RACE, RESISTANCE, AND REGIONALISM:

Perspectives from Brazil and Spanish America

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AFRICAN-AMERICAN REFLECTIONS ON BRAZIL'S RACIAL PARADISE. Edited by David J. Hellwig. (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1992. Pp. 285. $34.95 cloth.)

BLACK INTO WHITE: RACE AND NATIONALISM IN BRAZILIAN THOUGHT. By Thomas Skidmore. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993. Pp. 334. $16.95 paper.)

BLACKNESS AND RACE MIXTURE: THE DYNAMICS OF RACIAL IDENTITY IN COLOMBIA. By Peter Wade. (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993. Pp. 424. $58.00 cloth, $18.95 paper.)

THE CITY OF WOMEN. By Ruth Landes. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995. Pp. 287. $35.00 cloth, $17.95 paper.)

"THE HOUR OF EUGENICS": RACE, GENDER, AND NATION IN LATIN AMERICA. By Nancy Leys Stepan. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991. Pp. 248. $32.95 cloth.)

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF CAROLINA MARIA DE JESUS. By Robert Levine and José Carlos Sebe Bom Meihy. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995. Pp. 162. $29.95 cloth, 15.95 paper.)

PRINCE OF THE PEOPLE: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A BRAZILIAN FREE MAN OF COLOUR. By Eduardo Silva, translated by Moyra Ashford. (London and New York: Verso, 1993. Pp. 219. $34.95 cloth.)

Brazil has assumed a predominant place in the study of race relations in the Americas since Gilberto Freyre published *Casa grande e senzala* (*The Masters and the Slaves*) in 1933. Trained by anthropologist Franz Boas, Freyre was one of the first Brazilian intellectuals to separate the categories of race and culture in explaining the socioeconomic and cultural position of persons of color in Brazil. Freyre argued that Brazilians of African descent had not advanced relative to whites not because of inherent racial inferiority or degenerative miscegenation but because the institution of slavery had blocked their ascent. He also highlighted the cultural contributions that Africans and indigenous peoples had made to Brazilian national identity. Freyre argued further that Portuguese men

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had been predisposed culturally to miscegenate with women of color and to adapt to foreign customs. He then naively claimed that this easy association between blacks and whites on the slave plantations of the northeast had led to a racial democracy in Brazil.

Freyre's thesis supposedly laid to rest the whitening ideologies that had gained influence in Brazil as slavery waned. During that era, nineteenth-century proponents of pseudo-scientific racism and social Darwinism had advocated mass European immigration to whiten the Brazilian population and dilute the black presence. Subsequent to Freyre's seminal work, UNESCO-sponsored research on race carried out in the 1950s challenged the myth of racial democracy by documenting racial discrimination from a socioeconomic approach and discovering a strong correlation between blackness and poverty. These findings led some scholars, notably sociologist Florestan Fernandes, to conflate race and class in their analyses.[1] Other forms of revisionist scholarship continued until the military era (1964–1985), when documentation of racial discrimination was prohibited. In today's freer academic context, Brazilianists continue to debate the meaning of race.

In a recent review essay on race, Howard Winant stated, "the literature on race in Brazil suffers from a series of debilitating problems, including a neglect of the discursive and cultural dimensions of race, an exaggerated belief in the omnipotence of elites where racial management is concerned, and a tendency to downplay the tensions and conflicts involved in Brazilian racial dynamics."[2] He has advocated using a different approach called "racial formation theory," which views race as a contested and mutable social construction that is defined and redefined in dialogue between blacks and whites. In this essay, I will employ Winant's concept of race as a standard for critiquing the works reviewed here.

Thomas Skidmore's *Black into White,* and Nancy Leys Stepan's *"The Hour of Eugenics"* both examine how race is defined and deployed in Brazil on the level of elite ideology and national identity formation, but they tend not to incorporate blacks as active agents in constructing race relations, except for a few prominent mulattos.[3] The remaining five books pay more attention to the role played by persons of color. David Hellwig's

1. Such studies include *Race and Class in Rural Brazil,* edited by Charles Wagley (Paris: UNESCO, 1952); Roger Bastide, *Estudos afro-brasileiros* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1973); Florestan Fernandes, *A integração do negro na sociedade de clases* (São Paulo: Dominus, 1965); and Roger Bastide and Florestan Fernandes, *Brancos e negros em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Editora Nacional, 1959).

2. Howard Winant, "Rethinking Race in Brazil," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24, pt. 1 (1992):181–92. Winant's bibliography is comprehensive.

3. Some of the notable exceptions highlighted by Skidmore or Stepan are Nina Rodrigues, Artur Ramos, Edison Carneiro, Florestan Fernandes, Machado de Assis, and Manoel Quirino.

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African American Reflections on Brazil's Racial Paradise addresses how U.S. blacks have perceived racial opportunity in Brazil. Robert Levine and José Carlos Sebe Bom Meihy's *The Life and Death of Carolina Maria de Jesus* and Eduardo Silva's *Prince of the People* provide in-depth analyses of native intellectuals who rose briefly from humble origins to national prominence. Ruth Landes's *The City of Women*, an ethnographic account of *candomblé* dating from Bahia in the 1930s, provides powerful evidence of a counterhegemonic response to the ideology of whitening, in this instance demonstrating the formation and sustenance of a collective black identity formed within the *terreiros* (temples) and street festivals of Salvador. The preceeding three volumes are especially suitable for undergraduate courses because of their engaging and thought-provoking treatments of race, gender, and poverty.

Finally, anthropologist Peter Wade's analysis of the construction of racial identity in Colombia in *Blackness and Race Mixture* offers the most theoretically complex discussion of how power relations, place, and demography all shape the formulation of racial ideologies. Wade's choice of region as a central analytical category draws attention to the fact that the works studying race in Brazil do not employ this category. The tendency to extend a localized understanding of race to all of Brazil persists to some degree, repeating Gilberto Freyre's oft-criticized extension of a regional portrait of race relations in coastal Pernambuco to the whole of Brazil.[4] Yet anyone reading this group of books cannot help but be struck by regional variations in race relations existing in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Salvador da Bahia. The second goal of this essay, then, is to highlight the importance of region in the social construction of race.

The View from Above

Thomas Skidmore's *Black into White: Race and Nationalism in Brazilian Thought* was the first intellectual history to offer a sustained and fundamental critique of the myth of Brazilian racial democracy. Some twenty years ago, Skidmore challenged Freyre's rosy assessment of sexual relations between white planters and black slave women by analyzing

4. Such criticism has been especially apparent in the field of family history, where demographic historians have discovered that the extended multiracial household described by Freyre was specific to the elite in the coastal sugar-producing regions. Demographic studies from Minas Gerais, São Paulo, and even Salvador da Bahia have demonstrated that small nuclear households, often headed by single women of color, were the predominant family form. See Arlene J. Díaz and Jeff Stewart, "Occupational Class and Female-Headed Households in Santiago Maior do Iguape, Brazil, 1835," *Journal of Family History* 16, no. 3 (1991): 299–314; Donald Ramos, "Single and Married Women in Vila Rica, Brazil, 1754–1838," *Journal of Family History* 16, no. 3 (1991):261–82; Alida Metcalf, *Family and Frontier in Colonial Brazil: Santana de Parnaíba, 1500–1822* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992); and Elizabeth Kuznesof, *Household Economy and Urban Development: São Paulo, 1765–1836* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1986).

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the development of whitening ideologies. The Brazilian elite, facing the impending abolition of slavery in the late nineteenth century, sought to attract European immigrants to fill its labor needs and began to assimilate European paradigms of pseudo-scientific racism and climatic determinism. Elite members struggled with these ideas, especially the more gloomy predictions of English historian Henry Thomas Buckle and French Minister to Brazil Arthur de Gobineau, who argued that the combined effects of racial mixing and a tropical climate might lead to genetic degeneration, sterility, and the ultimate extinction of the Brazilian population.[5] Many Brazilian intellectuals similarly advocated an infusion of white immigrants to cure the diseased nation. The idea was that these immigrants would intermarry with blacks, thereby lightening the national complexion and infusing Brazil with a modernizing zeal.

Skidmore avoided imposing an artificial consensus by revealing nodes of intellectual activity that interpreted racist thinking along divergent lines. Military officers, for example, came to embrace positivism and social engineering as a solution for Brazil's perceived racial backwardness and envisioned themselves as national leaders at the end of the War of the Triple Alliance (1865–1870). They also developed a certain ambiguous admiration for blacks and racially mixed *sertanejos* from the Brazilian interior because of their bravery and savvy tactics.[6] Meanwhile, the civilian elite adopted scientific racism only selectively and partially. For example, Raimundo Nina Rodrigues, a mulatto physician who was the first to study Afro-Brazilian folklore and art seriously, had already internalized beliefs about African inferiority and racial degeneration. Conversely, First Republic scholars like historian Capistrano de Abreu pointed to culture and the colonial legacy, not race, in attempting to explain Brazil's backwardness. Public hygienists demonstrated the crucial role of endemic diseases and malnutrition underlying the supposed laziness of the racially mixed poor. Brazilian modernism incorporated indigenous and Afro-Brazilian motifs in the 1920s. Then Gilberto Freyre transformed racial mixing into a social virtue rather than a degenerative vice.

Black into White, which deservedly has achieved canonical status in the study of Brazilian intellectual history and race relations, has been

5. The theme of racial degeneration has received more specific analysis in Dain Borges, "'Puffy, Ugly, Slothful, and Inert': Degeneration in Brazilian Social Thought, 1880–1940," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 25, pt. 2 (May 1993):235–47.

6. Affonso d'Escragnolle Taunay and Euclides da Cunha both expressed intense ambivalence about the abilities of mestizos, their experience warring with their intellectual presuppositions. See Peter M. Beattie, "National Identity and the Brazilian Folk: The 'Sertanejo' in Taunay's *A retirada da laguna*," *Review of Latin American Studies* 4, no. 1 (1991):7–43; Euclides da Cunha, *Rebellion in the Backlands* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1944); and Robert Levine's reevaluation of the Canudos campaign in *Vale of Tears: Revisiting the Canudos Massacre in Northeastern Brazil, 1893–1897* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992).

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reissued by Duke University Press more than twenty years after its original publication in 1972. The new edition remains essentially unaltered except for an added preface that outlines scholarly advances in the last twenty years and proposes research agendas for the future. In it, Skidmore calls for a closer examination of the relationship of ideology to socioeconomic realities, more attention to the role of the mulatto, and a move beyond assessing elite attitudes to examine non-elite thought.[7] Subsequent scholars have already sought to fill in some of those gaps. George Reid Andrews, for example, has shown how the influx of European immigrants at the start of the twentieth century undercut the ability of former slaves to renegotiate favorable terms in the workplace. Andrews thus has used socioeconomic data to challenge the myth of racial democracy.[8] Other scholars have followed up on topics introduced in *Black into White*, such as the connection between race and immigration policy.[9]

Discriminatory immigration legislation is only one of the many topics explored in Nancy Leys Stepan's *"The Hour of Eugenics": Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America*. Stepan explores the adoption and adaptation of eugenics in Latin America from 1900 to 1940, focusing on Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico. Her study falls into the category of history of science and succeeds admirably in this genre. Stepan critiques the assumption that science is a purely empirical enterprise. Diverse interests promoted eugenics to achieve varied political agendas even within a single country. Several eugenic paradigms existed simultaneously, and Latin American scientists and intellectuals chose selectively among them to meet the needs of their societies. Eugenics did not arise in Latin America as a pale imitation of European models but rather evolved so as to not alienate the Catholic Church while accommodating the racial diversity that centuries of miscegenation had produced in the New World.

Stepan advances a persuasive argument in explaining why Latin American eugenists adopted Lamarckian and neo-Lamarckian theoretical frameworks. The "hard eugenics" of English scientist Francis Galton,

7. The crucial role of the mulatto in the defining of race relations was analyzed earlier by Carl Degler. He posited that racial discrimination existed toward blacks but that mulattos formed a separate category with the possibility of upward racial mobility through marriage to a whiter individual. Thus socioeconomic class could offset race to a certain extent. Degler coined the term *the mulatto escape hatch* to describe assimilation of blacks into the dominant class through successive generations of whitening. See Carl N. Degler, *Neither Black nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1971).

8. George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo, 1888–1988* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).

9. See Jeffrey H. Lesser, "Are African-Americans African or American? Brazilian Immigration Policy in the 1920s," *Review of Latin American Studies* 4, no. 1 (1991):115–37; and Teresa Meade and Gregory Alonso Pirio, "In Search of the Afro-American 'Dorado': Attempts by North American Blacks to Enter Brazil in the 1920s," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 25, no. 1 (Summer 1988):85–110. On Jewish immigration, see Lesser, *Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995).

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who advocated selective breeding to preserve racial purity and prevent "the unfit" from reproducing, was too extreme. Both Galton and German biologist August Weismann also maintained that outside influences did not affect the hereditary characteristics (germ plasm) that one passed down. Such paradigms offered little hope for racially mixed Latin American countries with progressive aspirations. In contrast, the theory posited by French naturalist Jean Baptiste Pierre Antoine de Monet Lamarck—that acquired characteristics could be inherited—was much more optimistic. Through manipulation of the environment, negative traits could be slowly altered and eliminated over time. Neo-Lamarckism thus offered hope that genetic improvement could be engineered through human agency via social welfare and sanitation programs.

Eugenics in Latin America remained largely prescriptive and voluntary in its focus on reproductive health measures such as protective labor legislation for women, premarital medical exams, mandatory prenatal care, and the issuance of eugenic identity cards (*fichas biotipológicas*). Eugenists emphasized preventive measures designed to eliminate "racial poisons" like alcohol, tobacco, and venereal disease, which were believed to alter the germ plasm permanently and have a deleterious effect on a race. Forced sterilization never gained acceptance in Latin America, however, except for a short-lived law promulgated in Veracruz, Mexico, requiring sterilization of "incurable idiots."

Stepan's stated intent in *"The Hour of Eugenics"* is to link eugenics to representations of race, gender, and nationality. She succeeds best in the last category, linking the construction of national identities to racial policy in Argentina, Mexico, and Brazil. Here regional variation appears most clearly. In Argentina the reclamation of the Hispanic past and national identity coincided with increasing restrictions on immigration to stem the tide of Europeans. In Mexico the national ideology of *mestizaje* challenged theories of racial degeneration through miscegenation. Yet while advocating the racial fusion of "a cosmic race," Mexico continued to exclude African-American and Asian immigrants. In Brazil public-health officials reevaluated the supposed indolence of racially mixed persons, linking it to disease, malnutrition, and poverty rather than to race. The publication of Freyre's *Casa grande e senzala* also provided a powerful myth of racial democracy for combating models of racial degeneration.

Stepan might have achieved a more complex discussion of the intersections of race, class, and gender had she explored more fully the social history of the family and gender relations in Latin America. For example, Stepan assumes implicitly that the Catholic Church would oppose more extreme eugenic measures such as sterilization because of its traditional control over the sacrament of marriage and procreation. Yet following the Council of Trent, the church defined a number of impediments to marriage, some of which coincided with prescriptions for eugenic

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fitness. Marriages could be impeded on the grounds of impotence, mental disorders, or a prohibited degree of consanguinity. The church could also deny a couple the right to marry on grounds of close legal and spiritual kinship (godparentage).[10]

Racial identity and economic class were added as additional criteria for marriage in the late colonial period. In 1776 Carlos III passed the *Real Pragmática,* which revised the norms of marriage. Extended to the colonies in 1778, the edict permitted parents to impede a marriage if "inequality" existed between the prospective spouses, including as criteria race, social background, legitimacy of birth, personal morality, and economic position. This intensified concern over racial equality after centuries of miscegenation extended north as far as New Spain's northern frontier and south to the viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata.[11]

Yet in a book addressing the politics of reproduction, Stepan pays surprisingly little attention to women. This omission reflects her decision to limit *"The Hour of Eugenics"* to a study of the movement rather than its victims.[12] It is hardly fair to critique the author for not doing something that she did not set out to do, yet the impact of eugenic attitudes and policies on the poor and the racially mixed—especially on women—can only be imagined. Skidmore also pays little attention to women in *Black into White* and makes inconsistent claims in discussing their role in the reproductive rates of different racial groups. For example, he suggests that blacks reproduced at a slower rate than whites and mulattos, musing: "one of the likeliest hypotheses is the disadvantage in mating encountered by black women." This statement contradicts a subsequent claim that black women contributed to whitening by selecting lighter sexual partners. It is unclear whether Skidmore is referring to marriage or reproduction or both in using the term "mating" (pp. 43–46). The notion that black women preferred white partners is assumed, not demonstrated, and the motives for making such a choice also remain unexplored.

Nor is the role played by women of color adequately addressed in David Hellwig's edited collection, *African-American Reflections on Brazil's Racial Paradise.* The contents consist of twenty-seven writings by African-American journalists, intellectuals, and promoters of black colonization

10. Asunción Lavrin, "Sexuality in Colonial Mexico: A Church Dilemma," in *Marriage and Sexuality in Colonial Latin America,* edited by Asunción Lavrin, 47–95 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

11. On central Mexico, see Patricia Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey in Colonial Mexico: Conflicts over Marriage Choice, 1574–1821* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988). On frontier regions, see Ramón A. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500–1846* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991); and Susan M. Socolow, "Acceptable Partners: Marriage Choice in Colonial Argentina, 1778–1810," in Lavrin, *Marriage and Sexuality in Colonial Latin America,* 209–51.

12. For a discussion of the effects of public-health legislation on poor women and prostitutes in early-twentieth-century Argentina, see Donna Guy, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires: Prostitution, Family, and Nation in Argentina* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991).

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schemes, each with a short contextual introduction and annotations. The selections chart the evolution of U.S. black perceptions of Brazilian race relations over the course of the twentieth century: from enthusiastic endorsement of racial democracy in the early twentieth century (in Part I, 1900–1940), to skepticism at midcentury (Part II, 1940–1965), to outright repudiation in recent decades (Part III, 1965 to the present).

The first two sections comment extensively and favorably on the possibility of interracial unions in Brazil without indicating what role women have played in this dynamic. Despite this flaw, the topic of "racial absorption" proves to be an effective tool for demonstrating how racial thinking changes over time. A selection penned by W. E. B. Dubois in 1914 claimed that racial intermarriage contributed to the lack of rigid color or social bars to advancement in Brazil. But in a subsequent letter dating from 1941, Dubois recanted, arguing that racial amalgamation was not sufficient to allow blacks to rise to the level of whites and that a serious commitment to social planning was required. By the mid-1970s, perceptions had changed so much that Richard Jackson defined miscegenation or mestizaje as "a process that, while loosely defined as ethnic and cultural fusion, is often understood to mean the physical, spiritual and cultural rape of Black people." At this point, he interpreted racial amalgamation as tantamount to "white lynching" (p. 217).

Providing evidence of substantial ideological change among African Americans in the form of primary documents should prove valuable to students of the African diaspora. But *African-American Reflections* suffers from inadequate explanatory annotations and supplementary notes. Many of Hellwig's selections contain factual inaccuracies that could easily escape nonspecialists. For example, one commentator erroneously asserts that slave families in Brazil did not suffer separation through sale as captives did in the United States (pp. 26–30). Another selection (first published in 1957) contains dated and inaccurate data on slavery and the misconception that slave children took their status from their fathers (pp. 159–66).

Many of the essays in *African-American Reflections* dating back to the 1920s paint Brazil as a bucolic land of opportunity for blacks, especially in the rural sector. Standing alone, these selections provide a misleading impression. For example, black separatist Cyril Briggs misinformed his readers in claiming that the Brazilian government reimbursed immigrants for all reasonable expenses and provided land and tools. Although such provisions were made available for Europeans, Africans and Asians were actively barred from settling in Brazil by a clause in the Constitution of 1891. This legislation was extended to all blacks in 1921 under a vague clause that permitted the government to deny visas for reasons of "public order or national interest" (Skidmore, p. 192). The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation covertly assisted the Brazilian govern-

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ment in compiling information on followers of Marcus Garvey and black nationalists who might arouse racial consciousness in Brazil. This policy was kept quiet because it contradicted the image of racial harmony that Brazilian leaders wanted to project in order to attract European immigrants.[13] Hellwig should have provided such information in supplementary notes, especially if the text was intended for course adoption.

The items in the second part of *African-American Reflections,* "The Myth Debated (1940–1965)," range from petty exchanges between rival journalists to more balanced assessments of the positive and negative aspects of race relations in Brazil provided by Franklin Frazier and George Schuyler. The third section, with selections dating from the 1960s to the present, is by far the most critical. For example, anthropologist Angela Gilliam and Brazilianist Cleveland Donald Jr. highlight the destructive aspects of the internalization of whitening that prevent mulattos and blacks from making common cause. Both contributions lay bare the limitations of Degler's "mulatto escape hatch," the theory that affluent Brazilian blacks could use social class to attract a white spouse and produce children who could assimilate into white society.[14] Donald maintains that mulattos never truly gain white status regardless of social class (p. 212). Gilliam concurs, insisting that race, "is a color, with money or lack of it, education and social class as *supplementary* elements in the definition thereof" (p. 176, her emphasis).

The View from Below

The remaining four books focus on individuals who did not try the "mulatto escape hatch," creating instead positive channels to affirm their blackness. In *Prince of the People: The Life and Times of a Brazilian Free Man of Colour,* Eduardo Silva reconstructs the life of Cândido da Fonseca Galvão, a black Bahian of humble origins who came to style himself as Dom Obá II d'Africa, a "prince of the people" who also walked in the elite world. His father was a freed African slave who had raised him in the Bahian interior (nothing is said of his mother). As a young man, Galvão volunteered to serve in the Paraguayan War, serving in the Twenty-Fourth Corps, who were known as the *zuavos* for their flamboyant uniforms modeled on those of the French African Army. He parlayed his military experience into retaining his rank and uniform, gaining a pension, and receiving patronage. Galvão moved to Rio de Janeiro, where he became a journalist, using his meager funds to have his own articles and pamphlets printed. The "prince" also served as an advocate for the poor within the petty court system and received tribute from black female street vendors and other "vassals." He gained the attention of the Carioca elite by ap-

13. See Meade and Pirio, "In Search of the Afro-American 'Dorado.'"

14. For more on Degler's thesis, see note 1.

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pearing faithfully at the weekly public audiences held by Emperor Dom Pedro II. Prominent citizens who came to kiss the Emperor's hand and engage in political debate also came in contact with Dom Obá.

Silva reconstructs Obá's life and thought by gleaning fragmentary evidence, most of it from an ephemeral newspaper, *O Carbonário.* The author fleshes out his subject's portrait with contemporaneous sources, such as Dionísio Cerqueira's *Reminiscências da campanha do Paraguai, 1865–1870,* which stimulated Silva to speculate about what Galvão's experience of the war might have been. In addition to applying the general to the specific, Silva sometimes projects the attitudes and experiences of Galvão onto the entire black community, treating him as a window for reconstructing the attitudes of the black and racially mixed underclass. Unfortunately, Silva sometimes oversteps his evidence.

Galvão clearly stood apart in a number of ways. He claimed descent through his father's line to a divine Yoruba lineage and displayed a variety of symbols to represent his personal authority. Galvão decorated his military uniform with "African feathers," and his press portrait featured African representations of *orixás* (Yoruba deities) as well as Christian symbols. In the role of prince, he adopted the dress of the Rio elite but also sported an umbrella, a symbol of royalty and state power among the Yoruba. Galvão wrote in a mixture of Latin, Portuguese, and Yoruba, drawing on diverse sources of inspiration that included the Old Testament, literary figures like Luiz Vaz de Camões and Antônio de Castro Alves, and African oral traditions.

Galvão addressed several racial issues in his published writings, suggesting that blacks did not passively accept the negative opinions and policies of the white elite. He spoke out against corporal punishment and disapproved of the law classifying African slaves as foreigners and denying them full citizenship as freedmen unless they paid to apply for naturalization. The prince also spoke out against discrimination, maintaining that virtue and merit were more important than color or class. When confronted with pseudo-scientific racism, Galvão rejected the whitening ideal and expressed pride in being black. One of his supporters argued that he should be named ambassador to West Africa to promote free African migration to the plantations of Brazil, a "blackening" policy. Galvão also criticized the injustice of denigrating blacks after they had been the first chosen to defend Brazil in war.

Yet the lives of those who looked up to Dom Obá II d'Africa remain opaque in *Prince of the People.* Readers learn of the importance of Bahian men and women in the cultural life of Rio as founders of samba schools and candomblé houses, but the relations between these ritual leaders and the prince is unclear. Silva describes the harsh material conditions faced by urban blacks and the ethnic and religious cleavages that divided Brazilians of African descent. But their lives remain vague, and

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one wishes that Silva had made better use of the social histories available on Imperial and Republican Rio de Janeiro.[15]

Nonetheless, Silva should be commended for piecing together such an engaging historical biography. The translation by Moyra Ashford is smooth and highly readable. Silva's project bears some resemblance to that tackled by Robert Levine and José Carlos Sebe Bom Meihy in writing *The Life and Death of Carolina Maria de Jesus*. Dom Obá and Carolina were both black Brazilians who were marginalized by elite society for their outspokenness and were denigrated as ill-adapted or even crazy. Galvão remained alive in popular memory for thirty years after his death, however, while Carolina was quickly forgotten by the Brazilian public.

A largely self-taught writer, Carolina Maria de Jesus achieved sudden fame in 1960 when she published her personal account of life in a São Paulo favela, a work entitled *Quarto de despejo* (later published in English under the title *Child of the Dark*). She boldly criticized corrupt politicians, bureaucratic mismanagement that contributed to shortages of food and basic services, racial discrimination, and the grinding despair of poverty and hunger. Yet her account was written not as a means of social protest but rather as a form of personal escapism.

In their efforts to resurrect Carolina, Levine and Meihy seem to personify the dominant views held by U.S. and Brazilian audiences. U.S. historian Levine was inspired to study Carolina's life after years of questions from students about Carolina's ultimate fate. Meihy, the founder of the Brazilian Oral History Association, initially had little recollection of Carolina's book, which was long out of print in Brazil. Like many Brazilian academics, he resented the book's uncritical acceptance by North Americans and Europeans as a testimony to Brazilian political corruption, racial discrimination, and poverty.

Levine and Meihy trace Carolina's early years in rural Minas Gerais and her struggle to educate herself and combat racial discrimination, drawing on her poignant autobiographical account entitled *Diário de Bitita*. As a young adult, Carolina migrated to São Paulo, where she worked as a domestic servant for a series of employers. When she became pregnant at age thirty-three, she lost her job, moved to a favela called Canindé, and earned a precarious living by collecting scrap paper. When *Quarto de*

15. Such works include Sidney Chaloub, *Trabalho, lar e botequim: O cotidiano dos trabalhadores no Rio de Janeiro da Belle Epoque* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1986); and Chaloub, *Visões da liberdade: Uma história das últimas décadas da escravidão na corte* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1990); Sandra Lauderdale Graham, *House and Street: The Domestic World of Servants and Masters in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Thomas Holloway, *Policing Rio de Janeiro: Repression and Resistance in a Nineteenth-Century City* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993); Mary Karasch, *Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808–1850* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987); and Carlos Eugênio Líbano Soares, *A negregada instituição: Os capoeiras no Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, 1993).

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despejo was published, she was living in a makeshift shack with her three children, each born of a different white father.

Levine and Meihy lay to rest longstanding doubts about the authorship of *Quarto de despejo.* Surviving manuscripts reveal that her agent, journalist Audálio Dantas, did not significantly alter her original diary. Nor was Carolina just a media creation invented to sell books. This account also covers Carolina's reception by the Brazilian public after the publication of *Quarto de despejo* in 1960. Levine and Meihy argue persuasively that the media focused more on Carolina than on the content of the book itself in order to avoid dealing with the issues that it raised.

Carolina defied neat categorization, ultimately pleasing no one. Even her feelings about race were ambivalent. She wavered between an aesthetic appreciation of her own blackness and outright denigration of anything black, especially her neighbors from the Northeast. She clearly preferred European and North American men as intimate partners, and in bearing their children, she participated in the whitening process. Yet Carolina was not extreme enough to please political radicals and intellectuals who wanted to use her book to combat the evils of a racist and capitalist society. She was unwilling to take up larger political causes or be used by political groups. She even retained a certain respect for the corrupt politicians of the day, especially Adhemar de Barros and Jânio Quadros, who extended patronage to her in the form of medical care. Before achieving fame, she attended political rallies and speeches regularly, became a recognized figure, and was even called to the platform to debate.

Carolina's outspokenness and unwillingness to conform ultimately caused public opinion and criticism to focus on her personality flaws rather than on the social and economic issues raised in her book. She refused to become a docile example of middle-class womanhood after she was catapulted to fame. She also refused to give up her independence, rejecting several offers of marriage at the cost of being accused of promiscuity. Although Carolina was condemned as "an uppity black woman," she did not attract favorable attention from feminists. Nor was she praised for being a good mother.

Instead, Carolina was criticized for being unable to handle success and was portrayed as crazy and arrogant. In Argentina, she was presented publicly with a large screw to replace the one that she supposedly had missing (p. 117). Carolina used some of the proceeds from *Quarto de despejo* to move her family to a working-class neighborhood, where she was shunned by her neighbors and badgered by strangers seeking handouts. She continued to write nonetheless, paying to have her manuscripts published. Her subsequent works sold poorly. Although *Quarto de despejo* was translated into many languages and became a bestseller in forty countries, her publisher sold the foreign rights to her work so cheaply

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that she received almost no royalties. By 1964 she was reduced again to collecting trash. In 1970 Carolina moved to an area on the outskirts of the city of São Paulo, where she lived until her death in 1977. The press chided her for sliding back into poverty, never acknowledging that she preferred a simple quiet life on her semi-rural property.

Levine and Meihy also examine what happened to Carolina's three children. Her eldest son João died of kidney failure shortly after her own death. Daughter Vera achieved some upward social mobility through hard work, education, and a good marriage. She became a teacher and studied English in night school. Younger son Zé Carlos, although intelligent and articulate, was divorced twice, employed only sporadically as a truck driver, and became a habitual drunk. Yet both surviving children expressed pride in Carolina as a strong mother and a dignified human being who commanded respect. Zé commented, "She was an excellent debater—an artist and an activist at the same time, like [Chilean poet] Pablo Neruda" (p. 126). He believes that Carolina did not gain the enduring respect that she deserved because "Brazil preferred silencing my mother's message to opening its eyes" (p. 119).[16]

Anthropologist Ruth Landes was also victimized for not conforming to gender expectations and choosing an unconventional lifestyle instead. Her colleagues discredited her 1947 monograph on Bahian candomblé because it did not fit neatly into the professional paradigms set by male anthropologists in the 1930s. *The City of Women*, reissued by the University of New Mexico Press nearly fifty years after its original publication, is now being hailed as a "trail-blazing classic of post-modern anthropology and a basic primary source for candomblé studies" (back cover). At the time it was originally published, however, *The City of Women* did not conform to the paradigm of "science of culture" that catalogued customs and traits that were supposedly "homogeneous, integrated and static" (p. vii). Landes's views now conform to prescriptions for ethnographic writing issued in the 1980s.[17] Her voice is present in the text as are the multiple and often conflicting voices of her informants.

In its day, the manuscript version of *The City of Women* was rejected repeatedly by academic publishers and was eventually issued by a trade press. Once published, the book was panned almost universally by fellow anthropologists. Sally Cole outlines the reasons in the preface: "First was her portrayal of the respective roles of women and men in candomblé; second was her contextualization of Afro-Brazilian religions as emerging out of local history and experience rather than representing African 'sur-

16. A different version of this book has been published in Brazil as *Cinderela negra: A saga de Carolina Maria de Jesus* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 1994).

17. See James Clifford and George E. Marcus, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986).

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vivals'; and third were her methods and personal comportment in the field" (p. xxi). More specifically, Landes was criticized for hobnobbing with humble descendants of former slaves rather than conducting decorous formal interviews and socializing with the local elite. Her allusions to her affair with Edison Carneiro, a mulatto radical intellectual, and her disparaging remarks about both the local Bahian elite and the U.S. and European expatriate community living in Salvador shocked the sensibilities of potential readers.

In Landes's analysis, gender assumes at least as much importance as race. Women performed crucial roles as *mães de santo* who interpreted spirit possession, trained initiates, and served as healers and diviners. Only women were considered proper vessels for the descent of the deities (orixás). Metaphorically, women were termed the wives or "horses" of the gods when they were "mounted by the spirit." For a man to welcome a spirit would be emasculating. Consequently, only openly homosexual men aspired to become *pais de santo.* Men were relegated largely to a spiritually subordinate role in candomblé: as *ogans,* they served as drummers, performed animal sacrifices, and contributed financially to the terreiro. Men demonstrated their cultural prowess in another realm, Bahian *capoeira.*

The spiritual dominance of women in the terreiros also carried over into the secular realm, where they ran mutual aid societies, served as important links in political patronage networks, and sheltered political subversives. The spiritual dominance of women in Bahian candomblé was contested by a mulatta newcomer named Sabina, who provided a more active role for men in her house. She recognized homosexual spirit mediums in her *terreiros caboclos,* which combined both Yoruba and indigenous spirits. Sabina resembled the sensuous mulatta so exalted in Brazilian culture. Slender, well-groomed, upwardly mobile, and fair-skinned, she embodied success via whitening. The more traditional African terreiros questioned her religious commitment, sense of aesthetics, and materialistic greed. Edison Carneiro disparaged her youth and slender figure: "The African woman is supposed to bulge, she is supposed to look comfortable, like one who carries children and loves men. That's why she's a mother" (p. 159).

Landes presents evidence to suggest that some Afro-Bahian women had begun to internalize the whitened ideal of beauty. For example, at dance parties, middle-class ways and dress were adopted but also criticized, especially straightening one's hair. A priestess named Hilda who became pregnant by a light-skinned mestiço defended her actions by affirming, "he supports his children—and he makes handsome ones" (p. 154). Yet Landes also provides counterevidence showing that the whitening ideal had yet to assume hegemonic status in Salvador da Bahia. For example, Martiniano, an elderly former slave who had been trained as a

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sorcerer in Nigeria, exclaimed proudly, "You Americans are so rich in goods—you can't understand our poverty. . . . But we have gold of a kind: we have the Negroes and the music of samba!" (p. 39).

Admiration for black culture also extended to members of the Salvadoran intellectual elite. Although some Bahian professionals adopted a patronizing attitude, Landes cites many scholars who esteemed candomblé and the women who practiced it. For example, law professor Dr. Nestor Duarte praised Baianas as an "ennobling and modernizing influence in Brazil." He admired female economic independence and matriarchal care of the community, concluding "we cannot have healthy men unless we have strong healthy women" (p. 76). Clearly, he perceived merits in black women beyond their supposed sexual availability to white men or their capacity for manual labor.

The inclusion of nonwhite intellectuals and journalists in studies of race has gained ground in recent years. Michael Trochim has researched the Black Guard, a pro-monarchical group of radical reformers who formed in the early republic.[18] Other scholars have studied the black press that emerged in the 1920s to awaken the consciousness of middle-class urban blacks, who first formed social clubs and then in 1931 the Frente Negra Brasileira. The FNB strove to overturn discriminatory practices, improve educational opportunities, provide social services, and sponsor leisure activities like dances, soccer leagues, and beauty contests. The FNB became a national party and was abolished a few years later by Getúlio Vargas under the Estado Novo in 1937.[19]

The urban black middle class of the Brazilian Center and South employed different strategies for racial self-affirmation than did contemporaneous candomblé practitioners in Salvador. Landes's *City of Women* thereby heightens awareness of the importance of region in the study of race relations. Her observations about how Bahian blacks constructed their racial identity in the face of a whitening ideology provides a fascinating counterpoint to Skidmore, who focused mostly on white elite intellectuals from Brazil's Center-South. Such works highlight the need for more comparative studies of race in Brazil that focus more on the variables of region and demography.

Regional sensitivity is one of the great strengths of Peter Wade's *Blackness and Race Mixture: The Dynamics of Racial Identity in Colombia,* which offers the most theoretically sophisticated analysis of race of all the

18. Michael R. Trochim, "The Brazilian Black Guard: Racial Conflict in Post-Abolition Brazil," *The Americas* 44, no. 3 (Jan. 1988):285–301.

19. Quintard Taylor, "Frente Negra Brasileira: The Afro-Brazilian Civil Rights Movement, 1924–1937," *Umoja, a Scholarly Journal of Black Studies* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1978):25–40; Kim D. Butler, "Up from Slavery: Afro-Brazilian Activism in São Paulo, 1888–1938," *The Americas* 49, no. 2 (Oct. 1992):179–206; and George Reid Andrews, "Black Political Protest in São Paulo, 1888–1988," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24, pt. 1 (Feb. 1992):147–71.

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works reviewed here. Wade has tackled discourses on blackness from the perspective of the Chocó, the coastal Pacific region that received the greatest numbers of slaves and today possesses the highest proportion of blacks in Colombia. Wade emphasizes the importance of politics, economics, demography, and region in shaping race relations. He is careful, however, to draw a clear analytical distinction between race and class, granting class greater autonomy in the dialectic of race relations.

Wade tests his assumptions by comparing the experience of blacks in three different regions where their demographic weight and economic role vary considerably. He examines Quibdó, the capital of Chocó; the city of Medellín in the heart of whitened Antioquia; and racially mixed Unguía on the Atlantic coast. Wade draws on an array of sources that include participant observation, questionnaires, essays, and government statistical studies of urban neighborhoods containing information on race, intermarriage, and occupation.

Wade discovers that blacks have the most power to determine the cultural meaning of blackness in Quibdó, although politics were controlled by upwardly mobile mulattos who had bought into the whitening ideal. In Unguía, black Chocoano migrants occupy the lowest stratum of society while racially mixed Costeños constitute an intermediate category. White Antioqueños influence social norms to a degree disproportionate to their numbers. Upwardly mobile Chocoanos therefore must conform to white expectations in behavior in order to rise, and prejudices against the Chocó region remain strong. In Medellín, where Chocoano migrants constitute a tiny minority, they adopt one of two strategies: nucleation into tightly knit black communities that retain strong kinship networks and ties to the Chocó, or a more dispersed pattern of settlement accompanied by assimilation to white norms and expectations. White acceptance of blackness tends to be granted conditionally on an individual basis, while negative stereotypes persist about the primitiveness of the Chocó and its inhabitants.

Overt evidence of racial discrimination is harder to pinpoint. For example, the fact that Chocoano migrants tend to cluster in nonskilled and menial occupations such as domestic service, street peddling, and construction results from a variety of factors, only one of which is race. Indeed, one of the few flaws of *Blackness and Race Mixture* is that the data are sometimes inadequate or too ambiguous to buttress Wade's elaborate theoretical constructions. Overall, however, this dense and meticulously researched monograph skillfully weaves historical sources together with contemporary data to construct a nuanced argument about the extent to which region and class determine how blacks participate in constructing their own racial identity. Wade's discussions of religious fiestas and Colombian popular music as mediating forces are especially compelling.

Blackness and Race Mixture indicates some possible directions that

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scholars of race relations in Brazil might pursue. Wade's emphases on place, region, and demography may caution scholars to avoid overgeneralizing from specific cases like the urban centers of Salvador da Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo. On surveying these seven books as a whole, one cannot help but be struck by profound regional differences in each case. Although region has not yet become a central analytical category among Brazilianists, the works reviewed here indicate that class and gender have become essential ingredients in the study of race. Yet such concerns should not be limited to a facile and fashionable linking of race, class, and gender. Researchers must seriously question to what extent powerful whites have imposed their ideologies on powerless blacks. The examples of Dom Obá, Carolina Maria de Jesus, and the many ritual practitioners of candomblé described by Landes demonstrate that the powerless do not always choose to silence themselves and give in to elite definitions of blackness. As other scholars have argued, we should seek out these dissenting voices in order to achieve a clearer understanding of how race is constructed, contested, and transformed.[20]

20. Similar calls have been issued by scholars employing postmodern paradigms, especially within the framework of subaltern studies. See Patricia Seed, "Colonial and Postcolonial Discourse," *LARR* 26, no. 3 (1991):181–200; "Founding Statement: Latin American Subaltern Studies Group," *boundary 2* 20, no. 3 (1993):110–21; and Florencia E. Mallon, "The Promise and Dilemma of Subaltern Studies: Perspectives from Latin American History," *American Historical Review* (Dec. 1994):1491–1515. See also Amaryll Chanady, "Latin American Imagined Communities and the Postmodern Challenge," in *Latin American Identity and Constructions of Difference*, edited by Amaryll Chanady (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), ix–xlvi. I would like to thank Suzanne Schadl for drawing my attention to these references.

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