The most important feature of Latin American lowland race relations since the abolition of slavery is the absence of sharply defined racial groupings. Unlike both the highlands and the United States, most of the former Latin American slave plantation areas lack racially derived caste-like divisions. The Negroes in the United States and the Indians in highland Latin America may be said to constitute separate social groups. Yet in much of the lowlands of Latin America one is obliged to conclude, as we shall presently see, that there is no such thing as a Negro group or a white group. There are, to be sure, Negroids and Caucasoids, as well as all of the intervening grades resulting from widespread miscegenation, but neither the Negroes nor the mixed or mulatto types nor the whites may be said to constitute by themselves separately identifiable, significant social segments.

A moment's reflection should suffice to bring into prominence the fact that without a method for clearly distinguishing between one group and another, systematic discrimination cannot be practiced. The sine qua non of any thoroughgoing minority system is a foolproof method for separating a population into respective superordinate and subordinate groups. In order to prevent the members of a certain group from freely choosing their jobs, voting, enrolling in a school, or joining a club, it is absolutely indispensable that there be a reliable way of knowing who is a member of the group to be segregated and who is a member of the group that is to do the segregating.
Now it just so happens that all of those people in the United States who are certain that they are whites and not Negroes, or vice versa, and all those people in Peru or Ecuador who are certain that they are mestizos and not Indios, or vice versa, are whistling through their hats. Genetically speaking, about the only thing any racist can be sure of is that he is a human being. It makes sense to inquire whether a given creature is a man or a chimpanzee, but from the point of view of genetics it is nonsense to ask whether a particular individual is a white or a Negro. To be a member of a biological race is to be a member of a population which exhibits a specified frequency of certain kinds of genes. Individuals do not exhibit frequencies of genes; individuals merely have the human complement of genes, a very large but unknown number, most of which are shared in common by all people. When a man says "I am white," all that he can mean scientifically is that he is a member of a population which has been found to have a high frequency of genes for light skin color, thin lips, heavy body hair, medium stature, etc. Since the population of which he is a member is necessarily a hybrid population — actually, all human races are hybrid — there is no way to make certain that he himself does not owe a genetic endowment to other populations. This would be the case even if all genotypes were directly expressed in the phenotype. But the fact that a man's actual appearance may be a poor guide to his genetic endowment makes it yet more difficult positively to establish his racial identity. Thus all Caucasoids would be scientifically well-advised to say: "I am probably part Negro," and all Negroes may quite accurately assert: "I am probably part white." The correctness of these statements is assured even if we consider populations which are resident in northern Europe and South Africa, for the archaeological and paleontological evidence quite clearly indicates that there has been gene flow between Europe and Africa for almost a million years. How obviously correct must they be therefore, in such locales as the United States, Latin America and the Republic of South Africa, where known and admitted hybridization has taken place on a vast scale during the past few hundred years! All racial identity, scientifically speaking, is ambiguous. Wherever certainty is expressed on
this subject, we can be confident that society has manufactured a social lie in order to help one of its segments take advantage of another.  

By what ingenious computation is the genetic tracery of a million years of evolution unraveled and each man assigned his proper social box? In the United States, the mechanism employed is the rule of hypo-descent.  

This descent rule requires Americans to believe that anyone who is known to have had a Negro ancestor is a Negro. We admit nothing in between. One result of this formula is that millions of us who are genetically more Caucasoid than Negroid are classified as Negroes. “Hypo-descent” means affiliation with the subordinate rather than the superordinate group in order to avoid the ambiguity of intermediate identity. Thus, first-generation children of interracial marriages in the United States are uniformly Negroes, when it is absolutely certain that such children have received half of their hereditary endowment from one parent and half from the other. That a half-white should be a Negro rather than a white cannot be explained by rational argument. The reason for this absurd bit of folk taxonomy is simply that the great blundering machinery of segregation cannot easily adjust itself to degrees of whiteness or darkness. Logically, if there are separate schools for whites and blacks, then there also ought to be separate schools for blonds, brunettes, tans and browns. The rule of hypo-descent is, therefore, an invention which we in the United States have made in order to keep biological facts from intruding into our collective racist fantasies. With it, we have gone so far as to create Alice-in-Wonderland kinds of Negroes about whom people say, “He certainly doesn’t look like a Negro.” Consider the case of Harry S. Murphy, the young man who recently announced that he, rather than James Meredith, had been the first Negro ever to be admitted to the University of Mississippi. Mr. Murphy calls himself a Negro and is apparently regarded as such by those who know his genealogy, and yet he is Caucasoid enough to have spent nine months at “Ole Miss” without attracting the slightest bit of notice. In most parts of lowland Latin America, Mr. Murphy would not only be regarded as white, but he could never “pass” as a Negro.
The contrast between both the United States and highland patterns and the lowland treatment of racial identity is most dramatically evident in Brazil, although similar contrasts are present everywhere in the former slave, tropical-crop, plantation areas. In Brazil, the whole question of racial identity is resolved in a fashion which is much more befitting the actual complexity of hereditary processes. Racial identity in Brazil is not governed by a rigid descent rule. A Brazilian child is never automatically identified with the racial type of one or both of his parents, nor must his racial type be selected from one of only two possibilities. Over a dozen racial categories may be recognized in conformity with the combinations of hair color, hair texture, eye color and skin color which actually occur. These types grade into each other like the colors of the spectrum and no one category stands significantly isolated from all the rest.

One of the most striking consequences of the Brazilian system of racial identification is that parents and children and even brothers and sisters are frequently accepted as representatives of quite opposite racial types. This feature of the system was confirmed recently by research carried out under the author’s supervision in a fishing village in the state of Bahia. A sample of 100 neighbors and relatives were shown photographs of three full sisters and asked to identify the race of each. In only six responses were the three sisters identified by the same racial terms. In all of the remaining cases one or both older sisters were racially distinguished from the baby. Furthermore, there were fourteen respondents who used a different term for all three of the sisters. The most frequent contrast was between branca for one and mulata or morena for one or both of the others, but in a few cases, the range extended over what may have represented the widest contrasts admitted within the respondent’s idiosyncratic version of racial types.

It was found, in addition, that a given Brazilian might be called by as many as thirteen different terms by other members of his community. These terms are spread out across practically the entire spectrum of theoretical racial types. A further consequence of the absence of a descent rule is that Brazilians apparently not only disagree about the
racial identity of specific individuals, but they also seem to be in disagreement about the abstract meaning of the racial terms as defined by words and phrases. For example, 40 per cent of a representative sample ranked moreno claro as a lighter type than mulato claro, while 60 per cent reversed this order.

A further note of confusion is introduced by the fact that a given informant was found to be quite capable of employing different racial terms for the same person after a short lapse of time. This phenomenon had previously been predicted by Donald Pierson:

> These and similar terms employed in Brazil are descriptive not only of racial origin but of other and more important phenomena. What is still more significant, their usage varies with individuals in keeping with varying personal relationships, and with the same individual at different times in keeping with different moods.\^[Italics are Pierson's.\]

In order systematically to explore the range of terms which might be applied to a given individual a set of nine portrait drawings, variable in hair shade, hair texture, nasal and lip width, and skin tone were also shown to another sample of 100 people. Forty different racial types were now elicited: branco, preto, sarará, moreno claro, moreno escuero, mulato, moreno, mulato claro, mulato escuero, negro, caboclo, escuero, cabo verde, claro, aracuaba, roxo, amarelo, sarará escuero, cór de canela, preto claro, roxo claro, cór de cinza, vermelho, caboclo escuero, pardo, branco sarará, mambebe, branco caboclado, moreno escuero, mulato sarará, gazula, cór de cinza clara, creolo, louro, moreno claro caboclado, mulato bem claro, branco mulato, roxo de cabelo bom, preto escuero, pelé. The highest percentage of agreement reached for any of the drawings was 70 per cent branco for drawing No. 9. The lowest percentage of agreement was 18 per cent sarará for drawing No. 1. Nineteen different terms were elicited by drawing No. 1 and nine different terms were elicited by drawing No. 9.\^[It would seem that if the people of this village ever decided to become segregationists à la Mississippi or Capetown, they would have to build forty different kinds of schools rather than merely two.\]
A further consequence of the absence of a descent rule in the Brazilian system is that it is possible for people to change their racial identity during their lifetimes. It is known, of course, that a certain number of United States Negroes annually pass into the white group in defiance of our racial rule of descent, and in the highlands, where descent is also important, "passing," as we have seen, occurs quite frequently. In Brazil, however, the changing of "race" does not require the secrecy and the agonizing withdrawal from family and friends which are necessary in this country and among the Indians of the highland regions. In Brazil one can pass to another racial category regardless of how dark one may be without changing one's residence. The passing is accomplished by achieving economic success or high educational status. Brazilians say "Money whitens," meaning that the richer a dark man gets the lighter will be the racial category to which he will be assigned by his friends, relatives and business associates. Similarly, light-skinned individuals who rank extremely low in terms of educational and occupational criteria are frequently regarded as actually being darker in color than they really are. It is this interplay between color and other diagnostics of rank which renders the Brazilian census material on race so dubious. Among the "whites" there are many "brown" persons who because of their superior economic standing are locally classified as "white." On the other hand, among the "blacks," there are many persons who are in reality "brown" but whose extremely low educational and occupational status displaces them into the "black" category.

This means in effect that there are no subjectively meaningful Brazilian social groups based exclusively upon racial criteria. The terms Negro (preto) and white (branco) could denote clear-cut population segments for nobody but a physical anthropologist. In the actual dynamics of everyday life, superordinate-subordinate relationships are determined by the interplay between a variety of achieved and ascribed statuses, of which race is an important but not decisive element. It is evident that in the Northeast of Brazil the fact that an individual manifests a particular set of physical characteristics does not by itself determine a single status-role.
The lack of a descent rule, the high frequency of “passing,” marked semantic ambiguity of both an abstract and referential sort, and the complicated interplay between physical appearance and other diagnostics or rank were in the initial phases of research in northeastern Brazil confused with an absence of racial prejudice. Blanket statements asserting that “Brazil has no racial prejudice” became popular among Brazilian diplomats and other official and semi-official spokesmen who shared Gilberto Freyre’s belief that:

With respect to race relations, the Brazilian situation is probably the nearest approach to paradise to be found anywhere in the world. Even Donald Pierson, the first North American to make a detailed study of Brazilian race relations, was somewhat carried away by his enthusiasm for Bahian inter-racial democracy, and tended to underestimate the amount of racial prejudice which actually existed, and which every Brazilian knows full well exists, except when talking to United States citizens.

Additional studies have since documented the prevalence of stereotypes against “Negroes” and Negroid physical features. Most Brazilians abstractly regard Negroes as innately inferior in intelligence, honesty and dependability. Negroid physical features are universally (even by “Negroes” themselves) believed to be less desirable and less beautiful than Caucasoid features. In most of their evaluations of the Negro as an abstract type, the whites are inclined to deride and slander. Prejudiced and stereotyped opinions about people of intermediate physical appearance are also common. On the whole, there is an ideal racial ranking gradient, in which whites occupy the favorable extreme, Negroes the unfavorable extreme and mulattoes the various intermediate positions.

But these ideological phenomena do not seriously affect actual behavior. What people say they will or will not do with respect to pretos and mulatos does not issue into actual behavior. Indeed, extremely prejudiced Brazilians have been observed to behave with marked deference toward representatives of the very types whom they allege to be most inferior. Racial prejudice in Brazil, in other words, is not
accompanied by systematic racial segregation and discrimination. The reason for this paradox should be clear: Despite the "ideal" stereotypes, there is no "actual" status-role for the Negro as a Negro, for the white as a white, or for the mulato as a mulato. There are no racial groups. Before two individuals can decide how they ought to behave toward each other they must know more than merely that one is dark-skinned and the other light. A Brazilian is never merely a "white man" or a "colored man"; he is a rich, well educated white man or a poor, uneducated white man; a rich, well educated colored man or a poor, uneducated colored man. The outcome of this qualification of race by education and economics determines one's class identity. It is one's class and not one's race which determines the adoption of subordinate and superordinate attitudes between specific individuals in face-to-face relations. It is class which determines who will be admitted to hotels, restaurants and social clubs; who will get preferential treatment in stores, churches, night clubs and travel accommodations; and who will have the best chance among a group of marriage suitors. There are no racial groups against which discrimination occurs. Instead, there are class groups. Color is one of the criteria of class identity; but it is not the only criterion.

Brazil's classes, unlike those of the United States, tend to include a very wide variety of racial types. Also, unlike those of the United States, the disabilities of class membership are immensely more severe and unshakable. Thus, while it is true that racial prejudice exerts only a negligible influence in establishing an individual's class membership, this membership is less mutable, and immensely more significant for everyday relationships and long-range life expectations, than is the case in our own culture. Race discrimination is per se mild and equivocal; class discrimination, however, produces disabilities and inequalities of a sharp, persistent and pervasive sort. I have elsewhere argued that it is not Brazil's color groups, but her classes which correspond most closely to the Indians in highland Latin America and to the Negroes in the United States.

This class discrimination has recently been summarized by Thales de Azevedo for Bahian society. Dr. Azevedo re-
gards the Bahian social hierarchy as consisting of three classes, with the most important social cleavage between the middle and lower groups. These two groups are popularly perceived as os ricos and os pobres, the rich and the poor. The rich are sometimes called the whites. They are those who don't work hard, those who work with their heads or those who wear a tie, the doutores, the people with college-level degrees, the government workers, the powerful businessmen. The poor are sometimes called the Negroes. "They are those who sweat. They are the humble ones."

Of crucial significance here is the fact that despite the equation of the rich with whites and of the poor with Negroes, the actual facts of the matter are that both groups are racially mixed. Negroes occur, although in small percentages, among the "whites" as well as among the "Negroes." And whites occur, again with smaller percentages but nonetheless in significant numbers, among the so-called pobres or "Negroes."

These racially mixed groups confront each other in a manner which is strikingly reminiscent of the accommodations which exist between the supposedly racially homogeneous minority groups in the United States. Thus, as Azevedo points out, the people of the lower group are obliged to address the superior group with the title Dona for women and O senhor for men. The "inferior" person is careful not to use você to address members of the superior group. Kissing among women; the intimate goodbye signal made with the fingers; and the handshake and abraço (embrace) are rarely employed in asymmetrical relationships. If a superior shakes hands with an inferior, the latter must let the superior take his hand without responding with a clasp of his own.

Other mechanisms regulate the spatial positions and limit the use of intimate gestures and words. A member of the inferior group is received into the house of an upper- or middle-class person but rarely does he seat himself in the living room or at the dinner table. If a meal is offered to him, he eats in the kitchen, in the pantry, or even at the table but separated, either before or after the others. Marriages rarely cross the lines which separate these two groups. The
clothing is different. The educational system is structured in relationship to the two groups. Public schools are attended practically exclusively by the pobres and private schools only by the members of the superior group. A pobre caught at a crime by a policeman is taken to a comfortless prison where he may be treated brutally and where his companions are criminals, bums, alcoholics and beggars. The individual of the higher group in the same circumstances almost always finds a way to avoid immediate imprisonment. If he is taken prisoner, he is brought to the police station discreetly in an automobile. He may be taken to the hospital rather than to prison, while persons with degrees are legally entitled to be put in special prisons.

This description of the differential privileges of the “rich” and the “poor” in Brazil could be expanded to much greater lengths. Class “discrimination” operates in hotels, hospitals, restaurants, night clubs, housing and many other public and semi-public institutions. Of course, a good deal of this “discrimination” automatically results merely from the inability of some individuals to pay for certain goods and services. Such discrimination is a part of any system where goods and services are bought and sold and where there are pecuniary inequalities. But in northeastern Brazil, the pecuniary inequalities are so great that a large segment of the population is unable to purchase the quantities and qualities of goods and services which are deemed the minimum prerequisite for a comfortable existence by those who provide the model for the “good life.” The Brazilian masses are not only unable to buy servants, yachts, country estates, pâté de foie gras and trips around the world (some annoying results of pecuniary “discrimination” in the United States), but bread and meat, a suit of clothes, shoes, adequate medical care, beds, high-school education, comfortable transport and many other items which are deemed minimum essentials in advanced industrial societies. Under such conditions, the issue of racial discrimination is scarcely a vital one. Lower-class whites and lower-class colored people are alike segregated and “discriminated” against, one perhaps slightly more than the other; but where the common deprivations are so pervasive, where upward mobility is so restricted, all of the
familiar symptoms of racial discrimination tend to be subsumed by the class differentials.

Thus, although the pattern of “race” relations in Brazil contrasts markedly with that of the United States, especially with that of the South, once Brazil’s lower class is accorded its proper structural significance as the equivalent of the “Negroes” in the United States, the stratification systems of the two countries actually bear a very close resemblance to each other. In both cases, the fundamental heritage of the slave plantation was the creation of severely handicapped minorities, darker in color than the rest of the population. Let those who regard Brazil as a “racial paradise” remember that this paradise is occupied only by fictional creatures. The real men and women of Bahia are not members of “races,” except insofar as any collection of human beings may be said to have an objective racial identity. As far as actual behavior is concerned, “races” do not exist for the Brazilians. But classes exist both for the observer and for the Brazilians. This is the first fact to be digested if one is curious about why racial identity per se is a mild and wavering thing in Brazil, while in the United States, it is for millions of people a passport to hell.
The argument in the previous chapters has been that differences in race relations within Latin America are at root a matter of the labor systems in which the respective subordinate and superordinate groups became enmeshed. I have already attempted to show how a number of cultural traits and institutions which were permitted to survive, or were deliberately encouraged under one system, were discouraged or suppressed in the other. It remains to be shown how the specific combination of features which characterize lowland race relations more narrowly construed can be accounted for by the same set of principles.

At present, probably the majority of American scholars who have found a moment to ponder the peculiar aspects of the Brazilian interracial "paradise" are devoted to an opposite belief. What could be more obvious than the inadequacy of a materialist explanation of the Brazilian pattern? How can plantation slavery be made to explain anything about the lack of interracial hostility in Brazil? Was it not a plantation system in the United States South which bred a condition contrary in every detail to that of Brazil?

The current vogue of opinion about this contrast derives in large measure from the work of Frank Tannenbaum, a noted United States historian, and Gilberto Freyre, Brazil's best known sociologist. The theories of these influential scholars overlap at many points. It is their contention that the laws, values, religious precepts and personalities of the English colonists differed from those of the Iberian colonists.
These initial psychological and ideological differences were sufficient to overcome whatever tendency the plantation system may have exerted toward parallel rather than divergent evolution.

Freyre's theories, originally proposed in his classic study of Brazilian plantation life, *Casa grande e senzala*, have remained virtually unchanged for over thirty years. What most impresses Freyre about Brazilian slavery is the alleged easy-going, humanized relations between master and slave, especially between master and female slave. Slaves, while subject to certain disabilities and although sometimes cruelly treated, frequently came to play an emotionally significant role in the intimate life of their white owners. A high rate of miscegenation was one of the hallmarks of this empathy between the races. The Portuguese not only took Negro and mulatto women as mistresses and concubines, but they sometimes spurned their white wives in order to enjoy the favors of duskier beauties. Behind these favorable omens, visible from the very first days of contact, was a fundamental fact of national character, namely, the Portuguese had no color prejudice. On the contrary, their long experience under Moorish tutelage is said to have prepared them to regard people of darker hue as equals, if not superiors:

The singular predisposition of the Portuguese to the hybrid, slave-exploiting colonization of the tropics is to be explained in large part by the ethnic or, better, the cultural past of a people existing indeterminately between Europe and Africa and belonging uncompromisingly to neither one nor the other of the two continents.¹

Other colonizers were not as successful as the Portuguese because their libidos were more conservative. Especially poorly endowed sexually were the "Anglo-Saxon Protestants."

The truth is that in Brazil, contrary to what is to be observed in other American countries and in those parts of Africa that have been recently colonized by Europeans, the primitive culture — the Amerindian as well as the African — has not been isolated into hard, dry indigestible lumps... Neither did the social
relations between the two races, the conquering and the indigenous one, ever reach that point of sharp antipathy or hatred, the grating sound of which reaches our ears from all the countries that have been colonized by Anglo-Saxon Protestants. The friction here (in Brazil) was smoothed by the lubricating oil of a deep-going miscegenation...

The next and fatal step in this line of reasoning is to assert that the special psychological equipment of the Portuguese, not only in Brazil but everywhere in "The World the Portuguese Created," yields hybrids and interracial harmony. In 1952, after a tour of Portuguese colonies as an honored guest of the Salazar government, Freyre declared that the Portuguese were surrounded in the Orient, America and Africa with half-caste "lusó-populations" and "a sympathy on the part of the native which contrasts with the veiled or open hatred directed toward the other Europeans."

How Freyre could have been hoodwinked into finding resemblances between race relations in Angola and Mozambique and Brazil is hard to imagine. My own findings, based on a year of field work in Mozambique, have since been supported by the field and library research of James Duffy. If any reasonable doubts remained about the falsity of Freyre's luso-tropical theory, tragic events in Angola should by now have swept them away. The fact is that the Portuguese are responsible for setting off the bloodiest of all of the recent engagements between whites and Negroes in Africa (including the Mau Mau). And the Portuguese, alone of all the former African colonial powers, now stand shoulder to shoulder with the citizens of that incorrigible citadel of white supremacy, the Republic of South Africa, baited and damned from Zanzibar to Lagos.

It is true that the Portuguese in Portugal tend to be rather neutral on the subject of color differences, if they ever think about such things at all. But this datum can only be significant to those who believe that discrimination is caused by prejudice, when the true relationship is quite the opposite. When the innocent Portuguese emigrants get to Africa, they find that legally, economically and socially, white men can take advantage of black men, and it doesn't take long for
them to join in the act. Within a year after his arrival, the Portuguese learns that blacks are inferior to whites, that the Africans have to be kept in their place, and that they are indolent by nature and have to be forced to work. What we call prejudices are merely the rationalizations which we acquire in order to prove to ourselves that the human beings whom we harm are not worthy of better treatment.

Actually the whole issue of the alleged lack of racial or color prejudice among the Portuguese (and by extension among the Spanish as well) is totally irrelevant to the main question. If, as asserted, the Iberians initially lacked any color prejudice, what light does this shed upon the Brazilian and other Latin American lowland interracial systems? The distinguishing feature of these systems is not that whites have no color prejudices. On the contrary, color prejudice as we have seen is a conspicuous and regular feature in all the plantation areas. The parts of the system which need explaining are the absence of a descent rule; the absence of distinct socially significant racial groups; and the ambiguity of racial identity. In Portuguese Africa none of these features are present. The state rules on who is a native and who is a white and the condition of being a native is hereditary:

Individuals of the Negro race or their descendants who were born or habitually reside in the said Provinces and who do not yet possess the learning and the social and individual habits presupposed for the integral application of the public and private law of Portuguese citizens are considered to be ‘natives.’

As for miscegenation, the supposedly color-blind Portuguese libido had managed by 1950 to produce slightly more than 50,000 officially recognized mixed types in an African population of 10 million after 400 years of contact. This record should be compared with the product of the monochromatic libidos of the Dutch invaders of South Africa—in Freyre’s terms Anglo-Saxon Protestants to the hilt—a million and a half official hybrids (coloureds). It is time that grown men stopped talking about racially prejudiced sexuality. In general, when human beings have the power, the opportunity and the need, they will mate with members of the opposite sex regardless of color or the identity of grand-
father. Whenever free breeding in a human population is restricted, it is because a larger system of social relations is menaced by such freedom.

This is one of the points about which Tannenbaum and Freyre disagree. Tannenbaum quite correctly observes that “the process of miscegenation was part of the system of slavery, and not just of Brazilian slavery.... The dynamics of race contact and sex interests were stronger than prejudice. ... This same mingling of the races and classes occurred in the United States. The record is replete with the occurrence, in spite of law, doctrine, and belief. Every traveler in the South before the Civil War comments on the widespread miscegenation....” But it should also be pointed out that there is no concrete evidence to indicate that the rank and file of English colonists were initially any more or less prejudiced than the Latins. It is true that the English colonists very early enacted laws intended to prevent marriage between white women and Negro men and between white men and Negro women. Far from indicating a heritage of anti-Negro prejudices, however, these laws confirm the presence of strong attraction between the males and females of both races. The need for legal restriction certainly suggests that miscegenation was not at all odious to many of the English colonists.

The idea of assigning differential statuses to white indentured servants and Negro workers was definitely not a significant part of the ideological baggage brought over by the earliest colonists, at least not to an extent demonstrably greater than among the Latin colonists. It is true, as Carl Degler has shown, that the differentiation between white indentured servants and Negro indentured servants had become conspicuous before the middle of the seventeenth century even though the legal formulation was not completed until the end of the century. But who would want to suggest that there was absolutely no prejudice against the Negroes immediately after contact? Ethnocentrism is a universal feature of inter-group relations and obviously both the English and the Iberians were prejudiced against foreigners, white and black. The facts of life in the New World were such, however, that Negroes, being the most defenseless of all the immigrant groups, were discriminated against and
exploited more than any others. Thus the Negroes were not enslaved because the British colonists specifically despised dark-skinned people and regarded them alone as properly suited to slavery; the Negroes came to be the object of the virulent prejudices because they and they alone could be enslaved. Judging from the very nasty treatment suffered by white indentured servants, it was obviously not sentiment which prevented the Virginia planters from enslaving their fellow Englishmen. They undoubtedly would have done so had they been able to get away with it. But such a policy was out of the question as long as there was a King and a Parliament in England.

The absence of preconceived notions about what ought to be the treatment of enslaved peoples forms a central theme in Tannenbaum's explanation of United States race relations. According to Tannenbaum, since the English had gotten rid of slavery long before the Discovery, they had no body of laws or traditions which regulated and humanized the slave status. Why this legal lacuna should have been significant for the course run by slavery in the United States is quite obscure. Even Degler, who accepts the Freyre-Tannenbaum approach, points out that it was "possible for almost any kind of status to be worked out." One might reasonably conclude that the first settlers were not overly concerned with race differences, and that they might have remained that way (as many Englishmen have) had they not been brought into contact with Negroes under conditions wholly dictated by the implacable demands of a noxious and "peculiar" institution.

Let us turn now to the main substance of Tannenbaum's theory. Tannenbaum correctly believes that the critical difference between race relations in the United States and in Latin America resides in the physical and psychological (he says "moral") separation of the Negro from the rest of society. "In spite of his adaptability, his willingness, and his competence, in spite of his complete identification with the mores of the United States, he is excluded and denied...." Also, quite correctly, Tannenbaum stresses the critical role of the free Negro and mulatto in Latin America. Manumission appears to have been much more common, and the position of the freed man was much more secure than elsewhere.
Free Negroes and mulattoes quickly came to outnumber the slaves. However, according to Tannenbaum, this phenomenon came about because the slave was endowed with "a moral personality before emancipation... which... made the transition from slavery to freedom easy and his incorporation into the free community natural." The Negro and mulatto were never sharply cut off from the rest of society because the Latin slave was never cut off from the rest of humanity. This was because slavery in southern Europe and Latin America was embedded in a legal, ethical, moral and religious matrix which conspired to preserve the slave's individual integrity as the possessor of an immortal human soul. The "definition" of the slave as merely an unfortunate human being, primarily according to state and canonical code, is given most weight:

For if one thing stands out clearly from the study of slavery, it is that the definition of man as a moral being proved the most important influence both in the treatment of the slave and in the final abolition of slavery.\(^1\)

Note that it is not merely being claimed that there was a critical difference between Latin American and United States race relations during and after slavery, but that the very institution of slavery itself was one thing in the United States and the British West Indies and another thing in Latin America:

There were briefly speaking, three slave systems in the Western Hemisphere. The British, American, Dutch, and Danish were at one extreme, and the Spanish and Portuguese at the other. In between these two fell the French. ... If one were forced to arrange these systems of slavery in order of severity, the Dutch would seem to stand as the harshest, the Portuguese as the mildest, and the French in between. ...\(^2\)

The contention that the condition of the average slave in the English colonies was worse than that of the average slave in the Latin colonies obscures the main task which confronts us, which is to explain why the treatment of the free mulatto and free Negro were and are so different. To try to explain why the slaves were treated better in Latin
America than in the United States is a waste of time, for there is no conceivable way in which we can now be certain that they were indeed treated better in one place than the other. It is true that a large number of travelers can be cited, especially from the nineteenth century, who were convinced that the slaves were happier under Spanish and Portuguese masters than under United States masters. But there was plenty of dissenting opinion. Tannenbaum makes no provision for the fact that the English planters had what we would today call a very bad press, since thousands of intellectuals among their own countrymen were in the vanguard of the abolitionist movement. The West Indian and Southern planters, of course, were in total disagreement with those who preferred slavery under foreign masters. Actually all of the distinctions between the Anglo-American and Latin slave systems which Tannenbaum proposes were already the subject of debate at the beginning of the eighteenth century between Anglo-American abolitionists and Anglo-American planters. For example, in 1827, the Jamaican planter Alexander Barclay responded to the English critics of his island’s slave system as follows:

According to Mr. Stephen [author of Slavery of the British West India Colonies] there exists among his countrymen in the West Indies, an universal feeling of hatred and contempt of the Negroes.... It is by this assumed hatred and contempt, that he strives to give probability to the most incredible charges of cruelty and oppression; and indeed, in many cases, this alleged feeling of aversion and abhorrence on the part of the whites, is the sole ground for supposing that the charges should be made, and the sole proof of them. Such things must have happened, because the colonists hate the Negroes. Now, I most solemnly affirm, not only that I am unconscious of any such surely unnatural feelings having place in my own breast, but that I have never seen proof of its existence in the breasts of others.14

All slave-owners of whatever nationality always seem to have been convinced that “their” slaves were the happiest of earthly beings. Barclay claims that the Jamaican slaves celebrated the cane harvest with an inter-racial dance:
In the evening, they assemble in their master’s or manager’s house, and, as a matter of course, take possession of the largest room, bringing with them a fiddle and tambourine. Here all authority and all distinction of colour ceases; black and white, overseer and book-keeper, mingle together in the dance.\textsuperscript{15}

At Christmas time the same thing happens. The slaves

... proceed to the neighbouring plantation villages, and always visit the master’s or manager’s house, into which they enter without ceremony, and where they are joined by the white people in a dance.\textsuperscript{16}

Concludes Barclay:

All is life and joy, and certainly it is one of the most pleasing sights that can be imagined.\textsuperscript{17}

In the United States, equally rapturous descriptions of the slave’s lot were a conspicuous part of the ideological war between North and South. Many planters felt that their slaves were better off than the mass of Northern whites, and Southern poets did not hesitate to cap their comparisons of free and slave labor with panegyrics

... on the happy life of the slave, with all his needs provided, working happily in the fields by day, enjoying the warm society of his family in the cabin at night, idling through life in “the summer shade, the winter sun,” and without fear of the poorhouse at its close... until we finally find the slave “luxuriating” in a “lotus-bearing paradise.”\textsuperscript{18}

If one were so inclined by lack of an understanding of the nature of sociological evidence, it would not be difficult to paint a picture in which the position of the Anglo-American slave system was promoted from last to first place. Freyre himself provides enough material on cruelty in the Brazilian plantations to fill at least a corner in a chamber of horrors:

And how, in truth, are the hearts of us Brazilians to acquire the social virtues if from the moment we open our eyes we see about us the cruel distinction between master and slave, and behold the former, at the slightest provocation or sometimes out of mere whim, mercilessly rending the flesh of our own kind with lashes?\textsuperscript{19}

There are not two or three but many instances
of the cruelties of the ladies of the big house toward their helpless blacks. There are tales of sinhámoças who had the eyes of pretty mucamas gouged out and then had them served to their husband for dessert, in a jelly-dish, floating in blood that was still fresh. . . . There were others who kicked out the teeth of their women slaves with their boots, or who had their breasts cut off, their nails drawn, or their faces and ears burned.  

Another Brazilian observer, Arthur Ramos, goes even further:

During the period of slavery, suppression and punishment prevented almost any spontaneous activity. . . The number of instruments of torture employed was numerous and profoundly odious. . . . There was the tronco, of wood or of iron, an instrument which held the slave fast at the ankles and in the grip of which he was often kept for days on end; the libambo which gripped the unfortunate victim fast at the neck; the algemas and the anjinhos, which held the hands tightly, crushing the thumbs. . . . Some plantation owners of more perverted inclinations used the so-called novenas and trezenas. . . . The Negroes tied face down on the ground, were beaten with the rawhide whip on from nine to thirteen consecutive nights. . . .

The testimony of the travelers, poets, planters, abolitionists and scholars in this matter, however, is worthless. Better to dispute the number of angels on a pinhead than to argue that one country’s slavery is superior to another’s. The slaves, wherever they were, didn’t like it; they killed themselves and they killed their masters; over and over again they risked being torn apart by hounds and the most despicable tortures in order to escape the life to which they were condemned. It is a well known fact that Brazil was second to none in the number of its fugitive slaves and its slave revolts. In the seventeenth century one successful group held out in the famous quilombo of Palmares for sixty-seven years and in the nineteenth century scarcely a year went by without an actual or intended revolt.

In a recent book, the historian Stanley M. Elkins attempts to save Tannenbaum’s theory by admitting that slavery
in the United States (at least by 1850) “in a ‘physical’ sense was in general, probably, quite mild” and that there were very “severe” sides to the Spanish and Portuguese systems. Elkins assures us, however, that even if slavery had been milder here than anywhere else in the Western Hemisphere, “it would still be missing the point to make the comparison in terms of physical comfort. In one case we would be dealing with cruelty of man to man, and, in the other, with the care, maintenance, and indulgence of men toward creatures who were legally and morally not men—not in the sense that Christendom had traditionally defined man’s nature.”

It is devoutly to be hoped that Elkins shall never be able to test his exquisite sense of equity by experiencing first thirty lashes dealt out by someone who calls him a black man and then a second thirty from someone who calls him a black devil. But if there be such talents as Elkins’ among us, we had better take a closer look at the proposition that the Negro was regarded as a human being by the Latin colonists but not by the Anglo-Saxons. The principal source of evidence for this resides in the law codes by which the respective slave systems were theoretically regulated. Admittedly, these codes do show a considerable difference of legal opinion as to the definition of a slave. The Spanish and Portuguese codes were essentially continuations of medieval regulations stretching back ultimately to Roman law. The British and American colonial codes were the original creations of the New World planter class, developed first in the West Indies (Barbados) and then copied throughout the South. Although the Constitution of the United States said that slaves were persons, state laws said they were chattels—mere property. “Slaveholders, legislators, and judges were forever trying to make property out of them . . . They simply did not regard them as human beings.”

On the other hand, Spanish and Portuguese slave laws did, as Tannenbaum claims, specifically preserve the human identity of the slave: “The distinction between slavery and freedom is a product of accident and misfortune, and the free man might have been a slave.” From this there flowed a number of rights, of which Fernando Ortiz identifies four as most significant: (1) the right to marry freely; (2) the right to seek out another master if any were too
severe; (3) the right of owning property; and (4) the right
to buy freedom. Tannenbaum shows how all of the U. S.
slave states denied these rights. He goes further and shows
how the U. S. slaves were virtually left without legal remedy
for harms committed upon them, and he emphasizes the casu-
al fines which protected the life of a slave under the early
laws, and the total lack of legal recognition given to the
slave's affinal or consanguine family. Indeed, for every favor-
able section in the Spanish law, both Elkins and Tannenbaum
readily find an unfavorable section in the Anglo-Saxon codes.

What the laws of the Spanish and Portuguese kings had
to do with the attitudes and values of the Spanish and Por-
tuguese planters, however, baffles one's imagination. The
Crown could publish all the laws it wanted, but in the low-
lands, sugar was king. If there were any Portuguese or
Spanish planters who were aware of their legal obligations
toward the slaves, it would require systematic misreading
of colonialism, past and present, to suppose that these
laws psychologically represented anything more than the
flatus of a pack of ill-informed Colonel Blimps who didn't
even know what a proper cane field looked like. Ortiz leaves
no room for doubt in the case of Cuba. Yes, the slave had legal
rights, "But these rights were not viable ... if they contrast
with the barbaric laws of the French and above all, of the
English colonies, it was no less certain that all of these rights
were illusory, especially in earlier times. . . ." Sanctity of the
family? "Man and wife were permanently separated, sold in
separate places, and separated from their children."30 "How
many times was a son sold by his father!" and "Pregnant or
nursing slaves were sold with or without their actual or fu-
ture offspring."31 Protection of the law? "The sugar and cof-
fee plantations were in fact feudal domains where the only
authority recognized was that of the master. . . . Could the
Negroes hope in these circumstances to change masters? The
rawhide would quiet their voices. . . ." Rights to property?
"From what I have said in relation to the work of the rural
slave, to speak of his right to hold property and to buy free-
dom, is futile. . . ." "But I repeat, the plantation slave was
treated like a beast, like a being to whom human character
was denied. . . ."32
Tannenbaum makes much of the fact that there was no set of ancient slave laws to which the Anglo-Saxon planters or the slaves could turn for guidance. He prominently displays the meager penalties attached to murder of slaves as examples of their sub-human status in the eyes of the Anglo-Saxon colonists. But Ortiz informs us that “it was not until 1842 that there was any specific legal regulation of the form of punishment which a Cuban master could give his slave.” Actually it turns out that “the state did not concern itself with the limitation of the arbitrary power of the master in relation to the punishment of his slave until after the abolition of slavery [1880].”

In Brazil, as everywhere in the colonial world, law and reality bore an equally small resemblance to each other. Stanley Stein’s recent historical study of slavery in the county of Vassouras during the last century yields a picture almost totally at variance with that drawn by Gilberto Freyre for the earlier plantations. The Vassouras planters went about their business, methodically buying, working, beating and selling their slaves, in whatever fashion yielded the most coffee with the least expense. The master’s will was supreme. “It was difficult to apply legal restraints to the planter’s use of the lash.”

Typical is an eyewitness account of a beating told by an ex-slave. On order from the master, two drivers bound and beat a slave while the slave folk stood in line, free folk watching from further back. The slave died that night and his corpse, dumped into a wicker basket, was borne by night to the slave cemetery of the plantation and dropped into a hastily dug grave. “Slaves could not complain to the police, only another fazendeiro [master] could do that,” explained the eyewitness.

If Stein’s picture of nineteenth-century Vassouras is accurate—and it is the most carefully documented study of its kind in existence—then the following recent pronouncement from Charles Boxer will have to be accepted minus the time restriction:

The common belief that the Brazilian was an exceptionally kind master is applicable only to the 19th
century under the Empire, and it is contradicted for the colonial period by the testimony of numerous reliable eyewitnesses from Vieira to Vilhena, to say nothing of the official correspondence between the colonial authorities and the Crown. Of special interest in Boxer's refutation of the myth of the friendly master is the evidence which shows that Brazilian planters and miners did not accept the legal decisions which awarded human souls and human personalities to the slaves. The Brazilian slave owners were convinced that Negroes were descended from Cain, black and "therefore not people like ourselves." Making due allowance for exceptions and the special circumstances of household slaves, Boxer concludes that "it remains true that by and large colonial Brazil was indeed a 'hell for blacks.' "

38
At one point, and one point only, is there a demonstrable correlation between the laws and behavior, the ideal and the actual, in Tannenbaum's theory: the Spanish and Portuguese codes ideally drew no distinction between the ex-slave and the citizen, and actual behavior followed suit. The large hybrid populations of Latin America were not discriminated against solely because they were descended from slaves; it is definitely verifiable that all hybrids were not and are not forced back into a sharply separated Negro group by application of a rule of descent. This was true during slavery and it was true after slavery. With abolition, because a continuous color spectrum of free men had already existed for at least 200 years, ex-slaves and descendants of slaves were not pitted against whites in the bitter struggle which marks the career of our own Jim Crow.

However, to argue that it was the Spanish and Portuguese slave codes and slave traditions which gave rise to these real and substantial differences in the treatment of the free Negro and mulatto is to miss the essential point about the evolution of the New World plantation systems. If traditional laws and values were alone necessary to get the planters to manumit their slaves, and treat free colored people like human beings, the precedents among the English colonists were surely greater than among the Latins.

If anything, the laws and traditions of England conspired to make its colonists abhor anything that smacked of slavery. And so it was in England that in 1705 Chief Justice...
Holt could say, “As soon as a Negro comes into England he becomes free.”¹ Let it not be forgotten that five of the original thirteen states — New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Pennsylvania, plus the independent state of Vermont — began programs of complete emancipation before the federal Constitutional Convention met in 1787. Partial anti-slavery measures were enacted by New York in 1788, and total emancipation in 1799, while New Jersey began to pass anti-slavery legislation in 1786.² Furthermore, all of the original states which abolished slavery lived up to the declared principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution to a remarkable degree in their treatment of emancipated slaves. “They were citizens of their respective states the same as were Negroes who were free at the time of independence.”³

There were no restrictions prior to 1800 upon Negroes voting in any state which had abolished slavery. They were voting at that time and continued to vote without interruption in New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, and the two slave states of New York and New Jersey.

It was only later that Connecticut (1814) and Pennsylvania (1837) got around to imposing restrictions. Although the slave codes of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania had forbidden slaves to testify in court cases involving white persons, these laws were never applied to free Negroes, and “there were no such laws in New England.... Nor were there any distinctions whatever in criminal law, judicial procedure, and punishments.” In all of the Northern states, therefore, Negroes were citizens “by enjoyment of full political equality, by lack of any statements to the contrary in any constitution or law, by complete absence of legal distinction based on color, and by specific legal and constitutional declaration....”⁴

We see, therefore, that if past laws and values had a significant role to play in the treatment of Negroes and mulattoes, the hounding persecution of the free Negroes and mulattoes should never have occurred in the English colonies. For contrary to the oft-repeated assertion that there was no
matrix of English law or tradition into which the slave could fit, it is quite obvious that very specific laws and traditions existed to guide the Anglo-Saxon colonists. These laws and traditions held that all men had natural rights, that the Negroes were men and that slaves ought to become citizens. That the Constitution asserts "all men are created equal" is not some monstrous hypocrisy perpetrated by the founding fathers. It was an expression of a general Northern and enlightened Southern belief that slavery was an institution which was incompatible with the laws and traditions of civilized Englishmen. That the American versions of these laws were later subverted by court decisions and that the Constitution's guarantee of freedom and equality became a grim joke is surely ample testimony to the futility of trying to understand socio-cultural evolution in terms of such factors.

Understanding of the differences in the status of free "non-whites" in the plantation world can only emerge when one forthrightly inquires why a system which blurred the distinction between Negro and white was materially advantageous to one set of planters, while it was the opposite to another. One can be certain that if it had been materially disadvantageous to the Latin colonists, it would never have been tolerated — Romans, *Siete Partidas* and the Catholic Church notwithstanding. For one thing is clear, the slavocracy in both the Latin and Anglo-Saxon colonies held the whip hand not only over the slaves but over the agents of civil and ecclesiastical authority. To make second-class citizens out of all descendants of slaves was surely no greater task, given sufficient material reason, than to make slaves out of men and brutes out of slaves.

Although the slave plantation per se was remarkably similar in its effects regardless of the cultural background of the slaves or slave-owners, the natural, demographic and institutional environment with which slavery articulated and interacted was by no means uniform. It is the obligation of all those who wish to explain the difference between United States and Latin American race relations to examine these material conditions first, before concluding that it was the mystique of the Portuguese or Spanish soul that made the difference.
The first important consideration is demographic. Latin America and the United States experienced totally different patterns of settlement. When Spain and Portugal began their occupation of the New World, they were harassed by severe domestic manpower shortages, which made it extremely difficult for them to find colonists for their far-flung empires. Furthermore, in the New World the conditions under which such colonists were to settle were themselves antithetical to large-scale emigration. In the highlands a dense aboriginal population was already utilizing most of the arable land under the tutelage of the encomenderos and hacendados. In the lowlands large-scale emigration, supposing there had been a sufficient number of potential settlers, was obstructed by the monopolization of the best coastal lands by the slave-owning sugar planters. Only a handful of Portuguese migrated to Brazil during the sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century, a deliberate policy of restricting emigration to Brazil was pursued, out of fear that Portugal was being depopulated. Cried the Jesuit father Antonio Vieira, “Where are our men? Upon every alarm in Alentejo it is necessary to take students from the university, tradesmen from their shops, laborers from the plough!”

The migrations of Englishmen and Britishers to the New World followed an entirely different rhythm. Although the movement began almost a century later, it quickly achieved a magnitude that was to have no parallel in Latin America until the end of the nineteenth century. Between 1509 and 1790 only 150,000 people emigrated from Spain to the entire New World, but between 1600 and 1700, 500,000 English and Britishers moved to the North American territories.

The reason for this accelerated rate of migration is not hard to find:

As opposed to Spain and Portugal, harassed by a permanent manpower scarcity when starting to occupy the Western Hemisphere, seventeenth-century England had an abundant population surplus, owing to the far-reaching changes affecting the country’s agriculture since the previous century.

The changes in question were the enclosures by which
much of England’s farming population was being forced off the land in order to make way for sheep-raising (in turn stimulated by the manufacture of woolen cloth). The depletion of England’s own natural resources, especially its forests, made it convenient to consider establishing overseas companies to produce commodities which were becoming increasingly more difficult to produce in England: potash, timber, pitch, tar, resin, iron and copper. It was to produce these commodities that Jamestown was founded in 1607.

The staple and certain Commodities we have are Soap-ashes, pitch, tar, dyes of sundry sorts and rich values, timber for all uses, fishing for sturgeon... making of glass and iron, and no improbable hope of richer mines.\textsuperscript{8}

Manufactures of this sort, plus subsistence agriculture, proved to be the mainstay of the more northerly colonies and were later to establish the United States, at least in the North, as an important industrial power. From Maryland on south, however, the colonists quickly switched to tobacco-growing as their basic commercial activity. Whether agriculture or manufacturing was the principal concern of a given colony, labor, as always, was the main problem. There were plenty of Englishmen eager to settle in the New World but the price of the Atlantic passage was high. The system developed to overcome this obstacle was indentured servitude, whereby the price of passage was advanced, to be worked off, usually in five to eight years, after which the immigrant would be free to do as he might choose. Despite the high mortality rate of the early indentured servants, tens of thousands of English men and women bought passage to the New World in this fashion. The great lure of it was that once a man had worked off his debt, there was a chance to buy land at prices which were unthinkably low in comparison with those of England.

For almost one hundred years, white indentured servants were the principal source of manpower in the Anglo-Saxon colonies. Black slave manpower was a relatively late introduction. The case of Virginia would seem to be the most important and most instructive. In 1624, there were only 22 Negroes in Virginia (at a time when several thousand a year
were already pouring into Recife and Bahia). In 1640, they had not increased to more than 150. Nine years later, when Virginia was inhabited by 15,000 whites, there were still only 300 Negroes. It was not until 1670 that Negroes reached 5 per cent of the population. After 1680 slaves began to arrive in increasing numbers, yet it was not until the second quarter of the eighteenth century that they exceeded 25 per cent of the population.

In 1715 the population of all the colonies with the exception of South Carolina was overwhelmingly composed of a white yeomanry, ex-indentured servants and wage earners.

**Population of the Colonies, 1715**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colony</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Negro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>9,500</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>94,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>8,500</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>46,000</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>27,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania-Delaware</td>
<td>43,000</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>40,700</td>
<td>9,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>72,000</td>
<td>23,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>3,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>6,250</td>
<td>10,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Against a total white population of 375,000, there were less than 60,000 slaves in all of the colonies. If we consider the four Southern colonies — Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina — the ratio was still almost 3 to 1 in favor of the whites. At about the same time, the total population of Brazil is estimated to have been 300,000, of whom only 100,000 were of European origin. In other words, the ratio of whites to non-whites was the exact opposite of what it was in the United States. A century later (1819) in Brazil, this ratio in favor of non-whites had climbed even higher, for out of an estimated total of 3,618,000 Brazilians, only 834,000 or less than 20 per cent were white. At approximately the same time in the United States (1820), 7,866,797, or more than 80 per cent of the people, out of a total population of 9,638,453
were whites. Although the Negro population was at this time overwhelmingly concentrated in the South, Negroes at no point constituted more than 38 per cent of the population of the Southern states. The high point was reached in 1840; thereafter, the proportion declined steadily until by 1940 it had fallen below 25 per cent in the South and below 10 per cent for the country as a whole.

Clearly, one of the reasons why the colonial population of Brazil shows such a preponderance of non-whites during colonial times is that a large part of the population increase resulted not from in-migration but from miscegenation and the natural increase of the European-Negroid-Amerindian crosses. Thus, in 1819, there were almost as many mestizos, free and slave, as there were whites, and by 1870, there were more "mixed bloods" than whites. This situation reversed itself toward the end of the nineteenth century after the first great wave of European immigrants had begun to flood São Paulo and the Brazilian south. According to the 1890 census, there were 6,302,198 whites, 4,638,495 mixed types and 2,097,426 Negroes. This "whitening" trend has continued until the present day, when whites number about 62 per cent of the population, mixed types 27 per cent and Negroes 11 per cent. These figures, of course, should be read with an understanding that many persons classed as "whites" are actually "mixed" in conformity with what has previously been said about the inherent ambiguity of racial classification in Brazil.

There is no doubt that the number of Brazilians of color who were free was always greater than the number of free Negroes in the United States, absolutely and in proportion to the number of slaves. But the disparity may not have been as great as many people believe. Thus in 1819, when there were anywhere from 1,500,000 to 2 million slaves in Brazil, there were about 585,000 free men of color (not counting Indians), while in the United States in 1820, 1,538,000 slaves were matched by 233,634 free Negroes. Conservatively, therefore, one might claim that in Brazil there were only about twice as many free Negroes in proportion to slaves as in the United States. This fact permits us to place the claims for a higher rate of manumission in Brazil in
proper perspective and leads us directly to the most important question about the demographic patterns under consideration. The number of free people of color in nineteenth-century Brazil is not at all startling in relationship to the number of slaves. What is amazing from the North American point of view is the number of free people of color in relationship to the number of whites.

Manumission may have been somewhat more frequent in Brazil than in the United States, but not so much more frequent that one can use it with any certainty as an indication that slavery in Brazil was a milder institution than it was in the United States. It should be borne in mind that the higher ratio of free coloreds to slaves in Brazil might to some extent represent a greater eagerness on the part of Brazilian masters to rid themselves of the care and support of aged and infirm charges. Since we know nothing about the age distribution of the free Brazilian colored population in comparison with that of the United States free colored population, it is obvious that less importance than is customary should be attached to the ratio of free to slave colored in Brazil.

But the ratio of whites to free colored is indeed astonishing, especially if one admits that many of the “whites” quite probably had non-white grandparents. The central question, therefore, is, why did the Brazilian whites permit themselves to become outnumbered by free half-castes? Several factors, none of them related to alleged special features of the Portuguese national character, readily present themselves.

In the first instance, given the chronic labor shortage in sixteenth-century Portugal and the small number of people who migrated to Brazil, the white slave-owners had no choice but to create a class of free half-castes. The reason for this is not that there was a shortage of white women, nor that Portuguese men were fatally attracted to dark females. These hoary sex fantasies explain nothing, since there is no reason why the sexual exploitation of Amerindian and Negro females had necessarily to lead to a free class of hybrids. The most probable explanation is that the whites had no choice in the matter. They were compelled to create an intermediate free group of half-castes to stand between them and the
slaves because there were certain essential economic and military functions for which slave labor was useless, and for which no whites were available.

One of these functions was that of clearing the Indians from the sugar coast; another was the capture of Indian slaves; a third was the overseeing of Negro slaves; and a fourth was the tracking down of fugitives. The half-caste nature of most of the Indian-fighters and slave-catchers is an indubitable fact of Brazilian history. Indian-Portuguese mamelucos were called upon to defend Bahia and other cities against the Indians, and the hordes of people who were constantly engaged in destroying the quilombos, including Palmares, were also half-castes. There was little help from the armed forces of the Crown:

The land owners had to defend themselves. They were obliged to organize militarily. Within each sugar plantation, in every large estate, in the solitude of every cattle ranch, under the command of the senhor, there lived for this reason, a small perfectly organized army.

This rabble of mestizos ... provided the fighting corps charged with the defense of the estates. Out of them came the morenos, the cafusos, the mulatos, the carijos, the mamelucos ... to guarantee the safety of the master’s mills, plantations, and herds.

A second great interstice filled by free half-castes was the cattle industry. The sugar plantations required for the mills and for the hauling of wood and cane, one ox and one horse per slave. These animals could not be raised in the sugar zone, where they were a menace to the unfenced cane fields and where the land was too valuable to be used for pasturage. As a matter of fact, a royal decree of 1701 prohibited cattle raising within 10 leagues of the coast. The cattle industry developed first in the semi-arid portions of the state of Bahia and rapidly fanned out in all directions into the interior. Open-range mounted cowboys, for obvious reasons, cannot be slaves; nor would any self-respecting Portuguese immigrant waste his time rounding up doggies in the middle of a parched wilderness. The vaqueiros were a motley crew:
... they were recruited from among Indians and mestizos as well as among fugitives from the coastal centers: escaped criminals, fugitive slaves, adventurers of every type.  

The people who bring them [the cattle] are whites, mulatos, and Negroes and also Indians.  

The foundation of cattle ranches ... opened new possibilities in the interior ... to these new sesmarias ... there flowed the ... free mestizo population of every sort.

Although the Brazilian economist Celso Furtado estimates that only 13,000 people were supported by stock raising in its initial phases, the capacity of both the human and the animal population to expand rapidly in response to negative economic trends on the coast is given great emphasis.

It is also at least a reasonable hypothesis that half-castes were used to help supplement the colony's supply of basic food crops. That there was a perennial shortage of food in the colonial cities and on the sugar plantations is well established. Says Freyre, about the state of alimentation during colonial times: "Bad upon the plantations and very bad in the cities — not only bad, but scarce." It is known that in the West Indies the concentration on sugar was so great that much of their subsistence food requirements had to be met by imports from New England. At least in times of high sugar prices it seems probable that the Brazilian plantations suffered the same fate:

The profitability of the sugar business was conducive to specialization, and it is not surprising ... that the entrepreneurs avoided diverting production factors into secondary activities, at least at times when the prospects of the sugar market seemed favorable. At such times even the production of food for the sustenance of the slaves was anti-economic.

Who then were the food growers of colonial Brazil? Who supplied Bahia, Recife and Rio with food? Although documentary proof is lacking, it would be most surprising if the bulk of the small farmer class did not consist of aged and infirm manumitted slaves, and favorite Negro concubines who with their mulatto offspring had been set up with a bit
of marginal land. There was no one to object in Brazil, if after eight years of lash-driven labor, a broken slave was set free and permitted to squat on some fringe of the plantation.

All those interstitial types of military and economic activities which in Brazil could only be initially filled by half-caste free men were performed in the United States by the Southern yeomanry. Because the influx of Africans and the appearance of mulattoes in the United States occurred only after a large, intermediate class of whites had already been established, there was in effect no place for the freed slave, be he mulatto or Negro, to go.

It would be wrong, however, to create the impression that the Southern yeomanry, from whence sprang the “red-necks,” “crackers” and hillbillies, were capable of intimidating the lords of the Southern plantations. The brutal treatment suffered by the small white farmers as they were driven back to the hills or into the swamps and pine barrens should suffice to set the record straight. If the slave in the South came less and less frequently to be manumitted and if the freedmen were deprived of effective citizenship, and if mulattoes were forced back into the Negro group by the descent rule, it was not because of the sentimental affinity which Southern gentlemen felt for their own “kind.” To be sure, there was an intense feeling of racial solidarity among the whites, but nothing could be more in error than to suppose that the racial camaraderie of planter and yeoman was merely the adumbration of some bio-psychological tendency on the part of racially similar people to stick together and hate people who are different. Race prejudice once again explains nothing; such an explanation is precisely what the planters and yeomen came to agree upon, and what the rest of America has been sold for the last 150 years. There were alternate explanations, but these the American people has never permitted itself to learn.

The most remarkable of all the phenomena connected with the “peculiar institution” in the United States is the failure of the non-slaveholding yeomanry and poor whites who constituted three-fourths of all Southerners to destroy the plantation class. These whites were as surely and as permanently the victims of the slave system as were the free
half-castes and Negroes and the slaves themselves. Their entire standard of living was depressed by the presence of the slaves. Artisans, farmers and mechanics all found themselves in competition with the kind of labor force it is impossible to undersell — people who work for no wages at all! In 1860, the average annual wage among the textile workers in New England was $205; in the South, it was $145. “Even in industries that employed no slaves, the threat to employ them was always there, nonetheless.”

The relationship between the precarious condition of the Southern white yeomen and mechanics and the slave system was known and avidly discussed by many planters, reformers and abolitionists. Some of the planters were perfectly willing to see the poor whites depressed to the level of the slaves, in the conviction that the ruling oligarchy was blessed with a divine mandate to rule over the “mudsills” — “the greasy mechanics, filthy operatives, small-fisted farmers. . . .” The slaveholders, “born to command and trained to ride their saddled underlings, assumed the usual aristocratic disdain for the ‘lower order’ whether Negro or white. . . .”

A South Carolina member of the House of Representatives overtly expressed what was probably a general feeling among the planters: “If laborers ever obtain the political power of a country, it is in fact in a state of revolution, which must end in substantially transferring property to themselves . . . unless those who have it shall appeal to the sword and a standing army to protect it.”

Another Southern spokesman did not hesitate to admit that the Southern government was based on excluding “all of the lowest and most degraded classes . . . whether slaves or free, white or black.”

Why this opinion of them did not penetrate the minds of the majority of the poor whites, we shall see in a moment. However, there were thousands of individuals and even organized groups of Southern yeomen and mechanics who understood that they as much as the Negroes were suffering the effects of slavery. Some of them were able to put the story together with breathtaking insight:

When a journeyman printer underworks the usual rates he is considered an enemy to the balance of the fraternity, and is called a “rat.” Now the slaveholders have ratted us with the 180,000 slaves till
forbearance longer on our part has become criminal. They have *ratted* us till we are unable to support ourselves with the ordinary comfort of a laborer's life. They have *ratted* us out of the social circle. They have *ratted* us out of the means of making our own schools ... They have *ratted* us out of the press. They have *ratted* us out of the legislature.... Come, if we are not worse than brutish beasts, let us but speak the word, and slavery shall die!33

But slavery did not succumb at the hands of those who could most easily have killed it, and who, it would seem, had every reason to want it dead. Instead, the Southern yeomanry followed the planters into a war and bled themselves white in defense of the "property" which was the cause of all their sorrow. Why? Were they so loyal to the owners of the slaves because the measure of their hatred for dark skin and curly hair was so great? They fought because they were prejudiced, but it is no ordinary prejudice that leads a man to kill another over his looks.

It is not surprising that a Negro abolitionist, Frederick Douglass, an ex-slave himself, came so close to the answer, which many Americans, including scholars of high repute, cannot face:

The slaveholders, with a craftiness peculiar to themselves, by encouraging the enmity of the poor, laboring white man against the blacks, succeeded in making the said white man almost as much a slave as the black man himself. The difference between the white slave, and the black slave, is this: the latter belongs to one slaveholder, and the former belongs to all the slaveholders, collectively. The white slave has taken from him by indirection, what the black slave has taken from him, directly, and without ceremony. Both are plundered, and by the same plunderers. The slave is robbed by his master of all his earnings above what is required for his bare physical necessities; and the white man is robbed by the slave system, of the just results of his labor, because he is flung into competition with a class of laborers who work without wages.... At present the slaveholders blind them to this competition by keeping alive their prejudices against the slaves, as *men* — not against them as
slaves. They appeal to their pride, often denounce emancipation, as tending to place the white working man, on an equality with negroes, and, by this means, they succeed in drawing off the minds of the poor whites from the real fact, that, by the rich slave master, they are already regarded as but a single remove from equality with the slave.\footnote{34}

This account of the origin of the Southern race mania betrays an understandable tendency to exaggerate both the diabolism of the masters and the stupidity of the poor whites. It does not suffice to account for the equally virulent anti-Negro sentiments in the North as expressed by the Northern mobs which burned Pennsylvania Hall, destroyed the abolitionist presses, burned down a Negro orphan asylum in New York, and rioted against Negroes in almost every major Northern city during the Civil War. It does not explain why the Civil War was begun ostensibly to “save the Union” and why the Emancipation Proclamation could only be sold to the country as a military measure designed to throw additional manpower against the enemy.\footnote{35} The fact is, the Southern planters held a trump. To the abolitionists who warned both the Northern and Southern lower-class farmers and laborers that slavery would eventually drag them all down together, the planters countered that slavery was the only thing that was keeping 4 million African laborers from \textit{immediately} taking the lands, houses and jobs which white men enjoyed. The unleashing of 4 million ex-slaves on the wage market was indeed a nightmare calculated to terrify the poor whites of both regions.

The guiding principle of the slavocracy was \textit{divide et impera}. Its basic policy followed two lines, the first of which was to convince the white laborers that they had a material interest in the preservation of the chattel system. They were constantly told that, by consigning the hard, menial and low-paid tasks to slaves, the white workers were led to constitute a labor aristocracy which held the best and most dignified jobs, and that the latter were lucrative only because they were supported by the super-profits wrung from the unpaid labor of slaves. Unless abolitionism was “met and repelled”… the whites would have to take
over the menial jobs and the emancipated slaves would be able to compete with them in every branch of industry.\textsuperscript{36}

White laborers, both North and South, believed that emancipation was a plot of Northern capital to lower wages and enlarge its labor pool. Insistent propaganda pounded this line across; anti-slavery men were called "Midas-eared Mammonites" who wanted to bring Southern slaves into the North to "compete with and assist in reducing the wages of the white laborer."\textsuperscript{37} First-hand experience with the use of slaves in the South and of free Negroes in the North to break strikes made this story quite believable. And indeed, minus the allegation of complicity between abolitionists and capitalists, there was more than a grain of truth in it.\textsuperscript{38}

One more point needs to be made before the freed United States Negro and mulatto are properly located in relationship to the immense economic and political forces which were building race relations in their country as they swept the North and South toward civil war. One gains the distinct impression that fear of slave uprisings in the United States was far more pervasive than it was in Brazil, considering the relatively large number of armed whites who confronted the defenseless, brutalized and brainwashed slaves. However, this fear was not based on miscalculation of the enemy. For unlike the case in Brazil, the enemy was not merely the slave, but an organized, vocal, persistent and steadily increasing group of skilled abolitionists who from the very day this country was founded dedicated their lives to the destruction of the slave power. Although Brazil was not entirely devoid of abolitionist sentiment early in the nineteenth century, the scope and intensity of anti-slavery agitation cannot be compared with the furor in the United States. A congressional investigating committee in 1838 was told that there were 1,400 anti-slavery societies in the United States with a membership of between 112,000 and 150,000.\textsuperscript{39} In Brazil, the lucky slave fled to a quilombo, where cut off from all contact with the rest of the world, the best he could hope for was that the dogs would not find him. In the United States, however, the whole North was a vast quilombo in which not only were there escaped slaves but free men of all colors, actively and
openly campaigning to bring an end to the thralldom of the whip. The constant patrolling of Southern roads, the fierce punishments for runaways, the laws discouraging manumission, the lumping of free mulattoes with free Negroes, their harassment and persecution and the refusal to permit either of them to reside in some of the slaveholding states, were all part and parcel of the same problem. One wonders what effect it would have had in Brazil, if the larger and more powerful part of the country had been officially dedicated to the proposition that slavery ought to be abolished, and if in every major city in that region freed Negroes and mulattoes had preached and plotted the overthrow of the system. In a sense, the Civil War did not begin in 1860, but in 1776. From the moment this country came into existence the issue of Negro rights was caught in a thousand conflicting currents and counter-currents. Under these circumstances, it hardly seems reasonable to conclude that it is our “Anglo-Saxon Protestant heritage” which is at fault. Indeed there are so many more palpable things at which to point, that I hope I will be forgiven for mentioning only the few which seem to me most important.
One of the most profound consequences of the Latin American slave plantation system was the limitation of immigration by European homesteaders to the plantation areas. In this consequence, the slave system resembled that of the highland areas. In both cases the intensive use of non-European labor prevented the development of small-scale mixed farming by European migrants. In the highlands, the land resources were consumed in support of the Indian populations and hacienda interests, while the growing of commercial plantation crops in the lowlands effectively precluded the transference from Europe of any substantial number of peasant families. In both cases large mestizo populations began to develop early in the colonial period; and in both cases, it was from this mestizo group that many functions of an economic and political sort better filled by free labor were met in colonial society.

Thus, the labor systems of both the Latin American highlands and lowlands, despite their striking structural differences, were similar in their effect upon the pattern of immigration and the distribution of physical types in the hierarchy of social classes. In effect, in both cases, the labor systems prevented the development early in colonial times of a white class of small-scale European farmers. The de-emphasis of class in the United States and the emphasis on race as defined by descent, and the de-emphasis of race as defined by descent and the emphasis upon class in Latin America, do not constitute accidental correlations. This emphasis upon class is a symptom of social systems in which
upward mobility is extremely difficult, or has been extremely difficult historically.

In brief, it may be said that the large Negro and mulatto population in Brazil and the large mestizo population in the highlands have not come into competition with the relatively small white components over access to higher-ranking positions. They have not come into competition because there was little opportunity for any members of the lower class to move upward in the social hierarchy. Under such circumstances it is clear that no one had anything to gain in Brazil by instituting a rigid rule of racial descent; certainly, from the point of view of the landed aristocracy, it was of little significance who was a Negro and who was a white. During slavery, the only important issue was who was a slave. After slavery, the poor whites, the mulattoes and the Negroes found themselves more or less in the same boat. The inevitable product of the Latin American slave system was a society divided into two sharply differentiated classes, with the higher-ranking of the two numerically small in comparison with the lower-ranking one. The general economic stagnation which has been characteristic of lowland Latin America since the abolition of slavery, therefore, tends to reinforce the pattern of pacific relationships among the various racial groups on the lower-ranking levels of the social hierarchy. Not only were the poor whites outnumbered by the mulattoes and Negroes, but there was very little of a significant material nature to struggle over in view of the generally static condition of the economy.

This same set of factors should also be taken into account in the highland regions. As I have previously indicated, the generally low-ranking position of the mestizo groups in highland Latin America is responsible in part for the failure of many Indian villagers to make a concerted effort to remove themselves from Indian status. Here again, the generally stagnant nature of the economic system as a direct heritage of the colonial and republican labor systems is important. In a sense, in both the highland and lowland Latin American regions racial conflict of a direct and overt sort has been kept to a minimum by virtue of the fact that there has not been too much to fight over.
In the United States, however, the disproportion between white settlers and Negro slaves and the mulatto offspring of the Negro slaves has been further aggravated by the remarkably rapid rate of economic expansion and, hence, the rapid rate of the appearance of middle-class positions which the whites have sought to monopolize for themselves.

The power of the colonial labor systems over the economic destiny of the areas in which they were installed is revealed by the fact that the plantation worlds of Latin America and of the United States, despite the many differences which I have enumerated, actually manifested certain startling parallels. Northern Brazil, for example, developed a plantation aristocracy with a tradition of gracious living, lavish hospitality and a gentlemanly dedication to arts, letters and oratory. Our own Southern aristocracy later came to resemble the Brazilians in these respects. However, the heritage of slavery crippled the economic capacity of our South as much as it has acted as a barrier against the development of the Brazilian North.

In comparing the economic and social development of the United States with that of Latin America, it is well to bear in mind that as late as the 1930s our own Southern states constituted a genuinely underdeveloped region, characterized by poverty, illiteracy, sharecropping and a short life expectancy. The parallel between lowland South America and the United States extends beyond the tropical and semitropical areas. It is no accident that the highest per capita income in Latin America is to be found in the triangle between Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Belo Horizonte in Brazil, corresponding precisely to the area which contained a sparse aboriginal population and which was not used to establish slave-operated, tropical crop plantations during the colonial period.

As in the case of our Northern states, the southern portions of Brazil, northern Argentina and northern Chile, lying remote both from the slave zone and from the centers of aboriginal civilization, were best able to attract the wave of migrants who left Europe during the nineteenth century. These migrants added a new and vital ingredient to Latin America’s melting pot, hitherto precluded by the dominance
of the slave systems and by debt peonage. Unlike the downtrodden slaves and the apathetic Indians, the nineteenth-century European migrants were animated by hope and a spirit of enterprise. They eventually came to set up their own small farms in the European mixed-farming tradition, or they worked for wages in the expectation that they would soon be able to buy their own lands, or start their own businesses. In the last twenty years remarkable strides toward industrialization have been registered in these more fortunate parts of Latin America. So great is the rate of growth that Brazilians now speak of two Brazils, one a high-energy, mechanized society, rapidly moving toward an economy of abundance; the other a low-energy, agricultural society, which has yet to be touched by either the French or Industrial Revolutions. Between São Paulo and Bahia or Ceará, there is the gulf which exists between New York and Mississippi or Alabama.

It thus appears that the price which the underdeveloped countries or regions of Latin America have paid for relative racial tranquillity is economic stagnation. Of course, racists in the United States would prefer to place the blame for this economic stagnation upon the presence of large numbers of Africans and Indians. The terrible irony of this position should be apparent: it was the Europeans who were responsible for the introduction of the exploitative labor systems which doomed Latin America’s chances for rapid economic development. It was the Europeans who were responsible for beginning the cultivation of the tropical crops which were so highly prized in Europe and from which quick wealth could be obtained, but which gave the long-range effect of creating an inert peasant mass, psychologically, educationally and technologically ill-prepared for anything but the most rudimentary forms of subsistence agriculture. The hacienda system, the corporate Indian villages and the slave plantations were extensive, low-energy productive systems based upon mass, unskilled labor. Literacy, individual initiative and originality were not only unnecessary but actively combated by the slave-owners, by the Church, by the hacendados, and by the State, in order to promote and perpetuate the docility of the labor force.

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The backwardness of vast multitudes of the New World peasantry, illiterate, unskilled, cut off from the twentieth century and its brilliant technological advances, did not simply happen by itself. These millions, about whose welfare we have suddenly been obliged to concern ourselves, were trained to their role in world history by four centuries of physical and mental conditioning. They were deliberately bottled up. Now we must either pull the cork or watch the bottle explode.