2013

“A recurrence of structures” in collapsing Nigeria

Abstract: In Standard Yorùbá phonology, lexically spurious H tone marks each cyclic node, like English nuclear stress (Bresnan 2000), and is thus not a tone that affixes or modifies the meaning of a lexeme. This structure, however, is present in the phonology of all the southern dialects of Yorùbá, and is strongly resistant to phonological analysis. In this paper, I discuss the background of this structure and present a tentative analysis of its nature.

ABSTRACT: If the Southeast Asian “galactic polity” is defined by centrifugal–centripetal “pulsation between modalities” of power (Tambiah 1976), something similar is true of West Africa’s Asiacic social formations — indigenous tributary monopolies that flourished during the transatlantic slave trade before becoming “encapsulated” in British rule (Otte 1975). Structural ambivalence explains how Fortes & Evans-Pritchard (1940) could lump “stateless” Igbo and nomadic Nuer together into the “acephalous” political type. This paper reviews three southern Nigerian examples of evanescent hierarchy. In April 1979, ìkenchúku the youthful ruler of Ágbò Kingdom died from nocturnal gunfire during a land case and an electoral campaign, as an elderly chief was rewriting Ágbò history to push back the pendulum from absolutist primogeniture towards collective lineage rights. In November 1995, the writer Ken Saro-Wiwa was eliminated by “judicial murder” ostensibly because he had denounced a list of ten Ogoni chiefs — four of whom were subsequently lynched — in having sold out to Shell Oil Corporation and General Abacha. In November 2001, an Igbo anthropologist was roughly rebuked by an Igbo historian for refusing to parse the slogan Igbo énwe ọ ̀ọ 'Igbo has no paramount ruler' as synonymous to colonial cliches like “Biafran society is traditionally egalitarian” (Okigbo 1969 cf. Meek 1937). Instead of treating these perturbations as unrelated events, Tambiah's framework suggests they are causally linked in a long-term social formation, within which the entrenchment of local political brokerage is complemented by the steady collapse of nationalism.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE: The main descriptive source of this study is Chief Augustin Ègwa Èli Ìdúùwe's History of Greater Ágbò[r]. That irreplaceable text unpublished today, three decades after the author entrusted the manuscript to me, so I baledly and apologetically post it here in its unfinished form of circa 1982. An unattributed ten-page paraphrase/extract of Èli Ìdúùwe's manuscript is included in J. Butcher & al. "A critical analysis of the royal chronicle of Ágbò" (Berne Valley Project Paper 10, Dept. of History, Dalhousie University 1975). According to the introductory comment by Professor J. Webster, the material was forwarded by an unnamed history graduate of Dalhousian University.

Correction: as now, debunked: the “Possible image of a salon in General Babangida's château” presented in an earlier draft of this paper as a considerably shows a California mansion. Nevertheless Babangida's immense personal wealth has no legal explanation.

UPDATE1: The issues reviewed in this paper receive a less political take in a 25-minute TV documentary, "George Osodi: Kings of Nigeria," eliciting my response: "Déin in Abachan drag?".

UPDATE2: In northern ọ ̀ọ, the British éjí ended Sokoto vassalage in 1902-03 (Smith 1960, 201), but Lugardian indirect rule breaks down in a context of democratic opposition, as Smith in June 2014 the APC state governor blocked the Abia PDP from imposing a client, the an eventual successor to the Kano emirate.


UPDATE3: Further evidence has emerged that Shell guided General Abacha's terror campaign against the Ogoni protest movement.

TYPOS: In the caption of Fig. 8.1 (p. 126), the final, acute tone mark of Òminigbo Detarium microcarpum or senegalensis and the initial, acute tone mark of Òminigbo are both missprinted as grave accents.

UPDATE4: Superiority clash tears Delta traditional rulers apart. Guardian (Lagos), 20 August 2021.

As Èli Ìdúùw predicted after the bad end of Òlan Ilêkèchúku in 1979 and covert accession of exiled infant Ògbọ, Varsity Printers, Òtu Íwèlíte Asùgbọ Language & Culture (Ôtu Íwèlíte Asùgbọ Language & Culture) on p. 3 of "gbàlú nígbà Ògún àtì tóò òdì: Kings of Greater Ágbọ[r]."

2016

Research note — Òmìgbégbé facing Èdò past and future.

Umpaqó: Journal of Britón & Òliterary Studies (Oswego New York) 1, 136–41. [ISSN 2473–3415]

Supporting documentation for Before Wachukwà, Òmìgbégbé and Ògbọ énwe culture in medieval Ògùn.

2017

Ìgbò semiscriptalism — ìmìga bá ìkú ìnìtìrì eyí ìkáárè ìdááòhí.

Ìgbò Language Studies 2, 11-20.


ABSTRACT: Before the British Empire's Akwukwo captured ọ ̀ọ (the "Niger area"), various Igbo-speaking communities and their neighbors deployed an idiosyncratic (nomophonic) initiation code of gestures and graphic designs which by nature had no need to represent "tone" (lexical contrasts of perceived laryngeal pitch or fundamental frequency). With alphabetic literacy came no less than four tonemarking techniques, all of which remain in use for different purposes, and this multiplicity of means uncannily fits the proverbal norm of of òlì ọ by òlì, a proverbial watchword of strength in numbers in the southeast angle of òlì's geopolitical hexagon. This abundant methodological diversity is not about to be simplified by a (nonexistent) central planning office, and there’s no imminent prospect of linguists or speakers agreeing on a single style of encoding linguistically significant prosody that’s unrecoverable from immediate context. This paper reviews the clashing strengths and weaknesses of each type of Igbo tonemarking for various legitimate purposes. An exit from the present muddle needs a more adequate theoretical approach to Igbo prosody than linguistic science can offer right now, and a greater practical commitment to public education and media access is thus possible in the currently collapsing political economy of a vanquished province of a neoliberal necropolis.

2018

Cyclic accentuation in Yorùbá.


[preprint proof, 24pp. A5, last modified 15 January 2017]

ABSTRACT: In Standard Yorùbá phonology, lexically spurious H tone marks each cyclic node, like English nuclear stress (Bresnan 1971, Clague 1993, Wagnor 2005, Zbijarekta & Vergnaud 2006). Specify this 1975 (with assumed tone languages) as: specify the choice between two ad hoc analyses: either (i) amnesty all spurious Hs as homophonous "tonal morphemes" (Welmers 1959) or else (ii) sprinkle them as pitch accents into an unrestrictive "autosegmental-metrical" mix (Ladd 1996). But the circularity is avoidable,
“A Recurrence of Structures”
in Collapsing Nigeria
Victor Manfredi

From Tambiah to Nigeria
According to a leading school of anthropological thought, Lévi-Strauss (1945) deployed Jakobsonian structuralism to split the “atom of kinship”—an emic node of “arbitrary” mental representations organizing small human groups. Then Leach (1954) adapted this idea to analyze four centuries of “structural variability” among part-time kingdoms in Burma’s Kachin Hills, and Tambiah (1976) further expanded the view, positing a Maussian “totalization” of “dialectical tensions” through two millennia, from Asokan India to Southeast Asian Buddhist states. In shifting the visual metaphor from microscopy to astronomy, Tambiah also updated the implied linguistic analog of social relations, from a phonological feature grid to a syntax of recursive rules (“transformation yet felt continuity”; 1976, p. 527) generating infinite outputs (“the set or family of occurrences . . . that particular Southeast Asian religio-political systems [as indeed individual actors] portray in varying mixes and strengths”; 1976, p. 516).¹

These innovations notwithstanding, Tambiah’s treatment of politics remains Lévi-Straussian in other respects: diachrony is intrinsic to

¹ See Tambiah (1976, p. 516) for a discussion of “transformation yet felt continuity.”
the model, and the proper object of analysis is internal to the mind ("La parenté... n'existe que pour se perpétuer... [N]ous sommes en plein symbolisme"); Lévi-Strauss 1945, pp. 49, 53). There is also carry-over of ethnographic substance ("the production of wider systems of social solidarity and political integration" involves "[m]arriage or unions... as has been demonstrated by Lévi-Strauss, Leach andNeedham"; Tambiah 1976, p. 117 n. 13), and even an echo of the maestro's Olympian style ("[M]yth and reality are closer than we think"; Tambiah 1976, p. 117 n. 13), and even an echo of the maestro's "ham"; Tambiah 1976, p. 117 n. 13).

Having already met these themes in Tambi's classroom thirty-something years ago, I should have immediately perceived the significance of a typewritten history of Ágbọ ("Agbor" in colonial spelling) which was handed to me in September 1976 by the anthropologist M. A. Ọnwụejiogwụ ("Onwuejegwụ") when he introduced me to the author, Chief A. E. Ìdùùwe. Ọnwụejiogwụ had written a preface highlighting Ágbọ's multimodal politics and noting that the phenomenon is not rare. Nearby examples include the Igbo-speaking Òru ("alluvial") mini-states (Nzimiro 1972); Okpe, the Urhobo ("Sobo")-speaking kingdom of which Otite drily says that its "political system cannot be regarded as being in equilibrium" (1971, p. 56); Isekeri ("Jeki"), the Yoruba-related enclave which went from having "[i]n 1800... a highly centralized government" (Lloyd 1963, p. 207) through an 88-year interregnum before the crown was revived in 1936 in the multi-ethnic crossroads of "Warri" (Ikime 1969, pp. 253–70; cf. Moore 1936, 1970; Edevbie 2004, p. 265f.; Imobigha et al. 2002; Eke[h] 2007); and Edó (known to Europeans as Benin) and to Igbos as Ìdùù; the antique and pluridynastic imperial capital that the British pillaged in 1897 before restoring its monarchy in 1963 (Bradbury 1967, 1968).

This cluster of political ambivalence in the Atlantic trade zone of southern Nigeria, cutting across linguistic and ecological lines, attests to the overlap of two larger subregional patterns: i) crowned priests of tutelary divinities in Édo and Yorùbá-speaking walled market towns (Fádipé 1940, 1970), and ii) gerontocratic lineages in Igbo-speaking and Cross River horticultural villages practicing the "occasional state"—a temporary union of autonomous communities facing external threat (Áfìgbo 2006, p. 40). The empirical blurring of these divergent types was noted by the government folklorist N. W. Thomas (1910, and later amplified in Bradbury 1969), although Thomas was sacked when his grassroots research threatened to undermine the conceptual footings of Indirect Rule (Lackner 1971). Saving the dichotomy of "centralized authority" versus "stateless societies" (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940, p. 5; cf. Meek 1937, pp. 3, 185) needed studies like Forde and Jones 1950—a classic of the trend to lump proto-states together with "tribal" organization (Fried 1957; Sahlins 1961). Thanks to official groupthink, Lugard's 1914 contraption called Nigeria stayed stuck in an orientalist "kingdom- and empire-oriented... straitjacket" (Áfìgbo 1996, p. 3f), and, eventually rebranded as a sovereign state, it failed to attain the "amalgamation in... culture... and even cosmology" (Áfìgbo 2003, p. 46) wished for by nationalists and modernization theorists alike. Instead it spawned a distinctively crumbling civic ethos and a new sociological term of art: "the chaotic complex" (Láwúyì 2002; cf. Áfìgbo 1972, 2005b; Òláníyàn and Álágó 2003; Eke[h] 2007).

Successor regimes became successively more top-heavy (Fawole 2003) and more adept at gerrymandering the federating units (Élò[h] 1983), yielding to date 37 insolvent states and more than 740 unaccountable local jurisdictions. Proliferation of vacuous administrative domains may be ethnographically insincere, but it obeys an unassailable double logic: to defuse game-theoretic power blocs at the center (Dudley 1973) and to instrumentalize public goods at the periphery. The money interest is hard to exaggerate. In 2007, for example, one local chairman in Édo State disposed of an unaudited annual "security vote" equal to US$100,000 (roughly the same as his official salary) plus had a free hand to distribute cars and other valuables irregularly sourced by the state house from ruling party godfathers. Commodification of customary politics is even more blatant in the Efik-led trade kingdom known to Europeans for 400 years as "Calabar":

[T]here was a Palace Crisis in 2004 over the matter of fake clans and villages. A number of Etuboms [kingmakers] maintain long lists of villages that do not exist, on account of which they themselves are considered Clan Heads. . . . One of the Etuboms owns 22 fake villages and is personally paid for 18! . . . All the Etuboms who were either not part of this scam or were suspected of harbouring sympathies for those who wanted to stop the malpractice have since been shut out of the Palace. . . . The total effect of this exclusion is that seven out of the 12 Efik Principalities are not represented at all. (Edem and Ekeng 2008, p. 7f)

In sum: for at least a century, historic palaces in Nigeria’s Atlantic fringe—sometimes called the “South-South”—have been continually
reshaped by the respective occupying power; but why? What “deep structure” regenerates this flickering phenomenon through time and space? Before turning to particular cases, here’s a general guess.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, under the financial stimulus of slave exports and the civil pressure of raids (Rodney 1969), the ancient gift economy gorged itself on inflated rents and marriage fees (Fálána and Adebáyò 2000, p. 100f., citing Fádipé 1940) and entrenched “the necessarily political character of middlemen” (Manfredi 1993, p. 4). As chiefly pourcentage became the format of retail politics in Atlantic Africa, a distinctive jargon evolved for trade-inducing bribes: first as comey (from Portuguese comer, “to eat”), then as custom and dash (Geary 1927, p. 82; Jones 1958, p. 52), and now more gerundively as seeing and settling. Graft by whatever name was hardwired into the Royal Niger Company’s 19th century gunboat concessions and grandfathered into the post-1914 chieftaincy “warrants” which the occupier doled out along with the right to siphon export rents on vegetable fats (cocoa and palm oil), precursors of today’s smuggled hydrocarbons. Periodically, systemic gravitation aligns these mediating networks into galaxies, big and small.

That a politics sustained in this way tends to fluctuate, follows by analogy with the Asian cases cited above. Small scale structural “oscillation” of the Kachin conical clan (Leach) can be explained as neomarxist “evolution/devolution” in a context where social reproduction is not locally assured (Friedman 1975). And in Buddhist capitals, “outcomes of a pulsatating kind” expressed in a “cospolitical idiom together with its grandeur and imagery . . . [are] a realistic reflection of the political pulls and pushes of these center-oriented but centrifugally fragmenting polities” (Tambiah 1977, p. 74). So too in Ágbọ̀, Ìdúùwé the titled organic intellectually willingly donned the mantle of a “gumlao revolutionary leader” (Leach 1954, p. 263) as a partisan of “voluntaristic action” conscious of “many pasts and . . . an open-ended future” (Tambiah 1992, p. 170).

This paper retells the story of Ágbọ̀ (§3) in between briefer comments on better-known Ogoni (§2) and Biafra (§4). An appendix (§5) provides excerpts from Ìdúùwé’s remarkable manuscript.

Vulturian Ecology

In the current league table of “blood for oil,” Nigeria can’t compete with occupied Iraq, but the rankings may change if Africa’s western equatorial coast becomes “the next Gulf” (Rowell et al. 2005; cf. Ghaizvinian 2007). Anticipating such a development, U.S. planners recently predicted Nigeria’s “outright collapse” (National Intelligence Council 2005, p. 16), but their presentism is misplaced: a “tendency towards disintegration” (Rodney 1969, 24) has marked the West African subregion since the 16th–19th centuries, when tributary lineage systems met the nascent capitalist world-economy, and the same anomic quality persisted throughout a long 20th century of fruitless nation-building. In recognition of this, a more reasonable question is not when “outright collapse” will arrive, but why it hasn’t yet.

No answer can ignore chiefly corruption (Nzímiro 1984). This issue was at the root of the “judicial murder” of nine Ogoni citizens, including the world-class writer Kenule Saro-Wiwa, in Port Harcourt on 10 November 1995 with the apparent complicity of top management of Anglo-Dutch Shell (Ámadí 1996, p. 161; cf. Ghaiz 1995; Lean 1995; Wiwa 1996; Rowell 2009). General Abacha’s “Special Tribunal” held Saro personally responsible for the lynching on 21 May 1994 of four Ogoni chiefs who “were on a list of 10 ‘vultures’ that Mr. Saro-Wiwa had made public the previous October because of what he said was their opposition to his aggressive campaigning for Ogoni rights against Shell” (Lewis 1996; cf. Ókôntà and Douglas 2001, Ókôntà 2007b, p. 226). The marsupial court invoked an Orwellian doctrine of guilt-by-presumed-conspiracy (Ámadí 1996), and then Saro’s executioner prolonged Ken’s hanging with repeated flubs (Ojůrúnjómi 1996, p. 24). Nor did Nigeria’s collective torture mercifully end when Abacha himself dropped dead of unknown causes on 8 June 1998.

During the next eight years of “President” ÒbáSANjó—the khaki-clad boss of 1976–1979 dredged up from retirement in 1998 and draped in proverbial agbádá iná and ë̀wá ëjè (Délánò 1966, p. 11) by the anti-democratic and unpopular People’s Democratic Party (PDP)—“more than 10,000 Nigerians . . . died in violent clashes along intercommunal lines” (Human Rights Watch 2007) and “more than three million Nigerians were internally displaced” (Reuters 2006). Some of these killings were at state hands (Fálána 2002, Ògè 2008) but most of the mayhem was dished out by auxiliaries, in tune with global trends (Smith 2001; cf. Ágbọ̀ 2004, Pratten 2006; Ókôntà 2007a).

Saro-Wiwa’s incandescent tragedy illuminates Nigeria’s political landscape. He began his literary career in 1962 as a scholar at University College Ìbàdàn. Classed as an ethnic “minority,” he spurned the Igbo-led National Council of Nigeria and the Camerouns (NCNC) of...
his “own” Eastern Region (see §3) to join the relatively exotic Northern People’s Congress (NPN) representing the Sókótó Caliphate (Ọmụrụyi 2016). Escaping doomed Biafra in 1969, he signed on as a civil commissioner in army-run Rivers State, but became disenchanted by federal reassertion of “the Crown’s rights over minerals and land” in 1973 as had been first claimed by the “Obnoxious Ordnances” of 1945–1947 (Coleman 1958, p. 282; Soro–Wiwa 1989, pp. 217, 387). Soro’s public disaffection from the extractive state may explain why he was “cheated of the opportunity” to participate in 1977 constitutional talks, after which he “avoided all political parties” (Saro–Wiwa 1996, p. 73). The 2nd Republic unraveled at the end of 1983, and General Babangida seized power in 1985 and coopted Soro in 1987 to run an ill-defined parastatal of “mass mobilization” with the bulky acronym of MAMSER. Soro resigned from MAMSER in 1988 and in 1990 launched the nonviolent Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (with an oddly similar acronym, MOSOP) in five out of the six Ogoni districts—also called “kingdoms” or “clans” (Saro–Wiwa 1995, p. 66; Obi 2003; Okontà 2007b, pp. 179, 209). MOSOP launched anticorporate campaigns, joined the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, and boycotted Babangida’s military-to-civilian “transition without end” (Diamond et al. 1997). The grinning general’s chakkavati-like conceit was to draw in effigies of Babangida’s name, Bójú (Babangida), a “cosmological toponymy” (Tambiah 1976, p. 102) of dual parties, center-left and center-right, planted like ornamental shrubs in symmetrical cement bunkers in more than 700 local government headquarters across Nigeria. Presidential nominations were repeatedly aborted by micromanagement, but in June 1993 the procrastinations ran out, Chief Moshhood Abújá swept the vote, and the army pulled the plug (Ọmụrụyi 1999).

After a few months, General Abacha emerged from behind the curtain (but never from behind his aviator shades) and Soro soon met his martyrdom in the glow of “șHellish” flares.ó Babangida, after recycling Òbasanjó in 1999, withdrew to his home town of Minna and into a German-built custom labyrinth.

These events were dramatic but not new. Southern Nigerian peasants had deposed their chiefs in 1904, 1929–1930, and 1968–1969 (Gailey 1976, Ágbò 1972, T. Adénìran 1974, Beer 1976, Ọhadiké 1991, Pratten 2007) and more generally “the presence of classes within the lineage mode of production” (Terray 1975, p. 96) is documented in a literature extending from Crowder and Ikime (1970) to Vaughan (2000) and Watson (2003), supporting the thesis that “kinship as-sumed the role of state surrogate during the centuries of the slave trade” (Eke[h] 1990, p. 66; cf. Meillassoux 1986). External entanglement caused medieval West Africa to miss out on any counterpart of the “feudal revolution”—the internal process by which medieval Western Europe passed from rogue knighthood to fiefdoms with financial accountability (i.e., from personal to territorial-bureaucratic authority) (Duby 1962, p. 68f.; Bisson 1994, p. 39). That transition was forestalled by a system whose “terrible logic . . . caused the African chiefs to cling to the Atlantic slave trade as their staple economic activity, even after it had become an anachronism . . .” (Rodney 1970, p. 118). Thus Joseph (1987) could find “prebendal politics . . . in the Second Republic” of Nigeria and Soro (if not mis quoted) could spot human “vultures” scavenging the delta’s political terrain. In wider perspective, West Africa’s “patrimonialism” (Reyna 2007) resembles South Asia’s “fetishized” political Buddhism (Tambiah 1992, p. 59) as the vehicle of waxing and waning power.

Ágbò in Its Firmament

Ágbò Kingdom covers Ìkà North and South Local Government Areas in the present Delta State (Ọnyéché 2002). Its capital, Ìme-Ọbì, “the king’s precinct” (< Òmụrụyi’s “inside,” òbi ìdù “dwell-er”), perches at the delta’s northwest edge on a sandy plateau where the east-west road crosses Òrọgodo stream. Next door is the sprawling market whose official name, Bójíboji, commemorates a waterside bivouac of colonial expeditionary troops (< Yorùbá ọjọ-ọjọ “face-washer”). In 1901 the British camped in front of Ágbò palace, but the post retreated to Bójíboji in 1906 after an angry crowd killed District Commissioner Crewe-Reade (alias “Rédi”) in revenge for beating a old man to death while press-ganging Ágbò youths as load carriers. Òdúuwe writes that Rédi’s violent end gave Ágbò an “official reputation for turcule.”

Ìkà North East and South together have just 5% of the population of the whole delta region—today’s Delta, Bayelsa, and Rivers States—but Ágbò Kingdom is not culturally atypical of its neighborhood. Igbo-style ọjọ (patrilineage symbols of indigenous bamboo ringed in iron bands; Figure 1) coexist with Òdó-style coral and brass regalia (refer-encing royal monopolies on salt-water wealth and the death penalty; Figure 2).

The dualism extends even to dance steps: aerobic Igbo acrobatics (Beier 1957) coexist with the lead-foot Òdó choreography performed by
dancers wearing cowrie-laden ūbulúku smocks depicting the dry-land locomotion of Óloòkún, the fish-tailed ocean god (Galembo 1993).

As Ìdúùwe’s manuscript makes clear, Ágbò was the transmission gate between Òdó and Igbo. Although this intermediation is largely overlooked today (Nzimi 1972, Ejiọfo[r] 1982, Ọchadiké 1994, Okpehwo 1998), the fractal pattern of dispersion is proved by abundant evidence and is well suited to a Tambian metaphor comparing Ágbò’s position between its Igbo-speaking satellites and the wider orbit of Òdó to a small solar system in a bigger galaxy.

For example, the big trading town of Ònịcha (“Onitsha”) now calls itself “Àdó City” (see for example http://ikmartins.5u.com/) because it claims to have been founded by “Ézè Chíìma” from Òdó (automatically pronounced “Àdó” in the Ònịcha dialect of Igbo; cf. Eménanjiofor 1971). But this attribution is imprecise. Òdó has no name resembling Chíìma, but Ágbò still recalls the eastward escape of “Prince Kimê” circa 1760 during a succession dispute (Idúùwe ms.; cf. Meek 1937, p. 11 fn. 4; Ọnwuejiogwù 1972; Oguagha 1992, p. 363; Manfredi 1994, p. 278f.). By regular phonetic shifts, the closest match in Ònịcha for [kimê] is precisely [chiima]. Three other separate details confirm that Ágbò, and not Òdó, was the direct model for the Igbo-speaking “Ézè Chíìma” states. First, Ágbò claims that its founder and Ònịcha’s were brothers who “left [Ódó] together, separating at Ágbò” (Nzimi 1972, p. 7). Second is the presence in one of the “Ézè Chíìma” towns of a ward called “Ọgwà Chììmé” (“Chììmé’s assembly” Ejiọfo[r] 1982, p. 345), with the final [e] making a telltale match to the Ágbò form of the proper name. Third, Ágbò’s royal lineage is called Nmù Déin (“Déin’s children”) after the founder of the current dynasty, and Ómù Déin—the Igbo translation of this phrase—is also the name of a royal line in Ágbò, Ònịcha, and ògwuta towns (Nzimi 1972, pp. 29, 196, 217), whereas no name like Déi(n) can be found in Òdó.7
Edó influence in Ògbọ is extravagantly dramatized in the Ògbọ festival called Ēṣi Ẹzi (“A friend from outside”.) (See Ìdúùwé ms.; Figure 2; Beier 1963; Ìmájągbe 1981). Less obviously, however, the “centralized” polity of Edó shares some basic structures with the “stateless” east. At Edó’s ritual apex sits Ọmọ N’Ọba (“Ọba’s legitimate child”), the culture-heroic king, but there are three more chiefly sets to reckon with (Bradbury 1956, 1967, 1968). The kingmakers areautochthonous and hereditary; the town chiefs are “big-man” commoners who exchange wealth for lifetime knighthoods (cf. Sahlins 1963); the palace chiefs are royal dependants, hereditary or appointed, with the formal status of house servants but from a household that covers half of the old imperial capital (Bradbury 1969). Two of these Edó grades—kingmakers and town chiefs—have counterparts throughout the “stateless” Igbo-speaking east.

Predictably, Edó’s political authority was most fluid in 1897 after the British toppled Ọba Ọvọnármwẹn and sacked the palace of its brass and ivory treasures. To quell civil resistance, the occupiers had to ally themselves with town chiefs and condone de facto “joint rule” between their client Ọba Èwèka II (whose father Ọvọnármwẹn died in exile) and the ìyàsẹ (the Yorùbá-style town leader). But abuses by the town chiefs disadvantaged their party, the Action Group (AG, led by Yorùbá Chief Òba Òbàfìún Òwọlọwọ, alias “Awọ”) in the 1951 Western Regional elections, which were won instead by the National Council of Nigeria and the Camerouns (NCNC, led by the Igbo Chief Ìdúùwe Òvú–ẹ́ Ìkàwà, alias “Zik”). During the 1951 campaign, Òwegbe, the palace’s masonic auxiliary, “unleashed a wave of violence throughout Benin Division” (Bradbury 1968, p. 247) against the AG’s elite cadre, the Reformed Ògbọnì Fraternity (a Christianized form of Ògbọ freemasonry). In 1963, Èwèka’s son Ọba Àkèñúà Ọba endorsed the NCNC’s plebiscite to remove the Midwest from the Western Region (Vickers 2000), which had the effect of substantially restoring Edó monarchy after 66 years. The Midwest secession also deemphasised the monarchy’s mythical link to Ifē (called “Uhé” in Edó) and this remains a sore point, earning the current Ọba a public smackdown from the Yorùbá establishment (Àjáyì 2004; cf. Òrìędè-àwú 2004, Àlùkò 2004, Èghárevba 1934, Ryder 1965, Horton 1979, Adédíràn 1991, Òbáyémi 1991).9

That such kingdoms fluctuate between “a weaker form, which was perhaps the more usual state, and a stronger form, which was perhaps achieved during exceptional periods” (Tambiah 1977, p. 82) is borne out by yet another example, which I observed at first hand. On 8 September 1976, my mentor M. A. Ònwuejìogwù presented me to A. È. Ìdúùwé (Figure 1; Figure 3), an accomplished elder of Ògbọ’s royal lineage.

Ìdúùwé had by then already been an activist for half a century, since helping to found Ògbọ Patriotic Union, a club of migrant literates in Lagos. In 1939, he wrote to the British in his capacity as APU secretary, that “…apart from language, Ògbọ people have everything in common with the Yorùbá and the Benin [- Òdó]. And we pray you do not listen to irresponsible grumblers and newspaper men.”10 These disparaging epithets transparently refer to Zik, who founded the West African Pilot in 1937 and who in 1949 told the Ìgbo State Union that “the God of Africa has specially created the Ìgbo nation to lead the children of Africa from the bondage of the Ages” (Coleman 1958, p. 347). In 1948 the colonizers disregarded Ìdúùwé’s advice and reclassified Ògbọ Kingdom as an Igbo-style cluster of ten “Èkà clans,” ensuring that “clan heads rotated the post of presidency in the district council” (Ìdúùwé ms.; cf. Coleman 1958, p. 314).11 But in 1960, Ìdúùwé’s pro-Yorùbá sentiments were rewarded by the Ògbọ monarch Òbìká (1916–1967; Figure 4), an AG minister at the time, who conferred on him the title Òdii, glossed as “leader of [the king’s] legion and deliverer of the royal gifts.”12 Around the same time, Ìdúùwé wrote “History of Greater Ògbọ,” whose title diplomatically conveys the pre-1948 centripetal idea of Ògbọ Kingdom without technically contradicting the decentralized constitutional position of the day.

After the 1963 plebiscite, Òbìká switched parties to become a Minister in the NCNC’s Midwest administration.13 This was inevitable: “Just as the British colonial government expected kings and chiefs or native authorities to ensure its success among their people, so did the Midwestern State government expect the same type of rulers to promote its interests” (Otite 1975, p. 78).14 But two army coups ended civil rule in 1966, and when the Ògbọs finally lost the Biafran War in 1970, Òbìká’s son Èkenciónú felt autonomous enough to sell a large tract of lineage land to Chief Vincent West Ègbárin, a multi-industrialist with the portentous alias Òrikàkèzé (“He [who] resembles a king”). In October 1976, Èkenciónú celebrated the Òṣìṣẹ̀ festival in high style on national TV, and the lineage assembly (Figure 1) sent Ìdúùwé to contest the land sale in court as a violation of collective usufruct (cf. Òchêndù 1977, 1995).15

On the morning of 9 September 1976, as state radio announced the death of Mao Ze Dong, Chief Ìdúùwé invited me to see “where my
father is buried.” We crossed the old highway, a war-torn moonscape where ducks bathed in puddles between paved spots, and entered a sandy path, when two motorcycles zoomed up. The riders, scrawny ịchásün (palace lackeys), accosted my elderly host and knocked him to the ground. As I helped him to his feet they called me a spy and grabbed the portfolio containing my passport. That evening, Chief and I discussed the assault with Ọnwụejióngwọ, and the next day I walked alone to the palace, primed with a repertoire of antiquarian blandishments for the king:

Dóo Deín, ọgụ ekélikà, éka oghei, ógi-ázụ gbome Ohimi, nwá tútú!

[Hail dynastic founder, multicolored snake, unchecked hand, whose domain extends up to the Niger, demonic child!]

My performance amused the ịchásün, but Ikenchúku returned my passport only on condition that I conduct my studies in a distant village under loyal supervision.

By my next visit in 1980, much had changed. In 1979, General Obasanjọ rigged Awo's party (then called UPN) out of the presidency and handed Lugard’s baton back to the Caliphate’s NPN—resuming the script of 1960 that had been interrupted by coups and war. Also in 1979, Chief Ọríkaezé dropped dead in an NPN meeting and Ikenchúku was mysteriously shot at night somewhere outside of Ägbọ. Following an autopsy in the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (O. Eboh, p.c.), Ikenchúku's corpse was refused legitimate burial by Ogbe Nmü Déin (Idüwé manuscript, excerpted below), complicating the succession of his infant son (Figure 3). Idüwé’s lawsuit was granted by default, following the respondents’ deaths.16

After these decisive events, Idüwé finished rewriting his “History of Greater Ägbọ,” but he still had to collate the different drafts prepared during the kingdom's successive phases. While we fiddled with scissors and paste, another editorial problem arose. Idüwé still used a colonial-era spelling, which had been overtaken in the 1960s and ’70s by the official orthography with subdots (Ekere 1961, Ọgbalụ 1975, Elugbe 1984, Williamson 1985), but this well-argued policy was scarcely known, far less applied, in a small speech community like Ägbọ. The job was over my head and beyond my means, but Idüwé was patient and in January 1982 presented me to his ọgwá in ebullient mood.

The NPN was overthrown by populist soldiers at the end of 1983; then in August 1985 General Babangida turned the wheel of dhamma once again, spinning Nigeria further down the drain. Meanwhile both Idüwé and Ọnwụejióngwọ have joined their ancestors, and Ikenchúku's son has assumed the Ägbọ throne. Idüwé’s book remains unpublished, to my great regret.
Victor Manfredi

however, as Igbo’s twinkling political constellations morphed into a neo-Biafran Rorschach test. The thesis of the 16th Añiajiogó Lecture, delivered by a professor of physics, is adequately represented by the following excerpt:

The precolonial traditional government of the Igbo without kings imbued in them the characteristic traits that prompt the saying that “Igbo énwé ezé.” . . . Most Igbo governed themselves without giving power to chiefs or kings. . . . Nobody had any special privilege because of ancestry. . . . Perhaps we should say more about self-reliance, which is strongly influenced by the legacies of Igbo énwé ezé. . . . The Biafran war tested the self-reliance of Eastern Nigerians, especially the Igbo, to its limit. . . . Then Biafran scientists and engineers began to fabricate grenades, mines, bombs, mortars, rockets, pontoons, plated vehicles etc. . . . We find some parallels between scientific culture and the legacies of Igbo énwé ezé. Scientific culture recognizes no kings and chiefs with divine knowledge . . . Our conclusion is that the implications of Igbo énwé ezé are democratic, self-reliant, scientific, modern and in tune with the best traditions of humankind. (Ọnwuméchili 2000)

Prof. Āfìgbo, then the dean of Igbo historians and co-organizer of the event, reports that this hackneyed panegyric was rewarded with a “vile attack” (2002, 2005a, 478) from Prof. Ọnwụejìogú (2001) in the form of a reply entitled “Igbo nwe ézé, Igbo Have Kings: The Evolutionary Development of Complexities in the Igbo Political System.” Āfìgbo himself replied with a more social-science inflected restatement of Ọnwụmèchili, resting on two remarkably traditional planks. Āfìgbo’s Plank One is the diffusionist idea that “advanced social technology (more centralized political systems)” was not indigenous to Igbo-speakers but the result of external “conquest” by a “second wave of migrants . . . who came in from the middle belt savanna” (Āfìgbo 2002, 2005a, 483). The sole evidence cited for this story is an imaginative equation of the ethnic term Igbo LL with “the phoneme [sic] gbó . . . found among the Yorùbá to be indicative of bush” (p. 482). To be taken seriously, the etymology would have to explain the opposite tone of the two roots, L versus H—but Āfìgbo doesn’t mark tones—and would also need to justify the reconstruction of a word spanning the unrelated meanings of farmland and forest/bush (p. 482)—but no such word exists in any Nigerian language known to me.15 Linguistic howlers aside, Āfìgbo’s story is a neat ideological

**“The Igbo Have No Kings”**

When General Abacha’s dead hand slid off the lever of power one June night in 1998, a tangential consequence was to reprieve the annual Igbo studies conference which had been banned by an eccentric satrap in Ìmò State, the very pentacostal Colonel Zubairu (Ìlozúé 1999). The next meeting in November 2000 was thrown in turmoil,
match for Ñwụmēchili’s premise, that any example of Igbo-speaking kingship is an “exception” (2000), echoing civil war propaganda that “Biafran society is traditionally egalitarian” (Öjúkú 1969) and rehashing Meek’s Hamitic theory that “[k]ingship is not and never was a feature of the Igbo constitution. Where it occurs it is clearly of exotic origin” (Meek 1937, p. 185). Once upon a time, Áfi ìgbo had called Meek’s idea “prejudiced” and “based on rather very slender evidence” (Áfi ìgbo 1981; cf. Zachernuk 1994), but by 2002 he had decided that it provided “some of the key to our problems” (Áfi ìgbo 2002, 2005a, p. 482). What had changed meanwhile?

Áfi ìgbo’s Plank Two is equally familiar from 19th century and colonial literature. He puts it as follows:

Igbo political theory, by which we mean the theory which underpins and supports the Igbo polis, is . . . basically organic and natural being based on blood descent . . . . With such a political theory it is not surprising that in an Igbo polity, the number one political authority is that which derives from correct standing in or descent from the blood line. (2002, 2005a, p. 484, emphasis original)

A few pages later, Áfi ìgbo repeats the idea that “traditional rulership in Igboland” is based on principles related “to hereditary rights, to ascription, to the blood line” as distinct from “charisma and achievement” (p. 488). One hundred forty years before, a counsel to the British Raj in India wrote: “The history of political ideas begins, in fact, with the assumption that kinship in blood is the sole possible ground of community in political functions” (Maine 1861, p.129). Áfi ìgbo’s 2002 thesis has one great difficulty, apart from its disfigurement with childish taunts. Any attempt to marginalize Igbo examples of “centralized kingship” at the same time that one asserts the ubiquity of Igbo “traditional rulership” based on a pre-contract, tribal organization based on “blood” is an incorrigibly static position that must attribute all change to the deus ex machina of immigration. Áfi ìgbo may have missed the words evolutionary development in the title of Ñwụjejìgwù’s 2001 pamphlet, and he probably also overlooked the main point of Ñwụjejìgwù’s 1981 book which contextualizes Nri within the wider Igbo-speaking area by showing that its centralized political structure was not an isolated “exception” (Ñwụmēchili’s term) to the stateless tribal stereotype. Building on Nzímíro (1972), Ñwụjejìgwù disproved the colonial theory that Igbo politics can be reduced to “mutually balancing segments” (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940, p.16) and showed on the contrary that “where wealth differentiation and associational groupings are marked . . . segmentary opposition becomes a minor feature of the political process” (1981, p. 134). This is not a matter of Nri alone: differentiation and association of this kind runs right across the Igbo-speaking area, and not just in the big trading entrepôts. Áfi ìgbo’s quaint appeal to “organic and natural . . . blood descent” also ignores an elementary ethnographic point unknown to Sir Henry Maine, that all kinship terms are in principle classificatory and not limited to literal, “organic,” or biological reference (cf. Ñwụjejìgwù 1981, p. 135 fn. 15). By insisting, on the contrary, that kinship is objectively separate from politics, Áfi ìgbo can blame the hubristic and authoritarian Lord Lugard for the “careerism and impudence” of Igbo “warrant chiefs” in 1912–1929, characterizing that era as “the time when the principles upholding the Ézè-ship institution in precolonial Igboland were violently breached (Áfi ìgbo 2002, 2005a, pp. 487, 491). But to be consistent, Áfi ìgbo should also blame the hubristic and authoritarian Lord Qbasanjò for the “careerism and impudence” of today’s Igbo-speaking “political godfathers” of the PDP, such as the Anambara State brothers Chris and Nnàndị “Andy” Ubah[h] (Nnànná 2004, Ayòdê 2006). Áfi ìgbo never considers the possibility that these monstrous “big men” are not aberrations, but predictable expressions of long-standing Igbo political order.

Intellectual vacuity is plain whenever a historian resorts to post hoc propter hoc. Offering the excuse that “since 1896 much water has run under the bridge,” Áfi ìgbo pardons the failure of the committee by “the military administration of the defunct East Central State appointed in 1975” with himself as “Chairman . . . to restore to the institution [of traditional rulers] in Igbo land its ‘tradition[al]lines’ by laying emphasis on the correct genealogical position of an occupant of the stool” (2002, 2005a, p. 490). Continuing the self-pity, he laments that “[f]or some time we have been sliding back into the warrant chief era” (p. 490)—as if the verification of genealogy is a job for the army. The worst thing that Áfi ìgbo manages to say about Ñwụjejìgwù’s culturally and historically grounded 1981 study of Igbo kingship is that “only the first chapter does not address a political question,” and that it is “by and large political anthropology more or less along the lines of high-noun colonial anthropology” (1996, 12, emphasis added). Maybe high noon is when the national clock stopped.
Appendix

Excerpts from Idúùwe’s “History of Greater Ægbọ”

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In the late forties political parties sprang up. [Óbíkà] remained neutral for sometime, while his subjects supported the two parties NCNC and AG. The majority became NCNC partisans. They wanted their natural rulers to support them but this honourable ruler hesitated to support any political party, as he is the father of all. They then victimised him with the false slogan that he caused the Western Nigerian government whose party was AG to increase taxation. They marched to him with the false slogan that he caused the Western Nigerian government whose party was AG to increase taxation. They marched to his palace, caused damages to his car and property and attacked some of his chiefs—Akpara, Oguden and others—and drove them into the woods. The leaders of the party were arrested and jailed in 1954.

Óbíkà’s character was undaunted despite all his worries, and he was obliged to become an AG partisan. In the election of 1959 he showed himself as an able leader and won for the AG 5 seats out of the 14 seats in his clan, and the majority in the Ika Local Council of 42 seats in which the AG won 22 against NCNC’s 20. The Òbí was therefore congratulated and the Western Region Government made him a Minister of State without portfolio and Edward Anuku a junior Minister in the Ministry of Economic Development and Planning. But because of the crisis of 1962 in which the Government of Western Nigeria was seriously involved, the Obi crossed the carpet to NCNC during the campaign for the creation of Mid West, and the Òbí won for his new party great support for the Midwest Region. The Government of the new Region made him to continue as Minister of State.

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The installation and coronation of Íkenchúku was marked with the greatest enthusiasm ever witnessed in Ægbọ, despite the cloud of the civil war which had begun in 1966. . . . He proved himself a patriot during repressive incidents in the civil war. Íkenchúku could be called a saviour of his people and of the strangers within his gate. . . .

At last after the third year he became despotic and oppressive and there was unrest in the kingdom. He died on 29th April 1979 survived by 4 daughters and two sons of 2 and 1 year old. He was not given the usual burial ceremony but his son was untimely crowned privately by the palace chiefs without the knowledge of his royal family Ògbe Ñmù Déin people and [kingmakers] Àlì Òjémisi.
S. Moore, L. Murphy, O. Ndibé, the late I. Ìgzimíro, E. Ochonu, I. Ìkóntá, 'D. Òlóruñyòmí, O. Òmòñiriú, O. Owen, and M. Vickers. Where possible, I replace "Western errorist" transcriptions of African words with more modern spellings. Tonemarks: [ ` ] = high, [ ´ ] = low. Tone conventions: in Yorùbá and Kaná, no mark = mid; in Igbo, Àgbò, and Èdò, no mark = same as previous mark, and a sequence of two high marks = intervening downstep. In Ògbe, the [ - ] sign indicates antidownstep.

1. Although I’m unaware of any published reference by Tambiah to Chomskyan syntax, he mentioned it often in class, and his [1979] 1981 essay cites the generative concept of "sequencing rules" from the formal pragmatics literature. Staal (1986, p. 190) explicitly contrasts Tambiah’s "syntactic" approach to ritual with Geertz’ behaviorist view. The quotation in the title of this paper is taken from the larger phrase “a recurrence of structures and their transformations in systemic terms” (Tambiah 1976, p. 5), in which a syntactic metaphor can also be inferred.

2. Informal description by anonymous People’s Democratic Party lawyer at the Èdò National Association meeting, 29 August 2008, in suburban Boston.

3. In Nigeria, “South-South” denotes the four states of the delta (Èdò, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers) plus Cross River and Akwa Ibom.

4. The four incinerated chiefs included Sarò’s brother-in-law Sam Orage and his prominent benefactor Edward Kobani.

5. President-elect Abíolá resisted four years of torture in solitary confinement, during which his wife Kudirat was gunned down on Abacha’s orders; then on 7 July 1998 Abíolá expired after marathon hectoring by Tom Pickering and Susan Rice of the Clinton State Department (Eghagha and Oyèébámi 2008). Claims were pursued under Abíolá’s orders; then on 7 July 1998 Abíolá’s daughter, I. Òkóntà, was never publicly investigated.


7. Ògbe has no clear etymology; one possibility is the univerbation of an Ògbe phrase meaning “our master” (< òl + èyìn).

8. “Friend from outside” euphemizes Èdò intervention, approximately along the rhetorical lines of the “Fraternal Soviet Liberation” of Hungary in November 1956. The Èdò footprint is even more vivid: the term òṣì, “friend,” may be a quotidian word of Ágbò, but it has no cognate in the rest of the Igbo cluster, and was almost certainly adopted from Èdò òṣì, “friend, lover” (Melzian 1937, p. 169).

9. Prof. Àjàyí seems to accept the Ife foundation myth verbatim, and censured my use of the term ethnohistory in the course of a dinner table discussion in 1993. The Èbo’s junior brother has pushed back against Àjàyí in literary form (Akenzúa 2008).


11. Òì, pronounced “Èkà” in Èdò (Egharevba 1934; Melzian 1937, p. 33), is an ambiguous, outsider’s term that can denote all Igbo-speakers west of the Niger—including also the Anijọcha, Òkwụnà, and Òshímili districts (Forde and Jones 1950; Òhadike 1994, pp. 69–96). Âgbò’s 1938 demotion was still resented by Òbìkà’s son and successor Èkénchùkú (1938–1979), who griped about it in 1976 while giving me a lift to Beinicity in the royal Peugeot 604. Ò⁄wujeòjìwù told me of confronting Jones in his Cambridge University retirement about the (1956) reclassification of southern chiefs—a move which Jones admitted was designed to favor Zik at the expense of Awo, who was officially regarded as a dangerous communist.

12. The name Òjìwì itself transparently means “brought from Èdò.”

13. In 1981, an Ògbe Nmù Deìn elder who had been an NCNC stalwart playfully asked me to remind Zik—by then a septuagenarian grandee who was my neighbor in the Igbo university town of Nsùkà (“Nsukka”)—of a thirty-year-old promise to supply a revolver!

14. An instructive precedent occurred in 1956 when the Western Region deposed the Aláàfi n of Ògùn, who was refusing to join the AG. Similarly in 1963, the Midwest exiled the “Olu of Warri” Èrejuwa II due to re-injecting General Ôbásanjó into the contrived power vacuum (thanks to Dr. Ebe Ochonu, in the comments thread to his 2009 Sahara Reporters review, for this critical information).
to “his personal and institutional conflict with certain NCNC party stalwarts” (Otite 1975, p. 75). One effective lever on customary chiefs is the monthly stipend paid by the regional or state government; Aziikaiwe recognized the practice as creating a conflict-of-interest “dilemma” (1976, p. 6).

15. Lawsuits aside, Ogbe Nmù Dèen pressed a second complaint against Obi Ikenchüku, that he was stubbornly monogamous and took too long to produce an heir. When one arrived, he was provocatively named Kjagboekuži, “What can Ágbò say now?” The boy’s mother feared for the infant’s safety and raised him in exile, permanently impairing his fluency in the language.

16. Only temporarily, because a new expropriation had already begun: before relinquishing power the first time, Obásanjó had made the Land Use Decree of 1978 “abolishing the customary proprietary rights of families and individuals—and traditional rulers—over both developed and undeveloped land” (Vaughan 2000, p. 149). Obásanjó was not the only generalissimo-turned-agroindustrialist who managed to profit from this self-administered windfall.

17. A brief clip of a dance Ìdúùwe arranged for me that day can be heard at http://people.bu.edu/manfredi/Orogodo.mov.

18. There’s at least a phonetic match between the root syllables of Yorùbá ìgbò MH “forest” and western Igbo úgbo HH “farm” (2002, 2005a, p. 482), but the latter is a transparent loan into Igbo from Òdó and the connection is tangential to his argument, notwithstanding the semantic mismatch noted above.

19. Afi ìgbo demeans Ónwụejìogwú for “the difficulty he usually has with the use of the English language” (2002, 2005a, p. 478), and repeated the slur near-verbatim in a footnote (p. 492). He also bemoans Ónwụejìogwú’s proofreading abilities: “Even his name, Michael, is wrongly spelt at least once” (p. 478), although Afi ìgbo himself in the same paper twice misspells the Igbo verb enweghi—truncating it as enwegh (pp. 480f)—not to mention the many OCR-typos in the multi-volume Africa World Press reprints of Afi ìgbo’s collected papers. Then there are the literary oddities in other recent works which can’t be blamed on hourly workers in Trenton, New Jersey; e.g., “Ogruguru” (Afi ìgbo 1997, p. 6 and passim)—a toponym which is spelled better as Ogurugu even on ordinary road signs in the university town of Nsìkìa where Afi ìgbo had lived for more than a decade before writing “Ogruguru.” Afi ìgbo also mocks Ónwụejìogwú for producing a “self-edited, self published and self-distributed journal, Qđını, the journal of his [sic] museum at Nri” (p. 481), without irony, only one page after defending Ònwụmèchíli’s paean to “Biafra[n] . . . self reliance and scant respect for authority” (p. 480f). The historian also gets basic facts wrong about Qđını Museum, which was founded in 1972 not by Ónwụejìogwú but by the same University of Ibadán (photo, Ónwụejìogwú 1981, p. 58) where Afi ìgbo had acquired his own terminal academic credential just nine years before.

PEOPLE AND IDEAS TRAVEL TOGETHER: TAMBIAH’S APPROACH TO RITUAL AND COSMOLOGY IN BRAZIL

Mariza Peirano

1. See Peirano 1998 and 2008 for a general guide to anthropology in Brazil.

2. For a re-analysis of Malinowski’s Trobriand ethnographic material, see “The Magical Power of Words” (Tambiah 1968b) and “On Flying Witches and Flying Canoes” (Tambiah 1983b); for the re-analysis of Evans-Pritchard’s Zande material, see “Form and Meaning of Magical Acts” (Tambiah 1973). All three essays are reprinted in Culture, Thought, and Social Action (Tambiah 1985b). See Tambiah 2002 for the intellectual biography of Edmund Leach.

3. Tambiah’s approach to ritual inspired a great part of the large research program “An Anthropology of Politics: Rituals, Representations, and Violence” sponsored by Núcleo de Antropologia da Política (NuAP), which lasted from 1997 to 2005 and resulted in the publication of more than thirty books. See NuAP 1998, and www.ppgasmuseu.etc.br/museu/pages/nuap_publicacoes.html.

4. I am referring to Tambiah’s trilogy on Thailand, Buddhism and the Spirit Cults in North-East Thailand (1970), World Conqueror and World Renouncer (1976), and Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets (1984).


6. Leveling Crowds received two reviews in Brazil (Comerford 1998 and Chaves 1999), and was the subject of a longer essay (Peirano 2008).

7. See Sahlins 2005 (a version of which appears as Sahlins’s contribution to this book) for a pioneering use of these two notions.

PARADOXES OF ORDER IN THAI COMMUNITY POLITICS

Michael Herzfeld

1. I am indebted to Charles (“Biff”) Keyes for pointing this out to me when he visited the community with me at an early point in my thinking about its problems.


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