

*The Fragmentation of Atlantic Slavery and
the British Intercolonial Slave Trade*

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I

By the middle of the eighteenth century the expansion of the plantation complex in the Americas was firmly linked to transplanted Africans' labor. This system transcended the division of the Atlantic world into six "imperial" economies (British, Portuguese, French, Spanish, Dutch, and Danish). In one way or another, these contending polities attempted to benefit from the transatlantic traffic by taxation, subsidization, reexportation, or the creation of facilities for the convenience of foreign slavers. Even the exigencies of war allowed room for the system to function. Slaveholders in conquered islands were encouraged to continue business as usual, often under their own legal systems. Indeed, foreign conquest could mark defining moments in the expansions of Atlantic slavery. The British conquest of Havana during the Seven Years' War temporarily shattered the Spanish imperial *Asiento* system in Cuba. The labor of at least four thousand slaves, introduced during eleven months of occupation, set the stage for a new phase of plantation development in that island.¹ Until the 1770s, all the European imperial systems remained permeable by a ubiquitous system of commercial agriculture that drew on fresh supplies of enslaved Africans. As Joseph Inikori notes, the Atlantic in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was "a common market of sorts,"

and the slave trade of the early modern period was possibly the most “international” activity of the preindustrial era.² Before the beginning of America’s struggle for independence in the 1770s there were only two major constraints on the expansion of transatlantic slavery: Unrestricted slavery could only be practiced by Europeans on non-Europeans in areas outside of northwestern metropolitan Europe “beyond the line,” and Europeans themselves were unenslavable anywhere in regions they dominated on either side of the Atlantic.

The initial fissures in the Atlantic system, fostered by colonial revolutions, were significant but incomplete.³ The first extended break in the uninterrupted flow of Africans to New World plantations followed the closure of colonial mainland ports to British slaves on the eve of the American Revolution. Britain’s defeat divided the largest slave system in the New World but did not end the flow of Africans to either fragment. Although some historians regard the split as a boon to Anglo-American antislavery, easing the task of British abolition in particular, the inference is dubious. If the British Empire lost more than half of its plantations and their slaves in 1783, British abolitionism had also lost its strongest overseas political constituencies supporting curtailment of the Atlantic slave trade. Indeed, the loss of the thirteen mainland colonies enhanced the relative imperial value of the colonies that were most dependent on the indefinite importation of Africans for economic expansion. It is hardly coincidental that for at least two decades after Yorktown, postrevolutionary British governments placed a high priority on first securing and then expanding their West Indian plantation system. The West Indies became, as never before, not only the jewel in the imperial crown “but now virtually the crown itself.”⁴ The imperial Parliament simultaneously committed itself to a limited role in the internal affairs of the slave colonies. As late as the 1780s, occasional suggestions for transforming the labor system of the plantation complex received short shrift from all imperial authorities.

The conjunction of the French wars and the French Caribbean slave uprisings in the 1790s constituted a more direct challenge to the Atlantic slave system than the American Revolutionary War. Haitian independence in 1804 permanently eliminated the largest prerevolutionary destination for Africans in the Caribbean. Yet the great St. Domingue slave revolution of the 1790s encouraged compensatory expansions of plantation regimes throughout the Caribbean rim.⁵ By the middle of the first decade of the nineteenth century the political configuration of the plantation complex had changed far more dramatically than during the decade after 1775. Planters in the United States had displaced their French Caribbean counterparts among the major New World importers of slaves. Spanish-ruled Cuba had become the fourth-largest

recipient of slaves in the Atlantic plantation complex. Only the British and Brazilian slave systems remained unchanged in their dominant positions as importers of Africans. (See table 10.1.)

Thus as they began their final assault on the African slave trade in 1804, the British parliamentary abolitionists, dubbed “the Saints” by their opponents, were aware that slavery had lost none of its dynamic potential. Vast undeveloped lands in the Caribbean rim still beckoned metropolitan capital and African labor. British slavers, still the principal carriers of slaves from Africa, were on the verge of a new era of expansion. In 1800 British abolitionists could hope to impose imperial limitations on Atlantic slavery only at its margins, by limiting British colonial potential for growth. During the decade 1794–1804 British acquisitions of new colonies threatened to shatter the tenuous abolitionist assertion that the British tropical frontier was near its “natural limits” and a “natural rate” of slave reproduction.⁶

In 1801, Parliament prepared to welcome peace with France for the first time in almost a decade. William Wilberforce sorrowfully noted that newly acquired Trinidad would require the acquisition of a million slaves, postponing the “natural limits” of the British slave frontier for a century. The following year George Canning made the same point in comparative terms when he opposed the opening of prime Crown land in Trinidad to sugar planting. The island, he warned the House of Commons, had almost as much undeveloped acreage fit for cane as did Jamaica. The latter colony held more than a quarter of a million slaves compared with Trinidad’s ten thousand. Jamaica had imported nearly seven hundred thousand Africans over the course of a century in order to reach a slave population of only two hundred fifty thousand. It was clear that Trinidad alone could move up to another million coerced Africans into the Middle Passage.⁷

Britain’s reconquest of Demerara soon after the resumption of hostilities with France in 1803 elicited a public cry of despair from James Stephen, the most influential political strategist among the abolitionists during the five years before abolition of the slave trade. He saw his country “still given up without remorse to the unbridled career of slave trading speculators. . . . The monster, instead of being cut off, as the first burst of honest indignation promised [in 1792], has been more fondly nourished than before, and fattened with fuller meals of misery and murder, into far more than his pristine dimensions.” Three years later, on the verge of abolitionist victory, Wilberforce warned his constituents that most established West Indian proprietors were “prompted by a true persuasion that abolition will materially lessen their gains.” He had “no hope of the West India body’s opposition to abolition ending of its own accord as long as there remained cultivable land in the western hemisphere.”⁸

Table 10.1. Average Annual Movements of Slaves to the Principal Importing Areas of the Americas, 1804–1839 (thousands)

(1)	All Areas			
	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
ca. 1804–5	U.S. (all) 17.9	British West India (all) 24.9	Spanish America 12.5	Brazil 23.3
ca. 1804–5	U.S. (all) 17.9	Demerara/Trinidad /Jamaica 17.0	Cuba 9.3	Brazil 23.3
Frontier Areas				
1808–33	Importing states 16.2	Demerara/Trinidad 0.8	Cuba 12.3	Brazil 34.8
1814–39	Importing states 20.7	Demerara/Trinidad 0.9 ^a	Cuba 15.6	Brazil 37.5
Total net migration, 1814–39	516.6	23.3	390.8	937.5

^aThis figure includes free migrants after 1834. *Sources*: Column 1: R. W. Fogel, “Revised Estimates of the U.S. Slave Trade and the Native-Born Slave of the Black Population,” in *Without Consent or Contract: Evidence and Methods*, ed. Fogel et al. (New York: Norton, 1992), pp. 53–58; Michael Tadman, *Spectators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), p. 12, table 2.1; column 2: S. Drescher, *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977), p. 95, table 23; David Eltis, “The Traffic in Slaves Between the British West Indian Colonies, 1807–1833,” *Economic History Review* 25(1) (February 1972): 55–64, 58, table 1; B. W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807–1834* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), pp. 417–18, 430, tables St.2, St.20; Bonham C. Richardson, *Caribbean Migrants: Environment and Human Survival on St. Kitts and Nevis* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), p. 88, table 4; *Parliamentary Papers*, 1845 (426), 31:329 ff., Census of the West Indies 1844; column 3: David Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 245, 247, tables A.2, A.4; Column 4: *Ibid.*, pp. 243–44, table A.1.

II

Between 1788 and 1807, abolition of the intercontinental slave trade was one of the most continually debated issues in the imperial Parliament. Year after year the House of Commons divided, often very narrowly, over bills and resolutions linked to that issue. Successive parliamentary committees heard testimony and gathered mountains of evidence. Waves of petitions to Parliament attacked the trade. Abolition became campaign fodder in hotly contested elections to Parliament. Its abolition of the African slave trade was a fatal blow to Britain's position as the leading carrier of African slaves.

The potential for British colonial slavery's expansion had not, however, been entirely eliminated. There was still the question of the internal mobility of British Caribbean slavery, although before closing the Atlantic traffic, abolitionist pressure had succeeded in restricting it. Imperial policy concerning that traffic began, almost imperceptibly, with an administrative Order-in-Council in October 1805, more than two years before the Slave Trade Abolition Act took effect. William Pitt's last administration issued this Order-in-Council in order to limit the flow of slaves to the newest British slave frontiers. These limits were reconfirmed by the Abolition Acts of 1806–7.

All subsequent revisions, culminating in the Slave Trade Law Consolidation Act of 1824, passed through Parliament with a minimum of discussion. Except for a single brief exchange, unrecorded in *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, the entire subject escaped the attention of the broad reading public.⁹ There were no major petition campaigns for or against the regulation or abolition of the intercolonial trade. The Caribbean traffic was overshadowed by successive campaigns to reduce the Atlantic slave trade, to prevent the illicit flow of Africans to the British colonies, and to accelerate the at first gradual, and finally the immediate, emancipation of British slaves.

In order to prevent smuggling of new slaves from Africa under the guise of intercolonial traffic, after 1807 slaves could no longer be carried from colony to colony without a license from the colony of departure. If the receiving area was a newly acquired colony, the slaveholder needed a second license from the colony of destination. As a further check on transatlantic traffickers, annual importations to the new colonies were limited to a maximum of 3 percent of the slave population of that colony. Finally, and crucially, imports could not exceed the actual annual decrease of slaves in those colonies. Even in the event of an epidemic in Trinidad and Demerara, these new British colonies could import no more than three thousand slaves per year, less than one-third of their preabolition rate. Any major frontier boom was preemptively prohib-

ited, and the effective expansion of the British slave frontier in an open slave market was already at an end.¹⁰

After 1805 British frontier planters could no longer hope to acquire so much as half of Havana's annual slave imports, not to mention still larger slave imports into Brazil. The results of Britain's combined policy of transatlantic abolition and transcaribbean regulation can be seen in tables 10.1 and 10.2. From 1808 until British emancipation in 1833, its two new sugar colonies received a combined average of well under a thousand slaves per year, a situation that continued beyond emancipation until the end of "Apprenticeship" in 1838. During the same generation, Cuba was annually importing seventeen times as many enslaved Africans. Even the United States, which also legally closed its territory to African slaves in 1807, saw greater growth in its slave population. Slavery on the mainland had long been expanding more rapidly by natural growth than from fresh African imports. The slave-importing southern states received slaves at twenty-three times the rate of slaves reaching the British frontier. Brazil, like Cuba, continued to rely on Africa for its slave labor growth and outdid the British colonies by the greatest margin. From 1808 to 1833 more than forty slaves were landed in Brazil for every slave arriving in Trinidad and Demerara.

The relative outcome was a foregone conclusion. In 1808 Britain's importing frontier colonies contained about 107,000 slaves. By the early 1830s that number had dwindled to 85,000. By contrast, Cuba's slave population at the beginning of its peak quinquennium of African importation (1816-1820) was already twice that of Trinidad and Demerara. Ten years later, Cuba's slave population was triple that of the two British colonies. The slave frontier of the American South expanded still more dramatically. In 1810 slave-importing U.S. states and territories had a combined population of 204,500, almost twice that of Trinidad and Demerara. By 1830 the same states, plus Arkansas and Florida, contained 697,000 slaves, or more than seven and a half times the combined slave populations of Trinidad and Demerara. Brazil's sparser and less reliable estimates do not permit the same comparison on the eve of British slave emancipation (see table 10.2).

The differentiation between the British Caribbean and the other plantation zones continued to deepen during the Apprenticeship years (1834-1838) and into the 1840s. Indeed, the difference between the effective labor power available to British planters and to the others was far greater than the raw numbers suggest. Barry Higman notes that between abolition and emancipation in Demerara, "the 30-40 years group was modal until 1826, when it was replaced by the 40-50 age group. During the same period the cohort over

Table 10.2. *Slave Populations in Major Plantation Zones, 1800–1864 (thousands)*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	British Caribbean			
	United States (including conquests)		Cuba	Brazil
<i>Year</i>	1800	1800		
Number	1,191	765		
<i>Year</i>	<i>c. 1817</i>	1817	1817	
Number	1,435	746	199	
<i>Year</i>	1820	1820		
Number	1,538	733		
<i>Year</i>		1823		1823
Number		717		1,148
<i>Year</i>		1827	1827	
Number		700	287	
<i>Year</i>	1830	1830	1830	
Number	2,009	685	310 (359) ^a	
Percentage change, 1817–1830	+31	–8	+55	
<i>Year</i>			1846	
Number			324	
<i>Year</i>	1850			<i>c. 1850</i>
Number	3,204			<i>c. 1,875–2,250</i>
<i>Year</i>	1860			
Number	3,954			
<i>Year</i>			1862	
Number			369	
<i>Year</i>				1864
Number				1,715

See notes on facing page

50 years old increased its share of the slave population from 4.3% in 1817 to 14.1%, while the share of slaves under 10 years decreased from 22.3 to 18.7 percent.”¹¹

Between 1821 and 1835, 18 percent of Africans purchased in Cuba were under fourteen years old, 78 percent were between fifteen and forty, and only 4 percent were over forty. The age pyramid of African slaves in 1823–44 clearly reflects the role of the African trade in keeping Cuba’s modal group well within the twenty-to-forty-year-old range.¹² Between 1808 and 1839 the new British colonies were demographically hobbled. They could not match their African-importing competitors (Cuba and Brazil) in expansion or in age and gender profiles for maximum labor efficiency. Nor could they match the ability of their counterparts in the American South to draw on older contiguous areas of slavery with high natural rates of population growth.

The cumulative impact of British imperial constraints was considerable. When emancipation was enacted by the government in 1833, slave owners were offered different rates of compensation for slaves held in each colony. These rates were designed to reflect a proportion of the average market value of slaves in each colony between 1823 and 1830. (See table 10.3.) Note that the average rate of compensation in the three most highly rated British colonies was more than three and a half times that offered in the lowest three. Owners of sugar plantations in Demerara received nearly three times as much compensation per field slave as did owners of sugar plantations in the sugar island of St. Kitts.

Once again, the intercolonial productivity gap indicated by these valuations was not only wide but widening in the final decades before emancipation. From 1815 to 1819, the ratio of tons of sugar produced per slave in the four

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¹¹All Spanish Caribbean. *Sources*: Column 1: *Preliminary Report on the Eighth Census* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1862), p. 7; column 2: Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), pp. 417–18; S. Drescher, *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1977), p. 34; column 3: Laird W. Bergad et al., *The Cuban Slave Market, 1790–1880* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 39; Stanley L. Engerman and B. W. Higman, “The Demographic Structure of the Caribbean Slave Societies in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” in *General History of the Caribbean*, vol. 3, *The Slave Societies of the Caribbean* (London: UNESCO Publications, 1997), ed. Franklin W. Knight, pp. 45–104, esp. 50–52, table 2.1; column 4: Leslie Bethell and José Murillo de Carvalho, “Brazil from Independence to the Middle of the Nineteenth Century,” in *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, vol. 3, *From Independence to c. 1870*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 679, 747.

Table 10.3. *Ranking of Colonies by Average Compensation Payments per Slave, 1834 (£ sterling)*

Employed slaves		Children under 6 years		Predial unattached field laborers	
British Honduras	60.9	Trinidad	22.2	British Honduras	82.0
British Guiana	58.5	British Honduras	21.6	British Guiana	65.2
Trinidad	55.5	British Guiana	19.0	Trinidad	49.2
St. Vincent	30.6	St. Vincent	10.9	Jamaica	37.2
Grenada	30.0	Grenada	10.3	St. Vincent	35.7
St. Lucia	29.9	St. Lucia	8.4	Grenada	34.4
		Jamaica	7.7	St. Lucia	33.5
Barbados	24.9				
Jamaica	22.9	St. Kitts	5.6	Barbados	29.1
Dominica	22.7	Tobago	4.8	Dominica	26.8
Tobago	22.3	Dominica	4.6	Tobago	26.5
Nevis	21.4	Bahamas	4.4		
Montserrat	20.0	Nevis	4.0	Montserrat	22.8
St. Kitts	19.0	Barbados	3.9	Nevis	22.7
Antigua	17.8	Virgin Islands	3.3	Antigua	22.6
Virgin Islands	16.3	Montserrat	2.5	St. Kitts	22.3

Source: As calculated by B. W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), table 4.3, p. 79.

most productive colonies to the amount produced in the four least productive was 2:1. By 1834 the ratio of most to least productive colonies was more than 3:1.¹³ In the United States, with an unrestrained interregional market in slaves, the differential was much narrower. In the period 1830–1834, prices for field hands were only 1.8 times higher in New Orleans than they were in Richmond.¹⁴ Because prices in Cuba and Brazil were determined by the large flow of Africans to these slave-based economies, the regional price spread within these economies was much narrower than in the British Caribbean.¹⁵

In the case of the British colonial slave frontier, the total loss of its African labor reservoir seems to have been far more important than the subsequent impediments to the intercolonial trade. Barbados alone was able to produce a considerable surplus of slaves between abolition of the slave trade and emancipation. In the brief period when the flow of British slaves was least constrained by imperial quotas (1818–1825), Barbados's population increased by fewer than twenty-five hundred slaves. Had Barbados desired to play Virginia

to the British Caribbean before 1840, it could not possibly have filled the role of the upper and middle South as a reservoir for the “new” colonies. Barbados was only to become a substantial source of outmigration after the end of Apprenticeship. According to Barry Higman, there is no evidence to suggest that Barbadian population growth “was engendered by the masters to feed a supply of slaves to the new colonies” (the so-called breeding thesis). Moreover, unlike those of the Chesapeake, Barbados’s slave exports would necessarily have contributed directly to the growth of a competitor producing the same product for the same market. Intercolonial restrictions doomed parts of the British slave colonies to a diminishing competitive capacity.¹⁶

III

There were other marked differences between the United States and British interregional slave movements. With minor exceptions, in the United States, the decision to trade in or to accompany slaves was made by the individual slaveholder. He or she was constrained only by the balance of personal scruples and self-interest. British West Indians, whether as potential sellers, buyers, or migrants, were hemmed in by public authority at both ends of regional exchanges. Beginning in 1818, at the very moment when the intercolonial trade became numerically unfettered (with the removal of the 3 percent cap on imports), a more inhibiting limitation was included in the Amending Acts of 1818 and 1819. Indirectly violating the taboo against interfering in the proprietary relationship between masters and slaves, the government now took successive steps toward submitting slaveholders to public authority. All population transfers now had to be registered at a centralized agency in the metropolis. No transfers could be disadvantageous to the affected slaves or result in the breakup of family groups, including children under fourteen years of age.¹⁷

This exercise of public scrutiny was without parallel in the contemporary transatlantic slave trades or the United States interstate slave trade.¹⁸ The violent destruction of family units was always one of the major targets of anti-slavery agitation. The domesticity criterion apparently worked in this case. Masters who imported slaves to the new colonies failed to maintain the high ratios of males to females previously typical of the Atlantic trade. Nor did they sustain the age structure achieved by purchasers of Africans. Higman concludes that importers of British slaves were “unable to fulfill their desire for a demographically selective movement.”¹⁹ The prerequisite of family cohesion probably also accounted for the fact that most slaves moved in large units. A single planter was responsible for more than half of the total

movement from the Bahamas to Trinidad. Small groups of slaves and those transferred singly were mostly urban and domestic slaves. Migrants probably accounted for very few of the agricultural slaves most desired by planters in the new sugar colonies. Because proprietors moving large collectivities of slaves had the best chance of obtaining licenses at both ends of the transfer, most slaves transferred between British colonies were not traded. They accompanied their masters. This pattern made the British intercolonial migration after 1808 completely different from the Iberian transatlantic trade and, to a much more disputed extent, from the domestic slave trade in the American South.²⁰

During the last decade of British colonial slavery, the welfare clauses apparently amounted to virtual abolition. After 1825, it was nearly impossible to move large units of field slaves from one colony to another. In 1828 a Barbadian planter requested permission to relocate his slaves to Trinidad. He argued his case on welfare grounds alone. In turn, the Privy Council of Barbados refused the planter's request on the same grounds: "We cannot in candor pretend that the population has yet arrived at that degree of density which renders such removal 'essential to the well being of the slaves.'" When Barbadians, with five hundred slaves to the square mile, could not be convinced to send slaves to a low-density colony with a decreasing slave population, the council seemed to have raised the hurdle to transferring slaves well beyond the level of normal demographic or economic reasoning.²¹

It remains unclear whether an unrestricted traffic in slaves between 1808 and 1833 would have led to large transfers between colonies, except in the case of groups accompanying their masters. Owners of marginal plantations in established islands were fearful of failing to sustain viability because of their ever-dwindling labor forces. At the end of the bound labor era in 1838, until they were overruled by London, sugar islands with the least productive plantations desperately attempted to legislate severe restrictions on the departure of their ex-slaves.²² Well before emancipation, the lid was already so tightly sealed on intercolonial transfers of any kind that Trinidad and Demerara registered a net outflow of forty-five slaves for the five years preceding emancipation. The abolitionist strategy of incremental infringement of slave movement was more than successful. By 1831 it was unlawful to travel within the island of Jamaica offering slaves for sale.²³

As one might imagine, the population-at-risk rate for long-distance removal in the British Caribbean was relatively low. The total number of slaves involved in the intercolonial traffic between 1808 and emancipation amounted to only 3.4 percent of the total population of the British Caribbean in 1817. By

contrast, using the same base year, the total proportion of slaves at risk for interstate movement in the United States was seven times as great.²⁴ In the African-dominated Cuban slave market, the number of slaves imported from 1811 to 1830 was actually greater than the entire slave population of the island in 1817. Quite apart from Africans or Creoles sold or resold within Cuba, more than half of the slaves on the island had already been uprooted once in their lives and were certainly victims of family destruction at the African end of slave trade.

The British separation of slave colonial populations into closed enclaves had important economic repercussions. The French wars and the Caribbean revolutions had opened new opportunities for the cultivation of coffee and cotton as well as of sugar. In 1770, sugar accounted for 89.4 percent of the combined value of British Caribbean exports of these products to Great Britain. By 1786 the share of coffee and cotton had risen to 28 percent. By 1806 their combined share reached 39 percent. For the British Caribbean this represented a diversification in staple production unequalled since long before the French Revolution. During the fifteen years from the beginning of the Anglo-French wars in 1793 to British abolition of the slave trade, coffee was the most rapidly expanding commercial crop in the British colonies. As David Eltis calculates, production may well have amounted to half of the world's output by the early nineteenth century. After 1808 the significance of British colonial output as a share of total world production diminished almost as rapidly as it had grown. In the period 1821–25, the British West Indian share of the combined Cuban, Brazilian, and British Caribbean coffee exports was 37 percent. By 1830 the British colonial share had dropped below 22 percent.²⁵

Within each British colony planters had to make hard choices about the allocation of their slowly diminishing and aging labor forces. In old as well as new colonies, planters shifted slave labor toward the production of sugar. In the frontier sugar colonies planters moved most rapidly toward the cultivation of cane. In 1810 Trinidad and Demerara planters employed 57 percent of their combined slave workforce in growing sugar. By 1830 that share had increased to 76 percent. Note that the ending of the intercolonial trade may have worked to the detriment of individual slaves within the new colonies as they were shifted from coffee groves and cotton fields to the more arduous work of producing sugar. The same holds true for the practice of keeping women in field labor.²⁶ Abolitionists obviously found it easier to block inter-island movement than to create legal and procedural mechanisms to hold down the transfers of slaves from coffee to sugar plantations. In this process, the best that abolitionists could do was to attempt to use the high deficit rates

in the new sugar colonies as grist for amelioration propaganda and for emancipation efforts.

IV

Of the American plantation systems on the eve of the American Revolution, the largest were the British, the Portuguese, and the French. By the revolutions of 1848, the leading plantation systems were the fragments of the old imperial settlements that had preserved slavery and the traditional means to expand their labor forces into new plantation areas. Without the closure of its slave trade (and later of slavery itself), the British fragment of the plantation complex probably would have remained among the nineteenth century's top four plantation systems. The British Caribbean certainly would not have lost ground as quickly as it did to the other systems. Slave trade abolition (in 1806–7) and emancipation (in 1834–38) played a far larger role in weakening the British component than did any of the subsequent metropolitan constraints on intercolonial movements. The British planters did not, of course, yield without a struggle. After 1808, they switched more labor and capital to the more profitable sugar economy. They managed to outdo Cuba in sugar production almost until British emancipation. New technology was effectively used to increase labor productivity, especially in the large new colonies. By 1830, slaves were generally better fed and healthier than they had been during the previous century.²⁷

Most of the above trends owed more to the ending of African imports than to constraints on intra-Caribbean movement. But gradual closure may have had another subtle effect on the relations between slaves and masters in the final decades of the institution.²⁸ Well before the intercolonial movement of field slaves came to a virtual halt during the late 1820s, masters had lost one of their most precious weapons: the power to arbitrarily detach and exile troublesome individual slaves at minimal economic loss. The planters' ability to sell a slave "south," without consideration for family integrity, was one of their major threats against resisters or potential leaders in collective bargaining situations. A number of recent accounts of slavery in the British Caribbean note the growth of a new balance of bargaining power between slaves and masters in the decades before emancipation. For example, J. R. Ward concludes his "balance sheet" of the process of amelioration with the observation that, despite improvements in the slave regime, Jamaican planters had failed as a class to establish the sense of uniformity and routine so essential for equilibrium in slave societies. Others, including Mary Turner, Michael Craton,

and Howard Johnson, have found that conditions of labor, and slave life in general, were rapidly changing. Just as the terms of servitude were being renegotiated at an accelerating pace, and just as the whip came under ever-closer metropolitan scrutiny, the possibility of “long-distance discipline” disappeared from the planters’ arsenal. Higman’s survey of incentives to slave labor in the British Caribbean does not even allude to the concept.²⁹

What has been still less remarked by historians is that the planters fell equally silent in Parliament about this aspect of their property rights. The Slave Trade Consolidated Bill of 1824 stirred the only notice on record of the obviously tightening restrictions on the planters’ right to remove their slaves from a colony. During the bill’s final reading in the House of Lords, a traditional opponent of slave trade abolition expressed concern that one clause in particular impinged on the planters’ right not only to trade but to move his own chattels between islands without London’s permission. Another peer noted that the bill’s new restrictions on the movement of chattels were clearly crossing the once-sacrosanct limit on direct parliamentary interference with slaveholders’ property rights in their chattels.³⁰ Yet all speakers noted that the West India interest itself had abstained from any formal protest. Therefore the short parliamentary discussion about the clause was framed exclusively in terms of its putative impact on the welfare of the slaves. By 1824, at the highest level of metropolitan political discourse, planter profitability was off-limits in considering the movement of slaves between colonies.

West Indian planters, choosing their battles with care, no longer contested parliamentary limits on slave owners’ authority to transfer their slaves. Within the colonies, however, masters had no choice but to formally negotiate with their slaves. Movement beyond a colony now had to be presented to their own slaves as an inducement to voluntary movement. By 1827 a Tortola slaveholder, fearful of provoking a bloody uprising, had to request the mediation of Methodist preachers to try to persuade his slaves to accept resettlement in Trinidad. By then, of course, intercolonial movement was no longer a “trade” in any meaningful sense of the term. Indeed, ten years later the planters showed how well they had learned the abolitionist language of family values. At the end of Apprenticeship some colonial legislatures enacted laws restricting the movement of ex-slaves from their islands. Freed blacks who wished to leave had to prove first that they had “no aged or infirm Father, or Mother, Wife, or infant child, legitimate or illegitimate . . . who may or ought to be dependent on him for support.” In the discourse about restrictions on migration, the welfare of the laborers was now the acknowledged priority in determining policy decisions about the intercolonial movement of slaves.³¹

V

Three other aspects of the British Caribbean trade might profitably be addressed in comparative context. First, did the inhibition of colonial slave transfers strengthen or weaken the system's ability to withstand the onslaughts of abolitionists in favor, first, of gradual and then of immediate emancipation? Restraints on the movement of slaves brought them a step closer to the status of European serfs, an avowed aim during the "gradualist" phase of British abolitionists' agitation for emancipation, led in Parliament by Fowell Buxton. A total freeze on the removal of slaves from their colonies of settlement topped Buxton's list of recommendations to the government regarding ameliorations in the mid-1820s. One irony of this campaign was that contemporary attacks on the inefficiency of serfdom in Europe and the Poor Laws in England emphasized the immobility of the labor force under serfdom. The restriction of slave sales within individual colonial markets probably reduced the efficiency and raised the costs of producing tropical products. Insofar as slave immobility increased the distress of the least efficient Caribbean planters, it probably contributed to the image of British slavery as a doomed institution on the eve of emancipation.³²

Yet intercolonial restraints on slave mobility were never as crucial or as harmful to British planters as was the closure of Africa. This may be inferred from their low-key or no-key opposition to ever-tightening constraints after 1818. By contrast, other interregional slave flows, as in the southern United States after 1808 and in Brazil after 1850, seem to have produced or exacerbated differences in regional commitments to defend slavery. In this respect the British slave colonies never broke ranks as sharply in the 1830s as did some northeastern provinces in Brazil in the 1880s over emancipation or as did some upper south states in the 1860s over secession. There may be some analogue in planter-slave relations between the situation of slaveholders in certain southern border states in 1861 and nonsugar British slave colonies (the Bahamas, the Virgin Islands) in 1833. In both "marginal" areas the process of renegotiating the terms of labor seems to have progressed furthest prior to the threat of immediate emancipation. Yet this analogy, too, argues against assigning great causal significance to the rate of British intercolonial movement.

Second, as in the other three frontier zones, the British plantation complex might have expanded somewhat more rapidly, if still modestly, had the new colonies been allowed free access to all British imperial slaves. Such growth would almost certainly not have deferred metropolitan British moves toward emancipation. Although the domestic slave trade in the United States clearly

sustained slave prices in the upper south at a higher level than would have been possible without such a trade, the principal benefit of the interstate movement was probably less economic than political. It expanded the representation of slave interests in the federal legislature, probably compensating for the erosion of commitment to slavery in the border slave states between 1808 and 1860. In the British Caribbean larger intercolonial transfers of slaves to new but unrepresented Crown Colonies would not have enhanced the political weight of Trinidad or Demerara in London as much as it did that of the new states of the cotton South in Washington.

Finally, in terms of the racial dimension of British Atlantic slavery, easier slave mobility probably would have been equally inconsequential. Of the big four plantation complexes at the end of the Napoleonic wars, the British zone was different in one important respect. Apart from the remote danger of a successful slave revolution, in no part of the British empire did the threat of interisland movement have the same racial significance. In the minds of British politicians and Caribbean planters the potential sources of new colonial labor were primarily non-European. Some white inhabitants of Cuba and Brazil plausibly advocated curtailing the slave trade in order to prevent "Africanization." In the United States a powerful movement even hoped to reverse the prior results of African migration.³³ No imaginable policy could have altered the Africanization of the old British Caribbean colonies, a process virtually completed a full century before abolition of the slave trade.³⁴ After the ending of slavery, postemancipation experiments to lure white labor into the British Caribbean were of minimal demographic impact.

The absence of racial-communitarian arguments in British planter propaganda is consequently not surprising. In their worst nightmares West Indian and metropolitan conservative interests imagined an anarchic Haitian archipelago displacing the ordered cane fields of the old regime. Visionary abolitionists correspondingly envisioned millennial communities spreading the seeds of civilization and love from free-labor and low-crime Caribbean utopias to the heart of Africa. But neither of these scenarios envisioned the West Indian colonies as predominantly inhabited by fair-skinned descendants of Europeans.³⁵ The allure of community-building racial migrations that beguiled white Cubans, Brazilians, and, above all, North Americans found little echo in either Britain or the West Indies. In the British orbit, slavery had to stand or fall unbolstered by direct appeals to "whiteness" as a source of political mobilization. In this respect, the British colonies remained unalterably Afro-American between the rise of abolitionism in 1787 and the end of Apprenticeship half a century later.

Conclusion

The closure of the British intercolonial slave trade between 1808 and 1830 was an exercise in compartmentalization and compression. Abolitionists quickly discovered that rights in persons in the Atlantic system were most vulnerable when they crossed geographical and political boundaries. The “Middle Passage” was the broadest, clearest, most casually accepted of these boundaries. The twenty-year battle in Britain over the fate of its Atlantic slave trade gave abolitionists the opportunity to extend and to refine the act of boundary-drawing. When thwarted in their initial attempts to blockade the entire route between Africa and British America, they moved (1794, 1806) to draw new lines: to abolish the British trade to “foreign” colonies within the Americas, to “new” areas of old colonies (1797), and to newly conquered colonies (1802, 1805, 1806). These encroachments must be seen as part of a larger Atlantic strategy. As early as 1791 abolitionists received a charter to exempt the Sierra Leone from slaving. They unsuccessfully sought to extend that zone to a vast stretch of the African coast in 1799. After 1808 British governments negotiated geographic limits on Luso-Brazilian and Hispano-Caribbean legal slave traders. In every part of the Atlantic system, from Chile to West Africa to Russia, British governments scrambled to amass bilateral or multilateral treaties banning the slave trade in one area after another. Anglo-American abolitionists even took at least ideological advantage of the state-creating power of the U.S. Constitution to portray the movement of southern slaves across state boundaries as a long-distance slave trade, analogous in every respect to the great Middle Passage. Thus, each demarcation created by Western power or culture was integrated into an abolitionist cartography of emancipation. What had been simply “beyond the line” within the Atlantic imperium in 1770 was resolved, line by line, in the century that followed.³⁶

Notes

This chapter benefited from suggestions by Stanley Engerman and Walter Johnson. I also thank the other participants in the Domestic Passages conference, and especially Steven Mintz, for comments on the original version of this paper.

1. Laird W. Bergad, Fe Iglesias Garcia, and María de Carmen Barca, *The Cuban Slave Market, 1790–1880* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 25.

2. Joseph Inikori, “Slavery and the Development of Industrial Capitalism in England,” in *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery: The Legacy of Eric Williams*, ed. Barbara L. Solow and Stanley L. Engerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 79–101. See also David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 136. Eltis notes that there were “market

imperfections” between major mercantilist entities as well as within the limits of sovereignty. On the volume and distribution of the slave trade, see David Eltis, Stephen D. Behrendt, David Richardson, and Herbert S. Klein, *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Dale Tomich sees the age of revolution as marking a transition from mercantilist imperial aggregation to global integration. “The ‘Second Slavery’: Bonded Labor and the Transformation of the Nineteenth-Century World Economy,” in *Rethinking the Nineteenth Century: Contradictions and Achievements*, ed. Francisco O. Ramirez (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988). This was less obviously the case, however, in the coerced migration of African labor. The British Navigation Acts and the French *exclusif* do not seem to have had a major influence on the rate of growth of the prerevolutionary Anglo-French slave sectors. On the African coast as a whole, African and European slave traders did not have much in the way of long-term market power over others.

3. For the case of the American Revolution, see Christopher L. Brown, “Empire Without Slaves: British Concepts of Emancipation in the Age of the American Revolution,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 56, no. 2 (April 1999): 273–306.

4. Michael Duffy, “The French Revolution and British Attitudes to the West Indian Colonies,” in *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*, ed. David Barry Gasper and David Patrick Geggus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 78–101, quoted on p. 79. See also Duffy, “World-Wide War and British Expansion, 1793–1815,” in *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 2, *The Eighteenth Century*, ed. P. J. Marshall (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 184–195; and Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar, and Seapower: The British Expeditions to the West Indies and the War Against Revolutionary France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 5–16. On decennial movements of Africans in British and Colonial ships to America, see David Richardson, “The British Empire and the Atlantic Slave Trade 1660–1807,” in *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 2, *The Eighteenth Century*, ed. P. J. Marshall (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 440–464. See also the British perspective on the process a century after the founding of the British abolitionist movement: “England, which had recently lost her thirteen colonies on the North American continent, and had not yet acquired Ceylon or the Cape of Good Hope, whilst her dominion in the East Indies was restricted and precarious, whilst Canada was unpeopled, and Australia unexplored, clung the more closely to the islands which were then the richest part of her colonial empire.” “The English in the West Indies,” *Edinburgh Review* (April 1888): 320.

5. For an overview of the French and Caribbean ruptures of the 1790s, see David Geggus, “Slavery, War, and Revolution in the Greater Caribbean, 1789–1815,” in *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*, ed. David Barry Gasper and David Patrick Geggus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 1–50.

6. Seymour Drescher, *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977), 71–76, 92–112.

7. See *Cobbett’s Parliamentary History* 36 (1801–1803), col. 143, Wilberforce, November 3, 1801; *ibid.*, cols. 854–76, Canning May 27, 1802. Wilberforce also projected the need for another six hundred thousand slaves to develop Jamaica’s uncultivated land. *A Letter on the Abolition of the Slave Trade, Addressed to the Freeholders and Other Inhabitants of Yorkshire* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1807), 291.

8. James Stephen, *The Opportunity, or Reasons for an Immediate Alliance with St. Domingo* (London: J. Hatchard, 1804), p. 137. See Wilberforce, *Letter on the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, 28, 290. See also Drescher, *Econocide*, 98, 243n16.

9. *Times* (London), June 22, 1824, reporting the discussion in the House of Lords, June 21, 1824.

10. See Roger Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and Abolition, 1760–1810* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1975), 348–349; and David Eltis, “The Traffic in Slaves Between the British West Indian Colonies, 1807–1833,” *Economic History Review* 25, no. 1 (February 1972): 55–64, esp. 55–57.

11. B. W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807–1834* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 142. See Stanley L. Engerman and B. W. Higman, “The Demographic Structure of the Caribbean Slave Societies in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” in *General History of the Caribbean*, vol. 3, *The Slave Societies of the Caribbean*, ed. Franklin W. Knight (London: UNESCO/Macmillan, 1997), 45–104.

12. See Manuel Moreno Fraginals, “Africa in Cuba: A Quantitative Analysis of the African Population in the Island of Cuba,” in *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, vol. 292, *Comparative Perspectives on Slavery in New World Plantation Societies*, ed. Vera Rubin and Arthur Tuden (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1977), 187–201.

13. This is calculated from Higman, *Slave Populations*, 51, table 3.4.

14. This is calculated from Richard Evans Jr., “The Economics of American Negro Slavery,” in *Aspects of Labor Economics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 199, table 8.

15. Laird Bergad et al. *Cuban Slave Market*, treat the slave markets of Havana, Santiago, and Cienfuegos as a single market.

16. Higman, *Slave Populations*, 81, 260, 348–349. If, economically speaking, “the Old South in the U.S. had no stake in the New South,” Barbados had even less of a stake in the “New British South.” See Lawrence J. Kolikoff and Sebastian E. Pinera, “The Old South’s Stake in the Interregional Movement of Slaves, 1850–1860,” in *Without Consent or Contract: Technical Papers*, 2 vols., ed. Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman (New York: Norton, 1992), 1:80–94. On slave “breeding” in the United States, see Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, “The Slave Breeding Thesis,” in *ibid.*, 2:455–472.

17. See Eltis, “Traffic in Slaves,” 57. Slaveholders also had to post bond in order to move families and had to ensure their comfortable passage. See Higman, *Slave Populations*, 80.

18. As in the British Caribbean after abolition of the transatlantic trade, slaves of Dutch colonies were asked whether they agreed with their master’s intended destination. Curaçao’s slaves apparently did not wish to go to Suriname, the principal Dutch sugar colony. Two-thirds of the movement of slaves from Curaçao was to Puerto Rico, beyond the Dutch orbit. More heavily female than the British migration (with a female-male ratio of 2:1) and moving in small groups, most slaves moved to do domestic work. Whatever the difference between the two Caribbean interregional flows, both received few of the agricultural laborers most in demand by planters. Like their British counterparts, Dutch ex-masters would follow their British predecessors in seeking bonded laborers from Asia

to replace their emancipated Caribbean slaves. See W. E. Renkema, "De export van Curacaose slaven, 1819-1847," in *Excercities in on verleden: Twaalf opstellen over economische en sociale geschiedenis van Nederland en de kolonien, 1800-1950*, ed. P. Boomgaard et al. (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1981), 188-208. I thank Pieter Emmer for bringing this essay to my attention.

19. Higman, *Slave Populations*, p. 82.

20. Compare Tadman, *Spectators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), for the United States, with Robert Wayne Slenes, "The Demography and Economics of Brazilian Slavery, 1850-1888," Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1975, 145-146.

21. B. W. Higman, "Slavery and the Development of Demographic Theory in the Age of the Industrial Revolution," in *Slavery and British Society, 1776-1846*, ed. James Walvin (London: Macmillan Press, 1982), 164-194, 190. See Higman, *Slave Populations*, 81. Nor were the blows to the planters forgotten. At the steepest decline of their economic fortunes, in 1847-1848, planters dated the depreciation of the prices of their slaves from the welfare-driven restrictions of intercolonial slave transfers in 1823. See *Parliamentary Papers* 1847-48, no. 23, vol. 4, p. 43, Supplement, 8th Report, 1848. Thereafter, the price of slaves in the old colonies such as Jamaica, Antigua, and Barbados fell by 50 to 70 percent compared with the price of slaves in the sugar zones of British Guiana, Trinidad, and the United States.

22. On attempts by the legislatures of St. Kitts and of Nevis to prevent emigration by ex-slaves, see Bonham Richardson, *Caribbean Migrants: Environment and Human Survival on St. Kitts and Nevis* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 81-88.

23. Higman, *Slave Populations*, p. 430, table St.20; Higman, *Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica, 1807-1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 63.

24. Compare Eltis, "Traffic in Slaves," 59, with Tadman, *Spectators and Slaves*, 45, for the American South. During the period 1808-1830, 264,200 African slaves entered Cuba. This is 133 percent greater than the number of slaves in the island in 1817, although this may have reduced the corresponding proportion of Creoles otherwise at risk for sale. Since 64 percent of the slaves sold in Cuba between 1820 and 1835 were Africans, I estimate that the number of Creoles sold between 1808 and 1830 was 95,100 (264.2×0.36). This would mean that about 48 percent of Cuban Creole slaves were at risk for sale during the period 1808-1830, about fourteen times the interregional sale rate for British Caribbean slaves. (See Bergad et al., *Cuban Slave Market*, 43). The direction of the small Spanish intercolonial trade after 1848 was into, rather than out of, Cuba. See Joseph C. Dorsey, "Seamy Sides of Abolition: Puerto Rico and the Cabotage Slave Trade to Cuba, 1848-73," *Slavery and Abolition* 19, no. 1 (April 1998): 106-128.

25. See David Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 294n6; Drescher, *Econocide*, 88-90; and Drescher, "The Decline Thesis Since Econocide," *Slavery and Abolition* 71, no. 1 (May 1986): 3-24, esp. p. 103, table 4.3; reprinted in Drescher, *From Slavery to Freedom: Comparative Studies in the Rise and Fall of Atlantic Slavery* (London: Macmillan, New York: New York University Press, 1999), 87-115.

26. Higman, *Slave Population*, pp. 66-71.

27. J. R. Ward, *British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834: The Process of Amelioration*

(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 272–273. For a short while the trend accelerated after emancipation.

28. Higman, *Slave Populations*, 199–204, 219–221, 224, 242–247.

29. On slaves' bargaining power, see Ward, *British West Indian Slavery*, p. 232. On evolving conditions of slave labor and life see, inter alia, Mary Turner, ed., *From Chattel Slaves to Wage Slaves: The Dynamics of Labour Bargaining in the Americas* (London: James Currey, 1995); Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982); Howard Johnson, *The Bahamas in Slavery and Freedom* (London: James Currey, 1991). On incentives and discipline, see Higman, *Slave Populations*, 199–204, 242–247.

30. See *Times* (London), June 23, 1824, esp. the speech of the Earl of Westmoreland, a diehard defender of the British Atlantic slave trade before 1807.

31. Eltis, "Traffic in Slaves," 61. See also Richardson, *Caribbean Migrants*, 82.

32. See *Parliamentary Debates*, 2nd ser., vol. 6 (Feb–April, 1822), April 1, 1822, col. 1426, for Fowell Buxton's motion in favor of *adscripti glebe* status for West Indian slaves. On conceptualizations of serfdom and slavery see Steven Mintz, "Models of Emancipation During the Age of Revolution," *Slavery and Abolition* 17, no. 2 (August 1996): 1–21. Adam Smith was unequivocal: "Whatever obstructs the free circulation of labour from one employment to another obstructs that of stock likewise": *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (New York: Modern Library, 1994), 156. In this respect both serfdom and England's Poor Laws of Settlement were less efficient than chattel slavery. It was assumed that freedom for serfs in Europe would induce labor mobility. See Richard Jones, *Peasant Rents: An Essay on the Distribution of Wealth* (London, 1831; reprint, New York: Macmillan, 1897), 29. John Stuart Mill saw the ban on the intercolonial trade as driving planters in the older colonies to ruin, because they could not relocate to areas where their slaves would have been worth up to three times as much. See Mill, "The Sugar Refinery Bill and the Slave Trade," *Examiner*, 18 September 1831, 594–95, reprinted in *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, vol. 23, *Newspaper Writings*, ed. Ann P. Robson and John M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 347–50. Another major political economist, J. R. McCulloch, viewed imperial restrictions as a serious impediment to the planters of the small islands such as Tortola. Restrictions prevented the planters from efficiently deploying capital and industry. McCulloch pointedly contrasted this constraint with the virtual absence of such restrictions in the United States. He hypothesized that the welfare of the slaves might be made the means of accelerating manumission provisions for slaves in exchange for increased freedom for planters to move them between colonies. See [J. R. McCulloch,] "Colonial Policy—West Indian Distress," *Edinburgh Review* 54 (December 1831): 330–351, esp. 350. The suggestions of Mill and McCulloch were clearly applications of free trade concepts to the question of the movement of West Indian slaves.

The Colonial Office did not fully recognize the impact of their welfare criteria on the immobilization of sunken slave and nonslave capital in the Caribbean. Earl Bathurst assumed that merchants and planters were free to withdraw their capital and employ it elsewhere. The obstacles to intransland slave movement undermined that possibility as early as 1808, and the devaluation progressed into the 1840s. See Earl Bathurst to Robert Wilmot-Horton, 6 November 1826, in the Wilmot-Hornton Papers, Mitchell Library,

State Library of New South Wales, as quoted in Neville Thompson, *Earl Bathurst and the British Empire, 1762–1834* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Leo Cooper, 1999), 179. In retrospect, the movement of slaves from the older plantations following the end of Apprenticeship was identified as causing “the ruin of the planters of the old windward and leeward islands, and the abandonment of those colonies as places of trade.” See *Times* (London), September 23, 1840, p. 4, col. d.

33. For the prospects and politics of “whitening” in Brazil, see Celia Maria Marinko de Azevedo, *Onda Negra, Medo Branco O negro no imaginário das elites—Século XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1987), 59 ff.; for Cuba, see Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery: Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999), 27–32; for the United States, see William W. Freehling, *The Reintegration of American History: Slavery and the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), chs. 1, 7, 8. For perceptions of the Caribbean as irrevocably black, see Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Library of America, 2004), 413; Edward B. Rugemer, “The Southern Response to British Abolitionism: The Maturation of Proslavery Apologetics,” *Journal of Southern History* 70, no. 2 (May 2004): 221–248, esp. 233.

34. The very terms of the “deficiency” laws in the Caribbean conceded the ineluctability of a black majority.

35. On the abolitionists’ imagined postemancipation communities, see David Brion Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 126.

36. With regard to the British intracolony slave movement, antislavery reached its apogee on the eve of British colonial emancipation. When Berbice merged with Demerara in 1831 to form British Guiana, Berbice continued to be considered a separate colony for purposes of slave transfers. Fragmentation trumped annexation. On the role of “the line” in the history of slavery and abolition see Seymour Drescher, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 19–24, 402–407, 434–435; David Brion Davis, “Looking at Slavery from Broader Perspectives,” *American Historical Review* 105, no. 2 (April 2000): 452–465, esp. 458–459; Eliza H. Gould, “Zones of Law, Zones of Violence: The Legal Geography of the British Atlantic, circa 1772,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 40, no. 3 (July 2003): 471–510; and Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400–1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).