered Jefferson the opportunity to pursue at once the two possibilities he saw for the Indian—removal and incorporation. The vast new territory, he calculated, could be "the means of tempting all our Indians on the East side of the Mississippi to remove to the West. . . ." In his draft of an amendment to the Constitution, Jefferson included a specific provision for such a removal: "The legislature of the Union shall have authority to exchange the right of occupancy in portion where the U.S. have full rights for lands possessed by Indians within the U.S. on the East side of the Mississippi: to exchange lands on the East side of the river for those . . . on the West side. . . ." Though the amendment remained in draft form, the Louisiana Territorial Act of 1804 did contain a clause which empowered the President to effect Indian emigration. Not all Indians would be "transplanted," however. If Indians chose civilization, Jefferson explained to the Cherokees, they would be allowed to remain where they were; if they chose to continue the hunter's life, they would be permitted to leave and settle on lands beyond the Mississippi. Calling the Cherokees "my children," he promised them that the United States would be the friends of both parties, and would be willing, as far as could be reasonably asked, to satisfy the wishes of both.⁴⁸

Still, all Indians, whether they were farmers or hunters, were subject to removal, and even extermination, if they did not behave. Should any tribe be foolhardy enough to take up the hatchet against the United States, the President wrote Governor Harrison, the federal government should seize the whole country of that tribe and drive them across the Mississippi as the only condition of peace. As Anglo-American tensions mounted in 1808, President Jefferson told the Ottawas, Chippewas, Potawatomes, and Senecas that white Americans considered them "a part of ourselves" and looked to their welfare as "our own." If they sided with the British, however, they would have to abandon forever the land of their fathers. "No nation rejecting our friendship, and commencing wanton and unprovoked war against us, shall ever after remain within our reach. . . ." A year later, Jefferson gave his Indian "children" another warning: "If you love the land in which you were born, if you wish to inhabit the earth which covers the bones of your fathers, take no part in the war between the English and us. . . . [T]he tribe which shall begin an unprovoked war against us, we will extirpate from the earth, or drive to such a distance as they shall never again be able to strike us."⁴⁹

Jefferson's complex feelings toward the Indian were summed up in a letter he wrote to John Adams. Childhood memories welled up as he de-

scribed the times Indian chiefs stayed at his home as guests of his father, and flowed into his vision of an agrarian civilization.

So much in answer to your enquiries concerning Indians, a people with whom, in the very early part of my life, I was very familiar, and acquired impressions of attachment and commiseration for them which have never been obliterated. Before the revolution they were in the habit of coming often, and in great numbers to the seat of our government, where I was very much with them. I knew much the great Outasette [i.e., Outacity], the warrior and orator of the Cherokees. He was always the guest of my father, on his journeys to and from Williamsburg. I was in his camp when he made his great farewell oration to his people, the evening before his departure for England. The moon was in full splendor, and to her he seemed to address himself in his prayers for his own safety on the voyage, and that of his people during his absence. His sounding voice, distinct articulation, animated action, and the solemn silence of his people at their several fires, filled me with awe and veneration, altho' I did not understand a word he uttered. That nation, consisting now of about 2000 warriors, and the Creeks of about 3000, are far advanced in civilization. They have good cabins, enclosed fields, large herds of cattle and hogs, spin and weave their own clothes of cotton, have smiths and other of the most necessary tradesmen, write and read, are on the increase in numbers. . . . On those who have made any progress, English seductions will have no effect. But the backward will yield, and be thrown further back. These will relapse into barbarism and misery, lose numbers by war and want, and we shall be obliged to drive them, with the beasts of the forests into the Stony mountains.⁵⁰

Here, in one great outpouring, were Jefferson's love for Indians and his rage against them, his memories of childhood warmth for Indians and his angry cries for their removal to the "Stony mountains."

Ultimately, for Jefferson, it made no difference whether Indians were removed to the Rocky Mountains, "extirpated from the earth," or allowed to remain in the United States. Indians as Indians could not be tolerated in the republican civilization the American Revolution had created. The new nation must have a "homogeneous" population—a people with the same language and laws, good cabins and enclosed fields, owners of private property. Diversity itself was dangerous in the republican society, especially diversity which included groups and cultures close to nature and the instinctual life.

The black and the Indian, as they existed in Jefferson's imagination and in the political economy of America, had been separated from each other. Jefferson viewed each of them as a different problem. Constituting sources of violence and sexuality, the black was a growing and threatening "blot"

to be removed to Africa. Close to nature and without government, the Indian was an obstacle to be removed to the West or to be incorporated as a Lockean property-owning farmer and become "a part of ourselves." At times Jefferson identified with both the black and the Indian, but in different ways. In his protest against British tyranny, he referred to himself and other American colonists as "slaves," and he described himself as an "oran-ootan" (an animal which, he claimed, lusted for black women) in his passionate cry of love for Maria Cosway. As a child, he had warm feelings for the Indian chief Outasette, whom he called "the guest of my father," and as the President of the United States, he addressed Indian chiefs as "my children." In one of his love letters to Cosway, he described himself as "a son of nature." The guilt Jefferson felt was different for each group: He was distressed over the brutalizing effect the tyranny of slavery had on the masters, and noted the decimating effect civilization had on the Indians. The most important basis for these differences in racial attitudes was the relationship of each group to the process of production. Jefferson and the American economy had located them in different places. The black was a slave worker within white civilization, and his labor was essential for white men like Jefferson to accumulate surplus, expand their capital, and also pay off their debts which some of them insisted, originated from the purchase of slaves. The Indian was not a laborer but an occupant of "vacant lands" which white men like Jefferson desired in order to expand their land holdings, as well as the national boundaries of white settlement, and to increase agricultural production.

Regardless of whether they were viewed in terms of their labor or their land, both blacks and Indians, for Jefferson, were under the domination of the body or the instinctual life. While both of them, like whites, were endowed with moral sense, they were both deficient in reason: Black intelligence was inferior and Indian intelligence was undeveloped. Thus both lacked the self-control and rational command Jefferson believed were essential qualities republicans and civilized men must have. In a republican society, men could not live "at random," and all behavior had to be "a matter of calculation" or else the strongest passions would overwhelm the moral sense and rationality. The hope Jefferson held for white America was the creation of a perfect society through the rule of reason and the expulsion of "enemies" from the "bowels" of the new republic. Curiously, Jefferson's language and recommendations for the realization of republican purity resembled the medical prescriptions of Dr. Rush. Turning with great ease from political to physical hygiene, Jefferson wrote: "The laws [of Virginia] have also descended to the preservation and improvement of the races of useful animals, such as horses, cattle, deer; to the extirpation of

those which are noxious, as wolves, squirrels, crows, blackbirds; and to the guarding our citizens against infectious disorders, by obliging suspected vessels coming into the state, to perform quarantine, and by regulating the conduct of persons having such disorders within the state." America had to be pure—in the animal kingdom as well as in human society. "Races" of "useful" animals must be improved and "noxious" ones "extirpated." The new nation must be isolated from "diseases" of all sorts: Immigrants afflicted with infectious disorders or monarchical principles must be quarantined. Indeed, everything—British corruption, luxury, monarchical ideas, "licentious" immigrants, the instinctual life, the passions, the body, blacks, and Indians—threatening to republican society had to be purged.

Throughout his life, Jefferson believed a purged republican civilization in America had significance for the world. He gave a republican emphasis to the Puritan errand in the wilderness. "The eyes of the virtuous all over the earth are turned with anxiety upon us, as the only depositories of the sacred fire of liberty," Jefferson observed, "and . . . our falling into anarchy would decide forever the destinies of mankind, and seal the political heresy that man is incapable of self-government." In his old age, he told John Adams: "And even should the cloud of barbarism and despotism again obscure the science and liberties of Europe, this country remains to preserve and restore light and liberty to them. In short the flames kindled on the 4th of July 1776, have spread over too much of the globe to be exterminated by the feeble engines of despotism."⁵¹ Americans had to be a pure and virtuous people if they were to maintain the trust the Revolution had bestowed upon them and remain the asylum of "liberty" in the world.