Aguda Blues, from Salvador de Bahia to the Gulf of Benin: Marcos Carvalho Lopes Interviews Sanya Osha

The Afro-Brazilian connections between the coast of West Africa and Brazil date back to the transatlantic slave trade and the Muslim uprising in Bahia in 1933.[1] After this major rebellion, many former slaves returned to West Africa bearing a large Brazilian cultural imprint consisting of architectural skills, culinary traditions, and song and dance. They also brought back Brazilian names and cosmopolitan outlooks. From Africa, enslaved Africans carried with them to Brazil philosophical and cosmological outlooks and indeed, culture generally. Some of these cross-fertilizations are what are interrogated in this intellectual and cultural exchange.

Key words: African philosophy; Afro-Brazilian philosophy; Abdias Nascimento; ethnophilosophy; Orisa; Paulin J. Hountondji; V.Y. Mudimbe; Kwasi Wiredu; Olabiyi Babalola Yai

Marcos Carvalho Lopes: How do you define African philosophy?

Sanya Osha: I would define it, first of all, by paraphrasing Paulin J. Hountondji's definition in his famous book, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*, as a set of texts written by Africans who consider themselves to be philosophers. However, this definition itself has incurred the wrath of some critics who consider it too narrow and restrictive. So I consider the definition as a sort of starting point from which to begin a conversation on African philosophy with a view to expanding and refining the boundaries of the conversation. And then this may be extended to include philosophical issues that concern us as Africans over time and space. What are the important existential questions that face us as Africans and how have we dealt with them philosophically and in a historically broad spatiotemporal context?

In this regard, there are two kinds of pressure that have been brought to bear on the discipline of African philosophy. The first kind stems from the pressures exerted by African philosophers upon themselves to demarcate the boundaries and orientations of the discipline. The second kind of pressure stems from an external stimulus. Africa being, in general, less affluent, philosophers are expected to be part of the general effort to develop their societies and in so doing are compelled to examine the parameters of their discipline to discern how in fact they are being philosophical or otherwise. In other words, due to the rather dire economic circumstances of their societies, philosophers are also expected to be part of the general nation-building effort. But perhaps more importantly, how can they be perceived to be assisting in developing their societies? Undoubtedly, these two kinds of pressure go a long way in informing the self-definition of the African philosopher and his/her role(s) in society.

For a long time, the fundamental question in African philosophy was "what is it?" or "does it exist?" An astonishing amount of literature has been produced dealing with this foundational question, and in tackling it, specific trends in the discipline have emerged. More instructively, the outlines of future orientation can now be discerned. African philosophy as a discipline has addressed a multitude of historical and cutting-edge aspects of scholarship in a bid to assert itself and ensure its continuing relevance.

Journal of World Philosophies 6 (Summer 2021): 174–182

e-ISSN: 2474-1795 • http://scholarworks.iu.edu/iupjournals/index.php/jwp • doi: 10.2979/jourworlphil.6.1.13

Some of these topics include, but are not limited to, democracy and the question of human rights, communitarianism, universals and particulars, African feminisms, public intellectual culture, sexuality, and endogenous knowledge systems. Various African and Africanist philosophers have addressed these important topics with a remarkable plethora of methodological approaches.

As such, there has been an extensive broadening of the disciplinary parameters of African philosophy to include almost any trend in contemporary scholarship. Although I must add that this diffusiveness can become problematic if the fundamental question(s) of African philosophy are completely ignored. Such foundational questions pertain to the origins, nature, and orientations of African philosophy.

MCL: How did you come into contact with African philosophy?

SO: I came into contact with African philosophy basically from my first year as a student of philosophy at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, where I studied. The late Professor Olusegun Oladipo, who passed in 2009, was my teacher and later became a colleague at the same university. Oladipo was an extraordinary achiever. He believed in building indigenous institutions to develop African philosophical traditions rather than depending on whatever form of charity from the west. He established a thriving publication house, the Hope Publications, which published quite a number of seminal works on African philosophy before he, unfortunately, died of a stroke at the age of 52 in 2009. He taught courses in African philosophy in which philosophers such as Kwasi Wiredu, a major African philosopher of Ghanaian origin, Paulin Hountondji, an equally important Beninois thinker, Henry Oruka, a Kenyan interpreter of the famous Sage school of African philosophy, and Claude Sumner, an important figure in late twentieth-century Ethiopian philosophy, were discussed. Wiredu himself had been a lecturer in the department in the early 1980s and his immense shadow loomed in that space.

Oladipo also published a slim but important book on African philosophy titled *The Idea of African Philosophy*, which was released in 1992, the same year Kwame Anthony Appiah's book *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* was also published. I had the great opportunity to proofread parts of Oladipo's book, which drew me in tremendously. Oladipo, by dint of that important proofreading opportunity, was able to demonstrate how an African philosopher in contemporary times ought to approach philosophy. My conversations with him also let me into the workings of his mind, the dilemmas and challenges he faced in confronting philosophy from an African perspective. He revealed that he felt initially alienated by the western tradition of philosophy and described his journey in formulating philosophical questions in an African key. Suddenly, philosophy no longer seemed so intimidating. Subsequently, I had other opportunities to work with him, thereby further sharpening my perspectives on African philosophy. I should perhaps add that Oladipo also edited and published a volume of Wiredu's essays titled *Conceptual Decolonisation in African Philosophy,* which I reviewed for a philosophy journal, *Journal of Philosophy and Development*, published in 1996 by the Department of Philosophy, Ogun State University, now Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria, and which ultimately provided me with the inspiration for my doctoral thesis on the Ghanaian philosopher. Such exposure and training have proved to be immensely beneficial to me.

Journal of World Philosophies 6 (Summer 2021): 174–182

e-ISSN: 2474-1795 • http://scholarworks.iu.edu/iupjournals/index.php/jwp • doi: 10.2979/jourworlphil.6.1.13

MCL: At first, the search for identity was the motto for the dissemination of African philosophy. Is this search outdated?

SO: I don't think it is an entirely outdated motif. Over the last few years, African philosophy has gained tremendous conceptual and theoretical impetus in which its borders have also shifted radically. Obviously, some purists would be dismayed by this development, and it is indeed easy for the discipline to lose focus or its foundational moorings, and so it is necessary to continue the interrogations behind its *raison d'etre* and the various realities and possibilities regarding its identity. We always have to reassure ourselves as to its points of origin, its aims and intentions, even as we embark on new philosophical quests and questions. The very nature of the philosophical enterprise necessitates that we ask and reframe these foundational questions in order to determine where we are, where we want to be, and where we ought to be. Locating our foundational moorings will assist us in nourishing our deliberations with fresh insights.

MCL: In your perspective, what questions move African philosophy today?

SO: Today, there is an almost endless variety of questions that preoccupy African philosophers, judging from the research currently being pursued. It seems African philosophers would devise a philosophical approach to any given social, political, or cultural issue confronting a given society. There is a tendency to utilize new concepts, metaphors, and methodologies in addressing a wide variety of epistemological issues. There is also an evident struggle to enthrone new philosophical heroes, a struggle to establish new modes of thinking and philosophical approaches. In many ways, everything is in a state of flux epistemically. The conceptual possibilities seem to be endless, but the potential for serious setbacks and misadventures is also enormous because this is a time in which cheap academic populism and disciplinary decadence could take root and flourish. By this, I mean quite a few pseudo-schools and movements of so-called philosophy are emerging, often with questionable pedigree. There are parochial viewpoints of a narrow ethnic character being paraded as authentic representations of African philosophy.

It would be easy to equate this discursive flourishing to the foundational debates that attended the birth of modern African philosophy in the era of Wiredu, Peter O. Bodunrin, Oruka, and Hountondji about fifty years or so ago. Only that this time around, the field is vastly broader and there are so many players of varying credentials and capabilities all active in the same space, so there are many more opportunities for charlatans and imposters to hold sway. Again, by this I mean the sprouting of pseudo-schools and pseudo-ideologies.

Another feature of contemporary African philosophy is that it has become much broader in scope and more internationalist in its outlook. You have Americans and Europeans actively engaged in African philosophy, and so one could point to its declining insularity, if one may put it crudely. Again, this development refers to the state of flux I mentioned earlier. There is an evident thrust to push the boundaries of the discipline in what is akin to a gold rush where everything is up for grabs. I tend not to look at the activities occurring within pseudo-movements lightly.

MCL: How do you see the disputes about womanism and feminism in relation to African philosophy? How does African philosophy address issues related to gender and sexual identity differences?

SO: I think this is a debate that had been more impactful in the fields of gender studies, African studies, or perhaps sociology and cultural anthropology. The leading names in these debates are the

Journal of World Philosophies 6 (Summer 2021): 174–182

e-ISSN: 2474-1795 • http://scholarworks.iu.edu/iupjournals/index.php/jwp • doi: 10.2979/jourworlphil.6.1.13

late Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, a poet, literary critic, and theorist; Oyeronke Oyewunmi, author of the widely acclaimed *The Invention of Women: Making Sense of Western Gender Discourses*; Ifi Amadiume, Duke University-based academic and author of *Male Daughters, Female Husbands*; Amina Mama, US-based sociologist and former director of the Africa Gender Institute, the University of Cape Town; and Nkiru Nzegwu, SUNY-based philosopher and art theorist. So the majority within this cohort are not philosophers per se, but their work has been highly influential and bears considerable philosophical significance.

However, there are African philosophers (usually female) conducting research on these topics and similar ones. In addition, African philosophers are also working in the areas of female genital mutilation, same-sex relationships, and other related concerns, so it may be argued that currently, the feminism/womanism debate is being superseded—or at least complemented—by other research concerns even when those concerns are of a similar nature.

On the second part of your question, how do African philosophers address issues relating to gender and sexual identity? This area of research is just one of many confronting African philosophers currently. So it depends on the philosophers involved and their specific research interests. And there are differing views on this topic, as to be expected.

MCL: Of those African philosophers you have known personally, who is the most important in your opinion?

SO: Obviously this is a very contentious question. I haven't known too many major African philosophers personally but I have drawn deeply from the work of most of them. One of the most important African philosophers has got to be Wiredu simply for his powerfully succinct methodological approach. He isn't exactly your fashionable philosopher, but he is certainly one of the most influential thinkers of the late twentieth century judging from the sheer amount of philosophy scholars particularly in West and East Africa who have been influenced by his approach. Wiredu, in particular, attempts to create a synthesis between modernity and traditional African culture employing concrete empirical insights. It's an almost absurdly simple approach but also one filled with utmost pragmatism, in other words, an approach that could only have been conceived in a moment of startling conceptual clarity.

I could imagine Wiredu was thinking, how do we get African societies moving in this age of decolonization? How does philosophy get off its high horse and get its hands dirty? To a certain degree, his approach entailed a demystification of philosophy in order to ensure its continuing social relevance.

There are many African thinkers with brilliant minds and impressive insights on the African condition such as theorists like Samir Amin, Claude Ake, Adebayo Adedeji, Wole Soyinka Ayi Kwesi Armah, and many others, but these by themselves do not constitute a viable philosophical method and going by this criterion, I think only Wiredu and perhaps a few other philosophers such as V.Y. Mudimbe, Odera Oruka, Cheikh Anta Diop, or so make the cut. The approaches developed in Sage philosophy appear to constitute another philosophical method, while ethnophilosophy following Hountondji's searing critique is often devalued. However, ethnophilosophy, in the hands of philosophers (like Ada Agada, who is about to publish a large edited volume on the topic), rather than anthropologists, may be set to enjoy a revival, and its central preoccupation with endogenous knowledge, a major focus of Hountondji's late career reflections, makes it (ethnophilosophy) a candidate for renewed philosophic scrutiny.

The Afrocentric approach of Cheikh Anta Diop and Molefi Kete Asante has interesting philosophical attributes, but it also entails a mastery of a wide variety of academic specialties. It isn't

Journal of World Philosophies 6 (Summer 2021): 174–182

e-ISSN: 2474-1795 • http://scholarworks.iu.edu/iupjournals/index.php/jwp • doi: 10.2979/jourworlphil.6.1.13

meant for the lazy or faint-hearted. In other words, it is composed of several vast conceptual vistas involving painstaking strategic and tactical intellectual labor. And perhaps this is why this approach appears to be less favored amongst contemporary African philosophers even if its ideological attractions and significance are largely unimpeachable.

Afrocentricity—the development of which is somewhat similar to the philosophy of ancestrality (*ancestralidade*) in Brazil, in terms of its intent to effect a radical discontinuity with the modern, not the ancient-western tradition—isn't often (due to perhaps an intense focus on the politics of racial identity) considered a powerful branch of African philosophy. Pioneers such as Wiredu, Hountondji, Oruka, Kwame Gyekye, and others in that generation preferred to engage with philosophy as a post-Kantian enterprise or as a universalist discipline, and perhaps also to engage without the discipline's baggage of racism first, in order to ensure the professionalization of their practices, and second, to boost the supposedly scientific credentials—following Hountondji's prescription—of their methods. And finally, there is the question of boundaries and limits. The pre-Socratic notion of philosophy, comparatively speaking, is much broader than the post-Kantian conception which most African modernists inherited from the colonialists.

The pre-Socratic notion was dominant in ancient Africa and in its purest conception can now only be practiced by mavericks and academic outsiders, so perhaps this makes it less appealing. Furthermore, this incredibly expansive notion of philosophy does not readily conform with the numerous disciplinary strictures of the modern academy. Thirdly, it could be terribly time-consuming and expensive to pursue. And then post-liberation Africans (with the exception of former Southern Rhodesians and South Africans) were perhaps less exposed to the ravages and toxins of racism because the attainment of independence gave them the illusion of absolute freedom. This probably made the discipline of philosophy as a whole less suspect racially. So African philosophers arguably were more open to its potentials, to its possible neutrality, and were more able to take advantage of its possibilities before its innate limitations became apparent.

MCL: Who is your favorite African philosopher?

SO: Again this is another contentious question. I admire quite a few African philosophers for a variety of reasons. I think it would be helpful to link this question to the previous one. I would imagine that my favorite African philosopher should also be able to exert considerable influence on the future direction of the discipline. Ideally, my favorite African philosopher would serve as a pathfinder, an opener of doors, a pioneer. Perhaps I digress a little. Wiredu is just magnificent, but do I always find him enjoyable? I would think not. This is not for reasons of diminishing brilliance or a lapse in logic but because his unfaltering conceptual coherence sometimes seems too good to be true. But nonetheless, I would never shy away from affirming his considerable impact and influence.

I have seductively ambivalent feelings towards the work of V.Y. Mudimbe that often turn out to be extremely productive. His work gives me a jolting feeling of plunging into an ice-cold bath. Through his astonishing scholarship, he is an instigator of agitated thoughts, and the effects he creates are never mild-natured. He has the effect of casting you off away onto an unruly journey, one that if you manage to return, it will be such that you will never be the same again. Such is the contradictory nature of the powerful effects he has upon me. I must also add that Mudimbe's strength lies in being able to extract philosophical meaning from a wide variety of texts, be they anthropological, artistic, archaeological, or literary. It isn't a methodological approach that is easy to follow, but it serves him well in building his practice.

But there is also a less well-known philosophical figure whose work I admire: the recently deceased Olabiyi Yai, from the Republic of Benin in West Africa. He was an early critic of Paulin

Journal of World Philosophies 6 (Summer 2021): 174–182

e-ISSN: 2474-1795 • http://scholarworks.iu.edu/iupjournals/index.php/jwp • doi: 10.2979/jourworlphil.6.1.13

Hountondji's (Yai's compatriot, by the way) work. He has also worked on West African/Afro-Brazilian[2] connections. Yai's work includes searing critiques of African academic philosophy and the tradition/modernity dichotomy. And in many ways, he serves as a griot in traditional West African intellectual culture. Indeed the griot is a deeply philosophical figure, a bridge-builder connecting the past, present, and future in a continuum of cultural, intellectual, and artistic practices. I really admire his work a lot.

So in terms of answering your question specifically, it is difficult to provide a succinct answer because different African philosophers affect me differently and I use their work for different purposes depending on what I am looking for.

MCL: Until today in Brazil, only one doctoral thesis, defended in philosophy departments, has African philosophy as its theme. There is no university chair dedicated to African philosophy in the country. When studying African philosophy, themes and issues are linked to the fight against racism and the search for identity. Most of these studies take place in departments of education (mainly in the philosophy of education) and sometimes in departments of anthropology. Due to a law that made the teaching of African, Afro-Brazilian, and indigenous history and culture an obligation of public schools, a form of philosophy has been gaining ground here, called the philosophy of ancestrality. It is assumed that this philosophy embraces all those peoples that would be linked to ancestral inheritances. In fact, Candomblé, in its Brazilian development, is mixed in the same space with all the orixas, and also, at times, indigenous deities. The philosophy of ancestrality (*ancestralidade*) is, for the most part, developed by people linked to Afro-Brazilian religions.

A colleague from Mozambique told me that he does not understand this ancestrality, that it is as Brazilian as Afrocentricity is North American.

The philosophy of ancestrality (*ancestralidade*) is still too recent to be able to be described in a viable way, perhaps more than it is, the concept of ancestrality (*ancestralidade*) is an interesting tool in the Brazilian context.

I do not know if you have heard of Abdias Nascimento, but he is the great name of Afro-Brazilian philosophy of the last century. He created a black theater company in Brazil in the 1940s, advocated for redress policies and quotas... Nascimento lived in the USA in the 1970s and for a period in Nigeria. In the 70s he lived with Molefi Asante, working at the same university. In the same year Asante launched the concept of Afrocentricity, he launched the idea of *quilombismo*.[3] He had a great political performance, being elected senator and bringing racial issues to the public agenda. He was recognized as an *honorary causa* at several universities. Abdias died in 2011 and is still an unavoidable name for thinking about Afro-Brazilian philosophy—he and an American teacher, Elisa Larkin Nascimento, who has lived in Brazil since the 1970s, published a number of texts. Perhaps *quilombismo* and Afrocentricity are closer relatives.

My colleague from Mozambique, José Castiano, drew attention to ancestrality and Afrocentricity as moments of subjectivity, of building an identity/a subject... but that would be closed to dialogue with other forms of philosophizing. In the Nietzschean vocabulary, I would say that they offer a redeeming truth. But, who said that these redemptions are not circumstantially useful for the reconstruction of identities shattered by racism?

SO: Of course I know of Abdias Nascimento. His colleague, Wole Soyinka, at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), Nigeria, called him "the Rottweiler of African cultural assertion in Brazil" in his book, *Of Africa*, published by Yale University Press in 2012. He was also

Journal of World Philosophies 6 (Summer 2021): 174–182

e-ISSN: 2474-1795 • http://scholarworks.iu.edu/iupjournals/index.php/jwp • doi: 10.2979/jourworlphil.6.1.13

interviewed by Henry Louis Gates Jr. in his television series on blacks in Central and South America titled, *Black in Latin America*.[4] I know Nascimento returned to Brazil after his academic career in the United States (SUNY, to be precise), and had a successful run as a politician. But I never knew he lived with Molefi Kete Asante in the US when they both worked at SUNY. Interesting…

It is also interesting to note that Nascimento started his career as a theater practitioner and then branched out into other areas of scholarship. But I also had no idea that he was crucial in establishing the concept of ancestrality as a key trope in Afro-Brazilian philosophy. His academic counterpart in Nigeria in that regard would be Wande Abimbola, a world-renowned proponent of Orisa spirituality (an ancient West African form of spirituality found amongst the Yoruba of south-western Nigeria, the Benin Republic, and all over the African diaspora, notably Cuba, Brazil, Colombia, and Trinidad and Tobago, amongst other countries),[5] an academic who also worked extensively in the US, particularly at Boston University after serving as Vice Chancellor of the Obafemi Awolowo University where Nascimento had worked. Another interesting parallel is that Abimbola was a frequent visitor to Brazil, where he kept strengthening cultural links with the Nagos and promoting Orixa (as you write in Brazil) spirituality. Abimbola also served a brief spell as a senator in Nigeria during the tail end of military rule between the late 1980s and early 1990s. Abimbola has published widely cited books on Orixa spirituality, notably the volumes he released through UNESCO around 1976. But his work has not had the same impact in Nigerian or African philosophical circles and he is not regarded as a philosopher in the same manner as Nascimento is regarded in Afro-Brazilian philosophy circles because professional philosophers in West Africa pursued a different trajectory, which didn't have much in common with philosophies resembling *ancestralidade*, *quilombismo,* and Afrocentricity largely due to the contrary turn Wiredu's work and his other West African colleagues took.

I am glad we are having this specific conversation. It is bringing seemingly marginal perspectives out of African and Afro-Brazilian cultural continuities in what could turn out to be a pivotal point… we are able notice more parallels between Brazil and Africa.

MCL: Brazil is the country with the largest black population outside Africa. However, in the dialogue of African philosophy, voices from the USA and the Caribbean are generally heard, but not those from Brazil. This is also a common problem in relation to Portuguese-speaking Africa. In a practical sense, are linguistic boundary divisions the reason for this lack of visibility? Is it possible for African philosophy to articulate a unity that would take these spaces into account?

SO: Yes, I would think the linguistic factor would account for a lot of the supposed lack of cultural connection. But then Brazil's imperial thrust is also much less than, say, that of France, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

Interestingly, West Africa bears a lot of the Brazilian cultural influence that exists till this day. There are Afro-Brazilian quarters spread all over the coast of West Africa, particularly in the cities of Lagos, Porto-Novo, Cotonou, Quidah, Grand Popo, Agoue, Lome, Savi, and Allada. The presence of Afro-Brazilian families of Santos, Reis, Assumpcao, Cruz, Pedro, Antonio, Oliveira, Souza, Fernandez, Pereira, Medeiros, Gomez, da Costa, da Silva, da Rocha, and Augusto all attest to the Afro-Brazilian influence evident in the coastal towns and cities of West Africa.

The black Brazilians who rebelled against slavery in Brazil between 1830 and 1835 sometimes returned to West Africa and were able to create a distinct culture complete with festivals, professional guilds, and networks, flavorful culinary culture, and major architectural landmarks. In Lagos, Nigeria, this cultural manifestation and its people are called *Aguda*.[6] Just as Candomblé in

Journal of World Philosophies 6 (Summer 2021): 174–182

e-ISSN: 2474-1795 • http://scholarworks.iu.edu/iupjournals/index.php/jwp • doi: 10.2979/jourworlphil.6.1.13

Brazil and Santeria in Cuba are derivatives of Orisa spirituality, Aguda culture is also Afro-Brazilian, and this cross-fertilization of cultures has occurred without undue coercion or violence, which in itself is an ingrained trait of Orisa spirituality. Orisa spirituality is simply able to attract its converts and acolytes without the necessity to colonize, kill, and maim. I would even go further to state that Afro-Brazilian culture in West Africa, unlike the aggressive world religions of Islam and Christianity, works akin to Orisa or Ifa spirituality, and this is perhaps why its influence has been less hegemonic or less pervasive. But this does not mean it does not exist or that it has not transformed lives in very significant ways. I for one greatly admire Afro-Brazilian culture in West Africa.

Perhaps various Brazilian governments have been much less willing to stamp the Brazilian imprint in Africa. We must remember that the US, UK, the Netherlands, Germany, and France all have elaborate programs of cultural exchange all over Africa, and they are quite visible and also influential. In this regard, Brazil is much less visible and influential.

Instead the cross-cultural pollination between Africa and Brazil seems to occur as a result of the efforts of private individuals and initiatives with little or no institutional backing. I say this generally about the Brazilian cultural imprint in West Africa where many Afro-Brazilian descendants reside, but this could also be applied to explain the paucity of intellectual exchanges between African and Brazilian philosophers.

The possibilities for the spread of imperialism in Africa are dangerously immense. The US, France, China, India, Russia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) all have varying forms of military presence in different parts of Africa, and we mustn't discount the cultural implications of this development. In other words, we mustn't ignore the convincing attributes of soft power of which culture and its varied manifestations are an integral part. Neither Portugal nor Brazil is mentioned in this new scramble for Africa. Of course, it isn't that I am justifying this new intrusive surge, but I am merely alluding to it in seeking to provide an explanation to your question.

Sanya Osha is an author of several works of scholarship and a senior research fellow at the Institute for the Humanities in Africa (HUMA), the University of Cape Town. Since 2002, he has been on the Editorial Board of *Quest: An African Journal of Philosophy/Revue Africaine de Philosophie*. His books include *Kwasi Wiredu and Beyond: The Text, Writing and Thought in Africa* (2005), *Ken Saro-Wiwa's Shadow: Politics, Nationalism and the Ogoni Protest Movement* (2007), *Postethnophilosophy* (2011), and *African Postcolonial Modernity: Informal Subjectivities and the Democratic Consensus* (2014). Other major publications include *Truth in Politics* (2004), co-edited with J. P Salazar and W. van Binsbergen, and *African Feminisms* (2006) as editor. His most recent book is *Dani Nabudere's Afrikology: A Quest for African Holism* (2018).

Marcos Carvalho Lopes is a professor of African philosophy at the University of International Integration of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony (UNILAB), currently working on how to forge stronger links between Brazilian and African philosophers. To this end, he is developing a series of interviews with various philosophers working on similar synergies that he hopes to eventually publish as a book.

---

1 The Muslim uprising was instigated largely by Yoruba-speaking West African slaves who were protesting the harsh conditions of slavery and plantation existence. Many of the ex-slaves were able to return to West Africa, where they re-integrated themselves into the local communities.

2 See papers such as "Theory and Practice in African Philosophy: The Poverty of Speculative Philosophy," in *Second Order* 6 (July 1977); "In Praise of Metonymy: The Concepts of "Tradition," and "Creativity in the Transmission of Yoruba Artistry over Time and Space" in *Research in African*

Journal of World Philosophies 6 (Summer 2021): 174–182

e-ISSN: 2474-1795 • http://scholarworks.iu.edu/iupjournals/index.php/jwp • doi: 10.2979/jourworlphil.6.1.13

Literatures 24, no. 4 (Winter, 1993); "The Identity, Contributions, and Ideology of the Aguda (Afro-Brazilians) of the Gulf of Benin: A Reinterpretation," in *Slavery and Abolition* 22, no. 1 (2001). The last major academic project he helmed before his death in December 2020 at the age of 81 was the UNESCO General History of Africa (GHA), which brought together African and Africa-descended philosophers from the continent, North America, South America, and other parts where black cultures are to be found in what truly promises to be an innovative "epistemological forum."

3 This is an idea largely attributed to Abdias Nascimento, which is perceived as a positive proposition linked to his impressive efforts as a politician working for the re-democratization of Brazil.

4 A PBS television series presented by Henry Louis Gates Jr. which aired in 2011.

5 See ed. Toyin Falola and Ann Genova, *Orisa: Yoruba Gods and Spiritual Identity in Africa and the Diaspora* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 2006); ed. Jacob K. Olupona and Terry Rey, *Orisa Devotion as World Religion: The Globalization of Yoruba Religious Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008).

6 "Aguda" is the term for Afro-Brazilian returnees to Lagos, Nigeria after the experience of slavery. They came back to Lagos usually as highly skilled craftspersons in the fields of architecture, draughtsmanship, carpentry, and the like. Their cultural imprint and legacy are still visible in the city.

Journal of World Philosophies 6 (Summer 2021): 174–182

e-ISSN: 2474-1795 • http://scholarworks.iu.edu/iupjournals/index.php/jwp • doi: 10.2979/jourworlphil.6.1.13