lestinians and Israelis, restore access of Palestinians to their landscape, break down physical barriers, and afford Palestinians space in which to experience their rootedness" (pp. 238, 239). Whether it is so that the inability to experience "rootedness" that leads to its ritual re-creation through sacrificial rites of symbolic rootedness, or whether this psychic angst of unrootedness is the origin of human bombers, remains, I think, an open question.

The Masters and the Slaves. By Gilberto Freyre. New York: Knopf, 1946.

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First published in 1933, Gilberto Freyre's masterwork on his native Brazil has been translated into Spanish, English, French, German, Japanese, and Polish. The book's impact arose from its portrayal of a Brazil that melded races and cultures like no other place on earth. But this portrait was thought excessively idealized by postwar generations of Brazilian social scientists, who noted not only that some of Freyre's historical arguments were wrong, but also that his hymn to miscegenation was parlayed by Brazilian conservatives into an image of "racial democracy" that masked Brazil's ongoing racial issues.

But with the fascination for "multiculturalism" in the late 20th century, Freyre's star rose again. *The Masters and the Slaves* now looked less like conservative apologetics and more like a visionary meditation on a remarkable society, the introduction to a trilogy rounded out by *The Mansions and the Shanties* ([1936] 1963) and *Order and Progress* ([1959] 1970), with their profound analysis of patriarchalism and their more pessimistic tone.

By the late 1980s, Freyre was again central to Brazilian intellectual life. In the larger world of social and historical theorizing, he is today seen as one of the great writers in that tradition of social thought that we might call aristocratic: Mme. de Stael, Tocqueville, and perhaps Ranke in the 19th century, Tolstoy, Churchill, and perhaps Braudel and Americo Castro in the 20th.

By aristocratic theorizing I mean the view that claims to see all of society, but from the point of view of the insider. The bourgeois view sees the whole of society, but aims to do so from the outside, from no particular point of view. It was the bourgeois as state official (and later as sociologist) who conceptualized *l'homme moyen sensuel*, an empty vessel invested with the qualities of a gender, a race, an education, an occupation, an age, and some attitudes. And it was the bourgeois as radical who imagined equality as a contentless similarity in education, life chances, expected

* Another review from 2049 to share with *AJS* readers.—*Ed.*

wealth, and other abstractions, and who believed that the good society would arrive if only all influences of an individual's heritage could be successfully removed from the unfolding of his life story.

Only the middle classes could believe such ideas; both high and low extremes knew this view to be chimerical. Excluded groups and their allies inevitably see a two-class world—us and them, oppressed and oppressor. In the multicultural version, there is not one *us* but many—each *us* being a *them* to its many peers. But still there is no outside. There is also no outside for the aristocracy. This is by definition true for the aristocratic reactionaries who mistake themselves for the entirety of society. But it is also true for those more generous minds to whom privilege carries the obligation of magnanimity and self-critique. The latter have a unique view, for it is often left to a certain kind of aristocrat—most often to aristocrats in an age of aristocratic decline—to see society as a single thing, multifarious but strangely unified, pathological as well as wonderful.

Gilberto de Mello Freyre was born in 1900 in Recife, the chief city of colonial Brazil's oldest region, the northeast sugar country. On the dedication page of *The Masters and the Slaves* his grandparents' names sing out the illustrious lineages—Mello, Silva, Teixeira, Cunha, Wanderley—that will become familiar in the dozens of family anecdotes that pepper the pages of the book. After private tutoring and local schooling, Freyre graduated from Baylor University in 1920 and then took a master's degree under Franz Boas at Columbia. He traveled in Europe, then returned to Brazil and took up on the one hand a bureaucratic position as secretary to the governor of his province (Pernambuco) and on the other a literary life of essays, pseudonymous tracts, little magazines, and caricatures. Complexities of the 1930 revolution sent Freyre to exile in Portugal and a year's teaching at Stanford. Returning to Brazil, he wrote *Casa Grande e Senzala*, which was first published in 1933 and, after numerous Portuguese editions, was translated into English in 1946. (The translator exchanged the metonymic Portguese title [literally *Big House and Slave Quarters*] for the more focused *The Masters and the Slaves*.) Freyre never held an academic position, but spent the rest of his life writing, lecturing, and living in the Northeast, where he ran a personal research foundation, the Insitituto Joaquim Nabuco. He died in 1987.

The Masters and the Slaves was an instant success in Brazilian intellectual life, so dominant that its twenty-fifth anniversary conference produced a 600-page book with 67 contributors. In many ways this success reflects the book's extraordinary style. It is written on a large scale, for a reader who has time for diversions and complexities, who relishes the obscure footnote and the family anecdote, who enjoys irony and contradiction, who likes an author who is present in his text—genial but opinionated, idiosyncratic but large hearted. There are times, indeed, when the book reads like a Borges story, so involved are the textual debates

and the historical byplays, so loving the description of this or that document, so complete the analysis of some traveler's bias toward his topics.

But the book's popularity also reflected its underlying aim to make of Brazil's vast miscegenation a positive rather than a negative thing. For Freyre's work was not a scientific depiction of society as it was but a passionate imagining of what one might take that society to be. Freyre's argument rests on two claims. First, he claimed that Brazil had mixed European, African, and American stocks into a stew of racial gradations. Second, he claimed that Brazilian culture had so mixed the cultures of those populations that even to the extent that the original cultures survived, they were no longer distinguishable in the way then characteristic of the United States. These points were more guiding themes than explicit claims. More explicit were a number of master subthemes. The first of these was Freyre's causal argument, which traced the origins of Brazilian society to the initial colonizing decision to create a latifundist sugar monoculture with a small and largely male population. This necessitated slavery (because of scarce manpower), encouraged miscegenation (as a way of building capital), determined the shift from Amerindian to African slavery (because the nomadic Amerindians' entire culture was obliterated by settlement and fixed labor), and founded the patriarchal system that still governed Brazilian culture.

Another crucial subtheme was the centrality of peninsular (Portuguese) experience. The Portuguese had a longstanding and complex relationship with Moorish culture, in which they were now dominant, now subordinate, indeed in which they had been both enslavers and enslaved. This pattern produced what was already a hybrid culture when it came to Brazil: hybrid in religion, sexuality, gender roles, occupational structure, and governance. In this sense, the Brazilian experience simply continued the peninsular one.

Similarly, Freyre traced numerous separate lines from African civilization to Brazil, noting in considerable detail the importance of the vastly varying African populations, religions, languages, and cultures that were brought to Brazil. He emphasized that the negative qualities considered characteristic of African slaves in Brazil were in fact produced by slavery, not by African heritage. He also treated the relation of Africans and Amerindians, noting that escaped African slaves created mini-empires in the outback, where "blacks were a Europeanizing force among the *caboclos*" (p. 311). Still another pervasive theme paralleled that of miscegenation: a focus on nutrition, physical development, morbidity and mortality, menarche—in short, a history of the body. In this analysis, Freyre managed to lose most (but not all) of the baggage of scientific racism while retaining a focus on the importance of a people's biological heritage.

Sexuality pervades *The Masters and the Slaves*. Joyous and intense, occasionally perverse and revolting, it runs through the discussions of religion and economics as well as those of family and sexuality. (One syphilis nostrum, he tells us, claimed that "if Christ Himself were to come

back into the world today, He would be the one to raise His holy voice to recommend the use of the Elixir" [p. 326].) It is this pervasiveness that persuades the reader of the importance of sexuality, even more than do the facts themselves. However, this sexuality is completely male—by page 12 we are hearing of "the naked Indian women with their loose-flowing hair," who "for some trinket or other or a bit of broken mirror would give themselves, with legs spread far apart, to the 'caraibas,' who were so gluttonous for a woman." Yet Freyre's explicit—indeed sometimes graphic—masculinity is only one of his many particularities, alongside his northeastern provincialism, his belief in aristocracy, his faith in the uniqueness of "Lusotropicalism," his frankness about Brazilian sadism and indolence, his constant desire to get behind the surface niceties, his love of ironic complexity, his occasional descent into racism per se (e.g., p. 278). These particularities in many ways *are* the book.

Even more than sexual, the book is sensual. Freyre's desire to show the extraordinary melding of cultures in Brazil leads him into endless discussions of food, of clothing, of religious rituals, of dance. We hear of the smell of certain kinds of bodies, the lushness of women's diets, the bodily marks of the endemic venereal diseases, the importance of the color red, the heat and indolence of midday in the Big House. We hear the sound of prayers, the songs of the interior regions, the rhymes of schoolboy taunts, the hum of lullabies. Above all, we get the sharp rasp of reality: "Silk-lined palanquins, but in the Big Houses bare-tiled roofs with vermin dropping into the inmates' beds" (p. 55); "Many of the fifteen-year-old brides died [in childbirth] shortly after their marriage, when they were still no more than little girls" (p. 366); "Runaway slaves had spread among the Indians a knowledge of the Portuguese language and the Catholic religion before any white missionary had done so" (p. 285); "The Mohammedan Negroes brought to Brazil from that African area which had been most deeply penetrated by Islamism were culturally superior not only to the natives, but to the great majority of the white colonists" (p. 298).

As one might imagine, Freyre's sources were of infinite variety, ranging from travelers' accounts to historical records, memoirs, newspaper advertisements, official investigations by political and church authorities, family stories, official statistics, scholarly literature, and so on. The bibliography contains items in English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, and Latin, in addition to Freyre's own Portuguese. That there is, however, no systematic attempt to assess the quality of these sources would open Freyre to great criticism after midcentury. Not that Freyre did not judge his sources. Far from it, his views of other scholars range from interest to condescension to outrage. He can be amusing (Capistrano de Abreu, he tells us on page 55, is "being a little too literary for once"). He can be cutting ("In admitting [that climate has an effect on culture], it is not necessary to go along with the exaggerations of Huntington and other fanatics" [p. 330]). He can be coy ("the account of Father Cepeda [on pederasty], now discreetly stored away in the archives of the Historical

Institute of Rio de Janeiro" [p. 413]). But his judgments are not systematic or professional. As David Cleary once remarked, he preserved an "air of amateur dilettantism."

Freyre does not spare himself or the reader the uglinesses of old Brazil. The discussion of sadism (p. 350) is horrifying. The frank racism of the colonizers and of the Church are plainly discussed (see the discussion of the Portuguese and the Amerindians [p. 106], of the Portuguese and the Africans [pp. 321, 390, 426]). To be sure, the more brutal realities of slave labor are not discussed until a later book (*The Mansions and the Shanties*) since the focus here is on family life. But it is puzzling to a present-day reader, given the sharpness of Freyre's judgments, that the book was long seen as offering conservative apologetics or as unduly optimistic. A dark strain runs through the whole work, for all its occasional nostalgia.

Like all great works written in the shadows of colonialism, *The Masters and The Slaves* has had a complex history. It should be read alongside the great anti-Freyre text—*The Negro in Brazilian Society* by Florestan Fernandes (first published in Portuguese in 1965). Fernandes's book avoids Freyre's conception of racial mixing and interprets Brazilian race relations through the sharp race delineations then characteristic of the United States. Under this approach, Brazil—in particular the city and state of São Paulo—evinces very clear patterns of racial discrimination indeed. Given this "obvious" fact, Fernandes and the generations of writers who followed his lead could not understand the long-standing failure of Afro-Brazilians to mobilize.

But this expectation of mobilization underscores one of the differences between the aristocratic and bourgeois styles of social knowledge distinguished earlier. The bourgeois views are explicitly dynamic; they envision and even promulgate change. The aristocratic views do not. They see change happening, but treat it as inevitable in the flow of history and, ultimately, as amounting to little. "Everything must change in order that everything can stay the same," in the famous remark of Lampedusa's Don Fabrizio Salina. So also Tocqueville argues that the French Revolution merely made visible that which had been happening for centuries, and Braudel tells us that the momentous events of Cateau-Cambrésis and Lepanto and Vervins count for little beside the (largely unchanging) history of structures. At its worst, this view is apologetic or reactionary. But at its best it conveys a commendable breadth of vision and a corresponding humility about our own inevitable provincialism, a humility often lacking in the bourgeois "view from outside." After all, the rich and egotistical Germaine de Stael saw at once that France and Germany were fundamentally different societies. But her portrait of France describes precisely those patterns of opinion, integration, and collective conscience that the brilliant and scientific Émile Durkheim mistook for universal social reality.

The Masters and the Slaves starts this year's series of works from beyond the 20th-century metropolis. Classic social science was not limited to Europe and North America. In fact, the making of today's (2049)

contemporary sociology began with this recognition. If you read Freyre, you will be challenged, exasperated, inspired, overwhelmed, occasionally disgusted, perhaps even titillated. But never bored. This is one of those rare books that is better to read than to have read.