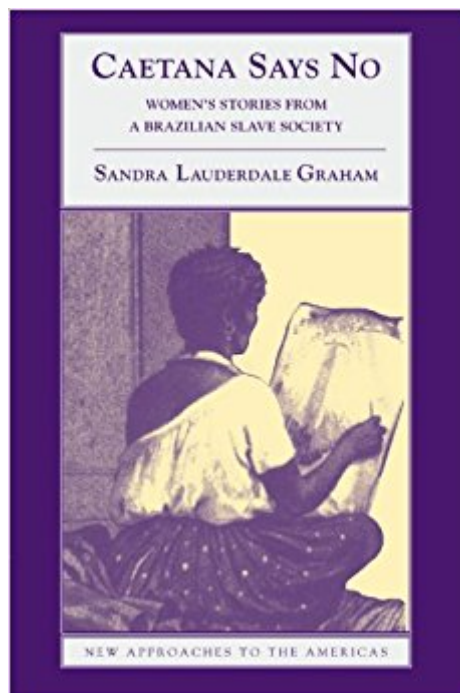




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# Caetana Says No: Women's Stories From A Brazilian Slave Society (New Approaches To The Americas)



## Synopsis

These true and dramatic stories of two nineteenth-century Brazilian women; one young and born a slave, the other old and from an illustrious planter family; show how each in her own way sought to exercise control over her life. The slave woman struggled to avoid an unwanted husband and the woman of privilege assumed a patriarch's role to endow a family of her former slaves with the means for a free life. Sandra Lauderdale Graham casts new light on larger meanings of slave and free, female and male, through these compact histories.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Two women, different roles, both shaking the structures of established male authority through the intransigence of their personal moral decisions. In this marvelous book Lauderdale Graham retrieves two sinuous stories from ecclesiastical and legal archives, and through their close analysis lays bare the stresses, ambivalences and the surprising elasticity of the slave system as practiced in a river valley in southeastern Brazil during the middle decades of the nineteenth-century.

'Brazilian Slavery' will never look the same again." Inga Clendinnen, Reader in History Emeritus at La Trobe University"Caetana is a finely crafted book on women's lives under patriarchal planters.

Readers will appreciate the author's vivid descriptions and analysis of typical Brazilian social customs and gender roles of the nineteenth century. The short length of the book combined with photographs will make this especially attractive for classroom use." The Americas"This is a fascinating study of gender, slavery and patriarchy, written from the perspective of two remarkable,

and at the same time so different, women. It combines imaginative research, engaging narrative, and solid thinking, opening a resonant new perspective on the historiography of nineteenth-century Brazil." Joao Jose Reis, Universidade Federal da Bahia

"Sandra Lauderdale Graham's lucidly written and meticulously researched study of women in a slave society calls to mind novelist L.P. Hartley's observation that "the past is a foreign country: they do things differently there." A fascinating read set in the expanding coffee economy of nineteenth-century Brazil, this book links the lives of two women, Caetana and Inacia, who chose to act in ways that subtly challenged the men who held power in their lives. By piecing together their lives and choices, Lauderdale Graham vividly and memorably depicts the complex and competing intersections of gender, race, family, and property that characterized Brazilian slavery." Alida C. Metcalf, Trinity University

"By exploring two mysteries that can't be fully solved, by puzzling over small kindnesses and betrayals in two plantation households, we learn the grammar of rules and exceptions that made up Brazil's nineteenth-century system. These women's predicaments show us the flexible harshness of whimsical, 'cordial' domination in agrarian Brazil." Dain Borges, University of Chicago

"Graham has given us a wonderfully insightful glimpse into the history of women in postcolonial Brazil.... This is one of the most lucid and welcome additions to the literature on the subject published in recent years. Highly recommended." Choice

"Lauderdale Graham should be commended for bringing to the attention of English-speaking readers such rich and thought-provoking details of nineteenth-century Brazilian slave society and culture." American Historical Review

Here are the true and dramatic stories of two nineteenth-century Brazilian women--one young and born a slave, the other old and from an illustrious planter family--and how each in her own way sought to have her way: the slave woman struggled to avoid an unwanted husband; the woman of privilege assumed a patriarch's role to endow a family of her former slaves with the means for a free life. Through these small histories Lauderdale Graham casts new light on larger meanings of slave and free, female and male.

It's a well written monograph, that deals with Brazilian culture, women, and the legal system. I recommend it for any historian or scholar looking to understand the agency women had within society.

The stories of the women of how they struggled to break away from a relationship and how their families did not help them leave the abusive relationship still is happening now. The women had to

make sure they did not want to go back to the lives of the men controlling them. They wanted to live a free life. Good book overall.

## Good Stuff

Okay, so my title is a bit harsh. But I gotta be honest, I felt like jumping into traffic while reading this book. It was so gosh dang boring. I had no idea it was possible to be driven into suicidal thoughts over boredom, but this book proved me wrong. So very, very, wrong. Now, I'm sure the author of this book is a nice lady, and it's pretty obvious that she is smart and knows a lot about history. But she presents it in such a dry way that I was literally cussing and sighing and asking "why god" to the ceiling every few minutes. My wife thought I was about to have an episode because at one point I threw the book and yelled "I GIVE UP!" Maybe I'm just too simple minded. I wouldn't doubt it. But other authors have managed to 'dumb things down' for us simple folk yet still retain the important stuff. Unless you have to read this book for school then I do not think you should read buy this book, mainly because you will give up after the 2nd page. I'm sorry, I hate giving negative reviews, and it looks like other people like it, but in my opinion, this book is terrible.

It's an interesting book with a new perspective on colonial and early Brazil. It opens your eyes to a new world, and shows us things that we, today, could possibly never have imagined.

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