

# Racial Governmentality: Thomas Jefferson and African Colonisation in the United States before 1816

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Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free. Nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government (Jefferson 1821).

But to return to the colonizing trick. It will be well for me to notice here at once, that I do not mean indiscriminately to condemn all the members and advocates of this scheme, for I believe that there are some friends to the sons of Africa, who are laboring for our salvation, not in words only but in truth and in deed, who have been drawn into this plan—Some, more by persuasion than any thing else: while others, with humane feelings and lively zeal for our good, seeing how much we suffer from the afflictions poured upon us by unmerciful tyrants, are willing to enroll their names in any thing which they think has for its ultimate end our redemption from wretchedness and miseries: such men, with a heart truly overflowing with gratitude for their past services and zeal in our cause, I humbly beg to examine this plot minutely, and see if the end which they have in view will be completely consummated by such a course of procedure. Our friends who have been imperceptibly drawn into this plot I view with tenderness, and would not for the world injure their feelings, and I have only to hope for the future, that they will withdraw themselves from it;—for I declare to them, that the plot is not for the glory of God, but on the contrary the perpetuation of slavery in this country, which will ruin them and the country forever, unless something is immediately done (Walker 1829).

The Americas and Africa have long been connected by circuits of appropriation and exchange. In this paper I offer an interpretation of how one such a circuit—Thomas Jefferson's plan to deport African Americans from the United States and to resettle them in West Africa—constitutively articulates emerging forms of nationalism, racism, and liberal egalitarianism. I take up *Alternation's* commitment to interdisciplinarity by reading Jefferson's writings with Michel Foucault's studies of governmentality and thus testing the boundaries between 'history' and 'theory'. In turn, I hope that this interpretation of Jefferson's colonisation proposals will resonate with current South African debates over discourses and practices of race, nation, and equality. I also hope that this essay's own appropriation of 'history' and 'theory' can become part of the

ongoing circuits of exchange—historical, theoretical, political, intellectual—between the U.S. and South Africa which also have a long history<sup>1</sup>.

In 1829, a free African American tailor named David Walker published one of history's most uncompromising critiques of, and calls for resistance against, U.S. white nationalism. In particular, the fourth chapter or 'article' of *David Walker's Appeal, in Four Articles, Together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in Particular, and very Expressly, to Those of the United States of America* offers a sharp critique of one of the most extensively discussed and debated policy proposals of the colonial and ante-bellum periods—a proposal that, by the turn of the nineteenth century, would commonly be known as 'colonization'. Although particular colonisation proposals differed from one another in some of their details, they were invariably some version of the following: a state and/or privately funded plan to appropriate a territory in Africa or the Americas and to forcibly deport, and/or advocate the emigration of, either the entire African American population, or just the free African American population, to that territory<sup>2</sup>. The appropriated territory was, in turn, to become a formally free and independent nation-state. In addition, for many colonisationists this new and independent nation-state was to become an informal political, economic, and ideological colony of the U.S.

Walker took particular pains to address a peculiar aspect of the colonisation movement, an aspect about which contemporary scholars have been strikingly silent. He insisted on addressing the fact that some colonisationists understood colonisation as emancipatory. That is, they understood colonisation as a practical means of rendering or realising the often illusive, modern ideal of 'freedom'. In Article Four of his *Appeal*, Walker writes about such 'liberal' colonisationists in the unusually panegyric terms of the passage quoted in my epigraph. Even if we detect a hint of Walker's famous sarcastic or ironic hyperbole in this passage ('Our friends who have been imperceptibly drawn into this plot I view with tenderness, and would not for the world injure their feelings ...'), we still must take seriously his concern that the ideals of 'salvation', 'truth', 'humane feelings', 'good', 'redemption', and 'the glory of God' had been conjoined with 'the colonizing trick'. He alerts us to the problem that such 'friends to the sons of Africa' understand colonisation as a 'deed', 'plan' or 'procedure'—that is, a utilitarian rendering of such ideals, a material realisation or representation of the illusive notion of 'freedom'. By rhetorically distinguishing unabashed pro-slavery colonisationists such as Henry Clay—whom he condemns elsewhere in the *Appeal* in

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Rosenthal (1968), Booth (1976), Frederickson (1981) and Marx (1998).

<sup>2</sup> Winthrop Jordan (1968:566) notes that 'warhawk expansionism' between 1806 and 1816 precipitated a passionate belief in the destiny of the white settler colonisation of at least the entire North American continent, and made Africa and the Caribbean the only realistic sites for colonisation. The Monroe Doctrine, and Jefferson's approving response to it in a letter to Monroe, 24 Oct. 1823 (Jefferson 1899 X:277), serve as markers of this shift, although Jefferson seems to have believed in such continental destiny as early as 1786, as his 'observations for the article *Etats-Unis* prepared for the *Encyclopedie*' (Jefferson 1899.IV:180) indicates.

quite different and no uncertain terms (Walker [1829]1995:45-55)—from these ‘friends to the sons of Africa’, Walker refuses to interpret colonisation as simply a cynical or duplicitous ploy, as merely an ideological surface beneath which would lie more fundamental and self-evident economic and racialist interests of pro-slavery whites. Instead, Walker presents us with the difficult task of interpreting the conjoining—‘imperceptibly’, ‘by persuasion’—of colonisation with an emerging, Enlightenment conception of ‘freedom’. How, he seems to ask, might we perceive and formulate a critique of this powerful persuasion?

The articulation of ‘freedom’ with colonisation that so concerns Walker can be traced to an under-examined, early period in the history of the idea of colonisation—from the 1770s, when the first full scale colonisation proposals began to be discussed in the British-North American colonies, to just before the founding of the American Colonization Society in 1816—and in particular to the pro-colonisation writings of Thomas Jefferson<sup>3</sup>. Although some pamphlets advocating colonisation appeared before Jefferson first wrote of the proposal, his over forty years of persistent and detailed advocacy undoubtedly make him the project’s intellectual founder<sup>4</sup>. In fact, early nineteenth-century texts that argue for and against colonisation widely represent him as one of the proposal’s most influential supporters. As Walker’s *Appeal* suggests, the colonial and ante-bellum periods in general, and Jefferson’s foundational texts in particular, challenge today’s predominant, historical understanding of colonisation as solely a pro-slavery deportation project—that is, as a mechanism for expelling free blacks and rebellious slaves who might ‘incite’ a desire for freedom among slaves. Pro-slavery forces did begin to control colonisation ideologically and organisationally after 1816, and by the mid 1830s would thoroughly dominate the movement; in addition, even before 1816 some colonisationists certainly envisioned colonisation as solely a deportation scheme. However, from its origins in the 1770s until approximately 1816, the project was in fact planned and supported by a complex and uneasy coalition of free and enslaved blacks (most of whom were northerners), white abolitionists (mostly northerners), and slaveholders who were vaguely ‘troubled’ by the existence of slavery (most of whom were Virginians such as Jefferson). The colonisation projects envisioned by these disparate interests were not simply

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<sup>3</sup> This focus on Jefferson is also indebted to Walker, who in his *Appeal* critically examines Jefferson more than any other figure, although he does not discuss Jefferson’s pro-colonisation writings in detail—not surprisingly, as most of these writings are in the form of personal correspondence. In fact, Walker issues an impassioned if masculinist call for all African American men to conduct such an examination of Jefferson themselves. Challenging Jefferson’s racial theories, Walker (1995:14f) writes: ‘Mr. Jefferson’s very severe remarks on us have been so extensively argued upon by men whose attainments in literature, I shall never be able to reach, that I would not have meddled with it, were it not to solicit each of my brethren, who has the spirit of a man, to buy a copy of Mr. Jefferson’s “Notes on Virginia”, and put it in the hand of his son. For let no one of us suppose that the refutations which have been written by our white friends are enough—they are whites—we are blacks’.

<sup>4</sup> See Jordan (1968:542-551) for detailed descriptions of the earliest proposals.

deportation schemes, but rather multi-phase, decades long resettlement projects meant to establish a Christian nation-state of free African Americans in the image of, closely allied to, and even controlled by the U.S.

Despite Jefferson's role as a 'founding father' of colonisation, Jefferson scholars rarely even mention his long advocacy of and copious writings on the proposal. When his advocacy is discussed, it is inevitably placed in the context of the frequently examined relationship between his role as a 'founding father' of liberalism and his defence of racism or his role as a slaveowner. Most accounts of this relationship inevitably generate one of three positions. Firstly, Jefferson is said to be an enlightened liberal whose racism and slaveownership were unfortunate but aberrant or atavistic when one considers his entire legacy<sup>5</sup>. Secondly, Jefferson's racism and slaveownership are said to be moral outrages and thus signs of the limits or contradictions of his liberalism<sup>6</sup>. Thirdly, Jefferson is said to have been a benevolent but realistic or pragmatic slaveowner who did his best for his slaves and who grappled honestly with the overwhelming complexities of 'the peculiar institution'<sup>7</sup>. To the contrary, Jefferson's long and passionate advocacy of colonisation, and in particular the very language of that advocacy, suggest that colonisation was by no means inconsistent with or contradicted by what has been called Jeffersonian liberalism. Rather, any account of such liberalism needs to consider how Jefferson could incorporate into 'liberalism' both his distrust of strong, centralised government and his dogged advocacy of a massive, centralised, state-sponsored scheme to enumerate, deport, and resettle African Americans in Africa, and then to surveil and control that resettlement after deportation.

In this essay I argue that the racism and nationalism which characterise Jeffersonian colonisation are constitutive of the particular form of 'freedom' Jefferson embraced—the calculable or formal and abstract equality of subjects as citizens. When faced with the incomplete arrival of 'freedom' in the U.S. after independence, or what he persistently represented as the obscured and misdirected 'light' of the Enlightenment, Jefferson sought to capture that light and render a distinctly 'American freedom' through a distinctly modern, calculable logic of racial governmentality. That

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<sup>5</sup> In the words of John Chester Miller (1977:277), 'he signally failed to live up to his own precepts'. See also Cunningham (1987:61f); Mayer (1994:83); Miller (1977:264-266).

<sup>6</sup> In the words of Paul Finkelman (1993:181): 'Scrutinizing the contradictions between Jefferson's professions and his actions ... [suggests that] the test of Jefferson's position on slavery is ... whether he was able to transcend his economic interests and his sectional background to implement the ideals he articulated. Jefferson fails the test'. See also Berlin (1970:176f).

<sup>7</sup> In the words of Dumas Malone (1948:267): 'If his judgement on the Negroes was unfavorable, that of his local contemporaries generally was probably far more so. His observations were less notable in themselves, however, than in the spirit in which he made them. His comments on the race were those of a scientific mind, softened by humanitarianism. Or, to put it more precisely, they represented the tentative judgment of a kindly and scientifically minded man who deplored the absence of sufficient data and adequate criteria'.

is, his colonisation discourse combined what Michel Foucault called 'governmentality' with a ritualised fantasy of racial purification by articulating formal, abstract equality with the racial and nation codification of populations. In turn, his colonisation discourse naturalised this articulation by representing itself as merely the technical, practical, and self-evident reflection of pre-existing, empirically verifiable racial and national formations. My reading thus suggests that we place colonisation firmly within the 'principle of reason' that founded, and continues to echo throughout, the U.S.

In what follows I offer a brief account of the historical specificity of colonisation discourse before 1816. I then situate Jefferson's advocacy of colonisation in his personal correspondence and published texts, within the wider context of his representation of the relationships between the U.S. and Europe, between the U.S. and African Americans, and between 'freedom' and racial-national codification.

### **the colonial and ante-bellum colonisation conjuncture**

'Colonization' is, at first glance, a curious term for a proposal often represented today as a white nationalist scheme to deport African Americans. From the late sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries, the words 'deportation' and 'transportation' were commonly used in English to describe forced expulsions of an individual, class, or group from a community, colony or nation<sup>8</sup>. On the other hand, the terms 'colonization' and 'emigration' had been used since at least the seventeenth century to describe the more or less voluntary efforts of Europeans to establish economic and political outposts around the globe. 'Colonization' thus suggests a degree of voluntary activity not suggested by 'deportation' or 'transportation'.

How, then, might we account for the widespread application of the term 'colonization' to U.S. proposals for the resettlement of African Americans? Firstly, these proposals were different from deportation/transportation proposals because early colonisationists were far more concerned with the development of African Americans in their new location than they were with the details of the emigration or expulsion itself. They imagined colonised African Americans in a new African nation-state in the image of, and committed to the interests of, the United States<sup>9</sup>. Secondly, and perhaps

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<sup>8</sup> For example, the British practiced the deportation/transportation of 'criminals' to various locations, and the early English colonists in North America deported/transported from their towns or communities people who did not conform to their moral, ethical, or legal requirements (Beatie 1986; Linebaugh 1992:17f; Smith 1965).

<sup>9</sup> We might say, ahistorically, that colonisation proposals were something of a hybrid of seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth-century deportation/transportation proposals, nineteenth-century British colonialism (in the sense that they involved establishing governmental and cultural replicas of the U.S. on other continents through settler colonialism), and high imperialism or neo-colonialism (in the sense that they involved maintaining governmental and cultural control over a 'foreign' population even after that population attained formal independence and control over their own territory). It is this hybrid status, and its unaccountability within the standard narrative of colonialism, imperialism, and neo-imperialism, that we must consider.

more importantly, colonisation is also distinct from other juridical realisations of 'race' and 'nation' from the period, such as anti-miscegenation laws, because its discourse of national statehood promised formal equality to African Americans in the form of emancipation and national autonomy in Africa. That is, at its inception colonisation was associated not with punishment or exile as much as it was associated with an emerging Enlightenment conception of 'freedom'. This aspect of colonisation is particularly pronounced in its early period, from the late eighteenth century until the early nineteenth century. In fact, pro-slavery forces did not begin to support the proposal in substantial numbers, and African American and white abolitionists did not begin to organise against it in substantial numbers, until after the founding of the American Colonization Society (ACS)<sup>10</sup> in 1816-1817 (Foner 1975:584; Foner 1983:291,295; Jordan 1968:566; McCartney 1992:17f; Miller 1975:54-90; Moses 1978:34-5; Moses 1996:13f). Between the 1770s, when the first North American colonisation proposals emerged<sup>11</sup>, and 1816, black and white anti-slavery forces made up the great majority of colonisationists (Foner 1975:579-584; Jordan 1968:548f; Miller 1975:viif,3-20; Moses 1996:6-13).

This periodisation is certainly somewhat artificial and schematic—some pro-slavery forces did support colonisation before 1816, and after 1816 pro-slavery and anti-slavery arguments vied with each other for political and ideological control over the movement. My point is that during the period before 1816, when the term 'colonization' began to be applied to the expulsion and resettlement of African Americans, discourse on the proposal was predominately characterised by arguments for colonisation as a necessary and logical extension of emancipation, and thus

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<sup>10</sup> The ACS was a private, pro-colonisation organisation—many of whose members were nonetheless government officials who helped secure some government funding for the Society—which was founded in 1816-1817 and which eventually directed the establishment of Liberia in Western Africa. The ACS took inspiration from the British Committee for the Relief of the Black Poor, founded in 1786, and the British Sierra Leone Company, founded in 1791. See Asiegbu (1969) on the role of these British organisations in the establishment of the colony of Sierra Leone. On the origins and early history of the ACS, see Bancroft(1957); Foner (1975:584-593); Fox (1919); Shick (1980); Staudenraus (1980). For the history of the ACS after 1816, see Beyan (1991) and Shick (1980), on Liberia in particular; Foner (1983:255f,290-303), and for funding of ACS, Foner (1983:291-293); Fox (1919); Kinshasa (1988); McCartney (1992), chapters II and III; Miller (1975:54ff); Staudenraus (1980).

<sup>11</sup> Jordan (1968:542) dates the beginning of an ideologically coherent colonisation 'campaign' at the 1790s. He adds that the 'scattering of such proposals prior even to The Notes on Virginia [composed in 1781-1782, published in 1787], seem to have been highly miscellaneous in inspiration and purpose' (Jordan 1968:546). My analysis of Jefferson in this chapter will suggest that, by the 1780s, a coherent notion of colonisation has already taken shape. Foner (1975:580), who ignores the magnitude of Jefferson's contribution to colonisation, dates the origins of the debate among free blacks over colonisation at the late 1780s, but also provides evidence of free black colonisation proposals being discussed as early as 1773 (Foner 1975:579), as do Miller (1975:3-53); Moses (1996:6-11) and Shick (1980:3-5).

foregrounds the complicity between colonisation and emerging Enlightenment conceptions of 'freedom'. The sense of voluntary emigration carried by the word 'colonization' can, I would suggest, be read as a trace of this complicity. Though perhaps counter-intuitive in today's terms, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries colonisation's fusion of expulsion and emigration, of emancipation and racial separation was self-evident to many of its advocates<sup>12</sup>.

As opposed analyses as those of Winthrop Jordan and Henry Noble Sherwood make this point explicitly—without, however, pursuing its wider implications. Writes Jordan (1968:548): 'What was striking in this proposal [in its early period] was that fervent equalitarianism led directly to Negro removal'; and writes Sherwood (1916:487; see also 507f): 'During the last quarter of the eighteenth century deportation was regarded not as a punishment for crime nor as a means to prevent an increase in the number of free negroes, but as the logical outcome of manumission'<sup>13</sup>. Jordan's suggestive adverb 'directly' and Sherwood's passive construction 'was regarded' both

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<sup>12</sup> Davis (1994) and Stirn (1979) argue that even in the 1830s there was no sharp division between emancipation and colonisation.

<sup>13</sup> It should be noted that Sherwood (1916:507) is an apologist for white colonisationists in general, as when he argues that white leaders of the movement were committed to an essential and real freedom: 'The men identified with the movement were of a high order and had for their purpose the emancipation of a race and the civilization of a continent'. Sherwood is right, as was Walker, not to dismiss or repress the connection between 'freedom' and colonisation. But rather than celebrate the 'high', or essential and timeless, nature of the concept of 'freedom' at the core of colonisation, as Sherwood does, I will argue that colonisation produces a historically specified, discursively formed notion of 'freedom' itself epistemologically inseparable from racist and nationalist commitments. In his otherwise careful argument devoted to limning the historical character of U.S. white supremacism in relation to African Americans, Jordan (1968:548) to some extent echoes this Sherwood position when he claims that 'No one [of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century antislavery advocates in the North] denounced colonization as a proslavery instrument, as the next generation was to do, for the good reason that the project was supported only by men of genuine antislavery feeling'. Foner (1975:585) also criticizes Jordan for this comment, but fails to place it in the context of Jordan's entire argument about colonisation. Consider the passage immediately following Jordan's (1968:549) claim about 'genuine antislavery feeling': 'Indeed, by far the most heartfelt of the denunciations of colonization [during this early period]—and there seem to have been extremely few—came from the most vociferous proponent of slavery, William Loughton Smith.... Colonization was an emancipationist scheme calculated primarily to benefit the emancipators. Essentially it was a means of profiting white Americans by getting rid of the twin tyrannies of Negroes and slavery'. Each sentence in this passage offers a somewhat different account of the articulation of colonisation with emancipation. Following the Sherwood-esque claim about colonisationists' commitment to essential and true freedom, Jordan claims that true antislavery forces opposed colonisation, and then claims that colonisationists were disingenuous, self-interested profiteers. This shifting reflects Jordan's concerted, if not entirely successful, struggle to account for the problem at the centre of my essay.

beg the genealogical questions we must consider here: how did ‘fervent equalitarianism’ ‘lead directly’ to colonisation? How did colonisation come ‘to be regarded’ as ‘the logical outcome of manumission’? How, in effect, did colonisation come to be valued ‘directly’, ‘logically’, and self-evidently as emancipatory? When Walker wrote of ‘some friends to the sons of Africa’ being drawn ‘imperceptibly’ into colonisation, he was referring, I would argue, to precisely this self-evidence that emerged before 1816. Our task, then, is to sketch a genealogy of this ‘striking’ self-evidence of ‘emancipatory colonization’.

Walker’s *Appeal* also urges an analysis of what can be called the imperial form of colonisation’s articulation with emancipation. The full title of Walker’s *Appeal*, as well as the persistently global terms of his analysis<sup>14</sup>, illustrate the two interrelated levels, domestic and foreign, on which early pro-colonisationists operated. As I have mentioned, a crucial aspect of colonisation during this period was the concern of its advocates with the status and development of African Americans in their new location, particularly when that new location was imagined to be Africa. The emphasis of colonisation was not on returning Africans who had been taken from Africa to their ‘homeland’, as much as it was on establishing settlements of Christian African Americans in ‘uncivilized’ and ‘undeveloped’ regions of the globe. This imperial vision sought not only to form a racially and nationally particular, white American nation, but also to begin spreading that which was understood to be universal and exemplary about white America: its Christianity, its capitalist economy, and its governmental system of national statehood. Thus, colonised African Americans were represented not only as racially particularised subjects to be separated from white America, but also, paradoxically, as abstract bearers of American national form to be sent out as global agents of American universality and exemplarity among Africans from whom African Americans were also in some sense distinct. I will examine this dual role in more detail later in this essay. For now, however, I simply want to emphasise that the term ‘colonization’ also carries the trace of these dual, interrelated roles—racial ‘purification’ of a domestic space and imperial power over foreign spaces—and that these roles give colonisation a complexity that the terms ‘deportation’, ‘transportation’, or ‘exile’ fail to capture.

Unfortunately, most twentieth-century historians of colonisation have neither addressed the genealogical question of colonisation’s articulation with emancipation, nor examined the imperial form of colonisation, nor considered the specificity of pre-1816 colonisation discourse in any detail<sup>15</sup>. Instead, they have been most concerned with determining whether post-1816 colonisation, considered in a domestic

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<sup>14</sup> See for example, Walker (1995:1-3, 7, 12f, 16-18, 20, 35-37, 46, 63, 72f).

<sup>15</sup> Only Foner (1975:579-594; 1983:290-308) Jordan (1968:542-569) and Miller (1975:3-53) discuss pre-1816 in any detail, and only they struggle to evaluate the relationships among the mixed interests of colonisationists (though they still consider the interests to be discrete) and the curious connection between ‘emancipation’ and ‘colonization’.



framework, could be characterised as either essentially radical and emancipatory, liberal and abolitionist, or conservative and pro-slavery. The question is not an easy one to answer, however, because the proposal brought together an odd, shifting, and uneasy coalition of free black, pro-slavery white, and abolitionist white advocates<sup>16</sup>. In the face of this complexity, most historical accounts have offered what might be called 'political interest' based explanations of colonisation. That is, they have explained colonisation by dividing its advocates into distinct groups—such as pro-slavery whites, black nationalists, and abolitionists—each of which is said to have viewed colonisation as an effective means of realising its particular political interests. These historical accounts differ only over which group tended to dominate the discussions over and the actual efforts at colonisation. As a result, colonial and ante-bellum colonisation has almost invariably been represented in one of two ways: firstly, as a proposal without substantial or genuine support among African Americans, which was a tool of pro-slavery or racially nationalistic whites who managed to dupe some naive free blacks and anti-slavery whites into co-operating with them, and whose real interest was to deport the free black population to keep them from 'inciting' a desire for freedom among enslaved blacks<sup>17</sup>; or secondly, as a proposal of early or proto black nationalists who, out of their desire for autonomy, worked tactically and warily with pro-slavery whites<sup>18</sup>.

These historical accounts are not quite 'wrong'. There certainly were pro-slavery forces who advocated colonisation as a way to deport free blacks whom they saw as a threat to the slave system—especially, as I mentioned above, after 1816. Many

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<sup>16</sup> The question of whether any enslaved blacks supported colonisation, and to what extent and in what manner, is of course extremely difficult to document, given their strictly subaltern position. There was certainly some support, given that some of the African Americans who went to Africa had been slaves, though certainly colonised slaves might have gone simply because it was their only means of attaining freedom from their masters. The efforts Walker went through to disseminate his *Appeal*, particularly throughout the South, would seem to suggest that he had indications of support among slaves for colonisation—support he risked his life to discourage. On these efforts, see Aptheker (1965:1,45-53); Eaton (1936); Harding (1981:92-94); Hinks (1994); Peace and Peace (1974).

<sup>17</sup> See Berlin (1970:172-188); Beyan (1991); Horton (1993); Kinshasa (1988); Mehlinger (1916).

<sup>18</sup> See Shick (1980); Moses (1996); McCartney (1992); Miller (1975); Stuckey (1972:1-29). Silger offers an extended study of the multiple 'motivations' of free blacks who emigrated after 1816 under the auspices of the American Colonization Society, without dismissing the importance of black opposition to emigration. There is another group of early twentieth century histories that offer apologia for colonisation. They argue that pro-colonisationists were well meaning and benevolent but technically unsophisticated enough to realize the proposal—see, for example, Bancroft (1957); Foster (1953); Fox (1919); Frederickson (1971); Opper (1972); Sherwood (1915); Staudenraus (1980). There is also much scholarship on colonisation and its white and black nationalist supporters from the mid nineteenth to the mid twentieth centuries, though this period raises issues outside the scope of my study.

anti-colonisationists, as well as some colonisationists, pointed this out at the time. In addition, black colonisationists such as Olaudah Equiano and Paul Cuffe were well aware of these pro-slavery interests, and their tactical discussions of autonomy certainly influenced later black nationalists such as Martin Delany<sup>19</sup>. Nonetheless, these contemporary histories miss something of the texture of pre-1816 colonisation. Firstly, by reducing colonisation to the rational pursuit of self-evident interests by autonomous political actors, such explanations fail to consider what it was about colonisation that conjoined contradictory interests. Perhaps more importantly, however, such explanations also fail to consider carefully the articulation of colonisation with emancipation. By seeking to determine whether colonisation was genuinely emancipatory or not, these histories actually generalise and de-historicise ‘freedom’ by suppressing its historically specific articulation with colonisation. These historical accounts thus fail to address the questions Walker posed in 1829: what notion of ‘freedom’ is rendered by colonisation, and how does that rendering become self-evident to colonisationists? Jefferson’s private correspondence and published writings can help us begin to formulate answers to these crucial questions.

### **‘mutilated however in it’s freest parts’—Jefferson’s enlightenment in the eyes of Europe**

Thomas Jefferson (1984:44) tells us in his ‘Autobiography’ that on February 7, 1779, as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, he supported an amendment to a slavery bill calling for ‘the freedom of all [slaves] born after a certain day, and deportation at a proper age’. In Query XIV of the ‘Notes on the State of Virginia’ (composed 1781-1782, published in 1787), entitled ‘The administration of justice and description of the laws?’, he offers an expanded description of ‘deportation’—which in a few years he would refer to as colonisation—to an account of the same amendment:

an amendment ... was prepared ... directing, that [slaves] should continue with their parents to a certain age, then be brought up, at the public expense, to tillage, arts or sciences, according to their geniusses, till the females should be eighteen, and the males twenty-one years of age, when they should be colonized to such place as the circumstances of the time should render most proper, sending them out with arms, implements of household and of the handicraft arts, feeds, pairs of useful domestic animals, &c. to declare them a free and independent people, and extend to them our alliance and protection, till they shall have acquired strength; and to send vessels at the same time to other parts of the world for an equal number of white

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<sup>19</sup> Equiano eventually abandoned colonisation and spoke out against it, and Cuffe only began warily advocating it after years of struggling for the emancipation of African Americans in the U.S. On Equiano, see Equiano (1995:325-351). On Cuffe, see Harris (1972); Thomas (1986).

inhabitants; to induce whom to migrate hither, proper encouragements were to be proposed ... (Jefferson 1984:264).

Between these 'Notes on the State of Virginia' and a letter written to Miss Fanny Wright just before his death (7 Aug. 1825) (Jefferson 1899.X: 343)<sup>20</sup>, Jefferson wrote repeatedly in his published writings and private letters about his strong belief in and desire for colonisation, making it arguably his most consistently articulated policy proposal<sup>21</sup>. He would eventually add to and alter the plan—variously suggesting Africa, the West Indies and western North America as sites for colonisation, proposing different ways to raise money for the project, altering the requirements for emancipation, calling for 'Germans' or simply 'white laborers' to replace colonised blacks. Yet the essential structure would remain the same from the 'Notes' to the 7 Aug. 1825 letter: gradual, full emancipation of all slaves followed by their forced deportation from the territorial boundaries of the United States and their subsequent incorporation into a formally independent nation-state that would nevertheless be economically and politically dependent upon the United States.

Jefferson began advocating colonisation at a crucial moment in U.S. history, a moment during which elite U.S. nation-state builders were struggling to formulate in theory and formalise in practice the ideas and projects of the Enlightenment. In his writings, Jefferson consistently represents colonisation as part of this greater struggle to respond to the call of reason, to capture and render or represent the 'light' of the Enlightenment in philosophical, political and juridical concepts and institutions. In fact, Jefferson consistently embeds his representation of colonisation in a very precise rhetorical structure. He first figures 'freedom' as the light of the Enlightenment which has been passed from Europe to the U.S., but which has been inexplicably refracted and reflected, such that it has arrived impure and incomplete and has left slavery intact and unenlightened. He then worries about Europe watching over and judging the fate of this refracted and impure light, and responds to this worry by advocating colonisation as a technical, governmental scheme through which the U.S. could gain enough control over that light to purify it at home and pass it on to African Americans. Finally, he figures the future relationship of the U.S. to colonised African Americans as one of the

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<sup>20</sup> All references to Jefferson's letters refer to Ford's (1899) multi-volume collected works, unless another author-date is given in the parenthetical citation. I will give the volume number first, followed by the page number in the volume. I will also give the date of the letter in parentheses before the citation since there is as yet no complete or authoritative collection of Jefferson's letters.

<sup>21</sup> According to Wilson, Jefferson's enormous correspondence is estimated at approximately 19,000 letters (Onuf 1993:67), and thus constitutes his most important body of literature. In this essay I discuss just a few letters dealing explicitly and substantially with colonisation, and written between 1785 and 1825, as well as on the 'Autobiography' (Jefferson 1899.I:66-69) and the 'Notes on the State of Virginia' (Jefferson 1984), which also contain important discussions of colonisation.

U.S. itself watching over and judging the new nation-state. In the final three sections of this essay I will consider each step in this rhetorical structure. Let us begin, then, with Jefferson's representation of the relationship of Europe to the U.S.

Throughout his lifelong faith in the possibility of fully representing Enlightenment truth—figured persistently as the 'light' of the Enlightenment—Jefferson struggles with its refraction from the moment of its emergence in Europe, and with the possibility of its non-arrival or impure arrival in the U.S. A letter Jefferson wrote from Paris to English abolitionist Dr. Richard Price in 1785 can introduce us to the rhetorical texture of this ambivalent attitude toward Europe. The letter evaluates a pamphlet Price wrote about slavery in the U.S. by predicting the pamphlet's reception in various states and regions. Jefferson begins by positioning Price and himself as allies attempting to get a complete view of justice:

In Maryland I do not find such a disposition to begin the redress of this enormity as in Virginia. This is the next state to which we may turn our eyes for the interesting spectacle of justice in conflict with avarice and oppression: a conflict wherein the sacred side is gaining daily recruits, from the influx into office of young men grown and growing up (7 Aug. 1785) (Jefferson 1899.IV:83).

The struggle for what elsewhere in the letter he calls 'emancipation' is figured here as something one can see, as a 'spectacle' the outcome of which will bring 'justice' into the light and into full view. At this point in the letter, Jefferson and Price see the same 'conflict'—both understand which is 'the sacred side' and which is the side of 'avarice and oppression'. This passage offers not an inkling of miscommunication or misunderstanding, nor any hint that some aspect of the 'spectacle' might be obscured, out of view, or other than what it appears to be.

Yet Jefferson cannot help but qualify his alliance with Price and Price's English abolitionism by the end of the letter:

Our country is getting into a ferment against yours, or rather has caught it from yours. God knows how this will end; but assuredly in one extreme or the other. There can be no medium between those who have loved so much. I think the decision is in your power as yet, but will not be so long (Jefferson 1899.IV:84).

Suddenly, Jefferson looks warily, even anxiously at Price, registers his ambivalence about the 'ferment' and thereby figures a disjunction between himself and Price. 'Our eyes'—Jefferson's and Price's, the U.S.'s and England's—appear not to have 'turned' together to view the 'spectacle' from which 'justice' would emerge into the full view of Enlightenment, but rather to have turned toward, and even threateningly against, each other. Their 'love' seems to have exceeded 'sacred' bounds, to have seethed and perhaps to have been infected by England, but certainly to be on the verge of slipping, unspeakably, out of 'control'. Precariously perched between a controlled, homosocial alliance on track to Enlightenment and a volatile opposition threatening to become

‘extreme’, between a ‘powerful’ rendering of ‘emancipation’ and an anxious, fearful scene of watching and being watched, Jefferson here sets the terms for what will be a life-long, ambivalent relationship to the figures of Europe and Enlightenment.

A letter written just six months later to James Madison, again from Paris, expands upon this ambivalent mixture of admiration for and distrust of Europe, coupled with anxiety over capturing and rendering the light of the Enlightenment (8 Feb. 1786) (Jefferson 1899.IV:192-197). As if to foreground this very ambivalence and anxiety, the letter opens with an enumeration of letters exchanged and expected, an implicit acknowledgement of the unsure lines of communication across the Atlantic:

Dear Sir,—My last letters have been of the 1st & 20th of Sep. and the 28th of Oct. Yours unacknowledged are of Aug. 20, Oct. 3, & Nov. 15. I take this the first safe opportunity of enclosing to you the bills of lading for your books, & two others for your namesake of Williamsburgh & for the attorney which I will pray you to forward (Jefferson 1899.I:1-7).

This recognition of the possibility of communicative misfire between Europe and the U.S.—that is, of the possibility that Madison may never even see this letter, that ‘the first safe opportunity’ may not be safe enough—resonates throughout the entire letter as a vague sense of impossibility.

Nonetheless, Jefferson places great weight on certain trans-Atlantic communications, particularly those involving structurally unequal exchanges of prestige, knowledge, technical skill, the arts and primary goods. He continues:

I thank you for the communication of the remonstrance against the assessment<sup>22</sup>. Mazzei who is now in Holland promised me to have it published in the Leyden gazette. It will do us great honour (Jefferson 1899.I:7-11).

For the rest of the letter’s opening paragraph he elaborates on the importance of honourable representations of the U.S. in Europe. After telling Madison of his ‘great pleasure’ that the Virginia Assembly has agreed in principle to federal regulation of their commerce<sup>23</sup>, Jefferson writes:

The politics of Europe render it indispensably necessary that with respect to everything external we be one nation only, firmly hooped together. Interior government is what each state should keep to itself. If it could be seen in

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<sup>22</sup> The reference here is unclear.

<sup>23</sup> Jefferson must be referring to a 1786 decision that sent Virginia delegates to a meeting in Annapolis with delegates from Maryland, Delaware, New York and Pennsylvania to discuss interstate commerce. It was at this meeting that some of the country’s most powerful politicians decided to call a constitutional convention in 1787 to revise the Articles of Confederation.

Europe that all our states could be brought to concur in what the Virginia assembly has done, it would produce a total revolution in their opinion of us, and respect for us. And it should ever be held in mind that insult & war are the consequences of a want of respectability in the national character. As long as the states exercise separately those acts of power which respect foreign nations, so long will there continue to be irregularities committing by some one or other of them which will constantly keep us on an ill footing with foreign nations (Jefferson 1899.I:18-33).

The revolutionary tactics on which Jefferson places so much importance here are quite different from those of 1776—though both seem to be part of one process, one movement toward ‘total revolution’. The task is now to fabricate a singular ‘national character’, the absence of which threatens not only armed conflict, but also ‘insult’. This character is first and foremost an ‘external’ one, an outward appearance or surface which, though not substanceless, is nonetheless neither autonomous nor intensive. It is not autonomous because it only exists to the extent that it is ‘seen in Europe’, to the extent that it alters ‘foreign’ ‘respect’ and ‘opinion;’ and it is not intensive because an unspecified terrain of interiority, ‘interior government’, is reserved for ‘each state to [keep to] itself’. The revolutionary goal is still, as it was in 1776, to differentiate an internal political, economic, and ideological space from an external one, to forge an ‘independent union’, and yet the very failure of that differentiation, the fact that it has fallen short of being ‘total’, calls forth new and different tactics. Jefferson holds out hope here that the business unfinished by the armed, political revolution, that which kept it from realising ‘total revolution’, could be completed on the level of organisation and representation. Yet the true test of that completion, the eyes in which it will be interpreted, ironically lie in a ‘Europe’ which threatens ‘our states’ and ‘national character’ with low opinion, lack of respect, insult, and war. The ambivalent exchange of glances figured in the letter to Prince now appear to represent not simply a mutual watching and being watched, but rather a powerful and threatening European surveillance and judgement.

Jefferson displaces this threatening sense of European observation and judgement to the next paragraph, in which he frets over the fate of a lost rough draft of his ‘Notes on the State of Virginia’:

I have been unfortunate here with this trifle. I gave out a few copies only, & to confidential persons, writing in every copy a restraint against its publication. Among others I gave a copy to a Mr. Williams. He died. I immediately took every precaution I could to recover this copy. But by some means or other a bookseller had got hold of it. He employed a hireling translator and was about publishing it in the most injurious form possible. An Abbé Morellet, a man of letters here to whom I had given a copy, got notice of this. He had translated some passages for a particular purpose: and he compounded with the bookseller to translate & give him the whole, on his declining the first publication. I found it necessary to confirm this, and it will be published in French, still mutilated however in it’s freest parts. I am now at a loss what to do as to England. Everything, good or bad, is thought worth publishing there;

and I apprehend a translation back from the French, and a publication there. I rather believe it will be most eligible to let the original come out in that country; but am not yet decided<sup>24</sup> (Jefferson 1899.I:37-58).

Despite his most rigorous efforts, Jefferson fails in Europe to control his representation of the U.S. One chance mishap, Mr. William's death, triggers a chain of chaotic events, sending his 'Notes' careening down a dangerous and circuitous path; the death, a lost text, a futile pursuit, the violence of translation, and the uncontrollability of mechanical reproduction overpower 'every precaution', all 'confidence' and 'restraints', and put Jefferson utterly 'at a loss'. The intensity of his concern evinces precisely the degree of both power and threat he grants to Europe—were France and England simply as inept and amateurish as these booksellers and translators, Jefferson would hardly concern himself with this 'trifle'.

However, no sooner has Jefferson laid out his anxieties and fears about a generalised European surveillance and judgement than he allows the unguarded desire for 'great honor' in the eyes of a Europe reading about him and Madison in the Leyden gazette, expressed in the first paragraph, to return and usurp the rest of the letter:

I have purchased little for you in the book way, since I sent the catalogue of my former purchases. I wish first to have your answer to that, and your information what parts of those purchases went out of your plan. You can easily say buy more of this kind, less of that &c. My wish is to conform myself to yours. I can get for you the original Paris edition in folio of the Encyclopedie for 620 livres, 35.vols.; a good edn in 39 vols 4vo, for 380#; and a good one in 39 vols 8vo, for 280#. The new one will be superior in far the greater number of articles: but not in all. And the possession of the ancient one has moreover the advantage of supplying present use. I have bought one for myself, but wait your orders as to you (Jefferson 1899.I:59-73).

This almost giddy excitement about the consummate embodiment of the Enlightenment's promise, the 'Encyclopedie', seems to displace the anxiety and fear of the previous paragraph. Here, France is the unambiguous home of knowledge, source of Enlightenment, and fount of truth. Yet this excitement shares much with the previous anxiety and fear. It is as if, because Madison must still send for the 'Encyclopedie' from Paris, the U.S. must still be judged in 'Europe's' eyes. For it is on the 'superiority' of the 'Encyclopedie' that Jefferson's 'Europe' would base its right to surveil, interpret, and judge 'our states'. The Enlightenment has indeed passed from Europe to the U.S., and yet not fully; it is passing, in a sense, still arriving and not yet resting, in the absence of 'total revolution'.

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<sup>24</sup> Jefferson did, in fact, publish the first edition of 'Notes on the State of Virginia' in England, in 1787.

This anxious excitement becomes even clearer in the rest of the letter's third paragraph. Continuing from the passage above,

I remember your purchase of a watch in Philadelphia. If it should not have proved good, you can probably sell her. In that case I can get for you here, one made as perfect as human art can make it for about 24 louis. I have had such a one made by the best & most faithful hand in Paris. It has a second hand, but no repeating, no day of the month, nor other useless thing to impede and injure the movements which are necessary. For 12 louis more you can have in the same cover, but on the back side & absolutely unconnected with the movements of the watch, a pedometer which shall render you an exact account of the distances you walk. Your pleasure hereon shall be awaited (Jefferson 1899.I:73-86)

Here, modern technology and craftsmanship are also placed firmly in Paris, to the implicit embarrassment of Philadelphia, the supposed home of the most enlightened of revolutions. The letter then proceeds to add politics and the arts to the list of Europe's claims to the light of Enlightenment. A long discussion of the statue Houdon, a French sculptor, is to make of George Washington (Jefferson 1899.I:87-110) is followed by a further recommendation that a bust of Count Rochambeau be placed in the 'new capitol' next to 'that of Gates, Greene, Franklin' in honor of his similar contribution (Jefferson 1899.I:137-145), and an excited description of 'one new invention ... a mixture of the arts of engraving and printing, rendering both cheaper' (Jefferson 1899.I:158-170)<sup>25</sup>. Jefferson also makes a recommendation that the Marquis de Lafayette be given land in the U.S. in honor of his contribution to the Enlightenment<sup>26</sup>. In fact, Jefferson justifies this gift of land on the grounds that 'the day [may] come when it might be an useful asylum to him' (122f). That this day, in which the U.S. would be the new home of such enlightened figures as the Marquis, has clearly not arrived—that it is still to come—is precisely the source of the letter's ambivalence over the traffic of Enlightenment from Europe to the U.S.

Jefferson's final comments to Madison, given in a post-script, only deepen this ambivalence:

P.S. Could you procure & send me an hundred or two nuts of the peccan?

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<sup>25</sup> Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, or Count Rochambeau, was a French soldier who served under Washington in the Revolutionary War. Sent to the U.S. in 1780, he got through the British blockade in 1781 and eventually commanded French troops in the battle that led to the surrender of Lord Cornwallis. Made a Marshal of France in 1791, he was then imprisoned and almost guillotined during the Terror, but Napoleon later restored his rank and estates.

<sup>26</sup> In recognition of Lafayette's many activities as a soldier in support of revolutionaries in the U.S. and France, and his troubles in France after the Terror, the U.S. Congress gave him a huge land grant in Louisiana in 1803, as well as \$200,000 and a township in Florida in 1824.



they would enable me to oblige some characters here whom I should be much gratified to oblige. They should come packed in sand. The seeds of the sugar maple too would be a great present (Jefferson 1899.I:173-178).

Still an economic satellite of Europe, sending primary goods to France and receiving knowledge, the arts, and political luminaries from the same, Jefferson's U.S. is very much still struggling to capture its share of Enlightenment, and Jefferson is still quite convinced that any such capture will need to be seen and judged by European eyes.

This European surveillance and judgement is particularly powerful to Jefferson precisely because it is inseparable from Enlightenment. The light of Enlightenment seems to figure and be figured by the watchful and judgmental gaze of Europe. The letter to Madison thus allegorises a fear inseparable from admiration, a surveillance inseparable from freedom, a sovereign judgement inseparable from truth. Jefferson seems completely subjected to this ambivalence, completely 'at a loss', as he writes about the missing copy of 'Notes on the State of Virginia'. Just as that missing text is bound to be 'mutilated however in it's freest parts' (Jefferson 1899.I:52f), so too does Jefferson seem to become most anxious at precisely the moments of his closest proximity to, and his deepest excitement over, Enlightenment.

### **figuring governmentality**

Jefferson is not, however, content to oscillate perpetually within this ambivalent and paradoxical scene of Enlightenment and surveillance, of anxious excitement, of 'mutilating freedom'. Devoted as he is to his vocation of nation-state building, he works hard to capture and render the light by which he is simultaneously watched and judged. Consequently, as persistently as this ambivalence resurfaces throughout his correspondence, so too does a meticulous formulation of its resolution. Consider, for example, a letter Jefferson wrote to the Marquis de Lafayette in 1820 (20 Dec.) (Jefferson 1899.X:179-181). This exemplary speech act—in which a representative of the U.S. responds to a representative of France about the way Europe strikes the U.S. and the way both have been struck by the light of the Enlightenment—is shot through with moments of 'infelicity', or what J.L. Austin would call 'non-serious', 'parasitic', or 'non-ordinary' interruptions of ordinary, direct communication. On the one hand, Jefferson declares that he knows just what is 'going on' in France and in the U.S., evincing a confident tone which pervades the letter. And yet, in the process of trotting out many of the rhetorical conventions of Enlightenment discourse, Jefferson stages a figural drama in which the trope of national unity and power emerges to offer a coherent and felicitous resolution to the conflict among Enlightenment, European judgement, and slavery.

In his letter to the Marquis, Jefferson attempts nothing less than the task of representing the Enlightenment. The letter has five general sections: first, Jefferson's lament about his failing health (Jefferson 1899.I:1-9); second, Jefferson's concerns with the state of affairs in France, and Europe in general (Jefferson 1899.I:9-26); third, Jefferson's attempt to reassure Marquis about conflicts between Spain and the U.S. over

Spain's colonies in the Americas (Jefferson 1899.I:26-48); fourth, Jefferson's assurance that 'things are going well' in the U.S., and that the resolution of the Missouri's entrance into the union as a slave state will in fact further the cause of emancipation (Jefferson 1899.I:49-65); and fifth, a discussion of some diplomatic business, and a salutation remarking once again on his failing health (Jefferson 1899.I:66-83). From the tired and failing body of the opening lines, through mixed metaphors to the 'anxiously wished' emancipation of the closing lines, the apparently confident and optimistic tone of the letter is coupled with parasitical ambiguity, discomfort and struggle.

This complexity is especially evident in its unwieldy metaphors. In the second section, and in the span of less than 200 words, Jefferson shifts through six distinct tropes, moving from light to the wind to volcanic rumblings to bowels to explosions and finally to disease and infection, all in an effort to render the twists and turns of enlightened truth. He begins this section with the classic trope of light in a conventional panegyric to Europe and America's civilising mission:

In the meantime your country has been going on less well than I had hoped. But it will go on. The light which has been shed on the mind of man through the civilised world, has given it new direction, from which no human power can divert it (Jefferson 1899.I:9-15).

The last sentence couples the most lofty goals and desires with utterly ambiguous references and syntax. The source of the light of the Enlightenment—so often filled by God, as in the Declaration of Independence ('Laws of Nature and of Nature's God', 'endowed by their Creator', 'protection of Divine Providence')—is here passive and unknown, though implicitly non-human given the last phrase of the sentence. Also, the light's rays are immediately bent and refracted, their proper course almost indecipherable. Does the light pass from this unknown source to 'the mind of man' and then 'through the civilized world', or 'through the civilized world' and then onto 'the mind of man'? And what of the force and brilliance the light might lose as it passes 'through'? If the mind of man is struck second, how can we know that the light is pure and uncorrupted? The antecedent of 'it' in 'has given it new direction' is also ambiguous. It apparently refers to 'your country', i.e. France, and yet 'the light', 'the mind of man', and 'the civilized world' are also potentially 'given new direction' by the Enlightenment. If it is possible to give the light new direction, in other words if the light has the potential to be misdirected, then surely the source of that light or the light itself is imperfect—capable, at the very least, of being corrupted and misdirected by 'the mind of man' or civilisation through which it must pass. And if the source or the light itself is capable of being corrupted and misdirected, then how could we possibly determine what that truth is beyond the shadow of a doubt? How could 'the people' be represented in perfect accordance with 'self-evident truths' if those truths could always already be refracted?

Despite Jefferson's confidence in the progressive development of 'things' (Jefferson 1899.I:9) and the steady dilution of 'evil' (Jefferson 1899.I:60f), this

second section of his letter suggests that the light of Enlightenment truth is always capable of being newly and more perfectly directed as well as misdirected. The light of truth emerges coextensively with imperfect non-truths, each new direction with other potential misdirections, every proper destination with improper arrivals. Jefferson's language suggests that the light itself, not God or Nature, has the non-human power to direct the truth of Enlightenment, to give itself a new and more proper direction, for he does not invoke an all knowing figure who directs the light as an implement or tool, as an official would a flashlight to illuminate 'what is going on'. The light sustains itself, it directs and misdirects itself.

Toward the end of section two of the letter, the tropic movement slips into the violent and unpredictable language of revolution. Jefferson lectures the Marquis about

the volcanic rumblings in the bowels of Europe, from north to south, ... [which] threaten a general explosion, and the march of armies into Italy cannot end in a simple march (Jefferson 1899.I:17-21).

Here the source of Enlightenment remains underground, deep within the entrails of the earth, powerful because it is hidden from sight. And Jefferson adds to this the ambiguous power of disease and infection:

The disease of liberty is catching; those armies will take it in the south, carry it thence to their own country, spread there the infection of revolution and representative government, and raise its people from the prone condition of brutes to the erect altitude of man (Jefferson 1899.I:21-26).

This last tropic movement brings the sureness of 'the light' down to the doubleness of revolution figured as that which both poisons autocratic evil and immunises the body politic, allowing healthy representative government to grow.

This wild tropic movement—from pure and impure light to invisible breeze to hidden rumblings to cathartic disease—captures precisely the difficulty of rendering enlightened representations of the 'good society'. With characteristic eighteenth and early nineteenth-century rhetorical verve, Jefferson gives us a representation of political truth that disseminates far beyond his confident tone. Perhaps most importantly, this letter exposes Jefferson to the possibility that the pure light of emancipation might be corruptible and diseased from the start.

But what of the context of this speech act, its addressee and its addresser? Jefferson delivers this ambiguous and unwieldy interpretation of political Enlightenment to the Marquis, but also as a representative of the U.S. he delivers it to Europe in general. That is, he expresses a need to respond to Europe. Jefferson certainly envisions Europe as One for the purposes of the Enlightenment ('The volcanic rumblings in the bowels of Europe, from north to south'). His tone is in part paternalistic—'In the meantime your country has been going on less well than I had hoped. But it will go on'—and in part panegyric or filial, since, as we saw in the letter to Madison, Jefferson understands by 'the civilized world' Europe first. This paternalistic/panegyric attitude about Europe returns us once again to the 'infelicities' of the

sentence:

The light which has been shed on the mind of man through the civilized world, has given it a new direction, from which no human power can divert it.

Now more than ever we wonder whether the U.S. or Europe is privy to the light. Certainly Jefferson thought of the U.S. as improving on, by breaking from, Europe. And yet he does seem to address Europe with a special reverence, as a rebellious child who can never fully leave his family behind.

In the next paragraph of the letter, however, Jefferson quite suddenly displaces the ambivalence figured with this wild tropic movement in general, and the ‘disease of liberty’ in particular, by offering a historically absurd but rhetorically confident allegory of American unity. He begins with a remark that counters section one’s ‘your country has been going on less well than I had hoped’ (Jefferson 1899.I:10f); ‘With us things are going on well’ (Jefferson 1899.I:49). The ‘things’ to which he refers are the acquisition of Florida in 1819 and the pending entrance of Missouri into the Union as a slave state. Both events were fought over bitterly during the period, and ended up as victories for pro-slavery forces—thanks in part to Jefferson’s support—since under Spanish control Florida had become a refuge for escaped slaves, and with Missouri on their side the slave states would hold their own against the free states in Congress and in Presidential elections<sup>27</sup>. Yet Jefferson offers a different picture:

The boisterous sea of liberty indeed is never without a wave, and that from Missouri is now rolling towards us, but we shall ride over it as we have over all others. It is not a moral question, but one merely of power. Its object is to raise a geographical principle for the choice of a President, and the noise will be kept up till that is effected. All know that permitting the slaves of the South to spread into the West will not add one being to that unfortunate condition, that it will increase the happiness of those existing, and by spreading them over a larger surface, will dilute the evil everywhere, and facilitate the means of getting finally rid of it, an event more anxiously wished by those on whom it presses than by the noisy pretenders to exclusive humanity. In the meantime, it is a ladder for rivals climbing to power (Jefferson 1899.I:49-65)

The confident unity represented repeatedly by ‘we’ and ‘All’ make it possible to figure the U.S. as a powerful and sturdy ship riding the ‘boisterous sea of liberty’, and as an

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<sup>27</sup> Both Miller (1975:231f) and Peterson (1960:191-193) represent Jefferson’s support of Missouri’s entrance into the union as a slave state as, in Miller’s (1975:232) words, ‘mark[ing] the strange death of Jeffersonian liberalism’. As I have been arguing, a close reading of Jefferson’s correspondence suggests that we place such a moment firmly within the life of such liberalism.

expert or scientist knowledgeable formulating the elements of a 'finally' free solution: 'it will increase the happiness of those existing, and by spreading them over a larger surface, will dilute the evil everywhere'. These figures displace the difficulty of 'a moral question' with the calculable clarity of questions 'merely of power'.

If this representative of the U.S. must thus represent his country to a representative of Europe in the most coherent, confident, and powerful—if disingenuous—terms, then Europe must be something of a judge in Jefferson's imagination. That is, if Jefferson's enlightened country receives the light of the Enlightenment as refracted through its irreducible ties to Europe, then any development of the Enlightenment in the U.S. must be carried out under the watchful eye of Europe. The 'eyes' he and Dr. Richard Price focused on 'justice' are now trained on Jefferson himself. Subjected to this field of visibility, then, Jefferson figures a unified and powerful national identity as a coherent and felicitous response to the infelicities of refraction and surveillance he nonetheless rhetorically proliferates.

This moment in the letter to the Marquis represents a crucial transformation in Jefferson's work. This transformation is locatable not so much diachronically—say, in the year of this letter, 1820—as it is rhetorically at nodal points, reiterated ritually throughout Jefferson's correspondence from the 1780s through to 1820s—particularly his correspondence on colonisation, as we will see below—when the ambivalent oscillation of light, surveillance, and judgement gives way to a governmental problem, a problem of power and of knowledge:

It is not a moral question, but one merely of power .... All know that permitting the slaves of the South to spread into the West will not add one being to that unfortunate condition, that it will increase the happiness of those existing ....

That is, the ambivalence of 'mutilation however in it's freest parts' and of the 'disease of liberty' gives way not to an ambiguous 'moral question', but rather to a confident and calculable figuration of national power and unity. Mobilising what J.L. Heilbron and his research group have called 'l'esprit géométrique' or 'the quantifying spirit' of the late eighteenth century<sup>28</sup>, Jefferson's text here turns the 'moral problem' of slavery into a tactical problem of discrete, manipulable populations, the solution to which is

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<sup>28</sup> These historians of science have argued that 'the later 18th century saw a rapid increase in the range and intensity of application of mathematical methods', a thesis that 'amounts to specifying the time and surveying the routes by which what may be the quintessential form of modern thought first spread widely through society' (Frängsmyr *et al.* 1990: 1f). For an overview of their research, see Heilbron's introduction to the volume; for essays relevant to the Jeffersonian context considered here, see essays by Rider, Heilbron, and Johannisson (in Frängsmyr *et al.* 1990). For a kindred study of the U.S. in particular, which places important emphasis on Jefferson, see Cohen (1971). On Jefferson's faith in statistics and mathematics in general, see also Appleby (1993: 7f); Stanton (1993: 152f).

calculably and transparently knowable. Although the text suggests that ‘All know’ slavery is a calculable and transparent problem, it is in fact the calculable and transparent representation of slavery that produces the figure of a powerful ‘All’ who can know in the first place. That is, the ‘All’ who ‘know’ are themselves effects of the calculable rhetoric of the predicate phrase—

that permitting the slaves of the South to spread into the West will not add one being to that unfortunate condition, that it will increase the happiness of those existing.

This predicate retroactively renders a problem transparently knowable to the confident, powerful, and unified subject ‘All’.

Jefferson’s correspondence proliferates detailed and systematic figurings of national unity in the face of his ambivalent fascination with and fear of European enlightenment, surveillance, and judgement<sup>29</sup>. He also makes clear that the proper object of this organised government is ‘the people’ figured very precisely as a ‘population’ of enumerable and manipulable units. Consider just two examples. In a letter to William Short (3 Oct. 1801), Jefferson justifies a tactical embrace of ‘false principles’ in U.S. foreign relations with Europe in the following terms:

To be entangled with [Europe] would be a much greater evil than a temporary acquiescence in the false principles which have prevailed. Peace is our most important interest, and a recovery from debt. We feel ourselves strong, & daily growing stronger. The census just now concluded shows we have added to our population ... (Jefferson 1899.VIII:97f).

Tactical governmentality here functions for Jefferson as a method of managing or disposing the new ‘American’ nation considered as a multiform population concerned with growth, strength, peace, and ‘national security’. Jefferson’s persistent privileging of the census has been well remarked by scholars, and the letter to Short offers just one of many such references<sup>30</sup>. Yet the implication this persistence has for Jefferson’s representations of ‘the people’ has been nearly unremarked. His public and private advocacy of and faith in the census as the most important raw representation of ‘the people’ offers a precise image of both the object and the subject of governmental organisation: a calculable image of abstract, discrete, and manipulable units.

In a letter to Baron von Humboldt (6 Dec. 1813), Jefferson reiterates his faith in the technical means of representing a coherent and enlightened ‘American’ population. Anxious this time about conflicts with Spain and the future of Mexico, Jefferson declares,

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<sup>29</sup> Consider, for example, a letter he wrote from Paris to Joseph Jones (14 Aug. 1787) (Ford IV.1899:437f).

<sup>30</sup> For example, see Cohen (1971).

But in what ever governments [the countries of New Spain] end they will be American governments, no longer to be involved in the never-ceasing broils of Europe. The European nations constitute a separate division of the globe; their localities make them part of a distinct system .... America has a hemisphere to itself. It must have its separate system of interests, which must not be subordinated to those of Europe. The insulated state in which nature has placed the American continent, should so far avail it that no spark of war kindled in the other quarters of the globe should be wafted across the wide oceans which separate us from them. And it will be so. In fifty years more the United States alone will contain fifty millions of inhabitants ... the numbers which will then be spread over the other parts of the American hemisphere, catching long before the principles of our portion of it, and concurring with us in the maintenance of the same system ... (Jefferson 1899.IX:431).

Full of imperatives and modal commands, this letter reads more like a manifesto than a personal communication with the 'dear friend' to whom it is addressed. And yet precisely the anxiety which gives to an opinion the syntax of a command suggests that however much Jefferson wants to see 'America' as unique, he cannot think the U.S. except in relation to Europe. Faced with this relationship, Jefferson offers a representation of the U.S. as a discrete 'system', within a separate 'quarter of the globe', made up of abstract and calculable 'inhabitants' or 'numbers'.

Such nodal points—represented in the letter to the Marquis by the figures of the 'All' who 'know', the well designed ship, and the clever expert or scientist; in the letter to Short by the figure of the enumerated American 'population,' and in the letter to the Baron by the figure of a discrete 'system' of abstract and enumerable 'inhabitants'—translate the ambivalence of light, surveillance, judgement, and 'mutilation however in it's freest parts' into an ordered, systematic practice of government. These nodal points indicate that Jefferson responds to the anxious ambivalence of Enlightenment by subjecting the U.S. to 'the quantifying spirit' of transparent, calculable, and tactical power, a subjection that paradoxically subjectifies the U.S. as an 'All' who 'knows' how to calculate 'the means of finally getting rid of' slavery. In effect, Jefferson turns the anxious ambivalence generated at the moments of his closest proximity to Enlightenment—his 'loss' at the verge of the publication of his 'Notes on the State of Virginia', his fear of the 'Notes' inevitable 'mutilation however in it's freest parts', and his cathartic infection with 'the disease of liberty'—into a representation of the U.S. as a powerful, unified population by subjecting 'America' to calculation and quantification.

Yet how can we account for Jefferson's turn from the ambiguities of light and vision, with which he seems to be plagued in his correspondence, to the rhetoric of calculation and quantification? As figured in the letters to the Marquis, Short, and the Baron, this turn raises the question of a power that simultaneously subjects and subjectifies, that is both productive and regulative, and that actively renders what it subjects. As sites of active, translative, transformative textual work, the nodal points in Jefferson's letters reflect less an oppressive, centrally controlled, and unidirectional ideology than the reflexive mode of power and knowledge Michel Foucault thematised

in *Discipline and Punish*. They raise the question, that is, of how a mode of power ‘produces reality’, ‘produces domains of objects and rituals of truth’ (Foucault 1979:194).

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1979:7) glimpsed this productive mode of power in the late eighteenth century realm of criminality, when ‘the entire economy of punishment’ began to be ‘redistributed’ in Europe with the ‘disappearance of torture as a public spectacle’ and the emergence of ‘a new theory of law and crime, a new moral or political justification of the right to punish’. ‘Punishment’, Foucault (1979:9,18f) argues, went from being the most visible and spectacular aspect of criminality ‘to become the most hidden part of the penal process’ as ‘a whole set of assessing, diagnostic, prognostic, normative judgments concerning the criminal [became] lodged in the framework of penal judgment’. Foucault’s (1979:24) effort

to study the metamorphosis of punitive methods on the basis of a political technology of the body ... in which punitive measures are not simply ‘negative’ mechanisms that made it possible to repress, to prevent, to exclude, to eliminate; but ... are linked to a whole series of positive and useful effects which it is their task to support

locates a reflexive mode of power in which punishment came to mean a multiform, systematic field of ‘discipline’ which itself would ‘reform’ and ‘free’. Subjects subjected to discipline became subjects at precisely the moment of their subjection.

One of Foucault’s central figures for this mode of power is Bentham’s Panopticon, an ‘architectural apparatus’ for which

power should be visible and unverifiable. Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so (Foucault 1979:201).

The Panopticon figures the ‘composition’ of ‘mechanisms of power’ in which

a real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation ... [for h]e who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection (Foucault 1979:199-201,202f).

Thus, for Foucault (1979:200) the Panopticon is ‘the architectural figure’ for a mode of power that creates subjects as reflexive structures which allow power to take effect.

Already in the final chapter of *The History of Sexuality—Volume I*, Foucault begins to move from the panoptic modality of power in the sphere of criminality to other spheres by shifting from the ‘microphysical’ realm of bodies to the



'macrophysical' realm of populations<sup>11</sup>. That is, in the words of Colin Gordon, Foucault begins to suggest that

the same style of analysis .... that had been used to study techniques and practices addressed to individual human subjects within particular, local institutions could also be addressed to techniques and practices for governing populations of subjects at the level of a political sovereignty over an entire society (Burchell 1996:4).

In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault (1980:136,138,136,139) argues that the seventeenth century marks a shift in mechanisms of power from the era of sovereignty, in which 'the sovereign exercised his right of life only by exercising his right to kill, or by refraining from killing' and thus practiced a 'right to take life or let live', to the 'modern' era that witnesses a 'power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them', 'a power whose highest function was perhaps no longer to kill, but to invest life through and through'. This 'modern' era is thus characterised by

an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations, marking the beginning of an era of 'bio-power' (Foucault 1980:140).

Explaining this notion of 'bio-power', Foucault (1980:144) continues:

... a power whose task is to take charge of life needs continuous regulatory and corrective mechanisms. It is no longer a matter of bringing death into play in the field of sovereignty, but of distributing the living in the domain of value and utility. Such a power has to qualify, measure, appraise, and hierarchize....

Thus 'bio-power', in Gordon's (Burchell 1991:4f) words, refers to

forms of power exercised over persons specifically in so far as they are thought of as living beings: a politics concerned with subjects as members of a population.

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<sup>11</sup> As Ann Laura Stoler (1995:xi) reminds us, Foucault finished *Discipline and Punish* (1979) the same day he began the last chapter of *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction* (1980). Stoler cites James Miller on this biographical information, and Miller (1993:240f) quotes Daniel Defert as his source. It should be noted that long before Foucault's analysis of the Panopticon Karl Polanyi, in *The Great Transformation* (1957) exposed the metaphoric or transportable character of panopticism, suggesting that its deployment of power was not limited to the sphere of criminality and the institution of the prison. Polanyi argues that we examine this panopticism across a range of governmental discourses and practices, as does Foucault (1980:140) implicitly when he writes of a general 'panoptic modality of power' and explicitly when he develops this argument in his subsequent work, as we will see below. Of course, for Foucault, unlike Polanyi, in principle no warden or minister is necessary for 'control' to be 'effective'.

and in Ann Laura Stoler's (1995:4) words bio-power signifies 'the regulations of the life processes of aggregate human populations'.

In a series of lectures delivered in 1978 entitled 'Security, Territory and Population' and 'The Birth of Biopolitics', or as he later retitled them in one of the lectures, 'The History of "Governmentality"' Foucault reiterates this historical shift and develops his analytical shift. The emergence of a codifiable and calculable category of 'population', and the attendant professionalisation of knowledges which produced that codifiability and calculability, puts into effect a diffuse, active, and multi-directional form of power. Foucault suggests, in effect, that the problems which fields of knowledge such as statistics were said to address were themselves given a particular, 'problematic' form by those very fields of knowledge (Burchell 1991:98-100). The 1978 lecture on governmentality argues that the very idea of political discourse underwent a massive restructuring at precisely the historical moment in which Jefferson is writing. As he did in the last chapter of *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*, Foucault argues that the period between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries in Europe marks a shift in the idea of governing and government whereby political treatises giving governmental advice to the prince or king give way to political treatises which are not yet self-proclaimed works of political science, but rather are searching for a new model of legitimation for government. Foucault suggests that the idea of government 'explodes' onto the scene during this period as a problem in new and pressing ways. The new treatises de-emphasise the *a priori* and self-generating justification of the prince or king's legitimacy and his consequent sovereignty over a certain territory which contains his subjects. Instead, they theorise a multifaceted 'art of government' capable of legitimising itself via its ability to tactically govern 'things'.

The emergence of a 'government of things', Foucault argues, entails a shift in the object of government, from a territory containing inhabitants to 'things' with multiple and varied needs (Burchell 1991:93). Whereas the family previously served as a model for governing a state itself legitimated by the figure of the prince or king, the new treatises recognise a need for a more flexible and complex model of government, a model within which 'the family', for example, would be just one among many objects of address for the government. Foucault refers in particular to the metaphor of the ship—popular in this period of governmental treatises, as we saw in Jefferson's letter to the Marquis—as a figure for this new object of government:

What does it mean to govern a ship? It means clearly to take charge of the sailors, but also of the boat and the cargo; to take care of a ship means also to reckon with winds, rocks and storms; and it consists in that activity of establishing a relation between the sailors who are to be taken care of and the ship which is to be taken care of, and the cargo which is to be brought safely to port, and all those eventualities like winds, rocks, storms and so on; this is what characterizes the government of a ship .... What counts essentially is this complex of men and things; property and territory are merely one of its variables (Burchell 1991:93).

This redefinition of government thus involves the emergence of 'a new kind of finality'

or a new goal of governing:

for instance, government will have to ensure that the greatest possible quantity of wealth is produced, that the people are provided with sufficient means of subsistence, that the population is enabled to multiply, etc. .... In order to achieve these various finalities, things must be disposed—and this term, dispose, is important because with sovereignty the instrument that allowed it to achieve its aim—that is to say, obedience to laws—was the law itself; law and sovereignty were absolutely inseparable. On the contrary, with government it is a question not of imposing law on men, but of disposing things: that is to say, of employing tactics rather than laws, and even of using laws themselves as tactics ... (Burchell 1991:95).

By shifting his analytic focus from the study of structures and institutions (such as the state) with essential and inherent ‘properties and propensities’, as Gordon (Burchell 1991:4) writes, to practices and deployments of power with a ‘plurality of specific aims’, Foucault locates a governmental realm within which power operates diffusely and reflexively.

If we pry Foucault’s analysis of diffuse and reflexive power in the realm of governmentality loose from its European context, and let it help us read Jefferson, we can in turn read Foucault’s tendency to undertheorise the relationship of racism and of nationalism to governmentality. Foucault’s study of a general panoptic modality of power allows us to interpret Jefferson’s paradoxical figuration of power, as that which subjects and subjectifies, more precisely than a theory of oppressive and unidirectional ideology or theory of hegemony and counter-hegemony could. Jefferson’s correspondence in effect dramatises subjection to a field of visibility characterised by the visible and unverifiable gaze of the Enlightenment which is simultaneously subjectification within a calculable pursuit of that light. That is, subjected to the visible and unverifiable gaze of Enlightenment, Jefferson rhetorically subjectifies ‘America’ by rendering it as a calculable and controllable population. The nodal points in Jefferson’s texts which translate the ambivalence of ‘mutilation however in it’s freest parts’ into an enlightened ‘question ... merely of power’ and calculable national unity can thus be interpreted as figures for what Foucault will call ‘governmentality’.

Jefferson’s preoccupation with Europe evinces his effort to define the conditions of possibility for governing the U.S. as a legitimate nation-state; he is concerned, in other words, with giving the U.S. the same status as the lofty European polities, but also with defining its essential difference. Responding less to a consistent critique of Europe than to a persistent anxiety over the meaning of Europe and of America, and to the exact nature of the difference between the two, Jefferson turns to this art of government to deliver the U.S. to the Enlightenment. Gone is the self-assuredness of absolute difference defined by revolution, so forcefully presented in the Declaration of Independence—a difference in kind. Having joined the world of burgeoning nation-states by the force of revolution, as a nation-state builder Jefferson begins to understand himself to be tactically facing differences in degree, differences to be interpreted by means of a new art of government. It is within this shift of interest, this

reformulation of emancipation by a revolutionary become nation-state builder, that we can locate Jefferson's letters on colonisation.

### **Jeffersonian colonisation and racial governmentality**

Jefferson's discourse on colonisation addresses itself directly to the disposal of 'populations'. More than that, his discourse on colonisation paradoxically renders the very idea of a racially and nationally codified population as that which it seeks to address. In this section, by reading a crucial passage on colonisation from Jefferson's 'Autobiography' along with the many letters on colonisation echoed by that passage, I will trace a racial governmentality, addressed to 'the problem of population', running throughout Jefferson's writings. It is this racial governmentality that conjoins a discourse of emancipation and freedom with a discourse of racial and national codification. For as we will see, a power that, in Foucault's (1980:144) words, 'distributes the living in the domain of value and utility', that 'invests life' with qualifiable, measurable, appraisable, and hierarchisable value, can be said to render a freedom both conditioned upon and limited by the articulation and calculation of 'race' and 'nation'.

Writing in 1821 about a debate in the Virginia House of Delegates in 1779, Jefferson offers an extremely condensed summation of his pro-colonisation discourse in this passage from his 'Autobiography':

The bill on the subject of slaves was a mere digest of the existing laws respecting them, without any intimation of a plan for a future & general emancipation. It was thought better that this should be kept back, and attempted only by way of amendment whenever the bill should be brought on. The principles of the amendment however were agreed on, that is to say, the freedom of all born after a certain day, and deportation at a proper age. But it was found that the public mind would not yet bear the proposition, nor will it bear it even at this day. Yet the day is not distant when it must bear and adopt it, or worse will follow. Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free. Nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government. Nature, habit, opinion has drawn indelible lines of distinction between them. It is still in our power to direct the process of emancipation and deportation peaceably and in such slow degree as that the evil will wear off insensibly, and their place be *pari passu* filled up by free white laborers. If on the contrary it is left to force itself on, human nature must shutter at the prospect held up. We should in vain look for an example in the Spanish deportation or deletion of the Moors. This precedent would fall far short of our case (Jefferson 1984:44).

As we have seen throughout this essay, Jefferson is again concerned with the fact that slavery in the United States is 'held up' for the world to see as a most glaring challenge to the promise of universal freedom. The reference to Spain tells us that the United

States somehow exceeds Europe, even when analogies suggest themselves; and yet the very act of referring to Spain suggests that Jefferson is looking to Europe again and finding no light or suggestion of a solution, but rather surveillance and judgement of the 'prospect held up'<sup>32</sup>.

How, then, does Jefferson respond to this 'prospect held up'? In the 'Autobiography' passage, he articulates a dilemma: 'Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free'. The fact of emancipation for slaves has the structure of something already written in the future, something that 'will have been'—the structure, that is, of the future anterior. Jefferson is familiar with this structure, for he made use of it as the tense of revolution when he wrote, in the Declaration of Independence: 'we ... solemnly publish and declare, That these United colonies are, and of right ought to be Free and Independent States'. Both the Declaration of Independence's 'are and ought to be' and the 'Autobiography's' 'written in the book of fate that these people are to be free' figure what Derrida has called the 'fabulous retroactivity' of the people inventing themselves in the very utterance of their independence: we will have been free once we say 'we are free' (Derrida 1986:10f).

Jefferson is, however, not willing to consider this means of emancipating the slaves—in fact, we know he was terrified about the prospect of a black revolution. In the 'Autobiography' passage, he prophesies that 'worse will follow', and that 'human nature must shutter' if colonisation is not adopted and slavery 'is left to force itself on'—a fearful prophecy that resonates throughout his writings. In the 'Notes on the State of Virginia', for example, he recognises that two discrete revolutionary possibilities exist in the colonies, and registers his terror of one:

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 ... of the proprietors of slaves a very small proportion indeed are ever seen to labour. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are a gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: that his justice cannot sleep for ever: that considering numbers, nature and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation is among possible events: that it may become probable through supernatural interference! The Almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest (Jefferson 1984:288f).

Here, Jefferson figures freedom for enslaved African Americans as the inevitable but

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<sup>32</sup> Many of Jefferson's letters on colonisation mark this scene of comparison with, and surveillance and judgement by, a generalized 'Europe'. For example, see a letter to St. George Tucker (28 Aug. 1797) (Jefferson 1899.VII:168).

terrifying effect of a just and wrathful God and ‘the wheel of fortune’. Paradoxically, the previous turn of that wheel made possible his own claim to the ‘my country’ for which he trembles at the inevitability of another turn. Jefferson thus prophecies emancipation as a race war, a ‘contest’ pitting white Americans against justice, the Almighty, and African Americans. In a letter to Monroe (14 July 1793), Jefferson again evokes that other revolution which he cannot countenance:

I become daily more & more convinced that all the West India Islands will remain in the hands of the people of colour, & a total expulsion of the whites sooner or later take place. It is high time we should foresee the bloody scenes which our children certainly, and possibly ourselves (south of the Potomac) have to wade through, & try to avert them—We have no news from the continent of Europe later than the 1st of May (Jefferson 1899.VI:349-350).

Here, the Haitian revolution authorises Jefferson’s prophecy of a dangerously revolutionary response to freedom’s non-arrival in the U.S. His vision of ‘bloody scenes’ seems to prompt him to listen to Europe in the very next sentence, and the silence with which he is met suggests that Europe too is poised to watch and judge the ‘bloody scenes’ to come. As in the ‘Autobiography’ passage, Jefferson commits himself to ‘averting’ this prophecy.

Yet again, in the letter to Tucker mentioned above (28 Aug. 1797), Jefferson writes about two mutually exclusive revolutions:

You know my subscription to it’s<sup>33</sup> doctrines; and to the mode of emancipation, I am satisfied that that must be a matter of compromise between the passions, the prejudices, & the real difficulties which will each have their weight in that operation. Perhaps the first chapter of this history, which has begun in St. Domingo, & the next succeeding ones, which will recount how all the whites were driven from all the other islands, may prepare our minds for a peaceable accommodation between justice, policy & necessity; & furnish an answer to the difficult question, whither shall the coloured emigrants go? and the sooner we put some plan underway, the greater hope there is that it may be permitted to proceed peaceably to it’s ultimate effect. But if something is not done, & soon done, we shall be the murderers of our own children. The ‘murmura venturos nautis prodentia ventos’ has already reached us; the revolutionary storm, now sweeping the globe, will be upon us... (Jefferson 1899.VII:167f)

Jefferson here shifts the grammar of his commitment to ‘justice’ away from the ‘fabulously retroactive’ ‘are and ought to be’ of the Declaration of Independence and the ‘Autobiography’ passage. Instead, Jefferson offers, on one hand, the prophetic

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<sup>33</sup> Jefferson refers to Tucker’s abolitionist pamphlet entitled ‘Dissertation on Slavery’.

threat of the Haitian revolution and, on the other hand, the practical and technical terms of 'something ... soon done', a 'compromise between the passions, the prejudices, & the real difficulties', and a 'peaceable accommodation between justice, policy & necessity'. Emancipation is here not the effect of revolutionary force, it is not rendered by the 'fabulous retroactivity' of a speech act the utterance of which invents the utterer. Rather, 'emancipation' is a practical question to be 'furnish[ed] an answer'—'whither shall the coloured emigrants go?'—and a 'mode', 'plan', 'provision', or 'operation' to be put into 'ultimate effect'<sup>34</sup>.

In the 'Autobiography' (1821), the 'Notes on the State of Virginia' (1781), and the letters to Monroe (14 July 1793), and Tucker (28 Aug. 1797), we can trace a concerted refiguration of 'freedom' from the future anteriority of the Declaration of Independence to the problem of a fearful prophecy, on the one hand, and the solution of colonisation as a practical, governmental project on the other. Rhetorically, then, the very refiguring of the Declaration's 'fabulous retroactivity' as, in the case of slavery, a prophetic problem to be practically solved, gives the danger Jefferson is seeking to 'avert' a form quite different from the 'long train of abuses and usurpations' to which the Declaration of Independence responded with a claim to the 'right ... to throw off such a government'. Derrida (1986:9f) has argued that the 'fabulous retroactivity' of a revolutionary declaration is an ethical act because it embraces and maintains the undecidability and underivability of its 'right'. The Declaration of Independence thus maintains within itself a trace of the ungroundability of its foundation, a trace one can read in the conjunction of a constation, 'are', and a prescription, 'ought to be'<sup>35</sup>. In his writings on colonisation, however, Jefferson can be said to 'avert' that ethical scene by figuring the futurity of justice at once prophetically and practically. That is, for this prophecy to figure a strictly decidable, solvable problem, a problem avertable given enough effort and 'foresight', the prophecy itself must have been given a form susceptible to being strictly decided and solved. In effect, the solution formulates the problem. What, then, is the form of that formulation? What is the problem colonisation produces?

In lieu of a revolutionary solution, Jefferson attempts to derive emancipation from a governmental system, a technical, utilitarian art of government: 'the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government', he says in the 'Autobiography' passage cited in this essay's epigraph. This solution, this art of government meant to capture freedom, involves the practical manipulation of discrete, racially and nationally calculable and codifiable population units; consequently, this art of government must

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<sup>34</sup> See also a 1820 letter to John Holms (22 April) (Jefferson 1899.X:157f).

<sup>35</sup> For Derrida's (1990) argument that in the process of retroactively bestowing upon itself its own legitimacy, the founding act of a constitution cuts or violates the existing law and thus commits the consummate ethical act, an act conditioned upon a strictly impossible judgement to reject the law and thus characterised by incalculability. On incalculability in general, see Derrida 1988, especially pages 114-118.

itself render the calculable and codifiable racial and national form of the population to be manipulated. Again in the 'Autobiography' passage, he writes of 'indelibly' separated 'races'—colonised African Americans, imported 'white laborers'—the 'indelibility' giving the population units a visible and discrete form subjectable to manipulation. In a letter to Monroe (24 Nov. 1801) he asks, 'Could we procure lands beyond the limits of the US to form a receptacle for these people?' (Jefferson 1899.VIII:104), and, answering himself in the next paragraph, writes:

The West Indies offer a more probable & practicable retreat for them. Inhabited already by a people of their own race & 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 into this hemisphere (Jefferson 1899.VIII:105).

This question and its answer not only 'objectify' African Americans, but more precisely render them as abstract, 'naturally' and 'practicably' manipulable units of a discrete population.

The famous letter on colonisation to Jared Sparks epitomises the 'problem of population' Jefferson imagines himself addressing with his proposal (4 Feb. 1824; Jefferson 1899.X:289-293). He begins: 'In the disposition of these unfortunate people, there are two rational objects to be distinctly kept in view' (Jefferson 1899.X:289). Immediately, the clarity and practicality of the solution is the measure of its feasibility. But this clarity and practicality reflects the calculability of 'the problem' itself:

And without repeating the other arguments which have been urged by others, I will appeal to figures only, which admit no controversy. I shall speak in round numbers, not absolutely accurate, yet not so wide from truth as to vary the result materially. There are in the United States a million and a half of people of color in slavery. To send off the whole of these at once, nobody conceives to be practicable for us, or expedient for them. Let us take twenty-five years for its accomplishment, within which time they will be doubled. Their estimated value as property, in the first place, (for actual property has been lawfully vested in that form, and who can lawfully take it from the possessors?) at an average of two hundred dollars each, young and old, would amount to six hundred millions of dollars, which must be paid or lost by somebody. To this, add the cost of their transportation by land and sea to Mesurado, a year's provision of food and clothing, implements of husbandry and of their trades, which will amount to three hundred millions more, making thirty-six millions of dollars a year for twenty-five years, with insurance of peace all that time, and it is impossible to look at the question a second time. I am aware that at the end of about sixteen years, a gradual deduction from this sum will commence, from the gradual diminution of breeders, and go on during the remaining nine years. Calculate this deduction, and it is still impossible to look at the enterprise a second time (Jefferson 1899.X:290f).

The letter continues incessantly in this vain. While this discourse certainly borrows



from that of the 'business' of slavery, and represents African Americans as non-human commodities, this de-humanisation also overlaps and interacts with a certain 'populizing' discourse:

The establishment of a colony on the coast of Africa, which may introduce among the aborigines the arts of cultivated life, and the blessings of civilization and science. By doing this, we may make to them some retribution for the long course of injuries we have been committing on their population. And considering that these blessings will descend to the 'nati natorum, et qui nascentur ab illis', we shall in the long run have rendered them perhaps more good than evil (Jefferson 1899.X:290).

African Americans are no more granted 'humanity' in some general or simply positive sense in this passage than they are only reduced to commodities, as in more traditional pro-slavery discourse, in the previous passage. Rather, Jefferson's discourse here invests African Americans with a common, racial identity on the level of their existence as aggregate, abstract beings—on the level, that is, of their existence as a racial population. It is this discursive production of a calculable black population which allows Jefferson to blend the de-humanising force of the traditional discourse of slavery—'The estimated value of the new-born infant is so low, (say twelve dollars and fifty cents) that it would probably be yielded by the owner gratis'—with the Enlightenment discourse of universal freedom—'By doing this, we may make to them some retribution for the long course of injuries we have been committing on their population'.

What is more, colonisation takes on an imperial form in this letter when he writes to Sparks that 'a colony on the coast of Africa' will grant 'retribution' both to 'aborigines', in the form of 'the arts of cultivated life, and the blessings of civilization and science', and to 'people of color in [U.S.] slavery' in the form of 'an asylum to which we can, by degrees, send the whole of that population from among us' (Jefferson 1899.X:290). On the one hand colonisation discourse gives deportation value by positing a hierarchical racial difference between African Americans and white Americans in the process of representing African Americans as objects of expulsion; on the other hand, colonisation discourse also gives U.S. colonialism in Africa value by positing an abstract equivalence between colonised African Americans and white Americans in the process of representing African Americans as abstract bearers of American imperialism. That is, on one hand, colonised African Americans are racially different from and subject to white Americans, and thus equated with 'aborigines', on the level of racial particularity, on the other hand, colonised African Americans are also represented as equivalent to white Americans, and thus different from 'aborigines', on the level of formal and abstract equality. Colonisation discourse renders this paradox consistent, self-evident, and 'rational'.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> The Sparks letter is not unique in its representation of colonisation as the governmental disposal of a calculable population. See, for example, a letter to Monroe (2 June 1802) (Jefferson 1898.VIII:152f).

These manipulable representations are echoed again in an analogy Jefferson draws repeatedly between colonised African Americans and 'imported' 'white laborers' or, often, 'Germans'. In the 'Autobiography' passage he writes that 'their [colonised African Americans'] place be *pari passu* filled up by free white laborers'. This analogy simultaneously constructs an abstract equivalence between 'free white laborers' and colonised African Americans, and codifies a racial and national difference between white and black populations. Jefferson thus again figures the paradox, however 'certain', 'that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government'. That is, he calculates what, precisely, 'the two races' share 'equally', or what form of being 'free' is common to both, and what, precisely, their governmental difference—'the two races ... cannot live in the same government'—consists in<sup>37</sup>.

In sum, I am suggesting here neither that Jefferson is a benevolent liberal who could not quite overcome antiquated prejudices, nor that Jefferson's representation of colonisation as genuinely emancipatory is simply a false ideological surface masking a traditional, de-humanising and objectifying discourse of slavery. Rather, I want to suggest that we read both his liberal language and his more traditionally objectifying language as overlapping and interacting to produce a hybrid, liberal racism driven by the governmental investment of subjects with life as populations to be enumerated, regulated, and manipulated—'we shall in the long run have rendered them perhaps more good than evil', Jefferson writes to Sparks.

Finally, colonisation discourse allows us to read a historically specific system of racialisation and nationalisation into Foucault's conception of 'modern technologies of power', a conception which, as many critics have argued, had little to say about racial and national forms<sup>38</sup>. In particular, colonisation discourse allows us to interpret what Foucault (1979:138) called the 'modernity' of these technologies. For Foucault, 'modernity' does not refer to a simple, progressive development from sovereignty to bio-power. In fact, the *History of Sexuality* suggests that different configurations of power necessarily overlap:

... in actual fact the passage from one [regime of power] to the other did not come about (any more than did these powers themselves) without

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<sup>37</sup> See also letters to Dr. Edward Bancroft (26 Jan. 1789) (Jefferson 1899.V:66-68); Rufus King (13 July 1802) (Jefferson 1899.VIII:162f); and J.P. Reibelt (21 Dec. 1805) (Jefferson 1899.VIII:402f).

<sup>38</sup> Stoler has argued recently that the lectures which Foucault gave in 1976 at the Collège de France—only some of which have been published and even fewer translated—confer upon race and racism a much more central role in the deployment of governmental power and knowledge. I have not been able to examine these lectures. Stoler's (1995:69) own reading of these lectures intriguingly suggests that Foucault's account of racialisation 'is no scapegoat theory of race. Scapegoat theories posit that under economic and social duress, particular sub-populations are

overlappings, interactions, and echoes' (Foucault 1980:149)<sup>39</sup>.

One of his few accounts of 'race' actually takes note of such 'overlappings'. In the last chapter of *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*, Foucault (1980:138) suggests that the shift from an 'ancient' regime of power organised by sovereignty to a 'modern' regime organised by 'a power to foster life'—or what he would eventually call governmentality—produced racism in the modern sense (Foucault 1980:149f). Foucault (1980:147f) writes, 'racism in its modern, "biologizing", statist form ... took shape' in the mid nineteenth century with a shift in the mechanisms of power from 'the symbolics of blood'—in which 'blood constituted one of the fundamental values' and 'power spoke through blood: the honor of war, the fear of famine, the triumph of death, the sovereign with his sword, executioners, and tortures; blood was a reality with a symbolic function'—to 'the analytics of sexuality'. That is, through new 'technologies of life' concerned with disciplining the body and regulating populations, 'sex' was produced as a crucial field for the deployment of power:

Sex was a means of access both to the life of the body and the life of the species. It was employed as a standard for the disciplines and as a basis for regulations .... Through the themes of health, progeny, race, the future of the species, the vitality of the social body, power spoke of sexuality and to

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condoned off as intruders, invented to deflect anxieties, and conjured up precisely to nail blame. For Foucault, racism is more than an ad hoc response to crisis; it is a manifestation of preserved possibilities, the expression of an underlying discourse of permanent social war, nurtured by the bio-political technologies of "incessent purification". Racism does not merely arise in moments of crisis, in sporadic cleansings. It is internal to the bio-political state, woven into the weft of the social body, threaded through its fabric'. Yet Stoler does not specify this 'manifestation', 'expression', 'nurturing', 'internally', 'weaving', or 'threading' beyond these diverse figures. In fact, in a footnote she compares Foucault's rejection of scapegoat theories with David Roediger's work on whiteness—work whose mechanism of racialization shares much with scapegoat theories. Stoler does effectively point out that Foucault's concentration on mid nineteenth century, European state-sponsored racism, and his representation of it as a precursor to Nazism as 'the most cunning and the most naïve ... combination of the fantasies of blood and the paroxysms of a disciplinary power' (Foucault 1978:149), blinded him to the complex and uneven discourses and practices of earlier racial forms (Stoler 1995:28). The racial governmentality of Jefferson's colonisation proposal, as one of these earlier, uneven discourses and practices, thus urges a rereading of Foucault's account, as I indicate below.

<sup>39</sup> This is not to say that Foucault's uneven and speculative mode of argumentation never gives in to a traditional discourse of modernisation. At times, he even defines modernity as the Western overcoming of sovereignty and non-Western forms of power: 'It is not that life has been totally integrated into techniques that govern and administer it; it constantly escapes them. Outside the Western world, famine exists, on a greater scale than ever; and the biological risks confronting the species are perhaps greater, and certainly more serious, than before the birth of microbiology. But what might be called a society's "threshold of modernity" has been reached when the life of the species is wagered on its own political strategies' (Foucault 1980:143).

sexuality; the latter was not a mark or a symbol, it was an object and a target ... sexuality, far from being repressed in the society of that period, on the contrary was constantly aroused (Foucault 1980: 145-148).

However, this shift also involved ‘overlappings, interactions, and echoes’ between the two mechanisms of power, the older ‘symbolics of blood’ and the newer ‘analytics of sexuality’:

it was then that a whole politics of settlement (peuplement), family, marriage, education, social hierarchicalization, and property, accompanied by a long series of permanent interventions at the level of the body, conduct, health, and everyday life, received their color and their justification from the mythical concern with protecting the purity of the blood and ensuring the triumph of the race ... (Foucault 1980: 149).

For Foucault, then, governmentality’s racial form involved displacing the symbolic, sovereign value of blood and revaluing ‘blood’ as one term in an array of terms to be calculated, codified, and manipulated in the interest of a concern with the value of sex—a concern, that is, with practices of disciplining bodies and regulating populations. Thus ‘racism’ is not simply an atavistic remnant of feudalism, nor is it in contradiction with newly emerging, regulatory conceptions of equality. Rather, ‘race’ is revalued through its interaction with ‘equality’ just as ‘equality’ is revalued through its interaction with ‘race’. However, because Foucault’s account situates ‘race’ as one term in an array of terms to be calculated, codified, and manipulated, it also fails to specify the form in which ‘race’ in particular overlaps, interacts, or actively relates to formal equality. Foucault leaves open the question of the precise form or modality of overlapping, interaction, and active relation between ‘race’ and formal equality. As a result, the specific histories and discourses of ‘race’, a term he introduces so suddenly in the last chapter of *The History of Sexuality*, are never examined.

Foucault offers a somewhat more extended though still cryptic account of this interaction in *Discipline and Punish*. In an effort to relate his study of ‘technologies of power’ to Marxian studies of ‘the economic take-off of the West’ and ‘the techniques that made possible the accumulation of capital’, he argues that technologies of power can be understood as ‘methods for administering the accumulation of men’, and that they

made possible a political take-off in relation to the traditional, ritual, costly, violent forms of power, which soon fell into disuse and were superseded by a subtle, calculated technology of subjection (Foucault 1979: 220f).

This partly analogical and partly historical characterisation of the relationship between ‘the economic’ and ‘the political’ leads Foucault to sketch another partly analogical and partly historical relationship between two forms of power—the micrological and disciplinary, on the one hand, and the macrological and formal, on the other. The former form of power he calls ‘technologies of power’, and the latter he alternately calls ‘the

great juridico-political structures of a society', 'an explicit, coded and formally egalitarian juridical framework, made possible by the organization of a parliamentary, representative régime', '[t]he general juridical form that guaranteed a system of rights that were egalitarian in principle', 'the will of all', 'the formal, juridical liberties', '[t]he "Enlightenment"', 'the contract [as] ... the ideal foundation of law and political power', 'the general forms defined by law', 'the law', and 'the juridical norms according to which power was redistributed' (Foucault 1979:221-223).

These two forms of power are intimately related for Foucault. The former seems to emerge out of the latter, in the same way that the 'political take-off' emerged out of 'the economic take-off'. Yet the two also seem to articulate together in a manner about which Foucault resists being precise. 'The "Enlightenment", which discovered the liberties, also invented the disciplines', he writes at one point (Foucault 1979:222), suggesting that the two forms or modes of power emerge coextensively. Elsewhere he writes that

the panoptic modality of power—at the elementary, technical, merely physical level at which it is situated—is not under the immediate dependence or a direct extension of the great juridico-political structures of a society; it is nonetheless not absolutely independent (Foucault 1979:221f),

thereby giving the disciplines a certain priority since they are more 'elementary', 'technical' and 'physical'. A few sentences later, he writes that formal egalitarianism is

supported by these tiny, everyday, physical mechanisms, by all those systems of micro-power that are essentially non-egalitarian and asymmetrical that we call the disciplines (Foucault 1979:222).

The disciplines 'provide, at the base, a guarantee of the submission of forces and bodies' for egalitarianism, continuing 'to work in depth' on and for egalitarianism (Foucault 1979:222). The disciplines are 'integrated' into the formal law, but exist 'as a sort of counter-law' or 'intra-law' on a different 'level' from the formal law, the 'infinitesimal level of individual lives' (Foucault 1979:222). This 'intra-law' or 'counter-law' is 'the same type of law on a different scale', 'more meticulous and more indulgent' than formal law (Foucault 1979:222). Foucault's figuration of this relationship as one of level, scale, size, fundamentality, physicality, depth, interiority, and interpenetration reflects the speculative and historically general perspective of his own discourse. While his account of 'infra-law' and 'formal law' suggests that the two modalities of power articulate actively and coextensively, he remains tentative about the form of that articulation. How might particular discursive articulations of power, such as Jeffersonian colonisation, work to conjoin these two modalities, the disciplinary and the formal? What might the specificity of such a particular, discursive articulation tell us about the relationship between the disciplinary and the formal? Is that relationship always indiscriminately one of level, scale, size, fundamentality, physicality, depth, interiority, and/or interpenetration, as Foucault seems to suggest, or

could Foucault's diverse figures actually obscure the specific interaction of the disciplinary and the formal mode of power in particular instances? What might a specific perspective on a particular discursive articulation of that relationship tell us about the relationship between regulation or control and formal egalitarianism that Foucault's general perspective does not tell us?

Foucault adds another figure to his already formative constellation when, in the midst of his account of the relationship between these two modes of power, he describes the disciplines as 'the other, dark side' of formal egalitarianism (Foucault 1979:222). The specificity of this figure could certainly be obscured or dismissed as incidental, since it comes in the midst of a stream of other, quite diverse figures, as we saw above. Yet the dismissal of a distinctly racial figure—the 'otherness' of a 'darkness' which simultaneously opposes, threatens, and supports formal egalitarianism—as incidental actually mirrors the very dismissal of race and racism as incidental aberrations from the tradition of enlightened freedom which we saw above in scholarship on Jefferson and slavery. Although one could hardly imagine Foucault articulating an interpretation of racism as incidental to enlightened freedom—in fact, as we have seen he argues quite the opposite at the end of *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*—Foucault's general perspective on, and diverse figurations of, the relationship between micrological and macrological modalities of power have precisely the effect of making the racial figuration of the former as an 'other, dark side' seem incidental. When he figures that 'other side' as a 'dark side', he implicates his study of this relationship in a history of racial formation—a history from which he nonetheless shies. I would like to use Jefferson's governmental discourse of colonisation to pry Foucault's racial figure loose from its apparent incidentality and suggest a more precise interpretation of the racial form of governmentality.

Unlike ethnocentrism that represented hierarchical cultural differences as differences in 'cultural strength', differences in degree that could be assimilated and incorporated, the discourse that gives value to Jefferson's 'indelible lines of distinction', from the 'Autobiography' passage with which I began this section, codifies a difference in kind. Jefferson's art of government articulates 'race', 'nation', and 'equality' by offering a solution—the enumeration, emancipation, deportation, and resettlement of African Americans—to a problem—the conflict between formally and abstractly equal populations with hierarchically ordered racial particularities—retroactively created by the terms of the solution itself. Colonisation is thus not only an utilitarian response to racial conflict; rather, colonisation is embedded in a discourse which also produces that very conflict as one between racially codifiable and calculable population units whose formal and abstract equality conditions and is conditioned by their hierarchically ordered racial and national particularities. Colonisation paradoxically responds to and creates the racial calculability of populations. As a specific governmental discourse, colonisation can thus be said not simply to interact with formal equality, nor to interact in the form of a relationship of different levels, scales, sizes, depths, or colors. Rather, colonisation articulates a supplementary relationship between formal equality and racial codification, and in turn enables the imperial form of U.S. citizenship—its simultaneous exemplarity and exceptionality.

Yet colonisation discourse does more than respond to and create the racial calculability of populations. One of the most distinctive aspects of Jeffersonian colonisation is that which distinguishes it most radically from a project to deport or transport African Americans out of the U.S. As he says in the ‘Autobiography’ passage quoted above, Jefferson does not adapt to a U.S. context the kind of deportation practiced by the Spaniards against the Moors. Rather, he expresses a need to surveil and to regulate colonised African Americans after deportation, and he represents that need as absolutely necessary, self-evident and realistic—a representation that many abolitionists shared with him up until the 1820s.

The 1824 letter to Sparks mentioned above exemplifies Jefferson’s concern that the U.S. keep watch over African Americans long after their deportation and emancipation. When Jefferson writes that by establishing

a colony on the coast of Africa, which may introduce among the aborigines the arts of cultivated life, and the blessings of civilization and science ... we shall in the long run have rendered them perhaps more good than evil,

the ‘rendering’ to which he refers also includes a continuing system of surveillance and control:

In the disposition of these unfortunate people, there are two rational objects to be distinctly kept in view. First .... Under this view, the colonization society is to be considered as a missionary society, having in view, however, objects more humane, more justifiable, and less aggressive on the peace of other nations, than the others of that appellation .... The second object [of colonising African Americans], and the most interesting to us, as coming home to our physical and moral characters, to our happiness and safety, is to provide an asylum to which we can, by degrees, send the whole of that population from among us, and establish them under our patronage and protection, as a separate, free and independent people ... (Jefferson 1899.X:290).

In this letter, colonisation displaces older, missionary practices due to the former’s ‘rational’, ‘more humane, more justifiable, and less aggressive’ objectives. These objectives paradoxically involve, on the one hand, granting colonised African Americans formal equality and independence—treating them as a ‘free and independent people’—while, on the other hand, maintaining a system of regulation and control over them—

to provide an asylum to which we can, by degrees, send the whole of that population from among us, and establish them under our patronage and protection, as a separate ... people.

Yet this passage secures the modernity of those objectives—their quality of being ‘more humane, more justifiable, and less aggressive’ than missionising—by repeatedly

declaring their visual self-evidence: 'are ... to be distinctly kept in view', 'Under this view'. The self-evident rationality and modernity of colonisation thus depends on the declarative reiteration of its clarity or 'distinctness'. This rhetorical reiteration of colonisation's self-evidence turns the paradoxical conjunction of formal equality with control and regulation into a 'rational' formula for freedom<sup>40</sup>. This regulatory sentiment is echoed in a letter to Doctor Thomas Humphreys:

I concur entirely in your leading principles of gradual emancipation, of establishment on the coast of Africa, and the patronage of our nation until the emigrants shall be able to protect themselves ... (8 February 1817) (Jefferson 1899.X:76f).

Jefferson's vision of continuing regulation and control casts America's proposed 'gift' to African Americans as less an ethical and just act which expects no return, than an unequal exchange in which formal equality would be paid for in perpetuity by the maintenance of a system of hierarchical racial and national particularity.

Jefferson also represents this conjunction of formal equality with continuing regulation and control in economic terms. For example, in the letter to Rufus King mentioned above, from 13 July 1802, he writes:

We might for this purpose [of paying for the colonisation of slaves from the U.S.], enter into negotiations with the natives, on some part of the coast, to obtain a settlement, and by establishing an African company, combine with it commercial operations, which might not only reimburse expenses but procure profit also ... (Jefferson 1899.VIII:161f).

Similarly, Jefferson writes to Monroe on 2 June 1802,

... and if leave can be obtained to send black insurgents there, to inquire further whether the regulations of the place would permit us to carry or take there any mercantile objects which by affording some commercial profit, might defray the expenses of the transportation (Jefferson 1899.VIII:153).

By bringing independent African Americans in Africa into the economic orbit of the U.S. as a peripheral nation-state, these continuing 'commercial operations' would construct and maintain both a separation of Americans from Africans, and a continuing dependency of Africans on Americans.

The fact that colonisation must continue beyond deportation, that it must proceed 'in such a slow degree' as he says in the 'Autobiography' passage, suggests that it not only produces and responds to, but also maintains the very terms of the crisis it represents. Colonisation can be said to demand the iteration and reiteration of the calculable difference, the production and maintenance of a difference in kind, between

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<sup>40</sup> See also an 1815 letter to David Barrow (Jefferson 1899.IX:515f).



discrete, racialised populations. That is, when Jefferson argues that the U.S. must keep a watchful political and economic eye over the new African American state, it seems that colonisation must continue to work trans-Atlantically after deportation so that it can maintain this calculable difference. Colonisation thus institutionalises its claim to complete the emancipatory promise of the U.S. revolution in a continual, systematic, trans-Atlantic ritual of racialisation. This iterative and reiterative aspect of African colonisation indicates again, as I mentioned earlier, that imperial U.S. citizenship does not demand the assimilation of difference to a homogeneous national norm, but rather depends on the active production of a particular kind of difference—the calculable racial difference of a population. Yet this reiterative aspect of colonisation also indicates that imperial U.S. citizenship is not animated simply by the desire to rid America of racial others. Rather, African colonisation schemes precisely sought to keep alive the very racial distinction they calculated in the first place through post-deportation surveillance and control. Colonisation's reiterative art of governmentality continually conjoins the formal and abstract equality between populations with the racially and nationally codified particularities of those populations.

Thus, colonisation's governmentality consists not only in centralised power and control (buying slaves and land, deportation), but also, and more importantly for Jefferson, in a systematic, reiterative, decentralised, diffuse political reason, a calculation of society whereby people would come to be understood as discrete, calculable members of a racially and nationally codified population. In effect, colonised African Americans are to be objects of an experiment in Enlightenment governmentality; they are to be rendered, represented, and maintained 'free' by the U.S. When Foucault (1980: 152) writes in *The History of Sexuality* that

I do not envisage a 'history of mentalities' that would take account of bodies only through the manner in which they have been perceived and given meaning and value; but a 'history of bodies' and the manner in which what is most material and most vital in them has been invested.

the 'manner' of 'investment', in the case of colonisation, is this reiterative and calculable political reason. In Jefferson, then, colonisation can be understood not as an aberration of liberal principles of freedom, but rather as a liberal, governmental articulation of formal and abstract equality with racial codification by means of a well-regulated, diffuse, and responsibilised society. This results not in a withdrawing of government from civil society, but in a dispersion of governmentality across a society itself created by governmental political reason. When he writes in the 'Autobiography' passage that

Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that [our slaves] are to be free. Nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government,

he suggests that formally and abstractly, as population units, African Americans and

white Americans are equally free. White nationalist racism 'is no less certain', however, because the freedom of these population units is conditioned upon the production and maintenance of their 'indelible' racial codification and hierarchicalisation.

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