II. NEGRO STUDIES IN LATIN AMERICA

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In considering the broad topic that has been assigned to me, I have tried to work out a number of observations that will not only indicate the status of Negro studies in Latin America but will at the same time point out what seem to be some of the principal needs to be kept in mind if that type of integration to which the Chairman has referred is to be achieved.

As you realize, the question of Negro studies in Latin America, at least in four or five of the countries where the Negro element is most important, is in every sense of the word a matter which not only has implications for scholarship but also involves factors arising out of an acute social consciousness. I think we can find in most of the scholarly production now taking place in the Latin American countries an appreciation of the fact that it is not merely the academic analysis and investigation of the Negro in that society that is important, but that there are also to be considered questions of much broader cultural import. In a nation like Brazil or Cuba, where the Negro element makes up probably at least half of the population, it is a question of the integration of a national culture, so that we find a double purpose involved in most Latin American scholarship in this field.

The progress that has been made, especially during the last ten or fifteen years, is really astonishing. There is, first of all, the actual amount of production in both the scholarly and popular publications concerning the Negro. A glance at the bibliography of the Negro in Brazil, for instance, would reveal that the number of studies has increased a dozenfold over the last decade. At the same time there would seem to be a very marked increase in what we might call dispassionate analysis. Up to a decade or fifteen years ago the interest in the Negro in a country like Brazil was largely confined to the picturesque. It was much the same as the interest manifested in the Indian, which was to a considerable degree literary. There was very little in the way of historical or sociological analysis, or of studies representing the innumerable
other points of view which of course are of great importance to the scholarly consideration of the Negro.

This scholarly approach today, however, is developing significantly in almost every one of the Latin American countries. Consider, for example, such a well-known older Haitian work as Price's De la Réhabilitation de la Race noire, and contrast it with the writings of Mars and the many other contemporary Haitian students who have approached the study of the Negro not merely with an eagerness to vindicate for their own race its place and prestige, but at the same time to analyze critically and in scholarly fashion the contribution and rôle of the Negro in that particular West Indian island.

Accompanying this increase in breadth of attitude, there has been a widening of the scope of subject matter. Today in these countries where the Negro element is important, you will find attention paid not merely to the common historical development of the people but also to linguistics, and to the sociological, musical, artistic, and other manifestations of life wherein the Negro has made his contribution.

I think it may be suggestive to consider very rapidly the status of Negro studies in those countries which have been most active in the field. I may take Brazil first, since I dare say that there the largest amount of scholarly activity has been directed toward the study of the Negro. In the field of sociology, the research of Octavio de Freitas is outstanding. He has done a magnificent piece of work in Doenças Africano no Brasil especially in relation to northern Brazil, wherein he considers the problem of acculturation, including the impact of the Negro upon the Portuguese and all the various consequences that flow from it. This is a monumental contribution which comprises several very significant volumes.

Dr. Arthur Ramos, a doctor of medicine and a psychiatrist, has, as you undoubtedly know, produced a half dozen of the most important volumes on the Negro in Brazil that exist today. It is especially important to note how, in this case, Dr. Ramos began his investigations in a more narrow field and gradually
broadened his interests to produce the only volume, so far as I
know, which attempts to relate the problem of the Negro in
Brazil to that of the other countries of America, including the
United States.

In the field of linguistics I may mention Renato Mendonga,
Jacques Raimundo, and various others, who have analyzed the
African influences on the Portuguese language. All of these, in a
specialized way, have provided an enrichment of the scholarly
literature available in Brazil, and all of this is the work of the
past ten years and represents a distinct departure from the
traditions of writing which prevailed up to that time.

Now, in Brazil this development has not been merely a scholarly
one. As I said at the beginning of my remarks, there is a very
real consciousness in Brazil that the Negro is not merely something
to be studied, but that he is as much a person as is the Portuguese.
And these scholars have been so conscious of this fact that two
Afro-Brazilian congresses have been held, not only to examine the
problem of the Negro from the scholarly point of view but at the
same time to bring about cooperative activity between Negroes
and whites, an aim which is there considered an indispensable
corollary to these other more scientific activities.

It is also important to note in the case of Brazil that studies
of the Negro have not been limited to any one region. There
has been a realization of the importance of this problem throughout
the republic. You find, for instance, in far away Rio Grande do
Sul, a scholar named Dante de Laytano who has published some
excellent linguistic works; in Bahia work has been done under men
like Carneiro; while in Natal, in the northern part of Brazil, the
work of such a scholar as Luis da Camara Cascudo is to be re-
marked. Even in the Amazon, where the Negro population is
very small, Ferreira Reis has published a number of works,
especially on the problem of the racial mixture of Indians and
Negroes. So that throughout the country, from the extreme
South to the North, there is productive activity, motivated by a
very real concern with this problem.

In the case of Cuba, which I think is probably the second
Latin-American nation in importance as regards the study of the
Negro, there has been greater specialization. One associates Negro studies in Cuba almost entirely with the name of Dr. Fernando Ortiz, who was the initiator, the promoter, and in that republic is still the dean of scholars dealing with the Negro. Dr. Ortiz, in spite of his prodigious production—and he has examined almost every aspect of the subject, treating it as an economic problem as concerns policy regarding Haitian immigration, or as a linguistic problem as evidenced in his magnificent dictionary, and the like—has also created, to some extent, a school of Negro studies. You may be aware of the establishment two or three years ago of the Sociedad de Estudios Afro-Cubanos, the Society for Afro-Cuban Studies. The first volume of its review was published some six or eight months ago, and the second number has just appeared. The Society attempts to bring together Cuban Negroes and Cuban whites of scholarly persuasion with the purpose of integrating and coordinating their activities. Although this society has but recently been organized, it is already doing very effective and significant work.

In Cuba this scholarly output has been accompanied by a most extraordinary interest in the Negro from the literary point of view. Concerning this many of you here present can speak with more authority than I, but I know, of course, of the work of Guillen and Ballagas and many others. Works written either by Negro Cubans or written by whites interested in the Negro as literary inspiration appear in Cuba almost every month. Only last week, for instance, I received two new works, one a series of short essays by a young woman, Lydia Cabrera, the title of which is Cuentos Negros de Cuba, the other, El Negro en Cuba, by Alberto Arredondo, which, interestingly enough, is entirely in the realm of economics.

In Haiti, as I have indicated, the same type of interest has been developed. At the present time, particularly through the inspiration of Dr. Price Mars and others with whom he has surrounded himself, there is a much broader emphasis on the contribution of the Negro in Haiti and in the West Indies generally than heretofore. For instance, within the last three years Dr. Jules Faine, of Port-au-Prince, has published in two volumes,
La Philologie Créoïle, which, whatever its intrinsic merit as a philological work, shows at least an interest in this broader approach. The Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haiti constantly has articles dealing with various aspects of the study of the Negro.

When we move to some of the other Latin-American countries, however, even where the Negro is an appreciable factor in the society, we find less activity of this type. In the Dominican Republic, for example, which lies next to Haiti, sharing the same island, where the Negroes, or those of mixed blood, represent a large element of the population, practically nothing of a scholarly character has been done. There are some indications of literary interest of the Afro-Cuban genre, but this is limited to casual works or small monographs, of no very serious character.

In Puerto Rico a similar situation prevails. The Negro has come into his own in Puerto Rico only as a literary subject. We find an important poet such as Palés Matos has produced two or three volumes of poetry in which the Negro is the inspiration, but no one has been concerned to any great extent with historical or sociological investigations.

In Venezuela, Negro studies are even less developed than is the case in the two West Indian countries to which I have just referred. A few things are to be found, such as the novel of Gallegos, Pobre Negro. Yet this is a literary work, whose author makes no pretense at evaluating the historic or scientific rôle of the Negro in Venezuela. In this country, interest in the Negro is literary to such an extent that, in making inquiry concerning persons in Venezuela interested in the subject, I was told that not only were the Venezuelans not interested in the Negro as yet, but they had scarcely recognized the existence of the problem.

Isolated individuals concerned with the Negro are, of course, to be found, as the Chairman has already observed. Such a person is the very able Peruvian scholar, Fernando Romero, a naval officer by profession, who is much interested in the Negro in Peru, where the Negroes constitute an element which is much more numerous than one might assume at first glance. Romero has produced a number of interesting papers on the slave trade.
and has organized a small group which has published a review where, little by little, scattered writings on various aspects of the Negro in that republic are being brought together.

In the more southern countries such as Argentina, which we may take as an example, the bibliography of the Negro, as far as I have been able to discover, consists of perhaps three works, none of them very extensive. *La Trata de Negros,* by Diego Luis Molinari, is a study of the slave trade and has a certain significance because of the fact that up to the middle of the nineteenth century the Negro was an important element in the Argentine, although today his importance has diminished as a result of the enormous European immigration. There is also a little work by Vincente Rossi, *Cosas de Negros,* which likewise deals with the Negro in the Rio de la Plata area.

You will notice that in making this very rapid analysis of the status of Negro studies in Latin America, I have left out of account numerous areas where the Negro is a factor to be reckoned with—Columbia, Panama, Bolivia, certain portions of Central America, and Mexico. In all these countries, however, it is impossible to discover that anything of any real scholarly or literary importance dealing with the problem in which we are interested has been produced.

It seems to me, as we survey the field, that a number of specific points concerning Negro studies in Latin America present themselves. First is the problem of exploration and investigation in those areas which have not yet been touched and where the Negro element is important. You have, for instance, in Panama, the very interesting phenomenon of the transfer of Negro populations from certain of the British West Indian islands, which involves the impact of the Barbadian and Jamaican Negroes upon the Spanish and Indian populations. There is thus a vast amount of virgin territory for exploration in Latin America, where no effort has been made, either by nationals or scholars from abroad, to examine the problems of Negro research.

The second point as regards Latin America seems to me very definitely to concern the proper distribution of available literature, and the furthering of first-hand contacts among scholars. I think