TRANSNATIONAL PATHWAYS from BLACK POWER to IFÁ in TRINIDAD

SPIRITUAL CITIZENSHIP

N. FADEKE CASTOR

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Cover art: Shrine establishment for Asewele (the spirits of lost travellers), dedicated especially to Africans who died in the slave trade and during slavery. Pictured from left to right are: Ifetayo; Oubi Kumasi-Ka; Patricia Ifagbamila Gibbons; Iya Akinde Rudder; Baba Ifasuen Norbert Bell; Iyanifa Ọmọlaṣọ Annette Thompson; Iya Ifabunmi Rhonda Valentine-Charles; Rawle Afuwepe Gibbons; Chief Alagbaa Awo Ifa Tayese Erinfolami. Ile Eko Sango/Osun Mil'osa, Santa Cruz, Trinidad, 2015. Photo by N. Fadeke Castor.

This book is for all those who came before,
who paved the way,
whose footsteps I walk in,
and shoulders I stand on.

This is for you.

Mo dupe lopo lopo.

CONTENTS

NOTE ON ORTHOGRAPHY

Yorùbá is one of the four official languages of Nigeria and is a member of the Niger-Congo family of languages. About thirty million people speak forms of Yorùbá, from nations in West Africa (e.g., southwest Nigeria, Benin, Togo) to nations throughout the Americas (e.g., Brazil, Trinidad, and the United States).[1]

Continental Yorùbá

Yorùbá is a tonal language with three tones: high, mid, and low. High tone is indicated by an acute accent. Low tone is indicated by a grave accent, and mid tone is left unmarked. Continental Yorùbá has seven vowels. Continental Yorùbá spelling uses an underdot to distinguish the sixth and seventh vowels with the following American English pronunciation equivalents:

a	father
e	bait
ẹ	bet
i	beat
o	boat
ọ	bought
u	boot

For consonants, Continental Yorùbá spelling uses the underdot with the letter *s* to distinguish the alveolar and palatal voiceless fricatives spelled with an 's' and 'sh' in English. The only consonantal pronunciations unfamiliar to speakers of Spanish, Portuguese, and English are /k͡p/ and/g͡b/. What distinguishes them from their European-language counterparts is simultaneous closure. Because Yorùbá does not have a /p/, the orthography spells these phonemes using 'p' and 'gb' respectively.

Diasporic Yoruba

Throughout the African diaspora, members of Yoruba-based religious communities speak forms of Yoruba, including in Cuba a creole mixed with Spanish (Lucumi). Although Continental Yorùbá is a tone language, most Diasporic forms of Yoruba have suprasegmental systems based on those of the dominant languages in those countries, i.e. Spanish, Portuguese, and English. To reflect this reality, I do not mark tone in Diasporic Yoruba spellings.

Like Spanish, varieties of Yoruba spoken in Spanish-speaking countries only have five vowels, so the spelling of those varieties does not employ the underdot. It is helpful to add a note here on the variability of spelling norms. For example, in the diaspora, key terms like Òrìṣà (Continental Yorùbá orthography) may be written as Orisa, Orisha, Oricha, or Orixa depending on the orthography of the dominant language. The first two spellings are most common in English, the third in Spanish, and the last in Portuguese. When writing about Yorùbá-based religions in the diaspora, many authors use the spelling that corresponds to that tradition. For example, when writing about Brazilian Candomblé in English, many authors use standardized Portuguese spellings of Yorùbá words, such as Oxum and Orixa.

In this text I use Diasporic Yoruba when discussing Yorùbá-based religious communities and their ritual practices in the Americas. The titles and names of diasporic individuals will remain unmarked (no diacritical marks).

In the case of naming Yorùbá elders from West Africa, all efforts will be made to use the correct marks for their names. Yorùbá place-names and terms, when referencing Continental Yorùbá, will also reflect standard Yorùbá orthography.

PREFACE

Turning Toward Oshun

"Save her, she's mine." Those words have haunted me for years. And in responding to their call, I have been on a long journey—a journey that has taken me to this place of making an offering; an offering to the ancestors and an offering to you, my readers. In doing so I find myself being called to come out of the "spiritual closet," as it were, for as M. Jacqui Alexander reminds us, "pedagogies of the Sacred" are needed for us to make sense of ourselves (2006, 15). The spiritual teachings and initiations that brought about this work will come as no surprise to those I have worked with over the years in Trinidad, even as they may be news to some people in the academy. Unlike many Western academics who have studied the Yoruba religion, I did not answer the call of Spirit while conducting research in the field. It was in fact the other way around for me. The spirits, specifically the ancestors, sent me to graduate school to study them.

When I was in graduate school, a faculty member warned me that studying the Yoruba people, their culture, and traditional religion could come with a stigma because academics would question my subjectivity if I came to follow the Yoruba spirits, the Orisha. "Too late," I thought. They were among the spirits who had sent me to graduate school and started me on the path that eventually led me here, to this work that you are reading. Leading me to this place of stark vulnerability where I tell my stories and in doing so offer a secret that I had tucked away back when I started school. Holding on to it until I was ready to take it out and put it on, simultaneously coming out of the spiritual closet and embracing my power. As Audre Lorde tells us, "The woman's place of power within each of us is neither white, nor surface; it is dark, it is ancient and it is deep" (2007, 37). It is from this deep space that I move forward on this journey (for it is ongoing) to answer Oshun's call. This offering began a long time ago.

Standing behind the counter in a pagan bookstore, surrounded by herbs, candles, and crystal balls, I had no idea that the next few moments would be critical to changing my life. I didn't know enough to recognize the voice of God/dess talking to me, talking about me. I couldn't have named that voice. I couldn't have named her if I'd been asked. I did know enough to be aware that something was happening—and that it was an important happening.

From my black combat boots and up through the many piercings, I looked like any other Bay Area punk rocker. (This was the early 1990s. Were we post-punk yet? We certainly didn't think so at the time.) Well, maybe with the exception of my darker skin and nappy hair. There weren't many black punk rockers then (or now). And there was definitely no Afro-punk scene back then. This was back in the "primitive" times of no popular Internet (sure, DARPA existed, but who knew about that?!). Strangely enough, for all my uniqueness, the woman standing next to me could have been my twin—another pierced black woman dressed head to toe in black. She was my coworker, my neighbor, and my best friend. And she was my coconspirator in all things not good for us.

So what was going on that day? How did two disaffected black punk rockers come to the attention of God/dess? This may be hard to believe, but it started with a candle. You know those seven-day candles in glass you can buy at the grocery store? Among many other "magical" supplies, the store where I worked sold these candles. And for a small fee the candle could be dressed. "Dressed" here does not refer to putting on clothes but rather to anchoring a blessing with glitter and oil. I would take a candle, say green for wealth, and sprinkle glitter on top from a shaker. Gold glitter would go first—for money again. Then maybe some blue (the color associated with Jupiter, for luck in material endeavors). And then an added dash of silver for blessings of spirit. The color associations were seemingly personal and arbitrary. Everyone had his or her own system, yet the associations were only somewhat arbitrary—they were linked into a larger system of signs drawing heavily on astrology and pagan cosmologies.

So on that day I dressed a candle; yellow, I think. After sprinkling the glitter, I added a few drops of oil. I don't remember which oil, but it would have been one labeled something like "Attraction," "Court Case," "Fire of Love," "Job," or "Money Drawing." These oils are another level of dressing designed to attract specific energies (as clearly designated by their names) to that candle. Once the glitter and oil are added, a prayer can be said, and then a film of wax stretched over the top seals the newly "consecrated" can-

dle. This keeps the energies (and glitter and oil) in place until the customer activates them by lighting the candle. All this for less than $2.50! Which was a bargain even in 1990s dollars.

How, then, did dressing this candle for someone else lead to God/dess talking about me and to me? How did this change my life and put me onto the path that would lead to this book, this story? All I can say is that opportunity presented itself: opportunity for the divine to lay a claim and give a charge. And I was not completely unaware. I felt the tremors of energy then. Even now, twenty years later, I can remember how that buildup of energy felt.

I had recently been reading from the books that we stocked mainly on Wicca and other forms of European paganism. Among the very few titles on African diasporic religion and spirituality, I recognized the book *Jambalaya* (1985) by Luisah Teish. The cover, with its drawing of a snake encircling a black woman's head, was memorable. I knew this book from my college days. One of my classes was Womanist Theology, with visiting scholar Carol P. Christ. Though the class was largely focused on European paganism, we had read parts of this book based on New Orleans voodoo and drawing on Afro-Caribbean/West African Orisha religions. *Jambalaya* was a groundbreaker when it came out in the mid-1980s. Nothing like it could be found in bookstores—a strong black woman's voice asserting the power of her ancestral traditions. In the calls to listen to "she who whispers," that inner voice (or spirit guide), she addressed the power in her own voice. And while doing so she asserted the power of women's voices everywhere, especially the voices of women of color.

Yes, I'm still talking about how dressing a candle led me to hear the voice of God/dess. Remember that in that moment I had felt a charge of energy, which I largely attributed to dressing the candle. As I bagged the candle and rang up the sale, I marveled, "I just dressed a candle for Luisah Teish. She wrote that book, *Jambalaya*. Wow!" Left there, I would have taken it as a good sign, as a shift in fortunes perhaps. Maybe better things were coming?

I had just recently come back. For I had run away from Oakland. You know, the fight-or-flight response? Mine had been triggered, and I had fled—all the way to Los Angeles! All the way to the home of my former college, tucked in the San Gabriel Valley. What would cause me to fly so far? In those days I had little to no money from my part-time, seven-dollar-an-hour cashier job at the pagan bookstore. And keeping up my bad habits took most of that. As broke as I was, LA was really far (and to this day I have no idea

how I got there and back; for sure it wasn't by plane, so I must have gotten a ride somehow). What was I running from? Mookie died. Rather, Mookie was killed. Run over by a car on Martin Luther King Drive, five times. They hit him, backed over him, and then did it again and again. Living on the margins, Mookie had crossed the wrong person. He was my friend and his death filled me with horror and fear. A fear for him, already realized. And a fear for me, a fear for my future. Is this how little his life, our lives, my life was worth?

So I had fled to the last safe place I knew. I went south to SoCal and away from this place where my friend was run down in the streets. After seeing old friends, old haunts and getting grounded in affirmations of life I came back to Oakland and my shared apartment, to my part-time job, and to my best friend and partner in crime. The fall of 1993 was an unsettled time for me, to say the least. I would later recognize this as a period of liminality,[1] where I was not what I had been but not yet what I would become. Or, in less abstract terms, I was ready for a change.

This context frames this moment when God/dess talked—and, more important, when I listened. "Thank you for your purchase. Please come again." I imagine that I said something this innocuous to Luisah Teish as I handed her the brown bag wrapping her dressed candle. And I am sure that she thanked me before she turned to leave. A tall, beautiful woman, she had a strong presence even in the mundane movement of walking to the exit. Part of the grace in her bearing came from a background in dance, including time studying with Katherine Dunham. Maybe this was why I was watching her. And maybe it is why when she turned it was so fluid. As if she was dancing, her lifted leg leading her body 180 degrees to face the counter.

And then again, maybe it was the God/dess in her. Literally the God/dess in her.

"Save them!" a voice cried from where she stood. And there was a look on her face that I had never seen. Her eyes were wide, fixed, and bright. As she stared straight ahead, her hand lifted to point a finger, first at me and then at my friend. Swinging toward a third person, our senior coworker, she commanded again, insistently, "They are my children. Save them."

With her message delivered, all the energy left the space, like a light going out. She was Teish again. She looked at our coworker, her goddaughter, we would learn later, as if to say, "You hear?" Glances were exchanged. Seemingly satisfied, she turned and departed. Teish/Oshun had left the building, but she had left behind a charge—in fact a divine charge. And that meant it

was not to be questioned, it was to be obeyed. Our coworker was an "older" African American woman, and she let out a loud sigh as she came to this realization. (I must remark that my friend and I were both in our early twenties, and at that point everyone seemed older. Our coworker could have been thirty or fifty!) She turned to us, her skeptical gaze looking us up and down, then said, "That was Oshun who spoke. And whether I like it or not, I'm going to have to try." We didn't know what she felt compelled to try. And we also didn't know at the time that she was an Orisha devotee and served that Yoruba feminine energy called Oshun, the energy of fresh water, creativity, and women's power.

The "save them" part remained unspoken between us. Again she sighed and looked us up and down, taking in our black boots, our artfully torn black jeans, and the flashes of metal from our piercings—nose and belly buttons hinting at others unseen. She was dressed all in white, making for a sharp contrast, one echoed by the difference in our energies, like the difference between a gentle breeze and the storm winds of a tornado. Her repeated sighs conveyed both her distress and her submission—distress at the task in front of her and simultaneous submission to Oshun's charge. Working together until our shifts ended and the last customer left, we locked the door and turned the battered "Open/Closed" sign in the window. It was then that she addressed us: "Look, I'm going to invite you to my house, to a ritual. And before you come you'll have to do what I say." The instructions that followed would turn out to be a litmus test. Were we committed? Were we up to the challenge? Were we ready?

I offer this story, one of my more precious memories, as the turning point. This was the key that led me to this journey of spiritual citizenship. Oshun provided the key, but it took me (and my Ori, or personal divine consciousness) to turn the key in the lock and then go through the opened door. Since then, I have walked a path illuminated by the ancestors, those upon whose shoulders I stand. Orisha, divine emissaries of God/dess (Olodumare), and Ifá (wisdom of Olodumare) have provided help along the way. And twenty-plus years into the journey, Ẹgbẹ́ Ọ̀run (spiritual comrades from heaven) revealed the direction, gifts, and company that had been mine all along. Indeed, it turns out that Spirit has been with me all along.

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INTRODUCTION

Pathways to Spiritual Citizenship

"You will travel widely, all over the globe." I heard these words with a disbelief that must have shown on my face. "Really, this is what Ifá says," the babalawo said in a thick Nigerian accent. In that moment I didn't know who or what a babalawo was or what Ifá was. I just knew that they were wrong. I had little more than the change in my pocket to my name, and none that I could spare. I had no official identification let alone a passport. I could barely afford to get a ticket to ride the train across the Bay, from Oakland to San Francisco.

"Who do you think you are?" Those were the words that went through my head. And I am sure they were visible on my face. Across from me the Ifá priest looked at me with a kind and knowing appraisal. He had seen this before with other clients. And having divined for me, he had seen aspects of my destiny. Looking down at the mat, he told me, "Ògún is very important for you." I wrote "Oggum" in my notes, a misspelling that reflected my lack of knowledge. I had never heard that word before. And of the many ways to spell Ogun in the diaspora, that is not one of them.

Only a few weeks earlier I had been at work when Oshun, the Yorùbá Orìsà of creativity, fresh water, and women's power, had manifested (see appendix II). In the middle of the day she had possessed one of her priests in a pagan bookstore. Oshun claimed me as her own that day, "Save her," she commanded, "She's mine." That mandate had brought me to a small apartment above a garage in Oakland where I sat across from a Nigerian

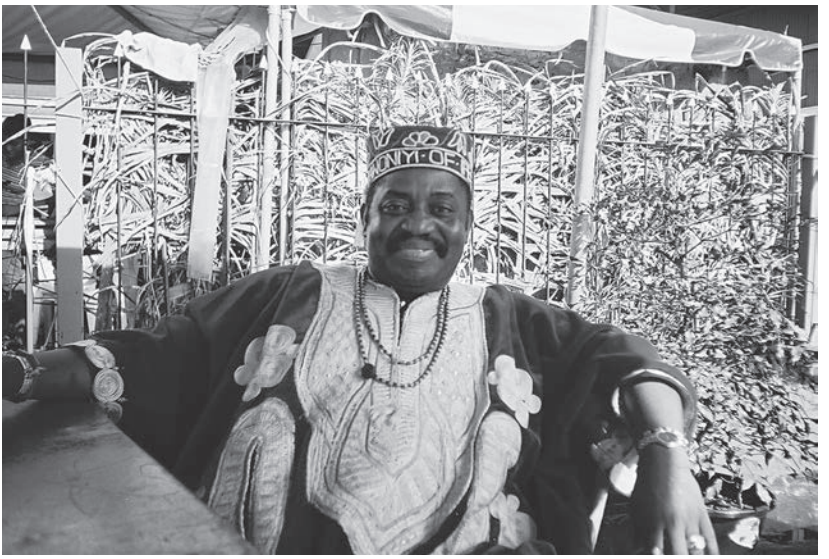

FIGURE INTRO.1 His Royal Majesty Oba Adébólú Fátunmise, the Àdàgbà of Iyánfowórogi (then Chief Fátunmise) in Port of Spain, Trinidad for the Sixth World Congress of Orisha Tradition and Culture, 1999. Photo by N. Fadeke Castor.

elder, who introduced himself as Bólú Fátunmise.[1] I would later learn that he was an eighth-generation Ifá priest, or babaláwo, from Ilé-Ifẹ̀, Nigeria (and it would be many more years before I started to grasp the implications of this).

In that moment, hearing that Ogun was important to me, I was lost. Lost and uncomfortable, sitting there in borrowed and ill-fitting light-colored clothes. For all my own clothes were black. I had been instructed to wear white if possible, light colors even, but under no circumstances black! Over the next several months I would learn that for this group black cloth was associated with negative energy as they believed it absorbed all energies—both good and bad. Right then I just felt annoyance piled on top of the discomfort. I was way outside my comfort zone. And that annoyance was linked to my feeling that these people thought there was something wrong with me, something unclean.

It was the instructions to take a bath that had started my journey to that living room where I sat while a stranger told me unbelievable things about my future. Or, more accurately, the journey had started with the decision to take a "spiritual" bath. I still distinctly remember standing in my kitchen talking to my roommate. I tried to explain the experience of being com-

manded by a voice from God/dess. And described my dilemma: "They want me to take a bath before I go to this thing. With milk. And then dress in white." I shook my head not only at the milk bath but also because I wondered where would I, who wore only black, get white clothes?

"I don't know why. I just feel that this is important," I explained that I was at a crossroads saying, "If I do this everything will change." I can still feel the sink pressing into my back as I took in the liminality, the in-betweenness, of the moment. Do what I had been doing (with grimmer and grimmer consequences visible all around me) or make this change? Take a bath? There was a deep breath, a shrug, and then a decision that a bath couldn't hurt. Even if it seemed kind of weird to bathe in milk and flowers, I had done stranger things. Just this one little step, and then I would see. That one decision, to take that bath, put my feet on the path to uncovering my destiny and learning to hear from and speak to God/dess in one of her many forms. A path that over two decades led me home to the land of my ancestors, to my own initiations, and to membership in a transnational spiritual community. Just as Awo Bólú Fátunmise told me, I would indeed "travel the globe." Taking that bath was a critical decision, an opening to a new path.

Later I would learn that the event I was spiritually cleansing for was a ritual celebration of a new Orisha priest. One of Luisah Teish's godchildren (in this religion relations are mapped through terms of spiritual kinship) had received initiation to Obatala, the Orisha of creation and wisdom, whose symbol is white cloth. On the day that I went, the new initiate, or *iyawo,* was being presented to the community. She was not allowed out from her corner (or "throne") as the initiation was not yet complete (it would be finished later in the week). Her rite of passage still had more phases to go; as of that moment when I saw her, she was still liminal (Turner 1969). I was not the only person experiencing liminality.

On the day I went, I found myself drawn in by the beating of drums as I walked into the house nervous as could be. My late arrival meant that I entered a room bursting with people and energy. On one end of the room was a space blocked off by white fabric, which surrounded and supported piles of fruit, food, and flowers. To my uneducated gaze there was a jumble of things around a seated figure clothed in white, a strange figure hidden from full view by the veil of her crown. Decades later, I can still remember the eerie calm and serenity of this person in the middle of a room of pulsing energy. Overcome by all that energy, feeling both invisible and out of place, I fled outside. There I reached for a familiar comfort and lit a cigarette.

"No, no, no—none of that. You can't do that here," came the loud reprimand from one of the many people dressed elegantly in all white. And standing there in my ill-fitting borrowed clothes, I knew no one. And I was being admonished for doing the one thing that gave me comfort, smoking. Just then a man, dressed in bright, rich colors, came to my rescue. "It's okay, just take it away from the house. Come down here to the end of the driveway." Looking at the other person, he quickly added, "She meant no harm. I don't think she knew." From the other person's reaction, who quickly backed down, I could tell my defender was a person of status. And from the style of his colorful clothes I took him to be a foreigner. And from his accent I guessed he must be from somewhere in West Africa.

That was how I met my first Ifá priest, Awo Bólú Fátunmise, and got my first Ifá reading. That was how I ended up in the garage apartment hearing that I would travel the world. As a visiting Nigerian elder, Awo Fátunmise was conducting Ifá divinations. This divination is a core ritual of Ifá priests in which clients receive answers to questions, remedies to problems, and information about their future. (While writing this, I realized that he must have been charging for those divination sessions. I have no memory of paying, however, or even of being able to pay had I been asked.)

I still have the few words jotted down on a torn piece of pink notebook paper. Those were my very first notes on an Ifá reading and possibly my first notes for the project that ultimately gave birth to this book. For, indeed, I would stay and join that spiritual community. This reading would be my introduction to the cosmology of Yorùbá traditional religion and the ritual practices of serving the divine forces of nature and deified ancestors known as Orisha (in both the singular and the plural). I would learn that the Yorùbá referred to an ethnic group in West Africa with a complex history going back a thousand years (a history much older than the label "Yorùbá").[2] And that in the contemporary moment there were thirty million Yorùbá-language speakers throughout West Africa, with the majority of them residing in southwest Nigeria (a cultural region called Yorubaland). I would sort out my confusion after some time, for Yorùbá can refer to people, culture, religion, and/or language. And at a later moment I would learn that many African diasporic religions from Candomblé and Umbanda in Brazil to Santería in Cuba, identified with Yorùbá culture and religion (among other nations, notably the Kongo/Congo). Adding to my confusion was that the "Yorùbá" identified from the diaspora could be imagined, historical, contemporary, or a mix of all three!

Taking the bath, going to the ritual in borrowed whites, going for a "reading," as divinations are called, were all moments of spiritual praxis, even though I was unaware of this at the time. They were actions of cleansing, prayer, and sacrifice, all central to African diasporic religions (called alternatively Yorùbá, Òrìṣà/Orisha, or Ifá throughout this text). From taking a bath, to going to a ritual *bembe*, *feast*, or *tambor* (terms for the gathering where the gods are called with offerings, prayers, drums, dance, and song), to getting a reading and making offerings: these are all fundamental rituals. Elders would later teach me that the foundations of Yorùbá ritual include elements of cleansing or washing, prayers or invocations, divination or reading, and appeasing through offerings. In that first week I had done or seen several of these things. I would go on to eventually do all of them. And in doing so, my life would intersect with the lives of other travelers on this spiritual journey—travelers in Oakland, California; in Santa Cruz, Trinidad; and in Ilé-Ifẹ̀, Nigeria—and with the numerous spirits who accompanied me to the many places in between.

I would learn many names for these spirits that drew on Yorùbá cosmology, the chief among them Òrìṣà/Orisha (referred to as Orisha throughout the text). These supernatural and at times historical figures are the approachable aspects of God, evident in the forces of nature all around us. We have already met Ogun, who is the original ironworker, a surgeon, a warrior, and a king (among his many mythic aspects). Ọ̀ṣun/Oshun, who in her way has brought us—writer and reader—here together, is the fresh water of the river, women's power, and the creativity of reproduction. She is all these things and much more. They say that there are 801 Orisha, with the 1 being the plus of infinity. Every aspect of God's creation is sacred, and every aspect of her creation can be encountered as an Orisha. It is because of this complexity and this magnitude that many call the Yorùbá religious tradition, on the continent and in the diaspora, the Orisha religion (or the plural "Orisha religions" to encompass the diasporic diversity).

Spiritual Citizenship is about the power of the sacred to inform new ways of belonging to community, the nation, and the transnational. In this book I engage the critical knowledge systems and ritual practices of African-based religions in the African diaspora. I locate contemporary Trinidad's Orisha and Ifá communities as inheritors of the promise of the 1970s Black Power movement.[3] From the turn of the millennium I draw on ethnographic ma-

terials to illuminate Orisha as engaged in the performance and practice of an emerging spiritual citizenship. The liberatory process of decolonization I identify draws on a spiritual praxis grounded in non-Western cosmologies and transnational spiritual networks that are embedded in a dynamic mixture of the historical, imagined, and contemporary Yorùbá. Informed by Yorùbá cosmology and a newly planted Ifá lineage, Orisha communities in Trinidad have embarked on a pathway of community building guided toward ideas of freedom, liberation, and social justice.

Trinidad and Tobago is a twin island nation-state whose society, culture, politics, and economics all bear the hallmarks of a colonial legacy. While independence in 1962 occurred politically and symbolically on many levels, decolonization (which I understand as a process and not a singular event) did not "naturally" occur as a consequence. The Orisha religion in Trinidad informs a *spiritual citizenship*, rooted in the African diaspora, that critically engages with inherited hierarchical legacies of identity and distinctions of difference. I found these critical engagements to be visible in both religious and performance practices, from aspects of the annual Carnival celebrations to everyday reconfigurations of time and space (e.g., the national pastime of hanging out with friends, involving storytelling, music, and often libations known as *limin'*, that exists in a now-for-now moment).[4] I focus on spiritual practices of African religions as a form of critical engagement and performance rooted in the African diaspora and the black radical tradition. This engagement with a wide diasporic horizon that joins people beyond the local, the national, or even the regional into a series of global relations, I refer to as "transnational spiritual networks."

By spiritual citizenship I mean the rights and responsibilities of belonging to community, informed by spiritual epistemologies, that is, not limited to the national but also inclusive of the diasporic, global, and transnational. I draw on Aihwa Ong's definition of cultural citizenship as a point of departure, which refers to "the cultural practices and beliefs produced out of negotiating the often ambivalent and contested relations with the state and its hegemonic forms that establish the criteria of belonging within a national population and territory" (1999a, 264). Where Ong speaks of this culture, I expand the concept to include both the spiritual and the cultural. My identification of spiritual citizenship also encompasses "a dual process of self-making and being-made within webs of power linked to the nation-state and civil society" (264) while extending the scale of this formulation. I do so first by moving across space to both the smaller level of local com-

munities and the larger level of the transnational and global communities. Then the scale also expands across time to deploy responsibilities across generations, both to those who are yet to come and to those who have come before. In forming diasporic community that draws on the resources of transnational spiritual communities to support and build locally and nationally, Yorùbá cosmology and ritual practices provide methods to access past generations (the ancestors) and heal historical wounds. This in turn informs a spiritual praxis that extends the healing to current and future generations.

Historically in Trinidad, spiritual citizenship has roots in the early British colonial period where individual and collective relation to the state (i.e., colonial governance) was informed, at least in part, by a religious understanding of the world. An early example of this was the organization of Yorùbá families in Diego Martin to purchase burial land for members of the African community. These families pooled their resources for this as many repatriated, indentured, and enslaved Africans were not Christian and thus, were barred from burial in church graveyards (Warner-Lewis 1996). While examples of spiritual citizenship such as this can be seen throughout the colonial period, my project here focuses on postindependence developments.[5] Specifically, the discourses of the 1970s Black Power movement in Trinidad (called a revolution by many) introduced critical questions aimed at changing inherited social relations that reproduced inequities along lines of race, class, color, and gender. Emergent from these conversations—and the social unrest that accompanied them—was a revalorization of non-European heritages, specifically the overgeneralized idea of "African." In the quest for non-European knowledge systems, values, and beliefs, many turned to African religions, both those at home and those from the African continent. This book explores this turn and how it has come to inform the understanding of belonging to community, asking: What is expected from belonging to a religious community? How does this inform the rights and responsibilities of belonging to the national community (being a Trinidadian) or to a larger global community (being a member of the African diaspora)? How do these levels of belonging then impact other facets of identity, be they race, color, class, or gender?

In exploring these questions, *Spiritual Citizenship* draws attention to critical cultural and spiritual practices. I match the spiritual together with citizenship as a means for understanding modes of belonging and the building of community informed by the sacred.

Rhizomatic Reflections

"Ogun onire, ogun onire." These words were still swirling in my mind as I left the Ile Eko Sango/Osun Mil'osa (IESOM) shrine, where I had just performed my duty as a child of Ogun (so I had been told). I had sung to Ogun to clear the road and open the way for the twenty-four-foot wood carving of Shango's sacred double-headed ax (*ose*) to get seated upright. As a crew of men worked the makeshift scaffolding and ropes to raise the statue into its fifteen-foot concrete base I had circled around and around, singing all the time, "Ogun onire, ogun onire."

After this spiritual labor, I was riding home over the hills, from one valley to the next, and reflecting on how the linear narrative that writing conventions demand fails to accommodate the nonlinear contradictory and polymorphous flow of Trinidad's cultural practices. The moving of the two-story carving from horizontal to vertical so that it could be seated in a fifteen-foot cement base was truly remarkable as it was done by six men with only ropes and shaky scaffolding (figure Intro. 2). I had been anxious to catch a ride home with Curt McLeod, the son of the shrine's spiritual mother. His SUV greatly facilitated the journey over curving, narrow roads, taking only forty-five minutes instead of the two to three hours that "traveling" (hailing route taxis on the road) through the capital of Port of Spain would have taken. And I needed to get ready for the other activities scheduled for later that same day.

For the raising of Shango's ose was happening during Carnival 2003. The day of the raising was a Sunday, when fetes are scheduled during the day or early evening to accommodate a Monday morning work schedule for most attendees (and organizers). I was attending, with some of my non-Orisha friends, a fete where I was sure to run into Iya Sangowunmi and other people from the shrine. For this was the McLeod Fete, hosted and organized by the McLeods' family business, led by I. T. McLeod and Pat McLeod (aka Iya Sangowunmi), the same couple that owns the several acres at the base of the Santa Cruz Mountains that are home to the IESOM shrine. Iya Sangowunmi leads IESOM and devotes her time, energy, and family resources to building a spiritual community there in order to fulfill her destiny (as outlined by her *ìta*, the divine plan of her destiny) of bringing Orisha festivals to life in Trinidad.

I mention this story here to emphasize that the relation between Trinidad's cultural and spiritual practices, which at first glance are seemingly

FIGURE INTRO.2 Ile Eko Sango/Osun Mil'osa shrine members work together to place the twenty-four-foot statue of Shango's sacred double-headed ax (Ose Ṣhango; made by Yorùbá carver Hassan Olánipẹ̀kun) into its fifteen-foot base. Santa Cruz, Trinidad, 2003. Photo by N. Fadeke Castor.

separate and discrete, fold back on themselves to become self-referential. That is, they move away from the neat linearity largely privileged in Western narratives. After we had elevated Shango's ose, I left Iya at the shrine, garbed in ritual wear and ase (spiritual energy), only to meet her later that night at a middle-class outdoors nightclub set on a pier over the water of the Chaguaramas peninsula. All of this was on my mind as I looked out the window, as Curt deftly maneuvered over winding roads. Rather than focusing on the precipitous drop below, mere feet away from our tires, I concentrated on the equally tricky and fraught task of presenting a singular narrative of this Orisha religion in Trinidad as my ethnographic experiences

presented me with everyday lived realities challenging to many accepted academic boundaries and categories.

Diasporic Articulations: Race, Citizenship, Religion, and Freedom

Spiritual Citizenship examines the performance of religion and ritual as situated within the context of transnational flows—that is, within the African diaspora. Critical to my study are understandings of the dynamics of diaspora as central to community; the centrality of spirit to the black radical imagination (freedom and liberation); identity and belonging (race and citizenship); and a recentering of difference that shifts the frame of multiculturalism from the exceptional to the everyday.

In my work on Trinidad's African diasporic religions, I have repeatedly observed the importance of the "diasporic horizon" (P. C. Johnson 2012). Diaspora is a complex term that references both community and identity, beyond its initial meaning in "dispersal." This key term has been widely discussed and analyzed in the academic literature (Clifford 1994; Hall 1999, 2003; P. C. Johnson 2012; Kelley 2000; Palmer 2000; D. Scott 1991).[6] I do not represent or restate this literature here. Rather, my intent is to highlight the facets of diaspora (and its theory) in relation to religion, which contributes to my argument on spiritual citizenship. The African diaspora is more than a community created through dispersal from a homeland. Diasporas are "social identifications based on shared memory bridges linking a lived space and a left-behind place" (P. C. Johnson 2007, 48). Diasporas, then, are performative communities invested in creating, negotiating, and traversing "bridges" between space and place.

This is especially true when diaspora is linked to religion. I find Johnson's conceptualization of "diasporic religions" useful for understanding the intersection of diaspora and religion that is so central to Trinidad Ifá/Orisha. When it comes to African diasporic religions, the possibility of doing away with diaspora is complicated by its widespread use throughout these communities. Thinking of diasporic religions as "the collected practices of dislocated social groups whose affiliation is not primarily or essentially based on religion but whose acts, locutions, and sentiments towards a distant homeland are mediated by, and articulated through, a religious culture" is particularly useful for my work (P. C. Johnson 2007, 258). This works very well with Trinidad's African diasporic religions, whose religious culture routinely and substantively performs diaspora. Through this performative they link

disparate social groups to create communities, build networks, and inform identities. I am particularly cognizant of how diasporic religion works in Trinidad as "having family tree 'elsewhere,'" which engages historical memory (say, of the slave trade and colonialism) to reinforce for Orisha and Ifá devotees "a double consciousness in relation to place" that contributes to "an awareness [that] is central, even actively conjured in their lived experience" (P. C. Johnson 2007, 31).

For the people I work with, the diasporic elsewhere is a lived everyday reality, much more than an abstract concept. It is a far-flung and wide network of spiritual family and community members in an "imagined community" that operates materially, virtually, and in the imaginary (Anderson 1991). The diasporic religious community or, using my preferred term, transnational spiritual networks offer sources of knowledge, access to global hospitality (before Airbnb), connections for work and business, and opportunities to exchange spiritual fellowship. Much of this is standard to immigrant communities, usually characterized by nationality. The difference here is that this community operates across nationalities, even as its members are locally grounded in their respective nation-states (and bound by laws governing border crossing, such as those related to visas, which will be seen in chapter 5).[7]

I envision spiritual citizenship as part of the numerous visions of "the imagination of both political and social life beyond the territorial boundaries of the nation-state" (D. A. Thomas and Clarke 2013, 309) that have emerged in the shadow of modernity and the dispersion of millions of Africans that we understand as the African diaspora. I argue for a conceptualization of citizenship that exists beyond the nation-state, even as it works with, and through, the nation-state. And I claim this wider frame of citizenship as part of the heritage of Pan-Africanism, Black Power, Négritude, and other politically engaged conceptualizations of the African diaspora (or other black radical traditions). Thus, I do not separate diaspora from a global formulation of citizenship; the two go hand in hand for an understanding of how people of African descent make community and negotiate systems of power (including the nation-state) while also working toward liberation and freedom.

I understand Ifá/Orisha in Trinidad as a form of black liberation and as part of "black internationalism" that consists of global black movements with a history that predates the "new" globalization (West, Martin, and Williams 2009). These various movements, from Pan-Africanism to Négri-

tude and beyond, engage what we now typify as the black radical imagination to embrace the "possibility of new social worlds" (West, Martin, and Williams 2009, 2; see also Apter 2016). In positioning the emergent spiritual citizenship of Trinidad's Ifá/Orisha community as part of the "globally connected waves of struggle by African peoples over the past two and half centuries" (West, Martin, and Williams 2009, 3), I reintroduce the spiritual and the religious to the political. Audre Lorde tells us, "The dichotomy between the political and the spiritual is also false" (2007, 56). An examination of important moments of historical conjuncture, such as the Black Power movement in Trinidad, reveals the importance of continuing to break down artificial divides, like that between the sacred and the secular. The ability to draw on a rich source of knowledge and understanding, outside of the Western canon, is the dividend of opening up our approach to struggles for black liberation. As M. Jacqui Alexander reminds us, "We were political *because* we were spiritual" (2006, 323).

We would be mistaken to reduce emancipation and freedom to the singular frame of national liberation (Wilder 2015, 3). My approach to Ifá/Orisha in Trinidad centers on conceptualizing the community as part of the wider wave of black internationalism, "a product of consciousness, that is the conscious interconnection and interlocution of black struggles across man-made and natural boundaries—including the boundaries of nations, empires, continents, oceans and seas" (West, Martin, and Williams 2009, 1). That is, the model of spiritual citizenship that I locate envisions layers of belonging, and a multiplicity of communities with their attendant roles and responsibilities. National citizenship does not preclude or compete with spiritual citizenship; rather, it is one facet within the entanglement of belonging. These entanglements are scalar, moving from the local to the national, regional, and global. And in doing so they create dynamics of belonging that span constructed borders and boundaries. Thus, I find spiritual citizenship, which I delimit here as diasporically grounded and tied to black liberation, to be supranational, containing and encompassing the national while also focused on a diasporic horizon.

Any examination of political belonging from a diasporic frame raises issues not only of citizenship but also of identity. I consider this work a contribution to the "new analytic frame" called for by Thomas and Clarke in "considering the vexed relationships between race and global formations today" (2013, 307). Attention to the history of race and citizenship in the Americas reveals the too often obscured (or softened) historical fact that

citizenship was not meant for Africans or their descendants (and this sentiment could extend to all non-Europeans). This history also reveals the survival against all odds of enslaved Africans and their strivings to be full citizens (never three-fifths of a person; see Kantrowitz 2012). In a by now well-known narrative, those of African descent in the Americas are largely the legacy of those not meant to survive.[8] And Africans in the Americas must negotiate an inherited Western citizenship that was constructed for Europeans, and landholders at that (Kantrowitz 2012). This is important as a point of departure to understand these negotiations of citizenship in the diaspora and its provenance. Certainly citizenship as it is largely understood is not a concept exclusive to the West, nor is it strictly tied to belonging to a state, or bounded territory. Just as subjects of the nation are produced as citizens, so then can opening up the concept of citizenship inform new forms of subject making and identity.

I agree with Sheller, in her investigation of Caribbean "counter-performances of citizenship" that come "from below," that "to become a citizen is also to become a gendered, racialized and sexed subject" (2012, 26). I would add to this that subjects are constructed as secular or religious (and at times both) depending on the nation-state. This was especially true in the colonial project with the construction of colonial subjects, who were often enslaved and indentured. This recalls that subject construction is often not free and certainly not free of power relations. Here I return to Sheller, who reminds us, in speaking of Haiti but applicable throughout the diaspora, about "the limits of self-determination and autonomy in a world in which the meanings of 'blackness,' and the legitimacy of black citizenship, are still overdetermined by forms of structural violence that transcend the postcolonial state" (2012, 186). This speaks powerfully to what is at stake in an emergent spiritual citizenship: the freedom to construct liberated subjectivities that radically imagine (by going outside of strictly Western thought) ways of belonging, being, and becoming. This would include a freedom to struggle against inherited colonial hierarchies of difference and move toward decolonized identities of race, class, color, gender, and sexuality. While in this book I focus predominantly on performances of race and class, these do not, and cannot, operate without gendered and sexualized intersections. In my offering here I hope to initiate a dialogue on how spiritual praxis and citizenship can open up new horizons of possibility for all our many distinctions of difference, our many identities.

Trinidad's multiculturalism is not one based only on a diversity of race

or ethnicity (though it is also that). Religious diversity is an important facet in today's society, in a nation where the minority position is agnosticism or atheism. There is a rich array of religious believers in Trinidad, from Protestants to Sathya Sai Baba, Muslims to Seventh-Day Adventists, Catholics to Hindus, Rastafari to Mormons, and the African diasporic religions of Ifá/Orisha and Spiritual Baptists. Among all these religions it is hard to find a public nonbeliever in Trinidad. As mentioned earlier, Trinidad is not a secular nation. In fact, the leadership of postindependence Afro-Trinidadian politics was a mainstream Christian leadership, even among the diversity of the nations' religions.

In defiance of the orderly classification of race and religion, Indo-Trinidadians participate in and contribute actively to what is commonly labeled as the "African" Orisha tradition. Houk (1995, 135) describes these Indo-Trini participants as mainly interested bystanders, though he estimates their presence as being up to 10 percent of the Orisha tradition, including notable shrine leaders and drummers. The influence from Indo-Trinidadian culture moves beyond the individual level of participation in community to theological influences from Hinduism. Aiyejina and Gibbons remark, "So strong is the inter-penetration of Africa and India in Trinidad that, in the context of the Orisha tradition, Osayin is perceived by some Orisha practitioners as having an Indian dimension and Hindu deities are represented in many Orisha *chapelles* or in separate Hindu chapelles within the same yard" (1999, 198).[9] In addition to there being Indo-Trinidadian adherents to Ifá/Orisha and the theological influence of Hinduism, there also exist cultural and political sites of support between sectors of the respective communities.

Locating Myself, Locating the Ancestors

In engaging a reflexive ethnographic practice, I position myself in the "writing against the grain" project of a decolonized anthropology (Harrison 1991, 2008). Doing so puts me humbly following the footsteps of those who broke ground in what is now recognized as black feminist anthropology. From the pioneering work of Zora Neale Hurston and Katherine Dunham to today's elders, notably A. Lynn Bolles, Faye Harrison, Irma McClaurin, and Sheila Walker, to name but a few (for more, see McClaurin 2001). In conjunction with other critical voices in ethnography, from feminist anthropology to the postcolonial, I understand my location as being simultaneously inside American systems of power by citizenship and geography and yet outside

these same systems by the marginality of both my race and gender. Thus, my insider/outsider status was already a complicated one before I set foot in the "field." Adding to this complexity are my familial relationships in Trinidad which brings with it more valences, locally and globally inflected, of race, gender, and class. Now add to this a mix of religion and nationality, and one has a true postcolonial, postmodern brew of contested subjectivities. In many ways and places, the often-fraught complex of anthropologists' subjectivity has been addressed at length.

And certainly being an African American woman of Trinidadian descent impacted my entry into and experiences in the field. Over the course of three years, I increasingly became viewed as a native born Trini who had returned after a long time in "foreign" (the local term for locations outside of Trinidad, usually in North America or Europe). This shift coincided with the movement of my racial designation, in which I began to see myself more as "red" (my local category in Trinidad) than as "black" (my category in America). None of these shifts existed in isolation. They all mixed together with my family's middle-class background in Trinidad to complicate my positions further.

A pivotal moment for me in Trinidad's Orisha religion brings to the forefront some important dynamics of the "betwixt and between" that is the methodological and ethnographic position of the insider/outsider. I was deep in the Santa Cruz Valley at the base of the mountain at the IESOM shrine for the international Alásùwadà Ifá conference (more on this in chapter 5). After two days of presentations where spontaneous rituals shifted the schedule, I was the first person to speak on the final day. As I walked up to the stage, my mind was whirling—how would this audience of Ifá priests, mostly from Trinidad, Venezuela, and Los Angeles, respond to my presentation? Newly initiated to Ifá (in that very location), I had made the decision to draw on my larger expertise and present on my journey. How had I become both an Ifá priest and an ethnographer/academic? This required me to go back over twenty years to my first steps into Orisha. My path has been the opposite of numerous other academics who became involved in the Yorùbá religion through their studies. As I began to detail in my opening stories here, it was my involvement in the Yorùbá religion in the mid-1990s that had brought me to graduate school, to ethnographic research, and ultimately to that conference on Ifá in the Santa Cruz Valley of Trinidad. And there I stood on the IESOM stage, looking out at a truly diverse audience of Ifá priests and devotees.

I began, "The ancestors brought me here. They brought me home. But first the ancestors sent me to graduate school. And it is through that path that I stand here today as an Ifá initiate of the Irentegbe Shrine, Little Oyo, Shrine Gardens, Santa Cruz. And it is through that path that I stand here today holding a PhD in cultural anthropology. That is the short story. "

I continued to tell how, in 1999, I arrived in Trinidad for the Sixth World Congress of Orisha Tradition and Culture to conduct my initial research in what ultimately became this book. It was then that I re-met family, who shared love they had been holding onto during my absence in the many years since my childhood visits. And I re-met the land, the society, the culture, all of which answered a call that I had felt deep down in my spirit. It was while I was at the Sixth World Orisha Congress, a global gathering of African diasporic religious practitioners and academics, that I met the conference organizer. Iya Sangowunmi, a newly initiated priest of Shango (who would become the shrine leader of IESOM), instantly recognized my family name and would later come to embrace me as her own (more on this in chapter 3). This relationship would serve as my entry into Trinidad Orisha, a network of Yorùbá-oriented shrines and a community of amazing people whose stories I try to do justice to throughout this text.

The ancestors brought me home to Trinidad, and it is there that I would later be initiated to Ifá. I would have the blessing of living in Trinidad to do my research as a Fulbright fellow and Wenner-Gren grant recipient from 2002 to 2005. During this time a divination reading from a visiting Ifá priest would lead to my getting a hand of Ifá (initial initiatory introduction to Ifá) in Chicago, where I was put under Ifá's protection. The spiritual genealogy of this ritual introduction to Ifá serves as an example of the transnational spiritual networks central to African-based religious community in the diaspora. I received my hand of Ifá from Awo Ifawole Keita, spiritual godson of Baba Medahochi, who was one of the original members of South Carolina's Oyotunji Village (a community informed by diasporic approaches to African religions, including Yorùbá Ifá and Orisha, and Benin Vodou).[10] Baba Medahochi's own initiation was in Togo to Ajá (another version of Ifá), which means that when I went back to Trinidad with my hand of Ifá, I carried the ase of Togo, via Chicago, back with me. I had become the very example of the transnational spiritual networks that I was studying!

At the Ifá conference deep in Trinidad's Santa Cruz Valley, I spoke that day in 2012 to an audience of Ifá priests and devotees (from Los Angeles, California; Ibadan, Nigeria; and Caracas, Venezuela) about being humbled

and blessed to have completed the PhD, to have been initiated right there at the IESOM shrine, and then being well on my road to writing a book on Orisha in Trinidad (this book), all under the direction and at the behest of the ancestors. I stood there in front of my elders and gave thanks. I gave thanks for the very dilemma that I would like to touch upon here. In many ways I walk—as I suspect many of us do—"betwixt and between" (Marcus 1998; Turner 1986). That is, I am both an insider and an outsider. Of Trini parentage, I grew up in the United States. Even though I have come to see Trinidad as my home, since my "navel cord" was not "bury in de yard" (the local measure of belonging), many would say that I'm not a true Trini (and to them I say, "Who you?").

Throughout my graduate training as a cultural anthropologist, I was never at ease with the Eurocentric Western modalities of academic discourse. (This unease informed my development of a critical and decolonial tool kit; see Harrison 1991, 2008.) Not to mention my disquiet at the centering of the Western atomized view of the individual, so contrary to Yorùbá philosophy, largely at the core of the theory I was learning. And here I come to my project and the questions at the crux of the matter. How to speak to the Ifá/Orisha community and my ancestors in a language that will be seen and heard by my academic community as well? How do I negotiate the precepts of Ifá in the seemingly secular world that is based on such different and often opposing values? In striving to answer these questions, my ethnographic explorations identified an emancipatory potential, a radical way for people to reimagine themselves and the world around them, how they live together in the world, in a tradition that builds upon those who have come before—with both roots, as in a tree, and routes, as in pathways to the continent, to West Africa. I located this in Trinidad: in Orisha, in Ifá, and at the IESOM shrine—all places that I have called home. On that day, as I stood on the stage, I looked out at the Ifá people gathered from across the diaspora and declared, "The ancestors brought me home."

Spiritual Citizenship emerges from a deep engagement with Trinidad over fifteen-plus years, including thirty-six months of consecutive field-based research on Afro-Trinidadian ritual and festival events. This book is based in part on an ethnographically grounded study of several Canboulay cultural practices (Carnival and emancipation celebrations, in addition to the Orisha religion).[11] That study focused on the Afro-Trinidadian middle class

and their differing expressions of cultural citizenship.[12] I recuperated a tradition of intensive ethnographic work to ground a growing body of theory on race, difference, nationalism, and postcolonialism. In focusing on these festive practices, I engaged cultural practices as a field illuminating the theoretical concerns of race, ethnicity, class, and nationhood, an approach that is shared with this work.

My ethnographic work on Orisha rituals and community building explores the dynamics of cultural performance and identity that constitute spiritual and cultural citizenship. In approaching the shrines and events of Trinidad Orisha, I paid particular attention to the spaces and places that religious identity intersected with, and informed, spheres of social and political life. It was in the process of mapping these intersections that the spiritual and cultural citizenship that informs this work became clear. Careful attention to ritual, festival, and everyday practices revealed the artificiality of dividing life into these separate categories largely created by the ethnographic gaze.

After I moved back to the States in 2005, changes in my "field" compelled me to seek additional funding and conduct new research. Over the summers of 2010, 2011, and 2012, I researched the recent establishment of Ifá initiatory lineages in Trinidad Orisha (see especially chapters 4 and 5). I worked with sixteen Ifá priests to create in-depth oral histories. These sessions focused on spiritual and religious pathways and genealogy: How did they come to the Orisha religion? How did they then come to Ifá? In asking these seemingly simple questions stories emerged of identity, family, politics, culture, and travel (to name just a sample of topics). From this rich archive I was able to map the recent emergence of Ifá in Trinidad.

Mapping the Journey

In *Spiritual Citizenship: Transnational Pathways from Black Power to Ifá in Trinidad*, my approach to African diasporic religions is diasporic, transnational, and global; even as people's spiritual experiences are locally grounded, they are always also globally informed. Thus, I find the study of Africans and their descendants in the Americas to be embedded in transnational spiritual networks. I divided this work into two parts as it moves from a focus on the black cultural citizenship visible in political engagements within the national frame (part I) to an emergent spiritual citizenship that becomes evident in a wider transnational frame (part II).

In part I, the first chapter opens with a story of spirits interceding in human affairs, literally sending "people to the streets." This is followed by another call, that of the drums that center spirit and agency. I move on to map the unfolding of the 1970 Black Power movement in Trinidad when frustrations literally burst into the street as critiques that had been building for years became direct challenges. This confrontation of the postcolonial state was a moment in which the nation both visibly imagined more and demanded more for itself. And in that moment the privileging of European everything—from aesthetics to economics—was questioned. And the African (imagined and otherwise) was reconsidered, reevaluated, and reengaged. In this critical space that called for new ideas of freedom and belonging, new ideas of community, and new ideas of citizenship, many looked for new forms of the spiritual and the sacred. Many people then turned to African diasporic religions, visibly bringing together the secular and sacred, the political and religious (or, indeed, as said by many, these were never separate).

Following Black Power, the African religions in Trinidad moved from the margins of society and entered mainstream politics in unprecedented ways in the following decades. In chapter 2, I examine the emergence of the Orisha religion in the public sphere, with state sponsorship, and its relationship to Trinidad's cultural politics of multiculturalism. The chapter situates the Indo-Trinidadian political sponsorship of African religions in Trinidad within the larger framework of multiculturalism. I argue that this sponsorship enabled a shift in discourse from an Afro-Euro continuum that privileges a "Creole" multiculturalism to one that is based on the contribution of particular elements. This shift then makes room for Indo-Trinidadian contributions to the nation, including the non-Christian religious and cultural contributions of Hindus.

Chapter 3, the opening chapter of part II, marks the transition from a spiritually informed black cultural citizenship to an emergent spiritual citizenship through an exploration of local institution building and shifting practices. The chapter begins with the close reading of a prayer that maps diasporic geographies and locates the local within larger transnational networks while performing spiritual labor for the nation. These themes of interplay between the local, the national, and the transnational are explored in the context of a global Orisha conference, shifts in ritual practices, and a case study in the spiritual politics of Carnival. The closing section examines an annual festival as an exemplar of the transitions in Trinidad Orisha

practice, in part informed by an increasing exposure to new lineages and ritual knowledge from Yorubaland.

I consider the emergence of Trinidad Orisha into transnational Ifá/Orisha networks in chapter 4. This shift brings into focus polarities of the Orisha religion in Trinidad between local ancestral practices and those shrines orientated toward Ilé-Ifẹ̀, Nigeria. In several sections I document the travels of Ifá/Orisha priests and devotees between Trinidad and Nigeria. These travels reinforce the place of Trinidad Orisha (and the emerging local Ifá) in transnational spiritual networks. The relationships that were formed through these journeys facilitated the exchange of spiritual knowledge, rituals, and ase that would continue to have a profound effect on the Trini Orisha community (explored further in the following chapter).

Using ethnographic and historical material on the establishment of "Ifá in the ground," chapter 5 explores how Trinidad became the newest home for Ifá in the diaspora and how this development illuminates an emerging spiritual citizenship. Sections explore how conferences arise as important transnational sites for institution building informed by new spiritual knowledge, praxis, and ase where newly articulated ideas of a global spiritual citizenship engage with ideas of social justice and freedom. In a personal narrative on Aséwẹ̀lẹ̀, a ritual to settle the souls of those lost in the slave trade and in slavery, I offer an ethnographic vignette that highlights the responsibility of spiritual citizenship not only to those who are here now, or to those in following generations, but also to those who have come before. In this ritual we witness the enacting of spiritual citizenship as offerings are made to appease and settle the lost souls. As an Ifá elder asks, "With the rites not done for them, how could anyone expect peace and progress in its real sense on both sides of the Atlantic?" (Pópóọla 2007, 35). The closing section focuses on the 2012 Alasuwada conference, which through spiritual praxis and an emerging spiritual citizenship endeavored to bring Ifá to bear directly on how people live together in community through a focus on developing an Ifá-informed social policy.

Throughout the text I play with the boundaries and borders of language use in how I present the Yoruba language, at times with diacritical markings indicating tone, and at other times with no markings. Rather than capricious or random, there is a pattern to the play (as is often the case in diasporic/Caribbean play). I have named the atonal use of Yoruba in the Americas as

"Diasporic Yoruba." This is also reflected in my own Yoruba language use, which is largely for sacred contexts and atonal (i.e. without diacritics). I apologize for any errors in the Continental Yorùbá. Full diacritical markings are attempted to properly convey tone for Continental Yorùbá names and context.

I felt that this contextual representation was important to try in a text that argues for decolonial approaches to ethnography, religion, and politics. Thus, I strategically present the full markings of the profound and beautiful language of Yorùbá (while recognizing that its written orthography is deeply intertwined with a history of colonialism and Christian missionaries). I have taken some liberties when the contexts overlap (as they often do) and for common terms that have a consistent understanding on both sides of the border (babalawo, ase). I have adopted the hybrid form of Ifá/Orisha to reference the African diasporic religion in Trinidad that is primarily informed by Yorùbá religion. I chose to combine the Continental Yorùbá spelling of Ifá (which is universally understood and employed) with the Diasporic Yoruba spelling of Orisha (another universally understood spelling) as a reflection of the interplay of the two streams—continental and diasporic—in Trinidad's African diasporic religion. For more linguistic details please see the Note on Orthography.

NOTES

Note on Orthography

1 Many thanks (*Ese pupo*) go to Chris Corcoran for her assistance with the orthographic notes and linguistic terminology. Any mistakes or shortcomings in the text remain my own.

Preface

1 That state of in-betweenness that I would later study in the works of Victor Turner (1969, 1986) and a state that I viscerally recognized and knew well.

Introduction

1 Having received new titles in the past twenty years, including a kingship, he is now His Royal Majesty Oba Adébólú Fátunmise, the Àdàgbà of Iyánfowórogi.

2 See Peel (2001) for more on the ethnogenesis of the Yorùbá people.

3 The late 1960s up through the early 1970s was a long decade of social critique and transition across the globe marked by struggles for decolonization, civil rights, and Black Power. This was especially the case in the postcolonial world that experienced waves of protest, social upheaval, and political pecarity. In Trinidad this time of social critique that spans the late 1960s into the mid-to-late 1970s has been locally constructed as the Black Power revolution (Oxaal 1971, Pantin 1990, Ryan and Stewart 1995). My concern in this book is with the religious, cultural, and social movement that emerged from this period. As such, throughout this text I refer mainly to the 1970 Black Power movement, especially when referencing the concentration of events that occurred largely in 1970. Certainly these events were socially and politically presaged in previous years and had reverberations throughout the following decade. At times when wanting to emphasize the long durée beyond the events of 1970 I use the term 1970s Black Power movement. For the sake of brevity at times I also just write Black Power to refer to both the events of that time and the consciousness raised through the power of their social critique.

4 Now-for-now is a Trini term that indicates being present in the moment with little concern for the immediate past or the immediate future. The corollary in American culture would be the frequently invoked concept of mindfulness. See Birth's *Any Time Is Trinidad Time* (1999) for more on Trini time.

5 For more on African religious practices in Trinidad during the nineteenth century and the pre-independence twentieth century, see Trotman (1976, 2003).
6 This by no means represents an exhaustive or canonical list of literature on diaspora or more specifically the African diaspora.
7 This is also true of other global religious communities, from the various traditions or lineages within Christianity and Islam to lesser known religions. Though my ethnographic representations here are very specific to African diasporic religions, they may be recognizable to scholars and practitioners of other religions. I do not claim either universality or exceptionalism. Instead I hope that in my own observations there will be synergies, resonances, and conflicts that open spaces for dialogue and reflection.
8 I say this without dismissing the waves of African immigrants who have settled in the Americas over the last hundred-plus years. These immigrants are an often unrecognized addition to the African community in the Americas (with all the complexities of being interpolated into racial systems largely nonexistent in their home countries).
9 For Hindu and Orisha interpenetrations, see also Mahabir and Maharaj (1996). See M. McNeal (2007) for a comprehensive and insightful analysis of the interplay of Orisha and Hindu religions as two complementary facets of post-Creole multiculturalism.
10 For a rich religious history of Oyotunji Village, see Hucks (2014); for an ethnographically informed analysis of the community, see K. Clarke (2004).
11 *Canboulay*, from the French Creole *cannes brulees* for "burning cane," refers locally to the nineteenth-century gatherings that included drumming, singing, and dance held by freed Creole slaves, liberated Africans, and the descendants of both. Originally tied to celebrations of the harvest and the end of slavery in August, the celebrations became part of the pre-Lenten Carnival complex in the late 1800s.
12 See Castor (2009).

Chapter 1. The Spirit of Black Power

1 The historical narrative of 1970 Black Power that I present in this chapter is partial in two important aspects. First, the focus here is on the public events of a singular year, leaving out the larger historical frame of the long 1970s decade (from the late 1960s to the mid-to-late 1970s). Especially now as the fifty-year anniversary of Black Power approaches, this wider frame is a larger project that calls out to be done (while outside the scope of this book). And secondly, the voices of those who lived through those days of protest, and nights with police pounding on the doors, is a story that surely needs to be told. I extend many thanks to Attillah Springer (Tillah Willah, see https://tillahwillah.wordpress.com/) for her poignant evocation of Black Power memories. I hope that in calling attention to these absences this chapter will open the way for these stories to be shared in print.
2 It is clear that there was interchange and exchange culturally and spiritually throughout the West African region, going south into Central Africa and north toward Sierra Leone. Much has been written about the creolization of Sierra Leone,