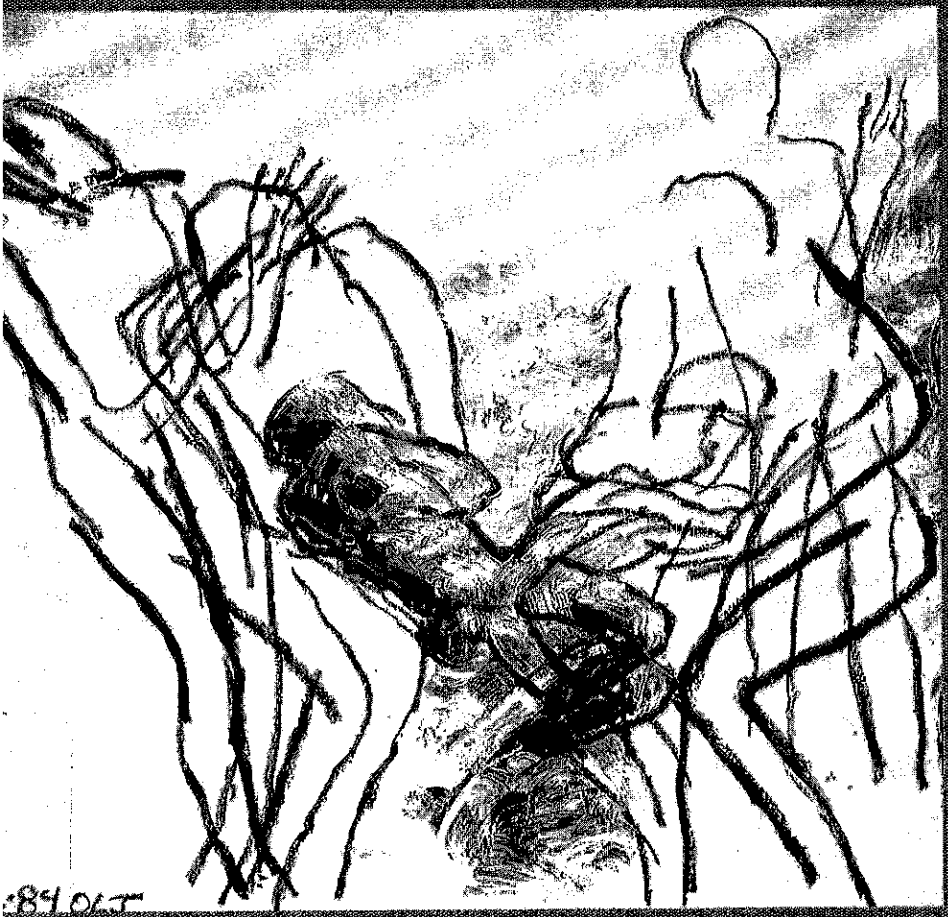
Scenes of Subjection

Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America



Saidiya V. Hartman

CE AND AMERICAN CULTURE
old Rampersad and Shelley Fisher Fishkin, *General Editors*

and Theft:
kface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class
Lott

Dialect of Modernism:
, Language, and Twentieth-Century Literature
iael North

'ering on the Body:
Racial Matrix of Modern Fiction and Culture
a Doyle

o Set You Flowin'?'':
African American Migration Narrative
ı Jasmine Griffin

ers of the Word'':
an-American Women Speakers and Writers in the North (1830–1880)
ı L. Peterson

, Rape, and Lynching:
Red Record of American Literature, 1890–1912
ra Gunning

es of Subjection:
or, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America
iya V. Hartman

Scenes of Subjection

TERROR, SLAVERY, AND SELF-MAKING IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA

Saidiya V. Hartman

New York Oxford
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
1997

Acknowledgments

This book owes a great deal to so many. The Charlotte Newcombe Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the University of California Humanities Research Institute provided financial support and time off, which helped in the development and completion of this project. The late George Bass provided support and enthusiasm during the early stages of the project, seeing promise when things were still quite vaguely defined. I would like to thank the members of the Feminism and Discourse of Power group for rigorous criticism and lively debate: Wendy Brown, Judith Butler, Nancy Campbell, Rey Chow, Nancy Fraser, Angela Harris, Jenny Sharpe, Jacqueline Siapno, and Irene Wei. I would especially like to thank Judith Butler, who has extended herself in innumerable ways to support my work. I am also grateful to my teachers. Hazel Carby provided a model of scholarly integrity, encouraged my interdisciplinary pursuits, and was an exacting reader. Alan Trachtenberg shared his passion for the study of culture, provided invaluable criticism, and continued to lend his support even after my official student days were over. John Szwed supplied me with endless citations and shared many instructive anecdotes. Others read the manuscript and offered valuable comments: Barbara Christian, VeVe Clark, Michael Davidson, Julie Ellison, Mae Henderson, George Lipsitz, Eric Lott, Arnold Rampersad, David Roediger, and Michael Rogin. My research assistant, Hershini Bhana, provided immensely valuable labor on this project; her dedication, enthusiasm, and commitment made my own task so much easier. Jan Anderson helped me to complete the bibliography. Glenda Carpio prepared the index.

The support of friends and colleagues has been invaluable: Elizabeth Abel, Elizabeth Alexander, Lindon Barrett, Rhakesh Bandari, Tobe Correal, Aya de Leon, Rosa Linda Fregoso, Herman Grey, Tera Hunter, Donna Jones, Lata Mani, Ruth Frankenberg, Sharon Holland, Lisa Lowe, David Lloyd, Michael Rogin,

ren Kaplan, Abdul Jan Mohamed, Harryette Mullen, Donny Webster, and Wendy iite. Special thanks to Ula Taylor for being the best colleague I could hope to have l a good friend. Norma Alarcon provided a model of intellectual passion and nmitment under fire. bell hooks has always been a reminder that courage is a itral ingredient of intellectual work. Angela Harris, Paul Rogers, and Robert St. irtin Westley read the chapters thoroughly, shared many important insights, and ed many an afternoon with stimulating conversation.

Farah Jasmine Griffin and Donna Daniels were the midwives of this book, helping through many difficult moments, providing inspiration when I desperately ded it, and giving generously of their time. Bill and Julia Lowe have been an nding source of inspiration and love in my life. I thank them for believing that all ngs are possible, even when I did not. My parents, Beryle and Virgilio Hartman, ve generously of their love even when they did not understand my choices. ially, I thank Gilbert, without whose love, support, and steadfast commitment this ok would not have been possible.

kland, California
ptember 1996

S. V. H.

Contents

be represented as the triumph of liberty over domination, free will over coercion, or consent over compulsion. The valued precepts of liberalism provide an insufficient guide to understanding the event of emancipation. The ease with which sovereignty and submission and self-possession and servility are yoked is quite noteworthy. In fact, it leads us to wonder whether the insistent, disavowed, and sequestered production of subordination, the inequality enshrined by the sanctity of property, and the castigating universality of liberalism are all that emancipation proffers. Is not the free will of the individual measured precisely through the exercise of constraint and autonomy determined by the capacity to participate in relations of exchange that only fetter and bind the subject? Does the esteemed will replace the barbaric whip or only act as its supplement? In light of these questions, the identity of the emancipated as rights bearer, free laborer, and calculable man must be considered in regard to processes of domination, exploitation, and subjection rather than in the benighted terms that desperately strive to establish slavery as the "prehistory" of man.

5

Fashioning Obligation

INDEBTED SERVITUDE AND THE FETTERS OF SLAVERY

> With the enjoyment of a freedman's privileges, comes also a freedman's duties and responsibilities. These are weighty. You cannot get rid of them; they must be met; and unless you are prepared to meet them with a proper spirit, and patiently and cheerfully to fulfil these obligations, you are not worthy of being a freedman. You may tremble in view of these duties and responsibilities; but you need not fear. Put your trust in God, and bend your back joyfully and hopefully to the burden.
>
> —Isaac W. Brinckerhoff, *Advice to Freedmen* (1864)

> It is not enough to tell us that we will be respected according as we show ourselves worthy of it. When we have rights that others respect, self-respect, pride and industry will greatly increase. I do not think that to have these rights would exalt us above measure or rob the white man of his glory.
>
> —*National Freedman* (April 1, 1865)

Emancipation announced the end of chattel slavery; however, it by no means marked the end of bondage. The free(d) individual was nothing if not burdened, responsible, and obligated. Responsibility entailed accounting for one's actions, dutiful suppliance, contractual obligation, and calculated reciprocity. Fundamentally, to be responsible was to be blameworthy. In this respect, the exercise of free will, quite literally, was inextricable from guilty infractions, criminal misdeeds, punishable transgressions, and an elaborate micropenality of everyday life. Responsibility made man an end in himself, and as such, the autonomous and intending agent was above all else culpable. As Friedrich Nietzsche observed: "The proud realization of the extraordinary privilege of responsibility, the awareness of this rare freedom and power over himself and his destiny, has penetrated him to the depths and become an instinct, his dominant instinct: what will he call his dominant instinct, assuming that he needs a word for it? No doubt about the answer: this sovereign man calls it his conscience."[1] In this regard, the burden of conscience attendant to the formation of the sovereign individual was decisive not only in the ways that it facilitated self-disciplining but also in its ability to engender resentment toward and justify the punishment of those who fell below "the threshold of responsibility" or

failed to achieve the requisite degree of self-control.[2] The onus of accountability that rested upon the shoulders of the self-responsible individual—the task of proving oneself worthy of freedom—combined with the undue hardships of emancipation engendered an anomalous condition betwixt and between slavery and freedom, for in this case the individual was not only tethered by the bonds of conscience and duty and obliged by the ascetic imperatives of restraint and self-reliance but also literally constrained within a mixed-labor system in which contract was the vehicle of servitude and accountability was inseparable from peonage. Moreover, the guilty volition enjoyed by the free agent bore an uncanny resemblance to the only form of agency legally exercised by the enslaved—that is, criminal liability.

Responsibility and restraint all too easily yielded to a condition of involuntary servitude, and culpability inevitably gave way to indebtedness. The emergence of what I term "indebted servitude" is the subject of this chapter. I use the term "indebted servitude" to amplify the constraints of conscience (discipline internalized and lauded as a virtue), the coercion and compulsion of the free labor system, and the "grafting of morality onto economics" in the making of the dutiful free laborer and similarly to illuminate the elasticity of debt in effecting peonage and other forms of involuntary servitude.[3] According to Nietzsche, the feelings of guilt, obligation, and responsibility originated in the relationship of creditor and debtor; moreover, debt as the measure of morality sanctions the imposition of punishment; debt serves to reinscribe both servitude and the pained constitution of blackness.[4] A telling example of this calculation of conscience or the entanglement of debt and duty can be found in Jared Bell Waterbury's *Advice to a Young Christian.* Here the duty of self-examination is compared to bookkeeping: "Let the duty [of self-examination] be duly and thoroughly performed, and we rise to the standard of the skilful [*sic*] and prudent merchant, who duly records every item of business; who never closes his counting-house until his balance sheet is made up; and who, by a single reference, can tell the true state of his accounts, and form a correct estimate of his commercial standing."[5] In the case of the freed, the cultivation of conscience operated in the whip's stead as an overseer of the soul, although the use of compulsion was routinely employed against those seemingly remiss in their duties. As it turned out, the encumbrance of freedom made one not only blameworthy and vulnerable to hardship and affliction in the name of interest but also, surprisingly, no less susceptible to the correctives of coercion and constraint.

Idle Concerns

Irony riddled the event of emancipation. How does one narrate a story of freedom when confronted with the discrepant legacy of emancipation and the decidedly circumscribed avenues available to the freed? What does autonomy mean in the context of coercion, hunger, and uncertainty? Is the unavoidable double bind of emancipation an illusory freedom and a travestied liberation? At the very least, one must contend with the enormity of emancipation as both a breach with slavery and reproduction or reorganization of the plantation system. What follows is an examination of eclipsed possibility and another lament of failed revolution.[6] The paradox

of emancipation involved the coupling of coercion and contract, liberty and necessity, equality and subjection. At the most basic level, this paradox was lived in planter opposition to a free labor system and the subjugation of free labor through contractual and extralegal means, the most notable examples of these efforts being compulsory labor schemes, often supported by the Freedmen's Bureau, the predominance of non–wage labor, vagrancy statutes that criminalized those not holding labor contracts, and the prevalence of white violence. To understate the case, the South proved unwilling to embrace a free labor system or to tolerate assertions of black liberty. Moreover, blacks were blamed for this opposition to free labor, presumably because they entertained fanciful and dangerous notions of freedom and refused to work, except under duress. As we shall see, these "fanciful notions" articulated an alternate imagination of freedom and resistance to the imposition of a new order of constraint.

However, the issue was not simply whether ex-slaves would work but rather whether they could be transformed into a rational, docile, and productive working class—that is, fully normalized in accordance with standards of productivity, sobriety, rationality, prudence, cleanliness, responsibility, and so on. Intemperate notions were to be eradicated, and a rational work ethic inculcated through education, religious instruction, and, when necessary, compulsion. Under slavery, the whip rather than incentive, coercion rather than consent, and fear rather than reasoned self-interest had motivated their labor; now it was considered imperative to cultivate rational, servile, and self-interested conduct in order to remake the formerly enslaved into free laborers.[7] However incongruous and inconceivable, nearly three centuries of black servitude could not relieve the nation's anxiety about the productivity of black labor or assuage the fear that the freed would be idle if not compelled to work.[8] Thus the advent of freedom was plagued with anxieties about black indolence that hinted at the need to manage free black workers by perhaps more compelling means.[9] From the vantage point of abolitionists, policy makers, Freedmen's Bureau officials, and Northern entrepreneurs, the formerly enslaved needed to be trained as free laborers since they had never worked under conditions of consent and contract and were ignorant of the principles of self-discipline and restraint. The goal of this training spearheaded by missionaries, teachers, and Freedmen's Bureau officials was to replace the love of leisure with the love of gain and supplant bawdy pleasures with dispassionate acquisitiveness.[10]

The discourse on idleness focused on the forms of conduct and behavior at odds with the requirement of a free labor system, given all its anomalies in the postbellum context. Named as offenses were a range of itinerant and intemperate practices considered subversive and dangerous to the social order. The discursive production of indolence registered the contested and disparate understandings of freedom held by plantation owners and the freed. The targeted dangers of this emergent discourse of dependency and idleness were the mobility of the freed, their refusal to enter contractual relations with former slaveholders, and their ability to subsist outside wage labor relations because of their limited wants. Not only is the elusiveness of emancipation indicated by the continued reliance on force and compulsion in managing black laborers, but, similarly, the moving about of the freed exposed the chasm between the grand narrative of emancipation and the circumscribed arena of

possibility. As a practice, moving about accumulated nothing and did not effect any reversals of power but indefatigably held onto the unrealizable—being free—by temporarily eluding the restraints of order. Like stealing way, it was more symbolically redolent than materially transformative. As Absalom Jenkins remembered, "Folks roved around for five or six years trying to do as well as they done in slavery. It was years before they got back to it." If moving about existed on the border of the unrealized and the imagined, it nonetheless was at odds with the project of socializing black laborers for market relations.[11] In effect, by refusing to stay in their place, the emancipated insisted that freedom was a departure, literally and figuratively, from their former condition.[12]

In the effort to implant a rational work ethic, eradicate pedestrian practices of freedom, assuage fears about the free labor system, and ensure the triumph of market relations, missionaries, schoolteachers, entrepreneurs, and other self-proclaimed "friends of the Negro" took to the South. Through pedagogical manuals, freedmen's schools, and religious instruction, teachers, missionaries, and plantation managers strived to inculcate an acquisitive and self-interested ethic that would motivate the formerly enslaved to be dutiful and productive laborers. The indecorous, proud, and seemingly reckless behavior through which the newly emancipated asserted their freedom was to be corrected with proper doses of humility, responsibility, and restraint. These virtues chiefly defined the appropriate conduct of free men. Practical manuals like Isaac Brinckerhoff's *Advice to Freedmen,* Jared Bell Waterbury's *Friendly Counsels for Freedmen,* Helen E. Brown's *John Freeman and His Family,* a fictional work, and Clinton Bowen Fisk's *Plain Counsels for Freedmen* thereby attempted to remedy the predicament of emancipation through the fashioning of an ascetic and acquisitive subject, prompted to consume by virtue of his wants and driven to exchange his labor because of his needs.[13] Issues of productivity and discipline were of direct concern to the authors of these texts, not only in their role as "old and dear friends of the Negro" or as sympathizers who "labored incessantly for their well-being" but also as plantation managers and Freedmen's Bureau agents directly involved in the transition to a free labor economy. Isaac Brinckerhoff had served as a plantation superintendent in the Sea Islands. Clinton Bowen Fisk was an assistant commissioner for the Tennessee and Kentucky Freedmens' Bureau and the eponym of Fisk University.

Advice to Freedmen, Friendly Counsels for Freedmen, John Freeman and His Family, and *Plain Counsels for Freedmen* were practical handbooks written for the emancipated in order to assist them in the transition from slavery to freedom. They were published by the American Tract Society, an evangelical organization established in 1825 "to diffuse a knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of sinners, and to promote the interests of vital godliness and sound morality, by the circulation of Religious Tracts, calculated to receive the approbation of all evangelical Christians."[14] The textbooks, designed to impart practical advice to adults as well as children, focused primarily on rules of conduct that would enable the freed to overcome the degradation of slavery and meet the challenges of freedom. These texts shared lessons on labor, conduct, consumption, hygiene, marriage, home decorating, chastity, and prayer. Most important in the panorama of virtues imparted by these texts was the willingness to endure hardships, which alone guaranteed

success, upward mobility, and the privileges of citizenship. Nonetheless, certain tensions arose in the passing on of these lessons; the effort to reconcile asceticism and acquisitiveness, self-interest and low or no wages, and autonomy and obeisance was not without notable difficulties attributable to the mixed economy of postbellum relations. In other words, the glaring disparities between liberal democratic ideology and the varied forms of compulsion utilized to force free workers to sign labor contracts exceeded the coercion immanent in capital labor relations and instead relied on older forms of extraeconomic coercion. In short, violence remained a significant device in cultivating labor discipline.[15] Undeniably, inequality was the basis of the forms of economic and social relations that developed in the aftermath of emancipation.[16] And it was this naked coercion that provided labor relations with their distinctive Southern character.[17]

Textbooks like *Advice to Freedmen, Friendly Counsels for Freedmen, Plain Counsels for Freedmen,* and *John Freeman and His Family* aimed to instill rational ideals of material acquisition and social restraint and correct "absolute" notions of freedom and the excesses and indulgences that resulted from entertaining such "farflung" conceptions. As their titles indicate, these handbooks were geared to practical ends, how-to advice, instructions for living, and rules of conduct being their primary concerns. The instrumental objectives of these books were explicitly declared in order that lessons of discipline, duty, and responsibility be simply and directly conveyed to their readers. The lessons contained in these primers were basically a series of imperatives—be industrious, economical, useful, productive, chaste, kind, respectful to former masters, good Christians, and dutiful citizens. The full privileges of citizenship awaited those who realized the importance of proper conduct and applied the principles of good management to all aspects of their lives, from personal hygiene to household expenditures. Not surprisingly, freedom was defined in contradictory terms in these textbooks. They encouraged both a republican free labor vision in which wage labor was the stepping-stone to small proprietorship and a liberal vision in which freedom was solely defined by the liberty of contract.

These disparate notions of freedom were complicated further by the servility freed laborers were encouraged to assume in negotiating the racial antipathy of the postwar period. The urging of servility begrudgingly acknowledged the less than ideal labor conditions of the South and the aversive racial sentiments to be negotiated and defused by the obeisance of the freed. Similarly apparent was the constrained agency conferred by the will of contract; although it was the cherished vehicle of self-ownership, it in fact documented the dispossession inseparable from becoming a propertied person. Bearing this in mind, let me suggest that the contours of this ascendant liberal discourse disclosed the constrained agency of freedom because volition and compulsion were regularly conflated and the legal exercise of willfulness was one's undoing. As it turned out, the liberty of contract and bondage were reconciled in the social economy of postbellum relations. Furthermore, the continuities of slavery and freedom were exposed by the centrality of prohibition and punishment, which were relied upon in the fashioning of liberal individualism. It appeared that only the cultivation of rationality and responsibility could eradicate the badges of slavery. In this respect the success of emancipation depended on the

remaking or self-making of the formerly enslaved as rational individuals and dutiful subordinates.

It is difficult to read these texts without lapsing into a predictive pessimism grounded in the certitude of hindsight. After all, we are painfully aware of what followed—debt-peonage, a reign of terror, nearly one hundred years of remaining separate and resolutely unequal, second-class citizenship, and an as yet unrealized equality. My reading of these texts emphasizes the disciplinary, punitive, and normalizing individuation conducted under the rubric of self-improvement. It is an interested reading that does not pretend to exhaust the meaning of these texts but instead considers the fashioning of individuality, the circulation of debt, the forms of subjugation that reigned in this proclaimed sphere of freedom, equality, and liberty, and, last, the impossibility of instituting a definitive break between slavery and freedom, compulsion and consent, and terror and discipline. In short, this reading focuses on the forms of subjection engendered by the narrative of emancipation and the constitution of the burdened individuality of freedom.

The Debt of Emancipation

"My friend, you was [*sic*] once a slave. You are now a freedman." *Advice to Freedmen* opens with this bestowal, as if by the force of its declaration it were granting freedom to the enslaved or as if freedom were a gift dispensed by a kind benefactor to the less fortunate or undeserving. Beneficent gestures launch the stories of black freedom narrated within these texts and also establish the obligation and indebtedness of the freed to their friends and benefactors. The burden of debt, duty, and gratitude foisted onto the newly emancipated in exchange or repayment for their freedom is established in the stories of origin that open these textbooks. In the section "How You Became Free" of *Advice to Freedmen,* the freed are informed that their freedom was purchased by treasure, millions of government dollars, and countless lives: "With treasure and precious blood your freedom has been purchased. Let these sufferings and sacrifices never be forgotten when you remember that you are not now a slave but a freedman" (7). Similary, *Plain Counsels* advised the freed not to take lightly the gift of freedom but rather to "prize your freedom above gold, for it has cost rivers of blood" (9). The blood of warring brothers and mothers' sons that stained the war-torn landscape of the United States granted the enslaved freedom, but the blood regularly spilt at the whipping post or drawn by the cat-o'-nine tails in the field, the 200,000 black soldiers who fought for the Union, or the hundreds of thousands of slaves who contributed to the defeat of the Confederacy by fleeing the plantation and flocking behind Union lines failed to be included in these accounts of slavery's demise. Blood, the symbol of Christian redemption, national reunion, and immutable and ineradicable differences of race, was routinely juxtaposed with gold and other treasure expended on behalf of black freedom and that presumably indebted the freed to the nation. However, the language of blood not only figured the cherished expenditures of war but also described the difficulties of freedom. As Jared Bell Waterbury remarked in *Southern Planters and Freedmen,* "Social difficulties of long standing cannot be suddenly or violently overcome. They are like wounds that must bleed a while before they will heal, and the process of cure, though slow and requiring much patience, is nevertheless certain."[18] In this respect, the wounded body stood as figure of the nation and the injuries of war were to be redressed not only by the passage of time but also by the obliged exchange and the moral remittances of the emancipated.

Emancipation instituted indebtedness. Blame and duty and blood and dollars marked the birth of the free(d) subject. The very bestowal of freedom established the indebtedness of the freed through a calculus of blame and responsibility that mandated that the formerly enslaved both repay this investment of faith and prove their worthiness. The temporal attributes of indebtedness bind one to the past, since what is owed draws the past into the present, and suspend the subject between what has been and what is. In this regard, indebtedness confers durability, for the individual is answerable to and liable for past actions and must be abstinent in the present in the hopes of securing the future. Moreover, indebtedness was central to the creation of a memory of the past in which white benefactors, courageous soldiers, and virtuous mothers sacrificed themselves for the enslaved. This memory was to be seared into the minds of the freed. Debt was at the center of a moral economy of submission and servitude and was instrumental in the production of peonage. Above all, it operated to bind the subject by compounding the service owed, augmenting the deficit through interest accrued, and advancing credit that extended interminably the obligation of service. The emancipated were introduced to the circuits of exchange through the figurative deployment of debt, which obliged them to both enter coercive contractual relations and faithfully remunerate the treasure expended on their behalf. Furthermore, debt literally sanctioned bondage and propelled the freed toward indentured servitude by the selling off of future labor.[19] As Gerald Jaynes observes, "The southern sharecropper bore all the burdens of an entrepreneur but was dispossessed of freedom of choice in making managerial decisions. . . . No government which allows its laboring population to mortgage its labor by enforcing debt peonage can claim to have free labor."[20] Yet debt was not simply a pretext but an articulation of the enduring claims on black laborers, the affective linchpin of reciprocity, mutuality, and inequality, the ideational hybrid of responsibility and servitude, and, most important, the agent of bondage. Thus the transition from slavery to freedom introduced the free agent to the circuits of exchange through this construction of already accrued debt, an abstinent present, and a mortgaged future. In short, to be free was to be a debtor—that is, obliged and duty-bound to others.[21] Thus the inaugural gestures that opened these texts announced the advent of freedom and at the same time attested to the impossibility of escaping slavery.

"How you became free" stories fabulated an account of the past and the transition from slavery to freedom that begat the indebted and servile freed individual. In this regard, these primers surpassed the immediate goals of a how-to book and produced a chronicle of recent events, a history as it were, that began the process of revision, repression, and reconciliation essential to the xenophobic and familial narrative of national identity that became dominant in the 1880s and 1890s.[22] However, as many former slaves asserted, they had not incurred any debt they had not repaid a thousandfold. In the counterdiscourses of freedom, remedy was sought for the injuries of slavery, not through the reconstruction of the Negro—in other words, the refashion-

ing of the emancipated as rational and docile individuals—but through reparations. Andy McAdams complained that the government gave former slaves nothing but a hard deal: "They was plenty of land that did not belong to anyone except the government. . . . We did not get nothing but hard work, and we were worse off under freedom than we were during slavery, as we did not have a thing—could not write or read."[23] In similar terms, Anna Lee, a former slave, conveyed the weight of duty and the burden of transformation placed upon the freed. Noting that the efforts to transform the South in the aftermath of the war were focused immoderately on free blacks, she recounted, "The reconstruction of the negro was real hard on us."[24] Simply put, these contending accounts of slavery and freedom quite differently represent the past and assess the burden of responsibility. In light of this, we need to consider whether the stories of emancipation narrated in the freedmen's handbooks simply refigured enslavement through the fabulation of debt. Discernible in these stories of origin was the struggle over the meaning of emancipation and, by the same token, the possibilities of redress, since these possibilities, in fact, depended upon the terms of recollection.

Despite the invocation of the natural rights of man, the emphasis on the "gift" of freedom and the accompanying duties, to the contrary, implied not only that one had to labor in exchange for what were deemed natural and inalienable rights but also that the failure to do so might result in their revocation. In short, the liberty and equality conferred by emancipation instituted the debt and established the terms of its amortization. The tabulation of duty and responsibility resulted in a burdened individuality in which one enjoyed the obligations of freedom without its prerogatives. The import of this cannot be underestimated, for the literal and figurative accrual of debt recapitulated black servitude within the terms of an emancipatory narrative.

The fiction of debt was premised upon a selective and benign representation of slavery that emphasized paternalism, dependency, and will-lessness. Given this rendition of slavery, responsibility was deemed the best antidote for the ravages of the past; never mind that it effaced the enormity of the injuries of the past, entailed the erasure of history, and placed the onus of the past onto the shoulders of the individual. The journey from chattel to man entailed a movement from subjection to self-possession, dependency to responsibility, and coercion to contract. Without responsibility, autonomy, will, and self-possession would be meaningless.[25] If the slave was dependent, will-less, and bound by the dictates of the master, the freed individual was liberated from the past and capable of remaking him/herself through the sheer exercise of will. Responsibility was thus an inestimable component of the bestowal of freedom, and it also produced individual culpability and national innocence, temporal durability and historical amnesia.

As explicated in the language of liberal individualism, the ravages of chattel slavery and the degradations still clinging to the freed after centuries of subjection to the white race were obstacles to be overcome through self-discipline, the renunciation of dependency and intemperate habits, and personal restraint. By identifying slavery rather than race as responsible for this degraded condition, these texts did reflect a commitment, albeit circumscribed, to equality. Yet in this regard, they also revealed the limits of liberal discourse—that is, a commitment to equality made

ineffectual by an atomized vision of social relations and the apportioning of individual responsibility, if not blame, for what are clearly the consequences of dominative relations. Seemingly, blacks gained entry to the body of the nation-state as expiators of the past, as if slavery and its legacy were solely their cross to bear. This ahistorical and amnesic vision of chattel slavery instituted the burden of obligation placed upon the freed. It leads us to consider whether the gift of emancipation was the onus of individual responsibility or whether guilt was inseparable from the conferral of rights. Or whether the newly conferred rights that ideally safeguarded the individual merely obscured the social relations of slavery and the predicament of the emancipated. Were recrimination and punishment the rewards of self-possession? Did emancipation confer sovereignty and autonomy only to abandon the individual in a self-blaming and penalizing free society?[26] Regrettably, the bound and sovereign self of rights was an island unto himself, accountable for his own making and answerable to his failures; social relations thereby receded before the singular exercise of the will and the blameworthy and isolated individual.

The repression of slavery's unspeakable features and the shockingly amnesic portrait of the peculiar institution produced national innocence yet enhanced the degradation of the past for those still hindered by its vestiges because they became the locus of blame and the site of aberrance. While the enduring legacy of slavery was discernible in the disfigurements of freedom, its vestiges and degradations were addressed almost exclusively as problems of conduct and character. It is clear that the injuries of the past could not be remedied through simple acts of forgetting or selective acts of erasure, nor could they be conjured away by the simple declaration of abolition, nor could the onus of responsibility placed upon the newly emancipated institute a definitive break between slavery and freedom.

While these stories of origin cast the freed as an indebted and servile class, they nonetheless demanded that the freed also be responsible and willful actors. Yet if the emancipated were beholden to friends, benefactors, and even former masters in their new condition, how could rational self-interest rather than obsequiousness be cultivated? How could those marked by the "degradations of the past" overcome the history of slavery through their own individual efforts, especially given the remnants of slavery in the present? How could the designated bearers of slavery be liberated from that past? Were not the vestiges of the past persevering beyond the triumph or failure of their own efforts in the pervasiveness of white violence, emerging forms of involuntary servitude, and the intransigence of racism? In anticipation of such questions and cognizant of the hardships of freedom, the self-appointed counselors of the freed tirelessly repeated the directive that the attainment of freedom depended upon the efforts of the freed themselves. By following wise counsels and through their own exertions, they would, as *Advice to Freedmen* assured them, one day become "worthy and respected citizens of this great nation" (4).

One risks stating the obvious in observing that the circumstances of the freed—the utter absence of resources, the threat of starvation, the lack of education, and the want of land and property considered essential to independence—were treated as if private matters best left to their own bloody hands, bent backs, and broken hearts rather than as the culmination of three centuries of servitude. If a sea of blood and gold had enabled the violent remaking of the nation and eventually effected a

reunion of warring "families," purchased at the expense and exclusion of the emancipated, it delivered blacks to the shore of freedom and deposited the detritus of the war at their feet. Like the ghosts of the Confederate dead paraded by the Ku Klux Klan in their nighttime raids to intimidate blacks, reminding them that the war continued and that the price was yet to be exacted for those white men lost in the war, debt too frighteningly refigured the past. Debt ensured submission; it insinuated that servitude was not yet over and that the travails of freedom were the price to be paid for emancipation.

The Encumbrance of Freedom

The discrepant bestowal of emancipation conferred sovereignty as it engendered subjection. The lessons of independence and servility contradictorily espoused in these texts epitomized the double bind of freedom—the tension between the universalist premises of liberalism, which included the freed within the scope of rights and entitlements definitive of liberty and citizenship, and the exclusionary strategies premised upon the inferiority of blacks. Therefore, these texts advocated mastery and control over one's condition and destiny—autonomy, self-possession, resolve, and discipline—and to the contrary confused self-making and submission. Overwhelmingly mastery was given expression through the laboring body. In *John Freeman and His Family,* laboring hands are the synecdoche for the self-possessed individual: "Look here, do you see these hands? They were made to work, I'm persuaded, for haven't they always worked hitherto? I've used 'em, and given all I made to Master Lenox; now I'll use 'em, and give all I make to *Master John*" (14). If the gains of self-possession are illuminated by the profits earned and enjoyed by John's laboring hands, notwithstanding, the image of laboring hands, and, moreover, hands meant to work, also underlines the primary role of blacks, whether slave or free, as manual laborers.

Self-mastery was invariably defined as willing submission to the dictates of former masters, the market, and the inquisitor within. If, as *Advice to Freedmen* declared, "your future, under God, must be wrought by yourselves," then clearly the future to be wrought was one of interminable toil, obligation, and humility, and accordingly, the emancipated were encouraged to remain on the plantation, be patient, and make do with the readily available, including low wages. This decided emphasis on submission, self-denial, and servile compliance was not considered at odds with autonomy or self-interest. Rather, mastery became defined by self-regulation, indebtedness and responsibility, careful regard for the predilections of former masters, and agility at sidestepping the "sore toes" of prejudice, anger, and resentment. The robust and mutable capacities of mastery are to be marveled at. If mastery was an antidote for the dependency of slavery—the lack of autonomy, willlessness, inability to direct one's labor or enjoy its rewards, and psychological disposition for servitude—it bore a striking resemblance to the prostration of slavery. Indeed, the propertied person remained vulnerable to the dispossession exacted by violation, domination, and exploitation.

The images of the laboring body represented in these texts made clear that the

freedman's duties coupled the requirements of servitude with the responsibilities of independence. In light of these remarks, let us reconsider the following passage from *Advice to Freedmen:* "With the enjoyment of a freedman's privileges, come also a freedman's duties. These are weighty. You can not get rid of them. They must be met. And unless you are prepared to meet them with a proper spirit, and patiently and cheerfully fulfill these obligations, you are not worthy of being a freedman. You may well tremble in view of these duties and responsibilities. But you need not fear. Put your trust in God, and *bend your back joyfully and hopefully to the burden.*" The joyful bending of the back refigured the "backbreaking" regimen of slave labor and genuflected before the blessings and privileges of freedom. The back bent joyfully to the burdens foisted upon it transformed the burdened individuality and encumbrances of freedom into an auspicious exercise of free will and self-making. This unsettling description divulges servility and submission as prerequisites to enjoying the privileges of freedom. Bending one's back joyfully to extant and anticipated burdens unites the sentimental ethic of submission with the rational and ascetic ideals of the marketplace. Freedom, although a release from slavery, undoubtedly imposed burdens of another order. The body no longer harnessed by chains or governed by the whip was instead tethered by the weight of conscience, duty, and obligation. In this scenario, the indebtedness instituted by the gift of freedom was unmistakable. It obliged a worthy return—a bent back, agile hands, and lowered expectations. The failure to meet this obligation, at the very least, risked the loss of honor, status, and manhood.[27] Only industry, diligence, and a willingness to work, even at low wages, proved one's worthiness for freedom.

The joyfully bent back of the laborer conjures up a repertoire of familiar images that traverse the divide between slavery and freedom. If this figure encodes freedom, then it does so by making it difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish the subjection of slavery from the satisfied self-interest of the free laborer. It is an image of freedom that leaves us unable to discern whether the laborer in the field is driven by the lash or by the inward drive of duty and obligation. The toiling figure, the bent back, and the beast of burden, summoned by this chain of association, elide the belabored distinction between will and will-lessness. In this regard, the anatomy of freedom laid out in these texts attends to the body as object and instrument, thus effacing the distinctions between slave and laborer, for as *John Freeman and His Family* tells us, the body "meant to work" hints at the racial division of labor in which "some must work with the hands, while others work with the head. . . . Everyone must be willing to do his part, just where he is needed most" (42).[28] Yet the bent back readily invokes supplicance, obeisance, prostration, and humility and bespeaks the utilization of the body as a laboring machine. Just as the lowered eyes, stooped shoulders, and shuffling feet were the gestural language of enslavement, the bent back similarly articulated the domination, violation, and exploitation of the postbellum economy.

Duty imposed burdens of the soul, too. For the free laborer doubled over by the sheer weight of his responsibilities, hopeful and obedient, work was to be its own reward, since the exertions of manual labor were also demonstrations of faith.[29] The bent back was testament to one's trust in God. As John Freeman informed his brethren, "If you don't work, you can't pray; for don't the Lord Jehovah say if we

regard sin in our hearts, he won't hear us?" (35). Idleness was the "devil's playground." The broken heart replicated the subjugated and suppliant body and transformed rules of conduct into articles of faith. As Waterbury declared, "You must have 'the broken heart,' sorrow for sin—sorrow before God, because you have broken his laws" (17). Just as the broken heart was the recognition of one's guilt and sin before God, so, too, the bent back assumed the posture of repentance, as if the sins of slavery were to be repaid by the travails of the freed.

If freedom appeared only as a hardship because of the alliance of liberty, servility, and obligation, this was explained by recourse to the dependency of slavery, the want of ease and idleness, and the adversity coupled with independence. *Friendly Counsels for Freedmen* conceded the hardships of emancipation but promised that rewards would flow from perseverance: "Your condition is in some respects much better, and in others somewhat worse, than when you were slaves. Your master, if he was kind, took good care of you. Now that you are free, you have got to take care of yourselves. At first this may be a hardship; but by and by you will see that it is a good thing. In slavery you had little or no care, except to see that your task was done. Now that you are your own men, you have got to think and work both" (4). While the pedagogical manuals attributed the hardships of freedom to idleness, infantilism, and intemperance or contrasted the burden of independence with the ease of slavery, the emancipated identified the sources of adversity as their lack of resources, the government's unwillingness to provide reparations, the pervasiveness of white violence, and the failure of the law to protect black lives. The emancipated also shared a different perspective on who comprised the dependent class of slavery. They argued irrefutably that they were the producing class and that the riches of their owners and the nation came from their labor. Andy McAdams said that although he was uncertain about what freedom meant, he certainly expected something different than what he had experienced: "I think they ought to have given us old slaves some mules and land too, because everything our white people had we made for them."[30]

The emancipated complained about the hardships of freedom, but their grievances were an indictment of the absence of the material support that would have made substantial freedom ultimately realizable. Being emancipated without resources was no freedom at all. As Felix Haywood recalled, "We knowed freedom was on us, but we didn't know what was to come with it. We thought we was goin' to get rich like the white folks. We thought we was going to be richer than the white folks, 'cause we were stronger and knowed how to work, and the white didn't and they didn't have us to work for them anymore. But it didn't turn out that way. We soon found out that freedom could make folks proud but it didn't make them rich."[31] Dire necessity, rather than opportunity or gratitude for the gift of wage labor, resulted in their return to the plantation. As many pointed out, the ravages of hunger and rampant white violence were the embittered gifts of emancipation. "Dependency" and "responsibility" were pliable and contested terms that ambiguously named the predicament of freedom. On one hand, responsibility restored the self-respect that slavery had taken, and on the other, responsibility meant that blacks were more enslaved after emancipation than before. According to Parker Pool, the freed were better slaves than they had been when they were owned because although they still had nothing, they had to bear their own expenses.[32] Countering these protestations,

Plain Counsels enjoined the freed to remember: "You cannot be too glad that you are free; that your hands, your head, your heart are your own" (9). However, it was not a shortage of joy that afflicted the freed; rather, it was an awareness that although one's hands and heart and head were now one's own, without resources it was impossible to live, and the body that labored for another's profit was perhaps only seemingly one's own. Self-possession secured little, particularly when this nascent sense of autonomous embodiment was identified with hunger, degradation, and violent assaults on one's person and quickly eclipsed by the encumbered existence of emancipation.

One wonders how readers of these primers responded as they encountered representations of slavery as dependency rather than captivity and the depiction of the ravages of the institution as careless habits.[33] If literacy was the avenue to humanity, the lesson to be gleaned from these texts was that the price of entry entailed silencing the very factors that determined the condition of degradation and impoverishment. Not only was the violence of slavery expunged, but also the productivity of slave labor was denied. Yet how could the joy of emancipation be understood without recourse to the enormity of loss, the senseless and innumerable acts of violence, or the constancy of dishonor that typified slavery? Did it seem a paradox that the language of mastery was the vehicle of self-realization? Could possession and property ever seem inalienable? How could the ambivalence of freedom be voiced without being woefully misunderstood as a longing for the good old days of slavery? How could the awful feeling induced by being released like "stray cattle," never having had anything and having no place to go, be expressed without seeming like nostalgia for life on the plantation?[34]

While these texts were written by self-proclaimed friends of the Negro who had "marched with them through the Red Sea of strife, sympathized with them in all their sufferings, labored incessantly for their well-being, and rejoiced in their prosperity," the coercive and servile character of the freedom espoused in the texts must be considered in regard to an ascendant liberal discourse of liberty of contract and self-regulating markets and the elusiveness of freedom when slavery was no longer its antagonist. Abolitionist discourse, expurgated of the terrifying details that scandalized and titillated Northern audiences, was little more than a colloquy on the degraded character of the enslaved and the unproductivity of slave labor. This rhetoric deployed in the context of Reconstruction insinuated the need for compulsion when inclination failed and condoned the use of coercion, if and when it aided in the transition to free labor. Certainly this was reflected in the policy of the Freedmen's Bureau and in the advice dispensed by the authors of these handbooks, some of whom were the policy makers and managers of Reconstruction. The liberal proclivities of abolitionist discourse in the antebellum period had provided a powerful natural rights argument against the institution of slavery, but in the postbellum period it yielded ambivalent effects—elitist and racist arguments about the privileges of citizenship, an inordinate concern with discipline and the cultivation of manhood, and contractual notions of free labor.[35]

In this regard, it is important to note the role played by abolitionist and antislavery

reformers in the conceptualization and dissemination of repressive free labor ideals. In examining the relation between slavery and the discourse of labor management in early industrial England, David Brion Davis argues that Bentham's vision of the model prison was a parodic intensification of the ideals of plantation management.[36] If Bentham's Panopticon is the model of discipline, the exemplary exercise of a modern power that is mild-lenient-productive, then how does our understanding of the carceral society change if, in fact, the carceral is a caricature of the plantation and presumes continuities between the management of slave and free labor? If this totalizing vision of managing labor had one eye directed toward slavery and the other toward freedom, it then becomes necessary to consider the way discipline itself bears the trace of what Foucault would describe as premodern forms of power but which perhaps are more aptly described as "discipline with its clothes off." None of this is surprising when slavery is contextualized within a transatlantic capitalist system that traded information and strategies of labor management between the plantation and the factory.[37] Not only did the crisis of industrialization—problems of pauperism, underemployment, and labor management—occur in the context of an extensive debate about the fate of slavery, but also slavery informed the premises and principles of labor discipline. As Davis notes, the focus on the coercion and barbarism of slavery and the whip as the only incentive to work "lent sanction to less barbarous modes of social discipline. For reformers, the plantation offered the prospect of combining virtues of the old agrarian order with new ideals of uplift and engineered incentive" (466).

In a similar vein, Amy Stanley has argued that the forms of compulsion used against the unemployed, vagrants, beggars, and others in the postbellum North mirrored the transition from slavery to freedom. The contradictory aspects of liberty of contract and the reliance on coercion in stimulating free labor modeled in the aftermath of the Civil War were the lessons of emancipation employed against the poor. Furthermore, many of the architects of scientific charity (a bureaucratic campaign to assist the poor by transforming their behavior, whereby idleness and dependence on charity were identified as the enemy of the poor rather than poverty), vagrancy statutes, and compulsory contracts were leading abolitionists—Edward Pierce, Josephine Shaw Lowell, and Samuel Gridley Howe, to name a few.[38] Stanley writes: "The experience of war and emancipation not only honed efficient techniques of philanthropy but also schooled Yankees in schemes for forcing beggars to work. The endeavor of reconstructing the southern labor system and installing contract practices recast conceptions of dependency, obligation, and labor compulsion. Just as the ideal of free labor was transported south, so its coercive aspects—articulated in rules governing the freed people—were carried back north."[39] Like the freed, the poor too were literally forced to participate in the world of exchange.

The specter of slavery's barbarism, symbolized by the whip, legitimated milder but more intensive forms of discipline. The circulation of techniques of discipline across the Atlantic, between the plantation and the factory, and from the plantation to Northern cities trouble arguments based upon epochal shifts of power or definitive notions of premodern and modern forms of power. Certainly the techniques of free labor management employed during Reconstruction were informed by styles of management used under slavery, and often these techniques were abandoned only as a result of labor resistance to continued work routines of slavery.[40] Furthermore, the compulsory contract that was the signature of free labor relations also traveled beyond the South. What concerns me here are the forms of discipline unleashed by the abandonment of the whip. Although the slave system had become "a discredited form of authority that seemed to require the personal imposition of constant pain," in contrast to the rational incentives of free labor, these new forms of discipline were also invasive and coercive.[41] These forms of constraint and discipline did not depend upon the spectacle of whipping or the lash but nonetheless produced compliant and productive bodies.

In this regard, a comparative examination of slavery and freedom reveals less about the barbarism of slavery than it does about the contradictions and antagonisms of freedom. By focusing on the ways in which antislavery and reform discourse paved the way for brutal forms of "modern" power, it becomes clear that slavery is less the antithesis of free labor than an intemperate consort, a moral foil, a barbarism overcome, and the pedestal on which the virtues of free labor are decried. Here, the point is not to efface the differences between slavery and freedom, however intangible, or deny the dishonor, degradation, and extreme violence of slavery but rather to underline the difficulty of installing an absolute distinction between slavery and freedom and to disclose the perverse entanglements of the "grand narrative of emancipation."[42] Slavery was both the wet nurse and the bastard offspring of liberty. It established free labor as a rational ideal and determined the scope of freedom and equality conferred by the Reconstruction Amendments and scrutinized in the *Civil Rights Cases* and *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Whether it was understood as the negation of fundamental liberties or as "mere chattelism," slavery fundamentally shaped the experience and interpretation of freedom; was freedom simply the absence of constraint or full and equal protection of the laws?[43] As liberal notions of freedom superseded republican ideals, freedom increasingly became defined in terms of the release from constraint and liberty of contract rather than positive entitlements.

Despite the heralding of consent, contract, and equality, freedom remained elusive. Again, this is not to equate the forms of extraeconomic coercion employed in the aftermath of emancipation with the regularity and impunity of violence experienced under slavery but rather to acknowledge the convergences, continuities, and imbrications of slavery and freedom and to reveal the violence and coercion that underlay the discourse of reason and reform. At the risk of repetitiveness, it must be emphasized that for black laborers, the liberty of contract primarily served to entrap them in a system of debt-bondage.[44] Perhaps it was enough of a difference to make it clear that you were no longer a slave, but it was far short of the autonomy yearned for.[45] As Anna Lee and countless others testified, "We done just about what we could after the war, as we were worse off then than we were in slavery time."[46] Only a willful misreading could interpret the disappointments of freedom constantly reiterated in slave testimony as a longing for slavery. To the contrary, what haunts such laments is the longing for an as yet unrealized freedom, the nonevent of emancipation, and the reversals of slavery and freedom.

If one dares to "abandon the absurd catalogue of official history" and the historical partitions to which the dominated are subject, as Edouard Glissant suggests, then

the violence and domination perpetuated in the name of slavery's reversal come to the fore.[47] Emancipation thus becomes double-edged and perhaps even obfuscating, since involuntary servitude and freedom were synonymous for a good many of the formerly enslaved. Although those faithful to narratives of historical progress greet such an assertion with disapprobation and disbelief, the intention is not to shock but to seriously consider remarks like those of former slaves Anna Lee and Absalom Jenkins. By focusing on the ambiguity and elusiveness of emancipation, I hope to glean this subterranean history of emancipation, one not fully recoverable and only glimpsed through the grid of dominant organizing narratives—the repressive pastoral of the WPA testimony, the grand narrative of emancipation, and liberal discourses of free will and self-possession.

The Will and the Whip

Freedom did not abolish the lash. The regular use of coercion, the share system, debt-bondage, the convict-lease system, and the prevalence of white violence hardly signal the triumph of the will or "rational" methods of management over the barbarism of slavery. Rather, what occurred was the displacement of the whip by the cultivation of conscience, the repressive instrumentality of the law, coercive forms of labor management, and orchestrated and spontaneous violence aimed at restoring the relations of mastery and servitude and quelling assertions of liberty and equality. Maria Sutton Clements recalled that the habitual exercise of violence—in particular, Klan attacks on black homes—against freedpeople forced them to "mostly hide out in the woods." If blacks assembled, they were accused of sedition—that is, talk about equality: "If dey hear you talkin they say you talkin bout equalization. They whoop up."[48] Tom Holland said that people were afraid to go out and assert their freedom because "they'd ride up by a Negro and shoot him jus' like a wild hog and never a word said or done 'bout it."[49]

In freedmen's handbooks, the displacement of the whip can be discerned in the emphasis on self-discipline and policing. The whip was not to be abandoned; rather, it was to be internalized. The emphasis on correct training, proper spirit, and bent backs illuminated the invasive forms of discipline idealized as the self-fashioning of the moral and rational subject. The whip was routinely invoked, less to convey the actual violence of the institution than the will-lessness of those compelled to labor and without choice. In summoning the whip, the contrast was made between a legitimate order founded on the contract and the compulsion of slavery and between rational agents and those motivated by force or fear. *Plain Counsels for Freedmen* provides just such an example: "When you were a slave, it may have been your habit to do just as little as you could to avoid the lash. But now that you are free, you should be actuated by a more noble principle than fear" (45). The inflated assessment of the will, the exalting of liberty, and the idealization of choice masked the violence of exchange. The disparity between free will and the coercion that fundamentally defined the postbellum economic order might be laughable if its consequences were not so tragic. If the will ultimately distinguished liberty from bondage, with the attendant assumptions of the power to control and define one's circumstances or actions, then the event of emancipation instituted a crisis regarding the meaning of freedom and the free individual. In the nineteenth century, the will theory of contract was dominant. According to Clare Dalton, "The idea that contractual obligation has its source in the individual will persisted into the latter part of the nineteenth century, consistent with the pervasive individualism of that time and the general incorporation into law of notions of liberal political theory."[50] Yet despite the lauding of the will, the feature of the contracts most emphasized was its binding force rather than its expression of individual will. Lest this seem like an exercise in the obvious, the point is not simply to expose what is disavowed by this construction of free will or to engage in the oft-repeated critique of possessive individualism but rather to explore the tension between the cultivation of liberal individualism, with its emphasis on will, mastery, autonomy, and volition, and the emphasis on submission, docility, fear, and trembling. The easy coexistence of the coerced free laborer and the volitional subject moving unrestrainedly along the path of self-interest and prosperity hints at the distance between the emancipatory ideal and the conditions of its actualization. The uncertainty elicited by the figure of the burdened and weary laborer toiling in the field—that is, the looming doubt as to whether he is slave or free—exposes the breach between the hallowed ideal of self-possession and the encumbrances of freedom.

In other words, was the only difference between freedom and slavery to be ascertained in the choice to labor dutifully, bend one's back joyfully, or act willingly as one's own inquisitor? If so, didn't this only disclose the elusiveness and intangibility of freedom? Particularly as the freed laborer enjoyed neither the illusions of free exchange nor volition because of the imposition of the contract labor system by the Freedmen's Bureau, the coercion and repression that shaped the market, the establishment of "wage" ceilings, and the effort to prevent the free movement of laborers through vagrancy, breach-of-contract, and antienticement laws and the prevalence of violence.[51] Moreover, the threat of starvation rather than voluntary action or inner compulsion resulted in the return to the plantation. In light of this, what was to be gained by the cultivation of the noble rather than the base? After all, was not the only choice to work or starve?

Obligation, duty, and responsibility rather than necessity clothed the exhortation to labor dutifully. Necessity was at odds with the proclaimed liberty of the volitional subject/liberal individual, since it was distinguished by encumbrance, compulsion, and the utter lack of options. Necessity uneasily contended with the willfulness, liberty, and autonomy that purportedly delineated freedom; it exemplified all that was presumably negated by the abolition of slavery—the primacy of compulsion, the weightedness of embodiment, and the sway of needs. Yet the pangs of hunger were no less compelling than the whip. However, motives far nobler than the drive of need and the avoidance of discomfort were to motivate the free laborer. Given this, the rational faculty was emphasized over the bodily, and liberty was premised on an unencumbered will and the capacity to choose. Necessity presumed a lack of choice. It signaled the return of the repressed—the primacy of base motives and bodily needs.[52] Generally, these manuals clothed necessity primarily as rational choice in order to fashion a liberal individual driven by free will and to shore up the eroding partition between compulsion and consent. When we compare Waterbury's

discussion of the hardships of freedom in *Friendly Counsels for Freedmen* with *Southern Planters and Freedmen,* it is clear that in *Friendly Counsels,* which was directed toward the freed, necessity was minimized in favor of stories of duty and self-making and the acknowledged obstacles were easily overcome by directed effort. For example, Waterbury writes in *Friendly Counsels* that freedom "acts on the mind. It obliges you to make a livelihood—to look up work such as you can do, that you may support yourself and your families." By emphasizing the willingness to work and the mental disposition and outlook of freedom, these texts privileged the rational faculty rather than bodily need as the primary motivation or determinant of the choice to labor. Rational decision and moral and ethical obligations thus explain the decision to labor. Although *Friendly Counsels* more readily admits the material hardships of freedom than *Advice to Freedmen, Plain Counsels,* or *John Freeman and His Family,* it focuses exclusively on the character of the freed, inasmuch as the difficulty of circumstance was still to be overcome by the strength of character: "Free people have to work, and some of them have to work very hard even to get their bread. Some of the free colored people have by their own labor gained the means of a comfortable livelihood and made themselves respectable. You can do the same, if you will use the same diligence." The onus of necessity can be managed, if not overcome, by the exercise of the will.

In *Southern Planters and Freedmen,* a text written for planters, Waterbury frankly admitted that the burden of freedom fell upon the freed because emancipation shifted the burden from the proprietor to the laborer: "Considering the poverty and dependent condition of the negro, it is evident that he will be the first to suffer and will experience the most inconvenience until the arrangement [of free labor] is established" (8). The emphasis on moral cultivation so pronounced in *Friendly Counsels* plays a secondary role to necessity and the threat of starvation in this dialogue with planters. Furthermore, the planters are assured that the freed will work simply because they have no choice: "Whatever fanciful notions he may have entertained of freedom as conferring happiness, he will soon be obliged, through *stern necessity,* to look at his actual condition, which is that of work or starve" (27). In the context of emancipation, necessity rather than the whip compels the black laborer: "Necessity may at first compel a reluctant service, which afterwards may be rendered under the influence of higher motives" (29).

In any case, despite the fixation on the will, issues of agency and volition, albeit different, were no less vexed for the freed than for the enslaved. It is equally clear, however, that the emphasis on volition was strategic and intended to cultivate motivation and self-interest. Hence, the first step on the road to independence was sedulous and conscientious labor. In the section titled "Being Industrious" in *Advice to Freedmen,* Brinckerhoff explained that freedom did not mean that one was no longer required to work but that one chose to work. He imparted this lesson through an anecdote about Isaac, a freedman he met while a superintendent of several plantations on the Sea Islands. Isaac mistakenly thought that as a freedman, he need not work unless he so desired. But as Brinckerhoff explained, "One of the greatest privileges of a freeman is to *choose* for himself. Slaves must do as they are commanded, but freemen *choose* for themselves. 'And now, Issac,' I said, 'you can make your *choice.* You may stay on this plantation with your family and work, and

thus earn your bread, or you must leave the plantation and find a home elsewhere. Which will you *do?*' He, like a freeman, made his *choice,* and like a wise man remained with his family and worked with them in the field" (15–16). As the repeated use of the word "choose" indicates, self-directed and deliberate action was of the utmost importance since volition distinguished free labor from slavery. At the same time, the obligation to work cannot be eluded, for the privilege of choosing involves not the choice to work or not but rather the orientation and disposition toward this requirement. Isaac's capacity to choose is possible only because of the liberty he enjoys. Furthermore, this example is revealing because work is exclusively defined by laboring on a plantation in which Isaac was held as a slave versus expulsion to an unnamed elsewhere identified as the space of idleness. Free labor is identified solely as contracted labor on the plantation; the personal autonomy exercised in the decision to resist wage work and strike out for oneself never entered this conception of choice.

One should also note that the emphasis on volition has as its consequence the effacement of the work of slavery, since slave labor was coerced, unlike the willful and self-directed labor of the freed. Labor as a social activity becomes visible only in the context of freedom. And as a result of this, a plantation pastoral with nonproductive slave laborers dependent upon the kindness of their master and irregularly prompted by the whip was the scenario of slavery that appeared throughout these texts. Moreover, the whip was only discussed in contrast to rational ideals of discipline; thus it figured not the violence of slavery but the dependence of slave laborers. By effacing the actual work of slavery and belaboring the issue of idleness, these texts endorsed paternalist arguments about the incapacities of black laborers and the need for extensive control over laborers in order to ensure productivity.[53] In this regard, Northern and Southern visions of slavery were increasingly coinciding as were their respective visions of labor management. As Amy Stanley observes, the "victors and vanquished [the triumphant North and the defeated South], ostensibly still struggling to implement opposing visions of emancipation . . . adopt[ed] similar methods of labor compulsion."[54] The consequences of this were profound because the emergent discourse on idleness targeted irresponsible characters and unbecoming conduct as a social danger and thus justified labor coercion and the repressive measures of the state enacted in the name of the prosperity of the population.

The fixation on idlers and shirkers in these handbooks attests to the pervasiveness of this ideology. In the fictional work *John Freeman and His Family,* the love of leisure and dutiful labor are contrasted in a predictable exchange of platitudes between two freedmen discussing the challenges of freedom. The similarity of the exchange between George and Prince and the back-and-forth of Jim Crow and Zip Coon should not go unnoticed. George, a hardworking field laborer, accuses Prince of laziness: "S'pose you'd go back to slavery, if ye could. You a'n't worth the name of contraband; you're nothing but the old nigger still." Prince is appropriately named, for he possesses all the pretensions of the prototypical Zip Coon, a love of fancy goods, and a refusal to exert himself. The love of leisure, sumptuary excess, and addiction to pleasure mark Prince as "nigger."

Miss Horton, a good white teacher from the North, overhears their conversation

as she returns from one of her weekly visits to the freedwomen, to whom she imparts the lessons of domestic economy. Aghast, she asks the men: "Did I hear rightly? . . . Would either of you, young men, be willing to go back to slavery?" (37). Although Miss Horton is incredulous, horrified, and disappointed, the articulation of her disbelief that they would willingly go back to slavery reproduces the repressive problematic of consent and the simulated willfulness typical of the rhetorical gestures of proslavery discourse. In short, the happy slave consents to bondage. In Miss Horton's expression of horror one discerns the contrary sentiments of these texts—abolitionist discourse sedimented with racist and paternalist views of black character and restrictive notions of free labor, which shamelessly encourage black laborers to accept low wages and comply with unfair contracts. Basically the freed are advised to work at all costs, since "work at low wages is better than idleness" (6).

George responds eagerly to Miss Horton's disheartened inquiry, defending himself and other freedpeople, "Not this child, but that darkey," pointing accusingly at Prince. It is interesting that Miss Horton repeats her question, directing it at Prince: "But what would you wish to go back to slavery for?" Prince replies, "I never been used to work, miss, and fact is, I don't like it." His remarks, inflected with the romanticism and nostalgia of minstrelsy, attest to the good old days on the plantation. Under slavery, he had lived the leisurely life of a coachman, with minimal work and fancy clothes; under freedom, he would be taught to work. The lesson of freedom, hence, was first and foremost the obligation to labor dutifully.

The other primers endorsed these views. *Friendly Counsels* notably contrasted the challenges of freedom with the ease of slavery: "In slavery you had little or no care, except to see that your task was done." But it warned the freed not to "fall into the mistake of some, that freedom means idleness" (4–5). The lessons expounded in these schoolbooks encouraged the freed to work for their former owners, remain on the plantation, accept poor wages, and comply strictly with a contract, even a bad one. *Plain Counsels* stressed the sanctity of the contract and its prescriptions rather than the liberty conferred by its exercise. Regard for one's word, respect for the rights of others, and self-interest required strict compliance with its terms. Abiding by the terms of a hard contract was in one's interest because the good reputation acquired by remaining true to one's promises would lead to further employment. The obligation or duties of the other member of the contracting party were not mentioned in this discussion of the contract, nor were the violations that commonly led to the breaking of contracts. The most common reason for breach of contract was poor treatment by the employer, including physical violence and other forms of abuse. Other reasons included invasive measures that implemented forms of control practiced under slavery—pass laws, restrictions on leaving the plantation during the week, the prohibition of visitors, interference in the domestic lives of laborers, et cetera; planters' failure to live up to the terms of the contract regarding shares and wages; and routine altercations expressive of the racial antagonism and class conflict of the postbellum period. It is remarkable that neither self-interest, will, nor liberty is mentioned in *Plain Counsels'* explication of contract; instead it is simply explained as "something which binds two or more parties" (47). This is particularly portentous given that its author was a commissioner for the Freedmen's Bureau. However, the control of the freed effected through the contract labor system of the Freedmen's Bureau, which negotiated year-long labor contracts between planters and freedmen, and the punitive measures instituted by the Black Codes and vagrancy laws, which made it a criminal offense to be without a contract, to break contracts, or to act improperly, were endorsed in these schoolbooks. The consequences of such measures negated bourgeois constructions of the free market and forcefully retained blacks on the plantation. In regard to the contract, the espousal of volition only secured the bondage of the freed.

Unbecoming Conduct

The freedmen's handbooks, in their insistence on dutiful conduct as a prerequisite to enjoying the entitlements of freedom, disclosed the linkages between repression, discipline, and the regulation of the freed population. After all, these texts were conduct books aimed at cultivating a rational, dutiful, and acquisitive laboring class and submissive and orderly black citizens. The inordinate concern with idleness, dependency, profligacy, and conduct revealed the continuities between the uplift messages proffered in these schoolbooks, the repressive instrumentality of the state, and the mandates of plantation owners and Northern manufacturers. The cultivation of docile and dutiful laborers—whether through the molding of a moral and rational subject, securing the control of the laboring body, or policing the population—was their shared aim. For example, the Black Codes of Mississippi stated that if "the laborer shall quit the service of his employer before the expiration of his term of service without good cause, he shall forfeit his wages for that year up to the time of his quitting." Any white person or civil officer was entitled to arrest a black laborer who quit the service of his employer without good cause. Antienticement laws made it a crime for a laborer to quit one plantation and sign a contract on another. (These laws kept wages low and severely limited the laborer's options for employment. Antienticement laws were common and continued to control the mobility and options of black agricultural labors until the 1940s.)

Vagrancy laws facilitated the convict- and bonded-labor system in that any person not in possession of a contract was declared a vagrant. This person was fined and, if unable to pay the fine, hired out to planters or put to work on public roads for a period as long as a year.[55] Although vagrancy laws that applied specifically to blacks were overturned, race-neutral vagrancy laws continued to have the same effect.[56] Vagrancy statutes provided a means of enforcing the contract system, for basically these laws subjected the unpropertied classes to arrest if they were without a labor contract. With the exception of Tennessee and Arkansas, all of the former Confederate states passed vagrancy laws in 1865 and 1866.[57] The effect of these measures, according to Maj. Gen. A. Terry, was "a condition of servitude worse than that from which they have been emancipated—a condition which will be slavery in all but its name."[58] Louisiana's Black Code required all freed laborers to contract for a year within the first ten days of January. The contracts to be signed by the head of the

household embraced the labor of all members of that household, including minors. The breach of contract resulted in the loss of all wages earned to the "time of abandonment."

In this context, the liberty of contract can rightly be called a fiction, for it was employed to enforce black subordination and legitimize a range of coercive measures, from the contract system to the regulation of domestic affairs. It served rather efficaciously in the transition from slavery to involuntary servitude. What kind of freedom was granted by these compulsory exchanges of property in the self? The lessons of duty and self-discipline disseminated in the textbooks colluded with the practices of domination conducted under the sanction of law. The complicity between the fashioning of the individuality promulgated in the handbooks and the repressive individuation and regulation of the Black Codes is significant, since the codes regulated the freed as a population by installing racial classifications within state constitutions, by prohibiting interracial sexual liaisons and social association, and by dictating the terms of contract and the rules of appropriate conduct. The repressive forms of control launched by the Black Codes focused on individual behavior and the management of blacks as a threatening internal element.

Like the freedmen's schoolbooks, the Black Codes and contract system mandated forms of dutiful and proper conduct. Unmistakably, the proper spirit was one of submission. Georgia's Penal Code stated that "all persons wandering or strolling about in idleness, who are able to work, and who have no property to support them; all persons leading an idle, immoral, or profligate life, who have no property to support them" are to be considered vagrants and could be fined, imprisoned, sentenced to public work, or bound out to a private employer for a period of a year. Freedpeople without property or contract were subject to arrest. According to the Florida Black Code, any able-bodied person without visible means of support was leading an idle, immoral, or profligate course of life and thereby subject to arrest. However, the state's concerns about proper conduct were not limited to those without visible means of support; its intervention extended to labor contracts and relations. A laborer could be convicted in a criminal court for the willful disobedience of orders, impudence, or disrespect to his employers.[59] In Louisiana, the failure to comply with orders, leaving the plantation without permission, impudence, use of indecent language, and quarreling were acts of disobedience that subjected the offender to fines ranging from $1 to $2 a day.[60] Decidedly, this micropenality of everyday life reinforced the virtue lauded in these manuals.

The significance of idleness and profligacy in the state's repressive governing of the freed population reveals how politically charged these accusations were and illuminates the forms of social struggle and contestation conducted under their cover. As well, the problem of idleness and the necessity of setting the freed to work underscores the convergence between policing the poor and policing the freed black population.[61] Consequently, a variety of everyday activities that enabled a measure of subsistence or autonomy were considered "troublesome" assertions of freedom and hence were criminalized. These activities ranged from moving about to hunting and fishing to styles of comportment. In addition to vagrancy laws, new laws requiring the fencing of animals, hunting and fishing laws, the privatization of public lands, et cetera, made subsistence living increasingly difficult and largely

illegal.[62] Punishment was increased for crimes that blacks were "likely" to commit, for example, stealing pigs. These offenses were harshly punished and responsible for at least half of the prisoners in the convict-lease system.[63] The confounding of the liberty of contract by a compulsory contract system, self-interest by the threat of criminal sanction, and self-fashioning by obligatory conduct delineates the crosscurrents of slavery and freedom that engendered involuntary servitude and the burdened individuality of freedom.

The contracts administered by the Freedmen's Bureau also dictated the terms of proper conduct. The magnitude of employers' interference in the lives and private affairs of workers is illuminated by the terms of contract. An example of the extent of employer invasion in the private lives of workers was a contract in which the laborer, in the attempt to protect his privacy, stipulated that he had just cause to leave his employer's service if the employer violated his conjugal rights.[64] In a study of labor contracts administered by the Freedmen's Bureau, Lewis Chartock found that the labor contracts arranged by the bureau were used primarily to regulate freedmen's behavior rather than to establish the tasks to be performed.[65] The key words used to describe the desired form of personal behavior were "quiet," "orderly," "respectable," "prudent," "well-behaved," and "sober." Contracts stipulated that workers be polite and respectful to their employers, orderly, prudent, and moderate in temperament and habit. Contracts also established the terms for personal and private governance. One contract stipulated that a husband was allowed to visit his wife as long as he remained orderly and respectful; others entitled employees to visit their spouses on Saturday night as long as they returned home by Monday morning.[66] Chartock concludes that "southern planters were able to use the contract system to define a social role for freedmen which was not far removed from the status they had occupied when they were slaves."[67] Ironically, the liberty of contract forged the link between slavery and freedom not only because it provided the fiction of free exchange that enabled debt-bondage but also because it prescribed terms of social interaction that reproduced master-slave relations and greatly regulated the personal and private lives of free laborers.

The liberty of contract, however illusory, could not be disassociated from the imposition of forms of involuntary servitude facilitated by Black Codes, vagrancy laws, the convict-labor system, the criminal surety system, breach-of-contract laws, and the share system. Moreover, even those wage laborers operating under the presumably ideal conditions of the "free market" were unable to enjoy the fruits of their labor. The liberty of contract dissimulated the inequality at the heart of this exchange. In the absence of a "free market," even as understood in the mystified terms of bourgeois economics, what did it mean to define freedom or free labor primarily in terms of the liberty of contract? Given the coercive measures regularly employed by capitalists to regain control of black laborers, the liberty of contract merely acted as the vehicle of involuntary servitude. Consent cloaked coercion, and relations of domination and exploitation were masked by the designation "free will." The contract enshrined involuntary servitude as freedom and reduced the free worker to a debtor, peon, and bonded laborer.

The fashioning of rational and moral individuals undertaken in the manuals was attuned to the dictates of the market and the racial order of the postbellum South.

The self-discipline and humility advocated in these pedagogical manuals must also be considered in the context of postbellum violence, where charges of inappropriate and improper conduct—in other words, behavior out of line with one's status—not only were penalized in the law but also sanctioned extralegal forms of white violence.[68] The ever-present threat of punishment, legal and otherwise, awaited acts of transgression or the failure to adequately comply with the rules. The majority of the violence committed against the freed in the aftermath of slavery was incited by charges of unbecoming conduct, which included one's dress, demeanor, movement through public space, tone of voice, and companions. "Unbecoming conduct" encompassed any and all possible affronts to racist mores and bared the "micropenalties" of disciplinary individuation, which policed and punished everyday expressions of freedom.[69] Although the handbooks encouraged a mastery of the self fostered in the spirit of servitude, charges of unbecoming conduct radically undermined any notion of "mastery of the self," even that conducted in the spirit of self-disciplining, precisely because any assertion of selfhood risked affronting the ruling race and the dictates of racial decorum that structured the social.[70]

The striking similarities between antebellum regulations regarding black conduct and postbellum codes of conduct leave us hard-pressed to discern even those intangible or inchoate expressions of black freedom. Antebellum cases like *State v. Tackett* held that the "impudence and insolence of a slave" were to be considered extenuating circumstances in the homicide of a slave, though the same would not prove adequate in the homicide of a white person because the relation of white man and slave made such impudence the equivalent of a "grave indignity upon one's person." Likewise, *State v. Jowers,* a case that involved a white man indicted for battery against a free black man, reached similar conclusions in arguing that remedies for black insolence, whether slave or free, necessitated violence: "If a slave is insolent he may be whipped by his master, or by order of a justice of the peace; but a free negro has no master to correct him, a justice of the peace cannot have him punished for insolence, it is not an indictable offense, and unless a white man, to whom insolence is given, has a right to put a stop to it in an extra-judicial way, there is no remedy for it. This would be insufferable." The enormity of the offense resided in the fact that it was committed by a black person and thereby challenged the very foundation of the social order—black subordination and white dominance. In the context of freedom, the need to reimpose black subordination was no less pressing and was actualized not only through forms of legal repression and punishment but also through the inculcation of rules of conduct. As Carl Schurz remarked: "A negro is called insolent whenever his conduct varies in any manner from what a southern man was accustomed to when slavery existed."[71]

The lessons of conduct imparted in freedmen's primers refigured the deference and servility of the social relations of slavery. Elucidating the dimensions of property as a social relation principally entails attending to the restoration of slavery effected through the regulation of conduct, the fashioning of individuality, and the naturalization of race. Clearly, these lessons instilled patterns of behavior that minimized white discomfort with black freedom. The regulation of conduct lessened the dislocations of the war by restoring black subordination on the level of everyday life: "White people have old, strong prejudices, and you should avoid everything you

can which will inflame those prejudices. You know how easy it is to hurt a sore toe. Prejudices are like tender toes. Do not step on them when it is possible to avoid it." The insults that regularly confronted the freed were to be countenanced by turning the other cheek and meeting harsh words with kind ones, as if the obstacles to freedom could be easily avoided or the goodwill of white folks conferred with the aid of simple promptings like declared black unworthiness—"I am not as good as I plan to be." The cultivation of proper conduct exceeded admonishments about duty and defiance; indeed, what amounted to the self-immolation of the free individual was required for the reconciliation of former masters and slaves. Not only were the freed encouraged to be subservient, obedient, and humble and remain with their former owners until death, but also they were asked to refrain from asserting their liberty in every meaningful and imaginable way. The effort to sustain the control of black labor through the cultivation of dutiful conduct and other techniques of self-fashioning discloses the affinities of will and compulsion, reason and repression, and coercion and volition. One was obliged to endure these encroachments of freedom not because one was still a slave without choice, but, ironically, in order to exemplify the dutiful and rational behavior of a freeman, which remains puzzling only if we fail to understand the idealization of self-abasement as a virtue. Above all, the emphasis on proper conduct disavowed the excessive and indiscriminate violence of the postbellum period.

Not only did the lessons of *Plain Counsels* promote the nobility of work and excoriate idleness, but also they sought to reconcile former masters and slaves. Sections pointedly titled "About Your Old Master" and "About White Folks" enumerated the predilections and prejudices of white folks in order that insolence and other potentially troublesome assertions of equality be avoided. Thus the freed were instructed in rules of racial etiquette that would enable them to effectively navigate white resentment and racism and decorously adjust to their new status. Since the task of reconciliation fell primarily upon blacks, humility, patience, and generosity toward whites were encouraged. As "About Your Old Master" explained, the difficulties experienced by former slave owners as a result of the abolition of slavery—the loss of wealth, sons on the battlefield, and slave property, in addition to the "new state of things"—naturally induced anger and resentment. Moreover, it would take years before former slave owners "put off the airs and manners of a master, just as you find it hard to shake off the habits of slaves" (11). Not only were the vestiges of the past to be endured, but also the strictures of the present had to be embraced in good faith. This sympathetic explication of white resentment was allegedly for the benefit of the freed, which is not surprising, or at least is quite consistent with the general spirit of schooling them for a "new slavery," since the lessons of freedom invariably involved the adaptation of the freed to a new order of labor and social relations that transformed and refigured those of slavery. Instructing the freed in the "ways of white folks" was intended to improve the interactions between blacks and their former owners and other whites. If the former slaves remembered the losses suffered by their owners, the action and attitudes of whites would be more understandable and kind feelings more quickly reestablished. Thus blacks were admonished to "think kindly about your old master. . . . Do not fall out now, but join your interests if you can, and live and die

together." Although slavery had been abolished, the ties between former masters and slaves were expected to endure until death, thereby binding the free laborer to his employer in perpetuity. In the new state of things, the ties of affection and reciprocal will enabled this eternal proprietorship.

The extant familial affection between former masters and slaves eventually would overcome resentment if blacks discreetly navigated the sore spots of the emancipation. This rapprochement, auguring the terms of national reconciliation, was also actualized at their expense.[72] By means of this resurrection of the customs of slavery and exploitation of the sentimental rhetoric of reciprocity, in particular the compulsorily dutiful conduct of the enslaved, the past continued to endure in the "new state of things." By providing a rationale for white resentment, *Plain Counsels* minimized the injuries imposed by "severe feeling," particularly the abiding stigmatic injury of racism and the reign of terror launched by this antipathy. Unfortunately, good conduct could not mitigate the sway of coercion, resentment, and terror. Even those like Fisk who declared slavery a crime against humanity because of its abrogation of natural rights described the relations of slavery as good, pleasant, and comfortable. Similarly, Fisk insisted that the kind feelings that formerly existed between masters and slaves had not been terminated by the war, as if the absolute denial of fundamental rights had been achieved through mutual affection rather than inordinate violence and brutal domination. As I have pointed out, the aspects of slavery most readily criticized in these schoolbooks were black dependence and the lingering failures of character exhibited in dishonesty, profligacy, idleness, irrationality, and sumptuary excess.

Plain Counsels claimed that despite the old master's anger about the new state of things, he still retained "a kind of family affection, and in spite of his bad feelings, I have noticed, he desires to see you do well in life" (12). Not surprisingly, this preamble about familial affection culminated in the directive to stay put: "Do not think that, in order to be free, you must fall out with your old master, gather up your bundles and trudge off to a strange city. This is a great mistake." The plantation was the designated sphere in which blacks would overcome the "disheartening influence of belonging to a subjugated race" and achieve a modicum of equality. It was clear, given the recommendations about unassuming and modest conduct, that blacks did not move as equals in civil society, nor were they endowed with rights that others were bound to respect or permitted to entertain ideas of equality without risking accusations of "putting on airs." The tragic limits of emancipation were bared in the designation of the plantation as the imagined space of freedom and happiness; this restricted landscape was deemed a place presumably as good as anywhere else in the world to explore the nascent experience of liberation. The freed could be as "free and happy" in their old home "as anywhere else in the world" (12). Unfortunately, this was true to the degree that freedom was no less elusive or more realizable on one plantation than on another or in Georgia rather than Alabama.

However, in many regards, the sheer capacity to move, as demonstrated by the mass movement off the plantation, rather than the gains or loss experienced at one's destination, provided the only palpable evidence of freedom.[73] As Felix Haywood recalled, when former slaves received news of their freedom "everybody went wild. We all felt like heroes and nobody had made us that way but ourselves. Just like that

we was free. . . . Nobody took our homes away, but right off colored folks started on the move. They seemed to want to get closer to freedom, so they'd know what it was—like it was a place or city." This desire set thousands on the road in search of a distinct and tangible freedom. The ambulant expressions of freedom are consistently detailed in slave testimony. The search for a parent, child, or lover and the longing to return to the place of one's birth or simply instantiate being free through the exercise of this nascent mobility. Locomotion was definitive of personal liberty. Blackstone's *Commentaries* defines personal liberty in terms of the power of locomotion: "Personal liberty consists in the power of locomotion, of changing one's situation, or removing one's person to whatever place one's inclination may direct, without restraint, unless by due course of law."[74] As itinerancy, nomadism, migration, roving, or simply walking, moving about occurred below the threshold of formal equality and rights and articulated the limits of emancipation and the constrained terms of agency. It is clear that the freedom experienced was in the search and not the destination.

Admonitions to remain on the plantation, abstain from assertions of equality, turn the other cheek when faced with insult, and avoid the sore toes of prejudice attest to the emphasis placed on servility, which was deemed necessary in navigating the upheavals of Reconstruction. Although *Plain Counsels* opened with a lecture on freedom that forcefully proclaimed the natural rights of all men to life, liberty, and property and denounced the high crime of slavery in abrogating these rights, it encouraged obsequiousness and humility in interracial social interactions. Accordingly, regular confessions of unworthiness rather than distasteful expressions of equality would best serve blacks in their transition to freedom: "Some white men will put on airs, and look down on you. Now, instead of putting on airs, too, and saying, 'I am as good as you are,' it is better to say nothing, or if you do answer, to say, 'I am not as good as I ought to be, as I want to be, and as I hope to be.'" The coupling of radical pronouncements about the evils of slavery with conciliatory and conservative admonishments to avoid inciting social turbulence by "not putting on airs" and remaining in one's place, quite like the increasingly conservative judicial assessment of the Thirteenth Amendment and the measure of equality, fostered the incidents and vestiges of slavery while exalting its abolition.

The good conduct encouraged by such counsels eased the transition from slavery to freedom by imploring the freed to continue in old forms of subservience, which primarily entailed remaining on the plantation as faithful, hardworking, and obedient laborers but also included manners, styles of comportment in work relations, objects of consumption, leisure, and domestic relations.[75] In their emphasis on proper conduct, these schoolbooks resuscitated the social roles of slavery, not unlike the regulation of behavior in labor contracts or the criminalization of impudence in the Black Codes. The pedagogical injunctions to obedience and servility cast the freed in a role starkly similar to the one in which they had suffered under slavery. On one hand, these texts heralded the natural rights of all men; and on the other, they advised blacks to refrain from enjoying this newly conferred equality. Despite proclamations about the whip's demise, emergent forms of involuntary servitude, the coercive control of black labor, the repressive instrumentality of the law, and the social intercourse of everyday life revealed the entanglements of slavery and freedom.

The Manhood of the Race

If pronouncements of equality were to be eschewed, lest one risked offending white folks, this was not to suggest that opportunities for self-improvement were hindered by these oft-repeated behests to resume the social demeanor of slavery. Notwithstanding the compromises of freedom endlessly being negotiated in the manuals, it was still believed that every man possessed the capacity to (re)make himself in accordance with his ideals.[76] The discourse on self-improvement asserted that neither race nor the badge of slavery need impede possibilities for success or advancement. While it is important to note that the emphasis on self-making represented an attempt to counter racist arguments about blacks' limited capacities and the prevalent notion that "the negro exists for the special object of raising cotton, rice and sugar for the whites, and that it is illegitimate for him to indulge, like other people, in the pursuit of happiness in his own way," it also placed the burden of self-advancement solely upon the individual.[77] Consequently, history receded before the individual anointed as the master of his fate. The only impediment to advancement was the self. Other obstacles to advancement, independence, and autonomy were conveniently neglected, and failure was attributed to deficiencies of character and habit. The individual abandoned to his own efforts savored assurances that the market provided a level playing field and the distribution of awards based upon one's efforts and merits. Every man was, according to *Plain Counsels,* "under God, just what he makes himself; it matters not whether he be white or colored. Frederick Douglass was born a slave and had no friend to help him. . . . Now you have yourself in charge, and I want you to make a man of yourself. Will you do it?" (18).[78]

If the emphasis on individual responsibility, reliance, and self-making inevitably attributed the wretched condition of blacks to their shortcomings, the remedy invariably suggested was "showing thyself a man," and the favored demonstration of this nascent manhood was dutiful labor. As John Freeman, the protagonist of Helen Brown's *John Freeman and His Family,* declares, "We are men now, and we're free men, too; and we've got to do just what free men do. You look round and you see every freeman, black or white, works for a living; works I say, not grubs and roots" (11). The equation of man and laborer conflates self-cultivation with the extensive capacities of the laboring body; that is, it establishes the isomorphism of making the self and making objects by likening distinct forms of production and, notably, by effacing the presence of women within the discourse of freedom, thereby restricting the act of making to masculinity. This emphasis on the creative capacity of making and self-making identified freedom as work. However, in lauding the body's extensive capacities and the individual's innate facility for self-making, various techniques of making and using were ranked, and "working for a living" and "grubbing and rooting" differentiated the constancy of application from mere subsistence and, ultimately, responsibility from idleness.

The individual prepared to meet the challenges of freedom and ready to make a man of himself was deemed capable of throwing off the vestiges of slavery by his own efforts. The frequent references to white people who had started out with less than the emancipated and achieved great success endorsed this capacity for self-

making. Such comparisons were only plausible if a blind eye was turned to the instrumentality of race as a vehicle of subjugation and white opposition to a new social order. Fisk, the author of *Plain Counsels,* claimed that he was "acquainted with many white persons who commenced married life twenty-five years ago with as little as you have now, and who worked with their hands for less than is given to you . . . and are [now] in very easy circumstance" (58). White people were to be regarded as living proof of the rewards realized by hard labor rather than as examples of the privileges afforded by whiteness. Of course, race mattered little if rewards were actualized on the basis of hard labor and everyone enjoyed the fruits of his labor. However, as this certainly was not the case, the willed innocence of abstract equality depicted a democratic distribution of opportunities in the context of racist domination, pervasive violence, and extreme exploitation and anticipated outcomes that obfuscated the condition of the South. Moreover, as whiteness remained the standard-bearer of value, the possibility and opportunity proffered were inherently racialized.

In this vein, *John Freeman and His Family* represented the prospects of citizenship and manhood as inseparable from the assimilation of whiteness. If blacks modeled themselves after whites, they, too, might receive the rewards that the latter enjoyed. John Freeman, taking this promise seriously, becomes the definitive mimic man: "Every good custom of the white people, which came to his knowledge, inspired within him the ambition to go and do likewise; and while he was humble and respectful as a *subordinate,* he was eager to be and do all that would make him a *true man.* He certainly had the right idea of *manhood* and liberty" (45; emphasis added). However, John was destined to remain a mimic man because of the palpable distance between the ideal aspired to, true manhood, and his actual condition as a humble and respectful subordinate. The distance between the humble subordinate and the true man established by the distinct temporalities of John's actual condition ("he was a humble and respectful subordinate") and his as yet unrealized aspiration ("he was eager to be . . . a true man") insinuated that although he aspired to reach the measure of true manhood, he might be unable to realize it. In this regard, *John Freeman* intimated that the chasm between the universal tenets of equality and the conditions of their actualization might never be bridged. We are left to wonder if the promised equitable enjoyment of material rewards, like manhood itself, was a goal to be aspired to but perhaps unrealizable, or if the liberty proffered with one hand was withdrawn by the other.

Was it possible for John Freeman to be a humble subordinate and a true man? The articulations of race, gender, and citizenship require us to answer both yes and no. Certainly black men and women were citizens as rights-bearing individuals protected by the state. However, realizing these rights and entitlements was another issue. Not only were issues of political equality greatly contested and social equality opposed, but also even the enjoyment of basic civil rights, to a large degree, was unrealizable given the relations of power and property that travestied these rudimentary rights. As has been argued earlier, the implied citizen of the Constitution and subject of "we the people" was the white male. Citizenship presupposed the equality of abstract and disembodied persons, and this abstraction disguised the privileges of white men. The presumed whiteness and maleness of the citizen trans-

posed the particular into the universal, thus enabling white men to enjoy the privileges of abstraction and a noncorporeal universality.[79]

To the degree that blacks were challenged to assume the duties of freedom and prove their worthiness by showing themselves as men, the implicit masculinism of citizenship was reinforced. Yet the task of demonstrating the "manhood of the race" was not simply imposed from without but also taken up as the blazon of an emergent black citizenry.[80] The considerable weight attached to the manhood of the race in large measure determined the abolition of slavery, the conferral of citizenship, and the eventual granting of manhood suffrage.[81] The military service of black men in the Civil War was an important determinant in the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment and the Civil Rights Act of 1866. The participation of over 200,000 black men in military service made it necessary for the state to recognize blacks as citizens.[82] The importance attributed to soldiering exemplifies the masculinism of citizenship and, moreover, shows citizenship to be a kind of soldiering. This conception of the citizen-soldier, according to Nancy Fraser, imagines the citizen as "the defender of the polity and protector of those—women, children, and elderly—who allegedly cannot protect themselves." The citizen as soldier introduces a gendered division between those who protect and those who are protected and suggests that one achieved true manhood through the ritual theater of fratricide and established one's humanity by the capacity to kill and the willingness to die.[83] *Advice to Freedmen* espoused this sentiment in noting that the presence of black combatants confirmed that "colored men prize[d] liberty sufficiently to fight for it." As well, the soldier fulfilled the citizen's obligation to "stand by the government and aid in saving our country and its institutions" (49).

As men and citizens, blacks were implicitly involved in the mimetic enactment of identity and entitlements. Certainly John Freeman's fashioning of manhood was modeled accordingly: "A purpose to do right as far as he knew how animated him daily, and the eager desire to rise above the degraded sphere in which he had always existed, to live and think, learn and do like white folks, was never for a moment abated" (45). As Homi Bhabha argues, mimicry is a production of the subject as the same and other. The mimic man is a partial representation of the dominant subject; however, he is not reassured by this displacement but menaced. The familiar transported to the distant becomes estranging and grotesque.[84] However, the threat or menace that possibly attends this displacement and reproduction of the dominant was minimized by the reassuring distance that separated the true man and John Freeman. Despite the unabated desire "to do right," rise above his "degraded sphere," and "do like white folks" that animated John Freeman's every day, he remained trapped in this degraded sphere, his efforts at self-advancement mocked by the subtle insinuation of an insurmountable barricade in the passageway between the debased sphere in which he had always existed and the celestial sphere of right, equality, and whiteness. This insurmountable barrier was race. Thus the danger of mimicry was eclipsed by the comfort of minstrelsy. The requisite subordination of the freeman foreclosed the threat of "true manliness."

The anxiety and discomfort surrounding black manliness were registered in the ambivalent demand to "show thyself a man." The command to "show thyself a man" brings to mind the compulsory display of black value on the auction block.

Dread and desire inflected the directive, as the freeman was required to prove his manhood and remain a humble subordinate. This delicate balancing act demanded that he display and cloak true manliness with the facility of an exhibitionist—now you see it; now you don't. The obligation to display the self in this fashion was at odds with the declared intent of the directive. How did the subject splayed before the scrutinizing gaze enact masculinity? Would the flaunting of black manhood before white inquisitors, skeptics, and enemies establish the vitality and worthiness of the race? Could such exhibitions of the self establish anything other than the distance between the freeman and the true man?

The relation between Lieutenant Hall, a Union army officer assisting in the transition from slavery to freedom, and John Freeman underlines the distance between the authentic and the mimetic or between the true man and the freeman. The white lieutenant, fulfilling his missionary duties with the "benighted Africans" of the United States, is savior, father, and disciplinarian. Lieutanant Hall bestows John with the name Freeman: "A new name it was, distinct, clean of slavery, savoring of the life of liberty and equal rights upon which he was entering. He was determined that he would never disgrace it by idleness or want of integrity, or by any act unworthy of freedom; and he was earnestly desirous that those who bore it with him would esteem and cherish it as he did" (22). In this case, since the surname is assigned rather than adopted, the independence and dignity that it is intended to connote are undermined. Figuratively, it extends the lieutenant's partriarchal reach as he confers the patronymic. The surname, in this light, not only expresses John's new condition, and the ambivalence of that condition, but also designates Lieutenant Hall as white father.

Henry Banner, a former slave, ironically noted that a surname was the sole inheritance of freedom: "The slaves weren't expecting nothing. It got out somehow that they were going to give us forty acres and a mule. We all went to town. They asked me who I belonged to and I told them my master was Banner. One man said, 'Young man, I would go by my mama's name if I were you.' I told him my mother's name was Banner too. Then he opened a book and told me all the laws. He told me never to go by any name except Banner. That was all the mule they ever give me."[85] In Banner's account the surname does not confer true manhood but the paradox of emancipation and the dispossession that acquires the status of a legacy. The surname here denotes, to borrow Spillers's term, "the captor father's mocking presence" and the disinheritance that engenders the African American. It substitutes for a proper inheritance and an adequate form of redress, it being "all the mule" that Banner received.

However, in *John Freeman* the significance of the surname lies in its function as a patronymic that identifies Clarissa and her offspring as John's, thus marking the decisive shift in the reproductive economy of freedom. John's wife and children are placed under his control and dominion by virtue of the patronymic: "You must give your wife the same name, then, mind, and all your children. Then we shall know you all belong together. You'll be the Freeman family" (21). When Clarissa, John's wife, is first addressed as Mrs. Freeman, she marvels at her new acquisition: "She has never been called Mrs. Freeman before. That sounds a heap like white folks, she thought to herself, and now I must honor the name, as John says" (26). However,

this acquisition, valued for its simulation of whiteness rather than for the new order of conjugal and contractual relations that it announces, betokens both her freedom and her death as civil subject. According to the doctrine of coverture, the wife existed under the cover of her husband's status and identity; therefore, married women were subsumed under the civil personality of men,[86] although freedwomen existed within and without the privatized enclosure of domesticity, since Mrs. Freeman straddled the demands of laborer, caretaker, and legal dependent. However, it is important to note that these primers treated freedwomen the same as men in one respect—they were expected to work and support their families.[87]

Just as anxieties about national prosperity and social order required that the freed prove their worth, exhibit their capacities, and practice temperance, restraint, and humility, so, too, the responsibility of each citizen to bear his part of the common burden and increase the strength and wealth of the nation created a curious domesticity at the interface of the public and private and annexed and regulated by the state.[88] In this regard, the emphasis on domesticity is best understood in relation to issues of prosperity, order, and hygiene. Issues of prosperity and hygiene are central to the regulatory efforts of the state, the policing of the private, and the strategies of state racism, since cleanliness and domestic order are confluent with social stability, economic health, and the eradication of idleness. In this case, the family does not provide a barrier to the values of the marketplace; to the contrary, the domestic is valued because it is essential to managing laboring families, inculcating suitable ideas of settlement and stability, and nurturing responsible and rational individuals. The complementarity of home and work can be discerned in the general inattention to feminine virtues and the imperative that all members of the family work. If, as argued earlier, the gender of the female slave becomes intelligible through a calculus of injury, liability, and inheritance, gender must be reconsidered here within a different economy of kinship, reproduction, and inheritance and in relation to issues of working-class formation, the health of the social body, and national prosperity. At issue are the ambiguous role of Mrs. Freeman and the work of normalization conducted within the domestic sphere.

Much fine work has been written on women's agency within the private sphere, on domesticity as an allegory of political desire, and on marriage as the symbol of "liberation and entitlement to democracy and desire."[89] The line of argument undertaken here is not intended to underestimate the joy experienced in creating and maintaining families for those long denied this benefit, to minimize women's agency within the household, or to cast the family as a monolithic and uniformly oppressive institution but rather to consider the question of the family in regard to issues of racial and class formation and the governing of the social.[90] The advent of freedom placed black women and children within a locus of patriarchal control and protection that signified the gains of freedom. Yet the privatization of marital and familial relations assured neither women's protection from the violence of outsiders nor protection from their spouses.[91] Conflicts and tensions within the freed family sometimes resulted in the physical abuse of women. Moreover, the illusive security and comfort of the private require that we forget the kinds of violence that women are subjected to within the home. Classically, the private sphere designates men's liberty from the state and the encroachments of others, and ensures their custody of

women and children rather than women's safety. This is to argue neither that freedwomen were controlled by their husbands nor that they didn't enjoy a measure of autonomy in their personal lives but rather to highlight the masculinist constitution of the private and the forms of encumbrance that enabled men to secure their liberty. As well, it is important to note that the sanctity of the private did not shield black women or men from racist attacks in their homes.

Although it has been forcefully argued that domesticity and the consequent reprivatization of female sexuality within kinship versus captivity networks were marked advances over slavery and great leaps on the road of black progress, given the destruction of natal and conjugal relations under slavery, here I advance a different reading, one less intent on celebrating the fashioning of heterosexual domesticity than on illustrating the perviousness of the family to the incursions of capital and the state. While the ability to forge and maintain familial relations must not be minimized, neither should the family be naturalized as the measure of racial progress. To the contrary, the utility of the family as a mechanism of state racism greatly tempers claims of progress. In fact, what is articulated at the site of the family is a shared concern about matters of racial hygiene, morality, and prosperity. In other words, the articulation of black politics at the site of the family is often consistent with the regulatory efforts of the state. Therefore, the domestic articulation of a politics of racial uplift risks displacing the political, endorsing a repressive moral economy, and privileging the family as a site for the reproduction of racial values. Thus the shifting configuration of familial relations cannot be seen as inherently progressive or oppressive but rather as a changing institution, or, as Jacques Donzelot describes it, "an uncertain form whose intelligibility can only come from studying the system of relations it maintains with the sociopolitical level."[92]

Domesticity and the Social

In these primers, issues of family and domesticity emerge obliquely and in relation to issues of labor, hygiene, and discipline. The utility of the family as a mechanism in the transition to a free labor system is evidenced by the importance attached to the home. Like the difference between grubbing and rooting and working for a living, domesticity was the sign of civilization, settlement, and rational desire, as contrasted with the itinerancy and subsistence of those eluding the contract system. Moreover, in these representations of domestic economy, the social comes into the view—that is, the hybrid space that repartitions lines of the public and private for the purposes of securing the public good—the health, safety, and morality of the people. Similarly, as was the case regarding labor discipline, the advice dispensed in these primers was not only concerned with the freed but also a component of a broader discourse on managing the working poor, eradicating pauperism, and domesticating asocial, dangerous, and itinerant classes. The same sort of advice dispensed in these freedmen's primers, particularly regarding the importance of domesticity and implanting the proper idea of home life, was elaborated in texts like *Public Relief and Private Charity* by Josephine Shaw Lowell and *A Handbook of Charity Organization* by Rev. S. Humphreys Gurteen.[93] These theoretical and prac-

tical treatises on eradicating pauperism and implementing effective forms of charity relief that didn't reproduce dependence share a common language with the freedmen's texts. Lastly, the concern about issues of proper association, hygiene, and prosperity extended beyond the immediate sphere of the family and issues of poverty and labor; the efforts to ensure national prosperity and the health of the social body would endorse the racial segregation of *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

The section "Household Life," added to the second edition of *Advice to Freedmen,* stresses association and hygiene rather than domestic possessions in its representation of a properly regulated domestic life: "Heretofore, although father, mother and children have resided in the same cabin, yet to a great extent you have not lived as families. We hope that before long there will be a change for the better in this respect. And how pleasant, when returning from the day's toil in the field, to sit down in a neat room where all is in good order, the furniture free from dust, the floor and hearth well swept, and the ceiling and wall nicely white-washed." It is living together that defines the hearth, although these arrangements are threatened by dirt and disorder, which not only present physical dangers in the form of illness and pestilence but also are signs of immorality. Hygiene—such as the cleanliness of persons, the need of fresh air, the importance of bed linen, not sleeping in one's day clothes—is as important as taking meals together in "beget[ting] system and regularity in the management of household affairs" and "cultivating those graces of manners and habits which distinguish cultivated and refined society" (33). Brinckerhoff induces the freed to strictly follow such guidelines not only for purposes of moral cultivation and refinement but also to battle the sickness that afflicts their children because of their lack of personal cleanliness.

The emphasis on hygiene expresses larger concerns about national well-being, since hygiene legitimated, if not invited, the policing of dwellings but also the setting of guidelines for marriage and other forms of social association, particularly those considered dangerous or destabilizing of social order. Regulating hygiene or ensuring public health was a fundamental aspect of the police power of the state.[94] As Giovanni Proccacci remarks, in the governing of poverty, hygiene provides a "grid for reading social relations, a system which serves at once to canalize them and to invent new paths of circulation that are more 'orderly' and more decipherable."[95] Managing immorality, indolence, criminality, and disease was the target of these lessons of hygiene, and they were fundamentally allied with Reconstruction, the return of national prosperity, and the establishment of a responsible and domesticated black laboring class. The coincidence of good housekeeping and national prosperity is keenly articulated in *John Freeman and His Family,* which utilizes the devices of sentimental literature, in particular, the kitchen as the microcosm of the nation and the ethic of submission. As Gillian Brown observes, in the domestic politics of sentimentalism, "uniformity and neatness in the kitchen matter profoundly, since these habits create a standard of harmony for America."[96] However, in this case domestic economy is not separated from or opposed to the market but continuous with it. Because of this, the household is not treated as the special province of women, except in *John Freeman. Advice to Freedmen, Friendly Counsels,* and *Plain Counsels* associate the well-managed and ordered home with the transition from slavery to freedom and the birth of the proprietorial self. The entanglements of the state and the family and the market and the household illuminate the nonautonomy of the private.

The visions of domesticity promoted within these texts emphasized duty, morality, and cleanliness, and, above all else, they represented the family as a laboring unit. Accordingly, the home is in service of the market, as its proper management stabilizes and induces good habits in the laboring classes. In other words, the discourse on domesticity is primarily geared to battling moral degradation, sloth, indolence and idleness. It is a discourse aimed at managing the laboring classes and the poor rather than creating a protected sphere outside market relations. Therefore, even the guardian of the hearth, Mrs. Freeman, participates in the world of the market as a laborer by taking in washing, once again eliding distinctions between the home and the world outside. As an important aside, it should be noted that all of these texts encouraged freedwomen to labor, despite the contrary desires of the freed exhibited in the mass exodus of women and children from the field.

Domestic disorder was held responsible for criminality and a range of other sins, from vanity and consumption of tobacco and liquor to stealing. In *John Freeman,* Miss Horton, a white Northern teacher, tries to eradicate the "old, lazy, filthy habits of the slave quarters" that were still clinging to the freed by imparting lessons on hygiene during her regular visits to their homes. Of course, the disorder that she observes within these dwelling indicates that the freed do not possess "the true idea of home" (31–32). For these reasons, Miss Horton is not only a teacher and friend of the race but also a home-visitor with a mission.

Miss Horton, upon her visit to the ladies, immediately scanned the room, detailed the problems, and identified the changes to be made. As her eyes surveyed the room, she was surprised "that a woman who was so tidy in her dress, as Clarissa certainly was, could live in a room so completely littered and filthy; and she made up her mind to give her new acquaintance a few useful hints." Clarissa is determined to follow these hints less because of the importance of neatness than because of her inclination to mimicry. Neatness is not simply a virtue but an expression of whiteness as well, at least as far as Clarissa can discern. In this regard, the virtue of domesticity was not only the ground of national well-being, moral cultivation, and family stability but also the very expression of whiteness. The linking of whiteness with purity, neatness, and health accedes to a politics of contagion that eventually serves to justify segregation and license the racist strategies of the state in securing the health of the social body. In this respect, Clarissa's desire to be "just as near like white folks as ever we can fetch" bespeaks the association of race and hygiene, or more specifically, purity and whiteness, that gives shape to the biopolitical imperatives of the nineteenth-century state.

Moreover, the lack of cleanliness is associated with moral depravity, animal habits, and criminality. The connection between hygiene and social danger is demonstrated by the case of Sam Prentiss. Sam was proud, wore fine clothes and bright buttons and other things he couldn't afford, smoked and chewed tobacco, and drank whiskey. To maintain these habits, he stole money from his employer, for which he was imprisoned. Clarissa, feeling sorry for his mother and the suffering and shame his imprisonment has caused her, pays her a visit. Now learned in the principles of home management, Clarissa literally replicates the former scene; she stands in Miss

Horton's stead, and Prudence plays the role of a more wretched version of Clarissa's former self. The omniscient narrator describes the dark, dirty, and miserable hut of Prudence, and as Clarissa enters the hut, she cast her eyes about and confirms this assessment. Prudence's lack of domestic skills and her dirty and disorganized home, cluttered with dirty dishes, are as responsible for Sam's criminality as his own bad habits. Prudence's own habits of consumption are continuous with his. She doesn't know how to use her rations properly and consumes them all at once (81–83). This excess of consumption is associated with dirt and disorder, the imbibing of intoxicants, and criminal behavior. However, as a result of Clarissa's instruction, Prudence comes to embody the virtue denoted by her name. Consequently, when Sam is released from jail, he returns to a cheery and pleasant home, which makes him feel better and induces him to try to do better: "Since his mother was taking pains to be smart, he would try to do better" (87).

The domestic sphere elaborated in these texts was a threshold between the public and private rather than a fortified private sphere. In these portraits, the fragility of the private, or more aptly, the lineaments of the social, was exemplified by the intrusion of strangers and "friends of the race" who policed the management of household affairs, regularly trespassing the border between the home and the world. Nineteenth-century social reformers considered the home visit essential to eradicating slothful habits and enhancing the moral dignity of the poor. Gurteen's *Handbook of Charity Organization* asserted that the chief need of the poor—we can easily substitute the freed—was "the moral support of true friendship—the possession of a real friend, whose education, experience and influence, whose general knowledge of life, or special knowledge of domestic economy are placed at the service of those who have neither the intelligence, the tact nor the opportunity to extract the maximum of good from their slender resources."[97] The home-visitor was the predecessor of the social worker; she dispensed household advice and assessed the character and development of the freed.[98] Miss Horton's visits conform to the genre of the philanthropic visit; the evaluation of progress, the inspection of order, an examination of proper domestic hygiene, and the dispensation of advice were the purposes of the visit.

The domestic was the ultimate scene of surveillance; a fence in need of whitewashing, a dusty house, or a nonobedient child thus invited punitive judgments. The description of the good life, although purportedly about the pleasures afforded by a well-managed domestic sphere, actually authorized the normalizing gaze, which, by detailed observation of all areas of life, judged the suitedness of the formerly enslaved to freedom and their conformity to the rules of household management. As *Friendly Counsels* advised:

> Make things as pleasant as you can in and around your house. What a difference there is! . . . Now, when a stranger approaches your house, let him notice a pretty gardenspot, with flowers and vegetables, all well kept. When he enters, let his eye be cheered by seeing how nice every thing looks, how well swept the floor is, how the tin things shine. Let him notice a few books, with marks of study or reading upon them. . . . As he glances around, it would be pleasing if he could see a little picture here and there hanging on the wall, or a flower-pot with a pretty pink or rose blooming in it, showing that you have a liking for such things. He would say, "Well, this looks like freedom. I think you must be quite a happy family." It will be a very pretty picture to show some who maintain that it is useless to attempt to elevate or to improve the condition of the colored race. (27)

Under the inspecting eye and the scrutiny of the stranger's gaze, every item in the home was portentous with meaning and arrested in a moral drama in which disorder and inefficiency decided one's fate. Sanctions awaited those outside the purview of acceptable behavior, and in this regard, the gaze was quite literally arresting. Thus the inculcation of good habits was achieved by creating a sense of hypervisibility. The stark intervention of power in the form of the stranger, or "friend of the race," elided the boundary of public and private and the home and the market. The visitor figuratively embodied the police power of the state to inspect and oversee matters of family, sexuality, hygiene, and so on, deemed necessary in maintaining the health and security of society. The public good sustained the invasion of the private and, like the entry of the friend/inspector or stranger into the domicile of the freed, determined whether all objects and persons were in their proper place.

Although ideologically designated as the putative sphere of liberty, the private failed to safeguard against the instrusions of individuals or the state.[99] Rather, home was an extension of the workplace and subject to the impositions of charitable inspectors like Miss Horton and the regulations of the state. Those without a "proper home" could be arrested for vagrancy and hired out, have their children taken away, or risk imprisonment, if not death, for violating rules of racial hygiene regarding sexual and conjugal relations. The mutable boundaries of the private were also employed to restrict black mobility and freedom of association by designating much of public space as the private and exclusive realm of whites. In any case, the sanctuary of the private was violated regularly, quite unlike the portrait of domesticity heralded by the culture of sentiment and the exponents of domestic economy. Clearly, intimate matters were subordinate to the economic interests and social imperatives of the postbellum order. The privacy of the private was rather tenuous; the domesticity propounded in these texts revealed the utility of the household to the marketplace and the regulation of the private through techniques of discipline and normalization.[100]

Proximate Dangers

The affiliations of hygiene, prosperity, and black subordination are clearly delineated in Jared Waterbury's text for embittered Southern planters. In short, Waterbury suggests that the health and well-being of the nation depended upon the ability to control and contain the dangers posed by the presence of emancipated blacks within the body politic. *Southern Planters and the Freedmen* divulges the instrumental ends of rational and moral cultivation: the production of servile and dutiful laborers and the regulation of a potentially threatening population within the body politic. The work of molding the freed into rational and moral subjects is explicated primarily in terms of social and bodily dangers, the threat of disorder, and the dangers posed by the physical proximity of sensual and childish men ruled by

passions. *Southern Planters* discloses the work of cultivation to be fundamentally that of discipline and regulation. Waterbury, employing the language of sentiment, first appeals to the reciprocity of the master-slave relation when delineating the obligations of planters to the freed: "The long years of toil by these patient and in most instances faithful slaves, now that they are free, impose an obligation on their former masters of sympathy and obligation." It is a paternal obligation that enjoins planters to aid in the moral uplift and education of the freed. However, if noble motives fail to inspire, Waterbury adopts a surefire strategy; he exploits base instincts and hints at the lurking dangers that await the commingling of an unschooled and passionate element with the civilized: "The planters have a direct interest in educating and elevating this large working class with whom they must hereafter, and for a long time, be in intimate contact. . . . To be surrounded by such hordes of men and women, so different from the whites in their antecedents; so marked and contrasted in their physical traits; possessing the strength of manhood and the passion of children; to be in constant contact with them as household and field servants and laborers, must make it evident to reasonable and reflective men that some culture is absolutely necessary to insure both safety and comfort" (39). The cultivation of a reasonable and moral labor force is required to maintain order, safety, and comfort. The threat lurking in the specter of powerful and childish men and in the habitual intercourse between two very different races borders on the indecent, and without the restraints imposed by reason and morality, such intimacy poses great dangers. The resurgence of the bodily here articulates fears about equality, proximity, and intimacy. In other words, how might this free laboring class be incorporated in the body politic as citizens while maintaining the integrity of whiteness? In order for the races to dwell comfortably side by side, the cultivation of the freed was essential, lest the dangers of such proximity rend the fabric of the social order: "It is for his interest and safety to place the negro in a career of improvement, so that the sensual shall not swallow up the intellectual life. His manhood must be developed by education, or he will remain in his darkness and depression; and who could endure to dwell amid congregated masses of men and women whose fiery impulses are restricted by no knowledge of their relations to society and to God?" (42).

Only the work of self-cultivation would enable the freed to properly exercise and enjoy the privileges of which they were as of yet unworthy: "Step by step he must gain that social and moral standing which will vindicate his claim to the privilege of citizenship, and exempt him from the privileges which hitherto have denied him its exercise" (31). The need to vindicate one's claim to the privileges of citizenship undoubtedly indicates a lingering suspicion about black worthiness and exposes the chasm between the stipulation of rights and the capacity to exercise them. Accordingly, the freed are required "to defend, maintain and insist on the recognition of" their inalienable and natural rights.[101]

The emphasis placed on the molding of a reasonable and moral subject, one restricted by recognition of God and social relations, also hinted at the shifting register of blackness from status-race—blackness ascribing slave status—to formal race—a "neutral" conception of race undergirded by notions of biological and cultural difference.[102] The abolition of slavery presumably announced the end of subjugation based on race or servitude, but the ascendancy of formal race—that is,

immutable, inherent, and naturalized racial differences—perpetuated the "stigma of inferiority based on race" or "stigmatic injury," to employ the language of *Brown v. Board of Education*, in the guise of neutrality and objectivity.[103] While the freed would no longer "feel the disheartening influences of belonging to a subjugated race," it was expected that they would "have to struggle under difficulties and embarrassments arising out of recent slavery, or connected with a social repugnance founded principally on physical traits" (31). The contention between equality in the body politic and the threatening physical presence of blackness was also at issue in the debates concerning the Fourteenth Amendment and the Civil Rights Acts of 1866 and 1875. Certainly the "repugnance of the physical" denotes the abjection of blackness and the ambivalent character of the abject exemplified by the conflicted and uncertain incorporation of black citizens into the national body and by the containment or expulsion of blackness required to maintain the integrity of whiteness.[104] The "repugnance of the physical" reinscribed the degradations of slavery, although augmented by the dangers of freedom and the antipathy incited by perceived dangers—dangers evoked by the proximity of the races dwelling side by side and the fiery impulses and untamed passions of the untutored.

The perils associated with the proximity of black and white bodies betrayed the anxieties unleashed by the stipulated equality of citizens—in particular, the menacing masculinity of the freedman endowed with rights and privileges. It was this anxiety that invariably associated equality with miscegenation and the congregated masses with the hazard of social equality, which jeopardized the providential line drawn between the races. According to Waterbury, the peaceful coexistence of the races depended not only on the education of blacks but also on maintaining the providential line that separated the races and established the superiority of whites: "The two races are, it seems probable, to dwell side by side for years to come. Amalgamation is not desirable. A broad, distinctive, separating line has been fixed by an all-wise Providence" (41). The law, too, would eventually accede to an "all-wise Providence" and act to constrict liberty and apportion equality in conformity with the color line, such that the citizenship conferred upon blacks reproduced the enduring marks of inferiority. As Waterbury himself admitted, despite the efforts of self-improvement undertaken by the freed, "the African must still acknowledge the superiority of the Saxon race" (42).