

Introduction

In Defense of Identity

Identities in Flux seeks to understand how the concepts of race, migration, and citizenship in Brazil interact in literary and cultural terrains. At the core of race relations in Brazilian culture lies the question of miscegenation or race-mixture, which has been compellingly advanced by Gilberto Freyre and powerfully critiqued by scholars (Isfahani-Hammond, 2005) as they grapple with the theoretical and social implications of violent plantation sexual relations that have challenged the seeming positive cultural hybridizations in the Americas. While slavery remains at the center of these complex relations, it also undermines the contradictions of assimilationism at the expense of racism. Though hybridity was politicized as a desirable system of racial reconciliation in which the plantation culture privileges African, indigenous, and European contact without any sense of hierarchy, the reality of colonial power relations proves otherwise. The quest for resolution of identity crisis calls for the questioning of citizenship when identities are constantly in motion and in the process inhibits collective social mobilization against racial oppressions.

When located in the context of decolonial frameworks (Maldonado-Torres, 2018), this project redeems Brazilian cultural icons who were once considered dislocated subjects of colonial power relations during enslavement and after. Similarly, these potential agents of reconstruction redefine themselves against the grain of past dehumanization and along the lines of theories articulated by Frantz Fanon (2004, 2008), Aimé Césaire (2000), Sylvia Wynter (2003), and Walter D. Mignolo (2000). As identities migrating from colonized spaces of damnation, inferiority, and oppression to insurgent positionalities that restore their humanity and

dignity, these archetypal subjects offer new ways of envisioning regeneration of the human spirit. Migrating identities in the transnational frame are thus not fixed but shifting and political. Race relations in the specific case of Brazil are borne out of historical racial inequalities that morph from their original dislocation to a new location where a series of negotiation processes shift from assimilation and integration toward potential upward mobility. Even when communities and social movements contest the state by challenging the official representation of citizenship through a demand for equality despite difference, the ultimate sense of resolution lies in the flux of identities that is amenable to social change.

“Racial democracy,” as interrogated by scholars, has been subjected to a rigorous analysis that has further complicated our understanding of racism or its assumed lack thereof in the mythical racial paradise that Brazil is projected to be. Recent scholarship (Caldwell, 2007; Pinho, 2010; Sterling, 2012; Smith, 2016; Aidoo, 2018; Mitchell-Walthour, 2018) differs in their positionings on Brazilian racial identity yet agree on the crisis of black citizenship given the persistence of inequalities and ambiguous ethnoracial citizenship (Mitchell, 2017) that make a definitive identification impossible given the possibilities of claiming fluid identities. By virtue of a luso-tropical miscegenation thesis, racial hybridity offers a terrain of struggle in which Brazilians could claim whiteness, blackness, or race mixture depending on their politics of identity. Embedded in this fluid terrain is what I propose as “migrating identity.”

In overlapping issues of race and gender with the problematic of “mestiço essentialism” (28), which comes against the grain of “racial anti-essentialism” (179) or the Brazilian hegemonic framework of racial democracy, Caldwell deploys the black women’s movement in Brazil as a case study in how black women’s identity challenges the political discussion of race as a fluid or hybrid phenomenon in her text *Negras in Brazil: Re-envisioning Black Women, Citizenship, and the Politics of Identity* (2007). The quest for racial equality by black women thus plays out in symbologies such as hairstyles, carnival costumes, and musical lyrics, among others. Caldwell burdens herself in critiquing Gilberto Freyre’s advancement of Brazil as a “Luso-tropical Racial Democracy” (31) by suggesting that “proponents of miscegenation and racial democracy have tended to conflate biological mixture between racial groups with social integration” (35). In other words, interracial sexual interaction and miscegenation do not translate into equal racial treatments. Unlike Caldwell’s direct assault on race relations, in her study *Mama Africa: Reinventing Blackness in Bahia* (2010), Pinho evokes

Africa as a signifying trope in Afro-Bahian construction of black identity by drawing on the strength of the *blocos afros* (Afro-Carnival cultural movements and organizations) that not only draw pan African connections with New World spaces of Jamaica, Cuba, and the United States, but also market this new black consciousness or re-Africanization through music, hairstyles, clothes, and religious practices, by expecting their adherents to model their Afrocentric black body against the readily Europeanized model of beauty enshrined in racial democracy. Pinho however takes issues with this simplistic marketing of *baianidade* (Bahian identity) by questioning its commercial partnership with the tourism industry. In other words, Pinho highlights the contradictions of these otherwise well-intentioned cultural movements by suggesting that they succeed in establishing a forceful political black identity while failing to bring about a more inclusive discussion on racial equality and pragmatic humanity.

In her comparative and seminal work on Afro-Brazilian roots and rites, *African Roots, Brazilian Rites: Cultural and National Identity in Brazil* (2012), Sterling seems to pick up from Pinho with a more forceful focus on the convergence of the sacred and the popular when it comes to how to politicize public rituals and festivals in order to effect social change through political agency. Drawing specifically on Candomblé religious rituals, street performances, poetry, and hip-hop cultural manifestations, Sterling methodically rejects hybrid national identity by challenging Edouard Glissant's notion of "rhizome" identity that privileges European roots. Rather, she insists on the celebration of African roots through which Afro-Brazilians are able to dialogue with their ancestry as well as reject state-sponsored "Afro-Brazilian identity" that is conflated within racial democracy. While Sterling's arguments are culturally anchored, those of Smith are more transnationally and anthropologically encompassing. In *Afro-Paradise: Blackness, Violence, and Performance in Brazil* (2016), Smith unveils the many complex levels of anti-black violence and racism in Brazil. Structuring her book performatively, she highlights critical moments in which racialized bodies experience violent encounters with the police and during which the myth of racial democracy is more visibly contested by the sheer power of police violence against mostly black bodies. The author dramatizes how a theatrical group in Bahia, "Culture Shock," relives the relics of modern slavery through the denigration of black citizenship by the "terrorist" hand of the white State and the surveillance implicit in grotesque police raids. Drawing on the analogy of the black body as a "wandering ghost" susceptible to torture, pain, and war, she shifts the

social analytic framing of race from language and discourse to “ways that gestures, looks, feeling, seeing, and hearing define material realities of the nation, and particularly the lived realities of blackness” (161). While framing her thesis in dialogue with more contemporary Black Lives Matter movement in the United States, she turns the metonymic drama of Afro-Brazilians into a commendable transnational paradigm of contestation against normalized violence against black bodies.

Along similar lines of unveiling the violence of the state against black bodies as examined by Smith in the context of the instrumentality of the police, Aidoo offers in *Slavery Unseen: Sex, Power, and Violence in Brazilian History* (2018) a largely understudied aspect in Brazilian Studies, especially as it relates to sexual violence. Drawing on several narratives of interracial sexual violence that included European travel records and Inquisition trials as well as literature, the author argues that racial democracy was forged within concealed acts of colonial sexual violence that included rape, sodomy of male slaves, and prostitution. While the scope and depth of Aidoo’s examination of Brazil’s anti-black racial violence is extensive, its main thrust lies in the revelation that Brazil masks racial violence, sexual exploitation, and white patriarchy. But the issue of black identity in contrast with the mixed-race identity continues to be problematic as the racial democracy myth compelled many to auto-identify as white or brown even when they are obviously black by phenotype. And this is where Mitchell-Walthour’s *The Politics of Blackness: Racial Identity and Political Behavior in Contemporary Brazil* (2017) is timely. Against the prevalent studies that focus on the privilege accorded by race-mixture, Mitchell-Walthour investigates black identity from the perspectives of ethnoracial identification, political inequality, and the intersections of race, class, and gender. The investment in knowing how black identity impacts political underrepresentation is rewarding in order to determine political participation and the benefits of affirmative action policies. Regardless of the limitations of the methodology, the study improves our appreciation of ethnoracial politics and the implications of black political identity and behavior.

The challenge to ethnoracial citizenship that the foregoing review presents offers the opportunity to engage the case studies presented in this book. From the problematic of mestiço essentialism (Caldwell), Afro-Bahian identity (Pinho), convergence between the sacred and the popular (Sterling), state violence against black bodies (Smith), sexual violence (Aidoo), to the quest for black political participation (Mitchell-

Walthour), the diverse perspectives contest Brazilian racial democracy while complicating the crisis of identity for Afro-Brazilians. The five iconic historical figures that form the corpus of this study have been carefully selected to make a statement on how race mixture or racial hybridity has not really eliminated racial discrimination in Brazil. Rather, it has allowed for a further complication of the racial problem by promoting racial ambiguity that further fragments the citizenry into shades of color that make national identity impossible despite the claim of multiculturalism. The life and trials of Manuel Querino as masterly fictionalized by Jorge Amado as Pedro Archanjo in *Tent of Miracles* offers a compelling treatise on Afro-Brazilian stereotypes and racial hybridity. In order to understand the contending racial opposites within Archanjo, one must make sense of the protagonist's initial desire to become a medical doctor (a position considered in the nineteenth century as exclusively reserved for the white elite) without success and his neglect as an ethnographer of Afro-Brazilian studies and African influences on Brazil. Zumbi dos Palmares, the leader of the most populous runaway slave communities in the seventeenth century, was initially perceived as an anti-Brazilian rebel until the Unified Black Movement transformed him into the hero of the Black Consciousness Day since the late 1970s. Beyond Querino and Zumbi, three other icons, Xica da Silva, Black Orpheus, and the City of God perform shifting identitarian roles as they challenge the myth of racial democracy. In the case of Xica da Silva, an eighteenth-century hypersexualized mixed-race woman shifted from being the mistress of a Portuguese elite to being accorded freedom from slavery, only to be abandoned and humiliated by being denied the benefits of full citizenship. As a national stereotype of a "miscegenated" woman, her identity is questionable within the context of racial democracy. Black identity is also problematized in the carnivalesque character of Black Orpheus and the ghetto-stuck characters in *City of God* where the violence around them becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy and identity. These identities are migrating and shifting. They are not fixed as they undergo the perpetual fragmentation that the myth of racial democracy engenders.

Defining Concepts

This study argues that the quest for identity has been laden with various racialized challenges and coping strategies through the course of the

tortuous journey of negotiating identities in the Brazilian miscegenated world. Despite the convenient claim about the “racial paradise” that the Portuguese colonial slave-labor project bequeathed to its ex-colonies such as Brazil, Goa, Macau, and the five Lusophone African countries (Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and São Tomé and Príncipe), the persistence of social exclusion and economic inequalities proves otherwise. While the miscegenated identity of those of “mixed race” is praised as a social ideal, the realities of this dualized personality are anything but celebratory in the midst of oppressive conditions of survival and negotiations. This study serves as a multilayered and nuanced interrogation of economic disempowerment as the critical weapon that negated the possibility of any equality since the holders of this economic power were not ready to negotiate such a determinant power in the functioning of the Portuguese colonial empire. Countering the fallacious arguments of Gilberto Freyre in his numerous works, this study challenges such claims of racial erasure and the existence of a “colonial family” in a context where the “Casa Grande” and the “Senzala” remain literally separated and unequal.

In the specific case of Brazilian fraudulent “racial democracy,” and looking deeper into the problematic “cosmic race” produced through sexual violence and economic exploitation, this study argues that, as a matter of fact, the identity produced through this interlocking relationship was more of a shifting one, a “migrating identity” that constantly and strategically negotiated its being and relevance according to contexts and convenience as a matter of survival. In addition to reviewing historical and critical literature, the study deploys a number of case studies to unveil the contradictions of the claim of a uniform Lusophone Atlantic, and demonstrates that Lusotropicalism was more of a burden than an asset. In so doing, such iconic symbols of national identity as Zumbi, Xica da Silva, Pedro Archanjo, Orpheus, and the favelado are interrogated by juxtaposition with works by various cultural producers to arrive at a sustainable theoretical proposition on shifting Brazilian-ness and Afro-Atlanticity. In addition, the implied dislocations of these characters are juxtaposed with their real relocations through highlighted social inequalities and problematized “racial harmony.”

While the case studies primarily focus on Brazil, this book’s conceptualization extends well beyond Brazil as it interrogates the Afro-Atlantic Lusophonia in terms of historical and cultural intersections between Portugal, Africa, and Brazil during slavery and colonialism, in order to better

understand the transnational movements of ideas, people, and cultures over many centuries. These intersections, these movements, ultimately constitute how we engage this unique diaspora of Lusotropicalism and the cultural political challenges it poses for the miscegenated and migrating identities thereby produced. Some of the questions to be interrogated include: To what extent does the Afro-Atlantic Lusophonia replicate or problematize the “Black Atlantic” as theorized by Paul Gilroy? How does Gilberto Freyre’s “Lusotropicalism” complicate or expantiate such a paradigm? Beyond these two formulations, is there a differentiating or inclusive paradigm that better captures the Lusophone Atlantic while taking into consideration the uniqueness of the individual historical units of Africa, Europe, the Americas, Asia, and the Caribbean, in order not to limit analysis of case studies to external influences and impositions without regard for indigenous articulations of identity, resistance, and sociohistorical formations?

To better appreciate the interlocking dynamics of the concepts and terminologies deployed in this book, namely, “migrating identities,” “dislocation,” “relocation,” and “Afro-Brazilian Diaspora,” it is necessary to have working definitions of such ideas from the outset. Based on the central thesis that the Atlantic is a space of migration, whether voluntary or involuntary, the negotiation of place, space, and identity as the migrant moves from one location to the other, deals with the implied dislocation from the old setting, and the inevitable relocation in the new setting, and the adaptation of such a decisive experience into a survivalist trigger; it is indeed a perpetual process of naming and renaming the shifting identities that occur in the individual or group. This negotiation is performed primarily by those in migration, and secondarily by scholars of the phenomenon.

By “migrating identities,” I refer to those collectives and individuals subjected to forced and voluntary migrations whether as enslaved, colonized, labor-driven, or politically displaced subjects through natural disasters or economic exigencies. This broad definition allows for nuanced understanding of case studies, as the characters, cultural productions, and settings analyzed vary from case to case, especially since the time-frame of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is quite broad. I am not suggesting that the “identity” that is migrating is in any way fixed, even before migration; but in the very least, the migrant has a sense of place and origin before the migration took place. Unlike voluntary migration, which can be planned by the migrant in a three-part sequence

(“pre-migration,” “physical migration,” and “post-migration”), involuntary migration, such as transatlantic slavery, is never planned by the migrant, but rather is imposed as a brutal consequence of imperial economic greed. In both instances of voluntary and involuntary migrating identities, however, a lasting trauma is implied as the migrant adjusts through a series of coping mechanisms that may not be limited to assimilation, invocation of memory, nostalgia, and even real and symbolic rebellion, resistance, or creative cultural and spiritual adaptations. Of particular relevance is the view of Vijay Agnew in *Diaspora, Memory, and Identity* (2005) when the critic articulates a “dynamic tension every day between living ‘here’ and remembering ‘there,’ between memories of places of origins and entanglements with places of residence, and between the metaphorical and the physical home” (4). Yet, beyond the physical and metaphorical place or space, Stuart Hall in “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” (1993) cogently problematizes identity as a dynamic process when he theorizes: “Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a production, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation” (18). Migrating identities are thus subjected to the persistent dynamics of change as they navigate the transformative energies of dislocation and relocation regardless of the historical or contextual frame of reference.

The discussion of “dislocation and relocation” raises a number of questions and issues that relate to the migrating subject’s state of being and frame of mind. Through ruptures, disjunctures, and reconfigurations, this perpetually dislocated and relocated subject is a product of two or more worlds who shifts amidst a territoriality well beyond its control, especially between the old “homeland” and the newly adopted “hostland.” Even the notion of the center in relation to the margin is constantly shifting to the extent that the newly reconfigured Afro-Atlantic subject may well be at the mercy of constant conflicts, internal divisions, movements, fractures, and an elusive cohesion that is complicated by multiple identities as the subject tends to break away from colonizing hegemony and is yet implicated in it as a hybrid personality that cannot be restored to the original state of purity. Can this subject be exclusively dislocated or reciprocally dislocated and relocated over time, depending on contexts and specific moments of identitarian consciousness? For Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994), the dislocated subject occupies, indeed,

a “third space,” an “in-between space” that carries the ultimate meaning of culture since this same character is able to disrupt colonial hegemony from within, not so much as a split subject, but by playing on the power of marginality imposed on it, and through this power, recast social and cultural meaning through subversion by creatively playing in the margins and on the interstices of cultural identity. Yet the dislocated subject may well be coping with a larger sense of belonging neither to a homeland nor to a hostland, in which case the sense of place is problematized, as there is really no fixed center or “home” since this subject often feels torn between the two or more spaces through the crisis of consciousness and of identity. Even when “relocation” seems to conjure up positive vibrations for the dislocated subject, the sentiments of memory or nostalgia complicate this positive feeling as it endeavors to recuperate what appears “lost” and necessary to regain through the symbolic recourse to remembrance. In the process, a fluidity of the subject emerges, as when confronting the often romantic memories of the old home with the harsh realities of the new residence. In sum, while not interchangeable, dislocation and relocation are two sides of the same coin for the migrating subject and must be considered hand-in-hand to get the full import of the dialectical intersectionality of norm and deviation in the process of becoming or of problematic transatlantic identity formation.

The “Afro-Brazilian world” refers to the Africa-influenced expansive space that suffered under Portuguese colonial oppression was later reconfigured into shifting identities due to the problematic myth of racial democracy. In order to understand the paradoxes of reversal deployed to counter dislocating structures through cultural production, this book serves as an urgent call for intervention. While studies have been conducted about dislocations of Afro-Brazilians from political power through the myth of racial democracy that disenfranchises through economic disparities, these works do not provide answers beyond the more obvious (slavery, miscegenation, and the fallacy of assimilation thesis), thus avoiding the real issue: the direct impact of racial and economic disempowerment. In recasting dislocation as an economic and racial consequence of a deliberately structured reality, this book sets out to present strategic modes of dislocations and concrete counter-dislocation measures that challenge abusive processes that deprive marginalized populations of human and civil rights. Ultimately, beyond being an academic exercise and labor of love, this study seeks to demand social justice for dislocated populations in Brazil—mostly black and brown.

Socioeconomics of Post-Abolition Migrating Identities

This book argues that slavery was only partially responsible for the contemporary marginalization of the Afro-Brazilian population, which has been “migrating” between slavery, urban poverty, marginalization, social exclusion, economic deprivation, educational inadequacy, and political powerlessness, among other agencies of social death. Beyond slavery, the draconian structural policies adopted by the violent instrumentalities of the State in the post-abolition era have maintained socioeconomic and political disparities for more than a century. It is against this background that this book raises a number of research questions that further elucidate the intricacies of migrating identities in the Afro-Brazilian world. What, for example, were the significant consequences of slavery in Brazil in concrete terms? What specifically has changed for Afro-Brazilians since the abolition of slavery in 1888? Which texts (canonical or otherwise) have manifested and/or contributed to highlight dislocations in socioeconomic, cultural, and political terms? What strategies have been adopted “against” the state by cultural producers representing “counter-dislocation” voices from the urban periphery? What is the place of postmodern cultural production in relation to traditional expression, and how is this new wave challenging old ways of cultural dissemination in relation to shifting power dynamics?

Other questions seek to understand the aftermath of such exclusionary politics in terms of counter-strategies designed to advance social equality. One wonders, for example, why a radical social upheaval has been avoided in Brazil to date despite signs and signatures of tensions and agitations among social movements clamoring for change and social justice? Is there any place for negotiations in a dire state of affairs that could easily deteriorate into systematic “social death”? What is the role of culture in these wishful “negotiations” and what are its limits? What are the possibilities and potentialities of social regeneration without uprooting hegemonic and dislocating forces which seem to remain intact in the post-abolition era? Of what ideological or pragmatic significance is negotiation in the midst of a stifling economic condition that ultimately requires structural overhaul and redistribution of state resources in order to redress conscious and unconscious dislocations? At what point in the cultural-political negotiation process will sociopolitical actors realize the limits and cooptation alternatives available to them, and how do these alternatives negate their original resistant ideological goals? In answering

these questions, the book argues that shifting identities will be inevitable if lasting structural changes are not effected by the state.

Though many studies on Brazilian slavery have glossed over the subject of the economic impact of this heinous crime against humanity, a few have focused on slave resistance as well as on the import of miscegenation as a strategic measure to “harmonize” the differences between the races that contributed to the making of contemporary Brazil. Yet even though miscegenation is sometimes taken as a potential “solution” to social inequalities, this paradigm is yet to be interrogated beyond the facile cultural harmony it brings about. In fact, the violence it conjures up in the colonial setting fails to rationalize such problematic harmonious relations. The reality is that miscegenation was not just a cultural or social arrangement, it was (and is) also an economic one. The convenience of having intercourse with both the Amerindian and African women in colonial Brazil yielded many unspoken benefits to the colonizer. Economically speaking, these women would bring to the world biracial children, who, in addition to “belonging” to the colonizer, were also born into slavery despite the privileges attached to them as biological children. Despite such “privileges,” they were still considered slaves who could be sold out to other plantations as well as forced to work just like any of the Africans turned into slaves in the Americas. Socially speaking, these biracial subjects often served as “foremen” and thus had control over African slaves in the colony—forgetting that they themselves were the offspring of slaves. The hierarchy thus created exacerbated tensions as the miscegenated children came next in terms of power dynamics right after the colonizer, while the Amerindians and the Africans remained at the bottom.

That colonial set-up has not changed to date in the polarized Brazilian political structure. The complex Brazilian race relations are arguably the aftermath of that colonial engineering that lasted for more than three centuries. With a recent Brazilian census indicating that over fifty percent of the population as biracial, the inevitable rungs on the economic ladder are, in descending order, the rich white elites, the mixed-raced middle class, and the black poor. According to Robert Brent Toplin, this economic division or social stratification is not in any way troubling to the Brazilian white elites because it is in their best interest to continue to dominate other races.¹ Octávio Ianni goes even further by suggesting that capital accumulation in Latin America came about through slavery while capitalist expansion equally led to the slave

crisis, considering that the European Industrial Revolution necessitated the abolition of slavery.² This dialectical relationship between slavery and capitalism leads today to the same gap between the haves and the have-nots as well as to the attendant racial antagonisms that pervade the Brazilian society in the twenty-first century.

Racialized policies of Brazil in the colonial era have remained unchanged except for some structural changes geared toward improved racial relations. The same way slaves were kept in a lamentable socio-economic situation as objects and chattel, likewise, most black Brazilian poor wander aimlessly through the favelas of life in contemporary Brazil when it comes to economic empowerment. Though no official discrimination laws were enacted in Brazil as in apartheid South Africa, racist policies were practiced in order to keep blacks disempowered, uneducated, subservient, and disenfranchised. Brazilian elites continue to need cheap labor in order to maintain profits in their privileged “national” and “transnational” businesses, the same way that they needed African slaves in the colonial plantations and mines. The white minority in Brazil will not voluntarily share economic power with disenfranchised blacks because it is not in their short-term interest to do so. Political efforts to “unify” white and black Brazilians have not worked despite various affirmative action policies introduced by the Workers’ Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores* [PT]), especially in the era of the Lula presidency. This is so because class discrimination has always been in place to ensure that white elites assume their privileged space in the natural order of things in the Brazilian economic apartheid. The European foray into Brazil, while often treated as a coincidence, was a well-planned voyage of exploitation and not simply of discovery. European monarchs had traded with their royal counterparts in Africa before the advent of slavery and colonialism. They even went to the extent of trading ambassadors or emissaries and exchanged gifts. Thus the claim that they did not know Africa or Latin America had mineral wealth, spices, and natives whose labor could be easily exploited was sheer nonsense. Amerindians and Africans were imposed the burden of mining precious stones and gold, and also cultivating the land for both food and cash crops while the colonizer became the controller of virgin lands “in the middle of nowhere” in Africa as well as in the New World.

Slavery was thus a vital economic activity for the survival of even European economies. This explains why emancipation did not come very easily. Even in the case of Brazil, where independence was declared by the heir to the Portuguese throne, the race-mixture experimentation was

not as easy as it has been represented. Despite the efforts to integrate slaves after abolition in Brazil, the process was slow and painstaking. Political and economic factors had to be considered. Now that slaves were not needed for the industrializing post-abolition economy, they could not all be repatriated back to Africa, not even all those who committed “treason” by attempting to overthrow the colonial government in Bahia before abolition, such as the Malês in the nineteenth century.³ There is no question that economic and political factors contributed to the “race-mixture” experiment. It was born less of the benevolent desire to attain racial equality than of the need to create a semblance of racial tolerance and co-existence. In the colonial capital of Bahia alone in the early eighteenth century, it was reported that African descendants constituted 96% of the population.⁴ Yet Brazilian slave owners were also noted to have been very harsh with their slaves.⁵ Gilberto Freyre’s claim that Brazilian slavery was more compassionate than other slaveries is untenable. Often framed as the Tannenebaum thesis, the Freyrean argument appears to have assumed the humane treatment of the African slaves by the colonial slave owners. If indeed the circumstances of the slaves were humane, what explains the many slave revolts of the nineteenth century? Even after abolition of slavery and independence from Portugal, the slave owners were still hoping to keep their slaves. Brazil’s close ties with Europe at a time when slavery was being perceived as an impediment to development contributed to its decision to also abolish slavery, even though it was a gradual process. The Brazilian economy was not in any way threatened by the emancipation of slaves. Rather, the Brazilian government felt that free labor would ultimately be more lucrative than slave labor due to technological advances, modernization, and industrialization. Besides, the emancipated slaves constituted the lowest economic class, and, lacking technological know-how, would have no choice but to return to the petty occupations they were used to before abolition. The lack of upward mobility for blacks was thus blamed not on racial discrimination, but on class: their place in the social hierarchy brought with it immense odds, which alone would prevent them from prospering.

Summary of Chapters

In seven chapters, the conceptual framework of *Identities in Flux* interrogates and exemplifies the viability of a paradigmatic shift in explicating marginalized and dislocated populations, especially in Brazil. Interdisciplinary

in focus and context, the book has necessitated fieldwork, theoretical thrust, and applications that vary from chapter to chapter. Through archival materials, scholarly dialogues with prominent and emergent cultural and institutional “memories,” as well as local social interpreters of Afro-Brazilian cultural production, especially in Bahia, the entire book maps the cause-effect analysis of slavery and its aftermath in social policy and execution. Chapter 1, “The Afro-Brazilian Diaspora: From Slavery to Migrating Identities,” traces the history of Portuguese colonialism in the lusophone world with specific emphasis on the impacts of slavery and colonialism in Brazil. In addition, African resistance, adaptations, and relics of renaissance are analyzed to highlight survivalist tendencies that attempted to create counter-dislocation paradigmatic shifts even at the stage of the conquering mission of the Portuguese. While chapter 1 provides the historical context, chapter 2, “Zumbi dos Palmares: Relocating History, Film, and Print,” compares and contrasts dramatic and cinematic renditions of a social icon while highlighting some historical and biographical elements deployed to fashion a persona and a legend that document one of the lasting icons of Brazilian social history. While this chapter focuses principally on the dramatic text *Arena Conta Zumbi*, the cinematic interpretation of the life of Zumbi dos Palmares in *Quilombo*, as directed by Carlos Diegues, is also revisited. Chapter 3, “Xica da Silva: Sexualized and Miscegenated Body Politics,” explores the shifting versions of the legacy of Xica da Silva as portrayed in film and fiction, while focusing on the significance of her sacrificial strategies to “free” herself from slavery and enjoin others to do the same. Chapter 4, “Manuel Querino: African Contributions to Brazil,” provides a case study that examines the contributions of the works of Manuel Querino (1890–1920) to the discourses on African retentions in Brazil.

The remaining chapters provide archetypal exemplification of iconic essences that have become part of Brazilian cultural and national consciousness. Chapter 5, “Jorge Amado’s Poetic License: Fictionalizing History,” delves into a comparison of history, biography, and authorial license in the invention of Pedro Archanjo in his famed *Tenda dos Milagres*. Chapter 6, “Black Orpheus: Regeneration of Greco-Yoruba Mythologies,” investigates the emergence of Black Orpheus as an Afro-Brazilian character by studying fictional (*Invenção de Orfeu* by Jorge de Lima; *Orfeu da Conceição* by Vinícius de Moraes) and cinematic adaptations over the years—from Greek dramatic versions, to Brazilian dramatic pieces that led to two cinematic adaptations: *Orfeu Negro* (1959) and *Orfeu* (2000).

Finally, chapter 7, “City of God: The Ghettoization of Violence,” highlights “gangsta” violence that is overlapped with drug trafficking in the “Hollywoodified” favela community of Cidade de Deus (City of God) in the urban peripheries of Rio de Janeiro.