N. Fadeke Castor, *Spiritual Citizenship: Transnational Pathways from Black Power to Ifá in Trinidad*. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2017. xxiv + 228 pp. (Paper US\$ 24.95)

In her introduction, N. Fadeke Castor presents “spiritual citizenship,” one of her main organizing terms, as the moral economy of group belonging. This opens up “citizenship” in order to think about other forms of belonging and the obligations that come with community, including responsibilities to both human and superhuman beings, within, beyond, and below the level of the nation. This clearly written book focuses primarily on the spiritual citizenship of a particular middle-class Orisha movement in Trinidad in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries and their engagements with Ifá divination practices. Chapter 1 examines the history of Trinidad’s Black Power movement in the 1970s, which challenged the race, color, class, and religious hierarchies inherited from British colonialism. Chapter 2 looks at the upsurge in the public presence of Orisha in the 1990s through the recognition given by Basdeo Pandey’s administration and its policies favoring “multiculturalism,” leading to national organizing of Orisha groups. This included the emergence of new groups of middle-class, increasingly Yoruba-oriented, Orisha leaders. Chapter 3 focuses on Orisha festivals and conferences, including the Sixth World Congress of Orisha Tradition and Culture, held in 1999, and the Annual Rain Festival at Ile Eko Sango/Osun Mil’osa (IESOM), Castor’s primary field site. Chapter 4 explores the transnational connections with Nigeria that have shaped middle-class Yoruba-centric Orisha in the twenty-first century, even as it has become more exclusivist. Finally, Chapter 5 traces the rise of Ifá.

Several questions arise from Castor’s book. In Chapter 2, she seems to suggest that anti-obeah and antidrumming laws are still on the books in Trinidad, but although these practices are still stigmatized, they were effectively decriminalized at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The Miscellaneous Laws Act of 2000 addressed discriminatory references to “religion” in earlier colonial legislation, removing the term “obeah” from a prior ordinance as well as adding an explicit exception for “religious observations” to prohibitions on drumming.

In discussing spiritual citizenship, Castor points to scholarship arguing that the status of citizenship includes processes of gendered, racialized, and sexed subjectivization, to which Castor astutely adds the subject’s construction as “secular” or “religious,” particularly under colonial rule. However, such processes of religion-making were hardly limited to the colonial period. Given her discussion in Chapter 2 of the “sanitization” of grassroots culture by the middle class in the creation of (Afro)Trinidadian national culture during the

mid-twentieth century, one could ask how this new set of appropriations of Orisha by middle-class practitioners during the 1990s and early 2000s led to transformations and “sanitizations” of Orisha. Such processes of recognition (and adaptation to middle-class mores) necessarily involve some kind of transformation. A small example of this would be the recent shift in vocabulary that Castor mentions but does not analyze, from calling Orisha traditions “Orisha work” (which she seemingly portrays as the peculiar usage of Burton Sankeralli, but which was in fact an older, widely used term) to now referring to them with the more elite Protestant Christian inflected term “Orisha faith.”

Castor ends the book by discussing the inclusiveness of the new Yoruba-oriented Ifá practices (the coming together of a global community or using Trini herbs instead of bush from Africa), but what about their exclusions, for example of Catholic and Hindu elements? She mentions the unfulfilled promises of unity between Afro and Indo during the Black Power movement, but how are those possibilities addressed in this Yoruba-centric Orisha group that she positions as heir to Black Power’s liberatory possibilities? She quite convincingly argues that these groups empower and liberate practitioners from certain colonial norms. This she calls decolonization. However, in other moments they seem to reinforce other colonial models—for example, the mutual exclusivity of groups such as African and Indian—by excluding Hindu (and Christian) elements from their practice. Might this not better be described as “unsettling,” as Yarimar Bonilla has put it (“Unsettling Sovereignty,” *Cultural Anthropology*, 2017), rather than “decolonizing”? “Decolonization” would suggest that we can return to a precolonial state, but “unsettling” puts this in doubt (while remaining sympathetic to the ideal). Castor’s work makes clear that certain colonial norms are reproduced in the postcolonial present, including by Ifá/Orisha practitioners, but the focus of the book’s analysis is mostly on liberation.

Overall, *Spiritual Citizenship* is accessible, slim but not thin, and adds to the limited scholarship on the subject of Ifá in Trinidad. It provides a fascinating case of the ways in which Afro-Atlantic cultures are constituted through ongoing exchanges around and across oceans. It would be a useful addition to undergraduate and graduate courses in anthropology, religious studies, and African American studies.

Alexander Rocklin

Religious Studies, Willamette University

alex.k.rocklin@gmail.com