

Afro-Brazilian Social and Subjective (Po)Ethics: Teachings from Black and Indigenous Peoples / *(Po)éticas sociais e subjetivas afro-brasileiras: ensinamentos dos povos negros e indígenas*

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the pedagogical and sociological teachings present in the myths of the orishas and the perspectives of some indigenous thinkers. Using a decolonial and counter-colonial framework, it seeks to question and encourage the creation of paths to break with coloniality, promoting the invention of new ways of thinking about society and its sociopolitical organization. The study proposes abandoning white-colonial perspectives and exploring the social and subjective (po)ethics of Black and Indigenous cultures to rethink collectivity, human-nature relations, transgression and order, social maintenance, duality, and other gender perspectives.

KEYWORDS: Myths of the orishas; Indigenous perspectives; Subjectivities; Social thought; Ethics

RESUMO

Este estudo investiga os ensinamentos pedagógicos e sociológicos presentes nos mitos dos orixás e nas perspectivas de alguns pensadores indígenas. A partir de um referencial decolonial e contracolonial, busca-se questionar e incentivar a criação de caminhos para romper com a colonialidade, promovendo a invenção de novas formas de se pensar a sociedade e sua organização sociopolítica. O estudo propõe abandonar perspectivas brancas-coloniais e explorar as (po)éticas sociais e subjetivas das culturas negras e indígenas para repensar a coletividade, a relação humano-natureza, a transgressão e a ordem, a manutenção social, o duplo e outras perspectivas de gênero.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Mitos dos orixás; Perspectivas indígenas; Subjetividades; Pensamento Social; Ética

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Introduction

This study seeks to encourage reflections through a decolonial and counter-colonial theoretical lens, aiming to break away from certain Western constructs of humanity, upheld by coloniality and its attendant problems—such as the relentless pursuit of productivity, asymmetric economic relations, precariousness, cultural imposition, modes of social interaction, and violence.

By viewing society through the lens of Aníbal Quijano's concept of the coloniality of power, we can see culture, the state, and political and social institutions as sectors shaped and dominated by Eurocentrism. Eurocentrism functions as a hegemonic mode of controlling subjectivity and intersubjectivity, globally imposed and accepted as the sole legitimate rationality. According to Quijano, Eurocentrism, alongside globalisation, capitalism, and modernity, forms a power structure intrinsic to coloniality, grounded in the notion of "race" imposed upon populations since the colonial expansion. This constitutes the most profound and effective form of political domination, perpetuated by Europe, America, and the forces of capitalism (Quijano, 2002).

The Eurocentric experience in Latin America obscures the recognition of our identities, complicating our ability to address social challenges. Despite being a society characterised by diverse cultural backgrounds and strong Black and Indigenous influences, coloniality through Eurocentrism and modernity persistently promotes white, Eurocentric, and North American cultures, beliefs, and lifestyles as the future model for social progress. As Quijano (2005, p. 118) observes:

Applied specifically to the Latin American historical experience, the Eurocentric perspective of knowledge operates like a mirror that distorts what it reflects. In other words, the image we find in this mirror is not entirely chimerical, as we possess so many significant European historical traits in so many material and intersubjective aspects. Yet, at the same time, we are profoundly distinct. Therefore, when we gaze at our Eurocentric mirror, the image we see is necessarily partial and distorted. Here lies the tragedy: we were all led, knowingly or not, willingly or not, to perceive and accept that image as ours, as exclusively ours. In this way, we continue to be what we are not.

Consequently, we can never fully identify our actual problems, let alone resolve them, except in a partial and distorted manner.¹

Considering Quijano's (2005) critique of the nation-state, we understand that every society is structured by power, and the idea of nationalization—of a single identity—can only be built through the extermination of different peoples and cultures or the imposition of one group over another in pursuit of social homogenization. In Brazil's case, the creation of a nation-state ignored the presence of Black and Indigenous peoples, their beliefs, and worldviews, excluding these groups from spaces of power. This led to the imposition of a white, Western culture as the national culture and identity.

In seeking to reconnect with who we are and disentangle ourselves from the grips of coloniality and Eurocentrism, this study explores the ethical principles and teachings inherent in Black and Indigenous cultures, with the goal of recovering and envisioning new possible worlds.

We align with Antônio Bispo dos Santos (2019), who suggests that it is through religiosities and beliefs that populations form their worldviews. It is from these worldviews that their ways of life and systems of social organisation emerge. Therefore, myths, beliefs, spirituality, and religiosities are vital elements for understanding societies and their modes of organisation.

Here, we engage with Black and Indigenous worldviews by drawing on the perspectives of Indigenous leaders from the Krenak and Yanomami peoples, the myths of the Yoruba, Fon, and Afro-Brazilian orishas, and the *orikis* of the orishas.

The *oriki* is a literary genre within the Yoruba oral tradition. It serves as a salutation or evocation to the *ori* (head), recognising the *ori* as a divinity that embodies all our origins. Consequently, saluting or evoking the *ori* is a way of honouring our own divinity and our origins (Poli, 2019).

¹ In Portuguese: “Aplicada de maneira específica à experiência histórica latino-americana, a perspectiva eurocêntrica de conhecimento opera como um espelho que distorce o que reflete. Quer dizer, a imagem que encontramos nesse espelho não é de todo quimérica, já que possuímos tantos e tão importantes traços históricos europeus em tantos aspectos, materiais e intersubjetivos. Mas, ao mesmo tempo, somos tão profundamente distintos. Daí que quando olhamos nosso espelho eurocêntrico, a imagem que vemos seja necessariamente parcial e distorcida. Aqui a tragédia é que todos fomos conduzidos, sabendo ou não, querendo ou não, a ver e aceitar aquela imagem como nossa e como pertencente unicamente a nós. Dessa maneira seguimos sendo o que não somos. E como resultado não podemos nunca identificar nossos verdadeiros problemas, muito menos resolvê-los, a não ser de uma maneira parcial e distorcida.”

For Oyèrónkẹ Oyěwùmí (2016),² the *oriki* is a recited poetry directed at a specific person or subject, forming the basis for most other Yoruba literary genres. In Yoruba life, everything has its own *oriki*, an expansive definition of things whereby “to present the *oriki* of a person is to name, rename, and accumulate more names. *Oriki* is simply the call of the name in the most literal sense of the term” (p. 72).

Antonio Risério (1996) draws attention to the textual and poetic richness of *orikis*, describing them as “omnirepresentational.” *Orikis* are essential elements in social rites, ubiquitous in Yoruba social existence. They provide a wealth of material for various types of analysis concerning Nagô-Yoruba life and are frequently utilised by scholars to explore religious culture, conduct historiographical research, and offer socio-anthropological interpretations.

Like *orikis*, myths also offer rich resources for social analysis. According to Naiara Paula Eugenio (2014), mythology functions as a means of learning and internalising historical events, serving as a narrative tool for interpreting the surrounding reality.

Using the tools of *orikis* and myths, this study will explore alternative, counter-hegemonic perspectives for viewing, relating to, and building society, focusing on the themes of collectivity, human-nature relations, transgression and order, duality, and alternative possibilities for gender relations and representations.

1 Collectivity as a Social and Ancestral Understanding in Yoruba and Afro-Brazilian Culture

Collectivity is a core ethical concept in Yoruba culture, rooted in social and ancestral understanding, and consistently reinforced through its myths and symbols. When examining this concept, we encounter the orisha Oxóssi as one of its foremost embodiments. Oxóssi is revered as the orisha of collectivity, the lord of abundance, and the hunter with a single arrow. “He does not care if the chief orders everyone to work at

² OYẸWÙMÍ, Oyèrónkẹ. Matripotency: Ìyá, in Philosophical Concepts and Sociopolitical Institutions. In: What Gender is Motherhood?. Gender and Cultural Studies in Africa and the Diaspora. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2016. D.O.I.: https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137521255_4

home when he grabs his hoe to go to the field. If anyone works near him in the field, they will find something to eat (Poli, 2019, p. 104).”³

According to the *oriki* above and Ivan Poli’s (2019) analysis, Oxóssi always provides food to those who work alongside him, even if it requires transgressing rules. From the ethical principles embedded in this *oriki*, we observe that competition or accumulation is absent; instead, there is a guarantee of abundance for all, preventing hunger and misery. As Poli argues, these verses symbolically convey that the collective goal of a group must be embraced by each individual as their personal objective. This concept stems from the hunters’ code, in which turning a collective goal into an individual pursuit ensures the survival of the community.

In the song Odekomorodé, performed by Alcione and Grupo Ofá and written by Iuri Passos, Luciana Baraúna, and Yomar Asogbá (2019), Vovó Cici narrates one of Oxóssi’s myths:

[...]

(Narrative by Vovó Cici)
Oxóssi, the Lord of hunting
The Lord of the community
The Lord of silence

The one who is always alert
And always observes everything around him
The one who lets nothing escape

We cannot deny it
We are hunters!

And one of them always took his mother wherever he went
And the mother saw the terror
that other young men were enduring
She remembered her son only had one arrow

She ran to Ifá and said,
Lord! Lord! Save my only son!

And Ifá said,
So, if you wish to save your son
Make an offering at the foot of the Iroko (sacred tree) for your son
This offering will change his life entirely

³ In Portuguese: “Ele não quer saber se o chefe mandou fazer um trabalho comum na casa quando ele pega a sua enxada para ir a roça. Se alguém trabalhar perto dele na roça encontrará o que comer.”

And the mother ran and made the sacrifice

The moment she placed the offering
At the feet of the Iroko, her son, who was near the king's court,
Threw his single arrow

And it flew straight to the heart
of the great bird, shrinking smaller and smaller
until it fell at the king's feet

Pierced through, and everything returned to normal
The day became clear, and everyone rejoiced
Everyone began to celebrate

Then the king called Oxotocanxoxô
(The hunter with a single arrow) and said,
Oh! You, with just one arrow
freed me from this sorceress
I offer you what I promised
Whoever killed these sorceresses would receive many cowries,
many cowries, many cowries

Then the young man said,
I would prefer something else
that you spare the lives
of the other hunters, my brothers

And the king replied,
Of course. Then they are all forgiven

And when the community saw that Oxóssi
had saved the other hunters
they began to chant,
O-Xó-Ssi!
O-Xó-Ssi!
O-Xó-Ssi! [...] (Passos *et al.*, 2019).⁴

⁴ In Portuguese: “[...] (Narrativa de Vovó Cici)/ Oxóssi, o Senhor da caça/ O Senhor da comunidade/ O Senhor do silêncio// Aquele que está sempre alerta/ E sempre observa tudo que está a sua volta/ Aquele que nada deixa escapar// Nós não podemos negar/ Somos caçadores!/ E um deles, sempre aonde ia ele levava a sua mãe/ E a mãe viu, o terror/ que outros jovens estavam passando/ Ela lembrou que o filho dela só tinha uma flecha// Ela corre e vai até Ifá e diz/ Senhor! Senhor! Salve o meu único filho// E Ifá disse/ Então, se você quiser salvar o seu filho/ Você faça uma oferenda no pé do Iroco/ (árvore sagrada) pelo seu filho/ Esta oferenda tornará a vida dele/ muito diferente// E a mãe correu e fez o sacrifício// No momento que ela arriou o sacrifício/ no pé do Iroco, o seu filho onde ele estava/ próximo a/ corte do rei/ atirou a sua única flecha// E a flecha foi direto no coração/ daquela grande ave e foi diminuindo/ diminuindo, diminuindo, diminuindo/ Caindo no pé do rei// Transpassada e tudo voltou como era antes/ O dia ficou claro e todos ficaram alegres/ Todo mundo começou a fazer festa/// Então, o rei chamou Oxotocanxoxô/ (O caçador de uma flecha só) e disse/ Oh! Você com uma flecha/ ó me livrou dessa feiticeira/ Eu ofereço o que eu tinha dito pra você/ Quem matasse essas feiticeiras/ eu daria muitos búzios, muitos búzios/ muitos búzios// Então, o jovem

In this myth, Oxóssi rejects the wealth offered by the king in favour of saving his fellow hunters, his brothers. This act exemplifies decision-making rooted in collective thinking, concern for the community, and decisions that transcend the individual in favour of the “we.” The value of wealth is seen as inferior to the value of life.

A key point in this myth, which even “justifies” Oxóssi’s actions, is the Yoruba view of wealth accumulation as a form of social imbalance. If one person has an excess of cowries, another will have none. As Wanderson Flor do Nascimento (2016) explains, in Yoruba cosmology, life is governed by an energy called *axé*. Everything possesses *axé*, and it must circulate freely, never being hoarded. Accumulating wealth disrupts this movement—the becoming that defines *axé*.

The myth of Exu, the orisha who governs the marketplace, closely aligns with this perspective of collectivity and links Exu with Oxóssi. In Exu’s marketplace, there can be no stagnation or accumulation of goods; rather, solidarity and sharing must prevail to strengthen the community. It is also essential to highlight that in Yoruba culture, there is no binary distinction between the material and the spiritual. Therefore, exchanges in this marketplace involve not only material goods but also actions, emotions, and other forms of *axé* (Nascimento, 2016).

Oyěwùmí (2016)⁵ discusses the notion of collectivity in the context of life in African Yoruba villages, drawing attention to the collective upbringing of children and the tradition of the community giving gifts and money to *Ìyá*—the person who gives life—for the care of newborns, acknowledging the infinite needs of a baby. This underscores the ethics of collectivity, which strengthens the community through the nurturing and support of the family unit.

Bringing these (po)ethics of collectivity and community into the Afro-Brazilian context, I recount an experience during a Candomblé ritual, led by ancestral Indigenous

disse/ Eu preferiria outra coisa/// que o senhor perdoasse/ a vida dos outros caçadores, meus irmãos// Aí o rei disse/ Claro. Então estão todos perdoados//E quando a comunidade/ viu que Oxóssi/ tinha salvo os outros caçadores/ começaram a/ dizer/ O-Xó-Ssi!// O-Xó-Ssi!// O-Xó-Ssi! [...]”

⁵ See footnote 1.

entities known as “cabocos.”⁶ The ritual occurred at *Ilê Axé Oyá Irokê*, where “caboco” Laje Guerreiro presides. During the ritual, the “caboco” sang the following chant:

My father took me hunting,
Through the forests I walked.
My father took me hunting,
Through the forests I walked.
With a single arrow,
I struck the peacock.
With a single arrow,
I struck the peacock.
I shared the meat,
I wore the feathers.
I shared the meat,
I wore the feathers.
With a single arrow,
I struck the peacock.
With a single arrow,
I struck the peacock (Laje Guerreiro, 2022).⁷

Once again, through song, we witness the imagery of sharing, the collective mindset, and a focus on community. The sharing of the hunted meat symbolises the sharing of *axé*, exchanges, and reciprocity. These ideas are deeply embedded in the imagination of Afro-Brazilian ancestry, belief, and spirituality, and they permeate social organisation and ways of life.

2 A Different Human-Nature Relationship

From a Yoruba perspective and through the views of Indigenous leaders from the Krenak and Yanomami peoples, we encounter a construction of the human-nature relationship that breaks away from the Western concept of human superiority over nature.

One perspective on death in Yoruba culture allows us to reflect on how the human-nature relationship is understood organically, where both humans and nature originate

⁶ The use of the term “caboco” instead of “caboclo” occurs because the former is more commonly used in spoken language and is the way the author learned it through their experience in Candomblé.

⁷ In Portuguese: “Meu pai me levou pra caçar/ pelas matas eu andei/ meu pai me levou pra caçar/ pelas matas eu andei/ com uma flecha só/ o pavão eu acertei/ com uma flecha só/ o pavão eu acertei/ a carne eu dividi/ as penas eu me vesti/ a carne eu dividi/ as penas eu me vesti/ com uma flecha só/ o pavão eu acertei/ com uma flecha só/ o pavão eu acertei.”

from the same matter and are part of the same life cycle. The following excerpt from a myth illustrates this idea:

Oyeku Meji revealed how Orunmilá taught humanity to protect itself from premature death. When man was created, death considered the new creature its favourite food. Thus, death was the only deity pleased when God created man. While the other deities saw humans as inferior beings created to serve, death saw them as its food. However, it waited for man to multiply before entering their homes and consuming them at will. The humans had no means of defence and resigned themselves to death's incessant attacks. They had no one to appeal to, just as they believed that lesser animals existed to serve as human food, so too did death believe that humans were its meat [...] (Poli apud Tratado, 2019, p. 80).⁸

This excerpt from the myth of Oyeku Meji—one of the Odu (destinies) of *Ifá*,⁹ a divinity linked to *Ikú* (death)—demonstrates that death is understood as a natural occurrence, just like other elements of nature. Humans are born, grow, serve as sustenance, and die, as they too are part of nature.

Death is seen as something natural and part of the life cycle. What is not “acceptable” is premature death. In Yoruba societies, there is a mythical understanding of premature death through the phenomenon of *àbíkú* (born-to-die; those who die before reaching an advanced age). Many precautions, offerings, and rites are performed to keep *àbíkús* alive and prevent their premature departure (Verger 1983). According to Ribeiro Fria and Sàlámì (2022, p. 261), “Premature death is socially unacceptable because the

⁸ In Portuguese: “Oyeku Meji revelou como Orunmilá ensinou à humanidade como proteger-se de morte prematura. Quando o homem foi criado, a morte considerou a nova criatura como prato favorito para seu alimento. Então, foi a morte a única divindade feliz quando Deus criou o homem. Enquanto as outras divindades consideravam os homens seres inferiores criados para servir, a morte os considerava como provisão de alimentos. Não obstante, esperou que o homem se multiplicasse para dirigir-se às suas casas e utilizá-los, caprichosamente, como alimento. Faltavam os meios de defesa, e o homem resignou-se ao ataque incessante da morte. Os homens não tinham a quem apelar, pois a lógica era que, da mesma forma que eles acreditavam que os animais inferiores eram feitos para o alimento dos homens, a morte considerava os homens como sua carne de alimento.”

⁹ *Ifá* is a Yoruba divination system, commonly practiced by *babalaôs* (fathers of secrets). They transmit from generation to generation a vast set of traditional stories, classified into 256 *odus*, or signs of *Ifá* (Verguer, 1983).

ideal is a ‘good death’: a non-violent death occurring in old age, celebrated with a funeral so that the spirit may be guided to *egbe orun* [...].”¹⁰

Poli (2019) explains that Ogum—the orisha of war, technology, civilisation, and order, who has dominion over iron—is one of the orishas whose myth is associated with death, alongside Xangô and Omolu. Below is an *oriki* that illustrates this concept:

He kills on the left and destroys on the left
He kills on the right and destroys on the right
Ogum spares no one
He kills without speaking to anyone
He kills the thief and kills the owner of the stolen object
He kills the owner of the stolen object and kills whoever criticised this action
He kills without reason in the city (Poli, 2019, p. 84).¹¹

According to this author, the association of these orishas with death is linked to the possibility of being saved from it or postponing it. This association helps instil a fear of death, particularly through Ogum, his myths, and *orikis*, so that people may avoid premature death. Viewing Ogum as an orisha who can kill anyone allows him to be invoked to avoid death. Additionally, the fear of death encourages people to avoid or think carefully before going to war. This is evident in the following *oriki*: “Ogum saves those who are on the verge of death./ If Ogum heals people, they do not die” (Poli, 2019, p. 85).¹²

Beyond this reflection on death, the “primary” relationship of the Yoruba people with nature is one of respect and fear. According to Reginaldo Prandi (2005), early in their civilisation, the African Yoruba people believed that supernatural forces and spirits were present in nature and its elements. Fearing the dangers that nature posed to human life, they offered their own food as a sacrifice to mitigate these risks, sealing a pact of

¹⁰ In Portuguese: “a morte prematura é socialmente inaceitável, porque o que se tem por ideal é a “boa morte”: morte não violenta, ocorrida em idade avançada e celebrada com festa fúnebre para que o espírito possa ser conduzido ao *egbé orun* .”

¹¹ In Portuguese: “Ele mata à esquerda e destrói à esquerda,/ Ele mata à direita e destrói à direita,/ Ogum não poupa ninguém,/ Ele mata sem falar com ninguém,/ Ele mata o ladrão e mata o dono da coisa roubada,/ Ele mata o dono da coisa roubada e mata quem criticou esta ação,/ Ele mata sem razão na cidade.”

¹² In Portuguese: “Ogum salva aqueles que estão na iminência/ de morrer. Se Ogum curou as pessoas, elas não morrem.”

submission and protection. Over time, these spirits came to be worshipped as divinities—the orishas.

Thus, the orishas are associated with various elements of nature: Oxóssi with the forests, Ossaim with the leaves, Iemanjá and Oxum with the seas and rivers, Iansã with the winds and lightning, Xangô with fire and thunder, and so on. Each represents an element that connects and creates this relationship between divinity, nature, and humanity (Prandi, 2005). For these peoples and cultures, caring for nature and offering sacrifices to the elements of nature are intrinsic to life on Earth.

The Earth itself is understood as an orisha, as the following myth illustrates:

Onilé was the most reserved and discreet daughter of Olodumare. [...] When the orishas, her siblings, gathered at the great father's palace for important meetings where Olodumare communicated his decisions, Onilé would dig a hole in the ground and hide. [...] One day, the great god sent his heralds to announce that there would be a grand meeting at the palace and the orishas should come richly dressed, for he would distribute the riches of the world among his children. [...] On the appointed day, each orisha went to the palace, [...] each dressed more beautifully than the other. [...] Iemanjá arrived dressed in the foam of the sea, [...] Oxóssi chose a tunic of soft branches adorned with fur and feathers from exotic animals, Ossaim wore a fragrant mantle of leaves, Ogum preferred steel armour adorned with tender palm leaves, Oxum chose to cover herself in gold, with green river waters flowing through her hair. Oxumarê's clothing reflected all the colours, carrying fresh raindrops in his hands. Iansã wore a whispering wind and adorned her hair with lightning plucked from a storm. Xangô was no less magnificent, covering himself in thunder. Oxalá draped himself in pure white cotton fibres, with a noble red parrot feather on his forehead. And so on. [...] The orishas dazzled the world with their attire. Except for Onilé. [...] Onilé hid in a deep hole she dug in the ground. [...] Olodumare had them seated comfortably on mats arranged around the throne. [...] Then Olodumare said that by choosing what they thought was the best of nature to present themselves before him, they had already divided the world among themselves. Thus, Iemanjá would have the sea, Oxum the gold and rivers, Oxóssi the forests and all their animals, and Ossaim the leaves. He gave Iansã lightning and Xangô thunder. Oxalá became the master of everything pure and white, of everything that is the beginning; he was given creation. To Oxumarê, he gave the rainbow and the rain. To Ogum, he gave iron, and everything made from it, including war. And so on. [...] Whenever a human needed something related to any of those parts of nature, they should offer a gift to the orisha who owned it. [...] The orishas, who had listened in silence, began to shout and dance with joy, making a great racket in the court. Olodumare called for silence—he had not finished.

He said the most important task was still to be assigned: someone had to govern the Earth. [...] He said he would give the Earth to the one who wore the Earth itself. Who would it be? they wondered. “Onilé,” Olodumare replied. “Onilé?” they all gasped. But she had not even attended the great meeting! [...] “Yet Onilé is among us,” Olodumare said and commanded everyone to look into the deep hole where the quiet, discreet daughter was hiding, dressed in earth. [...] Humanity would not survive without Onilé. After all, where was all the wealth that Olodumare had shared with his orisha children? “Everything is on Earth.” Olodumare said (Prandi, 2005, p. 8).¹³

Onilé, the earth mother orisha, also called Aiê and Ilê in Africa, is worshipped in the older and more traditional *terreiros* (sacred grounds) of Bahia. She is responsible for guarding the planet and everything on it, protecting and enabling life on Earth (Prandi 2005). This myth reflects the belief that everything on Earth is interconnected, that divinity exists in all things, and that life on Earth is based on correlation. The concept of an “isolated individual” is unsustainable, and thus, the Western notion of “human

¹³ In Portuguese: “Onilé era a filha mais recatada e discreta de Olodumare. [...] Quando os orixás seus irmãos se reuniam no palácio do grande pai para as grandes audiências em que Olodumare comunicava suas decisões, Onilé fazia um buraco no chão e se escondia [...] Um dia o grande deus mandou os seus arautos avisarem: haveria uma grande reunião no palácio e os orixás deviam comparecer ricamente vestidos, pois ele iria distribuir entre os filhos as riquezas do mundo [...] Quando chegou por fim o grande dia, cada orixá dirigiu-se ao palácio [...] cada um mais belamente vestido que o outro [...]. Iemanjá chegou vestida com a espuma do mar [...] Oxóssi escolheu uma túnica de ramos macios, enfeitada de peles e plumas dos mais exóticos animais. Ossaim vestiu-se com um manto de folhas perfumadas. Ogum preferiu uma couraça de aço brilhante, enfeitada com tenras folhas de palmeira. Oxum escolheu cobrir-se de ouro, trazendo nos cabelos as águas verdes dos rios. As roupas de Oxumarê mostravam todas as cores, trazendo nas mãos os pingos frescos da chuva. Iansã escolheu para vestir-se um sibilante vento e adornou os cabelos com raios que colheu da tempestade. Xangô não fez por menos e cobriu-se com o trovão. Oxalá trazia o corpo envolto em fibras alvíssimas de algodão e a testa ostentando uma nobre pena vermelha de papagaio. E assim por diante. [...] Os orixás encantaram o mundo com suas vestes. Menos Onilé. [...] Onilé recolheu-se a uma funda cova que cavou no chão. [...] Olodumare mandou que fossem acomodados confortavelmente, sentados em esteiras dispostas ao redor do trono. [...] Então disse Olodumare que os próprios filhos, ao escolherem o que achavam o melhor da natureza, para com aquela riqueza se apresentar perante o pai, eles mesmos já tinham feito a divisão do mundo. Então Iemanjá ficava com o mar, Oxum com o ouro e os rios. A Oxóssi deu as matas e todos os seus bichos, reservando as folhas para Ossaim. Deu a Iansã o raio e a Xangô o trovão. Fez Oxalá dono de tudo que é branco e puro, de tudo que é o princípio, deu-lhe a criação. Destinou a Oxumarê o arco-íris e a chuva. A Ogum deu o ferro e tudo o que se faz com ele, inclusive a guerra. E assim por diante. [...] Assim, sempre que um humano tivesse alguma necessidade relacionada com uma daquelas partes da natureza, deveria pagar uma prenda ao orixá que a possuísse [...] Os orixás, que tudo ouviram em silêncio, começaram a gritar e a dançar de alegria, fazendo um grande alarido na corte. Olodumare pediu silêncio, ainda não havia terminado. Disse que faltava ainda a mais importante das atribuições. Que era preciso dar a um dos filhos o governo da Terra [...]. Disse que dava a Terra a quem se vestia da própria Terra. Quem seria? perguntavam-se todos? ‘Onilé’, respondeu Olodumare. ‘Onilé?’ todos se espantaram. Como, se ela nem sequer viera à grande reunião? [...] ‘Pois Onilé está entre nós’, disse Olodumare e mandou que todos olhassem no fundo da cova, onde se abrigava, vestida de terra, a discreta e recatada filha. [...] A humanidade não sobreviveria sem Onilé. Afinal, onde ficava cada uma das riquezas que Olodumare partilhara com filhos orixás? ‘Tudo está na Terra’, disse Olodumare.”

superiority over nature” is equally untenable—life on Earth coexists, and all forms of life depend on one another.

The earth is also presented as a divinity by Davi Kopenawa, who tells us that *Hutukara*¹⁴ lives alongside the stone, the earth, the sand, the river, the sea, the sun, the rain, and the wind. *Hutukara* is the sacred land; it is one body. For the Yanomami people, *Hutukara* makes life possible. Everything that composes the Earth has a purpose, and therefore, there should be no destruction or unrestrained exploitation. It is the responsibility of the Earth’s people to care for *Hutukara* and use it wisely—a responsibility for all of us (Gomes & Kopenawa, 2015).

Ailton Krenak (2020), in his book *The Future Is Not for Sale*, presents an Indigenous perspective of the Earth as a divinity, responsible for guarding the planet and all life upon it. Reflecting on the pandemic and its impacts, Krenak highlights the fact that the COVID-19 affected only humans. The virus did not impact the fruits, birds, or other creatures—only humans. For Krenak, humanity and its artificial world have entered crisis because of their disconnection from nature, turning towards activities and concepts that overshadow life and destroy the earth. In this view, earth, as a divinity protecting the planet, strikes at that which threatens it—humanity.

Our mother, the Earth, gives us oxygen for free, puts us to sleep, wakes us in the morning with the sun, lets the birds sing, the streams flow, and the breezes move, creating this wonderful world for us to share. And what do we do with it? What we are living through could be the work of a loving mother who has decided to silence her child, at least for a moment. Not because she doesn’t love him, but because she wants to teach him something. “Child, silence.” The Earth is saying this to humanity. And she is so wonderful that she doesn’t give an order. She simply asks: “Silence.” This is also the meaning of isolation (Krenak, 2020, p. 5).¹⁵

¹⁴ *Hutukara* is, at the same time, the Earth and nature as we know it in a concrete way, but it is also a cosmic being (Gomes & Kopenawa, 2015).

¹⁵ In Portuguese: “A nossa mãe, a Terra, nos dá de graça o oxigênio, nos põe para dormir, nos desperta de manhã com o sol, deixa os pássaros cantar, as correntezas e as brisas se moverem, cria esse mundo maravilhoso para compartilhar, e o que a gente faz com ele? O que estamos vivendo pode ser a obra de uma mãe amorosa que decidiu fazer o filho calar a boca pelo menos por um instante. Não porque não goste dele, mas por querer lhe ensinar alguma coisa. ‘Filho, silêncio.’ A Terra está falando isso para a humanidade. E ela é tão maravilhosa que não dá uma ordem. Ela simplesmente está pedindo: ‘Silêncio.’ Esse é também o significado do recolhimento.”

As Krenak argues, we must abandon anthropocentrism. Everything is nature. There is no separation between nature and us.

Another point that highlights the lack of care for humanity's own nature is when Krenak mentions that "foolish" governments believe the economy cannot stop. However, the economy, a human-invented activity, depends on humans to function. Therefore, if humans are at risk, this activity, along with others, should lose its importance (Krenak, 2020).

It is striking that an artificial world, created and sustained by coloniality and disconnected from nature, continues to function even as humanity faces a crisis, with different powers trying to keep this artificial world running. This Western/colonial mode of operation loses all meaning when we view life through Yoruba and Indigenous perspectives. Nothing is more important than the balance of life and ensuring a harmonious existence with nature.

3 Transgression-Order and the Maintenance of Social Structure

In Yoruba culture, order and transgression are deeply interconnected. According to the *orikis* of certain orishas and their teachings, transgression is seen as necessary for the emergence of a new order—one that better serves the community's social function and more justly benefits all its members.

Contrary to the generalisations that associate Exu with evil, when referring to Exu as a transgressor, we are speaking of one who, as Sàlámì and Ribeiro (2015) state, simultaneously regulates order, harmony, and peace, while also being known as "*atúká-màásesàà*" (p. 142)—the one who continuously promotes changes in the universe.

In the Yoruba community, as Poli (2019) explains, Exu is both a transgressor, as demonstrated in the verse, "if Exu wishes, he enters a country by force" (p. 72),¹⁶ and the lord of the local marketplace, where different clans and ethnicities gather, and war can be averted. In this way, Exu can invade a country but can also prevent conflict through the marketplace, communication, and his influence over agreements and negotiations.

¹⁶ In Portuguese: "se Exu quiser, ele entra em um país à força."

Moreover, in the Yoruba community, the orisha Ogum is linked to civilisation and order but is also associated with death and war. In other words, the one who builds also destroys, and vice versa.

From this understanding of the duality of these orishas, we see that, in the imagination of these peoples, transgression and order are not opposing forces; rather, they work together to promote social transformation. What is unsatisfactory must be transgressed or destroyed so that a new order can arise, fostering the development and continuity of the community.

According to Adailton Moreira and Elisa de Magalhães (2021), Exu's order should not be confused with a calm, static harmony. Exu moves the collective, like an outdoor market where everything pulses—questions, differences, and conflicts are ever-present. Order arises from disorder because Exu operates between harmony and conflict.

Using the example of Mawu-Lisa and Dã, androgynous beings responsible for the mythical creation of the universe for the Fon people of the ancient Kingdom of Dahomey, Poli (2019) presents a reading of transgression and order based on the concept of the androgynous being. These beings appear as regulators of the universe's order, a role only possible because the androgynous being knows and embodies both the “masculine” principle (order) and the “feminine” essence (disorder). Once again, order and disorder do not appear as binary opposites, such as good or bad, but as complementary and necessary principles for movement and harmony in cosmological and sociological contexts.

If we apply these principles to Brazil—a country whose flag bears the motto “order and progress”—we might consider that perhaps what is missing is “disorder” to guide the country towards a counter-hegemonic and counter-colonial path, breaking away from the standards and precarities produced by coloniality. Disorder as transgression, disorder as the pulsation of peoples, voices, and questions, disorder that drives social movement and transformation, aiming for well-being and the reduction of inequalities and violence.

4 The Power of Duality and Other Perspectives on Male-Female Relations

In much of Sub-Saharan Africa, power is marked by duality in various forms. Duality signifies alliances between different peoples, between the “masculine” and the “feminine,” and represents social symmetry. Xangô, the orisha king of Oyó, embodies various elements of duality in his myths and *orikis*: his *oxé* (double-headed axe) cuts both ways and is flanked by two twins, symbolising the balance between traditional and new elements, and the resistance of traditional elements against the new (Poli, 2019).

This duality is also present in the language and communication of these peoples. The Yoruba language is rich in metaphors and extratextual elements, grounded in poetic thought. Language connects with the divine through the myth of Orunmilá, known as the lord of languages, the god of oracles, and a deity who speaks all languages. Orunmilá connects with Xangô through the semiotic and extraverbal dimension that is particularly strong in this orisha. Xangô, though not as linguistically skilled as Orunmilá, is the orisha of eloquence. He understands both current and archaic Yoruba and grasps hidden meanings (Risério, 1996).

By discussing duality here, we aim to illuminate a thought process that, unlike Western politics, is not monolithic and does not begin with the premise that something is either one thing or another, or that something is either good or bad. The worldview of these peoples moves beyond such binary and antagonistic positions. Instead, it is built on other possibilities—things that complement each other, things with double meanings, things that, while good, can also cause harm, or vice versa. We can understand this thought process further through a myth about Exu, recounted by the author in a theatre class: Ifá called Exu and showed him two gourds. In one was everything good, everything sweet, all the medicines, all the care, all the body’s secrets. In the other was everything bad, all the poison, all the distance, everything bitter. Exu was to choose one to take to the marketplace in the ancient city of Ifé. Exu, however, before choosing, grabbed a third gourd, opened all of them, and mixed everything inside. Since then, what is good can also be bad, what heals can also hurt, and what is poison can also cure.

From this narrative, we can also reflect on gender relations in the Yoruba community, where the “masculine” and “feminine” complement each other—both carry

energies and principles that are integral to social organisation and the development of the community. This contrasts with gender relations in the West, which tend to be binary, oppositional, sexist, and heteronormative, associating masculinity with strength and power, and femininity with fragility and inferiority.

It is important to note that, as Oyèrónkẹ Oyěwùmí (1997)¹⁷ argues, gender in Yoruba communities is not understood through the “bio-logic” applied in the West, where gender tends towards biological determinism. In Yoruba culture, bodily differences are superficial—the body does not serve as the basis for determining social roles, occupying positions of power, or establishing social identities. The body does not define norms or social hierarchies.

From the *oriki* of Xangô, “He braids his hair like a girl” (p. 124), we see the necessity for those in power, such as Xangô, the king of Oyó, to seek within themselves complementary elements and energies from the other gender to govern effectively. They must possess the regulatory principle of “feminine” power to fulfil their role as social regulators (Poli, 2019).

This “feminine” power is also seen in various stories of the yabás, “feminine” orishas, who challenge Western archetypes. Eugenio (2014) highlights warrior, hunter, and sorceress orishas such as Obá, Ewá, and Iansã. Obá, leader of a society of women, Elekô, won all her battles through her skill with weapons. She mastered the four elements and carried symbols representing the wars she had won. Ewá, a silent warrior and huntress like Obá, is both sensual and beautiful like Iansã. She is also a sorceress—her gourd contains enchanting powder, and she helps Oxumaré avoid war. Iansã, the buffalo woman, is a warrior and huntress associated with air, wind, and fire. She is the lady of lightning, impetuous and capable of summoning devastating winds, and she is also the goddess of women who work in the marketplace.

In her civilising role, Iansã legitimises the position of ialodê, a female figure who participated in the Ogboni society in Oyó and other cities. Ialodê was the leader of the marketplace sellers, a woman with the same power as male chiefs. In addition to being a

¹⁷ OYẸWÙMÍ, Oyèrónkẹ. *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

warrior, Iansã also appears as a heroine, representing women who must fight and hunt to feed their children (Poli, 2019).

Below is an *oriki* of Iansã/Oyá that reinforces her sociological roles:

Here comes Oyá to carry the buffalo horn.
Oyá, wife of the magnificent husband.
Warrior woman
Hunter woman
Daring Oyá, who faces death alongside her husband.
What kind of person is Oyá?
Wherever she is, fire blossoms.
A woman who looks as if she would break gourds.
Oyá, your enemies saw you
And fled in terror.
Eparrei Oyá
I fear only you,
Wind of death.
Warrior who wields firearms.
Oyá ô Oyá totô hmmm.
She gathers her belongings in a second,
In a second, quickly, she gets ready.
Female who floats like a *fulani*,
Marches with the grace of a trotting horse.
Epa, Oyá of nine births, I salute you (Risério, 1996, p. 145).¹⁸

Oxum, like Iansã, is also an *ialodê*—Iyá (mother) l (of) odê (marketplace) (Poli 2019). Her power comes not only from her leadership role as the lady of the marketplace but also from being the provider of life, being an Iyá. Oyěwùní (2016)¹⁹ discusses the power of Iyá from the Yoruba perspective of hierarchy based on seniority. An Iyá is an elder, revered by her offspring. Since all humans are born of an Iyá, no one is older than an Iyá, and therefore, she must be respected. According to the author, Oxum is the primordial Iyá, honoured not only for giving birth but because divinities provide for her.

¹⁸ In Portuguese: “Chega Oiá pra carregar chifre de búfalo./ Oiá dona do marido magnífico./ Mulher da guerra/ Mulher da caça/ Oiá encantada, atrevida que vai à morte com o marido./ Que espécie de pessoa é Oia?/ Onde ela está, o fogo aflora./ Mulher que olha como se quebrasse cabaças./ Oiá, teus inimigos te viram/ E espavoridos fugiram./ Eparrei, Oiá o/ Temo somente a ti/ Vento da morte./ Guerreira que carrega arma de fogo/ Oiá ô, Oiá totô hmmm./ Ela apanha seus pertences num segundo/ Num segundo - rápido - ela se arruma./ Fêmea que flana feito fulani/ Parte com porte de cavalo no trote/ Epa, Oiá dos nove partos, eu te saúdo.”

¹⁹ See footnote 2.

Oyěwùmí (2016)²⁰ also explores the concept of matriarchal potency based on these ideas about Iyá, who, in Yoruba belief, carries mystical powers, especially over her offspring. When a baby is born, both the baby and the Iyá are “born.” This author highlights the saying, “Even the king has a mother” (p. 76), once again showing that no one is more important than their Iyá.

The meaning of Ìyá is closely tied to the metaphysical power that Ìyá embodies. This is why Ìyá is also known as àjée. In the odu Oseetura, we see that Ìyá is characterised as àjée, and Oxum, the sovereign Ìyá, is the primary àjée, as discussed in section 2. The harmonious functioning of any Yoruba community depends on the axé of Ìyá, which was given to her by Olodumare. Consequently, it is understood that nothing can be achieved without her consent and participation (p. 29).

Oxum is also known for her charms and her cunning, as shown in the following myth:

It is said that the art of divination through cowries (the Ifá oracle) was always guarded as a great secret by Obatalá (the Lord of the White Cloth), who refused to pass on this knowledge. The beautiful and curious wife of Xangô asked many times to learn the art of divination, but Obatalá always refused. One day, Exu stole Obatalá’s immaculate white garments while he bathed in the river. Embarrassed by his nakedness, the old sage accepted Oxum’s offer of help, and she seduced Exu to recover Obatalá’s clothes. Oxum returned the clothes to Obatalá and demanded that he keep his promise to teach her the art of casting cowries. Since then, Oxum has also held the secret of the oracle. As a result, she is the only yabá authorised to consult Ifá (Dias 2020, p. 10).²¹

Iyá carries strength, produces wealth, participates in decision-making, and does not fear men, as the following *oriki* demonstrates:

²⁰ See footnote 2.

²¹ In Portuguese: “Conta-se ainda que a arte de ler o destino nos búzios (o oráculo de Ifá) foi sempre guardada como um grande segredo por Obatalá (o Senhor do Pano Branco), que se negava a passar adiante essa arte. A bonita e curiosa esposa de Xangô pedia inúmeras vezes para aprender a arte da adivinhação, mas Obatalá sempre se recusou a ensiná-la. Certo dia Exu rouba as imaculadas vestes brancas de Obatalá enquanto ele se banhava no rio. Envergonhado de sua nudez, o velho sábio aceita a ajuda oferecida por Oxum que seduz e ‘se deita’ com Exu com o objetivo de recuperar as roupas de Obatalá. Oxum devolve as roupas a Obatalá e exige que ele cumpra o prometido a ela, ou seja, que ele a ensine a arte de jogar os búzios. Desde então, Oxum tem também o segredo do oráculo. Desta feita, é a única yabá autorizada a consultar Ifá.”

Oxum, mother of clarity
Clear grace
Mother of clarity
Adorns children with bronze
Creates fortune in the water
Raises children in the river
Plays with her bracelets
Gathers and guards secrets
Digs and buries copper in the sand
Female force that is not confronted
Female from whom the male flees
In deep water, she sits profound
In the depths of the flowing water
Oxum, of the full breast
Ora leiê, protect me
You are what I have—
Receive me (Risério 1996, p. 151).²²

From these figures, *orikis*, and myths, we see that duality, power relations, and the “masculine” and “feminine” interact and intertwine in Yoruba culture, creating social organisations and ways of life that stand apart from the frameworks and limitations found in Western cultures, which are marked by heteropatriarchy and sexism, promoting power relations based on gender and sexuality. This representation transcends the Western understanding of women’s roles and relationships between nature and society, which often impose constraints on performing, living, and expressing oneself in everyday life.

Final Remarks

After analysing the social and subjective (po)ethics present in Black and Indigenous cultures, we observe that there are alternative ways to think about society, politics, culture, and modes of organisation. While white-Eurocentric-capitalist cultures foster inequality and competitiveness, leading to individualism, the destruction of nature, illness, and the construction and maintenance of exclusionary power structures, Black

²² In Portuguese: “Oxum, mãe da clareza/ Graça clara/ Mãe da clareza/ Enfeita filho com bronze// Fabrica fortuna na água/ Cria crianças no rio/ Brinca com seus braceletes/ Colhe e acolhe segredos/ Cava e encova cobs na areia/ Fêmea força que não se afronta/ Fêmea de quem macho foge/ Na água funda se assenta profunda/ Na fundura da água que corre/ Oxum do seio cheio/ Ora leiê, me proteja/ És o que tenho -/ Me receba.”

and Indigenous cultures offer other approaches to collective relations, economies, nature, differences, and forms of organisation and hierarchies.

The hierarchy based on seniority in Yoruba culture, for instance, while differentiating between the older and the younger, promotes equality in the sense that the old was once young, and the young will eventually grow old; thus, this form of hierarchy benefits everyone over time. It is a circularity that sustains the various dimensions of life. This Yoruba hierarchy differs from the hierarchies imposed by the colonial capitalist system, which are based on race, gender, sexuality, and class—characteristics that define the individual and are immutable, unlike age. Consequently, those in power remain in power, while those who are oppressed remain oppressed, resulting in a continuous cycle of subjugation.

These differences within the colonial capitalist system directly affect the right to life, as Wallace de Moraes (2020) explains with the concept of Colonialist Necrophilia in Brazil, wherein the state manifests an exacerbated and racist desire to disqualify and physically and/or psychologically eliminate specific groups—Blacks, Indigenous peoples, LGBTQIA+ communities, and women—going beyond Achille Mbembe's (2018) concept of necro-politics, which determines who may live and who must die. In this case, there is an active yearning for death, expressed through the absence of public policies and assistance or through actions that lead to the assassination of these groups.

The “advancement” and modernity of white-Euro-Christian-capitalist culture do not respect humanity or its own nature. Machines, industries, and businesses destroy nature, exterminate traditional peoples, and silence other knowledge systems. The focus is on an exclusionary future, while the past, stories, and ancestry are constantly violated and forgotten.

This colonialist mindset drives the world ever closer to a place of *mono*—monoculture, a single truth, a single story, a single way of being and existing in the world. In contrast, in the cultures of Black and Indigenous peoples, *pluri*—the plurality of thought, culture, of being and existing in the world—is paramount. Santos (2019) discusses the importance of *pluri* in Black and Indigenous cultures, rooted in the belief in many gods, each with its own characteristics, story, and importance to society and the peoples who worship them. Colonisation imposed, and colonality continues to

perpetuate, the *mono*—encouraging a single culture, a single god, a single way of thinking and behaving in society. Therefore, *pluri*, diversity, and multiplicity challenge this imposed singularity of coloniality, opening pathways to alternative forms of being and acting.

Thus, we ask: what would Brazil or the world look like if Black, Indigenous, traditional, and other oppressed peoples were present in significant numbers in spaces of organisation and power? What would it be like if our public policies were based on Black and Indigenous perspectives and worldviews? If our laws and norms were grounded in the history, teachings, and ancestral knowledge of Black and Indigenous peoples, in what kind of world would we be living today?

Understanding that the reality we know and live is constructed on Euro-Christian beliefs and ethics prompts the question: why not construct realities based on Black and Indigenous beliefs and ethics? These are questions for which we may not have exact answers today, but they offer clues to the construction of new worlds and alternative knowledge systems. Let us continue “blackening” and “indigenising” our ways of counter-colonising.

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Statement of Author's Contribution

The authors declare full responsibility for the entire article, to which both made significant contributions. Jean Vitor Alves Fontes was responsible for the project's design and developing the theoretical discussion. Beatriz Akemi Takeiti was responsible for the critical revision of the intellectual content and overseeing the theoretical discussion. Both authors were involved in writing the article, have approved its final version for publication, and assume responsibility for all aspects of the study, ensuring the accuracy and integrity of its content.

Research Data and Other Materials Availability

The contents underlying the research text are included in the manuscript.

Reviews

Due to the commitment assumed by *Bakhtiniana*. Revista de Estudos do Discurso [*Bakhtiniana*. Journal of Discourse Studies] to Open Science, this journal only publishes reviews that have been authorized by all involved.

Review I

The article does not clearly explain the theoretical contribution that underpins its analysis. The text, starting from the abstract, presents some formatting issues, as it does not comply with the ABNT standards (updated in July 2023). There are excessively long quotations (pp. 5-6 and 10-11). Additionally, there are issues with punctuation, accentuation, pronominal placement, and the use of compound adjectives, necessitating a thorough revision. On p. 13, the article refers to the orisha Ogum as “a civiliser, responsible for order; there is also Exú, a transgressor.” However, according to scholars

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Sàlámì and Ribeiro (2015), “Ogum is indeed the civiliser orisha because he is a trailblazer and opens paths, thus linking him to matters of work and technology” (p. 65), whereas Exu is the regulator of the universal order. He acts as a tuning fork to establish harmony among beings. He is the orisha of order, discipline, and organisation, a great strategist of the universe. Order emerges from chaos, and justice is often achieved through struggles against injustice. Exu, the keeper of the fundamental principles of peace and harmony, regulates order, discipline, and organisation, which are the antitheses of disharmony, disorder, and confusion (p. 139). Care must be taken when referring to Exu, as generalisations can lead to associations with evil and demonisation, a perception shaped by Catholicism and Islam, both on the African continent and in diaspora countries, and now reinforced by the rapid growth of neo-Pentecostalism in Brazil. In the second paragraph of p. 9, the article states: “Death is understood as a natural disorder that is part of nature; what is not ‘acceptable’ or understood as a natural disorder is premature death.” This assertion is incorrect. In the pantheon of traditional orisha religion, premature death is explained through the phenomenon of àbíkú—literally, Abí (to be born) and Ikú (to die). In Yoruba cosmology, it refers to children or young people who die before reaching adulthood, adults who die before their parents, or adults who die before completing their existential cycle. These spirits decide to reincarnate a few times, having established ójó orí with the Àbíkú Society, making a pre-birth pact to return to Orun upon reaching a certain age. Àbíkú spirits belong to a group called Egbe Orun Àbíkú, who inhabit the parallel world around us, Orun—the abode of gods and ancestors. Thus, various rituals must be performed to keep them alive or to undo the pact. References

SÀLÁMÌ, Síkírù; RIBEIRO, Ronilda Iyakemi. Exu e a ordem do universo. 2ª ed. São Paulo: ed. Oduduwa, 2015.

I suggest that a careful grammatical review be made, alongside the revision of some statements, as stated in the opinion. REQUIRED CORRECTIONS [Revised]

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Reviewed on May 30, 2024.

Review II

The article addresses an important theme: the systematic exclusion of African and Indigenous traditions from Brazilian culture, highlighting the hegemony of Western-centric traits that shape it. The author seeks alternative proposals, other ethics for our culture, in oríkis and a bibliography developed by Indigenous authors. This renders the article highly relevant, particularly as it brings forth two emerging perspectives: that of A. Quijano, in which the coloniality of power is evident, and that of A. Bispo dos Santos, who proposes a counter-coloniality, an intellectual and practical exercise of direct confrontation with coloniality. For these reasons, I believe the article merits publication. However, I suggest some corrections be made, and certain specific points addressed.

Concerning the necessary corrections, they pertain to the formal use of the Portuguese language. Throughout the text, there is a lack of commas, inappropriate use of commas

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in place of periods or semicolons, and some inaccuracies regarding gender and number. Therefore, I strongly recommend that the text undergo a thorough Portuguese language revision to eliminate these inaccuracies. (Examples: p. 4, 1st ¶: “mythology is a form of learning and assimilation of historical facts, it can be understood,”— “understood” should be “comprehended”— “mythology”; p. 8, 2nd ¶: “human superiority under nature” should be “over nature”; p. 10, 1st ¶: orisha names are not capitalised; p. 12, 3rd ¶: the title “The Future is not for Sale” is written as “*The Future is not for Sale*”; titles are not italicised or bolded in the body of the text; p. 12, 3rd ¶: repetition of the word “world” three times in two lines; Exu is spelled with an accent (Exú); p. 14, 2nd ¶: “*andrógeno*” instead of “*andógeno*”; on p. 17, 1st ¶, there seems to be a missing term, making the passage difficult to read: “*Oxum, assim como Iansã, também é uma ialodê - Iyá (mãe) l (da) ode (corte ou praça, em referência ao mercado)*”; among others). Although these issues do not compromise the reading of the text, considering the journal’s quality and the strength of the author’s arguments, I recommend these corrections.

Regarding the specific points I raise for discussion:

- a) Given the more evident situation of U.S. power, I suggest the author consider using the term “Western-centric” instead of “Eurocentric” (this is not a correction, just a suggestion for discussion);
- b) On p. 2, 3rd ¶, the author states: “The Eurocentric experience in Latin America distances us from our identities and hinders the search for solutions to our social problems,” and then cites Quijano, who says: “That is, the image we find in this mirror is not entirely chimerical, as we possess many important European historical traits in both material and intersubjective aspects.” It seems to me that Quijano’s statement acknowledges the European elements that also form part of our identities, creating a potential conflict with the author’s statement;
- c) On pp. 7-8, the term *caboco* appears without quotation marks. It seems to me that this form, though less commonly used, should be highlighted as an oral contraction rather than entirely replacing the original form;
- d) On p. 13, 2nd ¶, the author states that their work is based on Yoruba and Indigenous perspectives but also provides examples from Fon mythology;
- e) On p. 15, the author develops arguments about duality until the 3rd ¶, concluding with the idea that Exu mixes good and evil in the same gourd. However, in the 4th ¶, the author begins: “From this thought, we can also reflect on gender relations in the West, heteronormative and sexist, which tend to be binary and oppositional...”, which seems to interrupt the flow. I suggest clarifying the connection between these points;
- f) As a reading suggestion, the concept of lordship and gender (or its absence in Yoruba culture) is explored in greater depth by Oyěwùmí in *The Invention of Women* (2021 Brazilian edition);
- g) While challenging, it is worth noting the difficulty in discussing Yoruba and Indigenous cultures simultaneously, as this may lead to an overly homogenised view of Indigenous cultures and their legacies, given that there are over 300 Indigenous peoples, whereas Yoruba culture may appear more uniform.

I reiterate the importance of this article and am available for further clarification or discussion. REQUIRED CORRECTIONS [Revised]

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Reviewed on July 01, 2024.

Review III

The identified issues have been satisfactorily addressed. Based on the revisions made, I am in favour of publication. APPROVED

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Reviewed on August 01, 2024.

Review IV

Given that the observations, requests, and suggestions have been addressed, or the reasons for maintaining them have been justified, I consider the response adequate and suggest the publication of this article. APPROVED

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Reviewed on August 05, 2024.

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