

## Emancipation to Immigration

*Branqueamento* (racial whitening ideology) played a critical role in fin-de-siècle debates over Brazilian nation building when politicians and agriculturalists looked to immigration from Europe, Asia, and the Middle East as a means to modernize the economy from slave labor to free labor. Liberal reform intertwined with racial whitening and eugenic ideology wherein ideas about free labor became coterminous in discussions over whiteness and national identity. In the public at large, concerns about economic necessity during the shift from slave labor to free labor were intertwined with those about the nation's racial demographics. Defining whiteness meant defining how the nation would modify its population from blacker to whiter and assimilate immigrants who were neither white nor black.<sup>1</sup> While whiteness was highly regarded, it was a relational and dynamic construct that did not simply refer to skin color.<sup>2</sup> In some cases, the belief in whitening the population expressed abolitionists' desire for free labor via European immigration.<sup>3</sup> In other cases, whiteness expressed the desire to align with imperialist states, namely Euro-America and Meiji Japan. Leading abolitionists believed the Chinese were a "yellow race" who presented a threat to the whitening project, and thus could only serve as a temporary solution to the labor crisis.<sup>4</sup> Representations of Chineseness circulating in Brazilian mass media allow us to examine how yellowness played a role in defining whiteness and blackness. Print media circulated caricatures and parodic commentaries about the Chinese that related economic and political anxieties regarding assimilation with the so-called yellow race.<sup>5</sup> Racial representations of Chineseness were

not limited to defining Brazilian national identity, but they show the emergence of a global racialized national consciousness.

For their part, the late Qing and Meiji governments had their own expansionist ambitions, which took shape in labor migration schemes that established national symbolic and structural ties between overseas settlers and the homeland. Late Qing intellectuals and diplomats were interested in creating their own versions of China in Brazil, via *yizhi* (a word that means both immigration and colonization). Late Qing intellectuals feared that the end of China was near, and they looked to Brazil as a possibility for building a new China through economic and political expansion via overseas Chinese labor settlements. Their visits sparked much debate among abolitionists and proslavery advocates alike. Late Qing diplomatic visits to assess these possibilities entered into the imaginations of abolitionists in Brazil who were struggling for emancipation and republicanism. Bringing together Brazilian and late Qing views about the figure of the migrant Chinese laborer reveals an emerging global consciousness about racialized national imaginings that expanded beyond individual state territories. Examining late Qing dynasty diplomatic missives about the role that overseas Chinese could play in opening immigration and trade routes between China and Brazil—bearing in mind the context of Brazilian abolitionists' preoccupations over emancipation and national independence—shows how racial representations of Chineseness contained these geopolitical layers of significance. These were the transitional years leading up to economic liberalization, which must also be understood within the global transition from slave labor to new systems of migrant labor. Brazilian cultural production as well as Qing diplomatic writings contradictorily produced ideas about Chinese laborers as both the colonizing settler and the newly enslaved population; the figure of the Chinese migrant laborer would both fulfill the dreams of expansionism via immigration/colonization and serve as the necessarily disposable collateral for nation building.

In Brazil, antislavery advocates created emancipation narratives that made Chinese immigration or so-called yellow labor into a trope for the precarious condition of freedom following the end of slavery. Depictions of Chinese laborers vacillate as both the hope for and threat to the nation: they may provide a solution to the labor crisis, but their deemed unfreeness made them unsuitable for Brazil's whitening liberalism. Whereas Chinese laborers were undesirable, Japanese migrants were welcomed, for the time

being. Shifting ideas regarding Chinese and Japanese immigrants were tied to Chinese and Japanese state goals, which figured into Brazil's whitening project and transition towards republicanism.

In Brazil, fin-de-siècle views regarding labor, race, and liberty were largely focused on social Darwinist and eugenic ideas about miscegenation. Debates over Chinese labor productivity intertwined with discussions over miscegenation, Brazilian national identity, and republicanism. We can readily observe the interrelated rhetoric of sexual reproduction, mixed-race identity, and democracy in early nineteenth-century political theorist Alexis de Tocqueville's study of US democracy (1835; 1840), which he deemed the exemplary model for all nations. The Brazilian Constitution of 1891, Brazil's first republican constitution, was modeled after the US Constitution. For Tocqueville, there were two plausible solutions for forging unity and democracy: miscegenation or complete segregation. Integral to Tocqueville's discussion of racial democracy was sexual reproduction, in which "interbreeding" could allow a "third race" to arise.<sup>6</sup> He told his readers about a hybrid race that had developed in the Spanish and Portuguese Americas and described the mixed-raced children of European men and Indigenous women, "half-castes," who were the "natural link between civilization and barbarity."<sup>7</sup> Black and Indigenous female sexual reproduction were to serve as a bridge between exclusion and inclusion into civil society. Tocqueville's vision of a democratic nation thus promulgated a racial discourse wherein he posited a naturalized relationship of racial identity, liberty, and democracy that depended on governing sexuality. Following this logic, Alberto Torres (1865–1917), jurist and president of Rio de Janeiro from 1896 to 1900, expressed the view that mulatos occupied an intermediary social position, hierarchically ranked above the black population but never fully accepted by the white nobility.<sup>8</sup> The mulato emblemized the intermediary position for negotiating the nation's racial identity, which gained positive or negative value according to a hierarchical relationship between blackness and whiteness.

Competing narratives about miscegenation with Chinese laborers figured into these existing ideas that entangled mixed-race identity and national identity. Some believed that miscegenation could redeem their undesirability such that they could be assimilated to the point of eradication.<sup>9</sup> Other perspectives presented the viewpoint that miscegenation with the Chinese would pose a virile threat wherein yellowness would not only eliminate

blackness but also take over the possibility of whiteness. Chinese gender and sexuality gained a functional meaning in how it was used to negotiate the state's economic institutions. The Chinese became a figuration of a two-way bridge that could take Brazil from either a backward colonial economy based on slave labor toward a progressive state based on civilized free labor or keep it in a rearward direction.

Social Darwinist ideas about generative or degenerative miscegenation with the Chinese were in fact circulating around the globe, including US political cartoons that depicted Chinese laborers in a spectrum of dehumanizing stereotypes. Recurring depictions of the Chinese visually marked them with slanted eyes, knot button shirts, pointed-toe shoes, and, most prominent, the Qing dynasty queue, a men's thin ponytail hairstyle that symbolized loyalty to the Qing. In one image, titled "Darwin's Theory Illustration—The Creation of Chinaman and Pig," that appeared in a San Francisco-based publication, *The Wasp*, the Chinese were caricaturized in an evolutionary stage between rat and pig. The illustration shows physical features like a queue that resembles a hybrid rat and pigtail.<sup>10</sup>

These depictions were not merely products of the imagination: in the United States, cultural constructions of Chinese laborers as a yellow race prepared the cultural environment for unprecedented race- and class-based restrictions. The so-called Chinese question circulated on a worldwide scale the doubt over whether the Chinese were suitable for national integration. It created a homogeneous category, a "coolie race" that posed a threat to white free labor, and paved the way for anti-Chinese exclusion policies in the United States and around the rest of the world. The global Chinese or coolie question, as Ngai observes, lumped all Chinese laborers regardless of their status into one orientalist representation that flattened empirical differences among the various kinds of Chinese labor systems. It also obscured transnational dynamics, including racial politics.<sup>11</sup> The racialized nationalisms that emerged alongside the formation of a global system of nation-states did not arise from a single political system, but they possessed many centers of power.<sup>12</sup> The worldwide spread of anti-Chinese sentiment during the second half of the nineteenth century demands that we understand the polycentric and global dimensions of racialized nationalisms.

The US Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, signed by President Chester Arthur, was the first federal law to ban immigration on the basis of race and class. The act restricted US borders from economic competition through

claiming to defend the racial integrity of the nation.<sup>13</sup> The exclusion act caused a ripple effect in other countries, demonstrating the global dimensions of racial nationalism: US immigration restrictions and attempts to secure its racial and national borders produced a southward shift in migration patterns. These patterns also carried with them the racialized categories that US white liberal democracy wished to exclude. From 1890 to 1892, Africans and Asians were prohibited from entering Brazil.<sup>14</sup> Anti-Chinese sentiment that homogenized Chinese laborers as a coolie race conveyed the perception that they were unassimilable. The Chinese were racially and ethnically coded as uncivilized, subhuman, and filthy—as markers of the “exotic alien.”<sup>15</sup> They were undemocratic, unfree, and thus un-American bodies.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, they were unfit political subjects and excludable from entering into US citizenry. In the United States, racialized nationalism and economic competition between white and Chinese laborers fueled anti-Chinese sentiment that circulated on a global scale and entered into the completely new context of Brazil’s whitening project and national independence movement.

In the years immediately following Chinese exclusion in the United States, late Qing officials looked to places in the Americas like Brazil as a favorable option for Chinese political and economic expansion via the overseas Chinese. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the Qing steadily lifted bans on Chinese emigration. In addition to signing the 1860 Peking Treaty and the 1868 Burlingame Treaty that both lifted bans and legalized Chinese emigration, the Qing governmental attitude about overseas Chinese people also shifted, no longer perceiving them as traitors to the motherland who deserved a punishment worthy of death but as victims of “greedy foreigners” and “Chinese smugglers.”<sup>17</sup> This shift helped further the view among Chinese people that the restriction of overseas Chinese people from the United States by means of the Chinese Exclusion Act was “particularly unjust and despicable.”<sup>18</sup> Qing diplomats grappled with the negative perception of the Chinese that led to Chinese exclusion. Xue Fucheng claimed that the US public at large deemed Chinese people unsightly, with animal-like eating styles and appearances. Likewise, Cui Guoyin, Chinese minister to the United States, Spain, and Peru, noted that the illegal actions of overseas Chinese, including opium smuggling and tong wars, had been the grounds for exclusion. These critiques obscured a larger problem: the lack of overseas Chinese voting power in the US democratic system.<sup>19</sup>

In the face of global anti-Chinese sentiment and the decline of Manchu rule, late Qing leaders and diplomats took great interest in Meiji Japan's treatment of Japanese migration and overseas settlement as a model that Chinese migration could adopt to further Chinese state goals. The Meiji attached a nationalist meaning to migration and treated it as an extension of the state's economic and political objectives.<sup>20</sup> With the decline of the Qing empire and Japan's rise as a superpower following the successes in the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), many Chinese intellectuals and statesmen looked to Meiji Japan as a model of governance and modernity.<sup>21</sup> The Meiji Restoration ushered in a new period of modernization and national development, and it also transformed Japan into an imperial power, with the goal of expanding throughout Asia and to other parts of the world, including Brazil. Meiji leaders believed that in order for Japan to be considered a “civilized” nation, it would have to follow the European practice of colonization.<sup>22</sup> Japanese standards for modernization may be viewed as having been “subject to the approval or legitimacy granted by the West or the White.”<sup>23</sup> However, Japan's emergence as an Asian superpower, and its expansion into former European colonial outposts in Asia, challenged Western dominance and the “mystique of white supremacy” on which European and American expansion depended.<sup>24</sup> The Meiji empire was heavily invested in establishing the racial and cultural uniqueness of the Yamato race as having a divine lineage with morally superior virtues.<sup>25</sup> A secret study conducted in 1942 and 1943 and prepared in the civilian bureaucracy, titled “Global Policy with the Yamato Race as Nucleus,” contended that it was the destiny of the Japanese empire—the Yamato race—to become the “leading race” in Asia and the rest of the world.<sup>26</sup> Meiji expansionist ideas consolidated around the notion of a superior Yamato race and culture to drive Japanese militarism and occupation throughout Asia; its colonial takeover of former Western colonies, and the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity project was not to “invade” but to liberate Asia from Western domination.<sup>27</sup> However, Japanese military leaders made expansion itself into an act of racial and cultural purification in the form of annexation, colonial rule, and mass extermination.<sup>28</sup>

The “Yellow Peril” discourse emerged in 1895 when Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany coined the expression in reference to Japan's victory over China in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), also known as the Yellow War. However, as Tchen notes, the tropology of the Yellow Peril formed part of a

larger social malaise, so it would be incorrect to attribute an entire discourse to any one person.<sup>29</sup> The Yellow Peril expressed the threat of Asian domination over the West and homogenized ideas about the Japanese and the Chinese. It became a metonymy for Japanese imperialism as well as anti-Chinese labor. The Yellow Peril produced one-dimensional Asian political subjects who posed a threat to Western military power and economic domination. The Yellow Peril discourse provides an example of a racial regime that deployed racial difference for geopolitical and economic objectives. Visual and print cultures played a critical role in disseminating depictions of Asians as a threatening yellow race. Such constructions of racial difference were powerful political weapons that enabled the “psychological distancing” that facilitated ethnic cleansing, genocide, and killing during military confrontation.<sup>30</sup>

Fin-de-siècle and early twentieth-century anti-Japanese images circulating in Brazilian print culture mirrored prevalent anti-Chinese discourse, which depicted Chinese people as racially inferior, unhygienic, and backward.<sup>31</sup> Anti-Chinese attitudes influenced general perceptions about the Japanese, and the Japanese government worked concertedly to change those negative views through diplomacy and by providing economic and political support to Japanese immigrants. Japanese diplomats and immigrants also changed perceptions through appropriating and performing whiteness in order to further Japanese state goals. In 1894, Japanese diplomat Sho Nemoto arrived in Brazil and touted Japanese subjects as the solution to Brazil’s labor shortage and path to national progress; contrary to Europeans, Japanese settlers would be hard working, quiet, and eager to become Brazilian.<sup>32</sup> The year 1908 marked the official start of Japanese immigration to Brazil. The first vessel to travel between Japan and Brazil, *Kasato-Maru*, provided transport for 781 passengers. The fifty-one-day voyage prepared them for life in Brazil through screening short instructional films to prepare them for arrival and by offering Portuguese lessons.<sup>33</sup> The passengers’ journey marked the official and bilaterally sanctioned start of Japanese immigration to Brazil.<sup>34</sup> Upon arrival, Brazilians were impressed to see them wearing European clothes that the Japanese had purchased in Japanese factories in Japan.<sup>35</sup> These efforts pointed to a larger campaign among Japanese elites to portray Japan as a “white” country.<sup>36</sup> In all these ways and more, Japanese immigration was different from the experience of immigrants from China who confronted similarly harsh conditions and treatment but lacked

government protection. The Japanese settlers had the powerful Meiji government supporting them, and the empire was quite present in their daily lives on the other side of the world. In 1908, a Japanese diplomat mediated a labor dispute between laborers and a plantation owner, and within a year, Japanese public-private firms created Japanese-only colonies in São Paulo State.<sup>37</sup> The Japanese colonies had school systems that followed the Japanese school year, and the government sent them textbooks and other supplies.<sup>38</sup> The Japanese state had close watch and control over the Japanese colonies since their productivity was a great source of revenue for the growing military empire, and the government played a critical role in transforming negative images of the Japanese to facilitate Japanese state goals in Brazil.<sup>39</sup>

### *China in Brazil*

The Qing government addressed its weakened political and economic state by ordering a series of information-gathering missions to Japan, the United States, Europe, and the Americas. Its leaders were hoping to gain intelligence about the condition of overseas Chinese workers and assess modernization possibilities in agriculture, industry, and commerce. In 1876, the Qing government officially began to send regular missions abroad, ordering envoys to periodically send diary entries and reports that addressed such topics as canalization, military development, industry, literature and culture, and geopolitical relations.<sup>40</sup> The missions were divided into Eastern and Western *youli* (investigative) groups, whose findings would bring a global perspective to the insular Qing view. These missions opened paths for sending new waves of overseas Chinese populations abroad to mobilize an emerging Chinese national consciousness in the political realm and through economic entrepreneurialism abroad.<sup>41</sup>

Fu Yunlong, senior secretary in the Ministry of War, led the Dongyang (or Eastern ocean) group, responsible for investigating six countries: Japan, the United States, Canada, Peru, Brazil, and Cuba.<sup>42</sup> One of Fu Yunlong's main concerns was to make haste on lenient immigration policies in the face of the global effects of US Chinese exclusion policies.<sup>43</sup> Latin America symbolized a new start for the expansion of China via the export of labor, which could greatly benefit China. Totalling sixty-eight volumes and illustrated maps, the diary entries of Fu Yunlong provide a wealth of materials

that outstrips the contributions of his peers (Figure 2.1).<sup>44</sup> Except for a few preexisting notions about Brazil as a savage country, until the turn of the twentieth century, the Qing knew almost nothing about Brazil.<sup>45</sup> Fu Yunlong's travel writings and maps played a pivotal role in transforming insular Qing views and attitudes regarding Chinese emigration.<sup>46</sup> Fu Yunlong debunked existing ideas about Brazil and instead attributed them to the *Zhi fang waiji* (*Chronicle of Foreign Lands*), a text created in 1623 during the end of the Ming dynasty, in which Indigenous Brazilians were depicted with the negative rhetoric of the European conquest tropes, as uncivilized and unlearned barbarians. They were portrayed as naked hunters and cannibals, innocent and illiterate.<sup>47</sup> Although Fu Yunlong rejected those negative images as falsities, he emphasized favorable aspects about the Brazilian landscape and Indigenous people that created a positive image of Brazil—the Brazilians' love of leisure, eating, spending time with family, and their great affinity for swimming in the rivers. He was clear to emphasize that they did not labor; rather, black people performed all labor.<sup>48</sup>

Because Brazil was a young nation and in the initial stages of immigration, he estimated that it could accommodate 200,000 to 300,000 Chinese workers, immigration on a scale without parallel anywhere else.<sup>49</sup> Countering well-known accounts of the exploitative treatment of overseas Chinese workers in places like Cuba and the United States, he instead portrayed labor conditions favorably by painting a one-dimensional, romanticized portrait of the conditions of enslaved people, stating that Brazilians rarely treated slaves cruelly and social mobility existed. They were given room and board; they could plant and sell crops, the proceeds from which many people used to purchase manumissions; and once they attained liberty, they became citizens. These views sold a vision of Brazil as a vast land of opportunity, ripe to take in China's peasant agriculturalist population. By romanticizing slavery and projecting the view of Indigenous people as a leisurely class, Fu Yunlong created a portrait of Brazil and its inhabitants that depicted the land's agricultural possibilities, extractive industries, and its potential to reward hardworking immigrants. His written and illustrated portrayals of the Brazilian landscape and people drove forward the idea that it was a hospitable place for Chinese settlement. Emphasizing available lands and favorable labor conditions, he divided Brazil's population into *minzu* (ethnos): (1) Chinese, (2) Portuguese, (3) British, French, Italian, and Swiss, (4) emancipated black slaves who became citizens, (5) Indig-



FIGURE 2.1. Fu Yunlong’s travel map of Brazil. 1901. Double-leaved book in case with folded map (26 cm). Source: Fu Yunlong. Youli baxi guo tu jing, 10 volumes. China.

enous, and (6) miscellaneous groups without clear lineage.<sup>50</sup> Fu Yunlong’s classifications of minzu suggest that ethnic and racial identities were not coterminous with nationalism and statism for him but in flux.<sup>51</sup> As he tried to make meaning out of Brazil’s diverse population, he did not use language bound to a collective memory about Brazil’s racial and eugenic ideologies to describe Brazilian racial identities such as mulato, a commonly used but

derogatory word that described people of mixed-race parentage. Instead, he created a miscellaneous category for people “without clear lineage.” He included emancipated black slaves, whose liberty transformed them into *minzu*, citizens, and thus members of the national body. He did not give meaning to Chinese ethnicity in terms of Brazil’s existing racial caste hierarchy; rather, he created a separate *minzu* category for the Chinese in the Brazilian landscape. He was producing a new understanding of an emerging Chinese national consciousness that intertwined his understanding of *minzu* with circumoceanic memories of racial formation, including the processual transference of colonial racial ideologies into notions of racialized nationalisms.

In a mission to Brazil in 1889, he learned that overseas Chinese people were quite mobile; they moved along a vast Chinese migrant network in search of better economic opportunities.<sup>52</sup> For example, his writings about encounters with the Chinese who settled in Rio reveal that at one point, there had been more than a thousand settlers in Rio, but that number had fallen to approximately two hundred by 1889.<sup>53</sup> The decrease in the Chinese population conveys a larger picture about Brazil as a temporary stop-over along a larger route that connected Cuba, Peru, San Francisco, and other places, attesting to serial migration patterns that occurred once local economic opportunities dried up or were usurped.<sup>54</sup> Among the Chinese who remained in Rio, some had opened businesses such as groceries or restaurants.<sup>55</sup>

For Fu Yunlong, developing a strong sense of Chinese nationalism would also unify the Chinese who were living away from China. Maintaining patriotic ties to China also meant securing economic contributions to China from workers aboard. Diplomat Xue Fucheng noted that the Chinese who were living in San Francisco were already sending millions of dollars to China each year. If they continued sending remittances in that quantity, the overseas population would equalize China’s trade deficit.<sup>56</sup> While China benefited from receiving the earnings of the overseas Chinese, these plans proved unfavorable to host countries and served as tinder for fueling anti-Chinese sentiment.

Fu Yunlong’s plan to expand Chinese political and economic objectives to Brazil was not unique among his ilk. The prominent Chinese scholar and political thinker Kang Youwei, for example, shared similar visions for Brazil. By 1895, China, weakened by many things including wars, had begun ced-

ing territories to foreign powers. Kang Youwei, a leading Chinese scholar and major figure in the development of the modern Chinese state, was pre-occupied that the Chinese civilization might soon be extinguished. For him, Brazil offered a possible solution for preserving China, wherein overseas Chinese could build a new China in Brazil.<sup>57</sup> Colonial ideas about racial whitening influenced Kang Youwei's racialized notions of national identity and created a paradox. As Liang Zhan notes, on the one hand, Kang Youwei believed that Chinese emigrants could create a new China in Brazil. On the other hand, the project of whitening threatened to assimilate the Chinese to the point of extinction.<sup>58</sup> While racial whitening ideology was a main factor, Brazilian abolitionists feared that the Chinese would enter into the hands of voracious proslavery advocates who would consume them without accountability. The late Qing was too weak to extend political protection over the Chinese in Brazil. Japanese immigrants thus became a favorable option since the Meiji government was powerful and could invest in Brazil by way of investing in permanent settlements for overseas Japanese subjects.<sup>59</sup>

The dream of building a new China in Brazil was also apparent in the writings of Chinese diplomat Liu Shixun. He visited Brazil in 1909, one year after the official start of Japanese immigration to Brazil in 1908, attesting to ongoing Chinese interest in investigating Japanese economic and political expansion via migration schemes. He called it a "pity" that China should sit back and watch Japan seize land in Brazil where the Japanese were successfully cultivating rice, beans, coffee, and other crops.<sup>60</sup> Liu traveled to Brazil on a special mission to establish diplomatic relations between Brazil and China, which actually implied mutual interest in establishing commercial treaties that included redirecting Chinese migration from North America to South America.<sup>61</sup> Liu, along with a delegation of Chinese diplomats, visited Rio de Janeiro, Petrópolis, São Paulo, and Santos to assess the prospects of Chinese settlement.

In 1914, Liu established the first Chinese legation in Rio de Janeiro. Shortly after, diplomat Wu Guangzhuo, in support of Liu's aims for Chinese immigration to Brazil, sent a report to the Chinese Ministry of the Interior. Wu's missives echoed the Meiji government's views regarding migration as a mode of economic and political expansion. In a correspondence dated January 29, 1918, Wu advocated sending Chinese laborers to Brazil.<sup>62</sup> He argued that the outbreak of World War I had caused many European immigrants to return to their countries to fulfill military duties and that at

the end of the war, these European nations would have a shortage of labor and require the returned migrants to remain, exacerbating the labor shortage in Brazil. Praising the success of Japanese immigration and settlement in São Paulo, Wu noted that there was room for China to replicate those efforts, since the labor shortage in Europe would inadvertently provide the means for Chinese laborers to settle in Brazil, thus achieving the goal of economic expansion. Since Japanese immigrants were limited to settling in São Paulo State, Wu used this point to emphasize the possibilities of directing Chinese *yizhi* (immigration/colonization) to other states like Bahia, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, Paraná, and Rio Grande do Sul.<sup>63</sup>

Diplomatic attempts at promoting Chinese labor were successful to a small extent. Small waves of Chinese immigration to Brazil happened throughout the twentieth century. Immigrants settled in places like Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, as evidenced by the establishment of various social aid and cultural centers. For example, in 1919, about one hundred merchants and businessmen, including restaurant and laundry owners, established the Centro Social Chinês do Rio de Janeiro (Chinese Social Center of Rio de Janeiro) located near the city center (Figure 2.2). Today its members maintain strong ties with the Taiwanese government.<sup>64</sup> Ultimately, however, the Chinese statesmen's interests in replicating the scale of Japan's migration and settlement model in Brazil were not realized.

Regardless, these ideas regarding Chinese migrant labor reveal the emergence of a global hierarchy of race in which colonial racial hierarchies transferred to new racialized national categories. These identities informed an emerging Chinese national consciousness as well, which prevailed among leaders of Chinese Nationalist and Communist Party circles alike when deliberating the future of China. The movement toward Chinese nationalist unification signified a rejection of imperialism from foreign nations, as well as from the Manchurian Qing empire that had colonized the Han Chinese people.<sup>65</sup> In 1924, Sun Yat-sen delivered *Sanmin zhuyi* (Three Principles of the People), in which he questioned how it could be that China, with its great population and oldest civilization, its "single, pure race," could have become victim to such indignity: "The rest of the world is the carving knife and the serving dish, while we are the fish and the meat. Our position now is extremely perilous . . . we face a tragedy the loss of our country and the destruction of our race."<sup>66</sup> In the same year, Li Dazhao, cofounder of the Chinese Communist Party, condemned white supremacy and Western cul-



FIGURE 2.2. Street placard of the Chinese Social Center of Rio de Janeiro. June 15, 2017. Source: Photograph by the author.

tural hegemony, repudiating “the white peoples as the pioneers of culture in the world; they place themselves in a superior position and look down on other races as inferior.”<sup>67</sup>

### *Abolition and Sinophobia*

In Brazil, mixed views toward the Chinese existed, and terms such as *yellow race*, *yellow labor*, and *coolie race* were used interchangeably in discussions over Chinese labor. Opponents echoed the rhetoric circulating in the United States that the Chinese would bring new forms of unfree labor. While proponents like the Baron of Cotegipe, a proslavery advocate, favored Chinese labor for precisely the same reasons. Brazilian political leaders, intellectuals, writers, and artists created a discourse about Chineseness to participate in political and economic debates over Chinese labor. Late nineteenth-century Brazilian abolitionist cultural production is replete with depictions of Qing officials (*mandarim* in Portuguese) and Chinese laborers who figured into emancipation narratives as liberty’s antithetical Other.

Interestingly, anticolonial sentiment did not always mean anti-Chinese sentiment, but it conveyed the precarious labor conditions that would confront the Chinese due to proslavery advocates who viewed unfree Chinese labor as a solution to the labor crisis anticipated by abolition. For example, Henrique Carlos Ribeiro Lisboa, diplomat and former secretary of the Brazilian special mission to China of 1880 and adversary of the coolie trade, wrote a detailed account of his mission in a book published in 1888, *A China e os chins: Recordações de viagem (China and the Chinese: Travel Memoirs)*. Lisboa wrote the Chinese into a relational and global history of slavery’s racial regimes. The book’s text and images present a deceptively realistic account about the land and people of China. Lisboa’s observations were part of an information-gathering mission to China. Even though he attempted to debunk stereotypes about the Chinese, including the widespread idea that all the Chinese belonged to the Mongol race, he meticulously names, classifies, and categorizes the Chinese as racialized, ethnicized subaltern others. During the time of Lisboa’s publication, expressions like “Mongol race” fueled Yellow Peril fears. Words like *Mongolian* conjured up powerful and undefeatable figures like Genghis Khan, but *Mongolism* was used to signal congenital disease.<sup>68</sup> Such misconceptions or, in Lisboa’s words, “vulgarized opinions” and “crass errors” might have originated as early as the

thirteenth century in Venetian merchant Marco Polo's accounts of his visits to China while it was under the rule of the Mongol empire.<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, Lisboa could not imagine the Chinese as equals. He positioned them within the field of what Mary Louise Pratt calls the imperial eye.<sup>70</sup> His accounts were characteristic of the ethnographic projects of the nineteenth century that decidedly contributed to the archives of the colonial imagination, which Appadurai observes, were undeniably "classificatory, taxonomic, penal, and somatic."<sup>71</sup> Within the shifting global order of abolition and the turn to a new international division of labor, he was also negotiating their place in Brazil within globally constituted racialized national categories. Lisboa's contradictory treatment of the Chinese as either assimilable immigrants or excludable others was symptomatic of existing views concerning whether they would unravel or consolidate a national symbolic order itself an aspect of a shifting geopolitical order.

Lisboa sided with abolitionists, and thus opposed coolie labor, which was incompatible with the belief in whitening. The chapters "Chinese Emigration" and "China and the Chinamen" provide a detailed analysis of migration within China and abroad. He defined the latter as having two natures: contract labor and free labor. He explained that contract labor or "yellow traffic" produced the same deplorable conditions that had occurred with African slavery and then denounced the slave trade's atrocities as "crimes of Western civilization" and European colonization.<sup>72</sup> The chapter includes an illustrated scene, titled "The Bleeding Coolies in America" (Figure 2.3). The words beneath the title indicate that it is a Chinese drawing. The scene depicts dozens of victims of yellow trafficking in front of a plantation house. Two plump men wearing European-style clothing sit on the elevated porch, and below them on the ground sit groups of coolies whose arms and legs are tied and impossibly contorted. In the right-hand corner of the image stands an overseer dressed in a Western-style coat, pants, and hat. He is holding a knife and looks as if he is about to cut off the hand of a coolie depicted with the archetypical characteristics of a hair bun and a loose flowing knot button shirt that differentiate his race and class from the overseer. Through this report and illustration, Lisboa attempted to offer fellow abolitionists another perspective on the global Chinese question. For him, the issue of Brazil's future as a nation was not only about whether the so-called yellow race would be suitable for a whitening national identity. He urged his readers to find concern in the plantation economies that formed the basis of the economic and social structure of Brazilian society, and warned about the unsustainability of continued dependence on enslaved and slave-like labor whose

ends would lead to economic crisis.<sup>73</sup> It is not a coincidence that he published his book in 1888, the same year that Brazil declared the emancipation of all slaves. Ultimately, for Lisboa, liberty and free labor were not possibilities if the first republic's wealth depended on the economic demands of the plantation and ongoing forms of slavery in disguised form.

Blurring the line between art and politics, contributors to the Rio de Janeiro-based abolitionist journal *Revista Illustrada* (*Revista Ilustrada* in modern Portuguese) responded to Chinese immigration in ways that shed light on the emergence of a new political consciousness regarding race, liberty, and national citizenry. Founded in 1876, the widely read journal had a twenty-one-year run, issuing its final publication in 1897.<sup>74</sup> The *Revista Illustrada* deployed humor to put forward and comment on the most pressing events of the day. Angelo Agostini, an Italian immigrant from Piedmont, was the founder of the journal and the artist responsible for most of its illustrations. The journal's collaborators included immortalized names of the Brazilian literary tradition, among them Machado de Assis and Arthur Azevedo. They were acclaimed and well regarded in their day, bolstering the journal's reputation and popularity. Political satire, cartoons, and writings enable us to see how artists and writers deployed a discourse of Chineseness to oppose the proslavery sentiments of the seigniorial colonial elite class whose agendas often did not coincide with the general public's welfare.

Scattered throughout different issues of the *Revista Illustrada* are caricatures of Chinese laborers as well as Qing officials. They appear among illustrations of the Indian and the Slave. Allegorically, indigeneity stands in for colonial territory, which must be liberated and emptied in order for newly arriving immigrants to settle and constitute an independent state. Blackness personifies slavery, and Chineseness embodies unfree labor. Such were the antithetical Others that represented the barriers to liberty and nationhood. Racial representations are a critical site for examining modern liberalism's emancipation narratives, wherein the superior political soul is conceptually possible only within a dialectical relationship to its antithesis, the hypothetical slave or coolie.<sup>75</sup> Recognizing how constructions of Chineseness have been deployed across heterogeneous states of liberalism that unfolded in synchronic orders of modernity/coloniality requires reckoning with the polycentric statist and economic liberalization projects that discourses of Chinese racialization have served.

The illustration, "Chinaman as a Transition," advanced the idea that, rather than helping to whiten Brazil, the Chinese would transform the country into a



FIGURE 2.3. “The Bleeding Coolies in America.” Source: Henrique Carlos Ribeiro Lisboa, *A China e os chins: Recordações de viagem* (Montevideo: Typographia a vapor de A. Godel, 1888): 345.

predominantly yellow race. Four caricatures—a black slave, a Chinese laborer, a white agriculturalist, and a mulato—convey the idea that the Chinese would act as an economic and racial bridge between blackness and whiteness (Figure 2.4). The *Revista Illustrada*’s image suggests that the Chinese might take the place of the mulato in serving as an intermediary between blacks and whites. The Chinese could “dilute” the “negative interferences” of the black slave, thereby facilitating the process of creating a lighter, freer Brazil. The captions state: “In regard to the idea of bringing the Chinaman here as a transition . . . will it be the transition of color between black and white toward a yellow hue? In this case, the mulatos have the right to protest . . . and with reason.” Off to the side is the drawing of an outraged mulato—for what will happen to him? Chinese miscegenation is depicted as a threat to the mulato figure, the ideological bridge between blackness and whiteness. As the caption implies, Chinese labor brings

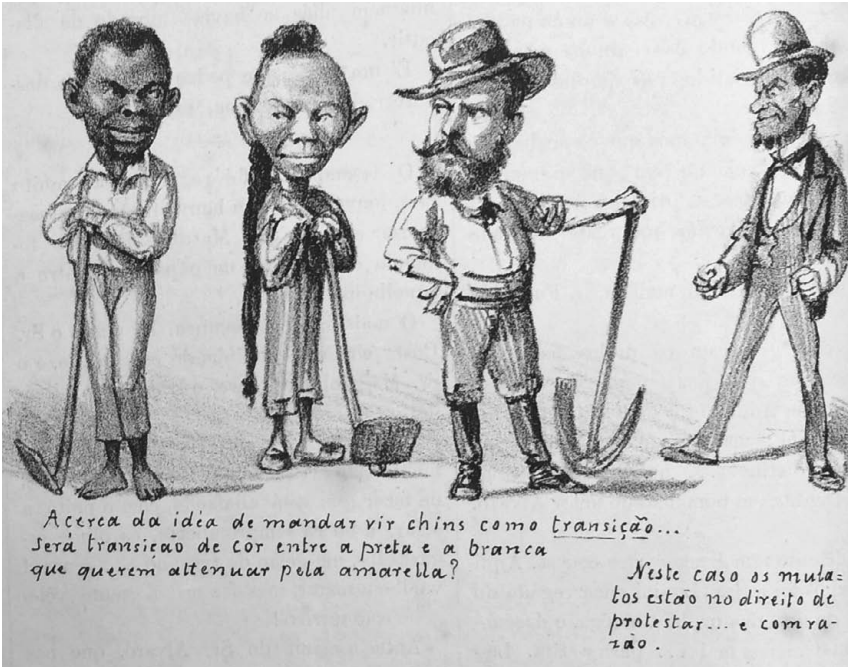


FIGURE 2.4. “Chinaman as a Transition,” *Revista Illustrada*, no. 120 (1878).

Source: Rare Book Collection, Latin American Library, Tulane University. Reprinted with permission.

with it the virile threat of Chinese sexuality that could biologically transform everyone into an unfree yellow race.

The turn from emancipation to immigration aided in enforcing the eradication of black and Indigenous people. The drawing sarcastically titled “September 7—Brazil Celebrating Its Independence” declares that under the Brazilian empire, the church and state hold “Native” Brazil captive (Figure 2.5). The drawing allegorizes Brazil as a “Native” male whose right leg is chained to the state and his left leg to the church. To achieve independence, indigeneity—symbolic of a colonial captive state—would have to be eradicated and replaced with new life. The figuration of the Indigenous man portrays anti-Brazilian imperial sentiment as well as the struggle for land and liberation, and it also shows that it is inconceivable to imagine a place for indigeneity within ideas of Brazilian national independence.<sup>76</sup>

The illustration depicts Brazilian independence by presenting a turn in racial

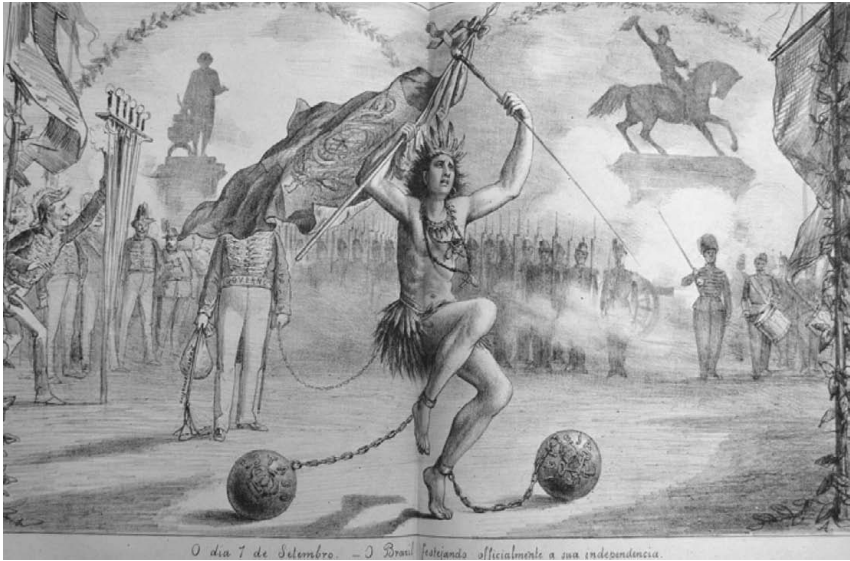


FIGURE 2.5. “September 7—Brazil Celebrating Its Independence,” *Revista Illustrada*, no. 34 (1876). Source: Rare Book Collection, Latin American Library, Tulane University. Reprinted with permission.

ideas, showing what Doris Sommer describes as Brazil’s “two-faced indigenism,” in which cultural elements of indigeneity were absorbed into national narratives, while Indigenous people were facing eradication and land dispossession.<sup>77</sup> This two-faced treatment of the Indigenous population in Brazil might also be understood as forming part of the “settler-colonial tendency,” in which contests for land are also a contest for life.<sup>78</sup> Brazil’s perfidious treatment of the Indigenous population is apparent in Brazilian literary romanticism. For example, José Alencar, a fervent advocate of slavery, wrote *Iracema* (1865), whose title is an anagram for America.<sup>79</sup> In this origin story about the founding of Ceará, in Northeastern Brazil, Iracema dies and leaves behind a son, who becomes the first Cearense. Before Iracema dies, she gives her son to his father, Martim, a white European Christian warrior. Her body, sickly and weak, cannot survive the road to the nation’s future. This allegory of her death transforms indigeneity, and Indigenous struggles for land and the actual enslavement and elimination of Indigenous people, into an affective bond, a “bitter *saudade*” (nostalgia) that forges a national imaginary on the disappeared site of the Indigenous body.<sup>80</sup>

In the story sketch titled, “*Colonização*” (“Colonization”), indigeneity stands

in for the disease-infested Brazilian empire (Figure 2.6). The images introduce the idea that Brazil, represented as an Indigenous woman's body, is unfit for European immigrants. The diseased Brazil warns European settlers to keep at bay. The illustration narrates the story of a European family that immigrates to Brazil. The narrative begins in Europe, where an elderly man is blessing the father of two young children. Standing beside them, among a few bundles that are their worldly possessions, is their mother, who is crying into the shoulder of another woman. Their dog is equally sorrowful in this scene of departure with no return—a tender farewell to the emigrants whose lives in one land would end to find sustenance in another. Upon arriving at Guanabara Bay, the family is hopeful. The father's hand motions upward to all the possibilities for the future. Their bundles are replaced with farming tools. These European settlers represent Brazil's future, a new working class that will build and whiten the country. However, these utopian ideas are not so easily fulfilled, as the frames indicate. Soon the city of Rio de Janeiro, depicted as an Indigenous woman, will transmit to them the miasma of yellow fever, represented as a snake coiled around a tree that bears the Brazilian empire's rotten fruits. The settlers' fate is grim. The last two scenes show that this diseased Brazil has orphaned the children, who are left alone kneeling before their parents' graves. Meanwhile, relatives in Europe receive the announcement of death that concretizes the finality of their departure. The longed-for immigrants who could whiten Brazil's colonial and enslaved past, and thus propel it into nationhood, could not survive Brazil's backward conditions, defined in terms of its failure to accommodate the ideal European nuclear family.

The drawing titled "A colonização chinesa" ("Chinese Colonization") advises against racial and cultural miscegenation with the Chinese, warning that Chinese labor would only contribute to already existing problems in Brazil (Figure 2.7). While the images give caution regarding Chinese labor's negative effects, they also turn a critical gaze to Brazil's colonial history. The Indigenous figures portray a cannibalistic, diseased Brazil that literally eats the Chinese. Chinese labor is shown as precarious, untrustworthy, and unfree. One frame shows that Chinese laborers have committed suicide. Another depicts them stealing farm animals, portraying the fear that they will take away local wealth. Yet the cartoons are also critical of the agriculturalists, rendered as slave drivers; one stands high above a circle of Chinese men whose queues have been tied to a pole. They are chained while they are forced to perform field labor. Collectively, these images configured Asian, African, and Indigenous bodies as the antithesis of lib-



FIGURE 2.6. “Colonization,” *Revista Illustrada*, no. 12 (1876). Source: Rare Book Collection, Latin American Library, Tulane University. Reprinted with permission.

erty: the currency for the transactions of dispossession and exclusion structured in liberalism’s dialectic of freedom.<sup>81</sup>

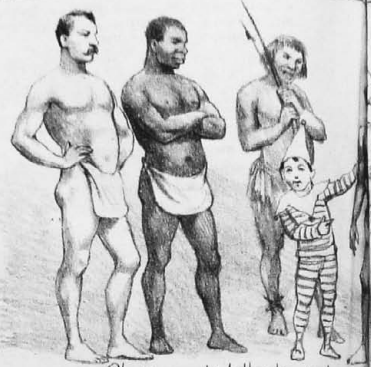
Published six months after the *Lei Áurea* abolished slavery, the illustration titled “Brazil-chim” (“Brazil-Chinaman”; *chim* is a derogatory word in Portuguese that referred to Chinese immigrants; its closest English equivalent is Chinaman) addresses the ongoing issue of unfree Chinese labor and conveys the viewpoint that the Chinese will transform Brazil into a degenerative, hybrid Brazil-Chinaman (Figure 2.8). The first frame in the third row shows that the Chinese would not whiten the country. Instead, they will assimilate with the black population. The images show Chinese men who have become wild from dancing samba. Their uncontrollable, erect queues emit a political and sexual message while they recklessly dance with Bahian women. The caption reads: “This samba is half Bahiano, half-Chinese, what a fun and splendid thing. Well, it is decided. The Chinaman will come.”<sup>82</sup> At this time, samba was discriminatorily viewed—as were other forms of African diasporic cultural production—and restricted in public spaces; thus, the scene of Chinese men *sambando*, dancing samba, is meant as a sarcastic portrayal of a morally suspect activity. The next frame provides another example of the contradiction between what is written



Uma das questões mais importantes da actualidade, é a immigração chinesa. Contra a opinião da maior parte dos collegas, declaramos-nos favoráveis a essa introdução de chins que devem salvar a patria, na opinião dos illustres lavradores N.B. (Continuamos sempre no gozo da mais perfeita san... etc. etc.)



Jim, somos apologistas dos chins, porque não conhecemos raça mais bella, typo mais gracioso, mais sympathico! E que bellas cores!



Plasticamente fallando, conhecemos raças bellas, mais robustas, mais varonias! As raças ficam mesquinhas e rachiticas nos filhos do Celeste Imperio! Ah! o pais do celeste! Que poesia! O governo não



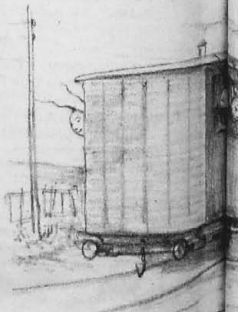
Não sempre os chins estarão de accordo com os fazendeiros sobre certos compromissos, pois que em geral, elles tem grande predilecção para se porem ao fresco, sem olhar para o prazo dos contractos...



Crentes de que resistiram na terra d'elles, os coolis enforcam-se por meio do tal rabicho, convencidos de que esse systema de fuga não convida ninguem a segui-los, empregam-no quasi sempre com a maior sem cerimonia.



Nas cidades é que não os queremos. É em nome da paz domestica das familias e socoço dos gallinheiros, desde já protestamos contra esses comedores de arroz. Isto de saborear canjas a custa dos outros... temos conversado!



Logo que chegarmos para a rosa...

FIGURE 2.7. "Chinese Colonization," *Revista Illustrada*, no. 558 (1883). Rare Book Collection, Latin American Library, Tulane University. Reprinted with permission.



O Chin é um pouco descansado é verdade, mas incontestavelmente, ninguém trabalha melhor do que elle... em abanar-se

Porém confiamos muito na intelligente vigilancia dos nossos lavradores. Varios sistemas se inventarao para impedir os Chins de se deslucirem por occasião do trabalho. Os Jrs Jannay, Telles e outros que inventarao tantas machinas para beneficiar o café, inventarao tambem outras applicadas aos cultivadores desse abençoado grão.

melhores colonos!



E ja que os fazendeiros querem chins... pois l'omem chins.

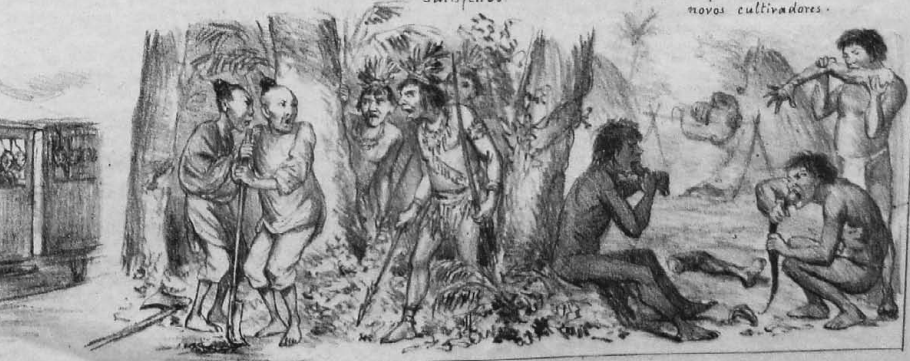


O que é que nos queremos afinal? É que os lavradores fiquem satisfeitos!



E, como em negocio de lavoura, elles entendem mais do que nós, é possível que o café se dê bem com os seus novos cultivadores.

de que ará' entre colonos.



incontinenti

Um excellente lugar é o sertão das provincias do Alto-Grosso ou Alto-Amazonas. Excellente lugar para cultivar a terra e o espirito dos habitantes da mesma, que se acha muito inculto.

Estamos certos, que estes dariam provas do maior reconhecimento.

# BRAZIL



O sr. barão de Cotegipe andava desgostoso e desanimado, por se considerar o homem mais impopular do Brazil,

quando, de repente, alguns amigos lhe vieram suggerir a idéa dos chins, não só como meio de auxiliar a lavoura, mas também de resultando seguro para a sua popularidade!

A lavoura ficaria com os chins, mais submissos do mesmo porço. E



e a sonhar com o chime!



S. Ex.<sup>a</sup> comprehendeu-se tanto do assumpto, que pondo-se bio tudo do chime, em frente de um espelho, exclamou: - Estes diabos até se parecem comnosco! (Comnosco, vá elle!)

Ficou delivante. - Preciso chime, venha o chime, a salvação possível fóra do



É um samba, meio bahiano, meio chinês, que coisa divertida e esplanada! Está pois decidido, o chime vem,



trabalha,



enriquece,



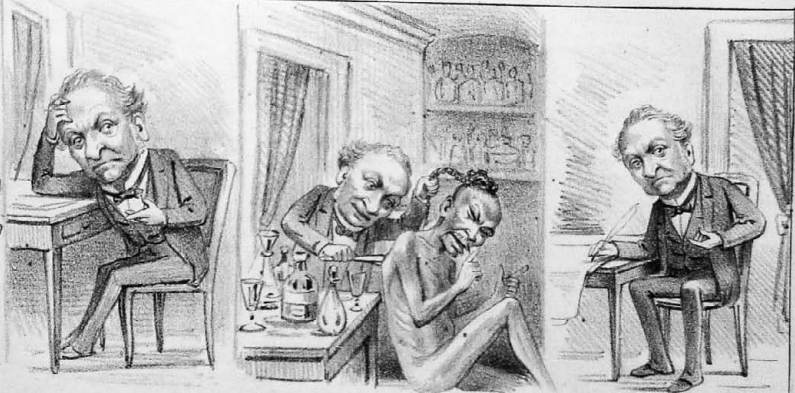
enriquece-110

FIGURE 2.8. "Brazil-Chinaman," *Revista Illustrada*, no. 523 (1888). Rare Book Collection, Latin American Library, Tulane University. Reprinted with permission.

# CHIM



...e, tendo trabalhado antigos e quasi pe-  
ria a questão da cor...



É o Sr. de Cotegipe come-  
sua a pensar no chim,

a estudar o chim,

a calcular o chim,



É demais, variatio affectat! Como  
teve ser agradável mudar os hábitos e  
de costumes,



Comendo arroz com dois  
pauzinhos



E apreciando um fricido de langarixas  
com minhocas recheadas em torno.



é uma felicidade geral!



Vencidos pelo numero, re-  
solvemos todos mudan-  
nos para a outra vida...



Ficam só no Brazil o Sr. Cotegipe e os  
chims. Estes, no delirio do entusiasmo mo-  
proclamam-no mandarin Schim-  
Scham-fo 2º imperador d'esta cotegibica  
China... Um pagode!

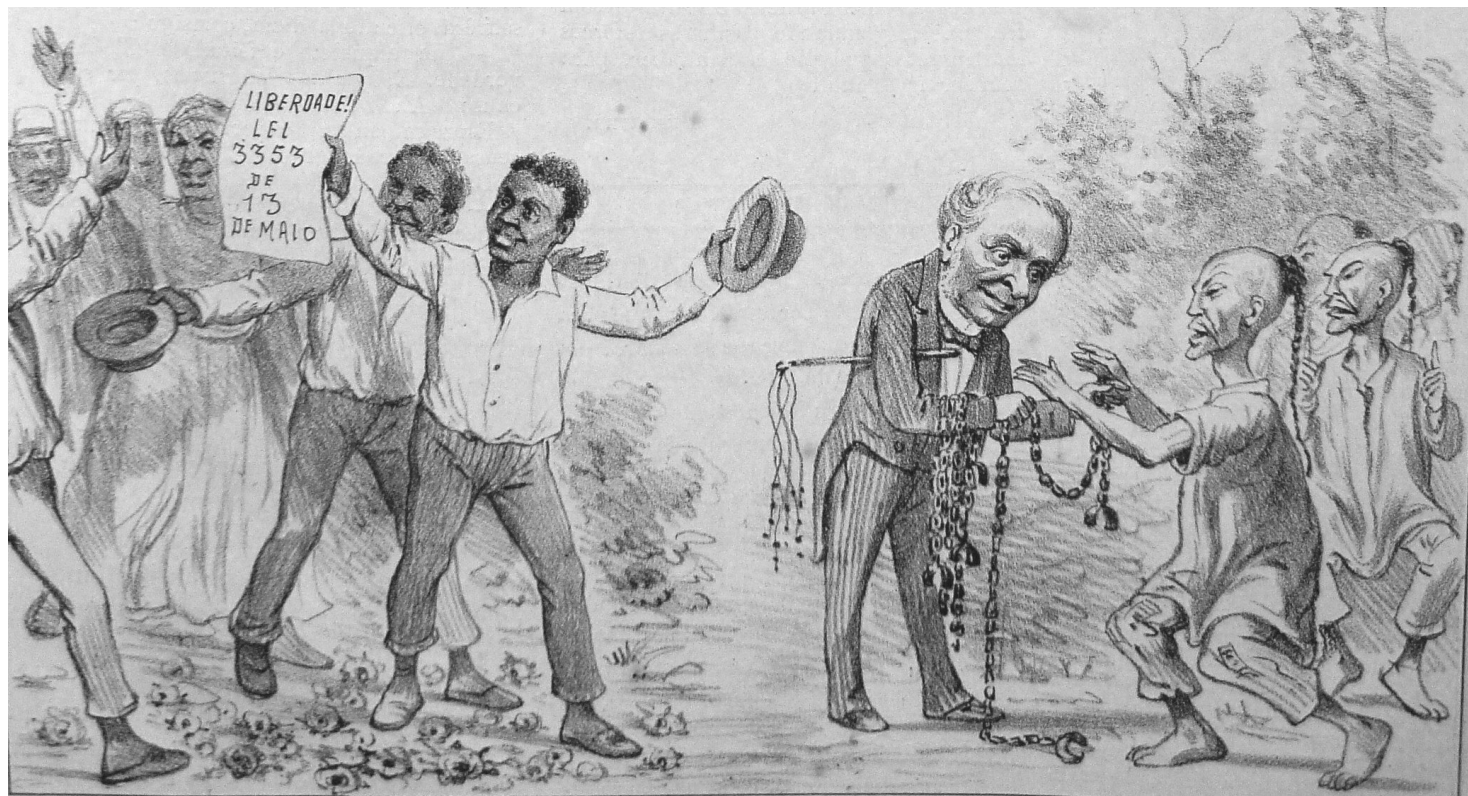


FIGURE 2.9. "Liberty," *Revista Illustrada*, no. 522 (1888). Source: Rare Book Collection, Latin American Library, Tulane University. Reprinted with permission.

and what is happening. A Chinese man is shown stealing farm animals, but the caption says “he works.” Following that scene is a picture of an impoverished white Brazilian man begging a heavyset Chinese man for money. Underneath the caption it says, “The Chinese will enrich us.”

The last frame of the series depicts a Chinese version of the Baron of Cotegipe, a zealous antiabolitionist and the head of the Council of Ministers during the last years of the Brazilian empire (1885–1888). His support for unfree Chinese labor was also aimed at maintaining the aristocratic order and preserving the power of the empire. For all his advocacy for Chinese immigration that the images invoke, he has gotten his wish of bringing China to Brazil. Even he does not escape the fate of degenerative miscegenation, shown as having acquired Chinese biological and cultural traits. Finally, the caption warns that Brazil will become Chinese if the Baron succeeds in establishing a Chinese labor migration scheme with types like the fictionalized mandarin Tchim-Tcham Fó. The Baron of Cotegipe, it warns, will turn Brazil into his version of an enslaved China—“this Cotegipe-ified China.” If this venture is successful, Brazil would degenerate into a hybrid Brazil-Chinaman, thereby directly hindering the formation of a white liberal republic. The figure titled “Liberdade,” published on November 11, 1888, literally and figuratively conveys the notion that Chinese laborers would serve as a substitute for black slavery. Liberated black slaves cheer while the Baron of Cotegipe cuffs the wrists of the newly enslaved coolies (Figure 2.9).

On November 4, 1909, a photograph with the title, “The Chinese in Rio,” and the caption, “Are we in Peking or Rio?” appeared in Rio de Janeiro’s *Gazeta de Notícias* (Figure 2.10). The reporter claims to have found Chinese settlers living and cultivating tea in Rio’s Botanical Garden, nearly one hundred years after João VI brought the first group of Chinese agriculturalists to Rio and confined them to the Botanical Garden to plant tea. The unfocused photograph features three people wearing Western-style clothing and implies that the Chinese diplomatic mission to Rio brought the idea of Chinese labor into fashion. The caption continues: “Not all Chinese smoke opium and sell fish. Here in the Botanical Garden, they cultivate tea just as they do in the provinces of the Celestial Kingdom.” These constructions of racial difference signal the production of new forms of exclusion. The Chinese in Rio are in Brazil, but they are confined to the grounds of the Botanical Garden. Like the construction of the coolie race, these settlers are shown as the unfit figure of emancipation. Although they wear Western clothing and do not indulge in the racialized vices of Chinese settlers, their indistinct appearance within the restricted borders of racialized agricultural

2 **GAZETA DE NOTÍCIAS** Novembro 4—1909

## OS CHINEZES NO RIO

Agora que a embaixada chinesa trouxe a moda da China, é natural que se pense um gouco em ver o que os chineses fazem no Rio. Assim nem todos levam no opio e a vender peixe. A "Gazeta" descobriu chineses no Jardim Botânico empregados na cultura do chá e trabalhando como nas províncias do Celeste Império.



Estamos em P'ekin ou no Rio?

davam leite e definhavam. Era um rendimento que desaparecia. Leu então varios livros da especialidade em que abalizados escriptores agricolas eruditamente discrivtavam sobre vaccas leiteiras. Mas nenhum dos alvites por elles propostos a contentavam. Um dia, em que o desanimo mais largo se fizera no seu espirito, pegou numa brochura e leu que a musica exercia na vacca uma influencia de tal modo decisiva, que o leite engrossava, tornando-se mais saboroso e nutritivo. Mrs. Adda estremeceu, e logo decidida a experimentar, partiu para as suas terras de Sunny Peak com o seu bândolim, cujas harmonias tantas vezes enthusiasmaram as elegantes de MR-waukee...

Poi, e a experiencia não podia ser mais decisiva. Resolveu então ir viver para as suas propriedades, e nesse proposito despediu-se das suas amigas numa festa encantadora, que as chronicas registraram com palavras cheias de eloquencia e saudade.

A illustre dama installou-se na sua nova residencia e logo principiou a sua encantadora vida bucolica. Vestida de branco, dá concertos de bândolim ás suas queridas vaccas. Os animaes escutam-na com mais attenção do que os "dilettanti" que frequentam as nossas salas de audições musicas. Na verdura e no silencio dos grandes prados, Mrs. Adda augmenta o leite das suas vaccas com sonatas de Schubert e mazurkas de Audram... Os pesados ruminantes erguem o focinho, num enlevo, parecendo saborear mais as valsas de Chopin do que a herva tenra e o feno macio. E quando a poetica senhora dá o concerto por findo, e os animaes recolhem aos estabulos, o leite que se ordenha corre tão abundante e grosso que não ha vasilhas que cheguem para o apurar...

•••

Das observações feitas por Mrs. Adda verifica-se que, em musica, a vacca é conservadora. Algumas crias é que são mais modernas, o que não admira, porque a mocidade é sempre mais ou menos revolucionaria. A vacca delecta-se com os velhos romances e "lieder" populares, e presta especial attenção ás canções doentes que

FIGURE 2.10. "The Chinese in Rio," *Gazeta de Notícias*, November 4, 1909.

Source: Newspaper Archives of the Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

labor—tea cultivation—became a necessary and disposable structural element in the making of the modern world.

The *Gazeta de Notícias's* Chinese settlers shared more in common with the *Revista Illustrada's* fictional portrayals of mandarins and coolies than with actual people who settled in Rio de Janeiro. These widely circulating images, words, and concepts about liberty and nation constituted part of a language that was bound to a circumoceanic memory of racialized labor. Beyond print culture, popular theater was a main stage where performances of racial impersonation like yellowface recasted debates about citizenry.