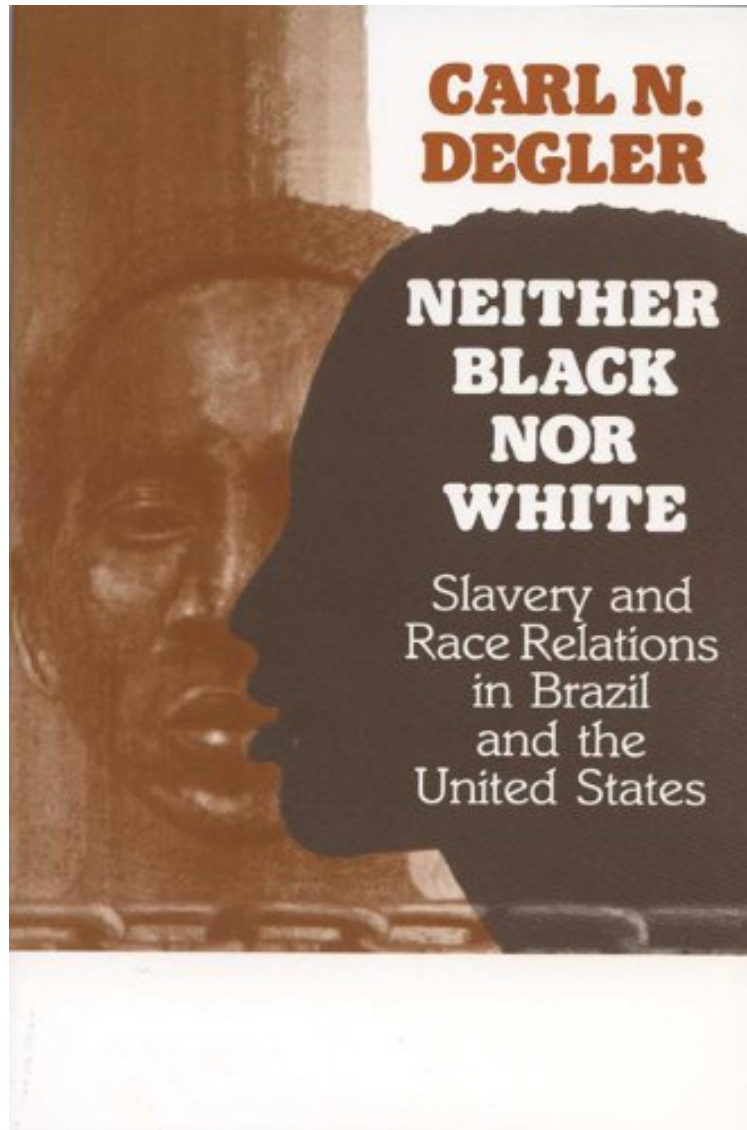


[Download] Neither Black Nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States

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Carl Degler

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Carl Degler : Neither Black Nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Neither Black Nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States:

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. History at it Serious BestBy Herbert L CalhounMr. Degler's book is history at it serious best. Using Frank Tannenbaum's "Slave and Citizen," as a launch pad, the author adds in all the

bells and whistles needed not only to give us a nuanced historical account, but also to tell an exceedingly interesting story. Taking up where Tannenbaum's leaves off, he "contextualizes" and "texturizes" Tannenbaum's skeletal framework, putting "flesh and bones" on it and adding dimensionality that work. In re-examining the Tannenbaum hypotheses with a fine-tooth comb, Degler sorts and churns them, and squeezes them until all the truth is wrung out. Then he begins anew with his own modified hypotheses that extends and builds upon those of Tannenbaum. In this re-examination, nothing is left to chance. Every cul de sac is explored until its secrets are dug up. Only then does Degler move on to the next topic and on to the next discovery. The book is much too rich and robust for a single review to do it justice; for the real substance lies in the beauty of the written details, and in the many fine culturally fresh examples. The best a reviewer can expect to do is to point to the highlights of the book and to encourage the reader to buy it and discover for himself what outstanding historical writing is really like. In Degler's version of the comparative analysis of slavery in the U.S. and Brazil, two central questions guide the study: (1) What accounts for the development of miscegenation in Brazil, and the corresponding development of segregation in the U.S.? (2) Can the differences in the two forms of slavery account for these societal differences? It is chapter I and II, of six, that does the heavy-lifting, as the author sets about the business of answering these two questions. Regarding the first, it seems that Brazil did not experience the same hardening of attitudes into a negative and stereotype-laced ideology of racism that extols the evils of blackness, as was to become commonplace in the U.S. This was true in part because, even during slavery, freed blacks were citizens and a normally accepted part of Brazilian societal and cultural life. Although there were, and still remain racial sensitivities, a racial caste system was not allowed to develop in Brazil as was the case in the U.S. As far as the racial hierarchy was concerned, there were "whites" and then descending gradations of mulattoes, leading to blacks being at the bottom of the ladder. But a much more important difference was that Brazilians always saw slavery as a "morally dirty business:" a moral wrong as it were, unlike their American counterpart, who identified with, rationalized, showed sympathy for, and remained in solidarity with the slaveholding class. At no time did Brazilian morality show sympathy for, or solidarity with, the slave owning classes. Americans, on the other hand, North and South, were sympathetic to the causes of the slave owning class, and after the Civil War, closed ranks with them to unify the nation under the banner of white supremacy. In contrast, in post-slavery Brazil, blacks were quickly integrated into Brazilian life as citizens, artists, historians, writers, musicians, engineers, etc. and their contributions to society acknowledged and embraced. Not so in post-slavery USA, where after a brief decade of "Reconstruction" came revenge: "the Redemption," in which the "color curtain" fell abruptly, and a century of Jim Crow darkness was introduced into the U.S., with reverberations continuing until today. Outside of proscribed black enclaves, such as today's black ghettos, American blacks pretty much lived a "social death" on the margins of mainstream white dominated society, in which their contributions either went unacknowledged or were conveniently subsumed under a surrogate white aegis. Even today, in the U.S. there remains no separately acknowledged black humanity based on a black identity and subjectivity. Chapter two attempts to answer the second question. And here I believe that Tannenbaum's analysis of the religious aspects of slavery is the more persuasive, and gets closer to ground truth than does Degler's. The reader may recall that while Tannenbaum argued that the two forms of slavery may have been equally repressive, the Brazilian version was more humane simply because, in principle, it granted the slave an element of humanity and moral equality with the slave owner that was missing in the U.S. version. It was the Portuguese and Catholic Justinian Code that did this. Slaves under the Brazilian system could be brave, virtuous, magnanimous, and patriotic. They had a soul and could be baptized as Christians. No such luck if you happened to be an American slave. Degler appears to skirt this very important issue altogether and attempts to explain the difference in terms of demographics: the fact that Brazil contained a significantly larger number of free blacks than did the U.S. Degler attributes this larger number to three factors: (1) there were more slaves in Brazil which naturally resulted in more freed slaves; (2) Portuguese slave owners tended to free ailing slaves to avoid the extra care of them; and (3) Brazilians had no reason to fear that freed slaves would rise up against the slave owners, for they were seen as normal and full Brazilian citizens. Thus Degler's argument of the differences reduces to one of demographics rather than one of moral and religious accountability. Chapter three takes us on a dizzying excursion down the dark road of racial distinctions based on skin color and blood classifications. It compares America's "one drop rule" with Brazil's "pure African blood rule." In this instance, demographics may have had more to do with the racial classifications than anything else, but this time the author shies away from making his case based on demographics. The very fact that a majority of Brazilians were, and remain mulattoes, must have had a great deal to do with the way the races were eventually defined. There are three categories: White, mulattoes, and Negroes. According to the author, while there is definitely a more subtle kind of color prejudice in Brazil than in the U.S., unlike in the U.S., anti-discrimination laws in Brazil are strictly enforced and thus racism has not been allowed to take root in Brazil and get out of hand as it has in the U.S. But, even so, it is as true in Brazil as it is in the U.S. that interracial marriages are frowned upon and discouraged -- especially black men marrying white women. Chapter four focuses on the psychological aspects of race, and it is here that I wish the author had spent more time. Degler claims that just as is true in the U.S., "place" based on color is a settled issue in Brazil too. The idea of upward mobility for blacks is pretty much a "dead letter" in Brazil. As is true in the U.S. blacks suffer from self-hatred and all of the same psychological problems that inhere in a society that uses race as the basis of its

caste system. As the author notes in the preface, while Brazil moves from class to identity politics, the U.S. moves in the opposite direction. In Brazil, as in the U.S., the better educated, the more skillful, are either whites or mulattoes, and they both are encouraged to see themselves as better than Negroes. The last two chapters are a recap of the author's main themes. As noted earlier, any review is unlikely to do more than skim the surface as I have tried to do and as Maxine Margolis did in her review for the NYT Review of Books. However, I think she got it horribly wrong, failing to shed her sensitive Americanized racial rose-colored glasses. In this respect, I doubt if I have done much better. But the book deserves five stars. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. critical reading for research By Steven G. Smith Learning is self motivated and this tome will educate one on the aspects of the Brazilian slave trade and how it differed from the American slave trade in the fact that in Brazil a NEGRO could earn enough money and earn a PARDON into whiteness, a class known as PARDO. This is a key piece to understanding political science as it relates to race relations and skin differential in darker skinned people. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Comparing American history with Brazilian history By michele I'm into American history and culture as well as Brazilian culture and language. In particular i'm interested in history of slavery and multiculturalism of U.s. and I wanted to compare the Brazilian situation with the American one and read about it.

Carl Deglers 1971 Pulitzer-Prize-winning study of comparative slavery in Brazil and the United States is reissued in the Wisconsin paperback edition, making it accessible for all students of American and Latin American history and sociology. Until Deglers groundbreaking work, scholars were puzzled by the differing courses of slavery and race relations in the two countries. Brazil never developed a system of rigid segregation, such as appeared in the United States, and blacks in Brazil were able to gain economically and retain far more of their African culture. Rejecting the theory of Gilberto Freyre and Frank Tannenbaum that Brazilian slavery was more humane Degler instead points to a combination of demographic, economic, and cultural factors as the real reason for the differences. In the early 1970s when studies in social history were beginning to blossom on the North American scene, Carl Deglers prize-winning contribution was a thoughtful provocative essay in comparative history. Its thoughtfulness has not diminished with the years. Indeed, it is as topical today as when it was first published. The Brazilian experience with rapid industrialization and its attempt to restore democratic government indicates that the issues which Degler treated in the early 1970s are more pertinent than ever today. Franklin W. Knight, Department of History, Johns Hopkins University.

This is one of the most important books written on the subject of comparative race relations since *Slave and Citizen* [by Frank Tannenbaum]. Deglers treatment of the nature of contemporary race relations is masterful. The Americas