

NEITHER
BLACK
NOR
WHITE

Slavery and Race Relations in
Brazil and the United States

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—Article 113, Brazilian Constitution of 1934.

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—Section 1, Article XIV, United States Constitution, ratified 1868.

To a North American, the position and place of Negroes in Brazil can seem only different. On the streets of Brazilian cities, blacks, browns, and whites mingle without apparent attention to color, whether in public or private places. At the primary schools the spectrum of colors runs from white to black, with no evidence of distinction in groups or playmates. Signs designating facilities for "Colored" and "Whites Only," which were common in the southern states of the United States until very recently and which the North knew in the nineteenth century, have no history in Brazil. Furthermore, the mingling of the races in Brazil carries no historical burden of violence. The race riot as it has been known in the United States for well over a century is unknown in Brazil. Brazil has certainly known violence in the past as in the present, but the violence has *crossed* lines of color rather than followed them. The lynch mob has a long and hideous history in the United States; at its height—or depth—lynching snuffed out the lives of over two thousand Negroes between 1882 and 1903 alone. In some particularly brutal years during the 1890's the annual total of deaths of blacks by lynching reached almost two hundred. In the 1970's that particular form of racial violence has passed from the scene, but as recently as a generation ago, lynch mobs

still claimed at least a few black victims each year. The lynch mob, like the race riot, is virtually unknown in Brazil, although in some sections of the country Negroes and mulattoes make up considerably more than a majority of the population. No state of the United States, not even Mississippi, has ever counted as high a proportion of colored people as have the states of Bahia or Pernambuco. In Bahia in 1950 the white population was no more than 30 per cent.

Brazilians are extremely proud of what their leading sociologist, Gilberto Freyre, has called their "racial democracy." One prominent Brazilian has been quoted as saying that the problem of color prejudice "does not exist in São Paulo certainly; it does not exist in Bahia. It is new, it is imaginary, it is not real."¹ Even a sociologist like Florestan Fernandes, who has done more than any other Brazilian scholar to call into question the validity of Freyre's assertion of racial democracy admits that Brazil is probably the most racially tolerant nation in the world.²

This very tolerance, especially in the face of the blatant racism of the United States, tends to make Brazilians either complacent about, or oblivious to the realities of the relations between whites and blacks in their country. E. Franklin Frazier, the United States Negro sociologist, noted this fact after he returned from a visit to Brazil just before World War II. "There is, in Brazil," he observed, "little discussion of the racial or the color situation. It appears that there is an unexpressed understanding among all elements in the population not to discuss the racial situation, at least as a contemporary phenomenon."³ Another North American, T. L. Smith refers to the "veritable cult of racial equality" in Brazil. The cult includes among its votaries the principal intellectuals of the country, whose unwritten creed has two tenets. "(1) Under no circumstances should it be admitted that racial discrimination exists in Brazil; and (2) any expression of racial

discrimination that may appear always should be attacked as un-Brazilian."⁴ One consequence of the cult, as Smith rightly observes, is that the grosser forms of discrimination against Negroes are prevented or firmly objected to.

The very existence of the cult, moreover, suggests that Brazil may not be as free of prejudice as the cultists would like to have others believe. As Emilio Willems, now a sociologist at Vanderbilt University, but long a resident in Brazil, has written, the alleged absence of prejudice in Brazil "is put with an insistence that certainly would be unnecessary if there were actually no doubt about it."⁵ Recently several Brazilian sociologists have been even more insistent upon the existence of prejudice within their society. Florestan Fernandes, for instance, who admits that Brazilians are among the most racially tolerant people in the world, emphasizes that tolerance is not equality. "The victims of color prejudice and discrimination are treated with relative decorum and civility as persons," he recognizes, "but as if they were only half persons. Their material and moral interests are not taken into account. What is important immediately and fundamentally is 'social peace.' . . ." The widespread denial of prejudice in Brazil Fernandes calls "the prejudice against prejudice."⁶ Professor L. A. Costa Pinto has called the Brazilian denial of prejudice "crypto-melanism" or "the fear of confessing to and the desire to hide the importance one really gives to the question of race and color."⁷

It is the purpose of this and the next chapter to spell out in some detail the nature of the relations between the races in Brazil, especially as they compare with those in the United States. But before we move into an examination of concrete examples, two general observations need to be made if we are to avoid misinterpreting the comparison. The first is that relations between the races vary from region to region in Brazil as they do in the

¹ Thales de Azevedo, *Les Élités de couleur dans une ville brésilienne* (Paris, 1953), p. 93.

² Florestan Fernandes, *A Integração do negro na sociedade de classes* (São Paulo, 1965), II, p. 293.

³ E. Franklin Frazier, "A Comparison of Negro-White Relations in Brazil and the United States," in G. Franklin Edwards, ed., *E. Franklin Frazier on Race Relations* (Chicago, 1968), p. 98.

⁴ T. Lynn Smith, *Brazil People and Institutions* (Baton Rouge, 1963), p. 66.

⁵ Emilio Willems, "Race Attitudes in Brazil," *American Journal of Sociology*, LIV (March, 1949), 403.

⁶ Fernandes, *Integração do negro*, II, p. 293.

⁷ Luis A. Costa Pinto, *O Negro no Rio de Janeiro* (São Paulo, n.d.) p. 325.

United States. The second is that the Brazilian definition of a Negro differs from that in the United States. Let us turn first to the question of regional diversity.

The Geography of Color Prejudice

The fullest and most important examination of race relations in Brazil written in English undoubtedly is Donald Pierson's *Negroes in Brazil*. Although first published in 1942, the book has been partly brought up to date by Pierson in a long introduction to a new edition published in 1967. But the principal conclusion Pierson makes in the book has not changed. "Prejudice exists in Brazil," he writes, "but it is *class* rather than *race* prejudice."⁸ By that he means that the principal barrier that keeps blacks at the bottom of the social economic ladder—a fact that Pierson admits in his book—is their general poverty. The validity of Pierson's conclusion is a central issue, but discussion of it will be taken up later. Here it is pertinent to notice only that Pierson's study, which has been widely used in analyses of race relations in Brazil, is actually based upon evidence drawn from a small and indeed very special part of the country. The state of Bahia, in northeastern Brazil, where Pierson carried on his field work, is located in that section of the country where Negroes have been and still are most numerous and culturally influential. (His research actually centered on the city of Salvador, or Bahia, as it is usually known, after the state of which it is the capital; its proper name was once Cidade de São Salvador da Bahia de Todos os Santos, or the City of the Holy Savior of the Bay of All Saints.)

All authorities acknowledge that the relations between the races are the easiest in the *Nordeste* or Northeast, of which Bahia is the largest state. For one thing, racial mixture in Bahia has probably progressed farther than in any part of Brazil. In the census of 1940, for example, the ratio of blacks to mixed bloods in the state of Bahia was 1 to 2.55, whereas in the state of Minas Gerais, it was 1 to 1 and in Maranhão and Piauí there were more Negroes

⁸ Donald Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil. A Study of Race Contact* (Carbon-dale, Ill., 1967), p. 349.

than mulattoes.⁹ There are so many so-called whites in Bahia with mixed ancestry that the term *branco da Bahia* is the name throughout Brazil for a person with a small amount of Negro blood. Pierson examined the photographs of the first five hundred people listed as white at the Identification Bureau of Bahia. To him, as a North American, only 68 per cent appeared to be of white ancestry exclusively. A light mulatto who came to Bahia from a state farther west summed up the special place of Bahia in the regional patterns of Brazil. He said that during the nine years he had lived in Bahia he had been struck by "the mutual respect between persons of different 'quality' [that is, of different color], for in his state persons of color would be treated with contempt." Other informants in Bahia agreed that even at the "highest levels of society" in Bahia a colored person does not generally "suffer humiliation."¹⁰ Bahia or the Northeast, then, represents the area or zone in which prejudice against colored people is slightest.

South of the Northeast at least three other zones of race relations can be identified: the area around Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo state, and the region comprised of the states south of São Paulo. As a rule of thumb, the farther south one travels in Brazil the more intense the degree of prejudice. E. Franklin Frazier, for example, who found that it was hard to discern in Bahia a color line at all, reported that in the states south of Rio (that is, São Paulo, Santa Catarina, Paraná, and Rio Grande do Sul), the color prejudice came close to what he, as a Negro, was familiar with in the United States. There was no legal discrimination, he added, but the social practices were clearly discriminatory.¹¹ Brazilian Negroes notice the difference even between Rio and São Paulo. A Negro maid who was taken by her employer from São Paulo to Rio refused to return with him when the visit was over, preferring to remain in Rio. "You can understand," she said, "here Negroes are people." A young mulatto woman who came to São Paulo from Rio was shocked by the attitudes of her neighbors toward

⁹ Azevedo, *Les Élités de couleur*, p. 22.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹¹ E. Franklin Frazier, "Some Aspects of Race Relations in Brazil," *Phylon*, III (Third Quarter, 1942), p. 292.

Negroes. In short order she came to hate the city, contending, "It is the worst place for Negroes. In Rio there was greater tolerance than here," she explained. Yet a white personnel manager in a São Paulo industrial firm asserted that São Paulo was quite "moderate" in its attitudes toward blacks compared with the attitudes of whites in the states to the south.¹²

The degree of difference in attitudes toward blacks among the four regions or zones is not of central importance here, though it bears upon later analysis. (Nor is the number of regions—four—of importance, other than to illustrate the diversity of outlooks. It is possible to point to several other regions of Brazil in which attitudes toward blacks on the part of whites might differ from these, but materials for drawing conclusions are not as abundant as for the four regions referred to here. Moreover, to add other regions unnecessarily complicates a pattern already complicated enough.) The purpose of mentioning the different degrees of prejudice here is simply to stress that relations between whites and blacks in Brazil do vary from region to region and that to generalize about race relations on the basis of one part of the country or another can be confusing and misleading. This variation in regional race relations has been one major source of the varieties of interpretations of race relations in Brazil. Generally, those students, like Pierson, who emphasize the absence of race or color prejudice in Brazil draw their conclusions from evidence gathered in the Northeast, Bahia and Pernambuco in particular. It is not accidental, either, that Gilberto Freyre, who has celebrated Brazil's "racial democracy," is from Recife, in Pernambuco. On the other hand, those who have played down or denied racial democracy in Brazil, like Florestan Fernandes and Roger Bastide, have made their studies in São Paulo.

The regional variation in Brazil might be compared to that which is well recognized in the United States. No one will deny that the treatment of the Negro in New England, for example, has been less discriminatory than that in, say, the Middle West. Furthermore, most Americans would acknowledge, I think, that prejudice and discrimination, not to mention violence against

¹² Roger Bastide, ed., *Relações raciais entre negros e brancos em São Paulo* (São Paulo, 1955), p. 138; Fernandes, *Integração do negro*, II, p. 303, 323.

blacks, have their greatest incidence in the South. Beneath the regional variations in each country, however, lies a norm that is truly characteristic of each country. We shall in this and the next chapter note regional variations in discussing concrete examples, especially in regard to Brazil, if only because these regional differences often have been ignored in previous analyses of race relations. But it should be understood that the regional variations in each country are only variations on a central theme. It is the central themes that we are ultimately comparing.

Who Is a Negro?

Up to now the word *Negro* has been used without definition, yet the most fertile source of confusion, if not error, in comparing race relations in the United States and Brazil is that the conception of the Negro differs in the two countries. Historically, in the United States any person with Negro ancestry has been considered a Negro, even if he appeared to be a white. In the days of slavery as later, in the days of legal segregation, a Negro was defined in law and in custom as anyone with a certain amount of Negro ancestry—usually one-eighth. But there have been instances in the twentieth century when any amount of Negro ancestry would cause a person to be legally a Negro. Thus a statute of Virginia enacted in 1924, for purposes of its antiscegenation law, defined a white person as "... such person as has no trace whatever of any blood other than Caucasian; but persons who have one-sixteenth or less of the blood of the American Indian and have no other non-Caucasian blood shall be deemed a white person."¹³ Because appearance did not decide the matter, persons with blue eyes, fair skin, and sandy or blond hair, like Walter White, for many years head of the NAACP, could be considered a Negro. Simply because White acknowl-

¹³ Quoted in J. Kenneth Morland, *Race, Values and American Unity and Stetson University Bulletin* (Leland, Fla., 1969), p. 5n. The exception for Indian blood was made in order to permit the descendants of Pocahontas to take advantage of that ancestry and white status at the same time. Charles S. Mangum, Jr., *The Legal Status of the Negro* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1940), Chapter 1 surveys in detail the legal definition of the Negro from the days of slavery to the 1930's.

edged his Negro ancestry, regardless of his appearance, he was a Negro. Also because of this definition, whites could suddenly become "Negroes," as happened not only in a work of fiction like Sinclair Lewis' *Kingsblood Royal* but in real life as well. By this genetic or biological definition, thousands of Negroes also "pass" into the white world each year, remaining there as long as they wish to keep their secret or are able to. Historically in the United States words like *mulatto*, *quadroon*, and *octroon*—all of which describe different degrees of Negro ancestry—have been used. But in fact they have been no more than descriptive; they carry no social or legal significance. There are only two qualities in the United States racial pattern: white and black. A person is one or the other; there is no intermediate position.

Although all Americans, white and black, grow up with and accept without question that definition of a Negro, there is no inherent logic in it. There is no reason why a person with half his ancestry white and half black should be defined as a Negro. With equal logic he could be defined as a white, or more precisely as a half white, half black. Brazilians are more logical, for they do not follow the North American definition of a Negro. In fact, no other country in the New World, with the exception of Canada, follows the United States in defining a black man as anyone with a measurable amount of Negro ancestry or "blood." In Brazil, for example, a Negro is a person of African descent who has no white ancestry at all. If a person has some indefinite amount of white as well as Negro ancestry he is something else. He is not white, to be sure, though he may be a *mulato*, or a *moreno*, or a *pardo*. For as we shall see in a moment, Brazilians are not color-blind. Indeed, they see, socially, more color distinctions than North Americans, who can see only two: white and black. Brazilians do not concern themselves about the genetic background of a person,¹⁴ but they look at hair and lips as well as skin color in categorizing someone. In Bahia, Pierson writes, one often hears "He is a bit dark, but his hair is good."¹⁵

Anthropologist Harry Hutchinson has spelled out the great variety of color gradations that he found in the community of Vila Reconcavo, located across the bay from Salvador, in the state of

Bahia. Although these gradations are not necessarily typical of all of Brazil, they do illustrate the diversity of colors and the valuations that are placed upon them in a community of the Northeast, where racial tensions are weakest in Brazil.¹⁶ The lowest level is composed of the *pretos* (blacks) or *preto retinto* (dark black). Somewhat above the *preto* is the *cabra*, who is slightly less black. (The word *cabra* also means goat in Portuguese, incidentally.) Still moving upward, we come next to the *cabo verde* (Cape Verde), who is lighter than the *preto*, but still quite dark, but with straight hair, thin lips, and narrow, straight nose. Then comes the *escuro*, literally, "the dark one," but he is still lighter than *preto*. The *mulato* is divided into two classes, *mulato escuro* (dark mulatto) and *mulato claro* (light mulatto). *Pardo* (light mulatto) is not used in speech in Vila Reconcavo, though it is used in other parts of Brazil and in the census. The *sarará* has light skin and red or blond hair, which is kinky and curled. Some *sararás* would pass in the United States as white. The *moreno* has light skin and straight hair, but is not viewed as a white. Just beneath the white is the *branco de terra* (literally, "white of the land," or *branco da Bahia* elsewhere in Brazil.) Though everyone recognizes that they have some Negro blood, *brancos de terra* are always spoken of as white and receive from everyone the same treatment accorded whites. The whites themselves are divided into blond and brunettes, depending on the color of their hair.

This amazing array of terms and gradations is testimony to the Brazilian emphasis upon appearance rather than upon genetic or racial background, which is the key to the North American definition of the Negro. It is also testimony to the fact that in Brazil there is a continuum or spectrum of colors from white to black, rather than a dichotomy as in the United States. For purposes of ease of discussion, we shall speak of black, or Negro, mulatto, and white, which terms, in themselves, are in striking contrast with the simple black-white division in the United States. But it should be understood that *mulatto* in Brazil really stands for a whole range of color types between black and white. Most accurately, distinctions among people in Brazil are between

¹⁴ Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil*, p. 128.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 140.

¹⁶ Harry William Hutchinson, *Village and Plantation Life in Northeastern Brazil* (Seattle, Washington, 1957), p. 118.

lighter and darker, not simply between Negro and mulatto or mulatto and white.

This fundamental difference in the definition of a Negro in Brazil and in the United States extends beyond the spectrum or hierarchy of colors. It determines the form that prejudice and discrimination take. In the United States a Negro's social position in society as a whole is largely unaffected by his class. (*Within the Negro community*, however, his occupation, income, education, and other indicia of class are the principal determinants of his position, as they are for whites, but that is another question.) It is this genetic definition of the Negro that causes some sociologists to speak of the Negro's *caste* position in the United States.¹⁷ The word *caste*, it is true, has a number of connotations not applicable to the situation in the United States; for example, in India, the concept's place of origin, caste carries religious significance as it does not in the United States. But the term does have the great advantage of making clear the difference between the position of the Negro and that of all white people in the American social structure. Classes exist in the United States, but it is not impossible or even especially difficult for an individual or his children to rise or fall from one class to another. All the indicia of class affiliation can be acquired, that is, money, education, a prestigious house, or a distinguishing profession. For the Negro in the United States, however, it is not possible to shed his ancestry and it is that which defines him and limits his social mobility at the same time. Caste aptly differentiates the rigid and unalterable limitation placed upon the Negro alone from those limitations or barriers, however difficult to surmount they may be, for any particular non-Negro individual, which are only those of class.

Because ancestry as such is not important in Brazil, though color obviously is, commentators on the Brazilian racial scene do not speak of a caste system as they rightly do in discussing the United States. In Brazil, to put the matter simply, if abstractly, a person is located in the social hierarchy on the basis of both color *and* class, a phenomenon that Charles Wagley has

¹⁷ Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York, 1942), Chapter 31 discusses the word *caste* as a description of the position of the Negro in United States society. The weaknesses as well as the sound reasons for using this East Indian word in this context are canvassed in that chapter.

called "social race." Color is important, but it is not decisive, as it is in the United States. A rich mulatto is accepted by whites to a degree that a poor mulatto is not. Marvin Harris, an American anthropologist who has long studied race relations in Brazil, has succinctly summarized the relationships between color and class in defining status in a backcountry town in Bahia state. His scheme, like Hutchinson's terminology, is derived from the study of a community in the Northeast, but it is applicable more or less to Brazil as a whole. Its principal value is that it serves to differentiate in a clear and concrete fashion the bases of social hierarchy in Brazil from those in the United States.¹⁸ In Brazil,

A "Negro" is anyone of the following: A "white" is anyone of the following:

Poverty-stricken white	White who is wealthy
Poverty-stricken mulatto	White of average wealth
Poor mulatto	White who is poor
Poverty-stricken Negro	Wealthy mulatto
Poor Negro	Mulatto of average wealth
Negro of average wealth	Negro who is wealthy

Two conclusions stand out in this comparison of who is Negro and who is white. First, to be of Negro ancestry is certainly a handicap; not as severe a one as in the United States, perhaps, but a handicap nonetheless. Second, as the Brazilians say, "money whitens," although it takes a good deal to whiten a full-blooded Negro, even in Bahia. (Once "whitened" by money, a "Negro" becomes a "*mulatto*" or "*pardo*," regardless of his actual color. A significant commentary on the meaning of *Negro* or blackness in itself.) One informant in Recife, which is also in the Northeast, put the whitening process this way: "When a black (*preto*) at-

¹⁸ Marvin Harris, "Race Relations in Minas Velhas, A Community in the Mountain Region of Central Brazil," in Charles Wagley, ed., *Race and Class in Rural Brazil*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1963), p. 72. One type of explanation that is typical, if not actually the most popular among Brazilian Negroes for color prejudice, is that quoted by Fernandes, *Integração do negro*, II, p. 362: "It is a mixed prejudice of race and class. It is not only of race, because there are whites who accept the Negro. It is not only of class because certain restrictions affect all Negroes, even the rich. As a mixed prejudice it is a color prejudice."

tains a prominent position—he has a ring on his finger. [The ring of a profession.] The black will be easily accepted. In that case, however, it is not the black, but the ring of the black that they accept.” The same principle is illustrated by the humorous story of a light-skinned mulatto in the same city who had three daughters. One of the daughters had a white boyfriend who was a factory worker; because he was white the father accepted him as a son-in-law. The second daughter had a boyfriend who was a Negro, studying to be a lawyer. After the wedding of the two couples the father told the third daughter: “A worker only if he is white; a Negro, only if he is a doctor.”¹⁹ An even better illustration of the way in which class mitigates color is an incident that took place in a São Paulo restaurant. Among the customers were two well-dressed mulattoes and a white man in working clothes, sitting at separate tables. The waiter gave equally solicitous attention to the mulattoes, the white, and the rest of the patrons. The two mulattoes were obviously old customers because they talked freely with the manager and other customers. Then a young black man in workmen’s clothes came into the restaurant, only to be stopped by the waiter from sitting at a table. The youth protested, exclaiming, “What is this, the Esplanada?”²⁰

The story reveals a number of things about Brazilian race relations. For one thing, the presence of the middle class mulattoes as accepted customers means that colored persons as such were not excluded, but the failure to accept the working class black cannot be attributed simply to class, because the white worker had been admitted. In short, a black had to be better, socially speaking, than a white in order to achieve the same acceptance; but he could be accepted, as he would not have been in, say, a restaurant in Georgia fifteen years ago. Finally, one other revealing aspect in the incident: the young Negro made his protest in class terms, not racial terms, for his exclamatory query is whether the restaurant is trying to put on the high social airs of a well-known luxury hotel in São Paulo. This failure of blacks who are discriminated against to react immediately in racial terms is also

¹⁹ René Ribeiro, *Religião e relações raciais* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 123–24.

²⁰ Oracy Nogueira, “Preconceito de marca and preconceito racial de origem,” *Anais do XXXI Congresso Internacional de Americanistas* (São Paulo, 1954), 428–29n.

characteristic of Brazilian race relations, as we shall have occasion to observe in more detail a little later.

Some North American observers, seeing the ability of wealth or education to whiten, and being themselves used to the rigid caste situation in the United States, in which no amount of money could gain a Negro or even a mulatto entrance to certain public, much less private places, have concluded that in Brazil there are in fact no race or color barriers. Donald Pierson, as we have already noted, has concluded that there are only class barriers restricting the mobility of Negroes and mulattoes in Brazil. It is not necessary, however, for color to be conclusive for it to have an effect upon opportunities open to a Negro or upon his life style. Ugliness, as Marvin Harris remarks, has low social value even when it accurately describes a millionaire’s daughter; her ugliness may not singlehandedly determine the prospective husbands available to her, but it is not without influence either. In Brazil, as we shall see later in this chapter, blackness carries at least as low social value as ugliness and considerably more tangible social disabilities.

From the Brazilian definition of the Negro it follows that the mulatto or mixed blood in general, occupies a special place, intermediate between white and black; he is neither black nor white. No such place is reserved for the so-called mixed blood in the United States; a person is either a black or a white. Thus the mulatto in Brazil represents an escape hatch for the Negro, so to speak, which is unavailable in the United States. Historically it has been the mulatto who has risen in Brazilian society, not the Negro. The great men of color of the nineteenth century, such as Luis Gama and José do Patrocínio among the abolitionists, André Rebouças, the famous engineer, and Machado de Assis and Cruz e Souza among the writers, were all mulattoes.²¹ As we shall see later, that fact in itself is important in comparing the race relations in the two countries. Right now, however, it is necessary only to look at several concrete examples to illustrate the fact and simultaneously expose some of the consequences that flow from it.

²¹ Fernando de Azevedo, *Canaviais e engenhos na vida política do Brasil*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo, 1958), p. 126n.

First look at the following explosion from a white Brazilian, in which the social mobility of the mulatto is obviously the source of his anxiety. "I am going to get out of Bahia and go to São Paulo," complained a prominent white to Pierson. "This town is too full of mulattoes and mulatto traits. . . . This place is full of envy, ill will, and egotism, all mulatto characteristics. The mulatto is not like the black; he is a person without character. He has no honor. He's always envious, he's jealous, he's so busy 'maintaining himself,' pushing himself in where he isn't wanted, that he can't tend to his business or his job; he can't do anything except make of himself a general nuisance."²² The diatribe is not only the classic indictment of the parvenu, but it makes a distinction between Negroes and mulattoes that has no meaning to North Americans. In the United States, mulattoes are no more a threat to the established class than Negroes.

An even more revealing outburst of white, middle-class hostility toward the mulatto is one also reported from the Northeast, this time from Recife. Here the antagonism is tempered and tortured by religious considerations, but the class issue also slides over into racial conceptions, despite the speaker's efforts to rule out race.

"You know that as a *Catholic intellectual*, trained in the doctrine of the church, I do not have, I cannot have, I ought not to have any racial prejudice. For us, all men are metaphysically equal; they are all given the same possibilities of salvation and all are redeemed by the blood of Christ in the mystery of the Redemption. I confess that as a Catholic and as an intellectual I never supported, doctrinally, any prejudice in that sense. I do not believe that the superiority of the race is in the color of the epidermis or in the turned up nose. I believe, however, that there are superior and inferior races. . . . My testimony will not be that of the intellectual without prejudice, brought up in the doctrine of the church. It will be only that of the man, grandson of the masters of the *engenho* [sugar mill] and full of prejudices. . . . I never felt any violent reaction against the fact that a colored man travelled with me on the same train, sat next to me at the same table, in the same movies, etc. . . . What irritates me is the mulattoist philosophy. . . . It is the mulatto wanting to

²² Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil*, p. 231.

take the place of the white, dressing like him, wanting to marry with the white, driving his own automobile. It is the meddling mulatto . . . wanting to imitate people of quality. To that my reaction is strong. I have an invincible antipathy for that mulatto-ness. I assert, however, that color does not prevent my admiring and esteeming those mulattoes whom I consider good people, better than many whites who have gone off the deep end. A man like X, for example, is not spiritually a mulatto. He has the character of a white. Against mulattoes of this level I feel no prejudice. A very dark Negro with the face of an old monkey like . . . X, does not arouse antipathy in me. On the contrary, twenty years ago I knew that black and considered him white and a good man. . . . I feel, however, a certain prejudice in regard to mulattoes who exercise offices of direction or functions of command. In this country there are sufficient whites to govern and to command. I do not believe that the Negro or the mulatto can or ought to govern and command white people . . . inferior people. They are good for work. They have souls. They ought to be baptized. Ought to be saved and to go to heaven. But to be equal to white, no. . . . The Catholic intellectual subscribes to none of this, which the man in him ends by saying . . . I believe that in this the intellectual is right—but it is the man who lives and feels."²³

Although there are many insights into Brazilian attitudes toward race in that statement, here we can content ourselves with calling attention to the distinction between mulattoes and Negroes once again. As the speaker himself makes evident, the basis of the distinction in his mind is that the Negro does not get out of his place, whereas the mulatto does. It is the mulatto, once again, who is socially mobile, not the Negro.

The greater opportunity that mulattoes enjoy for social mobility also encourages them to dissociate themselves from Negroes. This tendency is observable even when a mulatto has a strong intellectual interest in the life and culture of Negroes. Ruth Landes, a North American anthropologist working in Bahia in the 1940's on a study of the *condomblé* (Negro dances of African origin), noticed that her mulatto colleague, Edison Carneiro, a Brazilian student of the Negro, clearly did not identify with the

²³ Ribeiro, *Religião e relações raciais*, pp. 215-16.

blacks he so assiduously studied. They, in turn, viewed him with genuine affection, but as a patron and not as a fellow black. Landes, as a North American, could not avoid noticing what seemed to her an incongruity in this sharp separation. Carneiro himself, of course, was oblivious to her concern. In his mind there was no reason to assume an identification between himself and the Negroes; he was a mulatto, educated, and a gentleman, and therefore not a Negro. More recently Rodrigues Alves, the Brazilian writer, provided another example of the way in which mulattoes are differentiated from blacks, especially in Bahia. Alves pointed out that if one goes into an office and sees that the chief is a Negro and hears him say "I am a Negro," the chief's aid will say, "No, Sir, you are not a Negro, you are a *moreno*."²⁴ Both these instances are more or less neutral examples of the mulatto's dissociation from Negroes. Later we shall have the occasion to look at some examples in which the dissociation is more stressful and anxiety-producing. Whether benign or stressful, however, the mulatto escape hatch is one of the distinguishing aspects of the Brazilian racial scene when compared with the United States. These persons who are neither black nor white play the central role in differentiating the race relations of the two countries.

Although Brazilians do take color into consideration in ranking people, as we have seen, they do not refer to genetic or biological origins. As a result, insofar as there is prejudice or discrimination against Negroes in Brazil, it is based upon color rather than racial origins. "In Brazil," Professor L. A. Costa Pinto has written, "a defined and strong racist philosophy, giving support and moral sanction to racial discrimination does not exist." By that he means that Brazilians do not justify prejudice or discrimination against Negroes on grounds of innate genetic inferiority. They do refer to what they think of as cultural deprivation—the African heritage—and the burdensome historic experience of slavery to justify their placing low social value on Negroes. Sometimes, admittedly, it is difficult to distinguish between the justifications derived from cultural and historical experiences and those of race, but in general the distinction between United States and Brazilian ex-

²⁴ Ruth Landes, *The City of Women* (New York, 1947), pp. 59–60; 80. *Anos de Abolição* Serie Cadernos Brasileiros (Rio de Janeiro, 1968), p. 39.

planations holds. Oracy Nogueira has called the distinction the difference between a prejudice of mark (Brazil) and a prejudice of origin (United States).²⁵ This terminology has the advantage in regard to Brazil since it can include within a single term elements such as hair quality, general physical appearance, and even educational background as well as color. All of these elements enter into the Brazilian basis of stratification. It is superior, for that reason, to the more common term often applied to Brazil, that of *color prejudice*. Yet the latter term is more convenient and will be used here, though it should be understood that it includes more than color. The phrase *racial prejudice* will be reserved for the United States, because of the genetic or biological basis for the definition of a Negro.

As we have already noted, many Brazilians and some North American scholars have asserted that there is no color or racial prejudice in Brazil, only class prejudice. Recently, however, a number of Brazilian students of race relations have begun to revise that view, arguing that color carries rather severe disabilities in their country. Undoubtedly the leader of this group, whose research has centered at the University of São Paulo, is Roger Bastide. Bastide taught and worked at São Paulo for many years, but has since returned to his native France, where he now teaches at the Sorbonne. His work in Brazil has been continued by a number of younger sociologists at the University of São Paulo, notably Florestan Fernandes, Oracy Nogueira, Octavio Ianni, and H. F. Cardoso, to name only the oldest. Their studies in the history of slavery and contemporary race relations in southern Brazil have been a major contribution. Professor L. A. Costa Pinto in Rio de Janeiro has also been a leader in the reevaluation of the place that race and color play in the lives of blacks and mulattoes in Brazil.

²⁵ Costa Pinto, *Negro no Rio de Janeiro*, p. 344; Oracy Nogueira, "Preconceito de marca e preconceito racial de origem," *Anais do XXXI Congresso Internacional de Americanistas* (São Paulo, 1954). The Negro leader Abdias do Nascimento was quoted in *Jornal do Brasil*, May 12, 1968 as putting the difference between United States and Brazilian attitudes toward blacks in this fashion: "There is no problem of races; here the problem is color—the black who looks white and assumes the behavior of the white has no more difficulties." In the United States, of course, such a black would also have his ancestry kept a secret in order to "pass" as a white.

Nor have the Brazilians been alone in this reevaluation. Particularly valuable have been the studies of race and class in Brazil sponsored by UNESCO, four of which have been published under the general direction of Charles Wagley, an anthropologist at Columbia University. All of these studies recognize in varying degrees that the racial situation in Brazil differs from that in the United States, but all also acknowledge, as many Brazilians do not, that a form of color prejudice and discrimination exists in Brazil.

Before we turn to an examination of the nature and extent of color prejudice in Brazil, it is worth clarifying the distinction between prejudice and discrimination. Both prejudice and discrimination imply the inferiority of the person or group against which they are directed. But they are not the same thing; prejudice is an attitude, whereas discrimination is an action. As a moment's reflection makes evident, one may occur without the other. A person may be prejudiced against Negroes, but not act on it, at least not consistently. Conversely, a person may act in such a way as to discriminate against a Negro, but not be doing so consciously or as a reflection of prejudice. Most often, of course, both occur together: a prejudiced person acts in a discriminatory manner and discriminatory behavior reflects prejudice. But in a country like Brazil, where color and class so closely coincide and where the thrust of social values and public attitudes is hostile to discrimination, prejudice and discrimination do not always coincide. We will see in some of the examples in this and the next chapter that individuals may well admit to prejudice, but their behavior belies it, just as there are examples of discriminatory behavior on the part of persons who deny having any prejudicial attitudes.²⁶

²⁶ James W. Vander Zanden, *American Minority Relations*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1966), p. 9 reports on a well-known United States example of prejudice that did not result in discriminatory behavior. It concerns a sociologist who traveled around the United States in the 1930's with a Chinese couple, stopping for service at hundreds of hotels, auto camps, tourist homes, and restaurants. Only once were they refused service. Six months later the sociologist wrote each of the establishments they had visited and asked if Chinese guests were welcome. Over 90 per cent of the managers replied they would not accommodate Chinese, despite their having actually done so six months earlier.

Permutations of Prejudice

The existence of color prejudice in Brazil has been implied in what has been said up to now. The purpose of this section is to show that pejorative attitudes toward blacks is rather widespread in Brazil. The best place to begin is with that section of the country in which the absence of prejudice is most often asserted, that is, the Northeast. "That there is no prejudice of color in Bahia is an affirmation only partly true," one recognized Brazilian authority on race relations has recently written. "The colored people are still considered as forming a part of a biological and social category characterized by traits which cause them to be considered inferior to the whites. Some are convinced that Blacks and Whites are different in intellectual capacity, personality, morality, and aptitude for progress. They declare that if Bahia does not progress, it is the fault of the Blacks." The most obvious form the prejudice takes is in the stereotypes that whites have of Negroes in Bahia. They "are more or less the same as those which are encountered in the rest of the country," Thales Azevedo has written, "judging by the representations of the black in Brazilian literature." Negroes are seen as ugly, evil smelling, savage, superstitious, and lazy, much as they are stigmatized "in the United States."²⁷ In the sayings and folklore of the Northeast, perjorative judgments on blacks are common:

The white drinks champagne
The *caboclo* [mixture of Indian and white] port wine:
The mulatto drinks cheap rum
The Negro urine of the pig.²⁸

Even Donald Pierson, in his study of the Negro in Bahia, includes a list several pages long of derogatory statements about Negroes. Writing in 1942, Pierson cautioned his readers not to take seriously these canards, likening them to the disparaging thrusts at Irishmen and Swedes common in the United States in

²⁷ Azevedo, *Les Élités de couleur*, pp. 70-71, 103.

²⁸ Roger Bastide, *Brazil, Terra de Contrastes*, trans. Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz (São Paulo, 1959), p. 47.