

## Comparing Slave Systems: The Significance of “Racial” Servitude

There can be no denying the fact that certain distinctive features of slavery in the English colonies had a direct relationship to the development of the colonists' ideology of race. One cannot explain American social structure and contemporary relationships without reference to the former enslavement of African Americans. Race ideology emerged during a period of intensified slavery; it formed its roots in North American attitudes toward slaves.

We should understand that slavery was an essential social institution with deep roots in Western history, not a mere aberration in the historical unfolding of Western society. Present-day democratic and egalitarian ideals have not persisted as untainted virtues of the West since ancient times; they are of very recent venue and, ironically, have been afforded to us principally because of the wealth created by slaves.<sup>1</sup> In the eighteenth century, slavery represented the epitome of inegalitarian and inhumane values at a time when social forces in the Western world were striving toward individual freedom, representative government, equality, and social justice.

It is arguable whether the components of race ideology could have been created without slavery. Indeed, historians of the Americas have explored and debated the linkage between race and slavery for over half a century. Much of the historical discussion has focused on explaining differences between Latin American and North American experiences of race in the context of their presumably different slave systems. Because of the importance of this background literature, I will examine briefly their findings in the first part of this chapter.

On the other hand, since slavery existed without “race” for several thousand years, a broad look at slavery as a social institution seems useful so that we can determine which features represented the general characteristics of all

slave systems, and may be found anywhere, and which reflected the developing components of race in North America. Because we know so little about the topic, I explore the probable origins and nature of slavery in those areas of the Old World (Europe, Africa, and the Middle East) where cultural precedents for much of New World slavery were established.<sup>2</sup>

Then, looking at the institutionalization of slavery in the Spanish and Portuguese (Latin American) colonial settings, I note some areas of continuity in the customs, laws, beliefs, and practices brought by these Europeans to the New World that persisted irrespective of phenotypic differences within these populations. At the same time, I briefly delineate certain features that may be useful diagnostic criteria for comparing, evaluating, or classifying slave systems. Some historians have already utilized such features for assessing analytically how different systems of slavery vary from one another and the implications of these differences.<sup>3</sup> I then look at the uniqueness of English attitudes and beliefs, noting how their practices differed from those in Old World slavery as well as its versions in Latin America.

In the last section, I address the problem of the significance of North American slavery and its contributions to the idea of race. My data support the argument that it may not have been so much differences in the forms of slavery evolved in the New World, but rather the preexisting cultural attitudes of the varying European colonizers toward human differences, that best explain developing ideologies of race during and after the slave era.

### The Background Literature and the Issues of Slavery

Frank Tannenbaum was one of the first scholars to probe the differences between North American and Latin American slavery. Although he noted that Africans were brought nearly everywhere in the New World, he was struck by the absence of patterns of racial discrimination and clear-cut racial categories in those areas that came under Portuguese and Spanish hegemony (1947). Indeed, in most areas extensive intermingling had resulted in complex mixtures of Indian, African, and European genetic elements in the populations, and physical boundaries became blurred or disappeared altogether. Hypothesizing that differences in the slave systems between North and South America were responsible for the variations observed, Tannenbaum presented evidence that Latin areas had high rates of manumission, that freed slaves were not barred from participation in the larger society, and that there were no legal barriers to manumission or to intermarriage.<sup>4</sup>

In searching for explanations of such different patterns of group interaction, Tannenbaum argued that cultural-historical differences in the backgrounds of the colonizing Europeans were responsible. In the Spanish and

Portuguese territories, these were the paternalistic structure of Latin society, the church and its insistence on the moral personality of the slaves, the previous experiences of slavery on the Iberian peninsula, and the heritage of Roman law tempered by Christian ethics. These and many other elements of Latin culture protected the Negro slave and prevented the abuse and loss of his human personality and rights.<sup>4</sup>

Stanley Elkins ([1959] 1963) continued and extended the Tannenbaum thesis. Concentrating on variations in the systems of slavery, Elkins noted numerous differences in the slave laws of the Latin and English regions. He found that nothing—not laws, customs, church, or state—inhibited the plantation owners in English colonies from exercising total dominance over slaves and hastening their transmutation into chattel. Latin slavery, however, was circumscribed by traditional institutions; the authoritarian personal interest in the colonies shown by Spanish monarchs, the church with its numerous overseers of moral behavior, and the slave laws themselves were protective of the moral personality of the slaves and of their legal rights. Elkins concluded that Latin slavery was less harsh and oppressive than English slavery and had fewer debilitating consequences for the slaves once freed.

Reactions to the Tannenbaum and Elkins theses stimulated much new research, especially on comparative slavery among European colonists, and inspired debates among scholars on such questions as which system of slavery was more severe, what impact different socioeconomic conditions had on slavery, and how the qualities of slavery in different eras should be assessed. Revisionist scholars rejected the notion that North American slavery was more brutal and exploitative, pointing out that it was only in the North American slave colonies that Africans expanded their populations by natural reproduction, whereas slaves on plantations in the Latin areas often died or failed to reproduce. Many scholars attempted to prove that there were more similarities than differences in the realities of slavery in all the New World colonies.<sup>5</sup>

Yet, as Peter Kolchin noted in his review of recent comparative studies (1982, 72), scholars have not been able to totally deny Tannenbaum's observations that there were and still are significant differences in race relations between the two continents. North American race categories are limited in number and are socially rigid, even though phenotypic traits vary enormously within each category. South American "racial" terms are not race categories at all, but tend to be descriptive of multiple variations in phenotype that presume random miscegenation and a range of ancestral mixtures in individuals. In North America's southern colonies, distinctions in attitudes toward and treatment of people in different race categories were institutionalized and rendered uniform by law.

Critiquing and often contradicting the cultural-historical explanations, recent scholars have posed alternative answers for the differences in Latin and

English patterns of slavery and race relations. They point to the circumstances of contact, demographic realities, the nature of the local economies, differences between rural plantation areas and urban centers, and other economic and ecological factors. Some scholars feel that these factors alone, and not long-standing cultural orientations or values, may best explain the differences between Latin and North American forms of slavery. Other scholars do not deny the significance of cultural traditions but believe that the arguments for the greater importance of economic and demographic factors are more persuasive (Nash 1982, 156-160). Gary Nash cites evidence explored in recent primary studies like the labor demands of different crops, the ratio of blacks to whites and males to females, the availability of new slaves through trade, and the effects of tropical diseases as critical factors in the treatment of slaves.

Economic circumstances and ecological features are clearly important determinants of human actions and decisions, as many studies in cultural and human ecology have shown. And these must be factored in as critical to any analysis. But neither the colonial settlers nor the people they conquered and/or enslaved were totally deracinated individuals. We cannot ignore the fact that values and ideologies are strongly perduring aspects of culture. People adapt to new situations with the cultural equipment they already have. Prior values, habits, norms, customs, and beliefs function to guide and control people's behavior even in alien and unusual circumstances. The degree to which Latin American slavery reflected certain Old World traditions and behavior patterns is a case in point. The Iberian explorers brought with them knowledge of slave customs steeped in Mediterranean history, laws, and attitudes. The continuity of such elements of Old World culture can be identified not only in New World slave codes and laws but also in many actual practices.

First, Old World slave systems all acknowledged the slave as an unfortunate but nevertheless human being. There are few societies outside of North America in which the basic humanity of those in a slave category has ever been denied or even questioned. As we shall see later, North American science, and even the courts, provided a battleground for just this question in the nineteenth century (Chapters 10, 11). And the practical consequences of scientific decisions on the problematic humanity of blacks reverberated throughout the United States in the unqualifiedly demeaning, deliberately humiliating behavior of many whites toward blacks and Indians.

Second, some specific features of slavery exemplify the degree to which the dominant society understood and accepted the fact of the slaves' humanity. A complete analysis of these most common features would be far more elaborate than can be outlined here. But such features might well be used in combination as diagnostic tools or as a baseline for discussing the transformations in slavery in the New World that brought about what some histori-

ans see as a new institution in North America (e.g., Curtin 1977, 10). These will be briefly identified and discussed in the following sections.

A third and final point is that levels of brutality and harshness are not necessarily indications of whether slaves are considered human. The acceptance of the slave as another human being did not inexorably lead to the amelioration of slave conditions or even diminish the levels of brutality meted out in any given society. Much scholarly energy and time have been expended debating the issue of which system was harsher, the Latin or the English. The question, however, seems moot and irrelevant since examples of extreme cruelty as well as humane concern and treatment can be found in all systems. In any case, we may never have enough comparable evidence to accurately assess the levels of cruelty or severity found in any system.

History demonstrates, furthermore, that we humans did not need to invent slavery in order to brutalize and dehumanize one another. Modern warfare and oppression, torture, mutilation, and murder provide abundant evidence of our penchant for brutalizing one another, free people and slaves alike. (Humans exhibit the greatest cruelty when they have the uncurbed power to do so) when individuals perceive some extraordinary psychic or material benefits from sadistic behavior, and when mob or group actions override individual judgment and sensitivity. (Slavery satisfies all of these requisites and more, and the situation can be exacerbated when there are ethnic differences between slave and freed.) Interethnic hostilities and pejorative stereotypes are fairly persistent group experiences. But human cruelty need not have ethnic boundaries, as we all know. Moreover, it is a fact that owners of pet animals may treat such property—their horses, dogs, or cats—with a great deal of tenderness, love, and care, especially those living in close conjunction with them. In the North American colonies, slave children were often treated very kindly, literally as pets, while they were simultaneously considered subhuman. And many owners held their slave property as much too valuable to be mistreated. In other words, levels of violence and brutality alone are not the best indicators of the dehumanizing qualities of slave systems.<sup>6</sup>

An anthropological perspective does not attempt the difficult, indeed impossible, task of evaluating severity even if all data for making such judgments were available. This approach seeks only to specify the substantive areas in which institutions manifest similarities and differences. But first we must establish the common features, or baseline similarities, of Old World slavery by briefly examining its nature and history.

### The Nature of Slavery

Slavery is only one of a number of forms of servitude that are predicated on unfree, controlled labor. It is easier to characterize or describe slavery than

to define it in a universally useful manner. Although a great deal of work has been done in the past four or five decades, scholarship on comparative slave systems is still in fairly early stages of research and theory development. This research has shown, however, that the diversity of forms of servitude and the customs associated with them have been considerable; a wide range of customs, practices, beliefs, norms, and values have been subsumed under the rubric of "slavery." Sometimes the dissimilarities between societies have been so great that they inhibit making generalizations acceptable to all scholars. Different scholars emphasize differing aspects of slavery, and they often disagree on how to translate terms in other languages into concepts meaningful for comparative study. The result is that there is only limited and somewhat tentative agreement on the empirical dimensions of slavery contrasted with other forms of servitude.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, slavery has generally been defined as an institution in which some persons are legally owned by other persons just as a piece of property is owned. The slave exercises no will of his or her own, theoretically, but submits to the authority and domination of the master. (Customs and laws in slave-owning societies permit a slave to be bought, sold, given away, inherited, bequeathed, used to pay debts, or used in any other way that personal property can be used.) Thus the essential quality of slavery everywhere has been that an individual is defined legally as a thing, a piece of property owned by another, and physical force or some other form of coercion is the chief mechanism for maintaining this notion.<sup>8</sup> The power of the master-owner over the slave may vary in time and space, but it has always been one constant, and usually inviolable, fact.

But the slave is also a human being with all the attributes of consciousness, sensitivity, and thought that characterize free persons, and this is where the fundamental contradiction unfolds. All slave-owning societies have had to deal with the paradox expressed by the question, How can a human being be both a person and a thing?<sup>9</sup> Throughout history, societies have devised several different ways of trying to resolve this question or at least of coping with the glaring contradiction that it tries to mask. I argue in this analysis that "race" evolved in the Judeo-Christian society of North America in large part as one way of dealing with this dilemma, by defining Africans and their descendants as something less than fully human, or as a form of human being different from and inferior to whites.

Slavery has sometimes been treated as if it were solely an economic institution, with emphasis on the productive activities of slaves. My analysis focuses on what I consider to be the most important aspect of all such systems, the social and human relationships. Whether or not systems of slavery were productive and profitable (as has been debated in studies of Greco-Roman slavery and some periods of North American slavery) is not relevant to this analysis. It is the consequences of slavery for human social systems and social

relationships that matter; in this case, the manner in which slavery contributed to the concept of "race" and the postemancipation relationships between racially defined populations. There are elements of personal power and dependency; of social identity and consciousness; of prestige, status, and social distance; of religious belief, morality, and ritualized interactive patterns; and of many other factors that cannot be subsumed under a limited vision of slavery purely as an economic institution. Like all human institutions, slavery has to be comprehended within a wider context. To this end, we need to examine, albeit briefly, its history and the ways in which the institution has functioned over time.

### A Brief History of Old World Slavery

Slavery (in its fundamental sense) originated in societies that were essentially kinship-based; that is, in which kinship structures, institutions, values, beliefs, and ideology were dominant forces in the social system. In such societies, the chief organizing principles were those of kinship; it was the foundation not only of people's identity but of their social, political, economic, and ritual status in society and their relationships to others. This was true even in the civil societies of Rome and Greece, where social identity came nearest to the concept of citizenship, a form of identity essential to modern nation-states and viewed as a contractual relationship between the state and the individual. The "paterfamilias" was the head of the Roman lineage or family; family members derived their social status, property, and identity—and thus a large element of their "citizenship"—from their relationship to him. Such was the power and responsibility of the pater that he "had the right to life-and-death decisions about his own children" (Curtin 1977, 4).<sup>10</sup>

In all such societies, the kin group, whether it was a large aggregate encompassing thousands or a small lineage of ten or twenty persons, was the *sine qua non* of the sociopolitical system. Without a kin group to support and fortify him, a man was essentially a nonentity. Even the poorest peasants and farmers in a complex of relationships of which the vortex was the kin were enmeshed in a complex of relationships of which the vortex was the kin groups that socialized them, told them who they were, provided guidelines and sanctions for their behavior, and determined the course of their future lives. Genealogical ties, regardless of their biological accuracy, were a network of links that bound individuals (most importantly men) to one another and specified their rights, privileges, powers, immunities, and obligations. In the urban city-states of the ancient world, and in kingdoms and chiefdoms throughout history, kinship underscored the political-jural relationships among peoples and groups. The element of kinship as the universally recognized mechanism by which the most significant political relationships were established and maintained has been well established by anthropolo-

gists. All civil societies before the rise of the modern nation-state of the industrial world were in many ways elaborations on the principles of kinship. It is important to establish this point early, since slavery is best comprehended minimally as a non-kinship relationship, institutionalized in societies in which kinship provided the central principles of organization, particularly at the community or local level. As Paul Bohannan has observed, "slaves are essentially kinless people" (1963, 180); indeed, he claims, the institution of slavery itself is anti-kin. Patterson has likened this condition to one of social death.<sup>11</sup>

We will probably never know exactly when and where slavery first arose as a new concept of human relationships. Evidence indicates, however, that it came about only after the establishment of a mature farming way of life, with large stable populations and an emphasis on the aggregation of property and wealth. Such societies had already evolved groups and statuses that were unequal in their command over goods and services and in the degree of social-political power they could exercise. By the time of the first records on slavery, there were already small city-states with stratified social systems incorporating many specialists, such as farmers, herders, fishermen, traders, metalworkers, builders, carpenters, butchers, priests, administrators, bureaucrats, and military men. Differences in economic functions had given rise to social distinctions and to the further tendency to rank these different occupations and positions. Moreover, power and privilege had become politically concentrated in the hands of specific functionaries. Slavery arose, then, in inequalitarian societies in which the concept of one man having power over others was already developed.

Another characteristic of these societies was that some form of compulsory labor was also recognized. We know from many anthropological studies that in developed chiefdoms (an early stage of centralized governance), community members were required to allocate a portion of their labor or produce to the chief, as well as to his retinue and household. Young men, for example, who constituted the members of age-grade organizations (Age Sets) were required to clear land, footpaths, and roads; build bridges; erect granaries and other semipublic buildings; and serve in the armed forces. This was customary and expected, and young men had few or no options for avoiding such service. Other types of what we would call coerced labor have also been documented. What we should bear in mind, however, when we look for comparative materials is that these were societies in which there was no wage labor as we know it; wage labor is a phenomenon that developed in early capitalism. All labor, voluntary or compulsory, was invariably compensated through the reciprocal processes inherent in preindustrial economic systems where kinship values prevailed.<sup>12</sup>

Trade was a source of much of the wealth and the basis of political development of most ancient kingdoms. As various groups came into greater

competition for trade, strategic resources, and raw materials, many of them also came into open conflict. Hostilities led to small- and large-scale battles, and eventually there came a time when one of the consequences of such warfare was conquest, the takeover of whole communities, and the subjugation of their people. It was without doubt in answer to the problem of what to do with these "foreigners" that slavery developed. The first recorded instances of slavery represent the slaves as products ("booty") of war. And warfare was to remain throughout much of human history a major source of slaves (Finley 1968b). Slavery was an alternative to extermination.

Slave men and women could be put to productive work, augmenting the resources and wealth of their masters. Those with special skills were more valuable than simple laborers. Women could be used as domestic workers, as prostitutes, or as child bearers, creating more workers for their masters. Both domestic and industrial enterprises benefited from this unpaid labor, who needed only to be fed and clothed with minimal material comforts, which they themselves often had to produce. Slaves thus liberated free men and women from productive labor. They also became a source of prestige to the wealthy and powerful; owning slaves was a symbol of status and affluence, a form of conspicuous consumption.

Several other factors facilitated the conquering societies' treatment of alien human beings as objects, property, and beasts of burden. First of all, from the earliest settled Neolithic farming way of life some 10,000-12,000 years ago, when defined groups of people became associated with demarcated plots of land, property relationships factored into all human relationships. In such societies, groups of people formed by kinship principles came to be identified with property, and specific kinds and pieces of property became symbols of social relationships among and between individuals and groups.<sup>13</sup>

In probably all human societies, some aspects of persons have been interpreted as being exchangeable for some form of property. Bridewealth is a recognition of the fact that women have value as wives. Prostitution is an ancient institution that focuses on a woman's sexuality as an asset, exchangeable for some other form of property. Children were and still are frequently pawned, sold, and adopted via the exchange of some valued good. And, of course, wage labor is a prime example of the exchangeability of certain facets of human beings—their time, skills, talents, abilities, strength, senses, and attention—for property. Yet the differences are clear; under most forms of slavery, the total person becomes a commodity, and the exchange is mostly involuntary and often permanent.<sup>14</sup>

Second, in kinship-based societies, particularly where the kin group is a corporate, estate-owning entity, an ethos already exists expressing the concept that both individuals and groups have rights-in-persons over their members and one another.<sup>15</sup> This means that individuals belonging to the

kin group, and the group itself through its representative or headman, can make demands of its members and can dispose of them according to their judgment of what is best for the group. This is manifest in the high degree of control and power that kin groups exercise over members' behavior in such transactions as the arranging of marriages; the adoption, sale, or pawning of children; the allocation of labor and resources among members; and the imposing of penalties for wrongdoing. The group may also make demands for expenses accompanying all rites of passage (births, puberty ceremonies, marriages, and deaths) and other ritual occasions. Some of these rights are exchangeable, as in virilocal marriages, in which men of one kin group relinquish certain rights over their daughters or sisters, "giving away the bride" to another kin group. In most societies, before the imposition of state-level laws protecting the individual, kin groups had the sole power of life and death over their members.

Slavery evolved, then, in traditional societies where the concept of "rights-in-or-over-persons" was part of a nexus of understandings, customs, and beliefs about human relationships.<sup>16</sup> The extension of some of these values to the resident stranger(s) was probably an inevitable outcome of the adjustment of the host society to the presence of unfree aliens in their midst. There is of course a theoretical if not always pragmatic distinction between rights in people as property and rights-in-persons, a point that Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff do not address (1977, 11). But the notion of power and rights over others clearly forms the backdrop for the transformations that gave rise to slavery.<sup>17</sup>

As strangers, the conquered aliens had no kinship ties among the conquering group, and thus they were not a part of the ongoing social system.<sup>18</sup> While the norms, etiquette, and values of kinship and community demand that proper behavior be accorded to all members of one's own society, there were certainly in the early stages of its development no laws, customs, or religious proscriptions governing the treatment of aliens as the spoils of war. As "enemies" who were no longer a threat and no longer free to pursue their old way of life, captive persons were without any viable position or status in their new setting. Their very existence, as Patterson (1982) has noted, was an option to physical death. In the absence of any previous guiding experiences, an avenue was open for these conquering societies to create a whole new system of relationships, a new set of attitudes, customs, habits, and patterns of interaction. The conquering people, given unrestrained power, could theoretically formulate their own policies and laws, to suit their own purposes, and from the standpoint of their own group or self-interest alone.

It was probably at the juncture at which decisions were made about how to treat these marginal human beings that variations in the institutionalization of slavery must have begun to take place. The variables that influenced the developing system related to the economic and sociopolitical complexity

of the host society, to the nature of the domestic situations (in which most slaves were placed), to already existing customs governing the behavior of persons in the stratified society, to the economic factors of production and distribution, and perhaps to a host of other features as well. It is impossible at this stage to determine this precisely. What the evidence shows, however, is that certain trends began to develop, many found within the contexts of quite different societies. One of these was the habit of absorbing individual slaves into the masters' kin groups.

Most preindustrial or peasant societies valued large kin groups for the prestige, protection, and power that they provided. Beyond normal reproduction, one of the chief ways of enlarging one's kinship unit was to incorporate other individuals through adoption and/or marriage. This process was particularly common in those societies in which there were few slaves, in which the economy could not sustain or had no need for slave labor, or in which there were slaves with unusual talents or skills. Throughout Africa, in regions where traditional slavery was practiced, there is considerable evidence that enslaved persons were frequently absorbed into the kin group of their conquerors (Miers and Kopytoff 1977; Watson 1980). In many societies, including the ancient Mediterranean states and the Muslim world, such adoptions became an important device for freeing slaves. Once kinship had been created, obviously an individual's slave status ceased to exist.

In a different context, where agricultural and manufacturing activities could be enhanced with additional labor, slavery was institutionalized as pure manpower, and there grew a demand for slave labor on farms and plantations; in mines, manufacturing industries, and commerce; as well as in the domestic setting. Since warfare and conquest are unpredictable and unreliable ways of obtaining slaves, other mechanisms appeared to fill the demand. Slave raiding and trading are described in the early literature of the Mediterranean and Babylonian peoples. Phoenicians and Greeks raided for slaves along the Mediterranean coast and inland as far as the Danube River and the coasts of the Black Sea. In Asia Minor, where some of the largest trading centers developed, records show that Syrians, Germans, Thracians, Greeks, Jews, Egyptians, Ethiopians, Arabians, Persians, Spaniards, and North African peoples were sold in the slave markets. In Roman times, the Greek islands were a favored source of slaves, but many came from what is now Spain, France, Germany, and the British Isles. The Germans raided their neighbors and the people around the Black Sea to obtain captives for Muslim markets.<sup>19</sup> Once the trade in slaves had been established, it became an end in itself as a source of wealth for merchants.

Slavery subsequently became a very flexible institution, which could be molded to fit many kinds of social exigencies. As such, it was perceived as essential and necessary. There were many poor but free men, for example, who could barely eke out a living in the farmlands and towns. So it soon became

a custom for men who had become impoverished to sell themselves or their children into slavery. Men would voluntarily enter into servitude for a period of time to work off their debts, after which they or their family members would regain their freedom. Debt slavery became quite common and was widely recognized as an accepted variant of slavery. In addition, slavery as punishment for crimes committed by free men evolved as a way of dealing with miscreants. Individuals were sometimes sentenced to enslavement for a given period of time or for life, and might be sold away to a foreign land as an extreme form of punishment. And, of course, persons identified as enemies of those in power were sometimes ambushed, captured, and sold into slavery, thus helping to stifle political dissent. Debt slaves, dissidents, and criminals were usually (but not always) of the same ethnic group as the slave owners, a fact that may have tended to modify the nature of slavery itself. Moreover, these variations of slavery enlarged the numbers and sources of slaves, further entrenching the institution into the existing sociopolitical system by making it more of a functional necessity.

From their beginnings, the Roman Catholic and Byzantine Churches were major slave-owning institutions, as had been their ancestral pre-Christian temples of the ancient world. They were also major forces for improving the conditions of slaves, and they frequently manumitted their own slaves, often with the purpose of incorporating them into the clergy. Some high church officials, including a few popes, were descendants of slaves or were themselves born into the condition of slavery. There were state-owned slaves, who were often men of great training who kept the books, prepared documents, and wrote and even administered the laws. There were industrial slaves who worked in the mines, craft shops, and local factories; and domestic slaves, the largest category of all, were owned by individual families. Many ancient and medieval states employed slaves as part of their military forces. Slaves were even appointed as leaders of the armed forces. Some of these military leaders achieved greatness through their own talents and were able to gain their freedom because of their exploits and successes on the battlefield.

Most of the ancient and medieval states depended to a greater or lesser extent on slave labor for some facets of their economic production and trade. Not only was slavery extensive in the Old World but the slave trade continued throughout the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and the Black Sea until modern times. David Briton Davis points out that the "great Mediterranean slave trade reached its peak in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries" (1966, 58). Christians enslaved Muslims and Muslims in turn captured and enslaved Christians. Davis tells us that Swedish merchants traded captive Russians down the Volga and Dnieper River valleys along with furs and wax. Merchants and nobles of medieval Russia saw the export of slaves as a principal source of wealth. Men from Genoa and Venice established slave trading

posts in ports along the Black Sea, where they did a thriving business. "Tartars, Circassians, Armenians, Georgians and Bulgarians flowed into the markets of Italy and Spain" (Davis 1966, 58).

At the height of the Muslim Empire, some of the Caliphs of Baghdad, the political and religious center of the Islamic world from the eighth to the thirteenth century, were importing tens of thousands of slaves, many from Spain and a few even from the Far East. When sugar production was established on islands in the eastern Mediterranean, a new impetus was given to the slave trade and a new structuring of slaves on plantations took place, despite the fact that slavery was declining in western Europe. Slavery was thus an institution that not only was widespread in the Old World but was intertwined with virtually all aspects of culture: political, religious, economic, and social. Just as in Old Testament days, slavery was recognized as a necessary, normal, and proper component of the social system. There were those who condemned the immorality or brutality of slavery, but they did not question or object to the legality of the institution.

Yet slavery was never considered a "nice" institution, even by those who believed it to be right and proper. The fundamental dilemma of slavery has frequently intruded into human consciousness, as evidenced by the fact that during its development some felt the need to attempt to justify the institution. They were bothered by the disturbing reality of treating people as objects and took great pains to rationalize this paradox and make it acceptable to themselves and others.

Early in the history of the Greek city-states, slaves were thought of as normal human beings who had the misfortune of being taken into slavery. Later the beliefs evolved that some occupations were only fit for slaves and that conquered peoples were suited only for servile tasks. Greek ethnocentrism depicted all alien peoples as barbarians, uncivilized and deficient in governing themselves. Like some English two thousand years later, Greek apologists for slavery argued that the institution was just, legitimate, and proper and that the Greek states should enslave barbarians and provide law and order throughout the Mediterranean world. In this context, it was the superiority of Greek institutions of government, not the biological superiority of the Greek people, that provided the rationale. And in Rome, those persons who accepted the Latin language, customs, and laws ceased being barbarians and could be ultimately accepted as full citizens of the state.

Much has been made of the fact that some Greek philosophers, notably Aristotle and Plato, formulated the argument that some individuals were "natural slaves." But it is important to realize that this categorization, while sometimes referring to specific ethnic groups, was a general statement about differences of personality and abilities among individuals, specifically, what these philosophers thought was the power to reason. The distinction was applied to other Greeks as well as to non-Greeks (Cuffel 1966).

Independent of the attempts to rationalize slavery, and much more frequent in expression, were periodic efforts to improve the conditions of slaves. Perhaps because it was viewed as part of the natural order of things, the morality of slavery was not widely questioned until the rise of antislavery sentiment in Western culture in the eighteenth century. During the most oppressive periods, such as in Rome under the Republic several centuries before Christ, masters had tyrannical powers over their slaves. Slaves had no civil position and could be punished, or even killed, by their masters with impunity. Industrial slaves working in mines received the harshest treatment of all. They were frequently beaten or worked to death, and were merely replaced by newer slaves who could be cheaply purchased. The sheer brutality of such conditions inspired some to apply pressure to ameliorate the slaves' situation. But this was not just a reaction to the harshness of the treatment of slaves. Some people soon realized that slavery appeals to the most base, corrupting, and degrading of human inclinations. Both free people and slaves are brutalized under slavery, and each suffers a loss of freedom and of human sensitivity and compassion. The unchecked power of slave owners sometimes led to unspeakable cruelty, and no one was exempt from the consequences.

Other factors provided a dynamic social tension that periodically served to curtail or inhibit the abuse of slaves. Practical self-interest led slave holders to moderate their behavior, if for no other reason than that one cannot get good work out of a skilled and intelligent person who is treated merely as a "thing." Many slaves of Roman times, for example, were highly educated, well-trained Greeks and Egyptians. In so many instances, the masters soon recognized the superiority of the slave. This helps to account for the fact that in different areas and in different circumstances, the treatment of slaves and other unfree labor varied enormously.

The fact is that no matter how ruthless and brutal the practice of slavery in different time periods may have been, inevitably the slave holders could not ignore the humanity of the slaves. But recognizing people as human beings is not tantamount to showing kindness and compassion. (From the standpoint of contemporary moral values anchored in humanitarian ideals, all forms of slavery are tyrannical, brutal, and oppressive in that they deprive other human beings of their basic freedoms. This was not always the case: the moral arena in which evaluations and judgments are made today differs greatly from that of antiquity.)

A variety of customs, habits, and conventions developed affecting the sale and treatment of slaves and the relationships between slaves on the one hand and masters and other free persons on the other. Some of these soon became codified into bodies of laws, like those found in the Codes of Hammurabi of Babylon eighteen centuries before Christ. In societies without written literature, codes for managing slaves were part of a large oral repertoire of cus-

toms and traditions that were handed down from one generation to the next and maintained as general guidelines for behavior.

These ancient bodies of laws, customs, legal precedents, and traditions recognized the paradox of people being defined as things. Lawmakers, writers, and philosophers grappled with the finer points of cases where distinctions had to be drawn between the slave as property and the slave as human. One distinction, expressed in the law codes from Augustinian times to those of Justinian, was that between *ius gentium* (law common to all people) and *ius naturale* (natural law). The law of nature, some Romans argued, declares that there are natural rights inherent in mankind that cannot be denied under slavery. According to the law of nature, every man is an equal. When the law of nature comes into conflict with civil laws or laws of property, it is the law of nature that must prevail. Thus, law codes, while dominated by considerations of the owner's property rights, provided an out by which the human rights of slaves could be given precedence over the property rights of masters.<sup>20</sup>

The Justinian Code expressed existing standards of Roman law and thought at a time when slavery in much of western Europe was being gradually transformed into a new type of servitude, villenage, or serfdom. Historians disagree on the distinctions between the conditions of serfs and slaves, but they do agree that both institutions continued side by side in many parts of Europe up until the fifteenth century and even later in some places. Slavery and serfdom gradually declined and disappeared in western Europe from about the thirteenth century on, although Jordan notes that laws relating to villenage as a form of unfree labor remained "fossilized" in the English legal system (1968, 50).

Slave codes, customs, and actual practices reflected the degree to which societies were willing to give cognizance and priority to the human rights of slaves. Of significance for this study is the fact that prior to the eighteenth century, there appears to have been no society that categorically denied the humanity of slaves in law and social beliefs, even when their treatment appeared most brutal.<sup>21</sup> That is, no society felt the need to rationalize slavery by denying that slaves were fully human. Virtually all societies viewed them as unfortunate, inferior, and powerless, although their statuses varied widely.<sup>22</sup>

Scholars from Tannenbaum on have identified some of the pragmatic social features that are indicative of a society's recognition and acceptance of the slave as a human being. These include the possibility of manumission, the right to marriage or some form of cohabitation, the right to hold or own property (and to use it to purchase freedom), access to training or education in some skill, and some form of special rights or protection for slave women and their children by their masters or other free men. These are the most frequently found customary rights permitted to slaves in Old World societies,

and they were sometimes expressed in the written law. It should be obvious that these rights and privileges were not all equally and fully available to slaves in all societies and at all times. But evidence shows that they were accepted as normal aspects of slavery in the Middle East and Africa and, in Greco-Roman times, throughout much of the Mediterranean.<sup>23</sup> It is not clear whether such rights were always protected under the law, given the pervasiveness of human behavior, but they reflect, it seems to me, the dynamic nature of slave systems and of attempts at the resolution of, or compromise between, the property rights of slave owners and the constant reminders or assertions of the slaves' humanity (Barrow 1928).

Slaves have had other rights accorded to them, such as the right to seek legal redress from cruel and unusual punishment, the right to be sold to another master, the right to some degree of physical and social mobility within the slave status, the right to enter into contracts and to conduct business, and the right to religious instruction and to worship the gods of the dominant society. These rights were probably less commonly implemented in the Old World than the rights cited earlier, but it is significant that they are also found in the literature on Latin American slavery at various times and places (see Bowser 1974, Rort 1976, and others).

Of greater importance is the fact that Old World slavery never developed as "racial" slavery, although the potential ingredients were there.<sup>24</sup> Peoples of all physical variations and ethnic groups have been subject to enslavement since ancient times. The only restriction was the prohibition against enslaving one's coreligionists: Christians theoretically did not enslave other Christians, or Muslims other Muslims, a situation likely honored more in its breach than its observance.

On the Iberian peninsula, dark-skinned Africans arrived as part of the Muslim conquests, as we have seen.<sup>25</sup> But slavery had existed here since Roman times and by the end of the fifteenth century comprised such varied peoples as Armenians, Bulgarians, Circassians, Greeks, Jews, Lebanese, Syrians, Russians, and even other Spaniards (Bowser 1974). Peoples from sub-Saharan Africa were not unknown in this medieval world; some records of Africans traded in Portuguese and Spanish ports go back as early as the thirteenth century (Rort 1976, 4), but many were certainly there even earlier. Snowden has documented the even more ancient presence of dark-skinned Africans in the Greco-Roman world (1970, [1970] 1983).

After Portugal established trading ports along the West African coast beginning in the 1440s and Turkish forces conquered Constantinople in 1453, effectively cutting off trade with Black Sea ports, slave traders turned to West Africa. This greatly increased the numbers of African slaves bought during the latter part of the fifteenth century. The Portuguese initially monopolized the trade to West Africa, whose peoples supplied spices, ivory, gold dust, and animal skins, as well as slaves, to Europe. Lisbon and Seville evolved as major

trade centers. Of the estimated 100,000 slaves in Spain during the latter part of the sixteenth century, many were of African origin, including some who were descendants of the Moors (Palmer 1976, 6). They were primarily domestic slaves, but many also served in more public functions as soldiers, laborers, porters, and trash collectors. There were also free people of African background on the Iberian peninsula, so that dark-skinned, negroid-looking people were not unfamiliar to the Spanish and Portuguese even before they began directly importing Africans to the New World colonies in the early sixteenth century. Herbert Klein, speaking of the intimate contacts between the Spanish and African peoples, claims that "the Iberian peoples had long accepted the individuality, personality and co-equality of the Negro." Africans had mixed freely in slavery with them and all other Europeans, slaves and free, and "there was no reason for the white Iberians to conceive of these Africans as anything but normal human beings" (1971, 141).

Leslie Rout, Jr., notes that more female African slaves were imported than male, and they functioned as domestic workers and concubines. "As a result, a number of mulattoes were to be found in al-Andalus (the Muslim term for Spain), and several of them allegedly enjoyed positions of importance in the national aristocracy and bourgeoisie" (1976, 14, 18). Thus we perceive customs and practices already in place involving not only slavery but patterns of interaction with diverse human populations that subsequently would appear in Spanish and Portuguese America.

Certain codes of law had systematized and distilled many characteristics of Old World slavery as they were manifested in Spain and Portugal. Las Siete Partidas, a body of legal and moral principles enacted in Castile in the thirteenth century, governed slavery in Spain, and like its predecessor, the Justinian Code, it placed restrictions on the behavior of both masters and slaves, decreed appropriate punishment for offenses, and specified the rights and entitlements of slaves. It provided, among other things, for the manumission of slaves and for the recognition of the rights of slaves to marry, to earn wages, to have instruction in religion, and to be protected and represented in courts of law.

The continuity of slavery in the western Mediterranean meant that the institution's customs, laws, practices, beliefs, and habits were already established precedents for the New World conquerors. These precedents formed part of the cultural knowledge that was transmitted to the New World by the conquistadors and others. Elements of Las Siete Partidas were carried across the Atlantic and instituted in the New World colonies under the supervision and sanctions of the Crown and the church. They were designed to serve as guidelines for the legal regulation of slavery among both indigenous peoples and later imported ones. However, historians like Magnus Mörner, Colin Palmer, and Leslie Rout, Jr., have warned that strict supervision of the relationships between masters and slaves in the New World context could hardly

have been very efficient, and adherence to Las Siete Partidas was most likely only minimal in many areas. They suggest that local laws enacted to deal with particular circumstances often superseded or contradicted the laws of the Crown or colonial governments.

Nevertheless, Las Siete Partidas and the *cedulas*, or decrees issued by the monarchy and backed by the Catholic Church, provided standards and guidelines for slave-master relationships as reflected in Old World customs. If nothing else, they were reminders of the human personality and inviolable rights of the slaves and undoubtedly protected them in many instances from excessive brutality and abuse. In the structure of colonial society, representatives of the Crown and members of the church functioned to monitor the behavior of slave owners; these men often had considerable power, especially in the towns (Klein 1971). But custom and habit more than anything else probably functioned to provide adherence to the tenets of slave laws.

### Colonial Slavery Under the Spanish and Portuguese

Unlike the English settlers, the Spanish had conquered lands in New Spain (Mexico) and Peru with armies of men and established an elaborate colonial bureaucracy that eventually controlled huge territories encompassing large numbers of indigenous peoples. Under instructions from the Crown and the mandates of the Catholic Church, they set about immediately not only to impose their laws on the heterogeneous populations within the regions under their control but to convert the Indians to their religion and monitor their moral behavior. Their primary aim as conquerors, however, was to exploit the wealth in gold, silver, and precious stones so abundant in the Aztec and Inca worlds.

Cortés set out to conquer Mexico in 1519, and within a decade Pizarro formed a company in Panama to explore the wealth of Peru. According to Frederick Bowser, "blacks figured in all the expeditions undertaken by the company between 1524 and 1528" (1974, 3). In 1534, Pedro de Alvarado sailed from Guatemala with two hundred Africans in his company to claim some Peruvian territory. After the conquest of the Incas, when the followers of Pizarro and Alvarado came into conflict and civil war ensued, blacks were important in the battles on both sides. "Even more significant was the role played by skilled Africans in the supply of the royal army. Black artisans were employed to manufacture harquebuses, swords, and lances, and an African woman was commissioned to supply the force with rosaries" (Bowser 1974, 9).

These first Africans to come to the New World, having been brought from the Iberian peninsula, were already Hispanicized, that is, acquainted with the Spanish language and culture. Although most were probably slaves, some were free men and women serving as retainers and employees of the

conquistadors or church officials. When Africans served outstandingly in battles or as scouts, they were often given their freedom along with land and other spoils of war, much as in Old World slavery.

Bowser claims that Africans in Peru "profited by the free-and-easy atmosphere of the conquest period to gain their freedom" (1974, 273). And many more, he points out, came as free men on their own. They soon became an important component of coastal towns. All of this suggests that in the early years of colonization, the lifestyle that developed in Latin America was much more like that of the Old World ports and cities, including the case with which individual slaves could purchase or attain their freedom by virtue of their services.

Initially it was the Indians whom the Spanish planned to use as slave labor in the mines and in food cultivation and provisioning. Colonial settlers everywhere applied the argument of the conquest of indigenes in "a just war" to justify their actions (much as their northern counterparts would later do). But within decades, the decline of the Indian population from disease and maltreatment by their Spanish overlords became disturbing to the Spanish Crown and threatening to the labor supply. By 1550, the Crown had outlawed Indian slavery, although subsequent patterns of wage labor using the *mita* system (by which Indian districts or provinces had to provide laborers), and the organization of large haciendas, reduced most remaining Indians to impoverished peasantry under the nominal protection of the Crown.

As the Indian population declined, a growing demand for labor resulted in decisions to import more Africans, who had already demonstrated their viability as workers in tropical zones.<sup>26</sup> Beginning about 1518, the Crown allowed slaves to be imported directly from Africa. These formed a new category of slaves (*bozales*) who initially spoke no Spanish and were not yet acculturated to the European way of life. After the establishment of the African-Atlantic trade, Peru and Mexico received the bulk of the slaves brought over during the first two centuries (Palmer 1976). And it was in these territories that the dominant patterns of New World colonial slavery were first established. The numbers of African slaves increased steadily throughout the first century and much more dramatically after 1580 when the Spanish and Portuguese empires were united under Philip II and Spanish ships became directly involved in the slave trade.

Colonization and interaction among the Spanish, Africans, and Indians differed in many ways from the patterns later established in the English colonies. Demographically, the number of Iberian colonists in any area was never very large except in a few cities. In most rural areas, not only did native peoples outnumber their conquerors together with their followers and slaves, but in certain regions the slave population eventually equaled or surpassed that of the Europeans, who were concentrated in the cities.<sup>27</sup> Spanish

efforts to govern and control the two major vice royalties, with capitals in Lima and Mexico City, entailed strategies that either attempted to keep ethnically distinct populations separated or pitted some groups against others. Whenever Spanish officials dealt with incidents involving Indians, for example, they were always accompanied by their black slaves, whom they armed. In addition, the Spanish in both areas frequently passed laws that attempted to prevent contact between the *bozales* and Indians in order to insulate the latter from alien and sometimes heretical (such as Muslim African) influences and to preclude any possible unity among them.

All conquered regions came under the direct control of the colonial administration, involving both church and state, and the administrative bureaucracy was spread widely and thinly over all territories.<sup>28</sup> This meant that in towns, mining settlements, agricultural plantations, and rural districts, a Spanish minority governed an increasingly heterogeneous society. The social structure that the Latin rulers envisioned and tried to achieve was one in which clear status differences between the visibly distinct populations could be retained to facilitate the organization and efficient governance of the colonies. Their vision followed the model of estates that had been developed in Spain under the Catholic kings in which a system of *castas* distinguished Jews, Muslims, and Christians. The *castas* system was transmitted to the New World colonies, but ultimately the term itself came to be used to specify people of "mixed blood," the *mestizos*, *mulattoes*, *zambos* (African Indians), and various subsequent mixtures among these. The social structure was further complicated by class and status divisions and internal rankings within the European, Indian, African, and mixed groupings.<sup>29</sup>

A variety of civil laws were passed to keep the Africans, Indians, and mixed bloods apart. They were often separated into distinct residential areas and to some extent by the kinds of occupations open to them. Sumptuary rules placing prohibitions on dress, occupations, access to the military, universities, and hospitals, and restrictions on marriage were repeatedly promulgated. But efforts to enforce these laws were ineffectual or only weakly attempted.

Since both the Spanish and their slaves were predominantly male, and the slaves identified with the Spanish as conquerors, both turned to Indian women for sexual partners. In Mexico, Palmer (1976) relates, frequent complaints were lodged throughout the sixteenth century against Africans who absconded with Indian women and who often mistreated and intimidated the Indian men with whom they worked in the mines or on haciendas. In Peru, similar processes took place. Blacks assumed a position of superiority over Indians and often forced the latter to serve them. The Crown imposed harsh penalties on Africans who mistreated Indians, attempted to prevent sexual relations between slaves and Indian women, and tried to bar blacks from carrying arms (Bowser 1974, 154). The government appointed an In-

dian agent (*corregidor de indios*) to protect the Indians and prevent contact with black slaves. Despite official government policies, none of these numerous efforts at social control worked. The African slaves preferred to mate with or marry Indian women because their children would then be free, and Spanish men exercised their dominance as conquerors by mating with both Indian women and their female African slaves. This sexual intermingling between the different populations began early and continued right through the colonial period and beyond, following customs very much like Old World slavery.

On occasion, intermarriage with Indians was encouraged by the Crown, as when Spanish men were pressured to establish strategic marriages with high-status Indian women. On other occasions, local attempts were made to prevent the mixture of peoples because of the confusion of statuses that resulted. But none of the Latin colonies passed laws, as did the North Americans, strictly prohibiting intermarriage on pain of legal penalties. The church was responsible for more than a few marriages as it periodically forced Spanish men to legitimize their unions and their children by Indian, mestizo, and mulatto women (Klein 1971). As in the Old World, marriage was considered a normal state for men and women. Colonial laws permitted slaves to marry, while both custom and the Catholic religion pressured slave owners to recognize such marriages.

Well before the eighteenth century, according to Leon Campbell, "miscegenation had caused racial lines in Peru and elsewhere to become hopelessly blurred" (1973, 324). But it was not "race" that was blurred; it was the biological variations that the Spanish had tried to use to structure a society in a hierarchy of social categories. In Peru, Campbell asserts, the hierarchy placed Spaniards on top, mestizos next, then Negroes, and below them the large mass of "Indians" who retained much of their traditional culture and communities.<sup>30</sup> With the confounding of physical distinctions, new social criteria for signifying status had to be adopted. And these allowed for a certain fluidity in the social hierarchy so that some wealthy *castas* could purchase certificates of "whiteness," and children could be registered at birth in higher social strata for a fee (Campbell 1973). Wealth and/or occupation alone was often the catalyst of change in *casta* identity and further complicated the social statuses of mixed groups (Mörner 1967; Rout 1976). Moreover, some who were phenotypically recognizable as white also sank in status as their fortunes declined.

An important feature of these societies was the number of Spanish or high-status men who recognized their children by Indian and African-descended women. Bowers notes that "sexual contact between Spanish men and African women was widespread and persistent throughout the colonial period" (1975, 347). These preferences of Spanish males for such women were observed earlier in Spain (Rout 1976, 14). Their children were fre-

quently freed, often provided education and/or training, bequeathed estates or some form of wealth, and permitted to hold significant positions in the colonial hierarchy. In a process of "whitening," some mestizos and mulattoes were allowed to inherit the social status of their European fathers, despite the even greater burden of illegitimacy in some cases. Whiteness, or being of "pure" Spanish ancestry, because it symbolized the conquerors, represented the pinnacle of the social system.

In both Mexico and Peru, "whiteness" was a social category that provided numerous privileges and advantages, and families in this numerically small upper crust continued to preserve as much of their declared "purity of blood" as possible. But it is clear that the elite assimilated considerable numbers of mixed persons. At the same time, the great masses of indigenous people absorbed both Spanish genes and those of the Negro population, so that in most of Peru and Mexico the combination of distinctive African negroid physical characteristics virtually disappeared as they were blended into the dominant mestizo population.<sup>32</sup>

Similar processes took place in Brazil, where a genetically mixed population soon came to predominate particularly in the northern state of Bahia. Both Donald Pierson (1942) and Carl Degler (1971) describe a colonial society sensitive to the multifarious intermixtures of peoples and offering special benefits and higher status to mulattoes. The "mulatto escape hatch," as Degler called it, allowed those of mixed backgrounds to function in the interstitial areas of the economy, to have training and skills not available to freed blacks, and to achieve levels of political and social status closer to that of whites.

In all of Latin America, the European colonists not only recognized the intermixture of peoples but allocated distinct names to the various combinations and attempted to utilize their gradations within the social structure. Rank often came to depend on to what degree Spanish or Portuguese ancestry was manifest in one's phenotype, even though early in the conquest period negative connotations were associated with *castas*, primarily for their supposed illegitimacy. The social hierarchy, however, was a complex one, not easily fitted within parameters familiar to North Americans. Prejudice and discrimination against individuals with dark skins, which reflected their slave ancestry, characterized all of the Latin colonies in various forms and intensities. The value hierarchy ensured the persistence of color preferences, which were exacerbated in the postcolonial period. What some have called a "pigmentocracy" emerged slowly, according to Mörner (1967), and became more rigid as the colonial system matured. Black, Indian, and white, and every mixture among them, became not "racial" classifications but synonyms of individual social rank. As a consequence, before the end of the colonial period in the nineteenth century, some degree of fluidity had allowed mixed persons to achieve high status, wealth, and even fame, while poor whites de-

clined in status. As Emilia Viotti da Costa and others have revealed, "the society was in fact structured according to criteria of wealth, rank, color and legal status" (1977, 297). Da Costa further argues that in Brazil, "money and status could change black, or at least mulatto to white" (298). In none of these Latin areas was there a stigma attached to elite individuals or families for having had African ancestors, although recognition of such ancestry declined with increasing interactions with North Americans in the twentieth century.

In summary, the documented evidence from a variety of sources on Latin America suggests that whereas minute physical variations and admixtures were recognized and utilized to create an ideology of social inequality, they were not homogenized and translated into specific, exclusive, and distinct groupings. And even the names and categories invented to try to represent every possible ancestral combination were not associated explicitly with stereotyped behavior or institutionalized as dogma about innateness. The continued reproduction of genetically mixed people ensured that easy boundaries could not be drawn on physical traits alone, and individuals shifted about within various social strata on the basis of criteria other than what would have been considered "race" in North America. Instead, the criteria were markedly varied and included education, social class, family background, occupation, and wealth as well as color and physiognomy. Moreover, as da Costa also tells us, in Brazil, blacks, slave or free, had a wide variety of personalities reflected in literature and in the minds of whites. Their image was never relegated to the "Sambo" or "Nar" that dominated white minds in nineteenth-century North America (Fredrickson 1977; da Costa 1977). We would expect this to be the case throughout Spanish America.

The fundamental question raised by extensive miscegenation and its social recognition in the Latin colonies is whether the attitudes and practices of discrimination against dark-skinned or more negroid-looking people is reflective of the existence of "race" and "racism." Campbell (1973) implies that in Peru there was racism without race due to the fact that visibly clear-cut, nonoverlapping, exclusive groups did not and could not easily have emerged. Recalling that exclusiveness is a major component of race in North America, as we here define it, the query rises to central importance.<sup>33</sup> We need new conceptual tools and a more refined vocabulary with which to denote these subtle differences.<sup>34</sup>

## Uniqueness of the English Experience of Slavery

All forms of colonial slavery bore numerous institutional similarities in the use and treatment of Africans as slaves. And modern historians have argued

that every colony differed in some respects from others, whether Latin or English. Plantation societies, whether in Brazil, on the Caribbean islands, or in the southern United States, and whether producing tobacco, sugar, or cotton, were more similar to one another than they were to urban societies in their own territories; it was on plantations that slaves everywhere worked hardest and received the most inhumane treatment. Urban centers also tended to manifest, *inter alia*, similarities in the kinds of work that slaves did and in the nature of personal relationships between slaves on the one hand and slave owners and other free persons on the other.

But differences in the colonizing powers' varying historical experiences with human heterogeneity and with older forms of slavery led to their devising different cultural stratagems for coping with current realities. In other words, the differences between English American and Latin American slavery relate most directly to the retention of Old World customs and habits in the Latin areas, irrespective of the physical diversity in the population.

On the important issue of manumissions, for example, we have seen that there were always substantial numbers of free blacks and mixed peoples in the Latin colonies; no laws prevented the emancipation of slaves. On the contrary, the laws and customs of the Iberians assumed that freedom was the natural and normal desire of human beings, and moral pressure was put on those recalcitrant slave owners who denied freedom to their slave(s) when it could be purchased. According to Bowser, the principles of Las Siete Partidas "viewed slavery as a necessary evil, as a transitory condition that did not alter or diminish the nature of the slave" (1974, 273). Thus manumission was not only possible but, at least in Peru, the old Roman *peculium* (property or wages earned by slaves) was restored to provide slaves a means of income (278). Spanish American practices relating to the purchase of freedom, Bowser further tells us, were "more liberal than that envisioned by the Partidas" (1975, 343). Moreover, several historians have noted, Latins did not fear their freed slaves. Although most were poor, large numbers of freedmen worked in important crafts and professions. Many were mulattoes who did not identify with slaves or blacks.

In North America, numerous legal and customary prohibitions made private manumission difficult or increasingly impossible from the late seventeenth century up to the Civil War period. North Americans everywhere feared the consequences of freeing large numbers of slaves, a fear that peaked in the first half of the nineteenth century, when, as will be argued, "the Negro" was becoming viewed and defined as subhuman, as a species apart.

North American slaves had no refuge from, and no rights to redress against, cruel or unusual punishment. And they could not sue through the courts and request to be sold to another master, as was often the case under Old World slavery and as was found in the Latin colonies. In North America,

from the early eighteenth century on, outside of the northern colonies, slave marriages were not considered legitimate or legally binding on the master, and there was no institutionalized religious pressure to recognize them. It was an arbitrary decision on the part of an owner to permit slaves to enter into any form of connubiality. There was indeed no acceptance of the need for affective relationships between male and female slaves. On the contrary, slave women were thought of only as workers or as breeders and concubines at best. The slave codes gave the master complete discretion in the matter of separating "husband" and "wife" or mother and child and virtually total control over the welfare of the slaves.<sup>35</sup>

It was in the matter of female slaves and their children by their masters or other white men that North American racial slavery contrasted most sharply with the practices and customs of the Old World and with the slavery of the Latin American colonies. Historical records from the biblical accounts of Sarah and Abraham to the laws of Islam show that it was customary for a woman slave who had a child by her master to be protected from further sale and even to be allotted heightened status within the household.<sup>36</sup> It comes as no surprise that "Brazilians and foreigners alike acknowledged that the offspring of unions of masters with slave women were accepted as part of the family" (Degler 1971, 234). Nothing prevented Portuguese or Spanish settlers from recognizing their children by Indian or African women except their own personal inclinations and values.

This was not so in North America, although miscegenation manifested itself early in the history of the colonies, and, by the first part of the eighteenth century, mulatto offspring constituted a sizeable and recognizable demographic reality albeit not nearly as substantial as in Latin America. There was no customary provision for a slave woman's security or that of her children, and the system did not permit a change of her status under law. Indeed, North Americans obfuscated the facts and denied any separate social recognition to offspring of "mixed" parentage. Such children were not permitted by law or custom to be liberated, to be acknowledged by their fathers, or to be claimed as their heirs. In very few instances in the South or North did the mulatto descendants of white slave masters have legal access to the status or property of their fathers, even on those few occasions when they were emancipated, a clear indication that the ideology of race superseded other status dimensions.

The economic and social implications of this prohibition (or taboo) on paternal recognition have been far reaching. The North American black population today derives an average of about 30 percent of its biogenetic ancestry from Europeans, due initially to the matings of masters and slave women.<sup>37</sup> When we remind ourselves that it was not the poor whites who owned slaves, and that the slaves produced enormous wealth for their owners and

for the nation as a whole, then the demands made during the 1960s by some black groups for reparations do not seem quite so specious.

This critical difference in the attitudes of Latin American and North American slave masters and overall society toward their offspring by slave women cannot be fully explained by the demographic and economic facts adduced by recent scholars who relate the frequency of sexual unions with Indian and/or African women to the ratios of white men to white women. In the Latin colonies, men came to explore and exploit the land and people for wealth and generally did not bring their women with them. Consequently, it is argued, they established sexual liaisons with Indian and African women. Because of their fewer numbers, European men in the Latin colonies often elevated their children by these women to freedom (and freed other blacks) in order to fill "the innumerable petty jobs, the interstitial work of the economy, that the constraints of slavery would not permit the slave to perform and that white men were insufficient or unwilling to man" (Degler 1971, 44).<sup>38</sup> In contrast, the argument continues, Englishmen came with greater numbers of their own women, whose higher position and greater influence in English society made it possible to thwart any recognition of slave children (232).

Yet Nash reminds us that until about 1620, white women were generally unavailable in Virginia. And English males still took "little recourse to Indian women" (1982, 276). Nash cites a contemporary of this period who thought that the Englishmen were "imbued with a false delicacy . . . and could not bring themselves to sleep with Indian women" (276). Nash finds it difficult to believe that such squeamishness characterized the generally lower-class Englishmen and argues that the cause probably lay within the Indian communities, which felt no need to give up their women.

But overall patterns of European relations with Indians tell us a somewhat different story. In the early sixteenth century, both the Portuguese and the French cultivated alliances and cooperation with the Indians. They sent boys and young men to live with the Indians and learn their languages (Dickason 1979, 189). All the Latin peoples assimilated some Indians into their communities, although sometimes attempting to separate them residentially and by occupations. They vigorously converted them and transmitted to them their languages and lifestyles. The English on the other hand systematically excluded Indians from the very beginning. Nash says of this circumstance that "the general lack of red-white sexual intermingling forecast the overall failure of the two cultures to merge" (1982, 278).

The Latin colonies, in contrast, produced and incorporated large mestizo populations out of which came many outstanding cultural and political leaders. Not only was there genetic fusion but the syncretism of Indian, Latin, and African cultures was extensive. Talented mestizos and mulattoes were co-opted into the elite Latin community, many holding professional and skilled occupations. Of the English colonies, Nash states, "the half-Indian,

half-white person, usually the product of a liaison between a white fur trader and an Indian woman, remained in almost all cases within Indian society . . . [and was] the most alienated of all people from white society" (1982, 279). What Marvin Harris calls the "rule of hypo-descent," whereby children were accorded the lower status of their mothers, obtained in the cases of both Indian and black mixed offspring among the English (1964, 56).

We have seen that some scholars have argued against the importance of Europeans' previous cultural attitudes in determining their patterns of colonial interaction (Nash 1982, 284). But we are reminded of the Statutes of Kilkenny, which forbade the intermarriage of English settlers with the Irish, and the general English cultural predisposition, seen in earlier chapters, to keep themselves apart. It was not primarily the presence, or lack, of English women that generated Englishmen's indifference to their children by non-white women. Nash comes much closer to the truth when he states that Englishmen objected not so much to sexual relations with dark-skinned women but to conferring status on them "by accepting such intermingling as legitimate or by admitting its product to white society" (1982, 284). It was exclusion from English society that was the goal. The Portuguese and Spanish were also protective of their status, but they never erected exclusive categories and were much less rigid in their proscriptions.<sup>39</sup>

It seems, then, that the worldview of Latin colonists was from the beginning very different from that of the English, primarily because of their varying experiences with human diversity. The Latin colonists accepted Africans in a wider variety of roles, from free men of diverse social statuses to the lowliest of slaves, just as they had in the Old World. With the passage of time and increased importation of Africans, Latin colonists came to associate dark skins with slave status, but the correspondence was neither precise nor comprehensive. In the nineteenth century, Latin Americans came under the influence of the race ideology of North America. But because of the extensive intermixture of peoples, among other historical and cultural factors, it was impossible to incorporate all of the ideological components of "race" as they had developed in North America.

Because of the inability to structure phenotypically based separate and exclusive groups, none of the other components of race were institutionalized in Latin America as formidably and as widely as in the United States. Ranking and inequality were (and still are) heavily predicated on social factors, including income, education, inherited wealth, language, occupation, and lifestyle, which long predated the tricontinental mixing of peoples. This is so despite the retention of linguistic evidence suggesting phenotype-based categories. Postcolonial developments reveal clear preferences for "whiteness," in emulation of European and American values, but the race concept was never as rigidly and firmly established in the Latin colonial world as it was in pre-Civil War North America.

All of this suggests the need for rethinking and reformulating our understanding of attitudes toward human differences, not so much in terms of "race," using a lexicon specific to the North American situation, but in more precise terms derived from comparative studies of the ideological components of different societies' worldviews, at different stages of their development.

### **The Significance of Slavery in the Creation of "Race" Ideology**

What the English were developing, concurrently with slavery, was a new criterion of status, the idea of race, whose rationale could be situated in the "natural divisions" of mankind. But these divisions were not historically recognized as natural and relatively insignificant, as they were in the Old World. Instead, they were compounded into autochthonous taxonomic population units and ranked so that the lowest acquired questionable human status.

The imposing of subhuman status, within the slave context, required the denial of any recognition of the human rights of the slaves. Nash portrays this phenomenon in terms of "the psychological compulsion to dehumanize slaves by taking from them the rights that connoted their humanity. It was far easier to rationalize the merciless exploitation of those who had been defined by law as something less than human" (1982, 151).

That "something less than human" is the critical element. The institution of slavery facilitates the dehumanization process in a logical manner by posing the contradiction that a human being is simultaneously both a piece of property, a "thing," and a person. This permits emphasis on the property element and the prioritizing of the rights of owners to their property. It also allows gross subjugation and brutality on a large scale, while obviating the possibility of guilt. The dynamic tension inherent in this dilemma has always in the past provided fluid space for preserving the human rights of slaves. American slave owners, however, steeped in English legal history and traditions regarding the overarching importance of property and its connection to individual liberty, reversed this trend. They never came to accept fully the concept of slaves having natural rights that might supersede the property rights of the master. When they confronted the age-old dilemma of slavery, they chose to emphasize the slave as a piece of property first and foremost. It was the strongest and most successful assimilation of human beings to property that has ever been made.

The evidence for this is clearest in the numerous judicial decisions that fortified property rights. It is also found in many of the laws that were enacted after the turn of the eighteenth century, especially in the fugitive slave laws, the various legal codes controlling the movements and behavior of

slaves, and the lack of specification of slaves' rights in any of the relevant legal documents. It is manifest unmistakably in the customs and social habits that developed governing the treatment of slaves and the interactions of slaves and masters. However, before complete assimilation could be accomplished, as Nash so clearly recognized, the slave had to be defined first as a creature who was not fully human.

There were, as we have seen, already existing tendencies in English culture that promoted and ensured this cognitive transformation and that provided a kind of cultural validation for it: a hierarchical view of the world; the pseudoscientific-religious notion of the Great Chain of Being; and an extreme form of ethnocentrism emanating from long antagonistic relationships with other neighboring groups. The English had an elaborate conception of what "savagery" was all about, and most important was its "subhuman" nature. We will recall that, in the late sixteenth century, some Englishmen were beginning to believe that the "wild Irish," their prototype savages, were inherently inferior and could never become civilized. Paralleling the promotion of black labor as the only viable and suitable labor force that could be totally controlled in the context of colonial development, the English increasingly fitted the Africans into the mold that the Irish had once occupied in the dreams of the Sidneys, the Gilberts, the Raleighs, and like-minded others. It was fortuitous for the English that: (1) the new labor force happened to be not only culturally different but physically distinct and not easily mistaken for any of the other populations in the new colonies; and (2) the African-Atlantic trade provided an unlimited supply of this labor.

Several observations should be made with regard to the complexity of the processes taking place and of the dynamic nature of the interplay of ideological beliefs impinging on these processes. One is that it was ironically the context of a developing Christian world that virtually required the transmutation of the Negro's human status. Christianity was a doctrinal religious movement that emphasized humanitarian and spiritual concerns over material ones. Certain sectors of Christian European society were, throughout the centuries, progressively elaborating and expanding on the themes of Christian brotherhood, human rights, and the elevation of the good of the many over the privileges of the few. European Americans were virtually all exposed or conditioned (at one level and to a greater or lesser degree) to the virtues of selflessness, charity, compassion, and brotherly love. Within their own communities, certain standards of social behavior, shared systems of etiquette and politeness, and shared attitudes toward proper social graces all exemplified, at least minimally, the Judeo-Christian values governing human interactions. Theoretically, those who failed to adhere to the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule, to treat others as they would like to be treated, would experience divine retribution, if not here on Earth, then in the next world. Such a sanction was strong in a world where religious faith was still a significant aspect of a peoples' social well-being.

But greed and the great drive to accumulate wealth, which were the engines of the new economic order, required increasing deployments of forced labor and a callous indifference to human suffering. The psychological and physical violence against other human beings that is inherent in the use of forced labor called for some justification that would inhibit or assuage any guilt, for guilt was an interloper and an obstacle to the spirit of a growing capitalism. Donald Noel, responding to his own query asking why exploitation should cause racism, answers: "It does so, paradoxically, only if the values of the exploiting society are such that its members have misgivings about the justice of their actions" (1972, 164).

Given the degradation of slavery, it took only a minor cognitive transition to focus on the obvious physical and behavioral differences between Africans and Europeans and to reach the conclusion that Africans were somehow not quite human like themselves. With this conclusion, all moral and ethical problems receded, and there remained only the pragmatic ones of selective perception, namely, the obliteration from one's daily experience of any consciousness of the slaves' human qualities. Since the new definitions depended upon the very visible differences of the blacks, this psychological mind-set had to be extended also to those free blacks whom one might encounter. This accounts for the growing patterns of behavior and their corresponding attitudes, deeply humiliating and degrading, that Europeans showed to all blacks, especially in the southern English colonies. However trivial, every act symbolically had to remind both masters and slaves, whites and free blacks, of the subhuman status of the blacks. It also explains the increasing focus on the physical attributes of "the Negro," as we have seen.

This concern for the physical differences of blacks was to grow and intensify throughout the eighteenth century. It attracted the attention of learned people and scientists even as it was evolving as the basis for social, political, and economic discriminations. Jordan notes that there was a rapid growth of interest in the "anatomical investigations of human differences" both in America and Europe toward the end of the eighteenth century (1968, xiii). Two things are striking about this development. One is its indication of the direction that rationalizations of slavery were beginning to take. The other is the degree to which it coincided with the heightening of antislavery sentiment both in England and in the colonies, and with the independent, mushrooming revolutionary spirit on both sides of the Atlantic. As will be seen in Chapter 9, the growing antislavery movement was an inadvertent catalyst for the final synthesis and elaboration of those elements represented in the popular culture explicitly by the term "race."

We can conclude that slavery was seminal to the creation and development of the idea of race in the North American colonies. First, it gave the colonists, individually and collectively, the unrestrained power to create their own savage. They fabricated and imposed their ancient image of savagery over an easily distinguishable, and powerless, category of people, making it

possible to view them as subhuman. Second, since slavery always exacerbates cultural-behavioral differences between the free and the enslaved, black and white behavior grew even more divergent, especially on those plantations where slaves were forced to survive under brutish conditions. When people were treated like beasts, they inevitably behaved accordingly. The slavish, cringing behavior forced on the slaves, the stumbling and awkwardness, the inability to remember simple directions, the feigned ignorance or ill health, all were postulated as innate. This belief was then used as justification for the further indignities and brutalities of slavery. It was a cycle that more deeply imbedded in the white mind the idea that behavior and biology were conjoined and inseparable.

Third, it enabled the colonists to maintain "the Negro" as a separate and discrete social category, regardless of slavery, imposing laws that preserved their distinctiveness. Although some miscegenation occurred, it did not approach the degree of genetic mixture of African, European, and Indian people found elsewhere. Legal prohibitions against intermarriage and fornication, along with the "rule of hypo-descent," meant that the pigmentation and physiognomies of the original populations could be preserved intact, for the most part, and thus utilized for the critical function of maintaining easily perceived social categories. Fourth, slavery facilitated the establishment and maintenance of unequal social rank even after emancipation. It created gross cultural differences between whites and blacks and left the latter as a largely illiterate population without property or status and ignorant of prevailing political and economic processes. Because of its unequivocal linkage of social identity to physical characteristics, all people could easily be conditioned to such inequality. The ranking was implacable and permanent. All whites, regardless of social status, income, education, occupation, or social refinement, would always be on top, and all blacks at the bottom.

The next step in the crystallization of racial reality took place in consequence of the contributions of learned people who responded to the public's interest in the physical diversity of human populations and its implications. The rise of Western science coincided with the great colonial enterprises of western Europe and particularly with the structuring of a slave society in North America. Variation in human populations was a natural subject of investigation for scholars. They were soon to provide the public with the scientific evidence and rationalizations that it needed to articulate this diversity in a manner that suited European interests and cultural values. In doing so, science and scientific "truths" became critical to the ideology of race. We will see the beginnings of this process in the next chapter.

## Notes

1. See Morgan 1972, 1975 and the works of W. E. B. DuBois ([1935] 1985, 1965), who was one of the first to recognize this connection.

2. Philip Curtin notes that "the popular image of slavery is still pretty well confined to slavery in the United States, an image dominated by Uncle Tom's Cabin and textbook accounts of the cotton kingdom and the Civil War" (1977, 3).

3. The effort here is brief and not at all intended to be exhaustive. We need much more research that attempts to systematize comparative studies.

4. Tannenbaum was not the first to note and investigate this phenomenon. Sir Harry Johnston's book, *The Negro in the New World*, pointed out that travelers in the past had often observed differences in the treatment and conditions of slaves in Latin and English areas. Many writers and travelers pronounced Latin American societies, especially Brazil, as free of racial discrimination. See, for example, Pierson 1942. This may indeed be true for the early colonial period, but evidence suggests that by the mid-nineteenth century, the ideology of race had emerged in Latin America, and it continued to develop in the twentieth century.

5. See Davis 1966; Degler 1959-1960, 1970, 1971; Harris 1964; Lane 1971; Mintz 1961; Mörner, de Vinuela, and French 1982; Noel 1972; Sio 1964-1965; Skidmore 1972; and others.

6. Eugene Genovese's award-winning study (1976) argues that southerners did recognize the human personality of slaves, and this was manifest in the paternalism of the master-slave relationship. But there are many circumstances that reveal some telling truths about what owners really thought about blacks. For example, if slaves were accepted as human, why the shock, anguish, and feelings of betrayal, which "reverberated across the South," when the "most trusted and pampered slaves" promptly deserted their former owners after the Civil War (1976, 98)? Slave owners appear to have expected the loyalty of dumb animals from their former slaves and not the most human of all desires, to be free, which they would certainly have accorded to themselves.

7. For much of the material that follows, I have relied primarily on Davis 1966, 1975; Degler 1959-1960, 1970; Elkins [1959] 1963; Finley 1968a, 1968b; Mörner 1967; Mörner, de Vinuela, and French 1982; Noel 1972; Patterson 1982; Tannenbaum 1947; Watson 1980; Westermann 1955; and various articles from: Boner and Genovese 1969; Miers and Kopytoff 1977; Mintz 1974; and Rubin and Tuden 1977. But the reader should be aware that there are other works on slavery too numerous to mention here.

8. A definition that is at greatest variance with the classic ones of Moses Finley (1968a) and others is offered in Orlando Patterson's remarkable study (1982) in which he attempts to identify the "constituent elements" of all systems of slavery. Patterson defines slavery ("on the level of personal relations") as "the permanent, violent domination of natally alienated and generally dishonored persons" (13). It is a definition that might well apply to others, for example poor blacks in the South after Reconstruction and convicts and prisoners in certain well-known circumstances. Patterson also characterizes slavery in ways utilized by other scholars. Domination and powerlessness seem to merit his greatest emphasis, but he also claims that slavery was tantamount to social death in that the slave has no social status or human ties beyond his identity as an extension, and property, of the master. In the end, Patterson analyzes all slavery as a relationship of human parasitism (chap. 12) in which the slave's dependence on the master for all that he is and does is in some existential way counter or matched by the master's dependence on the slave, not only for his labor but

for the honor that accrues to him as the owner and master. Honor and social death, however, are not clearly empirical and therefore not easily documentable qualities.

My concern, of course, is not the commonalities among slave systems but those features that differentiate one from another. The Patterson work, however, provides enormous amounts of information and great insights into slavery in general.

9. The most articulate and important exploration of this problem in recent literature is the work of David Brion Davis (1966). See also his study of slavery during the Revolutionary War period (1975), in which he discusses among other things the "remarkable shift in moral consciousness" (41) that ultimately helped to bring about the end of slavery.

10. Wiedemann claims that "slaves were seen as similar to children; they were addressed as children" (1987, 25). See also Hopkins 1978, Watson 1987, and Weaver 1972.

11. Bohannan provides a good, brief discussion of this point (1963, 179-183). Most analysts have recognized this aspect of slavery. It is critical to understand what the absence of genealogical links means in such societies. See Finley 1968.

12. For elucidation of these points, refer to the classic works in economic anthropology. A good single-volume collection of such material is Dalton 1967.

13. See Gluckman 1965, especially chap. 2, for insightful comments on the role of property in tribal and early state-level societies.

14. Finley argues that the uniqueness of slavery "lay in the fact that the labourer himself was a commodity, not merely his labour or labour-power." This meant that he suffered "total loss of control over his person and his personality" (1980, 74-77).

15. See the discussion by Miers and Kopyroff (1977) about "rights-in-persons" as it is applied in Africa, where the question of defining slavery has been the focus of some debate.

16. Here, I am extending the argument from the African materials, but Chinese, Arab, and Asian Indian kinship structures from many areas had similar controls over their members.

17. Curtin follows Kopyroff and his predecessors in identifying slavery as the "legitimate exercise of a bundle of different rights over another person" (1977, 4) and speaks of it as a form of social control. It was just one of "many kinds of bundles of rights," he notes.

18. Miers and Kopyroff, in the introduction to their book (1977), provide a brief discussion of the issue. Their notion of the marginality of the slave is well taken, but it is questionable that such slaves were considered "non-persons." With few exceptions, slaves could be set free in most systems and either incorporated into the host society or returned to their native land. In Africa, slaves were frequently incorporated into the kin groups of their owners and treated as any other kinsperson.

19. The term "slave" as used today comes from *slav*, a term applied by Muslims to prisoners captured by the Germans from among the Slavonic tribes of northern Europe and sold to the Arabs (Hitti 1953, 525). Davis also points toward a German origin, with the term *sklavi* applied to foreign slaves to distinguish them from slaves of German ethnicity (1966, 68). These are not inconsistent propositions, since Arab dealers may well have picked up the term from their German partners in the business.

20. It is this understanding that may be fundamentally responsible for the contradictions between the firm identification in laws of the slave as property and the social

practices that recognized slave marriages, income and property (*pecuniam*), education, training, and so on. See Barrow 1928, Buckland 1908, Hopkins 1978, and Watson 1987, among others.

21. Early in the conquest period, some Spanish conquistadors and some Englishmen questioned the humanity of Native Americans. Largely because of the advocacy against Indian slavery of Bishop Bartolomé de Las Casas, Pope Paul III, as early as 1537, declared that the Indians were fully human with souls worthy of saving.

22. As in all human institutions, there are always exceptions that render the making of generalizations extremely difficult. Power has to be ascertained within specific contexts. Throughout the Middle East, Muslim North Africa, and much of the rest of Africa, many individual slaves held great political, economic, and social power, sometimes by virtue of being appointed as military or political leaders by their masters, sometimes as a result of revolts against existing political systems. Well-trained or educated slaves sometimes exercised more power than their masters. In Muslim history, many sons of slave mothers ascended to the high positions of their fathers. See Campbell 1974, Cuffel 1966, Hitti 1953, and Rotberg 1965, among others.

23. The most obvious exception to the custom of slave marriage was the large number of eunuchs created in many slave systems, a condition designed to preclude marriage and procreation. In Africa, master-owners were expected to provide male slaves with wives as a normal condition for all men.

24. See Campbell 1974 and Cuffel 1966. Moses Finley "insists" on the term "racism" to characterize Greco-Roman slavery because, he claims, slaves were considered barbarians and aliens in ordinary discourse, and ancient writers rationalized that they were inferior by nature (1980, 118-119). But his certainty is undermined by an earlier discussion in which he asks us rhetorically to contrast the fate of freed slaves in Rome with that of freed blacks in America (97). A Roman freedman "automatically acquired Roman citizenship," and his descendants suffered no stigma. For Finley, the difference was obvious.

25. It is well to be reminded, as Snowden (1970, [1970] 1983) has well documented, that dark-skinned peoples from the African interior have interacted with southern Europeans and Near Easterners in the Mediterranean since ancient times. They were hired as mercenaries in the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars (see Herodotus, in Godolphin 1942). They were frequently found in the military forces of the Arab and Muslim world from Spain and Morocco to India (Hitti 1953). However, the intermixture of peoples in the Mediterranean never led to an ideology of race or to institutionalized color prejudice.

26. Indians forced into labor by the Spanish began to be perceived as "weak and of little strength" (Palmer 1976), so the demand for black labor was made known early in the sixteenth century. Beginning in 1501, the Crown periodically allowed some black and mulatto slaves to be sent to the colonies. In 1517, Las Casas sent his famous request to the king for African slaves to be substituted for the Indians, a request that he later regretted.

27. See tables 11 and 12 in Palmer 1976, which show population estimates for the Mexican territories in about 1570. Comparable data for Peru seems not to be available, but Bowser reports that after 1593, during the height of the African slave trade, the population of Lima, the capital city, "was half African and remained so until 1640" (1974, 75).

28. All of the Spanish territories were organized under political divisions called vice royalities and governed by a viceroy from the capital city. Mexico City was the capital of New Spain, which included what is now California, New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas, as well as most of Central America. Other, smaller territories called "captaincy generals" were ruled by special governors who were theoretically answerable to the viceroy.

29. Colonists born in Spain of Old Christian backgrounds set themselves above those Spaniards born in the colonies (the Creoles), and wealth and titles distinguished individuals within the colonies. Among Africans, those acquainted with Spanish culture and language functioned in roles superior to those of African-born blacks (*bozales*), among whom were further ethnic divisions. And free blacks held higher status still, with wealth, occupation, and residency functioning as additional social dividers. See Mörrer 1967 and Rort 1976.

30. Bower earlier explained that "the black man rapidly came to occupy an intermediate position between Spaniard and Indian rather than the place beneath the Indian to which the law had consigned him" (1974, 7). Some free Africans had Indian slaves or employees. The rapid increase in the "mixed" population resulted in many mestizos, mulattoes, and persons of more complex combinations often settling into Indian communities. What came to define "Indianness" was not biology but culture and language. The same is true of mestizos. By living in the cities, speaking Spanish, and worshipping in the Catholic Church, Indians often changed their category of identity. See Mörrer 1967.

31. See Bower 1974, 1975; Mörrer 1967; Palmer 1976; and Rort 1976; among many others. Some historians disagree on the extent and nature of this phenomenon, but none denies its existence, despite the evidence of discrimination against such illegitimate children.

32. Small pockets of more or less negroid-looking peoples have remained in largely isolated areas of such Latin American countries as Peru, Chile, and Venezuela. Recent literature suggests that, as a result of the civil rights and "black power" movements in North America, a consciousness of "blackness" as a biosocial category has emerged in Latin America. It appeared among some of the predominantly negroid peoples in Brazil's lower economic classes where, as elsewhere, most people are of mixed genetic background and are not identified as black unless they show very little mixture. See the articles in Fontaine 1985 and Graham 1990.

33. "Racial" prejudice as opposed to color preferences particularly against blacks or negroid-looking people in Latin America increased in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in direct proportion to the numbers of Europeans immigrating to these areas bringing with them an evolved racial ideology. In the twentieth century, increased interaction with, and influences from, North Americans amplified and intensified the racial ideology of the "white" upper crust. Thomas Skidmore argues that Brazilians were vulnerable to European theories of innate biological differences among people, in part because of their own feelings of inferiority vis-à-vis Europeans (in Graham 1990, 10). Space does not permit exploration of the diffusion of the race concept from North America, but this is a fertile territory that needs extensive investigation. See also Knight 1970, Drake 1987, and the other essays in the Graham volume (1990).

34. Michael Banton has suggested several schemes for making these distinctions, derived in part from Charles Wagley, an anthropologist who has studied in Latin

America. Banton argues that racial identity in North America is based on ancestry; in central America, on sociocultural status; and in Brazil, on appearance (1983, 19). Although there may be merit to such a scheme, it may not reflect all the complexities of the varying ideologies about human differences prevailing in these regions.

35. Richard Surch (1975) has addressed one of the "seeming paradoxes" in the comparisons of American slavery with slavery elsewhere. Blacks in the American South, he claims, "seem to have been better cared for in terms of food, living conditions, and medical attention than slaves in other systems. Yet the American slave, unlike his counterparts in most other countries, was stripped of his humanity" (1975, 174). Most North American slave owners regarded their slaves "solely as capital assets, no different in kind from acres of land, from farming implements, or from work animals" (173). Like all capital goods, they best met market conditions for profitability when they were in good condition and could be sold for high prices. In addition, particular slave-breeding plantations may account for some of the good care and the high rates of reproduction of North American slaves.

36. Under the Code of Hammurabi of Babylon, if a slave woman bore a child by her master, she could no longer be sold away, and she and her child were set free upon his death. If he called the child "my child" during his lifetime, that child could share equally in his estate. Among the Muslims, the slave woman became *umm walid* (mother of children) and, like her Babylonian sister, her position was made secure. She "could neither be sold by her husband-master nor given away and . . . at his death was declared free" (Hirti 1953, 236).

37. See Glass 1953. Estimates of the non-African genetic mixture in the ancestry of African-American populations have varied considerably. See also Reed 1969, and Goldsby 1971.

38. Although appearing reasonable, this explanation does not account for the fact that slaves in other societies worked at petty jobs, at highly skilled crafts, and at all manner of jobs in between. I suggest that Latin slave owners freed their slave offspring because this was the known custom from Biblical times on, and there was no reason (no legal prohibitions or social pressures) not to do so. For a fuller discussion of sexual relations in the Latin colonial settings, see Mörrer 1967.

39. Englishmen in the West Indies, particularly Jamaica and Barbados, demonstrated a pattern more similar to Latin customs because of special circumstances. Some were absentee owners, and the managerial staffs who ran their large plantations were not encouraged to marry. The result was sexual intermingling with black and mulatto slave girls and the production of a mixed population, some of whom achieved freedom and/or privileges through their paternity. See Fredrickson 1981, chap. 11.