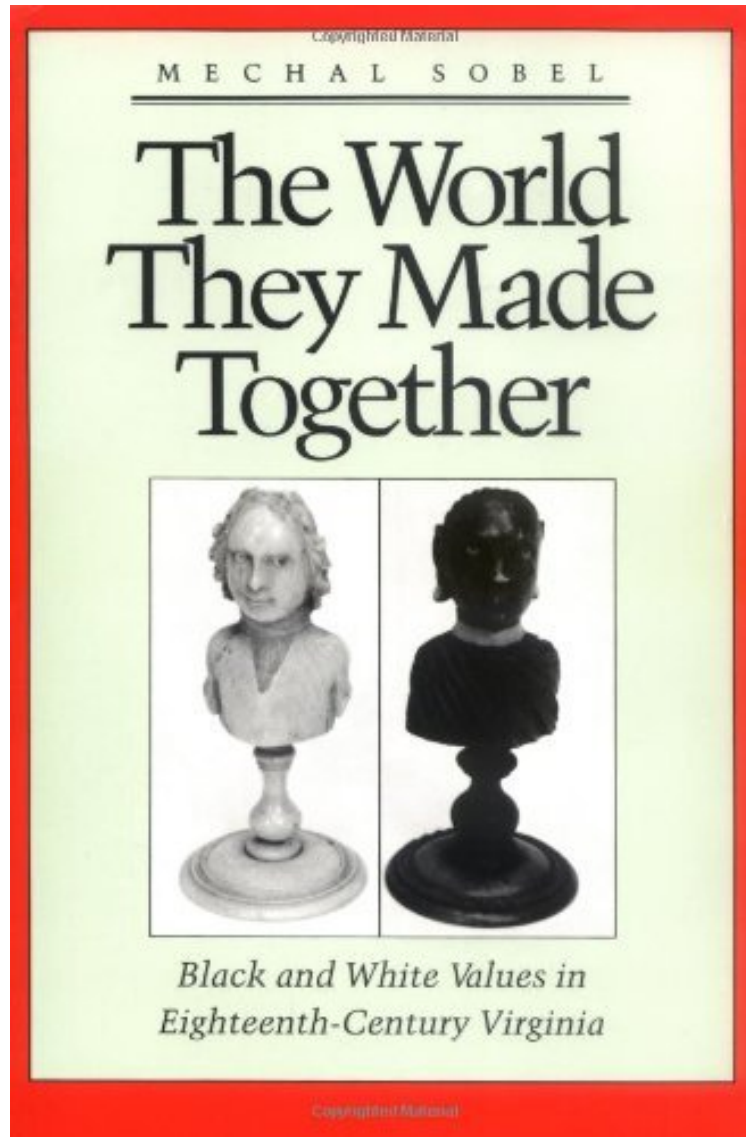


# The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth-Century Virginia

Von Mechal Sobel

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World They Made Together Von ggcon Sobel uses the concept of "world views" to support her argument that although the English and the different cultures in West Africa had separate world views, the close interaction between 18th-century Virginian whites and blacks resulted in these separate world views deeply influencing each other. In the 18th century, black and white children played together, white children often had a black woman as a "surrogate mother", and blacks and whites often worshipped together. This close interaction reinforced perceptions, values, and identities (world views) that were common between the two world view systems and, with time, the differences between the world views resulted in each world view being influenced by the other until they developed a symbiotic relationship.

Kurzbeschreibung In the recent past, enormous creative energy has gone into the study of American slavery, with major explorations of the extent to which African culture affected the culture of black Americans and with an almost totally new assessment of slave culture as Afro-American. Accompanying this new awareness of the African values brought into America, however, is an automatic assumption that white traditions influenced black ones. In this view, although the institution of slavery is seen as important, blacks are not generally treated as actors nor is their "divergent culture" seen as having had a wide-ranging effect on whites. Historians working in this area generally assume two social systems in America, one black and one white, and cultural divergence between slaves and masters. It is the thesis of this book that blacks, Africans, and Afro-Americans, deeply influenced white's perceptions, values, and identity, and that although two world views existed, there was a deep symbiotic relatedness that must be explored if we are to understand either or both of them. This exploration raises many questions and suggests many possibilities and probabilities, but it also establishes how thoroughly whites and blacks intermixed within the system of slavery and how extensive was the resulting cultural interaction. Pressestimmen "Mechal Sobel offers a revisionist look at the culture of the American South before 1800. Her approach presents a perspective on the South not found in comprehensive general histories. . . . In chapters woven with anecdotes, Sobel describes striking similarities and peculiar difference in the ways black and working class white Virginians spent their days, how they worshiped, where they lived, and how they saw themselves in relation to the rest of the world." --Mary Tabor, "Christian Science Monitor" Kurzbeschreibung In the recent past, enormous creative energy has gone into the study of American slavery, with major explorations of the extent to which African culture affected the culture of black Americans and with an almost totally new assessment of slave culture as Afro-American. Accompanying this new awareness of the African values brought into America, however, is an automatic assumption that white traditions influenced black ones. In this view, although the institution of slavery is seen as important, blacks are not generally treated as actors nor is their "divergent culture" seen as having had a wide-ranging effect on whites. Historians working in this area generally assume two social systems in America, one black and one white, and cultural divergence between slaves and masters. It is the thesis of this book that blacks, Africans, and Afro-Americans, deeply influenced white's perceptions, values, and identity, and that although two world views existed, there was a deep symbiotic relatedness that must be explored if we are to understand either or both of them. This exploration raises many questions and suggests many possibilities and probabilities, but it also establishes how thoroughly whites and blacks intermixed within the system of slavery and how extensive was the resulting cultural interaction.