Three

LEARNING TO CATCH HELL: RACE AND MODERNITY

IN WHAT SENSE was the creation of the modern world system a *racial* project? Certainly twentieth-century concepts of race did not yet exist as Europe was consolidated regionally and nationally in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as the early dawn of capitalism occurred and the imperial age began. Yet some early notion of race did operate: some division of the world along the familiar axis of "Europe and its others" was coming into being. This was the first appearance of what Du Bois would call "the problem of the color-line."

Nor did the world system change overnight from a condition largely oblivious to racial divisions to one deeply structured by them. The invention of race took longer than that. In fact, large-scale social constructs like the concept of race cannot be *invented* at all. They are developed, interpreted in new ways, and imported from other times and places. They are *re*invented, more properly put.

This chapter traces some of the elemental origins of modernity in the relationships of conquest and slavery. It describes in racial terms the historical trajectory the modern world system has followed, focusing on its rise and consolidation from the late fifteenth to the early nineteenth centuries. The account first considers *precursors* to racial modernity, reviewing the antecedents and prefigurations of the racial concepts on which the emerging world racial order drew. Next it explores *Europe at the threshold of modernity*, focusing particularly on the creation of nation-states along the European Atlantic and the origins of the tension between peoplehood (the "national") and the structure of domination ("statism") that would prove so problematic at later stages of European imperialism. Then it contemplates the transformative impact of modernity on the two principal regions in which Europe found its modern "others": the transformation of what had been an *African Africa to a colonial Africa*, and the "discovery" and rising significance of the *world's other hemisphere*, the Americas. Both these vast regions underwent comprehensive mutations as their fates were linked to the global system of exploitation and stratification; these social relationships were comprehensively racialized. Plunder, unequal exchange, and imperial rule played the greatest parts in forging and perpetuating these linkages, although

by the nineteenth century themes of independence and abolition were beginning to appear as well. The chapter concludes by considering *the limits to growth*, by which I mean the dawning of obstacles to imperialism, the increasing tensions between state/civil society-based views of slavery, and the impact of these factors on democratization. The issues of resistance and democratization become central concerns in Chapter Four.

Precursors

The historical origins of the concept of race are extremely diverse. Some type of group identity seems universal and primordial. The group's idea of itself may take many forms—tribal, spatial, linguistic, religious—all serving to distinguish between members and outsiders. Some form of ethnocentrism may even characterize all human society. The articulation of this concept in terms of the body—in corporeal, "phenotypic" terms[1]—is also found in early texts.

It is a big jump, however, from this tendency to modern notions of race. Although the concept is perhaps prefigured by ethnocentrism, and takes preliminary form in ancient concepts of civilization versus barbarity (Snowden 1983), or citizen (or *zoon politikon*) versus outsider/slave (Hannaford 1996; Finley 1983), it is only in the past few centuries, under the tutelage of various European imperialisms, that the world's peoples have been classified relatively systematically along racial lines. In terms of scale and inexorability the race-concept only began to attain its familiar meanings at the end of the Middle Ages. Religion, science, philosophy, and politics were all implicated in the gestation of racial logic. Probably the most significant rehearsals for that classification—the fierce anti-Islamic and anti-Jewish campaigns of the Crusades and the Inquisition—drew their inspiration from religious sources. The consolidation of nation-states, notably on the Atlantic margins of Europe, was in large measure accomplished in tandem with the launching of transoceanic imperial ventures and the takeoff of the African slave trade. Accumulation of natural resources, at first largely the result of plunder, fueled this process, signaling the end of feudalism and the transition to capitalism.[2]

The rise of Europe was a multidimensional process. It involved the onset of capitalism, of course: the slow development of more effective means of accumulation that vastly outstripped the limitations of feudalism. Beginning with the plunder of outlying regions, then developing extensive trade, and finally evolving the system of industrialization, this economic development, this accumulative leap, "combined and uneven," was in turn dependent on a series of political and cultural institutions that regulated and protected it.

Beliefs in a global human hierarchy of natural and ineluctable provenance came to play a central supporting role in the imperial order as the immense historical rupture represented by the rise of Europe, the onset of African enslavement, the *conquista*, and the subjugation of much of Asia proceeded. Myrdal's insight about circular and cumulative causation can be used to make sense of the importance of race in the organization of the modern world (Myrdal 1963). Employing this perspective facilitates an account of modernity as an "overdetermined" process, a complex evolution and interaction that gradually linked appropriation, coercion, and common sense from approximately 1500 on. The interaction (and tension) among processes of capital accumulation, techniques of state-building and political rule, and general understandings that explained (or rationalized) the conflicts this emerging system entailed, were all deeply shaped by race.

Europe at the Threshold of Modernity

The Europe that could "take off" into capitalism was far from consolidated regionally or nationally. European elites—noble, mercantile, and religious—began to seek the benefits of predatory adventure overseas, the benefits of proto-capitalist accumulation, in the fifteenth century, largely building on Italian experiences (which involved slavery as well) in the Mediterranean. Portuguese sugar cultivation on Madeira, and Portuguese/Spanish plantations on the Canaries, were early models for the Brazilian and Caribbean enterprises to follow. The Portuguese made the first recorded capture of Africans to be sold as slaves (probably to Madeira or the Algarve), on the Guinean coast in 1441.

Centralizing states also benefited from imperial initiatives. The effort to consolidate fractious or even warring peoples, provinces, ethnic groups, or even nations (take your pick among these terms) into a unified nation ruled by a central state was dear to the heart of many a monarch, court, or even *parlement*. The prospect of state-building based on the plunder of external resources was especially opportune, if only because it required lesser degrees of coercion—of nobility, burghers, or peasants. The financing of imperial ambitions, the strengthening of the central state by infusions of precious metals plundered abroad (Cole 1985; Bakewell 1984; Bakewell 1971; Ladurie et al. 1990),[3] the assembly of armed forces both land- and sea-borne, and the formation of alliances among traders, nobility, and military fortune-seekers—all tendentially converged in early imperial projects, and all tended to formalize and institutionalize racial hierarchy and classification.

The development of imperial/state-building projects depended, especially in their early moments, on the overcoming of challengers, both internal and external. Regionally, competition was fiercest with the Islamic powers. The

Turkish Empire to the southeast had a foothold in Europe and a history of armed clashes in the Middle Ages with the feudal predecessors of these same western European powers.[4]

To the south were Maghrebine or Levantine Muslims. These "Moors" had been a presence in Spain and Portugal for five hundred years. The two Islamic powers—Turkish and Moorish—were themselves rivals, and another Christian domain also existed in Europe: the Orthodox realms that survived after Byzantium in Greece, the Slavic regions, and Russia. Of the two Christian worlds and the two Islamic ones, only in northern and western Europe did the resources and motives exist for imperial adventure. The chief reason for this was the fragmentation and conflict[5] of the Holy Roman Empire into a series of potential nation-states, whose rivalry itself propelled imperial expansion. The rise in western Europe of nation-states bent on (and capable of) expansion distinguished that area from other, more quiescent zones. The consolidation of these realms combined with the decline of feudalism under the pressures of initial and tentative experiments with capitalism. It overlapped with the *reconquista*, the centuries-long process of re-Christianizing southern (and particularly Iberian) Europe.[6] It also informed early imperialist impulses, as these newly assertive nation-states sought to constitute their power and wealth by subduing and plundering others, particularly in areas hitherto unexplored (Kiernan 1969; Abu-Lughod 1989; Blaut 1993; Patterson 1997; Wolf 1982).

Thus nation-building and proselytism were characteristic of early imperial ventures. That early imperialists understood their errands in religious terms, that they saw them in part as missions to propagate the faith, was understandable for many reasons, among them the need to combat the antagonistic worldviews perceived in rival religious orientations, particularly Islamic ones. Add to this the quest for wealth and the drive to open trade routes in a world becoming less insular. Figure in as well the developing intra-European rivalries among states and aspirant empires not yet even fully nationalized, much less internationalized, in their collective identities. So early imperialisms balanced their accumulative economic aspirations—both as states and as a range of proto-capitalist enterprises[7]—with politically and culturally regulatory agendas. Principal objectives, especially at first, were the suppression of internal others—notably Muslims and Jews in the Iberian peninsula, but also elsewhere—and consolidation: territorial, political, economic. These projects also worked by religious means to compel greater cohesion both in the emerging European nations and in their respective spheres of influence.

In all these formative moments of imperialism—in the quest for plunder and trade, the project of nation-building, and the religious order demanded by the state—we can detect proto-racial dimensions, early impulses to draw fundamental lines of distinction between Europeans and "others." Initial versions of these demarcations varied, to be sure. In many cases they were "merely"

doctrinal, ethnocentric, accumulative. It would have required extensive experience and much debate to consolidate concepts of race that throroughly naturalized, indeed biologized, the European/"other" boundary. Yet precursors to the race-concept certainly emerged, driven foward by early colonial efforts and by nation-building itself.

Most of the imperial nations only consolidated themselves in sharp relation to the quest for colonies, and often in respect to simultaneous internal as well as external "ethnic cleansing" (to employ the familiar genocidal phrase anachronistically). England, France, Spain, even little Holland and Portugal had either to subdue various fractious internal "nations" (the Scots, the Bretons, the Galicians, etc.), or to break free from the imperial ambitions of other European powers. Both Portugal and Holland had to shake off the toils of Spanish rule, for example. In the Iberian case, the legacy of Moorish rule and its sequelae (after the thirteenth century) weighed heavily on the imperial ambitions of both Castile and Lisboa, first within the peninsula and then beyond it. English determination to master Ireland has often been seen as the proto-racial rehearsal par excellence for broader imperial efforts.[8] But everywhere in Atlantic Europe, early exercises in racial "othering" furnished precedents for the coming depredations of conquest and enslavement. Consider the following brief illustrations: the experiences of those two paradigmatic early European "others," Muslims and Jews, in the centuries preceding the onset of empire.

The Moors ruled Portugal from 711 to 1249. While this rule was ended well before the onset of Portuguese empire-building, what were its effects on the racial logic imposed by the Portuguese in their colonies such as Brazil? Gilberto Freyre and others have seen this long-lasting experience, this intermingling of Portugal and North Africa, as one of the sources of a supposedly more tolerant and benign Portuguese form of slavery and colonialism.[9] Other writers have stressed that the intense conflict that characterized this regime was the source of a particular Portuguese hostility to things African (Moura 1988). Similar questions can be raised about Spain, where the expulsion of Muslims was only completed in 1609.

Whether the Iberian contact with North Africa was salutary[10] or harmful for future regimes, there can be no doubt that these early experiences played a decisive role in initiating the Portuguese and Spanish entrances into conquest and slavery, both African and Native American. By translating slavery from the Italian colonies of the Mediterrean to the islands of Madeira, São Tomé, and the Canaries; by experimenting there with the development of plantation-style cultivation of sugar and other labor-intensive crops; by importing greater numbers of enslaved Africans both there and into their home territories[11] than did the other imperial powers; indeed by learning some of the skills of slave-trading from Maghrebine Arabs who brought their slaves north across the

Sahara from Mali and Mauretania, the Portuguese and Spanish became the first European slave traders, the first to consume the labor and lives of proto-racial "others." The northern European imperial powers would enter into the Americas, and into the slave trade, almost a century later, in the early to mid-1600s.

The Jews were the other early "outsiders" of premodern Europe. In the Crusades Jews were as fiercely assaulted as Muslims, and a series of expulsions drove the survivors from most of the later imperial powers as they were consolidated as nation-states (in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), and as imperial ambition dawned. The Inquisition, founded in 1229, came by the sixteenth century to embody a fairly racial anti-semitism with its renewal of persecutions against *conversos* or *novos cristões*. Now it was no longer the Jew's beliefs, but his or her essence, as depicted in the doctrine of *limpieza de sangre*, that was seen as unredeemable; thus even conversion was not acceptable: only expulsion or extirpation would generally suffice (Poliakov 1977; Mosse 1978; Arendt 1973; Netanyahu 1995).

From African Africa to Colonial Africa

Although European raiding and kidnapping of Africans for enslavement was pioneered in the fifteenth century, the transformation of European outposts in Africa into enclaves for the export of humans to the western hemisphere was a gradual and conflictual process. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Portuguese raiding and kidnapping along the Gulf of Guinea sometimes produced human captives, but often met resistance as well (Thornton 1998). Trading and even exchanges of envoys between Lisbon and the Senegambian and Congolese coasts were instituted quite early on—during the fifteenth century. These arrangements, although far from stable, began to lay the groundwork for meeting the future massive demands of the slave trade.

Still, it took a long time to replace the traditional system of acquiring slaves—banditry or piracy—with a relatively organized market. The reasons for this were many. The demand for mass labor grew only gradually as transatlantic conquest expanded. Not until the turn of the seventeenth century would a deeper demand for slave labor begin to emerge. African resistance was continuous and not infrequently successful. Competition and warfare among the European powers vying for access to the West African coast was severe. But perhaps the most formidable obstacles to the slave trade's gestation were the difficulties involved in creating a "supply-side" for human chattels in the African interior. Obtaining a steady flow of coerced persons depended on the ability to confer trading advantages (for example, manufactures, notably weapons

and textiles) on African trading partners and agents. It demanded the translation of traditional slaving practices—generally unpleasant, but hardly genocidal—into far more brutal and thoroughgoing routines of regional intervention and domination. It involved fomenting rivalries and warfare among African peoples, and overcoming opposition of many types. Warfare among peoples, some suborned by the slavers, some jealous of their independence, was a major source of slave supply. Armed bands engaged in widespread kidnapping. Already-captured Africans revolted repeatedly. Movements of resistance to slave trading, often religiously based, appeared intermittently.

Mass slave labor was tried out in island sugar cultivation, as we have seen, and also in mining and placer operations,[12] but it was not until large-scale sugar cultivation was instituted in the Brazilian Northeast (beginning in the seventeenth century and expanding rapidly toward the turn of the eighteenth) that the demand for African slaves seriously increased. Struggles between the Portuguese and the Dutch expanded from the African coast to Brazil, and by the early 1700s the British were able to impose their rule by virtue of their naval power and their own burgeoning need for slaves in the Caribbean. I discuss the American features of these shifts in a moment, but first it must be recognized that in Africa these developments led beyond the creation of entrepôts and coastal fortresses (themselves much fought over by the Europeans, and also the scenes of frequent slave revolts) to the establishment of proto-colonial spheres of influence. More serious attempts to impose colonial regimes, notably British ones but also French and Portuguese efforts, eventually succeeded and solidified these arrangements.

Why was this? Above all, the demand for enslaved Africans increased dramatically, beginning in the seventeenth century and continuing until the nineteenth. To furnish those human supplies required a more substantial European presence in Africa, a more effective set of coercive instrumentalities, for one thing, and a more developed legitimating rationale, for another. After all, was this not "the dark continent," the region of the world which, from Hegel to Trevor-Roper, was seen (from Europe) as "having no history"?[13]

To provide a steady and reliable flow of slaves, and to support an ever-more intrusive colonial enterprise, entailed huge costs. Thus as slavery developed, an extensive network of Africa-related trade exfoliated as well. Sugar became a commodity accessible to the popular classes in Europe, not just to the elites. The interplay of sugar and tea trading (not to mention other agricultural products dependent on mass labor and plantation systems of cultivation), and hence the interconnection of Asia and the Americas under European imperial auspices, was a major integrative step. African colonies too became huge markets, as multilateral trading circuits and mercantilist economic regimes took hold.[14] Through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries extractive enterprise in Africa developed prodigiously: mining and cultivation took various forms using

both enslaved labor and peonage systems. Latecomers to the colonial racket, notably the Belgians and the Germans, implemented genocidal means of extraction as late as the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The World's Other Hemisphere

Demand for enslaved African labor in the western hemisphere began its prolonged tendential increase during the seventeenth century. The first major importer of slaves was Brazil, and the engine of that growth was sugar production in the Brazilian northeast.

Both Portugal and Spain had by this time laid waste the native populations of their American colonies, through a combination of disease and rapacious labor practices, notably in mining (Stannard 1992; Stavenhagen and Iturralde 1990). Spanish extraction of gold and silver, based on enslaved indigenous labor, was largely a sixteenth-century phenomenon.[15] It had been these practices, among others, which had drawn the condemnation of las Casas and other erstwhile protectors of the Indians.[16]

Spanish booty, largely in the form of American gold and silver extracted from the limitless toil of native peoples, greatly facilitated the consolidation of European imperial states. As noted, these riches appeared in royal treasuries without coercive patrimonial extraction from nobles, and without similarly unwelcome levies on nascent bourgeoisies or potentially restive peasants. Thus the rise of imperial states (as distinct from gestating capitalist classes) is attributable in significant measure to colonial, racially interpretable, plunder.

The other side of the imperial enterprise was commercial. Here trade in many products, among them pepper and spice, lumber, and tobacco, was involved. But it was sugar that became, along with the slaves themselves who produced it, the first truly extensively traded global commodity.

Sugar was Portuguese for a good while. Early Portuguese predominance in sugar production can be traced to the experience gained in the Atlantic islands and the Algarve, but mostly it derived from the head start Portuguese navigators and slave traders had established in Atlantic Africa. Brazil, first reached by Europeans in the expedition of Cabral (1500), was far more accessible from the slave-exporting ports of West Africa, and indeed from Iberia itself, than were the Caribbean or the other mainland colonies. After searching for gold for a while (prematurely as it turned out) and doing their best with *pau-do-Brasil* (the wood for which the country was named), the Portuguese introduced Madeira-style sugar production in the mid-sixteenth century, largely in the northeastern areas of Pernambuco and Bahia,[17] known as the Reconcavo.

By the end of the sixteenth century European rivalries were extremely intense. The Spanish Habsburgs held on to Portugal from 1580 to 1640, but

had substantially lost control of the Low Countries by 1610. The Dutch financed much of the Portuguese sugar trade, but also slugged it out with the Portuguese: at stake was seventeenth-century imperial hegemony, in West Africa, Brazil, and for that matter Asia. Dutch assaults on Portuguese fortresses and coastal outposts, and on the Brazilian Northeast, did not ultimately succeed, although they did hold on to some Caribbean and Guyanese territory and of course bested the Portuguese in the Malacca Straits (Indonesia) region. Because of their far more advanced commercial capitalism and the seafaring/trading advantages it conferred, the Dutch became the largest slave traders of the seventeenth century, and the chief importers and distributors of Brazilian sugar.[18] Unlike the Spanish, from whose toils they had finally broken free, and in some contrast to the Portuguese as well, the Dutch were more capitalist than statist in their imperialism. This meant operating through "companies," the West Indian Company (founded in 1621) and the earlier East India Company (founded in 1602). Citing Sombart, Blackburn labels these entities as "proof of the emergence of a new type of aggressive and plundering bourgeoisie" (Blackburn 1997, 187; Sombart 1967, 75). But even if the Dutch balance between state and civil society tended to favor the latter more than the Iberian powers' arrangements did (and thus also resembled more closely the British approach of the succeeding imperial period), it still required a massive state involvement, at least to provide the coercive apparatus—the military and naval might—that was necessary to carve out an internationally competitive strategy. One other thing the Dutch shared with their Portuguese friends/enemies, their combined political rivals/business partners, was a solid appreciation for the utility of African slavery in reaping enormous trading profits across multiple markets, oceans, and continents.

By the later seventeenth century, though, the British had come to play the central role. By allying themselves with Portugal, they were able to outmaneuver all their other European rivals. Sugar production techniques learned from Brazil were employed on the widest of scales in the Caribbean, and the slave trade to that region burgeoned. The 1713 Treaty of Utrecht—a very complex series of European agreements centered on Spain—included the *Asiento*, an accord through which the British received exclusive license to import African slaves into *Nueva España*. The traffic in African flesh burgeoned after the treaty, with Britain in the lead, and French, Portuguese, and Dutch traders following behind. Brazil and the Caribbean were now the most significant receiving areas for the traffic, and sugar production the most central activity in which slave labor was engaged.

During the eighteenth century roughly half of the 6 million Africans Curtin enumerates as exported to the Americas went to the Caribbean. About one-third still went to Brazil, and something like one-sixth arrived in North America (Curtin 1969, 265). Although figures are in permanent dispute here, it is

certain that over the century's course at least a million Africans died in the middle passage and prior to embarcation (Curtin 1969; Solow 1991).

The production of a wide variety of goods depended on slave labor. Of these commodities sugar was by far the most important, but by no means the only product that British-owned African slaves produced. Exported from the primary producing areas not only to Britain, but through it to the rest of the world—Britain having replaced Holland as the world's central trading post by the early 1700s—slave-produced goods were the chief sources of national revenues. Furthermore, British trade with the colonies, both slaveholding and slave-exporting (that is, both American and African, speaking generally) was crucially shaped by these provinces' demand for manufactured goods, whose export drove the development of British industry to rapid rates of increase. As British colonies and home industries increased their productive capacities in response to the demand for exports, both of primary goods like sugar and tobacco and of manufactured goods like textiles, various "multiplier" effects developed. For example, the interplay of sugar and tea (largely a South Asian product) has often been noted. Solow writes:

> The total production of sugar and much of the production of tobacco, their cheapness, and their elasticity of supply were dependent upon the continuing flow of the productive labor of slaves to the colonies. The 18th century saw the full fruition of this trade reorientation. Total trade increased greatly, and the Atlantic was crisscrossed by British ships carrying manufactured goods to Africa, the West Indies, Brazil, Portugal, and British North America. The Atlantic islands were exporting wine, Africa slaves, Brazil gold, and the West Indies sugar and molasses. Some of the British North American colonies were sending rice and tobacco to Britain; others were sending fish, lumber, horses, and flour to the West Indies and were buying British manufactures with the proceeds. Every one of these flows depended on the product of slave labor. (Solow 1991, 71)

In the seventeenth century the slave trade had already increased markedly, particularly the trade to Brazil and (after mid-century when *Pernambucano* technologies of sugar production were brought there), the trade to the Caribbean as well. This was in itself remarkable, because during this century a significant slowdown—what some see as the first capitalist depression—affected most other economic activities (Hobsbawm 1987). But by the eighteenth century, as I have noted, the apogee of slave-trading was attained. Here too the multiplier effects of slavery upon trade in general—and thus the development of capitalism in its mercantile phase—must be appreciated:

> Shortly before the American Revolution sugar by itself accounted for about a fifth of all English imports and with the addition of tobacco, coffee, cotton, and rum, the share of slave-produced commodities in England's imports was about 30%. The impact of slavery on world trade did not end there. Much of England's shipping was engaged in transporting either sugar to Europe, slaves from Africa to the New World, or manufactured goods from England to the slave colonies. Toward the end of the eighteenth century more than half of England's exports were bound for one or another of the slave colonies. It was not just Britain but also France, Spain, Portugal, Holland, and Denmark that thrived on buying from or selling to slave colonies. (Fogel 1989, 21–22)

Investment in slaves was the first and largest-scale capital investment of the early industrial era. Because slavery was so central to economic growth and offered a seemingly unlimited labor supply, because at least in the eighteenth century slave-exploiting commodity production was relatively impervious to the business cycle (which in any case was still poorly understood), the ownership of African slaves represented a different type of investment than any other form of capital. It embodied a certain hubris, shall we say, above and beyond its moral degeneracy and religious hypocrisy: an unbounded economic privilege, an almost godlike immunity to risk,[19] a "license to steal," an unbounded luxury—especially for the absentee owner.

Indeed in the Caribbean, as earlier in Brazil, many owners were absent. Enslaved African populations exceeded whites by significant numbers. Interestingly, this was not the usual case in British North America, where large inflows of immigration took place during the eighteenth century. Even where the North American colonies were not primarily engaged in exploiting slave labor, though, there was "dependence" on slavery. To quote Solow again:

> Their land was suited to agricultural commodities which could not easily bear the cost of transport to Britain. They could import British manufactures only by shipping their surplus food and raw materials to the slave colonies of the West Indies and earning there the foreign exchange that enabled them to meet their balance of payments deficits in Britain. Thus, the international trade of the Northern colonies depended on slave production as much as did the trade of Virginia and South Carolina. (Solow 1991, 71)

The centrality of African slavery as the "motor" of early capitalist development, especially in the North Atlantic, cannot be overestimated.

Especially during the late eighteenth century, British economic growth was very rapid, despite the strains of the Seven Years and the American Revolutionary

Wars. This growth was export-led and protected, especially in its early stages, by the dependence of the colonies and by Britain's abilities to enforce restrictions on trading with third parties. As mercantilism, having succeeded the booty capitalism of the earlier periods of colonialism, gradually gave way to industrialism,[20] the social structures established by slavery remained in place. They were not merely residual, but fundamental economic, social, and cultural lineaments of the Atlantic world.

Thus the long-running discussion of the degree of capitalist production relations embodied in slave-based, plantation-style agriculture tends to miss the most important points: slave labor created much of the wealth and made possible the circuits of capitalist exchange that transformed and integrated the world economy;[21] this massive subsidization of nascent capitalism could only be provided by "others," by coercing the labor of Africans whose humanity, not to mention survival, did not have to be taken fully into account.[22]

The Limits to Growth

Of the many important arguments that swirl through the literature on the relationship between capitalism and slavery, one seems most telling: the incompatibility in the long term of slavery and capitalist industrial production. As industry developed, the conflicts involved in maintaining two distinct systems of labor, two distinct labor forces, intensified.

Slavery had permitted the superexploitation of what seemed for a long time to be a relatively inexhaustible supply of labor (provided that Africans could be captured and brought alive to the plantations, of course—not an easy matter). It had limited the slaveowner's commitment to the reproduction and maintenance of the slave. It had located slave labor largely at the margins of the national/imperial territory, isolating slave laborers from "free" ones, something of special importance as industry developed, largely in the metropoles, the "home" areas of the imperial nations. In contrast to the growing "free" working classes, the slave system formally afforded no political rights, no citizenship status or even personhood, to slaves; exclusion from the political realm was nearly total: opportunities for collective action were restricted as much as whites could manage (although such opportunities were of course not entirely absent). And, as I have been at pains to argue, a crucial social marker, ubiquitous and evident, demarcated the boundary between the enslaved and the "free," between chattel and person/worker/citizen: racial identity.

None of these distinctions were absolute. Industrial slavery certainly did exist: in the North American colonies and antebellum southern states as well as in the sugar mills of meso-America, and in mines and mills throughout the world. Superexploitation was hardly the fate only of slaves; it was the predominant experience of the early industrial proleteriat, the "free" workers of the "dark satanic mills" of England and New England, as well as elsewhere (Engels 1958 [1845]; Dawley 1976). Despite their primary engagement as plantation laborers, enslaved Africans were not all that remote from the gaze or experience of whites. Nor were slaves utterly without power: denied the right to organize, they still managed to "strike" and "negotiate" with their masters, as Ira Berlin (1998) and George Rawick (1972a), among others, have shown. An important theme of this book, glimpsed here and elsewhere, is that the distinction between "unfree" and "free" cannot be definitive.

Yet with the development of industry, the incompatibilities between slavery-based and "free" labor-based sysems were heightened. Industrial capitalists never had the same (relatively) inexhaustible source of labor supply that plantation slavemasters enjoyed until around the turn of the nineteenth century. Industrial development required more skilled and committed workers than plantation agriculture. The spatial proximity of the social classes at home, and the relatively more accessible means of political mobilization there, impelled notable concessions and reforms of a democratizing type. And as these shifts occurred, the legitimacy of slavery was ever-more called into question.

The incongruous relationship between slavery and industrialism became more obvious as industry developed and slavery was marginalized. This incongruity was not only, perhaps not even principally, economic. In a crucial sense it was primarily political. As will be argued in the next chapter, the odor of absolutism lay heavily upon slavery. Democratization—however partial, however tentative—was not only a transition from exclusion to inclusion, significant as that was. It was also a passage from slave-based to "free" labor, from a labor system deeply dependent upon coercion to one based on consent. The outcome of this transformation was the convergence—although far from complete, to be sure—between the emancipatory interests of the enslaved Africans and the accumulative interests of an increasingly powerful segment of the bourgeoisie. The obsolescence of the slave system also created new mutual interests—although hardly total solidarity—between "free" workers and slaves (or former slaves).

By the early eighteenth century the existence of a divided, racialized world, a world system distinguishing systematically between persons and slaves, between Europeans and "others," between white and non-white, was a generally acknowledged, comprehensive phenomenon.[23] But despite their reliance on depredation and brutality, most systems of imperial rule may be more effectively described as thoroughly stratified by race than as "eliminationist." These systems (or subsystems of a global racial order) were more than racially stratified, more even than racially dualistic. They were *riven* by race: permitting no involvement by native subjects in the exercise of authority; locally consulting

only with the settlers, and even with them only in such manner as prescribed by the metropolitan authorities.

Such practices led to predictable consequences: the widespread obliteration of distinctions between the state and such "private enterprise" as existed meant that there would be massive enrichment of favored colonial officers, licensees, and legatees at the expense not only of natives, but also of small settlers. The latter were transformed into overseers, hirelings, and petty entrepreneurs who were in perpetual danger of "going native," and thus came to fear above all the loss of their (white) privileges. For the real natives and slaves, of course, all political involvement was unthinkable. They could occasionally contemplate escape or even armed resistance, but they remained officially voiceless.

Not only was imperial rule forced to confront the distinctions and overlaps between slavery and wage labor; but also the techniques for managing different forms of labor—enslaved and "free," peripheral and metropolitan—tended to converge. Indeed each system of control made what use it could of the experience of the other. The arrogance and superciliousness of white supremacy in all its many forms extended outward to the farthest reaches of empire, while much of its contempt for natives and slaves found echoes in domestic disdain for, and fear of, the working classes, whose physicality itself—whose sexuality, for example (Stoler 1995)—was increasingly equated with that of the alien native or slave who labored at the opposite end of the world. The more effective control of an abject mass of laborers and slaves was the object of continual striving on the part of those in charge. Indeed the development of a sociopolitical "repertoire" adequate to the challenges of organizing national and transnational social orders premised on exclusion, coercion, and cultural deracination was deemed—not without reason—essential to the objectives of imperial expansion and industrial growth (Cooper and Stoler 1997).

In the later stages of slavery, and especially in the later nineteenth century, these patterns underwent still further alterations. Creolization had created divisions among the privileged strata and led to demands for independence. The decolonization of the Americas was the most notable result. The prevalence of *mestizaje*, which (once again in the Americas most notably) overlapped to various degrees with the creole category, tended to undermine and attenuate the political logic of racial rule. Mixed-race figures, *trigueños*, even *mulatos*, appeared among the elites. Independence-minded creoles sought to enlist slaves and landless peons in their rebel armies, bringing abolitionism to (some) Latin American countries in the early nineteenth century (Toplin 1972; Rout 1976), and to all by the dawn of the twentieth.[24] The demolition of colonialism in the Americas prefigured its eventual demise in Africa and Asia during the post–World War II break with which this book is centrally concerned. These interlinked, epochal shifts in the developing modern world system were all deeply racial processes.

10. For debates on Williams' thesis, see Solow and Engerman 1987; Wood 1997; Drescher 1999.

11. Voluminous literatures exist on virtually every imaginable aspect of slavery. In Chapter Three I discuss slavery at greater length, although writing on the topic is so extensive that I cannot claim to address it thoroughly.

12. See also Engerman and Genovese 1975; Fogel and Engerman 1974; Fogel 1989; Williams 1994 [1944].

13. By "peonage" I mean coerced forms of labor that do not extend to chattel status. Serfdom, bound labor, and *corvée* could be mentioned here. Some forms of landless peasant labor, for example, tenant farming and sharecropping, also qualify. Where arrangements of superexploitation short of chattel slavery exist, it is worthwhile to classify them as peonage, even though they may involve some wages or in-kind exchanges of value.

14. For U.S. defenses of the moral superiority of slavery as against waged forms of labor exploitation, see Wish 1960; see also Genovese 1992b; and Fredrickson 1971 on these points.

15. In those areas where feudalism was slow to decay or left behind significant social residues, for example, in Russia and Junker-dominated Prussia, peonage remained the prevalent method of extracting labor (Kolchin 1987). In other areas peonage operated through traditional systems of peasant-based agriculture. Still elsewhere, for example, in the Caribbean and East Africa, indentured labor was imported by colonial powers (through recruitment of South Asian labor in these cases) as an alternative or competitive strategy to slavery-based or traditional peasant-based systems of exploitation. The regulatory aspects of these developments, and their underlying racial logics, are quite apparent. Although not racialized everywhere (Russia, for example, retained its interest in the Jewish "other" whose racial difference was not deeply significant there), in most of the imperial world Europeans ruled non-European "others." Thus racial distinctions came largely although variably to coincide with political-economic and cultural ones.

16. But what is "excessive"? Slave labor almost always takes place under the shadow of brutality.

17. This was especially the case after: (1) the effects of contagious diseases began to be felt throughout the Americas; (2) the depredations of early slave-labor mining schemes, particularly under the Spanish, laid waste many indigenous populations; and (3) the inadequacy of the supply of indentured servants (largely white) to the developing plantation agriculture system was recognized, particularly in the North American colonies (Klein 1986; Tannenbaum 1992 [1947]).

18. Already in Weber's treatment of slavery—focused on the classical period, particularly Rome (Max Weber 1976)—there is the argument that high demand for slave labor and its products are crucial to its profitability, for in times of slack the maintenance of slaves can become a drain on their owners; slaves cannot be laid off like wage laborers. In respect to Weber and race more generally, see Weber 1978, 385–387; Manasse 1947; Rex 1980; Guillaumin and Poliakov 1974; Guillaumin 1995.

Whether the maintenance of slaves is a fixed cost, whether their mistreatment is involved in this determination, remains an open question. Owners of course had varying interests in maintaining the well-being of their slave "capital." When new "supplies" (i.e., replacements) were readily available, slavocratic regimes were more draconian (Schwartz 1985; Toplin 1972; Berlin 1998). See Chapter Three, below.

19. Although once more, between peonage and southern waged labor there may be distinction without difference.

20. In *Don Quixote* and *The Tempest*, to pick two prominent works.

21. Notably las Casas, who argued for the Indians' humanity and suggested their innate suitability for conversion, did not hesitate to recommend the substitution of African for Native American enslavement.

22. Consider, among many possible examples, Verdi's *Aida* (1871). Another high art object worth mentioning is the painting by Joseph M. W. Turner, *The Slaveship* (1840), which is a clear denunciation of the slave trade. The painting is probably based on a 1783 incident in which the masters of the slave ship *Zong*, lost at sea and despairing of their voyage's profits, decided to throw their living cargo into the ocean, the better to offset their losses with the ship's insurers (see Thomas 1997, 489–490). It hangs in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

23. "Threatened by the absolutism of the king, the nobility had reverted to the argument of an ancient race in order to claim freedom and equality—for themselves alone. The revolutionary bourgeoisie took up the challenge, rejected the Germanic myth, and replaced it with a Gallic one (still traceble in the popular adventures of [the French comic book series *Asterix and Obelisk*). Historian Guizot, for instance, would picture the French Revolution as a veritable war between two peoples" (Rooy 1990).

24. Gobineau 1984 [1853–55]; Biddiss 1970; Todorov 1993; Rooy 1990. Both John Lukács and George M. Fredrickson analyze the extensive correspondence between Gobineau and Tocqueville, who were friends; see Lukács 1974; Fredrickson 1997a. As many of these writers make clear, Gobineau's racism is rather more anti-democratic and counter-egalitarian than full-fledged white supremacy. Unlike his proto-Nazi successor Houston Stewart Chamberlain, he is not particularly anti-semitic. His hostility to Africans is explicit, but less color-oriented than Europeanist. Gobineau's antagonism is to what he sees as race-mixing: thus Finns and Magyars (European descendants of Mongol invasions) are also perceived as threatening. Gobineau, let it be noted, was a French diplomat (ambassador to Brazil as well as elsewhere), an early Orientalist who wrote on ancient Greek and Persian texts, and a historian of Norwegian piracy in France. He also published fiction and poetry.

25. The 1914 breakdown of the Second International indicated the endurance of this ambivalence into the twentieth century.

26. Of course, this is not to characterize Marxism in toto by such positions. Marx's comments on the barbarity of slave-trading ("the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black skins"), and on the brutalities of Asian and Latin American conquest as well, have often been noted.

A noteworthy exception to the Marxian founding fathers' somewhat sanguine attitude toward imperialism may be found in Luxemburg's *The Accumulation of Capital* (1951 [1923]), which sees the world's hinterlands as a permanently necessary source of regressive subsidization for capitalism, notably in their coerced use as an under- (or un-) valued source of exploitable labor. Wallerstein (1979a) shares some of this optic.

27. The Duboisian dictum is in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1989 [1903], 1). It should be remembered that Du Bois located the color-line, not only in the United States, but as a global phenomenon. His analysis of racism focused not only on the aftermath of African enslavement in the United States, but also on the unraveling of European empires, and on the fate of "the darker nations of the world—Asia and Africa, South and Central America, the West Indies and the islands of the South Seas" (Du Bois 1995 [1915], 645).

CHAPTER THREE. LEARNING TO CATCH HELL

1. Many discursive conventions have been applied to the racial body, each bearing its own theoretical presuppositions. For present purposes, it is enough to evoke some of the terms in which "somatic normativity" has been expressed.

2. With small exceptions, neither the classical nor the contemporary literatures on the transition from "pre-capitalist economic formations" to capitalism have much to say about race. In *Capital I* (1967) Marx refers in passing to the racial dynamics of "primitive accumulation," equating early conquest, pillage, and African slavery with the dispossession of European (notably English) peasantries. To mention only a few works: the otherwise magnificent books of E. P. Thompson on enclosure (1975); of Paul M. Sweezy et al. on the breakdown of the feudal order and the rise of the bourgeoisie (1976); of Robert Brenner on the onset of mercantilism in England (1993); of Barrington Moore on the "making of the modern world" (1966); of Karl Polanyi on the role of the state in constructing—and later destroying—the system and ideology of the capitalist "free market" (1980 [1944]); and of Theda Skocpol on the revolutionary crisis of the ancien régime (1979), are all quite circumspect—to put it generously—about racial matters. This list could go on, and certainly is not intended to diminish these books' valuable qualities. But despite their many merits, these accounts also suffer

from their racial blinkers: Moore's chapter on the U.S. Civil War inadequately reinvents Du Bois's account in *Black Reconstruction* (Du Bois 1977 [1935]), which is not cited and which Moore presumably did not consult. Skocpol does not make use of James's *The Black Jacobins* 1989 [1938] and does not discuss the Haitian revolution in her section on France. Karl Polanyi, who worked on slavery in West Africa after writing *The Great Transformation*, does not discuss the significance of the slave trade for the rise of capitalism in England. Albert O. Hirschman's important reflection of the rise of capitalist market rationality (1977) takes little interest in the centrality and persistence of slavery in rising capitalism.

3. I neglect here the important question of the European price inflation brought about by the massive infusion of precious metals in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For some discussions of this topic, see Goldstone 1984; Braudel 1972, vol. I, 462–542; Wallerstein 1974, 66–131.

4. Indeed, the immediate precedent for the Atlantic slave trade—sugar slavery in the Mediterranean—began as an insular project (under Italian control, in Cyprus and Crete) precisely because defeat in the Crusades had forced the Europeans to withdraw from the Middle East.

5. And final tentative peace, after the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.

6. For material on the founding of Spain and the origins of its empire, see Ladero Quesada et al. 1998; O'Gorman 1961; Clendinnen 1989; Abu-Lughod 1989.

7. Economies instituted by states (Polanyi 1980 [1944]); "entrepreneurship" outside state purview; forms of state "licensing" ("captaincies," encomienda, mixed companies of various sorts).

8. For an extensive example of this argument, see Allen 1994.

9. Freyre 1986 [1933]; for a parallel account on this point, see Buarque de Holanda 1973.

10. It is worth remembering not only the vast intellectual contributions proceeding from the Islamic world in the Middle Ages, but also the role of Arab scholarship in preserving the classical European heritage from destruction. Thus not only in their original works in mathematics and astronomy, in history and philosophy (for example, Ibn Khaldun [1332–1406]); not only in their cultural policies (generally tolerant and pluralistic toward Jews and Christians who did not seek to subvert or convert Muslim regimes); but also through their preservation of much Greek philosophy and literature, medieval Arabs helped found modern Europe. No Moors, no Augustine, for instance. Maybe no Aristotle either.

11. According to Kiernan, by the mid-1500s fully one-tenth of Lisbon's population consisted of slaves (Kiernan 1969, 10).

12. African gold production was substantial before the onset of colonialism, as it was in the twentieth century: "In the later Middle Ages, Africa accounted for something like two thirds of world gold production, and it was the largest source of supply from the eleventh to the seventeenth centuries" (Appiah 1998, 69). Reader (1999) stresses that Africans—particularly Ghana—largely produced gold for export, first to the Arab world and then to Europe, and that they valued practical metals like copper more than "precious" ones.

13. Critical perspectives on this point are widely available. See Mudimbe 1994; Davidson 1992.

14. The "triangular trade" widely noted in the literature on North American and Caribbean slavery was but one instance of such circuits. See Findlay 1990. Klein (1986, 145–146) disputes the relevance of this term to the economics of slavery in Latin America (and particularly in Brazil), but the balance of the evidence is against him. For views contrary to his, see the passages from Solow 1991 and Fogel 1989 quoted below.

15. Brazil's Minas Gerais gold boom came later, after the turn of the eighteenth century, when the preeminence of *nordestino* sugar had long been ceded to the Caribbean. The principal miners in and around Ouro Preto were enslaved blacks (as the name of that beautiful town perhaps suggests). See Miller 1988; Moura 1988.

16. Las Casas 1992; Clendinnen 1989. Brutal Portuguese treatment of slaves, as well as slave-hunting by the so-called *bandeirantes* in the Brazilian *sertão*, earned denunciation too, notably by Father Antonio Vieira (Cohen 1998; Blackburn 1997). Africans of various statuses

sometimes participated in the supposedly heroic expeditions of the *bandeirantes*; this was the case elsewhere in Latin America as well (see Davidson 1961; Rout 1976).

17. Initially Brazil's unexplored territory was allocated by the Portuguese Crown to favored nobles as "captaincies." The sugar-cultivation area of the northeast became known as the *Reconcavo* as the plantation system developed.

18. So, basing herself on Charles Boxer's "scorecard," Barbara L. Solow says that in the seventeenth century "Holland played Portugal in Africa and tied, Holland played Portugal in Asia and won, [and] Holland played Portugal in Brazil and lost" (Solow 1991, 67).

19. Of course, there were considerable risks associated with the slave-owning enterprise, particularly financial risks. But during the "takeoff" period for British slavery in the eighteenth century, these risks were notably lessened.

20. Debates about the timing and varieties of this transition remain important. James's (1989 [1938]) insistence that the Caribbean sugar-mill (or we might say, the Brazilian *engenho* or Cuban *ingenio*) was the earliest site of capitalist industrial production, considerably antedating Manchester's "dark satanic mills," remains convincing.

21. In *Capitalism and Slavery* (1994 [1944]), Eric Williams famously accounts for racism itself (notably British racism) as an outcome of the exploitative relationships of slavery. Although I disagree with the economic determinism of this position, Williams's thesis nevertheless retains great importance in respect to its detailed exposition of the dependence of developing capitalism on slavery. See Solow and Engerman 1987; Drescher 1999.

22. There are grand debates on this point as well. Certainly slaveholders were more concerned with their human property's well-being at some times and places than at others. For the present, it is enough to point out that it was the slaveholders' concern (or lack of it), their "regime" so to speak, rather than the autonomy of their chattels, that ultimately mattered.

23. Of course, this should not be taken to mean that there were no disputes about the meaning of race or about the boundaries and sources of racial difference. These concepts are inevitably, inexorably, contentious, and fungible. See Omi and Winant 1994; Winant 1994a.

24. There were notable exceptions, especially in the Caribbean and Central America, where the U.S. "big stick" took a racial form. See Helg 1990.

Chapter Four. The Empire Strikes Back

1. Writing in 1917, Du Bois linked racial slavery not only to the origins of modernity, but to class struggle:

> When we speak of modern African slavery we think of modern slavery as a survival of ancient slavery. But it was not. The cleft between the two was absolute. Modern slavery was the beginning of the modern labor problem, and must be looked at and interpreted from that point of view unless we would lose ourselves in an altogether false analogy. Modern world commerce, modern imperialism, the modern factory system and the modern labor problem began with the African slave trade. The first modern method of securing labor on a wide commercial scale and primarily for profit was inaugurated in the middle of the 15th century and in the commerce between Africa and America. Through the slave trade Africa lost at least 100,000,000 human beings, with all the attendant misery and economic and social disorganization. The survivors of this wholesale rape became a great international laboring force in America on which the modern capitalistic movement has been built, and out of which modern labor problems have arisen. (Du Bois 1995, 653)

2. See also Cooper and Stoler 1997.

3. Many types of slavery continued in the world's periphery into the twentieth century. In the clove plantations of Zanzibar it continued until World War I. Slave labor in cocoa production was maintained by the Portuguese Empire in Guinea-Bissau—linked in this case to British chocolate manufacturers like Cadbury—until at least 1920. (See the essays on latter-day African slavery in Klein 1993.) Heritable bonded labor status persists in both India and Pakistan, and racial slavery continues in Mauretania and Sudan (Bales 1999; Cotton 1998; Finnegan 2000). Sexual slavery—of women and girls for prostitution and domestic service—exists throughout the world (Sakhrobanek, Boonpakdi, and Janthakeero 1997).