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Caribbean in the Plural
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Slave Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying—Typhoon Coming On)
 by J. M. W. Turner (1840)
 Henry Lillie Pierce Fund, 1899
 Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

J. Lorand Matory

The "Cult of Nations" and the
Ritualization of Their Purity

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Candomblé is an Afro-Brazilian religion of divination, sacrifice, healing, music, dance, and possession-trance. The only rival to its beauty is its complexity. Though this religion is headquartered in the coastal Brazilian state of Bahia, it has counterparts and offshoots all over urban Brazil. The most widely heralded "nations," or denominations, of Candomblé have been regarded by most priests and by generations of scholars as survivals of primordially African religions. Since the 1980s, however, a number of scholars have emphasized the degree to which Euro-Brazilian elites have allowed Candomblé's survival only on condition of its adaptation to their own Euro-Brazilian values. For example, Beatriz Góis Dantas and Roberto Motta have suggested that the celebration of certain temples for their "African purity" (and a range of its arbitrary indices) are therefore artifacts of Euro-Brazilian dominance and "manipulation" in the world of Candomblé.¹

On the contrary, I have argued that the foremost historical source of the discourse of African racial and cultural "purity" in early-twentieth-century Candomblé was actually a

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late-nineteenth-century movement of racial and cultural nationalism in colonial Lagos, British West Africa.² During the Lagosian Cultural Renaissance of the 1890s, the discourse of racial and cultural "purity" played a central role in westernized Africans' and repatriated blacks' literary responses to British colonial racism. The hundreds of Afro-Brazilians who repeatedly traveled as merchants and religious pilgrims between Lagos and Bahia from the nineteenth century until World War II appear to have introduced this discourse into twentieth-century Bahia. Moreover, this discourse validated the worth of the African merchandise and ethnically "African" services of these travelers and their allies in the Brazilian marketplace. Hence, with the support of numerous local retailers of "African" goods and priestly purveyors of "African" services, "purity" grew into the normative standard of identity and practice in Bahian Candomblé as well.

I submit that the selective privileging of "purity"—amid a range of principles and precedents available to Candomblé priests—took place not because of but despite the preferences of Euro-Brazilian elites, who, from the 1930s onward, largely advocated *mestiçagem* (hybridity) as the preeminent standard of Brazilian national identity and culture.

Why the Euro-Brazilian elites of the Northeast went along with the countercultural assertions of the Candomblé priests and merchants is a question for another article. In brief, though, a major faction of the Euro-Brazilian elite clearly admired these priests and merchants for their polyglot literacy and sophistication, deferring to their authority on matters of religious principle and West African ethnology. In particular, the light-skinned intellectuals who propagated the Regionalist movement found in these Yorùbá/Nagô priests, merchants, and intellectuals evidence that their native Northeast was not, after all, inferior to the Southeast, a region that had surpassed the Northeast in wealth, whiteness, and political power over the previous century.³ I do not doubt, then, that light-skinned Northeastern intellectuals' disproportionate cooperation with and support of the temples at the expense of those temples and denominations that advocated ethnic and ritual hybridity. However, these light-skinned elites were not the main source of the purist idiom or the main agents of its propagation in Candomblé.

The purpose of this essay, then, is to explore the convergence of black Bahian class interests that converted the Lagosian literary discourse of cul-

tural and racial "purity" into the preeminent logic of ritual practice in Candomblé in the first place. Here I wish to solve a puzzle posed by my own twenty years of ethnographic inquiry in Nigeria, Brazil, and the Caribbean Latino diaspora: Why is it that Brazilian Candomblé Nagô and the Cuban Lucumí Regla de Ocha pursue "purity" and "cleansing" as ritual objectives far more than do the cognate Nigerian *òrìṣà* (pronounced "oh-ree-shah") religions that are typically regarded as their origins?

The Waters of Oxalá

At the most "African purist" of all Brazilian Candomblé temples, Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá (and at many of temples of the Yorùbá-affiliated Quêto/Nagô nation), the annual ritual calendar begins with a rite called the "Waters of Oxalá" (*As Águas de Oxalá*). It is an in-house rite whereby all the members of the temple community help to wash the "god of purity and peace"—Oxalá (pronounced "oh-shah-LAH")—and all members of the community cleanse themselves of the impurities that have entered them individually and collectively over the previous year.

The rite commemorates the mythical time when Oxalá insisted on taking a trip outside his kingdom, against the advice of his *babalaô*, or Ifá diviner. The diviner allowed Oxalá to go and visit his son Xangô (pronounced "shawng-GOH") in the latter's distant kingdom, but only on the condition that Oxalá never refuse help to anyone or complain about anything during his voyage. Thus, when Exú the trickster asked Oxalá to assist him in raising his headload of red palm oil, Oxalá could not refuse. Exú then maliciously spilled the palm oil all over Oxalá's immaculately white clothes. Without complaint, Oxalá washed his clothes in the river and continued on his journey. When Exú stopped him again to ask help in raising his headload of charcoal, Oxalá could not refuse, and Exú dumped the charcoal on Oxalá's clothes. Without complaint, Oxalá washed his clothes in the river and proceeded on his journey. By the same ruse, Exú then soiled Oxalá with a burnt black palm-oil pomade called *àdín*. Oxalá patiently washed his clothes clean a third time and finally reached Xangô's kingdom.

However, on his path, he encountered Xangô's escaped steed, which he secured with the intention of returning it to the owner, but Xangô's soldiers immediately apprehended Oxalá, thinking him to be a thief. During the seven years that they kept him in prison without Xangô's knowledge,

desolation befell the land and the women of the kingdom became barren. Only when Xangô's own *babalaô* divined to determine the cause of the kingdom's misfortunes was his father Oxalá released, whereupon Xangô begged Oxalá's pardon and ordered his subjects to retrieve water and wash Oxalá three times.⁴ These three washings are now reenacted annually in most Quêto/Nagô temples.

In the 1930s, when Mãe Aninha of the Opô Afonjá temple first became famous, not every Quêto/Nagô temple held the Waters of Oxalá ceremony. Moreover, Mãe Aninha's choice to place the Waters of Oxalá ceremony at the very beginning of the festival season diverged from the sequence established by the founders of her priestly line (in the Casa Branca do Engenho Velho temple) in a direction upgrading the ceremony's importance in the life of the religious community she led. This ceremony and the priority given to it in her Opô Afonjá temple appear to ritualize and dramatize the very same purity that traveler Martiniano do Bonfim and Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá's Mãe Aninha established in the 1930s as the core of Candomblé's social and ritual ideology.⁵

Purity and Dispersion

Few of the scholars who cite the exemplary "survival" of African culture in Candomblé, and even fewer Candomblé priests, are aware of the nineteenth and early-twentieth-century history of the Jeje and the Nagô as transatlantic nations. During that period, around 8,000 Afro-Brazilians "returned" to reestablish residence in West Africa. Several hundred of these—particularly members of the Nagô and Jeje nations—traveled back and forth between Bahia and the West African lands that they considered their ancestral homes. They went on pilgrimage and on business, taking back to Brazil not only a "refreshed" knowledge of their ancestral religions and plenty of valuable merchandise for use in Candomblé rituals, but also a knowledge of the novel cultural movements in early colonial West Africa that they themselves had helped to produce.

Some of those movements created ethnic identities and cultural standards that had never before existed in West Africa. In colonial Lagos, nineteenth-century "returnees" from Brazil, Cuba, and Sierra Leone (a safe haven for "contraband" slaves recaptured by the British Royal Navy) articulated an unprecedented "Yorùbá" culture that combined the legacies of the Òyó, the Ègbá, the Ègbádò, the Ijèṣà, and their westernized sons and daugh-

ters who had returned from the diaspora.⁶ Similarly, the Jeje nation in Brazil consolidated the ethnically, politically, and linguistically diverse captives of Fon, Maxi, Ewe, Gen, and Aja origins in a way unprecedented in their West African homelands. Only when Brazilians returned to West Africa did they introduce the term "Jeje" and the notion of these groups' shared identity into West Africa.⁷ In sum, the West African ethnic groups and cultures that are often described as the "origins" of the Brazilian Nagô and Jeje nations were actually produced in coeval dialogue with them.⁸

I have argued, further, that the unique prestige attributed to these nations in Brazil (not to mention their counterparts in Cuba) owes much to the conditions of this dialogue. As British colonial racism grew in the late nineteenth century, the literate African "returnees" who had long supported British colonialism felt betrayed and demeaned. In response, they asserted the tandem purity and superiority of the culture they called "Yorùbá," selectively documented its principles and precedents, and proclaimed it the basis of an African cultural renewal now known as the Lagosian Cultural Renaissance of the 1890s. Its proponents Africanized their names, their clothes, and their marital ideals in a way that was nonetheless novel and selective. For example, one of the key features of this revival was the publication of numerous books, pamphlets, and newspapers about "Yorùbá" life in English and in a hybrid, "Yorùbá" African language (chiefly Òyó in its grammar and Ègbá in its phonemes), which had been reduced to Roman script. Indeed, in Brazil and Cuba, this culturally nationalist literature gave "proof" of Yorùbá dignity and superiority.⁹ In turn, the French in colonial Dahomey, seeking to defend their new territory from British economic and political incursions as well as the allied Anglo-Yorùbá cultural incursions, elevated Jeje culture as the most worthy of local African cultures.¹⁰ These assertions of African purity and dignity appear to have found their way back to Bahia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the traveling merchants and priests.

Martiniano do Bonfim was the most famous transatlantic priest and merchant of this period. His testimony is documented in the Bahian ethnography from the 1890s to the 1940s. Both he and Mãe Aninha are quoted frequently endorsing notions of African racial and cultural purity. Yet the scholars who documented their words mistook these priests' testimony for disinterested quotations of primordial African values, rather than the modern, class-conditioned antiracist assertions of interest that they were.

Mary Douglas argued that the logics of purity, pollution, and its conse-

quences create vivid images of mystical punishment for antisocial behaviors that primitive societies have no forcible means to punish.¹¹ I would argue, pace Douglas, that such logics are not lost to "modern" social groups—and particularly not to such diasporic groups as Jews, Southeast Asian Chinese, South Asians in East Africa, and the Nagós and Jejes of Bahia.¹² For example, Jewish dietary laws and the *miqvah*, both based on a logic of ritual purity, dramatize the hereditary boundaries, the solidarity, and the cooperation of geographically dispersed religious/ethnic communities that often endeavor to unite around shared economic and political goals.

I will not be arguing that idioms of ritual purity exist or come about only as a function of the need to guarantee the solidarity of so-called "primitive" or non-state-based social groups. Idioms of ritual purity have been elaborated actively by some so-called modern and state-based groups, such as Nazi Germany and the Anglo-Saxon nationalists of the nineteenth-century U.S. South. Moreover, the discourse of purity is not the only ritual idiom found in so-called "primitive" or diasporic groups. As we shall see, the religion of the ancient Òyó kingdom, from which the founder of the greatest Nagó Candomblé lineage originated, celebrated ethnic hybridity and, as far as experts are able to discern, gave little emphasis to ritual purity. Moreover, the diasporic Angola and *caboclo* nations, or denominations, of Candomblé endorse their own brands of ethnic and cultural hybridity.

What I will argue is that, amid a range of ritual idioms and precedents available to the priests of the Yorùbá-affiliated diaspora, the idiom of purity has enjoyed the greatest success—a success out of line with its scarcity in both Òyó religion and the reigning *mesitigagem* ideology of the Brazilian host state at the height of Candomblé's elaboration of ritual purity. I will argue that the disproportionate and anomalous success of the purist ritual idiom in the Brazilian Candomblé is related to two factors: the condition of diaspora and the role of merchant interests in making diasporas endure as communities.

Not all ritual idioms are equally suited to the consolidation of dispersed communities that cut across multiple ethnically plural societies. Such communities' transterritorial dispersion and their frequent role in long-distance commerce create, even in the "modern" world, special incentives to selectively highlight, preserve, and elaborate on discourses and ritual metaphors of "purity." Indeed, since the territorial nation-states that govern diasporas often throw their considerable material power behind efforts to homogenize

their citizenries, religions of purity become the safest (albeit only partially successful) means of compelling the solidarity of dispersed groups.

On these matters, the Jeje and Nagó nations of the Brazilian–West African axis are cases in point. Among all the nations of Candomblé, these two have both elaborated the idiom of "purity" to the greatest degree and conducted the greatest commerce in goods from the African "homeland." Indeed, I will argue that a class of international merchants and the local priests who retailed their merchandise gained the greatest benefit from the idiom of "purity" and actively propagated it in the Bahian public sphere.

Purity and the Transatlantic Nation

So, this is not a case study in the economic determinism of religious ideology or in the inevitability of "purity" as an idiom of social control in stateless and diasporic groups. Rather, it illustrates the convergence of social conditions and class interests that have made religious purism hegemonic, in the Gramscian sense, in a range of diasporic societies. It illustrates the forces that made "purity" (as opposed to a range of other available idioms of racial, religious, and personal identity) a useful bargaining chip for an influential class of Afro-Bahians in the early twentieth century. This case also illustrates the forms of leadership behind the naturalization of the "purity" idiom as the institutional foundation of an entire family of religions.

In the 1920s and 1930s, a number of well-publicized fortunes had been made through the Bahian trade with West Africa and continued to be sustained by it, such as those of Lourenço Cardoso, Maximiliano Alakija, and Joaquim Devodé Branco. The "Africans" of Bahia relied on the import trade for their supplies of strip-loomed "cloth from the Coast," or *aşô òkè*, "African" cowry shells, West African peppers, soap, kola nuts, herbs, and raffia.¹³ Mãe Aninha grew wealthy on the retail end of that trade. She owned a shop in Bahia's historic Pelourinho neighborhood and another on the temple grounds, where she did a thriving business in Brazilian goods and African religious supplies well-reputed for their "legitimacy."¹⁴ Ruth Landes describes numerous other "African" women in Bahia during this period with "stands selling spices, soaps, beads, and other specialties imported from the west coast of Africa."¹⁵ During some of his trips, Martiniano took coral and wool to sell in Lagos and returned with "cloth from the Coast" to sell in Bahia.¹⁶ Felisberto Sowzer exported tobacco to West Africa and im-

ported *sabão da Costa* (black "soap from the Coast") into Bahia.¹⁷ The value of their sacred merchandise in Bahia depended on its "legitimacy," which, in local terms, meant its Africanness. So highly valued was African merchandise that many Candomblé gods refused any "non-African imitations."¹⁸ Not every participant in the import trade grew wealthy, but the link between "legitimate" or unadulterated Africanness and pecuniary value dialectically relied on and amplified an aesthetic value increasingly pervasive in the local religious and secular milieu: purity.

In Bahia, the "Africans" figured prominently not only in the overseas commerce with Africa but in butchering, dressmaking, laundering, herbal pharmacy, and market vending generally, while they monopolized certain other spheres of trade, such as the sale of cow heads and inner organs and the vending of food on the street. Indeed, it was often the *orixás*, or Candomblé gods, who ordered female initiates to take up the latter profession, and the gods were said to confer special protection on street vendors generally. The foods they sold were regarded as "typically" or "purely African," and vendors usually wore dresses and beads that are still associated with the Candomblé priesthood.¹⁹ Thus, not only the transatlantic traders but a range of retailers and craftspeople made their livelihood based on African ethnic trade monopolies and on an aesthetic of the distinctiveness and value of the "purely African."

The "Africans'" monopoly on the supply of these goods and services enhanced both their wealth and their influence. They used many means to demonstrate the pure Africanness of their wares and services, the most dramatic of which was the Africans' own daily sartorial, verbal, literary, genealogical, and ritual assertion of where they themselves had come from.²⁰ Proudly, they proclaimed themselves and their ancestry "purely African."²¹

Substantiated by the literature and ideologies arriving in Bahia from Lagos and Porto Novo, these claims were not only commercially profitable but psychologically empowering during the transition from slavery to semifreedom in early-twentieth-century Bahia. Hence, the discourse of Yorùbá superiority and "African purity" did not remain simply a diatribe against British racism or a product endorsement. It became a balm to an American people under psychological and spiritual assault. In the wake of Martiniano and Aninha's religious revolution in the 1930s, this idiom of ethnic and class distinction overwhelmed rival idioms in the ritual management of personhood in the Afro-Brazilian nations of Candomblé.

The Impure Roots of Purity

This historical context is intended to illuminate an ethnographic comparison at the core of my anthropological work. Ethnographically, this article will compare Candomblé ritual practices to historically related ritual practices among the West African Òyó people. Amid the vast formal similarities between the two, what is remarkable is the unimportance of "purity" and even of "cleansing" as rationales of ritual practice among the Òyó-ethnics I have studied and, by contrast, the hypertrophy of these rationales in the Òyó-inspired Candomblé temples of Bahia. We will seek an explanation for this disparity in the history of West African "Coastal" (*da Costa*) political developments and transatlantic commercial projects that, since the beginning of British West African colonialism, have affected Lagos and Bahia far more than they have affected Nigeria's inland Òyó-ethnic region.

On the Brazilian side, the focus of this article is the ritual practices of the most influential family of temples in Candomblé, those that grew from the root of the Casa Branca do Engenho Velho temple (also known as Ilé Iyá Nasô), which was founded around 1830 by "three black women from the Coast (i.e., West Africa) . . . Adetá, Iyá Kalá, and Iyá Nassô."²² This last figure clearly ranked the highest, as the temple still bears her name: "The house of Iyá Nasô." Her personal name is not known, but the priestly title, further Yorubanized in the current Brazilian orthography as "Iyá Nasô," either indicates that before her initial arrival in or return to Brazil she had been the highest-ranking priestess of the thunder god Ẹṣàngó in the Òyó Empire (which would make her the highest-ranking of all *orixá* [Nigerian Yorùbá "god"] priests in the empire besides the Emperor himself), or shows that she and her Bahian followers held Òyó religious models in such high regard that they named her after Òyó's highest priest of the empire's tutelary god.²³ Initiates of the ancient and prestigious Casa Branca do Engenho Velho temple, or Ilé Iyá Nasô, founded the now equally famous Gantois and Ilé Axé Opô Afonjá temples.

The non-Òyó Ijèsá, Anagó, and Kétu peoples, as well as the Jeje-affiliated Maxis people, have left distinctive verbal marks on the oral history and nomenclature of Candomblé. But an Òyó genealogy, language, and set of religious protocols left a mark like no other on the Iyá Nasô's Casa Branca temple and its scions. Even Mãe Aninha, the woman responsible for the vast expansion of these temples' prestige and influence in the 1930s, had been born of "Grunci" parents (from an entirely non-Yorùbá region in what

is now Ghana and Burkina Faso) but was initiated at Casa Branca as a possession priestess of Òyó's tutelary god Šàngó.²⁴ Xangô (in the Brazilian Portuguese orthography) remains the best-known *orixá*, not only in Bahia but throughout northeastern Brazil. It is for this reason that the religion of the Òyó-ethnic town of Igbôho serves as an appropriate West African point of comparison in the discussion below. Igbôho is the former capital of the Òyó Empire.

Purity and Commerce among the "Africans" of Bahia

The collaboration between Professor Martiniano (as he was often called) and Mãe Aninha to rescue the dignity of the black race and "reestablish" the purity of what, to them, was its exemplary religion had probably begun decades before the 1930s. The groundwork had been laid in the 1890s, when, after his return from colonial Lagos, Martiniano was instructing for-ensic psychiatrist and ethnologist Raymundo Nina Rodrigues. At that point, the "Africans" had been recognized as an ethnic category in Bahia, with the emergent, literarily informed "Yorùbá" identity only beginning to assume its paradigmatic status within the "African" ethnic group.²⁵ Many of the "Africans" had already clustered in certain exemplary professions, such as African-Brazilian international commerce and itinerant food vending. Casa Branca and a range of other Candomblé temples already existed, but they were quite comfortable with the simultaneous or hybrid adoration of Roman Catholic and African divinities. And, though Nina Rodrigues had been persuaded to accord some value to the purity of African practice, his analysis largely concerned blacks' inability to understand any accurate form of Catholicism.²⁶ He casually linked the term *bossal* (for "new arrival from Africa"—literally, a person "of the forest") with the term *ignorante* (ignorant).

By the 1930s, the socioeconomic status of numerous "Africans" and their rapport with the Regionalist intellectuals (such as Gilberto Freyre, Edison Carneiro, and Arthur Ramos) had overshadowed such reasoning and given way to literary and social-scientific discourses that were remarkably like the political and religious discourses of Professor Martiniano and Mãe Aninha. Before 1911, Mãe Aninha had not even founded her own temple and lacked both the authority and the platform to articulate the purist apologetics with which she and Martiniano marked the literature in the 1930s. Their collabora-

tion and purist influence on the broader Candomblé might have begun before the 1930s, but the vast scope of their direct influence on the Candomblé priesthood from Rio to Pernambuco, on the local and international press, on the academy, and on the governing class was fully evident and well documented only by the late 1930s.²⁷

Knitting together the Òyó royalist ritual idioms of the Casa Branca temple, the political priorities of the Lagosian Cultural Renaissance, and the commercial devices of the transatlantic Jeje and Nagô nations, Professor Martiniano and Mãe Aninha galvanized Afro-Bahian society and charted a new course for Candomblé discourse and practice by the late 1930s. The two priests appear to have been a major inspiration behind a growing emphasis on ritual idioms of purity, cleansing, and the radical extirpation of exogenous "influences" from the sacred "nation" and its subjects. For an ethnic group organized around the importation of distinctive goods and the provision of distinctive services, "purism" might seem to be a structurally conditioned form of taste, but it took Martiniano and Aninha's leadership to integrate their nation around this form of taste. Hence, with the material and ideological support of ethnic merchants and tradespeople and with the moral support of many others, the priests of Bahia elaborated a pervasive ritual system of purification and recruitment unprecedented among their forebears in Africa.

In the wake of Martiniano and Aninha's public leadership and ritual innovations, the Quêto nation grew from a distant third in the number of Bahian Candomblé temples in 1937 to the first-ranked in 1983.²⁸ Once ranked behind the Angola and *caboclo* nations, the Quêto/Nagô nation is now significantly ahead of both. Yet, proportionally speaking, much of Quêto/Nagô nation's gain during this period was at the expense of the Jeje nation, because, as we shall see, syncretism and *mestiçagem* are also structurally conditioned forms of taste that hold considerable sway in Candomblé and in Bahia generally. Since the 1980s, however, the Jeje and Nagô denominations of Candomblé have also gained tremendously at the expense of Umbanda and Kardecism in the metropolises of southeastern Brazil.

Purity and the Making of the *Axé*: The Institutional Logic of Candomblé

Some symbolic themes in Brazilian Candomblé have been elaborated in ways far more reminiscent of the ideologies of the turn-of-the-century

Lagosian Cultural Renaissance and far more characteristic of the discourses of merchant diasporas and their religions than they are of *orisha* religion in *Ọyó*. Purity is only one of them.

If there is one key term that encapsulates the religious and social differences between Brazilian Candomblé and the religion of the contemporary *Ọyó*-Yorùbá, it is the term *àṣẹ* (Yorùbá: pronounced "ah-sheh"). *Àṣẹ/axé* (Portuguese; pronounced "ah-SHEH") is, first, the power and authority embodied in human agents, animals, and inanimate objects. Hence, it denotes the "life force" that is inherent in all things and creatures but concentrated and transferable in the form of animal blood. That blood is used to amplify the "life force" and power of West African *orisha* and Brazilian *orixá* altars, including the possession priests themselves, who, at pivotal moments, embody the gods through possession-trance. West African *orisha* priests and Brazilian *orixá* priests share the related view that initiatic families (as opposed to birth families) can be constructed through the applications of sacrificial animal blood that link a person undergoing initiation (the initiate) to an initiating priest and, in turn, to the priest who initiated him or her. And, most pervasively, West African and Brazilian worshippers share the sense that people, communities, and their residences are like vessels that are rendered functional, orderly, and effective by their regulated containment of the proper *àṣẹ/axé*.²⁹ As in West Africa, in Brazil the term can be used to denote "power" and "authority," and can also mean "amen," or "let it be so." Virtually the same word, *aché*, is widely used and understood among Cuban and Cuban-influenced *oricha*-worshippers in the United States and around the Caribbean basin. Uniquely in Brazil, though, the term *axé* is shouted by young people and sung by hip musicians as an exclamation meaning "right on," "wow," or "cool." The expression has become a commonplace in daily conversation and advertising.

In this, and several other ways to be detailed below, the concept of *àṣẹ* has been weighted differently in West Africa and Latin America. In colonial and postcolonial Nigeria, where Alfred Lugard's strategy of Indirect Rule fortified indigenous systems of top-down royal government, the term *àṣẹ* is most commonly used as a reification of governmental command. It refers to ritually authorized hereditary authority and posits the consistency of Yorùbá and proto-Yorùbá royalism with the entire God- and god-centered universe. In Latin America, on the other hand, *aché* (Cuban Spanish) and *axé* (Brazilian Portuguese) reify solidarity within geographically extensive groups that

often crosscut nation-states—groups that may include black and *mulatto*-identified Brazilians, the Black race as a whole, or specific transnational religious nations or families.

Nigerian *àṣẹ*, Cuban *aché*, and Brazilian *axé* are all accumulative; people can lose it, gain more of it, and possess more or less of it than others do. Thus all three correspond quantitatively to rank within a community. However, far more than West African *àṣẹ*, Latin American *aché* and *axé* are detachable from states or governments. They link their bearers to relatively decentralized, geographically dispersed, and noncoercive communities.

In Brazil, *axé* can be a countable thing. An *axé* is a temple community, or family of temple communities, united by the same continuous ritual transmission of *axé* from a founding priest or priestess to the "children in saint" (*filhos-de-santo*) he or she has initiated and, in turn, to all the "children in saint" that they have initiated and so forth. Thus, one might ask a worshiper which *axé* he or she belongs to. In reply, he or she might identify initiatic lineage by the name of its founder, its temple of origin, or its ranking temple.³⁰ An *axé* (a temple community or family of temples) is held together by shared *axé* (ritually constituted life force) and, ideally, by a shared set of ritual conventions that are supposed to have remained unchanged since the founding of that *axé* (family of temples). Members of the same *axé* are more likely to trust each other than to trust outsiders to have contact with their young and vulnerable novices, to witness and participate in their important and secret rites, and to manage a possessed member of that *axé*. The ritual techniques from one *axé* might foul up or harm the gods, altars, and lives of people in another *axé*. Again, the purity of an *axé*'s rituals is an important idiom of social boundedness and distinction.

In the *Ọyó* kingdom, the structure of the initiatic family does appear to have changed over the past two centuries. In the precolonial and colonial period, initiation seems to have bound possession priests to the monarch or other hereditary authority, thus often replacing royal kinsmen who might usurp the monarch's power if allowed to serve as important delegates and counselors for the ruler.³¹ In the late colonial and postcolonial periods, the possession priesthoods acquired the additional role of dramatizing the continued rights of female agnates and their children to the increasingly exclusive patrilineal households of both commoners and hereditary rulers.³²

In Bahia, by contrast, black royals did not rule states, and patriliney neither really nor ideally defines membership in the corporate groups that have

dominated most Afro-Bahians' lives. Thus, ironically, while the West African *Ọyó* possession priesthoods tend to be initiatic *kindreds* centered on the living ruler of the host kingdom or chieftaincy, Afro-Bahian *axés* (like their Cuban counterparts) are lineages. Far away from the forms of state control that shaped the priesthood in precolonial *Ọyó* and other proto-Yorubá kingdoms, Candomblé is largely made up of multiple, autonomous lineages of temples. Unlike the small corps of priests and priestlike royal delegates that made up the *Ọyó* possession priesthoods, the Candomblé priesthood has become a mass organization with tens if not hundreds of thousands of possession priests.

Yet, from the viewpoint of the individual initiate, merely being initiated is not a sufficient guarantee of personal well-being, respect, and power. The diagnosis and cure of spiritually caused afflictions is thought to rely on the legitimacy of the curing priest's links to higher powers. His or her credible association with a well-established and respected *axé* is similar in importance to a U.S. healer's display of an M.D. degree from a well-established and respected medical college. That is, despite the existence of other medical colleges and other healing systems, with their less widely understood protocols of training and authorization, the prestigious medical degree inspires a qualitatively and quantitatively different sort of confidence.

Within any given temple, an initiate's authority and degree of respectability depend in large part on his or her initiatic age—that is, how long he or she has been initiated. In the broader community of initiates and among knowledgeable laypersons, each initiate's authority, degree of respectability, and very legitimacy depend greatly on the legitimacy of his or her extended family of temples and on the clarity of the initiate's links to it. The legitimacy of his or her family of temples largely relies, in turn, on the time depth of its traceably uninterrupted priestly genealogy and theologically inherited, unadulterated liturgical practice. The age of a temple is frequently used as a metonym of this genealogical time depth. Thus, some *axé*-founding Jeje-Nagô temples in Brazil—such as Casa Branca and Alaqueto (or Ilê Maroiaje)—are described by their priests and affiliates, with some symbolic truth, as three hundred or four hundred years old. According to these genealogical indices, clearly some *axés* rank higher than others.

There is no single priest with authority over the entire religious community, even within any given Brazilian state, but some *axés* have the institu-

tional power and some priests achieve degrees of projection in the media that give their public pronouncements and ritual protocols overwhelming authority, inspiring widespread deference, quotation, and imitation. These are called the "great houses" (*as grandes casas*), and the "greatest" of these are linked to the *axé* of Iyá Nasô.³³

Of course, assertions of the uninterrupted and pure transmission of ancient *axé* and of specific ritual practices are seldom literally demonstrable. Sublineages within an *axé*—even that of Iyá Nasô—do diverge in their practices. Any given priest and his or her temple might abandon its original *axé* and seek affiliation with an older and more prestigious *axé*. Some temples are founded and run by uninitiated practitioners, who might claim inspiration by other human or spiritual sources. However, rising in the world of Candomblé almost always depends on the public recognition of one's claims of descent from publicly recognized and unadulterated genealogies of *axé*. The broadest and most comprehensive *axé* in Candomblé is the African "nation," which ideally shares not only a language and musical standard but certain broad commonalities of ritual practice.

Yet back-and-forth travelers have posed a challenge to the lineal transmission of tradition, authority, and sacred life force, or *axé*—and to the genealogical standard of purity that would otherwise seem inherent in this religion. If back-and-forth travelers, or even newly arrived Africans, bring credible information about supposedly original ritual practices in the imagined homeland of the diasporic nation, does a priestess reproduce the practices of the previous Brazilian generation of priests in her family of temples, or follow the recommendation of those who claim direct contact with the roots of the more encompassing African "nation"? The founder of the Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá temple, Mãe Aninha, set a disruptive precedent and a prestigious example with her highly publicized answer. She placed the "African purity" of information and models derived through the Lagosian Cultural Renaissance squarely above the "purity" of the lineally inherited standard. She jumped to the head of the queue of Candomblé leadership and powerfully reoriented the priorities of her nation.

Between 1911 and 1938, Mãe Aninha enlisted transatlantic travelers such as Martiniano do Bonfim and Joaquim Devodê Branco in "restoring" to her then-new temple the supposedly primordial African practices that she claimed had been "forgotten" in the mother temple of her *axé*. Of this example transatlantic traveler Martiniano do Bonfim said, "Dona Aninha . . .

really tried to study our ancient religion and reestablish it in its African purity. I taught her a lot, and she even visited Nigeria." ³⁴ Aninha herself said, "My sect is pure Nagô, like Engenho Velho. . . . But I have revived much of the African tradition which even Engenho Velho had forgotten. Do they have a ceremony for the twelve ministers of Xangô? No! But I have." ³⁵ Professor Martiniano was precisely the person who "revived" this ceremony and the practice of appointing *Obás*, or "ministers," of Xangô from the ranks of the temple's economically or politically elite protectors and sponsors. However, this "revival" appears to be the product of Martiniano's Lagosian literary imagination, rather than the mere "reestablishment" of any *Ọyọ* practice. ³⁶ Whatever its source, Martiniano's "purist" reform enhanced his own fame and influence as much as it did Aninha's.

Many present-day priests and scholars of Candomblé remember Martiniano's name. While far more people remember Aninha and rightly credit her success to her personal brilliance and charisma, few contemporary priests or scholars recognize Martiniano's role in making her—that is, in creating the terms of distinction that enabled her to become more famous, more influential, and wealthier than any of her sisters in the *axé* of *Iyá Nasô*. Far from restoring Aninha's Candomblé to the state of its *Ọyọ* antecedents, what Martiniano actually did was to establish—for the first time in a syncretic religion with syncretic *Ọyọ* and equally syncretic Bahian antecedents—the organizing discourse and ritual standard of purity. On the grounds of his transnational expertise, Martiniano came to be known and consulted by Afro-Brazilian priests in Pernambuco and probably other Brazilian states as well. ³⁷ But in the decades since his collaboration with Mãe Aninha, no priest has been able to ignore the prestige of this standard, even as the objective possibility and virtue of "African purity" are debated by scholars, journalists, artists, and priests alike. Little aware of the history of its genesis as an ideology of Candomblé practice, subsequent generations of priests have reproduced its logic, not only in the patterns of the struggle for prestige but in the ritual logic of healing, recruitment, and initiation.

The Changing Conditions of "Purity"

Although worshipers and scholars have tended to read "African purity" as an objective description of fidelity to a primordially African religion, or as an arbitrary standard by which the Euro-Brazilian bourgeoisie chose or "ma-

nipulated" its clients, I have argued that the organizing discourse and ritual standard of "purity" found in Martiniano and Aninha's vast sphere of influence were generated primarily in colonial Lagos, favored by the conditions of dispersion, and made central by the conditions of commerce with a thoroughly modern Africa and the transnational class that conducted it. World War II interrupted the trade between Lagos and Bahia that initially favored this discourse in Bahia. ³⁸ However, from the 1950s onward, the prospect of privileged diplomatic and commercial relations with Nigeria and Dahomey/Benin persuaded the Brazilian government to subsidize a series of visits by Brazilian-descended Nigerians to Brazil and by Afro-Brazilians to West Africa. ³⁹ In the 1980s, Nigerian travelers, traders, diviners, and a publisher flooded into Brazil with a combination of religious zeal and profit in mind. Hence, like the 1930s, the 1980s witnessed a trade-empowered drive and the literature-backed push to "Africanize" the Afro-Brazilian religions and "purify" them of their allegedly non-African elements. In the 1980s, it was Opô Afonjá's Mãe Stella and a new cast of West African Yorùbá scholars from the Yorùbá-centric University of Ife/Obafemi Awolowo University that led the way.

Indeed, there is a new Martiniano—Professor Wande Abimbola—*Ọyọ* man, former professor and vice-chancellor of the University of Ife, itinerant *babaláwo* diviner, official spokesperson (*awúṣe*) of the Ife divination priesthood, polyglot, and published author many times over. Yet, as his authority threatened to displace that of his sometime Afro-Bahian, Afro-Cuban, and Afro-Puerto Rican collaborators, the more established priests among them cooled to talk of religious "purity" and to the idea of restoring an "African" standard of ritual practice. ⁴⁰ Nonetheless, the mark of "African purity" on the religions of Brazil and of the Cuban diaspora has been cast indelibly, while "re-Africanization" has acquired powerful allies at the superwealthy margins of *orìṣà* religion—for example, in São Paulo and the United States. ⁴¹

Hence, dispersion and commerce do not make the ritual idiom of purity inevitable; they just create the conditions of certain powerful and persuasive assertions by those who stand to profit by them. Leaders who wield this discourse well have shaped revolutionary changes in a range of Afro-Atlantic religions. Hence, in Brazilian Candomblé, the organizing discourse of "purity" is subject to contestation, and resistance is coded in syncretic terms. Nonetheless, hierarchy and membership in the most prestigious *axés*, as well as upward mobility among *axés*, are still coded in purist terms.

Moreover, the ritual pursuit of "purity" remains deeply embedded and pervasive.

The Contemporary Ritual Management of Purity and Impurity

Contemporary Candomblé depends on the expertise of initiated priests in managing the contents of the heads and bodies of the members of a geographically dispersed group of clients, followers, and initiates of the temple. Priests conduct rites intent on removing improper "influences" from people's heads, from the vessels that represent their heads, and from social spaces like cars, houses, temples, and temple grounds. In turn, expert priests engineer the deposition of proper forces and entities into people's heads (as well as structurally similar social spaces), all intent on guaranteeing the health of his or her wards and the orderliness of his or her community as a whole. A logic of cleansing and purification now rests at the center of this series of removals and depositions. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that most Candomblé rites now include cleansing as an indispensable element or as their main purpose. Since the 1930s, certain rites of collective cleansing, expressly intent on purifying the temple community, have become central in the temples most influenced by Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá.

It seems no coincidence that a wide range of these rites requires the use of imported African materials, as well as foods, clothing, and other products the provision of which was the specialty or monopoly of the African ethnics of the 1930s. These include camwood, indigo, kola nut, bitter kola, red palm oil, "soap from the Coast," "unguent from the Coast" (*limo da Costa*, or shea butter), cowry shells, African wild buffalo horns, cow heads, animal innards, wild herbs, hand-woven cloth, and "African"-ethnic foods. While I have detailed a broad range of these rites elsewhere,⁴² I will, in the present essay, try only to illustrate these ritual themes and their commercial entailments, as well as the logic of personhood and community that they dramatize.

Purity and Impurity. In the mid- to late twentieth century, Oxalá and his rites have enshrined purity as the first and highest principle in the political discourse and ritual practice in an ever widening circle of Jeje-Nagô temples. However, as Douglas observes cross-culturally, purist religions regularly restore what has been rejected as filthy or anomalous as sources of power.⁴³ In Candomblé, these anomalies and boundary-straddlers are personified in Exú, the *eguns*, and the *caboclos*. Exú in Brazil is the gender-blending,

promiscuous, omnivorous master of communication. His domain is the street (*a rua*) and particularly the crossroads (*a encruzilhada*). Exú is also the opportunity-opening, alliance-making, fertilizing, and dangerous intermediary between the purity-centered hierarchies of Candomblé and the outside world, without which those hierarchies cannot survive. Exú can facilitate or disrupt the purity that is necessary for the personal well-being of the Candomblé member and for the collective integrity of the temple.

The *eguns* are the spirits of the dead, usually personal ancestors whose efforts to help the living actually harm them because their world is upside-down relative to ours. The *eguns* suggest both the structural similarity of biological and ritual kinship and the need to keep them apart. The *caboclos* spirits are ethnically hybrid, hard-drinking, and often animal-like beings who typically wear copious feathers and live in holes in the ground (*buracos*). They empower those who seek independence from the purist and hierarchical structures of the Quêto/Nagô nation. Such sources of disruption and insubordination are, if Douglas and I are correct, almost predictable adjuncts to the cult of purity in Bahian Candomblé.

Cleanings. People with all sorts of troubles and from all social classes seek the help of Candomblé priests, who might recommend recourse to other curative systems or prescribe rituals of personal fortification, cure, or retaliation. People whose lives are full of conflict and confusion are often believed to be afflicted by an Exú, while people with the appearance of mental problems are often believed to be afflicted by *eguns*. However, the problems that Candomblé priests endeavor to solve have all sorts of symptoms, and proper diagnosis usually depends on cowry-shell divination.

The typical rite of personal fortification is the *bori*, which, in West African Yorùbá, means "to worship the head." In Candomblé, it is understood to invoke the sea goddess Iemanjá to remove the heat from or "cool down the head" (*esfriar a cabeça*) and to feed the head, thus strengthening its *axé*. Another common sort of personal fortification is "to close the body" (*fechar o corpo*), that is, to seal out malevolent forces. It goes along with the preparation of sacred beads for the client to wear for self-protection. Because the beads gain their protective powers from the imported "soap from the Coast" in which they are washed and from the herbal infusion in which they are steeped, this comprehensive rite is known *pars pro toto* as the "washing of the beads" (*lavagem das contas*).

Indeed, one of the foremost and perennial themes in Candomblé healing,

initiatric, and funerary rites is cleansing the body of inappropriate contents and sealing it against their future penetration. This theme, much akin to the logic of purity in the apologetics of Martiniano and Aninha in the 1930s, has been elaborated to an extreme in Candomblé ritual, as contrasted with contemporary Òyó ritual practices, which, due to Òyó's distance from the Atlantic coast, are probably less directly influenced than Candomblé by the Lagosian Cultural Renaissance and certainly less so by the Brazilian trade diaspora.

For example, on the one hand, present-day Candomblé healing rites emphasize the removal and exclusion of the exogenous influences that are the source of affliction. On the other hand, present-day Yorùbá medicine emphasizes balance among the fluids and worms that normally occupy the body, their proper location in the body, and the pacification (rather than the exclusion) of the malign forces that might impinge on the body. For Yorùbá traditional healers (*oníségún*), these factors are the bases of personal health.⁴⁴ This logic of pacification is explicit in the term for a commonplace element of Yorùbá medicinal practice — *omi èrò*, literally "the water of softening." Of malign influences, Abimbola explains, "No, you don't drive things off. They would just come back. You soften or placate them so you can coexist."⁴⁵

By contrast, almost all Candomblé curative rites, which work by removing and sending away the evil influences (*influências*), are also described as forms of "cleansing" (*limpeza*). For example, since much insanity is blamed on attacks by the dead, it is often curable through "cleansing (away) the spirit of the dead" (*limpeza de egum*). This type of cleansing dramatizes the threat to ritual kinship posed by the implicitly rival and parallel principle of social obligation and authority: blood kinship. In this "cleansing," white foods are passed over the body of the client/patient (white being the color associated with the dead, with protection from the dead, and with mourning) and then deposited into an earthenware bowl (*alguidar*). A cow head — incidentally, another paradigmatic item of "African" commerce in the 1930s — is similarly passed over the body and deposited in the bowl. These items seem to be intended to feed the spirit of the dead and thus lure it away from the human patient's head.⁴⁶ The bowl of sacrificial items is then wrapped up and rushed off to a place where the evil influences it now contains can no longer touch the patient. Once deposited elsewhere, those influences might, however, escape and affect passersby, making "the street" a permanently dangerous place of contagion.

Diagnosed even more often than attacks by spirits of the dead are attacks by the messenger god Exú, who can be bribed into doing anyone's dirty work. The victim of such an attack by Exú must also be cleansed in such a way that draws Exú away from him or her, partly with a bribe of food.

As in other sacrifices and food offerings, food and restrictions on whom one can eat it with define the boundaries of important social groups. Moreover, the placement of shrines maps out a series of forces on whose exclusion the purity and survival of the temple depend. Exú is both the foremost guardian of those boundaries and the bearer of the filth that would penetrate those boundaries if his vigilance lapsed. Hence, Exú is enshrined near the exits of a temple and its grounds and is characterized by his willingness to eat any kind of food that any kind of Brazilian will eat (*tudo que a boca come*, say Candomblé priests). On the other hand, the gods that typically possess Bahian Candomblé initiates in trance, sit in the central, interior shrines of the temple, and are highly selective in their eating habits. They typically eat "African" ethnic foods, such as bean fritters (*acarajé*), cornstarch custard (*acaçá*), hominy (*ebô*), mashed yam (*ipetê*), ground okra (*amala* [sic]⁴⁷), and beans with eggs (*molocum*), as well as the heads and inner parts of animal victims (the same parts whose sale was monopolized by "African" butchers of Bahia in the 1930s). Moreover, each god and his or her devotees obey certain stringent food prohibitions, some of which characterize the whole community of initiates, such as the prohibition on the eating of eggplant (*beringela*), which is reserved for the spirits of the dead (*eguns*). Other food prohibitions characterize the subgroups of temple members who worship the same god, and each such group performs a specific role in the temple division of labor and authority.

Exú's vivid sexuality dramatizes another boundary and logical structure of Candomblé's sacred kinship. Unlike most *orixá* altars, Exú's are often anthropomorphic, featuring exaggerated, erect phalluses or conspicuous vulvas and breasts. One of the main metaphors of sexual excitement and promiscuity in Brazil is "heat," which also describes the main forms of pollution that an improperly managed Exú can dangerously convey into the sacred community. Exú represents an irony at the core of Candomblé ritual conventions, one similar to that posed by the *eguns*. Prohibitions on sexual activity (*resguardos*) are a defining element of ritual activity and of the purity that ritual activity requires and endeavors to increase. For example, priests and their novices are forbidden to have sex with each other, and a person

cannot be initiated by a lover or a spouse.⁴⁸ Even biological parenthood is anathema to "parenthood in saint," or initiatic parenthood. For example, a person cannot be initiated or taken care of spiritually by his or her biological parent.⁴⁹ It is partly for these reasons that some contemporary priests say that sex has nothing to do with (*tem nada haver com*) and has no place in their religion.

Symbolically, however, in a way beyond the conscious recognition of most priests, this religion (like most others) has a great deal to do with sex. In Candomblé, sex is a recurrent metaphor and metonym in ritual efforts to control what does and what does not penetrate the body of the temple, the religious community, and its members. For example, possession by and other forms of engagement with the god prohibit sexual activity during the surrounding period precisely because the devotee's and the temple's relationship with the god is, at its height, structured symbolically like an exclusive sexual relationship. Hence, for example, the initiate is called an *iaô*, which many worshippers know means "bride" in Yorùbá, and possession priests are said to be "mounted" (*montados*) by the god.⁵⁰ Among the various ways of ending an episode of possession by the god, reported Ruth Landes, is the washing of the priestess's "mouth and sexual organs."⁵¹ In a further example of this implicit metaphor, one purist Bahian priest of the Quêto/Nagô nation told me in 1987 that anyone who serves as a possession priest of more than one god is "promiscuous" (*promiscuo*).

Thus, Exú's eating habits and sexual character identify the nemesis of Candomblé's purity and institutional solidarity as well as the logic of its membership, internal hierarchy, and ritual protocol. An *axé* is a geographically dispersed community structured by the gods' symbolically sexual penetration of the priests, by ritual parenthood, and by an ethnically coded commensality. Worldly sexuality, worldly kinship, and indiscriminate eating are therefore generally kept at bay as a condition of the maintenance of a bounded diasporic community and a condition of social ascent within or among such communities. Moreover, "legitimate" African goods and African ethnic merchandise such as kola nuts, black soap, and cow heads are among the least dispensable elements in these procedures to cleanse away the "impurity" of sex and blood kinship.

Initiation. Initiation links people permanently to the *axé*. The novice is stripped of her old clothes, shaved, bathed repeatedly with "soap from the Coast" and herbal infusions, and subjected to other ritual cleansings (*lim-*

pezas). The head of the novice is surgically implanted with the substance of the god to which she is consecrated.⁵² Just as the novice's head is prepared, so are vessel altars containing the emblems of the gods that empower and protect her. Ultimately her primary god will possess her.

Both her head and the vessel altars will become instruments through which her relationship and the temple community's relationship to the gods will be regulated. These instruments must be handled with great respect and with special attention to rules concerning the "cleanliness" of the body. The initiate must obey rules concerning her menstrual cycle, sexual activity, and bathing. Her well-being and that of the temple community depend upon it.

Though the novice is called an *iaô*, cognate with the Yorùbá term *iyáwó* (meaning "bride [of the god]"), many Brazilians emphasize the metaphor of birth, also present in *Qyô* initiations, to understand the nature of the novice's experience. The novice is born into the *axé* and, for some time, must behave like a small child—for example, eating only with a spoon, eating only cool foods, sitting on the floor or on a bench rather than at a table, and so forth. During this period, the novice is regarded as highly vulnerable, her body "open" to dangerous influences, such as "heat" and other dangerous forces "from the street" and from the dead. She must avoid persons just arriving from the street and must wear armbands (*contra-eguns*) and necklaces (*mocãs*) to keep the spirits of the dead at bay. Much of the conduct she learns while in seclusion in the temple is designed to protect her from the penetration of bad "influences" and to maintain proper relations with the forces and entities that penetrate her body.

While the initiation and its purist principles are surely not reducible to their historical relationship to the commerce between Brazil and West Africa, the initiation relies extensively on that commerce. Initiation subsidizes and prepares personnel for a transnational industry in the production and exchange of drums, ceramics, wooden bowls, beadwork, metalwork, domestic animals, wild animal products, Brazilian and African plant products, African chalk, cloth from every continent, and, most importantly, stones. Among these products, whatever comes from Africa is the most expensive, the most highly prized, and the most symbolically charged. The initiation itself requires the purchase of hundreds of dollars worth of these goods, and ritual "obligations" (*obrigações*) entailing similar expenses and purchases will continue throughout the initiate's life.

A Sacred Geography. During a seclusion in the temple ranging from seven to ten days to six months, the new initiate will observe and assist in numerous rituals from which he or she might previously have been excluded. These rituals will take her to parts of the temple compound previously unseen. Overall, these perambulations diagram a normative structure of personhood and community. The resident novice will internalize a sacred geography.

Whereas Bastide has argued that the compounds of the "great houses" plot out a miniaturized geography of Africa,³³ it is more evident to me that they plot out a logic of boundaries, hierarchies, and antitheses that is reproduced in ritual protocols of cleansing and purification as well. In wealthy houses, each *orixá* or group of related *orixás* is given its own detached building, or "house," on temple grounds. But the first god that is given quarters apart from the main building is Exú. On account of his role in expelling and keeping out bad, exogenous influences, he is generally kept as far away as possible from the other *orixás* and as close as possible to the exit of the temple compound. The next priority for a separate dwelling is given to the goddess who governs the *eguns*, or the dead (*Iansã Igbalé*); the lords of sickness and death (*Omolú* and *Nanã Burukú*); the *caboclo* Indian spirits; and the spirits of deceased high-ranking priests of the house. These spirits personify the forces that a purist temple must keep at a distance in order to maintain its internal collective health. These include, it should be noted, the linked phenomena of sexuality, ancestors and biological kin, ethnic hybridity, and loyalty to persons outside the temple community (i.e., "the street").

The street is the most dangerous site in this sacred geography. Proximity to those who have just arrived from the "street" and have not yet bathed is thought to convey heat, which is a particularly dangerous influence for initiates and new initiates. They are taught to run away from such people, just as they are taught to avoid the heat of the sun and not to turn their backs to flames.³⁴ "Heat," "the street," and Exú appear to be interlocking representations of the complex forms of interaction that disrupt the purity and focused sociospiritual order of which the new initiate is being made a part.

In that regard, Exú and the spirits of the dead are not the only threatening spirits. Occasionally, a *caboclo* Indian spirit "mounts" an initiate. Unlike new *orixás*, *caboclos* are ill-disposed to following orders, and they have been known to defy head priests and to object to the initiate's choice of a temple

to join. One priestess told me that her father-in-saint (that is, her *pai-de-santo*, the priest who initiated her) therefore "suspended" (*suspendeu*) her *caboclo*—that is, he sent it away. That same father-in-saint has for decades resisted this priestess's efforts to establish her own independent house. After some years, it was the *caboclo* who came back and inspired the priestess to set out on her own, and it was the *caboclo* who taught her the necessary information that her father-in-saint had kept away. *Caboclos* embody little concern for cultural and racial purity, and even less for hierarchy. Indeed, the term *caboclo* normally refers to a person with Indian and European ancestry combined. *Caboclos* are both a source of impurity and an emblem of individual self-assertion. Their shrines, too, stand apart from the main temple building.

In sum, virtually all Jeje or Quêto/Nagô Candomblé rituals engineer the removal of bad influences (associated with Exú, with "the street," and with nonmembership) from the bodies of individual clients, friends, and members. Most Jeje or Quêto/Nagô Candomblé rituals also deposit and nourish in the heads of members the substance of the gods (associated with the "house" and with "Africa"), thus linking those members to the sacred temple lineage, or *axé*. The purist logic of hierarchy and institutional integrity is personified in Oxalá and given the highest priority. Candomblé's main public rituals display the wealth, antiquity, efficacy, and overpowering reality of the gods' presence in the community through spirit possession at the lavish festivals, where the priests don the attire of prosperous wives and royals while the gods don the bodies of the priests themselves. A range of symbolic themes unites Jeje and Nagô Candomblé with its contemporary *Ôyô* counterpart, particularly those related to vessels and hierarchy. However, contemporary Jeje-Nagô Candomblé and *Ôyô* religion diverge strikingly around the theme of purity—a theme virtually absent from *Ôyô* ritual rationales but pervasive in Candomblé talk and practice.

The Strangeness of "Purity": The Ôyô Comparison. Major ritual elaborations on the cleansing/purification theme and concentration on the worship of Oxalá, or *Obàtálá*, do not appear to come naturally—or by way of mere "survival"—to such an *Ôyô*-dominant priesthood as the *axé* of Casa Branca, or *Ilê Iyá Nasô*. So we are left with much the same riddle that sent me searching for the roots of the organizing discourse of "purity" in 1930s Bahia.³⁵ The ethnographic literature on Yorubaland in the mid- to late twentieth century

documents several socially central rites of collective ritual self-cleansing, chiefly in locales distant from Òyó cultural and political influence, such as Ilé-Iṣẹ and Ijẹbú.⁵⁶

For example, during Ilé-Iṣẹ's annual Èdì festival, or Olójó, citizens of the kingdom sweep out their houses and surroundings, loading the filth into a basket that will be borne to the river on someone's head, cleansing the city of the misfortunes that it has accumulated over the prior year. Thereafter, citizens of the town observe an early-evening curfew in order to avoid recontamination by these misfortunes. Townwide rituals of this sort have been identified in other Yorùbá cities as well.⁵⁷ But few have been documented with the specificities that I heard from one long-term resident of Ilé-Iṣẹ. Having observed the rite alongside close friends in Ifẹ's royal family, she tells me that the person chosen to carry the load is a Hausa residing in the neighboring and enemy Òyó ethnic town of Mòdákéké. This Hausa has allegedly been lured under the pretense that he is to be crowned King of Ifẹ, whereupon he is mesmerized by chanting Ifẹ priests and liberated only once he has dumped his headload into the river.⁵⁸

I cannot verify my informant's details as empirical observations of the actual conduct of this ceremony, and I doubt that she observed all of the phases of the ceremony that she reports. What I do not doubt is that the account she related to me is based firmly on what her princely friends in the Ifẹ think is supposed to happen, revealing a culturally and politically central ideology of cleansing and ethnic identity in Ilé-Iṣẹ. According to this social imaginary, the person who bears away the filth purged from the in-group is a member of a major rival political and commercial group in Nigeria—the Hausa—and is said to have been recruited from a residence in the headquart-ers of Ifẹ's local Yorùbá archenemy, the Òyó refugee town of Mòdákéké. For Ifẹ royals, ritual cleansing appears to have an ethnic-boundary referent of the sort that ritual purification displayed in 1930s Candomblé.

Ifẹ's elaborate and central development of this sort of ceremony or image of ritual cleansing is symbolically consistent with the importance the city gives to the worship of Qbàtálá, or Òrìṣà-Nlá (the Nigerian cognate of Oxalá), a god for whom cleanliness is a central iconographic and ritual leitmotif. Researchers in this non-Òyó cultural sphere regularly describe Qbàtálá as the highest ranking of all òrìṣà.⁵⁹ Yet it is only relatively recently that West African commentators have taken to describing Qbàtálá as the god of "purity" and describing these forms of collective cleansing as "purification."⁶⁰ Even

these evolving references in West Africa, and their attachment to the defilement of the ethnic other, have an explicable political history.

As Andrew Apter points out, Òyó expansionism inspired the development of two rival "ritual fields"—one "Òyó-centric," of which Šàngó is the ranking divine symbol, and the other "Ifẹ-centric," of which Qbàtálá and the òrìṣà *funfun* ("white òrìṣà") generally are emblematic. Particularly in politics conquered by Òyó, these "white gods" appear to be identified with the conquered kingdoms and to dignify the virtue of patience, humility, cool forbearance, and peaceful acquiescence. Thus, even in the wake of military and political domination by Òyó, the conquered claim continuing ritual powers under the divine imprimatur of Ilé-Iṣẹ, the mythical origin, by certain selectively cited accounts, of all Yorùbá people and gods.⁶¹

As Mary Douglas has argued, ideologies of purity and the mystical consequences of pollution often bolster social norms and claims that are difficult to enforce by any means other than the fear of those mystical consequences. Qbàtálá's protopurist principles seem to acknowledge that the conquered had few other means to protect the small hereditary privileges with which their defeat had left them.

Neither Qbàtálá/Oxalá nor the protopurist principles of his worship in Ifẹ's sphere of influence enjoy nearly the same reverence in the Òyó ritual sphere. As an incorporative and continually growing military empire, Òyó did not dearly value purity, perhaps because mixing was so profitable, just as it would become for the expansionist Dahomean kingdom.⁶² Even the priests of Òyó's tutelary god Šàngó celebrate his and other Òyó gods' foreign and Islamic roots.⁶³

The Òyó-Yorùbá religions that I researched in the late 1980s showed no signs of purism or any suggestions of even the mild forms of ethnic cleansing identified in Ifẹ. Any given òrìṣà vessel-altar in Igbòho, for example, tended to incorporate multiple gods of diverse ethnic origins, depending on the multiple lines of inheritance that had converged on the worshiper-owner of that altar. That is, the calabash representing Yemoja in a particular compound might include small calabashes and dishes for Ọṣun, Èṣù, Šàngó, Qbàtálá, Òrìṣà Oko, Ifá, and/or Ọgún, and any of those small containers might have come from a range of the owner's lineal and nonlineal kin.⁶⁴ One Yemoja calabash even contained a cowry-shell necklace that the owner said was brought from Mecca after a relative's return from the hajj. In the panegyrics (*òríkì*) recited in Igbòho, Šàngó is described as a non-Yorùbá, Nupe

Muslim; Ògún as a native of the distant, non-Òyó town of Irè; and Òrìṣà Oko as a native of the distant Òyó-ethnic town of Iràwò.

Thus, the Òyó òrìṣà priesthoods that I have researched develop themes of incorporativeness to a far higher degree than do their current Candomblé counterparts, for whom the idea of a Muslim òrìṣà or an altar for one god that includes multiple others within its vessel would be difficult to understand. Perhaps these West African Òyó priesthoods had practiced elaborate rites of purification in the past, but they no longer do so to the extent that the otherwise largely Òyó-inspired possession priesthoods of Candomblé and Cuban Ocha do.⁶⁵ The initiation into the Šàngó possession priesthood in Igbòho does appear to develop a comparatively subtle logic of detaching the initiate and from the ties of biological kinship, but the pursuit of uterine fertility is nowadays the main reason for which Òyó people appeal to the òrìṣà.⁶⁶ Moreover, most Yorùbá (and especially òrìṣà worshipers) seek to remain so close to the familial dead that they bury them in or near the home and often lounge on the graves. Many children are regarded as the incarnations of recently deceased grandparents.

On the other hand, the New World priesthoods' distancing of biological parenthood and representation of dead relatives (*eguns*) as a major source of pollution and misfortune is distinctive and structurally explicable. Membership in the New World òrìṣà priesthoods is nonhereditary and, far more than the Òyó Šàngó priesthood, has become *antih*ereditary—a form of forcible adoption in which the threat of continued illness and misfortune is the overwhelming motive to enter into a new and demanding adoptive family. And while Abimbola tells me that the Lagos-centered Ijò Ẹrúnmìlà, or Church of Ẹrúnmìlà, has of late endeavored to reduce its reliance on Christian models, I know of no movements in the Òyó region to expurgate non-Òyó, non-Yorùbá, or non-African influences from their òrìṣà religions. Brazilian Candomblé, on the other hand, is in the midst of a growing movement, led by Ilé Axé Opô Afonjá's Mãe Stella, to eliminate religious syncretism altogether.⁶⁷

It is no coincidence, then, that the first West African writers to introduce the extremist discourse of purity and purification into the exegesis of òrìṣà religion were non-Òyó and part of a metropolitan bourgeoisie in the shadow of politician Obafemi Awolòwò's mid-twentieth-century Yorùbá ethnic nationalism, in which the Yorùbá people were seen as actual or potential victims of Hausa and/or Igbo domination, and in which Yorùbá indi-

viduals or subgroups who allied with non-Yorùbá groups were persecuted. It is the advocates of this ethnic nationalism who most privilege Ilé-Iṣẹ as the Yorùbá cultural capital. On the other hand, across multiple generations of civilian politics in twentieth-century Nigeria, no Yorùbá subgroup has been more willing to ally itself with the Hausa than have the Òyó-Yorùbá.⁶⁸

Documenting the Change in Bahia

It would be difficult to prove that these themes of cleansing and purity in ritual and architecture were entirely absent from Candomblé before the rise of the "African" ethnic merchants or before Professor Martiniano and Mãe Aninha's specific rise to power in the early twentieth century. However, the comparison of Candomblé with Òyó ritual practice suggests that these themes are not mere "survivals" of an antecedent Òyó religious ideology. They were novel themes, selectively borrowed and/or amplified under particular political and economic circumstances. If they were not invented by Professor Martiniano and Mãe Aninha, then their selection, their accentuation, and their increasingly central place in the Candomblé ritual complex certainly complemented Martiniano and Aninha's influential effort to reform their Afro-Brazilian religion. Martiniano and Aninha's reform efforts clearly accelerated the rise and spread of these ritual themes.

The preexistence of some of these themes in Bahia gave credibility to their project. For example, the Washing of [the Church of] Our Lord of Bonfim (*Lavagem do Nosso Senhor do Bonfim*) was a major annual event for Afro-Bahians by the 1890s. That a rite of cleansing—the actual scrubbing down of the church—became the focus of late-nineteenth-century Bahian Catholicism suggests the influence of motives that included but went beyond Catholicism, such as the theme of washing in Oxalá's mythology. It was no secret that many of them regarded Jesus Christ, to whom the church was consecrated, as the Christian counterpart of Oxalá/Obatalá.⁶⁹ This fact might be one reason for which Oxalá eventually came to be regarded by all as the highest of all the Brazilian Nagô gods. However, this consensus did not come quickly or automatically. Even in the late 1930s, there was great diversity among the temples. "In some *seitas* [or temples] Oxalá is considered the most important of the deities; in others, Xango; and, in still others, Omolu," Pierson reports.⁷⁰

Over the subsequent decades, Oxalá came to be called the most impor-

tant, first, or highest of the Candomblé deities, and only then did he come to be associated expressly with purity. Oxalá's precipitous rise within the Candomblé and his symbolic association with purity appear uniquely indebted to the efforts of Professor Martiniano and Mãe Aninha, which are in turn rooted in the Lagosian Cultural Renaissance. We find evidence in the fact that the period of Martiniano's and Aninha's greatest leadership in Candomblé and of their most highly publicized endorsements of racial and cultic purity—the 1930s—immediately preceded a proliferation in ethnographers' descriptions of rites of purification in Candomblé. In the subsequent decades, Oxalá's supremacy quickly became a point of widespread agreement, and numerous leje and Quêto/Nagô houses now open the ritual calendar with rites of purification named specifically after those in Aninha's Opô Afonjá.

The headquarters of Bahian African purism, the Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá temple, was founded under the authority of Brazil's version of the Òyó imperial god Šangô, known as Xangô; indeed, he is still the tutelary god of the house. But, by Aninha's hand, Oxalá became the object of the first and most elaborate series of festivals in the annual ritual calendar. Opô Afonjá appears to have reinterpreted the year-opening New Yam ceremony (*o Inhamê Novo*) of the older temples in Iyá Nasô's *axé* in new terms emphasizing the role of Oxalá, his struggle to keep clean while exiled from his homeland, and, for the first time, his emblematic status as a god of "purity" and "purification." On the one hand, the older Gantois temple had called the year-opening ceremony the New Yam, highlighting Oxalá's agricultural significance, and Raymundo Nina Rodrigues described Oxalá as governing the "reproductive potency of nature."⁷¹ an understanding of the god that is close to what I have heard expressed in Igbôho—that is, that Òrìṣà-Ńlá is a god of uterine gestation. Before 1923, Manuel Querino described the New Yam in Gantois without describing its purpose in terms of purification, though he explained a phase of the rite in which the head priestess taps each participant several times with a switch as a form of penitence for the "bad actions" of the previous year.⁷²

In the 1930s, at the height of Mãe Aninha's and Professor Martiniano's influence on Candomblé and on the discourses about it, Edison Carneiro became the first scholar to document a ceremony called the Water of Oxalá (*Água de Oxalá*) among the temples of Casa Branca's *axé*, describing it explicitly and repeatedly as a "rite of purification" (*rito de purificação*) and

noting that not all temples performed such a rite in the name of Oxalá.⁷³ Nor does it appear to have been the first rite of the ritual calendar in all of the temples that performed it. But with explicit reference to Mãe Aninha, to her Opô Afonjá temple, and to another of the "great" Quêto/Nagô houses (Engenho Velho), Carneiro became the first ethnographer to integrate a whole range of Candomblé rites under the symbolic theme of "purification." This exegesis, with its unprecedented focus on "purification," followed and was almost certainly indebted to Carneiro's lengthy intellectual and political association with both Mãe Aninha and Professor Martiniano. In his 1958 publication, based primarily on research in the Opô Afonjá temple, Roger Bastide gives nearly exclusive emphasis to the function of the Water of Oxalá ceremony to "purify" Oxalá's altar and the temple community.⁷⁴

Like Carneiro, Bastide infers that such purification is an expiation of sin (*pecado*). If perhaps some Candomblé members offered this explanation between the 1910s and the 1950s, hardly any do so now. "Sin" is an idea with hardly any force in current Candomblé discourses about proper ritual and social conduct. In the 1980s and 1990s, Candomblé members almost uniformly describe Oxalá as the god "of peace and purity" (*da paz e da pureza*). Precisely what the community is being metaphorically purified of during the current "Waters of Oxalá" (*Águas de Oxalá*) ceremony remains open to priestly and scholarly interpretation. However, the simultaneous crescendo of ideas about ritual, ethnic, and racial purity in the 1930s suggests a gestalt whose unity scholars have persistently overlooked and priests have apparently come to take for granted.

Today at Mãe Stella's Opô Afonjá temple, the weekly *Amalá de Xangô* (where the tutelary god of the temple is feted with his favorite dish, okra) is the most frequent occasion of communitywide gatherings, but no member of the community is expected to miss the annual Waters of Oxalá ceremony, where the sacred stones of Oxalá are washed. Moreover, it is the most participatory of all the rituals in the temple, with every officer, initiate, and affiliate of the temple ideally carrying sacred water for use in the ritual washing. Every participant has prepared for the rite through personal self-cleansing with water, herbs, "soap from the Coast," and balls of moistened cassava meal passed over the body before being tossed out the front gate of the temple grounds. To the participant's head is bound one of the few commodities for which there exists no Brazilian-grown substitute—the kola nut, or *obi*. At Opô Afonjá, this rite has been performed since at least

1934, when novel purist discourses about "African" ethnic identity had come into full evidence, with associates of Opô Afonjá taking the lead in articulating them.⁷⁵

Three changes have grown increasingly clear in the "great" *axé* of Casa Branca, Gantois, and Opô Afonjá and in the broader Quêto/Nagô nation of which this *axé* is the virtually undisputed and clearly the most imitated leader. First, the Waters of Oxalá ceremony is now almost universally performed in that nation. Second, the name New Yam has fully given way to the name apparently established at the Opô Afonjá temple, suggesting the leadership of Opô Afonjá in this gradual transformation. Third, with Opô Afonjá in the lead, virtually the entire Candomblé community has reached a new consensus about the centrality of purification among the functions of the Waters of Oxalá ceremony. Its former associations with agricultural and sexual fecundity have been forgotten. And these changes clearly reflect the ideological lead provided by Opô Afonjá and its merchant allies in the 1930s.

Conclusion

This ethnographically inspired historical revision is directed against not only Melville J. Herskovits's and others' vision of African diasporic religion as a "survival" of the past but also against a new social-constructionist ethnography that effaces the black interests and strategies behind African purism. In the analysis of Afro-Brazilian religions, social constructionists such as Roberto Motta and Beatriz Góis Dantas, have credited the Brazilian nation-state and its light-skinned bourgeoisie with much that a now little-known African merchant diaspora in fact planted on Brazilian soil. Of course, these analysts are correct to look for the forms of economic class interest and interaction that shape religions and other collective representations, but it is a mistake to overlook past forms of economic class diversity that endure in supra-economic ways and continue to shape the present distribution of social power. Nor should the reality of grave racial oppression in Brazil and the Afro-Atlantic world generally lead us to overlook the powerful influence of some blacks on the national cultures of post-slavocratic states.

Leaders of the Quêto/Nagô diaspora selected among and magnified Qyô and Ifê ritual precedents and Lagosian political discourses in a way that captured the imaginations of the "African" ethnic group in 1930s Bahia. Their political and commercial discourses of purity appear to have amplified and

recast the meaning of antecedent ritual themes, which, once recast, came to dominate an ever widening circle of Candomblé temples nationwide.

Mãe Aninha and Professor Martiniano might not have been the first in this transatlantic Yorubá ritual complex to conduct rites of cleansing, but their tremendous influence on Candomblé rested on their novel use of the concept of African purity as the linchpin uniting the Qyô cult of possession, a non-Qyô cult of cleansing, the nationalist discourses of the Lagosian Cultural Renaissance, the social conditions of dispersion, and the ethnic priorities of a diasporic commercial class in Bahia. Personified by Oxalá, the logic of purity has been increasingly central and increasingly ritualized in Candomblé since the 1930s. The prestige, media coverage, and protection from police persecution that Aninha, Martiniano, and their friends secured for the purist temples have, since then, guaranteed the expanding prestige of the purity principle.

At the same time, and for the same reasons, the opposite principle holds power in Candomblé. The impurity of sexuality is ritualized and personified in Exú, that of blood kinship in the spirits of the dead (*eguns*), and that of equality and independence in the *caboclo* Indian spirits. It is not so much that these forces are categorically condemned as morally bad. Rather, the integrity and hierarchical functioning of the Quêto/Nagô temple and its *axé* depend on continual efforts to keep those forces at the margins of the ritual space and time.⁷⁶

Logics of purity and purification nourished by mercantile diasporas can long outlast the importance of overseas trade. For example, the earlier decline of West African-Cuban trade has required the Lucumí nation to endorse a whole range of substitutions for "authentic" African imports, such as coconuts (Cuban Lucumí, *obi*) for kola nuts (Yorubá, *obi*) and ground eggshell (Spanish, *cascarilla*) for African chalk (Yorubá, *efun*). Nonetheless, Lucumí ritual is rich in cleansing procedures, called *limpiezas* (cleansings), or *despojos* (acts of stripping away), and emphasizes washing (as in *santo lavado*, or "washed saint"). Since the 1960s, the participation of black North Americans and West African immigrants in Lucumí religion has been fertile ground for new movements advocating African racial, religious, and cultural purism.⁷⁷ It is possible that an antecedent vocabulary and ideology of "cleansing" in Cuban Lucumí religion gave ammunition to the antisyncretic "re-Africanization" movement and facilitated its rapid expansion in Latino *oricha*-worshipping communities in the United States.

Purism stands among numerous other qualities of Candomblé that reflect the dispersion and commercial dispositions of Bahia's free "Africans." For example, the extraordinary elaborations of Candomblé's sacred cuisine and priestly attire clearly reflect the importance of commercial food preparation and dressmaking among the chief professions of the "African" ethnic community of the early twentieth century. Moreover, the extensive use of a sacred languages, of literacy, of books, of notebooks, of newspapers, of libraries, and of museums not only is highly visible in both Candomblé and Cuban Ocha but is explicable in terms of the way Brazilian and Cuban worshippers imagine their relationship to a distant place of origin.⁷⁸ This quality of African diasporic religion presents an obvious parallel to the role of commemoration, sacred language, and literacy in the Jewish diaspora.

I do not mean to suggest that the Lagosian Cultural Renaissance and the social configuration of this West African trade diaspora are the only possible origins of the rites and vocabulary of purification. Both Roman Catholicism and Brazilian Kadercism are rich in raw materials for purist rites and vocabulary. Rather, I am suggesting that the history and sociology of the "African" ethnic community in Bahia, as well as the strategic priorities of Professor Martiniano and Mãe Aninha (not to mention their transatlantic merchant contemporaries Lourenço Cardoso, Maximiliano Alakija, Joaquim Devodé Branco, and Felisberto Sowzer, and Aninha's distant but nonetheless purist priestly successor Mãe Stella), do a great deal to explain which of the locally available ritual concepts and terms were integrated into and most elaborated in post-1930s Candomblé and which have been neglected or suppressed.

Candomblé ritual and its logic of purity are not merely instrumental means to the efficiency and profitability of a transatlantic trade network. The profits of this trade are but part of a larger struggle among classes, by which I mean sets of people bound by at least an implicit consciousness of their shared interests. The "Africans" of Bahia in the 1930s, with the Jeje and Nagô temples at their symbolic core, were one such class: membership in which was structured not only by ties to a particular African locale but by race, gender, economic status, profession, and particular types of access to the power brokers of the Euro-Atlantic world—journalists, anthropologists, generals, and politicians. These interests are not reducible to earnings or type of relationship to the means of production.

As Pierre Bourdieu points out, economic *and* cultural capital "are simul-

taneously instruments of power and stakes in the struggle for power."⁷⁹ The stakes are not only earnings but esteem and control over the means of self-definition among various broader collectivities, including the Candomblé community, the Brazilian nation, the Yorubá Atlantic world, and the African diaspora as a whole. Candomblé ritual practice and politics as we know them today are products of such a struggle, and not of mere "survival."

"Purity" was a particularly suitable idiom for Candomblé's merchant leadership to consolidate its interests at the center of Bahia's "African" ethnic community. The influence of this transnational black merchant class probably reached its height in the 1930s, but neither Candomblé nor the Brazilian nation-state has been the same since then, for this now highly respected ritual idiom of individual and collective selfhood remains not only profitable to the providers of "purely African" ritual services but also convincing to people in need of healing and respect. However, it was first under the direct influence of the early-twentieth-century black merchant class that Candomblé became a major emblem of Northeastern regional identity and, ultimately, of Brazilian national identity as a whole.

It is just as important, however, that not everyone is agreed about the virtue of African purity as a standard of ritual practice and collective identity in Brazil. Many priests hold permanent or situational commitments to the hybrid *caboclo* Indian spirits and invest greater or lesser credence in the Catholic saints. Nor is there unanimity around the precise meaning and indices of African purity.⁸⁰ For example, do the imported African tie-dyes worn by Italian-ethnic Candomblé priests in São Paulo outrank the time-honored *baiana* skirts that remain de rigueur even in Bahia's most African purist temples? African purity, in the end, is less a consensual norm of belief and cooperative action than a shared symbolic meta-logic available for use in cooperative or competitive projects. It is used as easily to marginalize or demean fellow worshippers and temples as to include or uplift them. Such meta-logics are in the nature of diasporas and of culture generally.

I have argued elsewhere that such transnational communities and the nation-state have evolved in dialogue with each other.⁸¹ Pace Arjun Appadurai, I do not believe that transnational communities and their proliferation herald the demise of the nation-state.⁸² Nor do I believe, pace Benedict Anderson, that the nation-state succeeded and replaced territorial religious communities as the preeminent imagination of the collective self.⁸³ Rather, transnational religious communities like the Jeje and the

Quêto/Nagô/Yorùbá nations have evolved in a mutually constituting dialogue with nation-states like Brazil, Cuba, Togo, Benin, and Nigeria. These transatlantic nations and these nation-states have continually constituted and subsidized each other. Brazil and Cuba have helped constitute and subsidize the transatlantic nations in order to recruit and organize nineteenth-century slave labor, in order to advance their twentieth-century international commercial and diplomatic interests, and in order to assert, over nearly two centuries, new and interested folkloric visions of the territorial nation's character. The transatlantic Nagô and Jeje nations played founding roles in the Nigerian, Beninese, and Togolese nation-states: they constituted the first "indigenous" bourgeoisies, articulated the first cultural nationalisms, and contributed disproportionately to the postindependence ruling and administrative classes of all three West African states. More recently, Nigeria and Benin have sponsored and publicized the Yorùbá and Jeje/Fòn diasporas as means of extending their influence abroad and encouraging tourism.

Pace Ernest Gellner and Anderson, the nation-state does not rely on the real homogenization of its citizenry, or on the imaginary homogenization of that citizenry's experience.⁸⁴ Rather, as Wallerstein has observed, ethnic groups within the nation-state play a central role in producing and reproducing the diverse classes and occupational groups that the nation-state is assumed to comprise, inevitably and integrally.⁸⁵ The nation-state of nation-states, the United States, is self-consciously made up of multiple, living diasporas—Irish, Italian, Jewish, African, Anglo-Saxon, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Mexican, Salvadorean, African, Indo-Pakistani, and so forth. As interest groups and conduits of influence, they are the cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy, particularly vis-à-vis the choice and construction of allies, clients, and satellites. They constitute major voting blocs in U.S. electoral politics. They have long been training grounds for diverse labor niches in the U.S. economy. Despite periodic eruptions of popular xenophobia, numerous official institutions of the nation-state officially document, commemorate, celebrate, and congratulate these diasporas, making them constantly available as strategically alternative identities. Ethnic groups in the United States are key units of collective bargaining, as diverse groups compete for their share of the profits from the productivity of the nation-state. Diasporas typically become inimical to the nation-states not when they articulate too much with their homelands but when their interests contradict those of more power-

ful diasporas within the nation-state. Hence, it is not diasporas in general but particular diasporas that periodically bear the suspicion of hostility to or alienness from the nation-state.

Naturally, those who stand to make the greatest symbolic, electoral, and material profits from a united ethnic bloc or market would also be the most likely to subsidize cultural activities that appear to give primordial and transcendent existence to these ethnic groups. It comes as no surprise, under conditions of dispersion, that religious activities are preeminent among these cultural activities—in synagogues, in ethnically based churches, on Thanksgiving, in St. Patrick's Day parades and neighborhood-based saint day processions, at weddings, funerals, circumcisions, and naming ceremonies, on the Mexican American *Día de los Muertos*, during Caribbean Latino Spiritist sessions and Ocha *tambores*, and amid the recent Yorùbá revivalism of African Americans.

The error in Gellner's, Anderson's, and Appadurai's assessments of the relationship among the nation-state, religion, and transnational communities lies in their shared teleological convictions. Their analyses rely on predictions about the direction of change in the relationship rather than on a hard-nosed examination of the ongoing relationship among them, however moribund it may appear in the *longue durée*. I, for one, do not believe that we will see any end to this mutually constituting relationship for some time to come.

Notes

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1. Beatriz Góis Dantas, *Vovô Nagô e Papai Branco: Usos e Abusos da África no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro, 1988); Roberto Motta, "L'Invention de l'Afrique dans le Candomblé du Brésil," *Stória, antropologia, e scienze del linguaggio* 9.2-3 (1994): 65-85.
2. See J. Lorand Matory, "The English Professors of Brazil: On the Diasporic Roots of the Yorùbá Nation," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41.1 (1999): 72-103; J. Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé* (Princeton, forthcoming).
3. See Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion*. These travelers identified the Brazilian Nagô ethnic

- groups as the overseas equivalent of the West African Yorùbá ethnic group. Today, the Nagô ethnic group and religious denomination in Brazil is more often called Quêto. Brazilianist scholars and priests of the purist temples still regard Nagô, Quêto, and Yorùbá as interchangeable terms.
- 4 See Pierre Verger, *Orixás: Deuses Iorubás na África e no Novo Mundo* (Salvador, Brazil, 1981), 260–62.
 - 5 See Matory, "English Professors of Brazil."
 - 6 See *ibid.*
 - 7 See J. Lorand Matory, "Jeje: Repensando nações e transnacionalismo," *Mana* 5.1 (1999): 57–80; Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion*.
 - 8 For a discussion of the "dialogue" metaphor in African diaspora studies, see J. Lorand Matory, "The 'New World' Surrounds an Ocean: On the Live Dialogue between African and African-American Cultures," in *Afro-Atlantic Dialogues: Anthropology in the Diaspora*, ed. Kevin Yelvington (Santa Fe, NM, forthcoming).
 - 9 See Matory, "English Professors of Brazil."
 - 10 See Matory, "Jeje."
 - 11 Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London, 1984), 92.
 - 12 See also Joel Kotkin, *Tribes* (New York, 1993), 36–38; Wang Gungwu, *China and the Chinese Overseas* (Singapore, 1992), 181–216; and Agehananda Bharati, *The Asians in East Africa* (Chicago, 1972).
 - 13 See Melville J. Herskovits, "Some Economic Aspects of the Afro-Bahian Candomblé," in *The New World Negro*, ed. Frances J. Herskovits (Bloomington, IN, 1966), 249.
 - 14 Donald Pierson, "Negroes in Brazil" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1942), 293–94; Deostóredes dos Santos, *Axé Opô Afonjá* (Rio de Janeiro, 1962), 20.
 - 15 While Landes understands the designation of certain people as Africans to mean simply that they are blacks without wealth or education, the people chosen by her Bahian guide to represent this ethnic and class category were the retail merchants of Salvador's "Lower City," whose ancestors and whose characteristic wares were "from the west coast of Africa" (*City of Women* [New York, 1947], 16–17).
 - 16 Vivaldo da Costa Lima, "O Candomblé da Bahia na década de 30," in *Cartas de Edison Carneiro a Artur Ramos*, ed. Waldir Freitas Oliveira and Vivaldo da Costa Lima (São Paulo, 1987), 52.
 - 17 Irene Topázio Sowzer dos Santos, personal communication with the author, January 3, 1996.
 - 18 Herskovits, "Some Economic Aspects of the Afro-Bahian Candomblé," 249.
 - 19 *Ibid.*, 250–51. On the distinctive commercial value of African cuisine in the 1930s and its association with the worship of Candomblé's gods, see Landes, *City of Women*, 92–94. For descriptions of the foods that were classified as purely African in the early twentieth century, many of which are still served both by street vendors to the public and by Candomblé priests to the gods, see Manuel Querino, "A arte culinária na Bahia" (1928), in *Costumes Africanos no Brasil*, ed. Thales de Azevedo (Recife, Brazil, 1988), 138–41. It should be noted that Querino employed and apparently quoted the emic parlance of the "typical" and the "pure" well before the time that Motta and Dantas allege light-skinned Brazilian elites imposed it as a standard of Candomblé and Xangô religious ideology.
 - 20 See Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion*.
 - 21 See, for example, Pierson, "Negroes in Brazil," 284, 292, 302.
 - 22 Edison Carneiro, *Candomblés da Bahia* (Rio de Janeiro, 1986), 56.
 - 23 See Roger Bastide, *O Candomblé da Bahia* (São Paulo, 1961), 65–66; and Vivaldo da Costa Lima, "A Família-de-santo nos Candomblés Jeje-Nagôs da Bahia" (Master's thesis, Federal University of Bahia, 1977), 24–25. The title of Oyó's head priest of Šangô in the current Yorùbá orthography is "Iyá Násô." Note also that Bastide reports the oral history that Iyá Násô was the West African-born daughter of a Bahian returned to West Africa, which would suggest that a culturally Brazilianized woman occupied the highest ranks of the Oyó priesthood in the early nineteenth century or, at least, was an active and accomplished student of Oyó's Šangô priesthood between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (*The African Religions of Brazil*, trans. Helen Sebba [Baltimore, MD, 1978], 165). Given more substantial evidence, I would like to explore how this transnational priestess might have influenced the religion ancestral to the one I studied in Igboho in 1988 and 1989, and therefore the one that is presented in the following pages as a comparison case.
 - 24 Santos, *Axé Opô Afonjá*, 17.
 - 25 Anthropologists like Abner Cohen distinguish between ethnic "groups," which are largely self-defined and corporate in their interests or conduct, and ethnic "categories," which are lumped together and named chiefly by others (*Custom and Politics in Urban Africa* [Berkeley, 1969]).
 - 26 Raymundo Nina Rodrigues, *O animismo fetichista dos negros bahianos* (Rio de Janeiro, 1935), 20.
 - 27 On the matter of Aninha's influence on officers of the federal government, see Matory, "Candomblé's New-West Nation: Brazil," and Costa Lima, "O Candomblé da Bahia," 61.
 - 28 Carneiro, *Candomblés da Bahia*, 52; Jocêlio Teles dos Santos, *O dono da terra: O caboclo nos candomblés da Bahia* (Salvador, Brazil, 1995), 17–19.
 - 29 See J. Lorand Matory, *Sex and the Empire That Is No More: Gender and the Politics of Metaphor in Oyô Yorùbá Religion* (Minneapolis, MN, 1994); Andrew Apter, *Black Critics and Kings* (Chicago, 1992); and J. Lorand Matory, "Vessels of Power: The Dialectical Symbolism of Power in Yorùbá Religion and Polity" (Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1986).
 - 30 Thus, numerous Quêto/Nagô temples are named in Yorùbá according to the following formula: "Dwelling of the *axé* of [founding priest or tutelary god]." For example, Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá means "The dwelling of the *axé* of the staff of Afonjá" (an avatar of the thunder god Xangô).
 - 31 This example of the political uses of initiation refers chiefly to the Šangô priesthood since the late-eighteenth-century reign of King Abiòdun (see Matory, *Sex and the Empire That Is No More*, 8–13). It is intended not to summarize the full range of motives for initiation throughout Oyó's precolonial realm but to highlight the motives of the particular priesthood that probably trained the founders of the Casa Branca temple.
 - 32 Matory, *Sex and the Empire That Is No More*, 141–69.
 - 33 I employ this term in scare-quotes because, as my friend Pai Amilton often reminds me, size and power are not necessarily preconditions of greatness.
 - 34 Landes, *City of Women*, 28.
 - 35 Pierson, "Negroes in Brazil," 293.

- 36 Martiniano published in a Bahian newspaper his own account of the new offices that he introduced into the bureaucracy of the Ilé Axé Opô Afonjá temple under the rule of Mãe Aninha. He established the role of the "Twelve Ministers of Xangô" based upon its precedent in the Oyô kingdom, about which Martiniano learned during his eleven-year sojourn in Lagos. Since he had never traveled to the inland kingdom of Oyô, his innovation, or "revival," must have been based on what he had read or heard along the Bahian-Lagosian migratory axis. See "Os ministros de Xangô," *Estado da Bahia*, May 5, 1937. Martiniano's account of the history and role of the *mangbas* (or *mgbas*, in modern Yorùbá orthography) is idiosyncratic, undocumented elsewhere in the ethnographic and historical literatures on the Oyô palace and priesthoods. Martiniano's emphasis on the number twelve and the division of the *mgbas* nonpossession priests into those of the left and of the right do, however, mark its debt to another idiosyncratic account that we know at least one Afro-Brazilian voyager had taken to Bahia and shared with Martiniano's student Raymundo Nina Rodrigues. That account is from A. B. Ellis's *The Yorùbá-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (Chicago, 1964), which reports, "the Magba, or chief priest of Shango, has twelve assistants, who are termed, in order of authority, right-hand (Oton), left-hand (Osin), third, fourth, fifth, and so on" (97). Moreover, the temple's ultimate use of the term *obá* (cognate with the Yorùbá term *oba*, for "monarch") is strikingly at odds with any conceivable precedent in Oyô.
- 37 The influence of Martiniano's innovations endures far and wide. "To this day," says Roberto Motta, some ritual songs (*toadas*) in the Xangô religion of Pernambuco "are still attributed to Bonfim" (personal communication with the author, November 8, 1996; also Pierson, "Negroes in Brazil," 295).
- 38 Herskovits, "Some Economic Aspects of the Afro-Bahian Candomblé," 249.
- 39 Pierre Verger, *Trade Relations between the Bight of Benin and Bahia from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Evelyn Crawford (Ibadan, Nigeria, 1976), 553–56; Antônio Olinto, *Brasileiros na África*, 2d ed. (São Paulo, 1980), 295; Anani Dzidzienyo, "The African Connection and the Afro-Brazilian Condition," in *Race, Class, and Power in Brazil*, ed. Pierre-Michel Fontaine (Los Angeles, 1985), 135–53.
- 40 See, for example, Maria Stella de Azevedo Santos, *Meu tempo e agora* (São Paulo, 1993), 108. Santera Marta Vega, director of the Caribbean Cultural Center in New York City, and babalao Antonio Castañeda Márquez, president of the Yorùbá Cultural Association of Cuba, have also questioned the itinerant Nigerians' claims to superior religious knowledge and Abimbola's efforts to establish Ifé's centrality in the international organization of the *orisha*-priesthood.
- 41 See Reginaldo Prandi, *Os Candomblés de São Paulo* (São Paulo, 1991). In the United States, both Adefunmi I of Oyotunji, South Carolina, and significant numbers of black and white Americans have followed variants of this pattern. New World priests whose power had not been so well established in the Brazilian, Cuban, Puerto Rican, and other U.S. *orisha*-worshipping communities have been willing to place purity squarely above American genealogical seniority. Like Mãe Aninha in the 1930s, they have tried to jump to the head of the queue of American priestly leadership by going to Africa for initiation or by seeking instruction directly from itinerant Nigerian priests. Among contemporary Brazilian priests, the most famous exemplar of this phenomenon is Juana Elbein dos Santos, who
- is said to have been initiated in the worship of the god Odiùdà (now the foremost emblem of bourgeois nationalism among West African Yorubas) in West Africa. She is the author of *Os Nágô e a morte* (Petrópolis, Brazil, 1976), an African purist interpretation of Quêto/Nagô religion that is found on the bookshelves of many Candomblé priests.
- 42 Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion*.
- 43 Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 159–79.
- 44 This summary of Yorùbá pathophysiology is based primarily on the most thorough study yet conducted among professional *onifégún*. Anthony D. Buckley's *Yorùbá Medicine* (New York, 1997) is based on his field research among the Oyô-ethnic healers of Ibadan, Nigeria.
- 45 Wande Abimbola, personal communication with the author, August 10, 1999.
- 46 In the *limpeza de egum* I have observed, one sacrificial item is not food: twine is used to wrap up the patient, and is then cut off to remove the encumbrances placed in the patient's life by the *egun*.
- 47 In Nigerian Yorùbá, *amálá* is the term for rehydrated yam or plantain flour, which is typically eaten with puréed okra and a meat sauce.
- 48 Some observers note that these prohibitions have declined in effectiveness over time and, understandably, that they apply more often to heterosexual than to homosexual relations. After all, being nonprocreative, homosexual relations usurp the symbolic grounds of Candomblé's initiatic reproduction to a lesser degree.
- 49 While I know of one "great house" where succession to the highest office has, to date, remained within the same biological family, the most highly purist temple, Opô Afonjá, appears to forbid hereditary succession. The other "great houses" also appear remarkably free of hereditary succession. In principle, successors are always chosen based upon divination by a neutral party.
- 50 While the term *mount* was used for possession in all nations of Candomblé during the 1930s, it is now avoided in the "great" Quêto/Nagô temples, as they attempt to distinguish themselves from less "purely African" nations (see J. Lorand Matory, "Homens Montado: homossexualidade e simbolismo da possessão nas religiões afro-brasileiras," in *Escravidão e Invenção da Liberdade*, ed. João José Reis (São Paulo, 1988), 215–31; and "Sex, Syncretism, and Secrecy in the Yorùbá-Atlantic World," in *Orisa Devotion As a World Religion*, ed. Jacob K. Olupona and Terry Rey (unpublished manuscript).
- 51 Landes, *City of Women*. Similarly, a Lebanese-American initiate of Ocha chided me in 1984 for touching his head, the portal of the *oricha's* entry. In order to make the reason for his objection maximally clear, he asked rhetorically, "You wouldn't touch a woman's private parts, would you?"
- 52 Novices, like priests, can be male or female. I use the feminine pronoun here for ease of exposition.
- 53 Bastide, *O Candomblé da Bahia*, 82–83, and *African Religions of Brazil*, 247–48.
- 54 Gisèle Binon Cossard, *Contribution à l'étude des Candomblés au Brésil: le Candomblé Angola* (Doctorat de troisième cycle, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines, Paris, 1970).
- 55 Matory, "English Professors of Brazil."
- 56 J. Omofade Awolalu, *Yorùbá Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites* (London, 1979), 152–55, 179.
- 57 See *ibid.*, 179–80.
- 58 Olabisi Odeinde, personal communication with the author, August 23, 1999.

- 59 Ellis, *Yorùbá-Speaking Peoples*, 38–39; M. A. Fabunmi, *Ifẹ Shrines* (Ifẹ, Nigeria, 1969), 6; Awolalu, *Yorùbá Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 21; E. Bolaji Idowu, *Odùmare: God in Yorùbá Belief* (New York, 1963), 71.
- 60 Idowu, *Odùmare*, 73; Fabunmi, *Ifẹ Shrines*, 6.
- 61 Apter, *Black Critics and Kings*, 27–31, 231 n. 29.
- 62 Olabiyi Yai, "From Vodun to Mawu: Monotheism and History in the Fon Cultural Area," *SAPINA Newsletter* 4.2–3 (1992): 10–29; Suzanne Blier, *African Vodun* (Chicago, 1995), 78.
- 63 Matory, *Sex and the Empire That Is No More*, 129–30, 233.
- 64 *Ibid.*, 155–61.
- 65 *Ibid.*, 226–28. The calabash altar of Yemoja's head priestess and several others in Igbo were, however, kept scrupulously clean, and that head priestess—the late Madam Adewoyin—praised the goddess by a term that can mean "clean" or "holy" (*ó mọ*). In principle, these calabash altars were washed in herbal infusions and rechalked annually, on the occasion of the annual festival. Nonetheless, ritual themes of cleansing are obscure and periodic in Igboho compared to their incidence in Brazilian Candomblé and Cuban Ocha. Nor, in Igboho, are these themes associated with ethnic chauvinism or exclusivism.
- 66 *Ibid.*, 193–98.
- 67 Ocha, or Lucumí religion, is the site of a similar struggle in the United States. See J. Lorand Matory, "An African Empire in America: The Rise of Yorùbá Religion in the United States," in *Religion outside the Institutions*, ed. Lynn Davidman and Karen McCarthy Brown (Princeton, NJ, forthcoming).
- 68 Matory, *Sex and the Empire That Is No More*, 70–73. Depending on which political faction one studies from the mid-nineteenth century onward, the royalist, *Ọyọ*-biased *Ẹ̀ṣàngó* might seem the most important or culturally emblematic deity of the Yorùbá people. Or it might be one of a range of Ifẹ-biased gods favored by the metropolitan Yorùbá bourgeoisie: the Ifẹ-centered *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*, god of the highly literary Ifẹ divination priesthood and favorite of the Lagosian Cultural Renaissance; *Oduduwa*, mythical founder of Ifẹ-Ifẹ and favorite of Awolowo and his political followers; or *Ọ̀batalá*, a quasi-Christlike god headquartered at Ifẹ and an apparent favorite of apologists for Yorùbá religion in the twentieth-century mission churches, such as Idowu and Awolalu. Local bourgeoisies resisting the dominance of the Ifẹbù in commerce and party politics, as well as local royal dynasties resisting the dominance of *Ọyọ* in chieftaincy politics, tend to build up the importance of local gods, local variants of the "white gods" among them. Hardly any major leadership faction in Yorùbá cultural politics is without a clear and nearly predictable consensus on the matter of which gods matter most.
- 69 Nina Rodrigues, *O animismo feitchista*, 176, 180.
- 70 Pierson, "Negroes in Brazil," 280.
- 71 Nina Rodrigues, *O animismo feitchista*, 38–39; emphasis mine. Rodrigues's interpretation may have been inspired by his field research at Gantois or by his discussions with Professor Martiniano, both of which took place in the late nineteenth century, before the founding of the Opô Afonjá temple.
- 72 Manuel Querino, "A raça africana e seus costumes na Bahia," in *Costumes Africanos no Brasil*, ed. Thales de Azevedo (Recife, Brazil, 1988), 21–107.
- 73 Carneiro, *Candomblés da Bahia*, 64, 89–90. I do not know when Opô Afonjá began to perform this ceremony or when it was named the Waters of Oxalá in contrast to the name given to it in Opô Afonjá's elder sister temple Gantois—that is, the New Yam. Reliable sources suggest, however, that Opô Afonjá has been performing this rite since at least 1934 (Santos, *Axé Opô Afonjá*, 96). Carneiro's *Candomblés da Bahia* was published in 1948. At this late date, it is surprising that Carneiro also reports, "Oxalá . . . controls the sexual functions of reproduction" (64). The overall succession of writings since the late nineteenth century and my own observations in the 1980s and 1990s suggest that Oxalá in Bahia has undergone a progressive dissociation from agricultural, reproductive, and sexual themes. Images of reproduction and sexuality in the West African worship of Oríṣà Níà have long been highly sublimated (see, for example, Matory, *Sex and the Empire That Is No More*, 192), but, in keeping with the largely animarist and anticonsanguineal logic of Brazilian ritual kinship, the present-day worship of Oxalá in Brazil has been stripped almost entirely of reproductive and sexual symbolism. Carneiro's surprising interpretation might reflect his extensive consultation with the West Africanist literature of his day, a transitional discourse in the Bahia of his day, or both.
- 74 Bastide, *O Candomblé da Bahia*, 112–13.
- 75 Santos, *Axé Opô Afonjá*, 96.
- 76 Though all of the U.S.- and Brazilian-affiliated diasporas I have discussed have a powerful religious dimension, they do not all emphasize to the same degree the exclusivist and hierarchical logic of purity. What I have hypothesized is that idioms of purity are most likely to be emphasized where exclusivity is most profitable. Cases that involve a monopoly over the local provision of highly valued foreign goods are probably the best example, but such cases bear telling similarities to the idiom of purity in the South Asian ideal that privileges the descendants of foreign "Aryan" invaders, as well as those who successfully embrace the cultural markers of that descent: Sanskrit literacy, vegetarianism, and so forth. Upwardly mobile castes thus purify themselves. In the Indian diaspora, such castes might strengthen their case by displaying in their abodes the finest artifacts available from the South Asian homeland (see, for example, Agelhananda Bharati, *The Asians in East Africa* [Chicago, 1972], 29–31). The promise of a privileged position for ethnically pure exiles upon their return to the homeland provided a similar incentive for purism among Hutu refugees; see Liisa H. Malkki, *Purity and Exile* (Chicago, 1995).
- 77 See Matory, "African Empire in America."
- 78 For glimpses of the role of popular literacy in Candomblé members' and African ethnics' cultural self-articulation in Bahia from the 1890s, see Nina Rodrigues, *O animismo feitchista*, 35, 42–43; Pierson, "Negroes in Brazil," 42–43, 259, 272, 293; Landes, *City of Women*, 29–30, 112–15, 174; and Martiniano do Bonfim's "Os ministros de Xangô." Consider also the publications of *egun* priest Deocóredes ("Didi") dos Santos (1962), Maria Stella de Azevedo Santos ("Mãe Stella" [1993]), and Juana Elbein dos Santos (1976), the last of which several Candomblé priests have recommended to me as an excellent philosophical analysis of their religion. It and Verger's volume (1981) are found on the shelves and in the drawers of many Candomblé priests. Since the 1980s, many priests have taken book-based courses in Yorùbá language at the Center of Afro-Oriental Studies of the Federal University of Bahia.

- 79 Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA, 1984), 315-16.
- 80 See Góis Dantas, *Voxó Nagô e Papai Branco*.
- 81 Matory, "Jeje," 57-80.
- 82 See Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis, MN, 1996).
- 83 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, rev. ed. (New York, 1991).
- 84 See Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY, 1983); and Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.
- 85 Immanuel Wallerstein, "La construction des peuples: Racisme, nationalisme, ethnicité," in *Race, nation, classe*, ed. Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (Paris, 1990), 95-116.