

Bahia and the Academic Tourist

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Pilgrimage

We board the bus at Odina, on the Avenida Presidente Getulio Vargas. It rushes westward to the nose of the peninsula at Barra, the center of elite Bahian nightlife. Turning northward, the bus is soon whining its way up the steep Ladeira de Vitoria, where in 1835 enslaved African Muslims conspired to establish a Bahian Caliphate (Reis 1993, 112-128). The bus labors past tall International Modern apartment buildings, between which one catches glimpses of the Bay of All Saints, with the island of Itaparica in the distance. The apartment buildings rest on the sites of once elaborate town mansions of sugar planters from the surrounding plantation region. A few of the mansions survive, having been incorporated into the modern structures, and maybe half a dozen, in various stages of decay, remain in the hands of old families. At the top of the hill, the bus swings around the square at Campo Grande, past the Castro Alves theater, through the narrow streets of the nineteenth-century business district, to arrive at the bus terminal at Praça da Sé, where the colonial upper city begins. We are four African American academics; two spouses, a seven-year old prototype of the consequences of miscegenation and multiculturalism; and our Carioca instructor and guide. We have come on an intellectual pilgrimage to Pelourinho – the epicenter of Afro-Brazilian culture.

Pelourinho means “whipping post.” Before 1888, a slave master who did not have the stomach for face-to-face violence, could bring his recalcitrant slave here, to have him or her beaten into submission. But, the Tailor’s Revolt of 1798, inspired in part by the French Revolution, and calling for Bahian independence, was organized and betrayed in these same narrow, cobble-stoned streets. And, the ghosts of the Mâle rebellion of 1835 encounter Yemanjá, on the steps of The Church of Our Lady of the Rosary.

In recent years, elements of the Bahian elite have appropriated the history of the Afro-Bahian people, and the geography of their liberation struggles, and they have hired a few of the Afro-Bahians to play sanitized, folkloric versions of themselves for the tourist trade. A tourist brochure, prepared by the state tourist office, says, “The ‘Pelourinho’ – column of wood or stone – always represented a symbol of authority and justice. Salvador, the first capital city in the Portuguese America, could not afford the lacking of this punishment device provided with iron chains and rings that was used to seize criminals and expose them to public shame” (*Pelourinho*). The web site of Bahiatursa, the State Tourism Authority, tells us, “The sun shines almost year-round, which livens the spirit and darkens the skin of a hospitable and friendly people who favor brightly-colored clothes, believe in many gods and make life a never-ending festival.” (*bahiatursa*) The late elite Bahian novelist, Jorge Amado, described Pelourinho as “the heart of popular Bahian life, situated in the oldest, most powerful, most fascinating part of the city” (Amado 1977, 67).

This paper is my first attempt to understand what I experienced when I visited Salvador in June 1996 as part of my Portuguese language training with Pedro Maligo, of CICALS at Michigan State University.¹ I hope to develop a method that will allow me to understand Bahia on its own terms, avoiding both the explicit Eurocentrism of the standard western academic disciplines, as well as the implicit Eurocentrism of so-called Afrocentricity.² In this paper I hope to sketch out the questions and issues that I plan to clarify in a book entitled *Mother of the Saints: African Culture and Consciousness in Bahia*. As I begin this project, I find myself working under the influence of Michael Hanchard and his “racial politics” approach, as presented in *Orpheus and Power* (Hanchard 1994, 13-30). However, Professor Hanchard might have good reason to think that I have stolen his work and run off in the wrong direction.

I am also trying to absorb anthropologist Paul Stoller's concept of "sensuous ethnography," which he defines as

an attempt to reawaken profoundly the scholar's body by demonstrating how the fusion of the intelligible and the sensible can be applied to scholarly practices and representations. In anthropology, for example, it is especially important to incorporate into ethnographic works the sensuous body – its smells, tastes, textures, and sensations. Such inclusion is paramount in the ethnographic description of societies in which the Eurocentric notion of text – and of textual interpretations – is not important (Stoller xv).

Although she does not use the expression "sensuous scholarship," Barbara Browning discusses a similar method in *Samba: Resistance in Motion*, when, in her "Conclusion" she writes "Much of what I learned in Brazil I learned with my body, and it was only long after that I began to be able to articulate in writing what I had come to understand dancing." (Browning 167). I am prepared to argue that much of what I learned in Bahia, I learned eating. But, I will have to do a lot more research before I can reduce it to language.

There was one moment that defined my experience of Salvador. One afternoon we visited the Center for Human Resources, which is affiliated with the Sociology faculty of the Federal University of Bahia. As we discussed the poverty of the Afro-Bahian people, one of my African American colleagues kept asking, "What are the black politicians doing about this? What are the black politicians doing?" After several efforts to evade the question, one of the women who ran the center finally blurted out, in exasperation, "Listen, in Bahia, even the black politicians are white."

One of the ways in which I am modifying Michael Hanchard's idea of "racial politics" is *not* to look at Bahia as a society divided between black and white. I want to avoid imposing on Bahia the racial bipolarity that I have grown up with in the United States. It is also obvious that racial and ethnic identities in Bahia are much too complicated to be reduced to a black-white opposition. I have chosen instead to follow Jorge Amado and view Bahia as a culture of mulattoes, some darker or some lighter than others (Amado 1977, 371). I do not accept this as a sociological fact, but simply as a method of cultural analysis. It also helps me to get around the fact that I do not really understand what it means to be "white" in Bahia. Perhaps, in fairness to Michael Hanchard, I should refer to my approach as "cultural politics."

In Bahia, blackness and whiteness seem to be the opposite extremes of an unbroken continuum, with an infinite number of shades of brown in between. Salvador seems, instead, to be divided into two *cultural* systems. One is oriented toward *Africaness* and the other toward *Europeaness*. The cuisine of the African cultural system is built around poultry and seafood. The cuisine of the European system is constructed around beef. African spirituality is rooted in *Candomblé*. European spirituality is rooted in Christianity, in both its Roman Catholic and Pentecostal forms. Many, if not most Bahians get to choose between these two systems (Amado, 1993).

In *Orpheus and Power*, Michael Hanchard writes that "Racial consciousness represents the thought and practice of those individuals and groups who respond to their subordination with individual or collective action designed to counterbalance, transpose, or transform situations of racial asymmetry." (Hanchard 1994, 14). Bahians have to be conscious of the probability of being subordinated by anyone lighter in complexion than themselves, especially if that person or group identifies with the European-oriented cultural system. Bahians also have to be conscious of their capacity to subordinate anyone darker in complexion than themselves, especially if that person or group identifies with the African-oriented cultural system. For most Bahians, subordination is a two-way street.

The historical experiences of Jamaica, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic have proven that you do not have to have white people around in order to have *whiteness* as a social or racial dynamic. When there are no *real* white people around, the whitest people around manifest

whiteness. My approach to Bahia, therefore, resembles a discussion of the racial and cultural politics among dark and light-skinned African Americans, Jamaicans, Haitians, and Dominicans, rather than the relations between black and white people in the United States. When I use the expressions black, brown, or white, I am talking about relative complexions, and not races.

The Western-most City in Africa³

I am not a Brazilianist. I am an African Americanist. I am interested in Bahia as part of the African Atlantic world. I am interested in Brazil, only to the degree necessary to understand the context in which Bahia operates. I also think I detect a kind of Bahian separatism or nationalism operating at different levels of Bahian society. Each level – each culture – manifests this separatist tendency in its own way.

Roderick Barman has written that the concept of *patria* or "homeland" was "essentially part of a visual preliterate *mentalite*. Consequently, the word *patria* could hold different meanings for men living in the same physical space. In the port city of Salvador at the end of the 1790s, for example, the word signified to the artisans groups, Portuguese in culture, but often mulatto, the city of Salvador itself" (Barman 26).

For the elite, Barman writes that *patria* "was synonymous with the captaincy of their domicile." Bahia was first a captaincy, then a province, and is now a state. Among the elite, agrarian interests, also, have traditionally encouraged the centrifugal tendency in Brazilian politics – the desire to spin as much power as possible out to the provinces and away from the Capital.

The conception of *patria* for the artisan class is best exemplified by the so-called Conspiracy of the Tailors of 1798. Inspired by the French Revolution, the conspirators sought to eliminate class exploitation, racial discrimination, and slavery. According to Katia de Queiros Mattoso, of the forty-eight known conspirators, thirty-three were mulattoes, eleven whites, and four blacks. Of the four professionals, there were one white and one mulatto surgeon; one white professor of Latin grammar, and one mulatto Clerk of Court. There were two white commissioned military officers, one white non-commissioned officer, three white and six mulatto soldiers; one white and ten mulatto tailors, one white mason, and three carpenters, one goldsmith, two metal engravers, and a shoemaker – all mulattoes. De Queiros Mattoso lists one white, seven mulattoes and one black as of indeterminate professions, which she describes as being generally domestics (Mattoso 1970, 33-53). Other sources list sharecroppers, a school teacher and a druggist.

All of the white conspirators were free, by definition. Twenty-five of the mulattoes were free; only eight were slaves. Only one of the four blacks was free. De Queiros Mattoso suggests that the disparity between income and the cost of living contributed to the conspiracy.

Donald Ramos writes that at least three of the white conspirators were also Freemasons, members of a secret Masonic society, the Knights of Light. Ramos sees this organization as the source of French revolutionary propaganda in Bahia. The Masonic angle connects the Bahian conspiracy of 1798 to one nine years earlier in Minas Gerais. The conspiracy in Minas, however, never moved beyond a circle of aristocratic intellectuals. (Ramos 74-90) The Salvador Knights of Light were said to have been organized by a Frenchman, Monsieur Larcher. There were also reports of the involvement of mysterious Frenchmen in the slave conspiracy in Virginia, two years later, in 1800, known as Gabriel's Rebellion. (Egerton 1993)

According to Kenneth Maxwell,

Embittered and anti-clerical the Bahian mulattoes were as much opposed to rich Brazilians as they were to Portuguese domination. They welcomed social turmoil,

proposed the overthrow of existing structures, and sought an egalitarian and democratic society where differences of race would be no impediment to employment or social mobility (Maxwell 219).

In the few instances when the Conspiracy of the Tailors has been written about, there seems to be a presumption among the scholars that the conspirators were calling for the independence of Brazil. But, their rhetoric was clearly directed at the people of Bahia, calling for a Bahian, not a Brazilian Republic. According to Luis Henrique Dias Tavares, the Conspiracy of the Tailors is also one of the few instances in which the common people have been able to force themselves into Brazilian political history (Burns 246).

Eugene Genovese has written that slave resistance and revolt usually occurred when there were divisions or conflicts among the ruling classes. In their work, Genovese and João José Reis have both written about a series of slave revolts in Bahia between 1807 and 1835 (Genovese 1979). At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Portuguese colonial officials were distracted by the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, which resulted in the conquest of Portugal and the removal of the royal court to Rio de Janeiro in 1808. But, events in West Africa may have also contributed to the revolutionary spirit in Bahia. Afonjá, a military chief, revolted against the Oyo empire in about 1797, stimulating a series of civil wars that fed many Yoruba-speaking people, from present day Nigeria, Niger, and Benin, into the Atlantic slave trade. According to João José Reis, the holy war in the Niger river basin, beginning in 1804, and led by Shehu Usman dan Fodio, "produced thousands of slaves, mainly Hausas, who ended up stocking the slave-gathering outposts on the Bight of Benin." (Reis 1993, 94). These battle-tested warriors would not have adjusted easily to being enslaved in a Brazil fragmented by regional, racial, class, and ideological conflicts.

In January 1822, Prince Pedro, heir to the throne of Portugal, declared independence and became Emperor Pedro I of Brazil. The transition to an independent Brazil was largely peaceful. But, there was a strong Portuguese military contingent in Bahia that resisted. Although support for independence was stronger in Salvador than in the interior, pro-independence slave masters led an army of black freedmen, slaves, Indians and poor whites into the city of Salvador, 1 July 1823, to encourage the Portuguese to leave. According to João Jorge Rodrigues and Nelson Mendes of Olodum, slaves were told that they would be free and Indians were told that their land would be returned, as soon as the Portuguese left (Rodrigues, Mendes). To this day Bahians celebrate Independence Day at a different time than the rest of Brazil.

According to E. Bradford Burns, between 1824 and 1840 Bahia "seethed with social protest. In general terms, it is safe to conclude that the Bahian dissidents were people of color who opposed or fought against 'European types.' Their ideology was vague and often contradictory. They frequently sacked shops and warehouses in a quest for food and killed military officers and landowners in a challenge to authority" (Burns 1970, 173). The clearest example of African nationalism in nineteenth-century Bahia was the Mâle Rebellion of 1835. A force of primarily African-born, enslaved Yoruba Muslims came very close to capturing the city of Salvador in late January (Reis 1993, 97). Everything I know about the Mâle Rebellion of 1835 I learned from João José Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (1993). It is a fascinating story, dealing as much with the histories of Africa and Islam as with that of Bahia.

In 1831, in response to anti-Portuguese sentiment in Brazil, and demands for his return from the Portuguese parliament, the Portuguese-born Brazilian Emperor, Pedro I, abdicated in favor of his five-year old Brazilian-born son, Pedro II. A regency was set up that was to rule until the boy was old enough to ascend to the throne. This first regency was dominated by moderate liberals. In 1837, a second regency was put into place, dominated by conservatives (Burns 1993, 151-173). In Bahia, the radical Federal Club and disgruntled military officers led a revolt against the new conservative regency. This revolt was known as the Sabinada, in

honor of one of its alleged leaders, Dr. Francisco Sabino Alvares da Rocha Vieira. An independent Bahian Republic was declared, but later disavowed. Former members of the mulatto militias that had been disbanded in 1831 supported the revolt, as did much of Salvador's free brown and black population, who saw another opportunity to strike a blow against racial discrimination, class exploitation, and slavery. The Bahian historian Luis Vianna Filho called the Sabinada "the revolt of the masses." The system of slave labor broke down, during the five months that Salvador was besieged by government forces (Barman 195-197). After the cause was essentially lost, the Sabinista leadership sought the support of Brazilian-born slaves. With memories of the Mâle Rebellion, just two years earlier, fresh in their minds, the Sabinistas did not invite African-born slaves to participate. The involvement of any slaves in the revolt implied a level of equality that was unacceptable to many white and brown supporters, who consequently abandoned the Sabinista cause.

Once government forces defeated the Sabinistas and seized control of Salvador, they massacred hundreds of black and brown people, most of whom had not been involved in the revolt. This brutal repression had the intended impact of permanently eliminating the black and brown people of Salvador as a military threat to elite control. Never again would black and brown people participate in armed struggle to change social relations in Bahia (Kray 501; Holub 275). In all these conspiracies and revolts, the blacker you were, the more severely you were punished, regardless of the level of your involvement. Conversely, the whiter you were, the better your chances of escaping punishment, regardless of the level of your involvement. Pelourinho was the prime "battle ground" in all the revolts and conspiracies of the nineteenth century.

According to João José Reis, "while the guns fired in [the Mâle Rebellion of] 1835 were still smoking," the provincial legislature of Bahia attempted to regulate and discipline the African street labor market in Salvador (Reis 1997, 372-373). These African-born *ganhadores*, the nineteenth-century equivalent of our porters, messengers, deliverymen, taxi-drivers, and street vendors, were organized into ethnically-based proto-unions, or *cantos*. Over the years, the provincial and city assemblies considered a number of laws intended to control the enslaved, freed, and free laborers. In 1857 a law was passed requiring the *ganhadores* to register, pay a labor tax, wear metal tags showing registration numbers, and, if free, find guarantors of good behavior. The predominantly Yoruba laborers were particularly offended by the tags. In response they went on a week-long strike, bringing commerce in the city to a stand-still. They won only a partial victory – eliminating the tax and greatly softening the guarantor requirement – but they made the city fathers aware of a city-wide labor organization with considerable political and economic power (Reis 1997).

Uma Nação Africana Chamada Bahia⁴

In the 18th and 19th centuries, many enslaved Bahians escaped from slavery to form maroon communities, known in Brazil as *quilombos*. At the end of the nineteenth century, as the enslaved destroyed the institution of slavery, many of these *quilombos* in the northern suburbs of Salvador, evolved into neighborhoods organized, directly or indirectly, around *candomblé* communities. *Candomblé* is the Bahian form of Yoruba religious practice, imported along with enslaved Africans, from present day south-western Nigeria and southern Benin.

After the militant resistance of Afro-Bahians was crushed, and with limited access to the political process, it appears that Afro-Bahians retreated into a form of synthesized African nationalism. According to Kim Butler, some of the *candomblé* communities in present day Bahia can trace their origins back to the seventeenth century. But, Butler writes that none of these engaged in "as ambitious an effort to reinterpret African tradition in Brazilian context as did the houses of Engenho Velho, Gantois, and Opô Afonjá (Butler 195).

Engenho Velho, which means "the old sugar mill," was established around 1830, by African-born Bahian women. Also known as Casa Branca or "White House," Engenho Velho is rooted in the tradition of the Ketu nation, from present-day eastern Benin. Engenho Velho, today, is located in the Federação district of Salvador, home to the primary campus of the Federal University of Bahia.

It appears that around 1849 there was a dispute about who should succeed to the position of "mother of the saints," in Yoruba, *iyalorixa*. The dissidents withdrew from Engenho Velho and formed the Terreiro de Gantois. Gantois being the name of the French landlord.⁵

In 1903, there was yet another succession dispute at Engenho Velho. This time the dissidents withdrew and, in 1910, formed Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá (Butler 194-195). Opô Afonjá is located, in the northern suburbs, site of several *quilombos* in the years before emancipation. According to Robert Levine, after emancipation, government officials broadened the legal definitions of vagrancy and loitering so as to better "control the unruly freedmen who, it was feared, would gravitate to large cities and look for trouble" (Levine 59-69). In the period these *terreiros* and communities were being formed in the northern suburbs, the celebration of *candomblé* was illegal, and as was true for earlier *quilombos*, isolated, hill-top locations, like that of Opo Afonja, were advantageous.

Pelourinho

The Afro-Bahian geographer, Milton Santos, makes a distinction between Pelourinho as landscape and Pelourinho as space. According to Santos "landscape allows a fragmented, broken-up approach; space demands a unified, totalized approach." Santos says it is okay to "analyze a landscape as an aspect, a form, as a collection of objects, as a fragment of a larger collectivity that one separates for purposes of description and analysis. A space, is something that only can be examined in the fullness of relationships that define it" (Santos 13). The culture of elite Bahians, who control tourism, is constructed around the denial of the true meaning of Pelourinho. For them, the neighborhood can only be a landscape – a collection of objects – a fragment of a larger collectivity. For Afro-Bahians, however, Pelourinho is the space in which they made the transition from captive to slave – from "African" to Brazilian; where they were publicly whipped; where they worshipped their gods and honored their ancestors and deities; and where they conspired and fought for their freedom (Santos; Mattoso 1986, 33-81).

The one thing most non-Brazilians think they know about Brazil is Carnival. Salvador now attracts some two million people to its equivalent of Mardi Gras. Carnival activities, in Salvador, are focused in three different neighborhoods – (1) Barra/Ondina, on the south coast; (2) "greater Pelourinho," the historical City Center, on the Bay; and (3) Liberdade, the uptown neighborhood that is home to Ilê Aiyê, the most African-centered of the *blocos afros*.

The earliest Carnival organizations in Bahia were the *afoxes*, which are public, secular manifestations of *candomblé* communities. The best known *afoxe* is the Sons of Gandhi, organized in 1949, the four hundredth anniversary of the founding of the city of Salvador in 1549 (Crowley 19, 23). Because of the association with non-violence, naming the *afoxe* after Mahatma Gandhi is seen by some as proof of the group's quiescence. But, for a group of Afro-Bahian longshoremens to honor a brown-skinned Hindu who, only two years earlier, had led his third world nation to independence from a major European colonial power, strikes me as a bold political act. This was still a time, in Brazil, when it was dangerous to make public manifestations of African culture. For Afro-Bahians, with a deep tradition of both violent and non-violent resistance to slavery and racial oppression, Gandhi's India would be the next best thing to an independent Africa. For the Sons and Daughters of Gandhi, the Mahatma is clearly a masking of Oxala, but his image is significant because, unlike most other masks, his is neither white nor Catholic.

It is also significant that recently the name of the Daughters of Gandhi was changed to the Daughters of Oxum. In Africa, Oshun personifies beauty and sexuality. In Cuba, Ochun is also the spirit of the river and sweet water (Neimark 139-143; Brandon 147-148; Browning 65-66).

After the *afoxes* came the *blocos afros*, which project a secular pan-Africanist aesthetic. The first *bloco* was Ilê Aiyê. Ilê Aiyê means "House of the Material World" in the language of the Yoruba. Founded in 1974, in the neighborhood called Liberdade, by Antonio Carlos dos Santos, known as Vovô (grandfather) and Apolonio de Jesus. Before Ilê Aiyê, dark-skinned Bahians could participate in Salvador's carnival only as members of the Sons of Gandhi or as "popcorn," a loose grouping that was allowed to follow the sound trucks known as *trios electricos* (Weinoldt 1998). Barbara Browning noticed that "clearly, the trios attracted a lighter-skinned following than the afro- or indio-identified groups" (Browning 131). But, Christopher Dunn writes that "Some of the *trios electrico* instituted racist and elitist policies in order to block entry of those deemed undesirable. These groups routinely denied entry to Afro-Brazilians, even those who were able to pay the entrance fee" (Dunn 14). Dunn also writes that "To show that their project had nothing to do with nostalgia or folklore, the directors of Ilê Aiyê established a racial policy which paralleled that of the exclusively white *trios electrico*." During its first decade of existence Ilê Aiyê denied entrance to whites and even to light-skinned Afro-Brazilians in order to underscore its political message. Vovô sees nothing wrong with restricting membership to "blacks or people of African descent," saying it would be better if the other Afro *blocos* had the same policy. He sees this restriction as necessary, given that Ilê Aiyê originated in the Liberdade section of Curuzu, a black neighborhood with many *candomblé* communities and other manifestations of African culture (Weinoldt 1998). The membership policies of Ilê Aiyê could be seen to parallel those of the *trios electrico*, as suggested by Christopher Dunn, but it is also possible that this is a problem of cross-cultural communications. I believe that Ilê Aiyê is not so much concerned about *race*, but with a strong commitment to African cultural values. Like most Brazilians, Ilê Aiyê assumes that these values are color-coded.

The *bloco afro* best known outside of Bahia is probably Olodum. Founded in 1979, the name Olodum comes from the name of Olodumare, the remote entity that the Yoruba credit with creating and maintaining the universe ("About Olodum"). The *orixas* who emanate from Olodumare, existed before the creation of human beings, and are the guardians and facilitators of human destiny (Brandon 14). Based in Pelourinho and Maciel, the portion of the lower city contiguous to Pelourinho, Olodum floundered as a result of internal conflicts. João Jorge Rodrigues and Neguinho de Samba left Ilê Aiyê, joined Olodum, and built what had been primarily a musical group into a major community organization and political power base in Pelourinho, the poor but historic neighborhood in the old center of Salvador.

The organization of both Ilê Aiyê and Olodum were stimulated, in part, by the struggles for independence from Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. The Portuguese language, which normally acts as a barrier between Afro-Brazilians and the rest of the African Atlantic world, became, in the 1970s, a link to some of its most important liberation struggles. According to João Jorge Rodrigues, the writings of Amílcar Cabral of Guinea-Bissau; Agostinho Neto of Angola; and Samora Machel, of Mozambique – in the original Portuguese – circulated from hand to hand in the poor, black neighborhoods of Salvador (Rodrigues).

In *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean*, Richard D.E. Burton, following Michel de Certeau, makes a distinction between "resistance" and "opposition." Burton writes:

In very general terms, de Certeau argues that a given sociopolitical system can be resisted only when it is possible for the dominated group or dominated individuals to place themselves entirely outside the system in question. Resistance requires an

"elsewhere" from which the system may be perceived and grasped as a whole and from which a coherent *strategy* of resistance may be elaborated. *Opposition*, on the other hand, has no space it can properly call its own. It takes place of necessity *within* the system, on ground defined by the system, and in the absence of any concerted strategy of resistance, it operates, says de Certau, "blow by blow," moving from one *tactical* maneuver to another within and against the system (Burton 343).

I see Ilê Aiyê as manifesting resistance; based in the poor black neighborhood of Liberdade, an outgrowth of pre-emancipation *quilombos*, and the *candomblé terreiro* of Mae Hilda, Ilê Aiyê operates out of neo-African culture and values. Olodum, on the other hand, is clearly secular; and based in the Pelourinho/Maciêl neighborhood that is being appropriated by the elite for gentrification and tourism, would appear to manifest opposition.

The Politics of Culture and the Culture of Politics

Many Brazilians and others have invested their hope for change in Brazil in either the United Black Movement or the Worker's Party, but neither organization has had much success in Bahia. Both the movement and the party are expressions of the political culture of São Paulo. The experience of the Brazilian Black Front in the 1930s, and of these two groups today suggests that European-oriented Paulista political institutions do not transplant easily to African-oriented Bahia. Like most political formations coming out of the Marxist tradition, both the United Black Movement and the Workers Party have difficulty hiding their contempt for what they perceive as epiphenomenal folk culture.⁶

John Burdick writes of "Brazil's Black Consciousness Movement" that "Not only is the leadership of the black movement primarily middle-class; it also appears to be dominated by Afro-Brazilians with comparatively light skin." Many of these light-skinned middle-class leaders had to "transpose, or transform" themselves and their identities, but their assumption of entitlement to positions of leadership has alienated many darker-skinned folk who see their lighter-skinned leaders as johnnies-come-lately to black consciousness (Burdick 23).

A few Workers Party activists in Bahia understand that Paulista politics must be grafted onto African roots, if they are to thrive in the Bahian cultural ecology. The Workers Party must, also, deal with the historical fact that it is the grandchild of the "whitening" movement of the early twentieth century, in which the Brazilian and São Paulo governments subsidized the immigration of Europeans to São Paulo, so that Brazil could dilute its embarrassing blackness (Skidmore 1993).

Saudade

On our last day in Salvador, my wife, my daughter and I took the ferry across the Bay to the island of Itaparica. As we approached the island, we looked back toward Salvador. We could see the European city to the south, curving away toward the Atlantic Ocean. We could also see the African village stretching as far as the eye could see toward the north.

We arrived too late for serious exploration, so we walked around a bit and then had a late, overpriced lunch in a mediocre French café. As we took the ferry back across to the city, I realized that I now understood that elusive Brazilian word *saudade* because I was already homesick for a city that was not my home and from which I had not yet departed.

Endnotes

¹ The "Consortium for Inter-Institutional Collaboration in African and Latin American Studies" has since been dismantled.

² For a south central Brazilian expression of Afrocentricity see Abdias do Nascimento, "Quilombismo: An Afro-Brazilian Alternative," *Journal of Black Studies* 11: 2 (December 1980).

³ David Montgomery to Robert Hinton, personal communication, c.1984.

⁴ This is the central slogan on a t-shirt, produced by Ilê Aiyê, acquired in June 1996.

⁵ According to João José Reis, the firm Gantois & Marback "played an active part in the illicit slave trade with Bahia from 1831 to 1850." In 1857, the firm made money by legally transporting freed Africans back to Africa. "The Revolution of the Ganhadores," *Journal of Latin American Studies* v. 29, part 2, May 1997, p. 379. I am assuming this to be the same Gantois. I have not yet proved it.

⁶ This piece was written before the recent election of Luis Inacio Lula da Silva, of the *Workers Party*, to the Brazilian presidency. The *Workers Party* did not carry Bahia.

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