

**LUIZ DOS SANTOS VILHENA (1744–1814)**  
***COMPENDIUM OF BAHIAN AND BRAZILIAN NEWS (1802)***

The Negro women and a majority of the mulatto women as well, for whom honor is a delusion, a word signifying nothing, are commonly the first to corrupt their master's sons, giving them their first lessons in sexual license, in which from childhood on they are engulfed; and from this presently arises a veritable troop of little mulattoes whose influence on family life is most pernicious.

There are other men who never marry, simply because they cannot get out of the clutches of the harpies in whose power they have been since childhood. There are ecclesiastics, and not a few, who from old and evil habit, forgetting their character and station, live a disorderly life with mulatto and negro women, by whom they have sons who inherit their property; in this and other ways many of the most valuable properties of Brazil pass into the hands of haughty, arrogant vagabond mulattoes, to the great detriment of the State. This is a matter well deserving of His Majesty's attention, for if these sugar mills and great plantations are not prevented from falling into the hands of these mulattoes, who ordinarily are profligate [immoral] and set little store by these splendid properties, having come by them so easily, in due time they will all fall into their hands and be ruined, as has happened to the greater part of those that came into the possession of such owners.

You must know that the passion for having Negroes and mulattoes in the house is so strong here that only death removes them from the household in which they were born; there are many families that have sixty, seventy, and more superfluous persons within their doors. I speak of the city, for in the country this would not be remarkable.

The Negroes are harmful in still another way to the State of Brazil. For since all the servile labours and mechanical arts are in their charge, few are the mulattoes, and fewer still the white men, who will deign to perform such tasks . . .

The whites born in this land must either be soldiers, merchants, notaries, clerks, court officials, judges, or treasury officials or else hold some other public occupation that is barred to Negroes, such as surgeon, apothecary, pilot, shipmaster or sea-captain, warehouse clerk, and so forth. A few others are employed as sculptors, goldsmiths, and the like.

Is it not obvious that the inactivity of the whites is the reasons for the laziness of the blacks? Why should a man not dig the ground in Brazil who in Portugal lived solely by his hoe? Why should one not labor here who in Portugal knew nothing more than to put one hand to the plough handle and another to the goad?

No land could boast of greater opulence and plenty than Baía if it were ruled wisely, and henceforth admittance were denied to slaves, the causes of its backwardness and poverty.

**Taken from Luiz dos Santos Vilhena, "The Social Consequences of Slavery," in *Latin American Civilization: History & Society, 1492 to the Present*, ed. Benjamin Keen (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 209–211.**