

READING 2

Matthew Pratt Guterl, "After Slavery: Asian Labor, the American South, and the Age of Emancipation," *Journal of World History* 14, no. 2 (June 2003): 209–41.

Abstract: In comparing the adjustments to a free labor economy in the post-emancipation United States South and in slaveholding Cuba, this essay reveals certain parallels and divergences. Most particularly, it emphasizes the relative position of both places in the global, national, and colonial economies, and it explores the political economy of race and work. Following Confederate expatriates and Victorian travelers from the United States to the Caribbean, it also draws attention to various intellectual and cultural connections between Cuba and the American South. Here, too, it is especially concerned with shared notions of race and racial supremacy.

As the Atlantic slave trade dwindled into nothingness in the nineteenth century, millions of European and Asian peoples (whether free or under contract) poured into the labor-starved regions of South America, the British West Indies, the Spanish Caribbean, and North America.¹ Southerners in the United States were economically, culturally, and socially connected to the global experience of emancipation and labor adjustment in the Americas, sometimes profiting from the trade in free laborers or with slaveholding societies, sometimes owning property in the Spanish Caribbean or the British West Indies, and sometimes discussing what went on in other places as object lessons in the political economy of a post-emancipatory world. But, looking backwards, historians of the United States have been apt to use the rigid, late twentieth-century boundaries of that country to fit the square peg of the South into the round hole of "America." Outside of a small [End Page 209] handful of comparative works, few have attempted to understand the experience of emancipation in the Deep South from a comparative perspective, and fewer still from a global one.² The South's place in "the Plantation complex," that improbably diffuse international network of economic, political, and human relations that matured with the institution of slavery and was transformed in the wake of its demise, remains largely forgotten.³

This comparative essay attempts to remedy this forgetfulness. It does so through a consideration of two groups during the United States Civil War and its immediate aftermath: American expatriates to Cuba and cash crop planters in the Deep South. It specifically explores their experiences in light of the nineteenth-century diffusion of immigrant and coerced labor from Europe and Asia and the experience of emancipation in the Caribbean and in the United States. This essay is, therefore, an attempt to bridge the gap between the historiography on the United States and the fields of world and global

history. It suggests that comparisons between these places – specifically between the United States South and the broader Americas – cannot merely be juxtapositions that emphasize parallels or divergences, but, rather, must also employ a global perspective that takes into account the history of other white settler colonies and tropical dependencies. Comparisons, as historian Frederick Cooper writes, are “valuable,” but they can take us “much further from being able to do global history or the history of connections.”⁴ Likewise, those who write histories of the United States in the Caribbean – in Cuba, Haiti, and Mexico, to name [End Page 210] just three places – must not read “the American Century” into the past, forgetting in the process just how contingent and unpredictable was the dominance of later years. Here, then, is a moment at which the United States was, despite its reassuring rhetoric to the contrary, just one of many white settler colonies in the New World struggling to stay alive.

The “Labor Problem” in Cuba

If British and American abolitionists saw Cuba as having the most grotesquely abusive slave system in the Atlantic world, many Southerners and their counterparts, venture capitalists from the eastern seaboard, believed that the island had a certain mystique about it, an intoxicating aroma of decadence, decay, and slavery. In the 1840s and 1850s, as the growing split between North and South threatened to tear the United States in half, conspiratorial defenders of slavery and ardent celebrants of the “manifest destiny” of that country urged the purchase, or even the outright annexation, of Cuba from Spain. Southern slaveholders leapt to “claim” Cuba, lest Britain wrest control of the island away from Spain and surround much of the American South with “a cordon of foreign colonial governments, the population of which would be emancipated slaves.”⁵ Urging his fellow congressmen to consider the annexation of “this western *Eden*,” Georgia’s Representative, E. W. Chastain, could barely restrain his excitement over “the varied productions which spring forth spontaneously from her soil – salubrious in climate – exhaustless in her natural resources – she needs but the influence of American institutions, and the progressive spirit of American enterprise, to raise her to a condition that would challenge the admiration of the world.”⁶ But with the antebellum political atmosphere increasingly thick with sectional conflict, the urge to annex Cuba and parts of Mexico came to naught.

In the wake of the Civil War, some of the more notable citizens of the southern reaches of the United States fled to that same island and [End Page 211] to other supposedly sympathetic places.⁷ Mourning the loss of Arlington, their beloved Louisiana plantation, Eliza McHatton and her husband could hardly have chosen a better place to refashion their lost world than Cuba. Indeed, in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, Cuba, as a

slaveholding republic with plantation agriculture and as a popular travel destination for adventurous Americans, offered much of what had been lost in “the war of Northern aggression” – most especially ostentatious displays of slaves and wealth. The bitter conclusion of the Civil War had left many with feelings of hopelessness and anger, but also inspired fond memories of plantation life and Southern culture, memories that, for these Latin American exiles, encouraged an appreciation of the Spanish colony. “How prosperous and rich Cuba was in those days!” Eliza remembered later, “How animated and gay! We arrived when it was at the very acme of its opulence, when fairly drunk with the excess of wealth and abundance.”⁸

Gathering up their “possessions” (including their favorite slave, “Zell”), Eliza and her husband left for the aptly named Desengaño, a sugar plantation in the Matanzas district, on the northern coast of the island, some sixty miles east of Havana. Settling in, she decorated her new Cuban plantation with all those things brought from their old Southern home, and marveled at the thickness of the walls designed to stand up to the terrible weather of the hurricane season. But if conjuring up furniture, tapestries, and silverware for the inside of their new home was relatively easy, populating the terrain of Desengaño with the “right” sort of laborers for their *ingenio* proved much more difficult. Domestic labor, of course, was different than work in the cane fields. Remembering the “horrors of the early days,” Eliza was most especially disturbed by the memory of “the black woman, in a dirty, low-necked, sleeveless, trailing dress, a cigar in her mouth, and whining child on one arm, [who] went about spreading the table, scrupulously wiping . . . plates with an exceedingly suspicious-looking ghost of a towel.”⁹ “Until a tidy Chinaman was installed in the kitchen,” [End Page 212] she remembered, “I was very dainty.”¹⁰ And as for the many laborious tasks waiting in the cane fields, there simply were not enough African slaves to go cheaply around. A trusted overseer soon departed for Havana to “secure the only kind of labor available – Chinese coolies.”¹¹

Eliza’s choice between African slaves and Chinese coolies reflected the changing economy of work in the nineteenth-century Caribbean. Before the Haitian Revolution enabled the so-called “sugar revolution” in Jamaica and Cuba, the island had possessed only a smallish population of about two hundred thousand, some 20% of whom were slaves. The lure of greater profits from sugar cultivation soon encouraged greater attention to this cash crop, and by 1828 Cuba was the largest producer of sugar in the West Indies – this despite having “only” 286,942 slaves, “a figure deemed highly inadequate for the successful pursuit of sugar cane growing.”¹² For one absentee landlord from Bristol, Rhode Island, we can trace the exact moment when he turned away from coffee and toward sugar to November 1838, when he asked his overseer, Jose Seymour, if a plot of land near his “Ingenio Nuevo

Esperanza" was "good sugar land." ¹³ By the 1850s, there were roughly half a million slaves on the island. To further complicate matters, slave traders invariably brought mostly male Africans to Cuba, many of whom would be worked to death, leaving the island with a seemingly insatiable and counterproductive appetite for only male slaves; "[n]atural increase is disregarded," the abolitionist Joseph John Gurney noted in 1840, in a letter to Henry Clay, "[t]he Cubans import the stronger animals, like bullocks, work them up, and then seek a fresh supply." ¹⁴

Wherever there was too much arable land and too little labor, the end of slavery engendered a serious "labor problem" that, in the absence of free immigrants, could be solved most easily with contract labor. After tentative experiments with freed slaves from the United [End Page 213] States, and the disastrous importation of Europeans, the British turned to another colony with "surplus population": India. ¹⁵ But Cuban planters simply refused to give up slavery. Between 1800 and 1850, years that correspond roughly to the emergence of Cuban dominance of the trade in sugar, that Spanish island colony was transformed from a small, hopelessly backward outpost incapable of self-sufficiency to a magnificent entrepôt, whose largest city, Havana, the most active port in the Caribbean, was often favorably compared to Paris. An illegal and highly profitable slave trade drove this rapid expansion, at least until the British (having freed their own slaves) began stricter enforcement in international waters. At that point, things began to get quite rough for Cuba. Planters and investors there could not boast of colonial ties to a land such as India, where poverty, famine, and "imperialist disruptions" drove thousands from the Raj to other British colonies suffering after emancipation, most notably Natal, Jamaica, and British Guiana.

From the vantage point of Eliza McHatton's 1860s, it must have been astounding to survey the transformation of the Cuban socioeconomic fabric. By then, Cuba had already been transformed by newer, more efficient technologies of sugar production and the construction of railroads to speed and cheapen the connections between coastal ports and inland plantations. A consortium of Cuban planters had invested heavily in telegraph lines and railroad developments, and had imported newfangled machines that made the entire process of sugar refining more productive. These changes infused new energy into the Spanish colony, and into Cuban slavery. ¹⁶

The emergence of the Cuban "coolie trade" was contemporaneous with the technological innovations of the mid-nineteenth century. If the planters could not, or would not, have any more precious African [End Page 214] slaves – precious because, as in America, they were thought to be physically and temperamentally suited to work in tropical climates – they wanted only the "right" sort of labor as a replacement. Driven by fear of black rebellion (a fear exacerbated by census numbers from 1841 indicating that slaves

outnumbered whites), Cuban businessmen and planters had vainly struggled to encourage widespread “white” immigration to Cuba, largely from Spain.¹⁷ A slave rebellion in 1843 encouraged the Junta de Fomento, a corporation of planters and other interested parties, to authorize a contract for over 500 white laborers.¹⁸ The next few years witnessed the arrival of a few thousand immigrants, many of them from Ireland or the Canary Islands, who were put to work on modernization projects geared toward making the transport and processing of sugar more efficient.¹⁹ But the Irish were too expensive and wilted under the oppressive heat, and the several thousand Galacians brought in—“Spanish Irishmen,” as they were called—soon broke into open mutiny.²⁰ Cuban advocates of white immigration would never convince large numbers of Europeans to head for the Greater Antilles in the age of emancipation. Unlike Brazil, where the labor “crisis” came later, they were forced to look outside Europe for a way out of their quandary.²¹ Laborers had to come from somewhere, the great planter Miguel Aldama believed, even “from Siberia, if necessary.”²²

In 1847, much like the rest of the Caribbean, the West Indies, and Latin America (most everyone except for Brazil, in fact), Cuban planters [End Page 215] began to turn to the human abundance of Asia, and more specifically to Chinese laborers tricked or coerced into boarding coffin ships, as the solution to the perennial problems of scarcity and cost. The first group of Chinese coolies arrived in June of that year. They were subsequently doled out to “the island’s most prominent planters and a railroad company.”²³ Champions of “Asiatic colonization” stressed the economy and efficiency of their new field hands, railroad builders, and factory workers, and urged planters to consider the “in-born” intelligence of the Chinese when deciding upon certain punishments. Those seeking greater numbers of Africans blamed the failures of the former slaves in Jamaica on abolitionist permissiveness, also hinting that the Chinese were pitifully weak and brought with them numerous epidemics. Strict rules and uncompromising authority, and not wages, were what the emancipated slave needed. Despite the debate, the combined influx of these two unhappy peoples, the United States consul reported, had at least lowered the price of slaves considerably.²⁴ For transplanted Confederates in Cuba like Eliza and her husband, the need for labor thus came down to a hard choice between two very dissimilar peoples (“stupid negroes and dazed Chinese,” she called them), one familiar and the other inexpensive, one “dirty” and the other “tidy.”²⁵

These Chinese contract laborers forced dramatic changes in Cuban culture, not the least of which involved radically shifting meanings of race and labor.²⁶ “Once the quest for agricultural laborers for the Cuban planters had shifted from Europe,” historian Franklin Knight writes, “the words ‘white’ and ‘free’ underwent an interesting semantic change.”²⁷ As non-Africans, the Chinese

were sometimes legally classified as “white” and “free.” Their “voluntary” labor contracts, Evelyn Hu-DeHart notes, studiously avoided any mention of race, and the coolies themselves were referred to “euphemistically as ‘colonos asiáticos.’”²⁸ But however “white” the Chinese were in Cuba, the reality [End Page 216] was that they suffered under the lash much like slaves and were “bought,” not “hired,” by their new Creole masters, often in the same open-air markets where slaves were sold. By 1860, all Chinese coolies were forced to re-sign contracts at the conclusion of their original eight-year labor term or leave the island.²⁹ And, more importantly, they found themselves suffering extreme mistreatment and familiar abuse; as one Chinese laborer in Cuba put it in 1873, “I was treated exactly like a negro slave.”³⁰

The appearance of Chinese contract laborers in Cuba sharpened racial sensibilities by forcing some slaves away from work requiring technological skills and limiting them to work primarily as field hands and manual laborers, further solidifying the connection between blackness and backwardness. Here, Eliza Ripley’s disdain for her African housewoman and her eager appreciation of the Chinese cook were part of a broader racial division of labor. Cuban planters were “learning” that Chinese laborers were best suited to “household service” or “lighter work in the new and modern sugar mills.”³¹ Contemporary observer Ramón de la Sagra suggested that the “initial disappointment” in Chinese coolies stemmed from a deeper ignorance about how “to use or manage a more intelligent labor force.”³² Some Cubans quickly came to believe that the Chinese were strikingly different, and that “practical” manuals written to advise sugar planters on “breaking in” new slaves were useless when it came to “the celestials.”³³ “The Chinese,” Eliza McHatton summed comparatively, “were intelligent.”³⁴

The novel diversity of Cuba’s labor force was a source of great fascination for outsiders. One American visitor who commented on the [End Page 217] use of “Chinese masculines” in lieu of women and slaves in domestic work, described the situation as “funny,” further noting “the curious and out-of-place position of everything useful and useless.”³⁵ Others developed complicated interpretations of the Cuban racial division of labor, with some tasks perfect for the Chinese, and others allotted to African slaves on the basis of attitudes and abilities unique to particular tribes. A popular travel guide opined that the Carabalí were “by nature traffickers,” that the Congos made better house servants, and that the Lucimí “prefer[red] the monotonous labor of the water carrier.” “The Africans,” the author concluded, “retain their clanship in Cuba . . . with [their] own polity, relations, and a world of ideas and thoughts, to which the whites can rarely, and then only superficially, penetrate.”³⁶ But nearly every visitor studied the Chinese, the most confusing addition, they thought, to the political economy of slavery.

Samuel Hazard, an aging Civil War veteran suffering from an infernally weak constitution, took an extended, postbellum holiday in the opulent surrounds of Cuba to regain his strength. Once settled into his daily routine of bacchanalian dining, flirtatious exchanges with “the sly and retreating segnorina,” and luxuriously sexualized baths, Samuel could hardly restrain himself from extended discussion of the dissimilarity between the toil of Asians and Africans. Wherever he saw the Chinese, they were generally well clothed, hardworking, and engaged in labor that required some manner of technological sophistication. Surveying a cigarette factory in Havana, he found much to approve of in “the facility and dexterity” of the Chinese workers, all clad in their “blue dungaree clothes” and “scrupulously neat and clean.”³⁷ In contrast, he sketched “colored human nature” as pure, unadulterated laziness. His drawings of “the negro” in Cuba are grotesquely comical, featuring cartoonishly large breasts, the barest rudiments of technological intelligence, open mouths, doltish expressions, and a striking absence of gender differences between African men and women. “Now mark that great negro,” he urged his readers, “with his ridiculous looking wheelbarrow, appearing as though it had come out of the ark, such is the simplicity of its construction; the negro himself, without head [End Page 218] covering, with as little clothing as the law allows . . . generally ragged pants, and a portion of a shirt only.”³⁸

As far as Eliza Ripley was concerned, the frail and weak constitution of “the Chinese coolie” was a poor match for the tropic lifestyle of the African slave. “The Chinese,” she sighed, “when once acclimated and accustomed to the routine, were docile and industrious; they could not stand the same amount of exposure as an African, but they were intelligent and ingenious; within-doors, in the sugar factory, in the carpenter-shop, in the cooper-shop, in driving teams, they were superior to the negro.”³⁹ But Cuban “negroes,” Eliza thought, were perfect for the dreary, mindless, bloody work of cane harvesting— “[they] were,” she summed, “more or less stupid and stolid, like ‘dumb-driven’ cattle.”⁴⁰

In the minds of planters, the “natural” intelligence of the Chinese for more sophisticated work could pose problems, and seemed often to lead to collective legal action. “These indentured laborers,” writes one historian, “were aware of a distinction between slave labor and free, one which they felt was not being observed.”⁴¹ One morning, Eliza remembered:

[O]ur ears were assailed by a low, rumbling noise in the distance, which rose rapidly to shouts and unearthly yells . . . [t]he Chinese were in full rebellion: stripped to the middle, their swarthy bodies glistening in the hot sun, they rushed with savage impetuosity up the road, leaped the low stone fence that surrounded the cluster of plantation-buildings, of which the massive dwelling-house formed the center, brandishing their hoes in a most threatening manner, and yelling like

demons, as with hastily grasped rocks from the fences they pelted the retreating overseer. ⁴² [End Page 219]

After invoking the grand leitmotif of Southern race relations – the threatened rape of a white woman by a person of color – Eliza McHatton only casually mentioned the ultimate cause of the uprising: a “demand for an unlimited supply of food.” ⁴³ Thankfully, she continued, the truculence of the Chinese at Desengaño ended quickly once their queues, their “long pig-tail,” had been removed; “[h]ow quickly they wilted!” she squealed, “how cowed they looked!” ⁴⁴

If the Chinese understood that their role in Cuba was that of “free labor,” or even of “free white labor,” that understanding never translated into any of the real social privileges accorded to European immigrants in Cuba, in the United States, or anywhere else. The report of the Chinese Imperial Commission of 1873, which visited Cuba to investigate rumors of mistreatment and breach of contract, is replete with stories of abuse and protest, resistance and legal argumentation. “[T]he administrators and overseers are as wolves or tigers,” Ch’ên Ku complained to an investigator of the Imperial Commission, “when they detect only a little slowness in work they chastise us until the blood drips the ground.” ⁴⁵ “Five months have now elapsed, during which no wages have been issued to me,” Lo A-êrh complained desperately, “if I ask for wages the threat of chaining is made. I in all earnestness now meditate suicide.” ⁴⁶ Trapped in the barracoons at night, the Chinese worked in burned-out fields of sugar cane and they were beaten ruthlessly until they worked “like slaves.” “The Chinese didn’t fly,” the former slave Esteban Montejo once remembered, “[but] they sure did kill themselves.” ⁴⁷ “I have seen some 20 men commit suicide,” Lin A-pang remarked sadly, “by hanging themselves and by jumping into wells and sugar cauldrons.” ⁴⁸ Hoping that in death they would return to their faraway homeland, half of all suicides in Cuba in 1862 (173 out of 346) were committed by Chinese contract laborers. ⁴⁹ But Julia Woodruff, for one, noticed only with disdain that the Chinese seemed stuck in “a state of chronic sullenness,” and took “comfort” in that “their propensity to suicide operates as some check upon the worst [End Page 220] forms of cruelty.” ⁵⁰ Such abuses led, eventually, to the end of “the coolie trade” to Cuba.

By 1874 the final shipload of Chinese had arrived, and the flow of slaves to Cuba had been all but stopped; by 1886, the last contract had expired and slavery had been formally abolished. ⁵¹ Slaves and coolies might be increasingly antiquated, but Eliza Ripley – much like Cuba – could not give them up happily. Looking back on the 1870s, when competition with new European beet sugar manufacturers added further torque to the intensifying pressure for laboring bodies, she could only offer her disgust with what had become of her precious tropical paradise at Desengaño. “During the latter

years of our residence,” she complained, “[t]he gradual emancipation of slaves was enforced, the importation of coolies prohibited.”⁵² Even more dangerously, the Chinese in Cuba had become vital participants in a series of multi-racial anticolonial struggles against Spain, each of which seemed ardently anti-racist. “A few years later,” Eliza remembered, “we left the island forever.”⁵³

“Three Freedmen Equal One Slave”

During Eliza Ripley’s unhappy exile abroad, the deepest southern reaches of the United States had also wrestled with the fate of slavery. “[W]e were born to [slavery],” Eliza recalled wistfully of her childhood in New Orleans, “grew up with it, lived with it, and it was our daily life. We did it well; no people could have done better.”⁵⁴ Free or slave, black or white, North or South, the centripetal energies of “the slave question” pushed and pulled everyone to one side of the issue, with each year being worse than the next, and each decade more acrimonious than the last. Prior to the military conflict between North and South, slaveholders had possessed a nearly utopian faith in the wonders of chattel slavery; “Southerners,” one historian has suggested, “knew who they were, and they had images of what they were becoming. They were expansive—in the West, in Latin America, and in the **[End Page 221]** Caribbean—because they thought they had found a new and better order for humanity and felt that that order should be spread.”⁵⁵ This unflagging confidence, however, was always tempered by equal amounts of unease at the prospect of emancipation, an unease that increased at almost annual intervals following the failed rebellion of Nat Turner in 1831. As the age of emancipation swept away human bondage in Latin America and the West Indies, Southern slaveholders grew ever more entrenched in their narrow-minded defense of human bondage; “the American South,” Leonard Richards writes, “was beginning to stand out like a sore thumb, and the United States was being taunted throughout the Western world for claiming to be ‘the land of the free’ when one-sixth of its people were still in chains.”⁵⁶

The fears of Southern slaveholders in the age of emancipation were guided by an awareness of what had happened before in Haiti, in Jamaica, and elsewhere. Memories of supposed racial slaughter and barbarism in Saint Domingue—widespread in early nineteenth-century France and the United States—would persist for centuries as a cautionary tale of the danger of exposing slaves to the ideas of the Enlightenment. Jamaica, having long been one of the largest sugar-producing colonies in the Caribbean, had been hamstrung after emancipation in 1834. Freed men and women there fled to the hilltops and away from their former masters, this despite (and perhaps because of) the purported munificence of “apprenticeship,” wherein newly freed slaves were tied and suspended above a massive wooden cylinder, or

treadmill, and forced to walk by their mates, an experience designed to inculcate a virtuous work ethic in the newly emancipated “Negro.”⁵⁷

“The emancipation of slaves in the West Indies,” George Fitzhugh remarked in 1854, “is admitted to have been a failure in all respects.”⁵⁸ Most New World planters would have agreed with Fitzhugh, or with a [End Page 222] certain “Mr. Dickson,” who would later argue, “three freedmen equal one slave.”⁵⁹ And Fitzhugh’s comments would have been assigned even greater importance in the mid-1850s, when Southern planters feared the “Africanization” of the fair isle of Cuba, a loathsome process whereby the introduction of free laborers would undermine the strength of the slaveholding class there, leading to “a marked decline of productivity, bitter racial warfare, and the extermination of whites.”⁶⁰ “Cuba,” *DeBow’s Review* (a clearinghouse of Southern writing about political economy) concluded, was “the hinge or turning point of the future,” and if it followed the pattern set in Jamaica, British Guiana, and elsewhere, it would become “a volcano of free negroism . . . vomiting fire and blood on the neighboring coast.”⁶¹ Long before the end of the American Civil War, then, many Southerners had possessed well-developed fears of what would happen if the long chapter on slavery was to come to a quick close.

The postwar struggle to reorganize the former slave society of the American South, or to “put a new bottom on the boat of race relations,” as historian Joel Williamson once called it, thus revolved around an acute sense that other slave societies were undergoing a similar process, with both success and failure.⁶² As free laborers, former slaves possessed a certain ability to move away from past or present abuses and a related measure of general self-definition—factors that, as Thomas Holt has shown, posed serious problems for former slaveholders in Jamaica.⁶³ In short, they were better able to leave the worst places behind for slightly better alternatives elsewhere. With tooth-chattering trepidation, the American planter class looked to the experiences of the broader Atlantic world—to Haiti, to British Guiana, to Jamaica, and later to Cuba and Brazil—much as sixteenth-century explorers had looked to dusty, ancient tomes for information about anthropophagi and sea monsters. Writing in 1864, former master James Lusk Alcorn of Mississippi was quite distressed; “[o]ur negroes will soon be ashes in our hands,” he wept angrily, “our lands valueless without them.”⁶⁴ “The free negroes of Georgia,” another American planter [End Page 223] averred somewhat nervously, “will not deteriorate so fast as those of Jamaica, because they are more in the presence and competition of white men, and the country is not so insular.”⁶⁵

If colonization schemes couldn’t solve this “damnable dilemma” (Lincoln himself favored sending newly freed slaves to New Granada, while others looked to Liberia as a possible home for former slaves) some other solution had to be devised to the supposedly predestined postemancipation problems of

labor scarcity, racial degeneration and sloth, and economic collapse. Here the vastness of the United States supplied myriad examples of American ingenuity when it came to the exploitation of people deemed racially different or inferior. Immigration was one somewhat alluring option. Driven by the awful potato famines of the 1840s and lured by Hakluytian fantasies of life in the New World's most famous postcolonial republic, millions of poor, hardscrabble Irish had come to the United States and been put to work at the dirtiest, most dangerous tasks. While Congress had studied the "Coolie Trade" in the midst of the Africanization scare of the 1850s, and had soon afterwards banned contract labor, railroad and mining interests continued to bring in tens of thousands of Chinese men, who then competed with the impoverished Irish along the edge of what South Carolinian James Henry Hammond once called "the mudsill," the line between free and slave, white and black, citizen and noncitizen.⁶⁶ In short, the Anglo-American overlords of the North and West had already provided a test case of life after slavery, though the cold, hard lifestyle of the industrializing Northern states seemed devoid of all the Athenian civic pleasures of the Old South. "There is no such thing with slavery as a laborer for whom nobody cares or provides," Southern poet William Grayson breezily, and incorrectly, summed, whereas "[t]he most wretched feature of hireling labor is the isolated, miserable creature who has no home, no food, and in whom no one is particularly interested."⁶⁷

In the postbellum milieu, the beaten and battered South creatively applied the lessons of the past to the problems of the present day. Traveling through Mississippi, Union General Carl Schurz noted that "those who like to whip a negro but do not like to pay him wages" [End Page 224] universally believed that freed Africans could not be made to work without "physical compulsion."⁶⁸ Only through draconian jurisprudence and hair-trigger violence, white Southerners argued, could the degeneration of "the Negro" – manifested in thousands of "documented" cases of transhumance, immorality, and laziness – be slowed or halted.⁶⁹ "Let the untrained and incapable African be placed under the indentures of apprenticeship to his former master," pleaded the former Confederate secretary of the treasury Christopher G. Memminger to President Andrew Johnson.⁷⁰ The inland farms and great alluvial valley of the Mississippi River, the agricultural life's blood of the state, would follow Jamaica and Haiti into the abyss if the newly freed labor force of "Negroes" were not disciplined, controlled, and protected from their own proclivity toward uselessness in freedom. Thus, in the brief window of time between the end of the war and the onset of Radical Reconstruction, the state legislature and Governor Benjamin G. Humphrey of Mississippi acted to preserve the tattered remnant of Southern lifestyles, passing a wide-ranging set of laws modeled on West Indian apprenticeship known as "the Black Codes." Other states followed suit, developing a body of law whose sole purpose was to ease the transition to free labor by taking

away as many of the privileges of freedom as possible – especially those related to work. Indeed, these Black Codes were so viciously effective, and so obviously an attempt to reproduce the world the slaveholders had lost, that they were a driving force behind the equally radical Reconstruction Act of 1867.⁷¹ [End Page 225]

The shifting political landscape soon undid the Black Codes. Angered by the excesses of the postbellum South, Northern legislators bivouacked federal troops there and forcibly enfranchised black Americans, who themselves engaged in what has been called “the finest effort to achieve democracy for the working millions which this world has ever seen.”⁷² Any hope of survival depended, therefore, on copying the North’s free labor system, with its regular influx of immigrant labor. Like most other slaveholding communities, Southerners had, since the 1840s, used Europeans – especially the increasingly abundant “famine Irish” – in place of slaves. Long Island farmer Frederick Law Olmstead, sojourning along the antebellum Southern coast, had been told by one Virginia tobacco farmer that the Irish were used to drain fields because “a negro’s life is too valuable to be risked at it. If a negro dies, it’s a considerable loss, you know.”⁷³ The more adventurous Southern planters, fearing a “Negro exodus” and desperate for field hands and manual laborers, eagerly encouraged the emigration of Germans, Scandinavians, and the Irish, shamelessly advertising to foreign travelers that “the road to affluence is open to the immigrant who arrives with adequate means.”⁷⁴ By 1870, the erasure of the Black Codes under the Reconstruction governments forced more than a few Southern states to redouble their efforts to encourage immigration.⁷⁵

Hence, even as they bemoaned “the labor problem” that emancipation had wrought, some Southerners began to tap the pool of available human capital in Europe. South Carolina’s John A. Wagener, a former Confederate general, encouraged the passage of local laws protecting immigrants and sent agents to Germany and Scandinavia to foment emigration to the labor-hungry South, acts that incurred the wrath of the newly enfranchised African-American legislators in that state.⁷⁶ Mississippi, much like its neighbors, established its own immigration [End Page 226] efforts in the 1870s, and *De Bow’s Review* carried lengthy articles on the immigration efforts of the South for much of the late 1860s and early 1870s. But propaganda alone was simply not enough. Carl Schurz, who universally detested the entire region, suggested that “the propensity for idleness seems to be rather strongly developed in the South generally,” and sagely remarked that European and Northern émigrés to the former Confederate states “will not come to the South to serve as hired hands on plantations, but to acquire property for themselves.”⁷⁷ Somehow, J. C. Delavigne suggested (echoing Miguel Aldama), the “void which has been caused in our labor system by the emancipation of the blacks” had to be

filled, whether by immigration of new peoples, technological improvements, or the greater importation of former slaves from the upper South.⁷⁸

Still, if many agreed that there was a desperate need for supposedly inferior peoples willing and able to do the lowest sort of work in the South, there was hardly a national consensus on the virtues of the most obvious candidates: Irish immigrants, Chinese laborers, or the emancipated slaves themselves. For many late-nineteenth-century Americans, each of these groups – the lowbrow, hirsute immigrants from Europe (especially the Irish), the dangerous descendants of African slaves, and the mysterious, confusing Chinese – inspired nothing but fear and loathing.⁷⁹ And yet, each of these groups came or were brought to various parts of the South to satisfy the overwhelming need for labor, for human bodies capable of lifting, hammering, hoeing, and digging. “Each race,” a Louisiana planter told John T. Trowbridge, “has its own peculiarities.”⁸⁰ The trick was finding the right “race” for the right job.

As Southerners – black, white, and everything in between – struggled to comprehend the new postslavery patterns of land ownership and wage distribution, the differences between these laboring “races” [End Page 227] became a cause for concern. One South Carolina planter brought in a group of German immigrants, and “treated them better than his other hands,” even giving them “coffee and sourkrout [*sic*] – when, what would they do but demand butter for bread and milk for their coffee, and the next thing the whole crowd left.”⁸¹ A Natchez overseer, interviewed by Trowbridge on a Mississippi levee, wondered sadly if “the Negro” would soon be replaced by Germans. “The Germans,” he remarked, “want twenty dollars a month, and we can hire the niggers for ten and fifteen. The Germans will die in the swamps. Then as soon as they get enough money to buy a cart and a mule, and an acre of land somwhar, whar they can plant a grapevine, they’ll go in for themselves.”⁸² “This climate suits the negro,” J. C. Delavigne opined, further adding that “[t]here need not be any more contact between the races than the white man shall will.”⁸³ “Southerners,” E. Merton Coulter wrote, “had a mistaken impression of what a European immigrant was looking for. They wanted him to take the place of a Negro workman, live in Negro cabins, and eat Negro foods – cornbread and bacon.”⁸⁴ And there were always those Southern nativists who were inclined to dislike “outsiders” in general, especially when they were of “questionable” ethnological heritage and racial temperament.⁸⁵

In the American South, as in Cuba, California, and elsewhere, the Chinese seemed a likely solution to the postemancipation “labor problem” of the South. “As in the Caribbean,” historian Eric Foner writes, “the effort to introduce Chinese labor in the postbellum South formed only one part of a broader effort to use the power of the state to shape the postemancipation

order and create a dependent plantation labor force.”⁸⁶ In the United States, state immigration agencies acted as crucial liaisons between labor in Europe and Asia and capital in the South. At this point, crucial differences between Cuba and the American South enter into the story. The Cuban master class—living as they did on a monocultural island with little hope of economic diversification—had kept slavery and sugar alive through a combination of [End Page 228] “coolie” labor and wide-scale technological modernization. But postbellum Southerners, cursed with relatively little intact infrastructure, and stuck in an inferior position in the regionally organized economy of the immense United States, quickly found themselves dependent on everywhere else for things technological.⁸⁷ That dependence would make it difficult for Southerners to cope with “the labor problem” along Cuban lines.

The first hundred or so Chinese coolies arrived in Natchitoches, Louisiana, in 1867, having been brought there by a small group of cotton and sugar planters, as historian Lucy Cohen describes it, to “supplement the work of emancipated Negroes.”⁸⁸ Many of these early arrivals came directly from Havana and Matanzas in Cuba upon the completion of their original eight-year contract. And some of these came to the United States at the request of former masters in Cuba; one of the architects of this move to “import” Chinese laborers was Jules H. Normand, the son of a Louisiana planter and a former expatriate planter and hospital manager in Cuba during the 1850s and early 1860s. These first Chinese peoples brought to the American South were Spanish-speaking “voluntary” immigrants; as “free” laborers not part of the illegal “coolie trade,” they were quickly hired off to fellow planters in southern Louisiana and along the Mississippi River. Soon, greater numbers (though never more than a few hundred here and there) would arrive from China, California, and New York, brought into Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Louisiana by a widespread international network of bankers, Chinese and American “agents,” planters, local employers, and self-styled prophets of the virtues of Asian labor.⁸⁹

Because the Chinese were supposed to be “first class” laborers, they were just as likely to find themselves hired out to railroad construction [End Page 229] companies, factories, or mills. When the Louisiana state legislature handed control of the cotton mill at the state penitentiary over to Samuel L. James and Company in 1870, James brought in Chinese laborers, and the mill was soon “operating round the clock.”⁹⁰ Three hundred Chinese men worked on the ill-fated Alabama and Chattanooga Railroad, at least until the seizure of the railroad by the U.S. Marshall’s office in a bankruptcy proceeding. After rioting with black and white workers against the seizure and the railroad and the subsequent loss of their wages, the Chinese settled near Tuscaloosa, earning wages as domestic labor and eventually being recruited for a Louisiana plantation. The one hundred and fifty Chinese who settled at the

Millaudon plantation near New Orleans worked alongside emancipated slaves, and caused quite a stir with their “blue blouses and drawers . . . shaven crowns, beardless faces, and plaited pigtails sweeping the ground.”⁹¹

Those who discussed Asian immigration to Louisiana, California, and elsewhere – on *both* sides of the question – would long describe the Chinese as entirely inhuman, as “the ideal industrial machine” who needed less food and less remuneration for more work in less time. J. K. Vance, chairman of the Special Committee on Chinese Immigration appointed by the South Carolina Immigration Convention, argued:

The Chinese laborer has shown himself industrious, frugal, obedient and attentive to the interest of his employer. He is by nature mild and pacific. His shrewdness and wonderful imitative powers enable him readily to acquire the necessary information and to perform with facility every kind of farm labor. . . . the Chinaman cannot be surpassed, either as a servant or a laborer, by any other, whether you place him in the house, the garden, the field, the workshop, or on the railroad. . . . They work from sunrise until sunset, allowing one hour for dinner, and agree to obey, unquestioned, all orders from the owner or manager.⁹²

Initial reports on the abilities and intelligence of the Chinese were quite positive, though some noted an occasional awkwardness in the [End Page 230] handling of agricultural tools.⁹³ Fed by often glowing reports from the Caribbean, the Mississippi delta, and Louisiana, the more adventurous group of Southern entrepreneurs soon believed that the Chinese were extremely hard workers, capable of living on very little food, and with only the smallest desire for pecuniary recompense. If, then, the South could not have the modern *ingenio*, it could at least import newfangled human “technologies” who worked liked slaves, only cheaper and more efficiently.

Still, the South would remain decidedly ambivalent about the Chinese until the collapse of Reconstruction. Before the Civil War, *De Bow's Review* had wondered whether the Chinese were constitutionally capable of working in the South, noting the use of imported Chinese in Cuba under “a tropical sun” amounted to “white slavery” of a most cruel and unusual sort, and that they were most “serviceable” when used only for “many kinds of lighter labor.”⁹⁴ Postbellum anxieties about the Chinese were slightly different. Many Southerners worried about the logic of introducing yet another body of “alien” laborers in the deepest South, where “the Negro” was presumed to be an omnipresent threat to civilization.⁹⁵ Confederate General Robert E. Lee – the South’s Galahad – took a stand against the importation of the Chinese; “[w]e do not only want reliable laborers,” he wrote to the President of the Virginia Immigration Society, “but good citizens, whose interests and feelings would be in unison with our own.”⁹⁶

A veritable tidal wave of caustic criticism also rolled in from California, where anti-Chinese sentiments were more heated and more violent than anywhere else in the Western hemisphere. Recent arrivals from China raised fears of a “Yellow Peril” among white immigrants in the Far West and urbanizing North, where the average Chinese worker was presumed to be preternaturally efficient and economical, and thus threatening to the livelihood of the “white” citizen. The hodgepodge of immigrant and native-born peoples in California who comprised the white working class worried, shouted, and argued that the sexualized strangeness of the Chinese – their queues, their “pajamas,” their [End Page 231] inscrutable gaze, their lack of women – would soon wash away the racial bedrock of the republic. And beneath the anxieties about that bedrock, there were more calculated fears of the Chinese as “criminally cheap labor,” fears fed by the abundant pro-Chinese literature that, in contrast to earlier assertions of physiological weakness, enthused about their supposed ability to labor eternally for fewer wages and smaller meals.⁹⁷ The Chinese, whose thriftiness and work ethic was a source of perennial frustration and rage for the white working class of the Western states, were targeted there precisely because of their “superior” labor abilities, because of their secretive nature, and because they “underconsumed,” choosing to save money or ship it home rather than spend it in the United States. But these complaints about the Chinese only made them even more appealing in the South, where they would be replacing or supplementing emancipated slaves deemed dangerously unreliable as free labor, and not white workers deemed too costly or demanding.⁹⁸

When struggling to explain their failure to tap “the coolie trade,” Southerners used race to explain why they could not (or should not) keep “the Celestials” in their cane and cotton fields. However troublesome “the Negro” might be, one argument went, he or she was at least a God-fearing Christian; the Chinese, in contrast, were a dangerous, “pagan” people, “barbarous” to the end.⁹⁹ More importantly, many Southerners soon concluded that, despite their reputation for efficiency and cheapness, the Chinese were every bit as expensive and insistent as their European counterparts. Much like contract laborers in Cuba, they knew their rights under the law, they seemed acutely aware of the value of their labor, and they expressed a confounding familiarity with both organized and disorganized resistance.¹⁰⁰ The South wanted easy [End Page 232] replacements for slaves, not yet another lesson in “the labor problem,” and certainly not “yellow” laborers who demanded the same treatment as “white” immigrant workers from Germany and Ireland. The editors of *De Bow’s Review* made up their mind a little faster than most; by 1870, the *San Francisco Dispatch* was praising the New Orleans monthly for its principled discouragement of “the insane movement” to bring the Chinese to the sugar and cotton plantations of Louisiana and Mississippi.¹⁰¹

This studied ambivalence of the South and the disgust of the North, however, were not the only reasons why the region repeatedly failed to keep the annual harvest of Chinese brawn and muscle that vanished almost as quickly as it arrived, or why European immigrants, as E.Merton Coulter put it, “followed latitude and not longitude when they moved in great numbers to a new land.”¹⁰² Much like Cuba, where the steamy climate and the awful reputation of the place had encouraged European immigrants to settle elsewhere, the American South wanted Old World labor – no matter how questionably “white” it was – but could neither get it nor keep it. And because the “coolie trade” had been outlawed in 1862, Southerners were never able to bind the Chinese – despite the congressional amendments in 1870 and 1882 that rendered those born in “the Chinese Empire” anti-citizens in the United States – to contracts as ruthlessly as had their Cuban counterparts. Even within the South, then, factory mill competed against planter, pitting members of the master class against one another and “luring” the Chinese to leave one place to work in another. Planters in the rural South routinely complained to British traveler Robert Somers of an acute labor shortage due largely to the migration of labor – white, black, or otherwise – to other Southern towns and cities.¹⁰³

But there was also the place of the South itself in the rapidly evolving American economy. Indeed, compared to Cuba, where countless miles of railroad tracks and new machines had revolutionized the entire sugar industry, most Southern states looked quite underdeveloped. The slaveholding South had invested in only those kinds of infrastructural development that exploited the natural advantages of [End Page 233] slavery, rather than those enjoyed by the South. It invested, to paraphrase Gavin Wright, in human bondage and not in the land. “Now that the planter has to hire his labor,” argued one editorial, “it is important to render it as productive as possible by machinery.”¹⁰⁴ But in the postbellum age, as investment shifted away from slaves and toward land, the South emerged as the low-wage region in a high-wage country, as the increasingly backward agricultural part of a technologically sophisticated nation. And, to further complicate matters, the Civil War itself had destroyed much of what made slavery so profitable – most notably, its railroads and its bonded labor. Just when the South needed modernization the most, it was least able to bring venture capital to bear on the growing technological gap. In 1870, the Deep South – still recovering from the disastrous Civil War – was thus wrestling with developmental questions that Cuba had resolved long ago.¹⁰⁵ “Again and again,” Wright sums, “major initiatives by governments, planters, employers, or transport companies generated nothing by an evanescent pass-through.”¹⁰⁶ Indeed, even as planters in Cuba continued to defy myths about slavery by modernizing sugar production and laying down “more miles of railroad than any other country in Latin America,” the regional disparities in

economic strength and investment in the United States diverted technological advances away from the deepest South, making economic adjustments to life after slavery extremely difficult. ¹⁰⁷ “There is a competition betwixt ‘exhausted’ land and new land,” concluded Robert Somers, “and betwixt the poorer soils of the Atlantic slope and the rich bottom soils [End Page 234] of the west, inviting change and migration, and discouraging improvement in many fine parts of the country where cotton has long been produced.” ¹⁰⁸

Slavery itself had also schooled black folks in the meaning of freedom. Following the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 and the Civil Rights Act of 1865 former slaves fled the meanest and lowest places for better lives, showing a particular interest in education, religion, and land ownership. This, of course, only posed greater problems for both “emancipators” and planters, neither of whom (for different reasons) desired a small landowning class composed of the newly emancipated. Recently freed slaves pulled away from old plantations to the now-booming Mississippi delta were drawn by comparatively higher wages and the lure of “family or kinship ties” in the South. ¹⁰⁹ European immigrants likewise showed the same frustrating desire for betterment. The Chinese, who were brought in for the same work as emancipated slaves, promptly deserted; “those who wanted high-wage work could do much better in California.” ¹¹⁰ After the debacle with the Alabama and Chattanooga Railroad, where bankruptcy had denied several hundred Chinese workers their wages, one agent complained that he could no longer get the Chinese to “go South.” ¹¹¹ Emancipated slaves and Asian and European immigrants, despite considerable competitive friction, thus repeatedly demonstrated their desire for improved circumstances.

The sad circumstance of planter desperation had lasting consequences for the shape of “the race problem” in the United States. The South’s inability to hold on to enough free labor, or to garner enough investment to tap its own remarkable abundance of natural resources, would leave it vulnerable to the same cycle of dependence on Northern capital, eventually forcing Southerners to couch their veneration of “the Lost Cause” in anti-colonial tones, and to tighten their hold on the only available labor force – “the Negro” – with a viciousness [End Page 235] born of absolute desperation. If immigration and investment were not forthcoming, only racial separation and authoritarian control would solve “the labor problem.” Hence, Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest encouraged railroad development in his home state of Tennessee, volunteered five thousand dollars to secure Chinese “coolies,” and, even as these efforts failed, became the head of the Ku Klux Klan. ¹¹² If a democracy of white planters and suitably hardworking European immigrants was not possible, a coercive herrenvolk republicanism would take its place, seducing the white working class with its veneration of white womanhood and civic privilege within the

pale, its heavy-handed punishment of black men for supposed sexual advances toward Southern womanhood, and its tacit approval of the power of white men over all women in the South. ¹¹³

The uniquely American experience with emancipation was also behind the hardening of Southern political and legal institutions. In Cuba, the shift to free labor had been the most gradual of any colony or settlement in the Atlantic world, and the continuation (and acceleration) of the illegal slave trade in the 1850s, repeated investment in technological upgrades, and the widespread coolie trade softened the process. ¹¹⁴ In contrast, there was comparatively little chance of wide-scale modernization in the South, where there was no significant influx of new slaves, and where immigrant associations struggled to keep even the smallest numbers of Chinese and European immigrants. Emancipation in the South had been anything but gradual, and the freedom of former slaves and the indignities of Reconstruction routinely resurrected the sting of loss in war. Likewise, the prohibitively expensive but socially significant fact of self-purchase – the ability of slaves, in theory, to buy their freedom – added a delicate patina of flexibility to the institution in Cuba that the Old South had lacked for some time. In **[End Page 236]** contrast, the legal status of slaves and slavery hardened considerably in the United States between 1830 and 1860, with many states prohibiting the emancipation of slaves altogether. ¹¹⁵

The politics of Reconstruction came into play as well. If Southerners had at first preached the virtues of the Chinese as factory labor and skilled farmhands, Northern politicians and their African American allies had never been fooled. Reconstruction governments had always suspected that the search for immigrants was nothing less than an attempt to withhold from emancipated slaves the wages, lands, and privileges of citizenship they deserved. The quest for democracy for the Negro and the search for Asian and European immigrant labor in the South had thus long been deemed antithetical, and the advent of Radical Reconstruction in 1867 meant that “all governmental efforts in the South to bring in laborers were immediately abandoned.” ¹¹⁶ In the 1870s, even as the ideological and political foundation of Reconstruction crumbled, the anxious American planter class found its worst nightmare of the nineteenth century realized: they were unable, for a wide variety of reasons, to secure immigrant labor, and were faced with an exodus of “the Negro” that would ruin their plantations and destroy their civilization.

In the end, Southerners rallied around the idea that physical force could accomplish what the national economy could not and what the nation itself would not. The architects of Radical Reconstruction refused to allow Chinese labor on the scale of postemancipation societies in the West Indies and South America, and Southerners were no longer certain they wanted coolies anyway.

Increased convict labor provided one alternative to the problems of “racial” diversity in a world of free labor; “convicts,” David Oshinsky writes, “worked at jobs that free labor did not like to do, in places where free labor sometimes feared to go. Employers preferred them over Asians (‘too fragile’), Irish (‘too belligerent’), and local blacks (‘too slow’).”¹¹⁷ Jim Crow was another, even grimmer solution. As Reconstruction governments were abandoned, as federal troops departed in the wake of the disastrous election of 1876, the resilient planter class – still much in control – resurrected the old plan of apprenticeship for “the Negro.” To complement the [End Page 237] evolving system of sharecropping and debt peonage, ingenious Southern legislators cobbled together one of the most disturbing and intrusive systems of labor control ever invented. When it was complete, each and every aspect of Southern life would be organized around the control and discipline of the least fortunate members of the republic. Soon, they had convinced enough of their Northern fellows that “the Negro” was an “anti-citizen” who would never diligently work for wages alone, and that morality – a virtuous work ethic, an end to crime, the barest rudiments of a civilized lifestyle – could, indeed, be legislated, if only on a local level. If, after this tentative experiment with alternative work forces, European and Asian immigrants were now understood by all to be too weak, too smart, too expensive, or too prone to leave for better things elsewhere, there remained “the Negro,” who needed only “compassionate” laws to curb a supposed instinct for crime and thriftlessness.

Conclusion

On the road to a world without slaves during the nineteenth century, the global Americas stumbled on the problems of unprecedented labor needs, economic and technological quickening, and demographic diversity. The slaveholding regions of the United States shared many – if not all – of these concerns with their neighbors in the Atlantic world. More significantly, those Southern states debated solutions to and developed interpretations of these issues from a standpoint that was at once both nationalist and global, as much a part of the grand nationalist delusion of “manifest destiny” as it was a part of the shared history of white settlement in the New World. Hence, they were able to think of Cuba as both a potential addition to the United States and as a fellow in the fraternity of white settler colonies undergoing rapid and radical transformation in the age of emancipation.

The relationship between Southerners and Cuba seems similarly split right down the middle, full of imperial ambitions and racialized sympathies, even after the Civil War ended the dominance of the slaveholding class and lent a romantic veneer to memories of the Old South. Southerners studied the course of Caribbean history, attempting to divine their futures through the study of other slave societies and “white” settler colonies in the age of

emancipation. In Mississippi, they attempted their own phase of West Indian “apprenticeship,” only to see the Black Codes (modeled on similar laws in Jamaica) overturned [End Page 238] by Radical Reconstruction. The states of the former Confederacy opened immigration bureaus in Europe, desiring to tap the wealth of bodies in Ireland and Germany, but to no avail. They watched in horror as their former slaves ventured away from the plantation to reconnect with family members and to find better work somewhere else. In the deepest South, in Louisiana and Mississippi, white southerners brought in Spanish-speaking Chinese men from Cuba, and later Chinese from California, hoping to bind them to the land, hoping to put them to work on the sorts of modernization projects that had revolutionized Cuban sugar production, and hoping that their mere presence would instill in the newly emancipated slaves a more appropriate work ethic for the new order of things. They fought with radicals in Congress who refused to allow them contract coolies on the scale so earnestly desired. They studied the use of new technology from New England in Cuba, and hoped that they could “save” their civilization through its importation. And when these things all failed, the American master class waited for Reconstruction to end and for an opportunity to refine their methods of coercion in accordance with what they had learned to better control their largest and most available labor force.

As the idealism of Reconstruction collapsed under the weight of political compromise and then quickly faded from memory, the American South and Cuba appeared to be following different paths – the former rebuilding its regional commitments to white supremacy but dependent on the North in disturbing ways; the latter engaged in a remarkable series of anticolonial struggles against the aging Spanish empire and profiting from nearly half a century of technological investment and modernization. In 1868, an unbalanced coalition of Cuban dissenters – ranging from planters who witnessed the collapse of the American South with horror and who favored very gradual emancipation, to free people of color hoping for an immediate abolition of slavery – found common ground in distrust of Spain and launched an armed rebellion that would last ten years. While anti-racism was only occasionally (and usually rhetorically) at the forefront of this so-called Ten Years’ War, the revolutionary Liberation Army was a sizeable force composed of every conceivable group of peoples in Cuba, including both former slaves and coolies. The contrast between these two places, then, was as great as it had ever been, for the trend in the South was toward separate development and legally reinscribed racial hierarchies. “[T]he escalation of racial violence, the spread of spatial segregation by race, and the dismantling of political gains made during Reconstruction [End Page 239] in the South,” Ada Ferrer sums brilliantly, “occurred in the United States precisely as black and mulatto leaders gained increasing popularity and power in Cuba.”¹¹⁸

For Confederate expatriates in Cuba, these diverging trajectories would encourage a return to the South. “[W]e never for a moment contemplated a return to the United States,” Eliza McHatton explained, “until peace was restored and quiet assured.”¹¹⁹ The same revolutionary forces that had driven them abroad into the Caribbean and Latin America now encouraged another exodus back to the United States. “When my family went to Cuba,” Eliza remembered, “it was to escape from war troubles at home. We sought for rest and peace, but it was not long before we felt we may have ‘jumped from the frying pan into the fire.’”¹²⁰ The advent of the Ten Years’ War witnessed the devolution of Cuba into an unwelcome state of “lawlessness,” and the now aggressive attitude of men of “diminutive size and questionable appearance” posed serious racial threats to the safety of Eliza, herself the self-described flower of white Southern womanhood.¹²¹ Soon, she and her daughter were unable to “promenade” anywhere other than on the carefully groomed, palm tree-lined avenue that led to their plantation home. The specter of rape and murder at the hands of smallish, swarthy brigands of “inferior” type was everywhere. But in America, regional rapprochement and the emerging architecture of Jim Crow would provide precisely the sort of “quiet” for which she and her husband had so eagerly hoped. For McHatton, having escaped a war to free the slaves once before, the powerful anti-racist rhetoric of the Liberation Army, with its well-armed men of many colors, seemed even more dangerous. No wonder, then, that she soon chose to leave Cuba altogether, leaving their trusted slave Zell – who, Eliza remembered fondly, always signed his letters “esclavo” – in charge of Desengaño. In 1875, as Reconstruction crumbled in the United States, Eliza sold the plantation altogether.

That odd collection of patriots in Cuba – the Africans, Europeans, and Asians of the Liberation Army – would continue to wage intermittent war against Spain, oblivious to the invidious contradiction between an anti-racist ideology and the practical racisms of everyday [End Page 240] life. And the American republic, soon after burying “the bloody shirt” of regional division and Civil War, found itself more committed to white supremacy than ever before. And then their stories came together again. “[I]n an age of ascendant racism,” writes Ada Ferrer, “the United States opted to temper the victory of a multiracial movement explicitly antiracist.”¹²² In 1898, up in arms about Spain, thirsting for an empire of its own, and deeply suspicious of the equalitarian legacy of the Liberation Army, the United States stepped into the fray and helped to re-inscribe a firm color line in Cuban political culture. Having shored up white supremacy at home, the United States now exported it abroad in manly fashion, encouraging “white” Spanish immigration and, at first, restricting the arrival of black West Indians, who were to be used in the annual grinding and in the sugar mills.¹²³ Sadly, the criollo Cuban elite learned their American lessons too well. In Cuba as in the United States, emancipation, political revolution, and war had encouraged the growth of

racial supremacy and violence. In 1912 (the same year in which Eliza McHatton published her final reminiscences), the “white” Cuban authorities, inspired by the American example, slaughtered thousands of “mulatto” and “pardo” patriots who dared to organize under the banner of the Partido Independiente de Color.

Notes

- * José Alamillo, Kim Brodtkin, Rosanne Currarino, Linda Heidenreich, Evelyn Hu-DeHart, John Kicza, David Northrup, Sue Peabody, Christine Skwiot, and Heather Streets all offered helpful, wonderful advice during the writing of this essay. So, too, did the anonymous reader at *JWH*. Financial support came from a New Faculty Seed Grant from Washington State University; an Associate Fellowship at the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition at Yale University; and an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellowship at the Library Company of Philadelphia.
1. See especially David Northrup, *Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism, 1834-1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian Labour Overseas, 1830-1920* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974); Walton Look Lai, *Indentured Labor, Caribbean Sugar: Chinese and Indian Migrants to the British West Indies, 1838-1918* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).
 2. Notable exceptions include the life’s work of Stanley Engerman, as well as Eric Foner, *Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983); George M. Fredrickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American & South African History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Thomas Holt, “‘An Empire Over the Mind’: Emancipation, Race, and Ideology in the British West Indies and the American South,” in J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson, eds., *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 283-314; Anthony W. Marx, *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 47-64; Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt, and Rebecca Scott, eds., *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000). More recently, see the slender collection of essays, Douglass Sullivan-González and Charles Reagan Wilson, eds., *The South and the Caribbean* (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 2001).
 3. The term is from Philip Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

4. Frederick Cooper, "Categories, Boundaries and Connections in the Study of Labour," in Peter Alexander and Rick Halpern, eds., *Racializing Class, Classifying Race: Labour and Difference in Britain, the USA and Africa* (Oxford: St. Antony's College, 2000), pp. 214-15.
5. Senator Westcott of Florida, *Congressional Globe* 30, no. 1: Appendix, 608.
6. *Speech of Hon. E. W. Chastain, of Georgia, on the Acquisition of Cuba, in Reply to the Speech of Mr. Boyce, of South Carolina, Delivered in the House of Representatives, Feb. 17, 1855* (Washington D.C.: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1855), p. 14. Also see Basil Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba: 1848-1855* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948); Juan A. Sánchez Bermúdez, "La Pretensiones Anexionistas de los Estados Unidos en Cuba Colonial," *Islas* 64 (1979):43-63.
7. Rollin G. Osterweis, *The Myth of the Lost Cause, 1865-1900* (New York: Anchor Books, 1973), p. 8; Clement Eaton, *The Waning of the Old South Civilization, 1860-1880s* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1968); Cyrus B. Dawsey and James M. Dawsey, eds., *The Confederados: Old South Immigrants in Brazil* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1995); Eugene C. Harter, *The Lost Colony of the Confederacy* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1985); William Clark Griggs, *The Elusive Eden: Frank McMullan's Confederate Colony in Brazil* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987).
8. Eliza [McHatton] Ripley, *From Flag to Flag: A Woman's Adventures and Experiences during the War, in Mexico, and in Cuba* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1889), p. 126.
9. Ripley, *From Flag to Flag*, p. 151.
10. Ripley, *From Flag to Flag*, p. 152.
11. Ripley, *From Flag to Flag*, pp. 149-50, 155, 163-65, 166.
12. Franklin Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba during the Nineteenth Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), p. 29. On the specific demographic and economic transformations engendered in Cuba by this "sugar revolution," see Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba*, pp. 25-84; Louis Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform & Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 70-103.
13. Mark Anthony De Wolf to Joseph Seymour, November 30, 1838, De Wolf Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society, Box 5, Series I, Folder 241.
14. Joseph John Gurney, *A Winter in the West Indies, Described in Familiar Letters to Henry Clay, of Kentucky* (London: John Murray, 1840), p. 209.
15. William Green, *British Slave Emancipation: The Sugar Colonies and the Great Experiment, 1830-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 261-93; Alan

- H. Adamson, *Sugar without Slaves: The Political Economy of British Guiana, 1838-1904* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 41-56; Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).
16. On these advances and transformations, see especially Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *El Ingenio: Complejo Económico Social Cubano del Azúcar*, 3 Vols. (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1978); condensed and translated as Moreno Fraginals, *The Sugarmill: The Socioeconomic Complex of Sugar in Cuba* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971); Laird W. Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century: The Social and Economic History of Monoculture in Matanzas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 107-14; Hugh Thomas, *Cuba, or, The Pursuit of Freedom* (1971; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), pp. 120-25.
 17. The census of 1841 listed 418,211 whites, 436,495 slaves, and 152,838 free people of color. Duvon Clough Corbitt, *A Study of the Chinese in Cuba, 1847-1947* (Wilmore, Ky.: Asbury College, 1971), p. 2.
 18. Robert L. Paquette, *Sugar Is Made with Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict over Slavery in Cuba* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), pp. 81-103, 209-32.
 19. Mary Turner, "Chinese Contract Labour in Cuba," p. 71; Duvon Clough Corbitt, "Immigration in Cuba," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 22 (May 1942):302.
 20. Corbitt, *A Study of the Chinese in Cuba*, p. 4; Arthur F. Corwin, *Spain and the Abolition of Slavery in Cuba, 1817-1886* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1967), p. 86.
 21. According to Thomas Skidmore, Brazil did not suffer from the same level of acute labor shortage. Hence, the question of bringing in Chinese "coolies" was not an issue there until the moment of abolition in the 1870s, and even then the question was resolved in the negative – there would be no broad-based Chinese immigration to Brazil. The "controversy over Chinese immigration," he writes, "forced many Brazilians" to unite behind "a strong commitment to a progressively whiter Brazil." Thomas Skidmore, *Black Into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (1974; reprint, Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), pp. 24-27, quote on 27.
 22. Cited in Moreno Fraginals, *El Ingenio*, I, 273.
 23. Evelyn Hu-DeHart, "Race Construction and Race Relations: Chinese and Blacks in Nineteenth Century Cuba," unpublished manuscript in author's possession.

24. William H. Roberston to William L. Marcy, August 6, 1855, in "Report of the Secretary of State, in Compliance with the Resolution of the Senate of April 24, Calling for Information Relative to the Coolie Trade," *Senate Documents, 1st and 2nd Session of the 34th Congress* (Washington D.C.: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1856), p. 3.
25. Ripley, *From Flag to Flag*, p. 155.
26. Mary Turner, "Chinese Contract Labour in Cuba, 1847-1874," *Caribbean Studies* 14, no. 2 (July 1974):66-81.
27. Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba*, p. 116.
28. Hu-Dehart, "Race Construction and Race Relations."
29. Hu-DeHart, "Race Construction and Race Relations"; Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba*, pp. 116-18. As Knight notes, traveler Antonio Gallenga had noted during his visit to Cuba that it was often heard that one was off to "buy a chino." See Antonio Gallenga, *Pearl of the Antilles* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1873), p. 88.
30. Lui A-juí, quoted in *The Cuba Commission Report: A Hidden History of the Chinese in Cuba*, Denise Helly, ed., (1876; reprint, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 89.
31. "[S]laves on efficient modern plantations with steam-driven mills," one historian has remarked, "were treated more inhumanely than those on the old oxen-driven mills: they were confined to menial and manual labour; and they were regarded and treated as economic rather than human units." Corwin, *Spain and the Abolition of Slavery in Cuba*, pp. 109-10.
32. Ramón Sagra, *Cuba en 1860, o Sea Cuadro de sus Adelantos en la Población, la Agricultura, el Comercio y las Rentas Públicas, Suplemento a la Primera Parte de la Historia Política y Natural de la Isla de Cuba* (Paris: L. Hachette y Cia, 1863), pp. 43-44.
33. The classic example is *Practical Rules for the Management and Medical Treatment of Negro Slaves in the Sugar Colonies, by a Professional Planter* (London: J. Barfield, 1811).
34. Ripley, *From Flag to Flag*, p. 175.
35. Richard J. Levis, *Diary of a Spring Holiday in Cuba* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1872), p. 35.
36. C. D. Tyng, *The Stranger in the Tropics; Being a Handbook for Havana and a Guide Book for Travellers in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and St. Thomas* (New York: American News Co., 1868), pp. 66-67.

37. Samuel Hazard, *Cuba with Pen and Pencil* (Hartford, Conn.: Hartford Publishing Co., 1871), p. 149.
38. Hazard, *Cuba with Pen and Pencil*, p. 162.
39. Ripley, *From Flag to Flag*, p. 177.
40. Ripley, *From Flag to Flag*, p. 180. As Rebecca Scott reminds us, beneath this rarified debate about the abilities of the Chinese lay a plantation economy that only occasionally used contracted laborers differently than slaves. "[M]any of the Chinese," she writes, "were not employed with machinery at all but were used as agricultural workers, performing precisely the same tasks as slaves . . . [t]his is not to deny that indentured laborers stood, to some extent, in an intermediate position in the labor hierarchy and were on occasion perceived as especially suited to work with machinery." Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: the Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 31-32.
41. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, pp. 33-34.
42. Ripley, *From Flag to Flag*, p. 172.
43. Ripley, *From Flag to Flag*, p. 173.
44. Ripley, *From Flag to Flag*, p. 174.
45. Helly, ed., *Cuba Commission Report*, p. 49.
46. Helly, ed., *Cuba Commission Report*, p. 55.
47. Miguel Barnet, *Biography of a Runaway Slave*, W. Nick Hill, trans. (Willimantic, Conn.: Curbstone Press, 1994), p. 43. The Commission Report likewise suggests a relatively high rate of suicide both in Cuba and on the voyage overseas from China; see Helly, ed., *Commission Report*, pp. 43-47, 99-103.
48. Helly, ed., *Cuba Commission Report*, p. 101.
49. Hugh Thomas, *Cuba, or, the Pursuit of Freedom* (New York: Da Capo, 1971), p. 188.
50. Jay [Woodruff], *My Winter in Cuba*, p. 222. Hu-Dehart, "Race Construction and Race Relations."
51. Turner, "Chinese Contract Labour in Cuba," p. 78.
52. Ripley, *From Flag to Flag*, p. 293.
53. Ripley, *From Flag to Flag*, p. 293.
54. Eliza McHatton-Ripley, *Social Life in Old New Orleans: Being Recollections of My Girlhood* (New York: D. Appleton, 1912), p. 192.

55. Joel Williamson, *A Rage for Order: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 25.
56. Leonard L. Richards, "The Jacksonians and Slavery," in Lewis Perry and Michael Fellman, eds., *Antislavery Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Abolitionists* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), p. 107. On the sectional disputes related to slavery leading up to the Civil War, see David Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976); William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).
57. Holt, *Problem of Freedom*, pp. 105-108.
58. George Fitzhugh, "Sociology for the South (1854)," in Eric L. McKittrick, ed., *Slavery Defended: the Views of the Old South* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1963), p. 49. Also see David Christy, "Cotton Is King (1855)," in McKittrick, ed., *Slavery Defended*, p. 117; William Sumner Jenkins, *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1960), pp. 63, 105, 245.
59. Letter reprinted in F. W. Loring and C. F. Atkinson, *Cotton Culture and the South, Considered with Reference to Emigration* (Boston: A. Williams & Co., 1869), pp. 21-22.
60. C. Stanley Urban, "The Africanization of Cuba Scare, 1853-1855," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 37 (February 1957):29-30.
61. "Slavery Extension," *De Bow's Review* (July 1853):13.
62. Williamson, *A Rage for Order*, p. 43.
63. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, pp. 115-76.
64. Quoted in James L. Roark, *Masters without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), p. 115.
65. Letter reprinted in Loring and Atkinson, *Cotton Culture and the South*, p. 14.
66. James H. Hammond, "Speech on the Admission of Kansas, Under the Lecompton Constitution, Delivered in the Senate of the United States, March 4, 1858," in *Selections from the Letters and Speeches of the Hon. James H. Hammond, of South Carolina* (1866; reprint, Spartansburg, South Carolina: The Reprint Co., 1978), p. 318.
67. William Grayson, "Preface," in *The Hireling and Slave* (Charleston: J. Russell, 1854), p. vii.

68. Carl Schurz to Andrew Johnson, August 29, 1865, in *Advice After Appomattox: Letters to Andrew Johnson, 1865-1866*, Brooks D. Simpson, Leroy P. Graf, and John Muldowney, eds. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987), p. 113; Carl Schurz, *The Condition of the South: Extracts from the Report of Major-General Carl Schurz of the States of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1865), pp. 7-8.
69. See, for example, Susan Dabney Smedes, *Memorials of a South Planter* (1887; reprint, Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1981), pp. 237, 240; John T. Trowbridge, *The Desolate South, 1865-1866* (1866, revised and abridged; New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1956), pp. 190, 197-98.
70. Christopher G. Memminger to Andrew Johnson, September 4, 1865, in *The Papers of Andrew Johnson*, Paul H. Bergeron, ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), Vol. IX, p. 25. For more on the influence of West Indian apprenticeship on postbellum Southern attitudes, see Eric Foner, *Nothing But Freedom*, pp. 49-51; Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), pp. 201-202; Vernon Lane Wharton, *The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), p. 93.
71. See George M. Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate over Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (1971; reprint, Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), pp. 187-97; David M. Oshinsky, *"Worse Than Slavery": Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice* (New York: Free Press, 1996), pp. 15-29.
72. W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction* (1935; reprint, New York: Atheneum, 1992), p. 727. On the Black Codes and the impetus for Radical Reconstruction, see Foner, *Reconstruction*, pp. 228-80. The "most dramatic transformation" begat by Radical Reconstruction, Foner argues, "concerned labor relations," as right-minded lawmakers "swept away the remnants of the Black Codes" (p. 372).
73. Olmstead, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* (New York: Dix & Edwards, 1856), I, p. 101.
74. Frederick Trautmann, ed., *Travels on the Lower Mississippi, 1879-1880: A Memoir by Earnst von Hesse-Wartegg* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1990), p. 212.
75. Joel Williamson, *After Slavery: The Negro in South Carolina during Reconstruction, 1861-1877* (1965; reprint, New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), pp. 118-19.

76. Rowland T. Berthoff, "South Attitudes towards Immigration, 1865-1914," *Journal of Southern History* 17 (August 1951):336-37. Also see Bert James Loewenberg, "Efforts of the South to Encourage Immigration, 1865-1900," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 33 (1934): 363-85. James S. Pike reported that African-American congressmen in South Carolina were immediately aware that European immigration was "intended to overslaugh and crowd out the blacks." See James S. Pike, *The Prostrate State: South Carolina under Negro Government* (New York: D. Appleton, 1874), p. 55.
77. Schurz, *The Condition of the South*, pp. 23-24.
78. Delavigne, "The Labor Question," *De Bow's Review* (February 1870):167-73.
79. Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), esp. pp. 39-91; David Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991); Thomas Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (1963; reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 253-309.
80. Trowbridge, *The Desolate South*, p. 204.
81. *Daily Columbus Enquirer*, June 20, 1866, cited in E. Merton Coulter, *The South During Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947), p. 105.
82. Trowbridge, *The Desolate South*, p. 203.
83. Delavigne, "The Labor Question," *De Bow's Review* (February 1870):169.
84. Coulter, *The South During Reconstruction*, p. 104. Also see Foner, *Reconstruction*, pp. 213-14.
85. Berthoff, "Southern Attitudes towards Immigration," p. 343
86. Foner, *Nothing But Freedom*, p. 48.
87. Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy since the Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), pp. 17-31.
88. Lucy M. Cohen, *The Chinese in the Post-Civil War South: A People Without History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), p. 53, also see pp. 51-54. On the Chinese in the South more generally, see James W. Loewen, *The Mississippi Chinese: Between Black and White* (1971; reprint, Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, 1988), pp. 9-31; Robert Seto Quan, *Lotus among the Magnolias: The Mississippi Chinese* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1982); Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a*

- Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), pp. 94-95.
89. See Lucy M. Cohen, "George W. Gift, Chinese Labor Agent in the Post-Civil War South," *Chinese America: History & Perspectives* (1995):157-78; Cohen, "Entry of Chinese to the Lower South from 1865-1870: Policy Dilemmas," *Southern Studies* 2 (new series), no. 3-4 (1991):281-313.
 90. Cohen, *Chinese in the Post-Civil War South*, p. 93.
 91. Savannah Republican, July 16, 1870, cited in Cohen, *Chinese in the Post-Civil War South*, p. 97; Sylvia H. Krebs, "John Chinaman and Reconstruction Alabama: The Debate and the Experience," *Southern Studies* 21 (Winter 1982):379-81.
 92. J. K. Vance, "Report on Chinese Immigration," in *Proceedings of the Immigration Convention, Held at the Academy of Music, Charleston, South Carolina, on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th of May, 1870* (Charleston, S.C.: Walker, Evans & Cogswell, 1870), pp. 78-79.
 93. Cohen, *Chinese in the Post-Civil War South*, p. 91.
 94. Italics in original. "Cuba as it is in 1854," *De Bow's Review* 17 (September 1854):221-22; "Cuba Sugar Crop and Trade," *De Bow's Review* 18 (May 1855):641.
 95. "[M]ost Southerners," writes E. Merton Coulter, "were convinced that these people would become a greater curse to the South than the Negro had been. As it was best that the Chinese should associate with their own kind, they could never be spread out over the South in small numbers. Hence, only the large plantations could use them." Coulter, *The South During Reconstruction*, p. 106.
 96. "Gen. Lee on Chinese Immigration," *De Bow's Review* (May-June 1870):498.
 97. See, for instance, "Chinaman or White Man, Which?" *A Reply to Father Buchard by Rev. O. Gibson, Delivered in Platt's Hall, San Francisco, Friday Evening, March 14, 1873* (San Francisco: Alta California Printing House, 1873). The phrase "criminally cheap labor" is from page 8. Rosanne Currarino, "Labor Intellectuals and Labor Question: Wage Work and the Making of Consumer Society in America, 1873-1905" (Ph.D. Diss.; Rutgers University, 1999); Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (1971, reprint; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Robert G. Lee, *Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), pp. 15-82.
 98. Saxton, *Indispensable Enemy*; Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*, pp. 179-80.

99. William M. Burwell, "Science and the Mechanic Arts Against Coolies," *De Bow's Review* (July 1869):557-71; Cohen, *Chinese in the Post-Civil War South*, pp. 63, 69.
100. Jeffrey Moran, "Chinese Labor for the New South," *Southern Studies* 3, no. 4 (Winter 1992):290-91; Cohen, *Chinese in the Post-Civil War South*, pp. 82-86; Lee, *Orientalism*, pp. 65-66.
101. Cited in "Incongruity of Population Not Desirable," *De Bow's Review* (July 1870):580.
102. Coulter, *The South During Reconstruction*, p. 105.
103. C.f., Robert Somers, *The Southern States Since the War, 1870-1871* (London and New York: Macmillan & Co., 1871), pp. 74, 123. Also see, Cohen, *Chinese in the Post-Civil War South*, p. 93.
104. "The Labor Question," *De Bow's Review* (August 1868):783.
105. C.f. "In Lieu of Labor," *De Bow's Review* (July-August 1867):69-83; "Southern Railroad Policy," *De Bow's Review* (September 1868):841-43; "Sorgo Mills and Evaporators," *De Bow's Review* (July 1868); "Railroad Policy for the South," *De Bow's Review* (July 1868):607-11; "Knagg's Process of Cane Sugar-Making," *De Bow's Review* (June 1868):567-69; Oscar Zanetti and Alejandro García, *Sugar and Railroads: A Cuban History*, Franklin W. Knight and Mary Todd, trans. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); T. Guilford Smith, *Report of the Mineral Lands and Resources of the Alabama & Chattanooga Railroad Company* (Troy, N.Y.: Wm. H. Young & Blake, 1871).
106. Wright, *Old South, New South*, p. 75 and also pp. 17-31.
107. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex*, p. 196. Also, witness Robert Somers's description of the backwardness of Louisiana sugar production in Somers, *Southern States Since the War*, pp. 228-31. Two prominent Southern historians write that "Southern leaders. . . built their transportation system colonial style; it bound the staple-producing plantation districts to the ports and largely bypassed the upcountry." Eugene Genovese and Elizabeth Fox Genovese, *Fruits of Merchant Capital* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 50.
108. Somers, *Southern States Since the War*, p. 272.
109. Thomas C. Holt, "'An Empire over the Mind': Emancipation, Race, and Ideology in the British West Indies and the American South," in J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson, eds., *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 315-48; Robert Higgs, *Competition and Coercion: Blacks in the American Economy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard

- University Press, 1977); Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979).
110. Wright, *Old South, New South*, pp. 75-76.
 111. Krebs, "John Chinaman and Reconstruction Alabama," p. 381.
 112. Cohen, *Chinese in the Post-Civil War South*, p. 68.
 113. See especially Aline Helg, "Black Men, Racial Stereotyping, and Violence in the U.S. South and Cuba at the Turn of the Century," *Comparative Studies of Society and History* (2000); Laura Edwards, *Gendered Strife and Confusion: the Political Culture of Reconstruction* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Frederickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981). On anticolonialism and the disgust with Northern economic advances, see C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (1951; reprint, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), passim and pp. 291-320.
 114. On the process of gradual emancipation in Cuba, see Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, passim.
 115. On the possibility for slave self-purchase, see Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba*, pp. 130-31; Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba*, pp. 13-14.
 116. Coulter, *The South During Reconstruction*, p. 107; Williamson, *After Slavery*, p. 119.
 117. Oshinsky, *Worse Than Slavery*, p. 44.
 118. Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, & Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), p. 4.
 119. Ripley, *From Flag to Flag*, p. 128.
 120. Ripley, *Social Life in Old New Orleans*, p. 292.
 121. Ripley, *From Flag to Flag*, p. 210.
 122. Guterl: After Slavery X122 Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, p. 5.
 123. Laird Bergad, "Spanish Migration to Cuba in the Nineteenth Century," *Anales del Caribe* 4-5 (1984-85):174-204; Aviva Chomsky, "'Barbados or Canada?': Race, Immigration, and Nation in Early-Twentieth-Century Cuba," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 80, no. 3 (2000):417-52; Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuba Struggle for Equality, 1886-1912* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, pp. 187-92; Kristen Hoganson, *Fighting for Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998).