

NISHIDA, Mieko — *Slavery and Identity: Ethnicity, Gender, and Race in Salvador, Brazil, 1808–1888*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003. Pp. 256.

Mieko Nishida undertakes the difficult task of uncovering identities of Africans and Afro-Brazilians in the northeastern port city of Salvador da Bahia. Identity, which she describes as “one’s situational synthesis of self in relation to others” (p. 1), invariably represents a challenge for historians of the oppressed. In a study of Brazilian slaves, however, the task is especially daunting because Brazil lacks the rich collection of slave narratives available to historians of the United States. In *Slavery and Identity*, Nishida draws upon a variety of sources generated largely by state authorities (wills, inventories, censuses, marriage records, bills of sale, and travellers’ accounts) to challenge “linear models of collective identity” and examine ways in which the enslaved and freed struggled to “create their own ethnic [and subsequently racial] identity” (pp. 5, 157).

*Slavery and Identity* is divided into three parts focusing on African slaves, African freed people, and Brazilian-born people of colour. Each section advances a major change in identity, from ethnic nation to African and ultimately to race. Gender, Nishida rightly asserts, represents a variant throughout all three stages. She argues that cultural transformation began at the moment of capture and that the enslaved adopted distinct ethnic identities — such as Nagô, Gêge, Congolese, and Angolan — in accordance with the categories imposed by slave traders and customs officials. From precisely what these new identities emerged is unclear. Unlike John Thornton (1992) and Michael Gomez (1998), Nishida does not present material on African societies that allows for a clear understanding of the cultural changes wrought by the Middle Passage and initial years of enslavement. Like most historians of slavery, her expertise lies on the American side of the Atlantic. Bahian authorities, she makes clear, concerned themselves with ethnic designation of the enslaved. Among her best evidence of collective self-identity is the testimony of a participant in the 1835 Muslim rebellion who proclaimed, “we are all Nagôs, but each of us has his own homeland” (p. 38). Nishida also draws upon accounts of European visitors who observed slaves speaking in native languages, which she assumes corresponded to the same categories of “nation” found in government documents. Wills and marriage records more convincingly establish ethnic affiliation. In cases where officials noted the “nation” of marital partners, a large proportion bore the same ethnic label (for example, Hausa).

Part 2 focuses on the making of a New World African identity distinct from earlier ethnic affiliations. Nishida discusses manumission and alliances between the Yoruba and Hausa in the Malês revolt as evidence of a growing sense of African unity. Much of this material, however, repeats heavily the findings of Kátia M. de Queirós Mattoso (1972–1988) and João José Reis (1987, 1993). For Nishida, the close of the transatlantic slave trade in 1850 engendered the greatest transformation, as “the African born population of Salvador quickly developed their new ethnic identity as African born” (p. 105). She again turns to marriage records and wills in which notaries identified slaves and freedpeople born outside Brazil as “African”

rather than by the categories of ethnic nation common in earlier years. An evidentiary problem arises here: such records allow Nishida to comment adeptly on familial patterns but fall short of supporting her central point about the development of a collective African identity. That state authorities narrowed categories for identifying Africans tells us more about their own concerns than how the African-born saw themselves.

The third section addresses the Brazilian-born population of colour. Nishida confirms long-held assumptions of firm divisions between Africans and Afro-Brazilians. Expectedly, she finds higher rates of manumission among creole slaves, particularly those of mixed race. The fundamental transformation among the Brazilian-born after 1850, she asserts, was the emergence of a racial identity. Here she demonstrates that the Society for the Protection of the Needy excluded from its membership all but Brazilian-born black males. The 1872 census provides another key source. Nishida acknowledges uncertainty over how officials determined a subject's race but nonetheless concludes that "most likely census taking relied largely on self declaration". "The majority of the Brazilian-born free population of color identified themselves as *pardos*" (mixed race) rather than *pretos* (black) (pp. 146–147). Perhaps; but extant knowledge of the census process simply does not permit us to know whether racial categories represented self-perceptions or merely the assumptions of bureaucrats.

Mieko Nishida successfully demonstrates that African culture survived as it adapted in response to enslavement and manumission, as previous works have established. Her evidence makes clear that state authorities altered their perceptions of people of colour over the century but less convincingly elucidates self-identity. Nishida compiles a good deal of useful material on Salvador's urban slave society, including ways in which gender influenced work patterns. While experts on Brazilian slavery will find much familiar in *Slavery and Identity*, it offers a convenient English-language source for non-specialists disinclined to read earlier works in Portuguese by historians such as Kátia Mattoso, Maria José de Souza Andrade (1988), and Maria Inês Côrtes de Oliveira (1988, 1996). Nishida adds to a small collection of monographs on urban slavery available in English.

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NOËL, Françoise — *Family Life and Sociability in Upper and Lower Canada, 1780–1870*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003. Pp. 372.

Françoise Noël's purpose in this study is to describe and explain both the domestic culture and the cult(ure) of domesticity that were common, she argues, among Canadians and *Canadiens* in colonial British North America. Noël's frame of reference is the life-cycle of families, from courtship, marriage, and family formation through childbearing, child-rearing, home work, and household management, to old age and death. The voyage of life unfolds, almost exclusively, through an examination of carefully selected personal diaries and intra-familial correspondence of men and