

Mythology, Knowledge, and Power: An Examination of Social Forces in Brazil and the Emergence of Umbanda.

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The interaction among various imported and indigenous spiritual traditions in Brazil has created numerous distinct and complex belief systems. During Brazil's colonial period (1530-1822), African, Amerindian, and European transplants were in direct contact, and the differential interaction of their beliefs and practices has made for a distinct regional pattern. In this colonial context, diverse worldviews and previously well-defined spiritual beliefs and practices were thrust together, and have developed syncretically and in juxtaposition. Several factors were especially important in determining the nature of these syncretic interactions. These included the geographical and environmental characteristics of the various regions, economic considerations, and the concentration of various ethnic groups in a given area, especially Africans of common origin.

This paper examines the ways in which two differing mythologies, Afro-Brazilian and Institutional Roman Catholic, have interacted in the Brazilian cultural context. The focus is on *Umbanda*, a syncretic belief system which has developed primarily in urban Brazil in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Specifically, the birth and development of Umbanda is examined in terms of social forces which are in opposition because of their different, mythologically-based, conceptions of the relationship between knowledge and power: Afro-Brazilian and Roman Catholic religious traditions hold contrasting conceptions of this relationship. This distinction has socio-political implications which highlight the relationship between marginal cultures and the more dominant Catholic one.¹ A consideration of the

contrasting social histories of Institutional Roman Catholicism and Umbanda, and of their differing perspectives on the acquisition of knowledge and power provides insight into the social and political tension between these groups. This implicit difference sheds light on the historic marginalization of Umbanda in Brazil and on its current growing popularity.

The predominance of different ethnic groups in specific regions effected the emergence of distinct religious practices. The African Yoruba, originally from what is now Nigeria, were concentrated in the north-east region of Brazil known as Bahia. The high ratio of Yoruba to other West African groups in Bahia led to a continuation of Yoruban cultural and religious traits; for example, the religion Candomblé, prevalent in this region, maintains the pageantry and color of the rich Yoruban pantheon. In contrast, the southern part of Brazil was directly affected by the importation of slaves of Bantu cultural background from southern Africa. Falling sugar prices in the northeast led to a decreased need for slave labor at the same time that increased mining in the southern region created a greater demand for slaves. This predominance of Bantu peoples explains, in part, the dominance of Bantu spirit practices, known as Macumba in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and as Cabulá in the state of Espírito Santo, in the southern part of the country. The Amerindian presence was most pronounced in the Amazon Basin and the interior northeast. Both fugitive slaves and those working on cattle ranches in these areas often had extended contact with Amerindian religious beliefs and practices. The result of interaction between African and Amerindian spirit beliefs is known in the Amazon Basin as Pajelanca and as Catimbó in the state of Pernambuco. Thus, a geographical consideration of beliefs and practices in Brazil clarifies the emergence of this regional pattern which includes various Afro-Catholic, Afro-Amerindian, and Bantu-Yoruba syncretic traditions.²

During the twentieth century, as the result of both widespread migration to urban areas and improved mass communication, beliefs and practices involving hypnomantic knowledge—knowledge gained through possession or trance—have gradually become more uniform. The development of an industrial economy based primarily in the corridor between Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo has led to an influx of people to this area from around the country. The diversity of spiritual practices which were thrust together in the Rio-São Paulo area has created a rich pool of knowledge from which Umbanda has been born. Umbanda is the name used by the modern, syncretic groups which draw on Amerindian, African, and European sources for spiritual knowledge and power. This borrowing from multiple sources

distinguishes Umbanda from other regional Afro-Brazilian groups which tend to rely predominantly on one or two root sources.

Beyond the blending of beliefs which could be expected from informal contact among individuals in an urban setting, another important vehicle of communication has emerged among Afro-Brazilian communities. A "spiritist press" has developed, publishing a wide range of books dealing with hypnomantic knowledge and drawing upon European, African, and Amerindian traditions. The *Imprensa Espirita* is not a single publishing group, but rather an umbrella term for the many small publishers who produce books dealing with hypnomantic knowledge and whose wares are sold in specialized bookstores which carry spiritual goods, as well as at newsstands and on street corners.

By way of defining Umbanda, I have chosen an illustrative example from the "spiritist press," *Malungo, Decodificação da Umbanda*. This excerpt summarizes the function of the various regional or root traditions as they inform each other in Umbanda cosmology. Specifically, I have chosen a passage exemplifying Umbanda interpretation and assimilation of new spiritual and religious knowledge through the mass media. *Malungo, Decodificação da Umbanda* was written by an Umbanda practitioner, Dilson Bento, and was published in 1979.

Umbanda, in Brazil, designates a complex of beliefs and rituals of African roots, fruit of the interaction between Black, Amerindian, and European cultures. Umbanda is a religious movement which is currently in a stage of formation and expansion with a greater following in urban areas. As a social phenomena [Umbanda] extends itself throughout the Brazilian territory, penetrating the various social classes, making followers amongst both the rich and the poor.

The new converts of European descent who interacted with Umbanda accepted its approaches to "the mysteries" and attempted to translate and understand the concepts according to French spiritism [Kardecism]. These individuals drew spiritual concepts from the most varied of esoteric traditions in order to establish a code for Umbanda. The African cults assimilated this language as long as it didn't alter the African cosmogony or anything related to possession. In this manner Umbanda gained a body of doctrine, more or less defined but extremely eclectic, based both on African traditions and other traditional "schools."

. . . Not all teachings of diverse nature were encountered and incorporated in the way just mentioned. A part of our information came to us in a fragmented and chaotic state through the mass media system. However, an elaboration and comprehension of this information was conducted by mediums outside of their "ego" state, that is, in a state of possession or trance. It can be said that this information was processed through the unconscious by "traditional wisdom." By traditional wisdom we mean the elaboration of information by psychic means. Such wisdom is highly regenerative when applied to knowledge which has been fragmented and disassociated by mass-media. The collective memory organizes this data (at the level of the unconscious) in such a way as to always have available a central body of experiences. This central corpus is, in Umbanda, the structure of values of Black culture in Brazil. (Bento 1979:14-15, 56-57, my translation)

Bento presents a clear description of the assimilation of spirit beliefs and practices into Umbanda. The interaction among diverse traditions created a need for a framework which could incorporate and organize African, Amerindian, and European conceptions of the spirit realm. This framework was based on the authority of individual mediums who decided how new knowledge would be treated: After consideration by the spirits, new ideas might be accepted as received, rejected, or modified. Before this process can be treated in more detail, it is important to examine an individual's motivation for investigating or appropriating the beliefs and practices of another tradition.

The common element among the traditions which contributed to the formation of Umbanda, and which facilitated their blending, was the use of hypnomantic knowledge (Obeyesekere 1981:169). The assimilation into Umbanda of the various approaches to hypnomantic knowledge was possible because "the idiom or context of possession was comprehensible insofar as it was crouched [sic] in terms of a larger shared culture" (Obeyesekere 1981:169). The contributing traditions—Amerindian, African (Bantu and Yoruba), and French Kardecist—emerged from contexts which allowed for interaction with a spirit realm. In Umbanda, as in these source traditions, the interaction between people and spirits provides information and empowerment for individuals and groups. Moreover, the spirit traditions which inform Umbanda are open belief systems allowing and even encouraging the continual search for knowledge and thus for new, possibly more effective, power.

Power in this context must be understood in light of the underlying belief in the Afro-Brazilian complex that events and occurrences in the life of an individual are impacted by the spirit realm. Knowledge of means or techniques to manipulate the spirit realm is then, in a real sense, the power to control one's own life.

Attending to the search for power and power sources adds significantly to an understanding of Umbanda. In each of the groups mentioned above, consulting religious specialists and following their advice, performing rituals, using herbal medicines, etc. allows individuals to secure power. Some individuals are considered especially powerful because of their success in making contact with power sources through lineage, spirit beings, magical paraphernalia, or ritual practice. The search for power is ongoing: If one source or technique becomes ineffectual, it is necessary to search for a more effective means of exerting control over events in an individual's life. The growing popularity of Umbanda in urban Brazil is not surprising. Living in a complex, urban world produces conflicts which can be

ritually addressed through the manipulation of knowledge and power. Thus, knowledge becomes a desirable commodity and is appropriated as the occasion arises.

This pragmatic approach to acquiring new knowledge exists in both the regional traditions and in the more widespread practice of Umbanda. The adoption of new knowledge is determined by the pragmatic test of applying the knowledge. The results of this test determine whether the new knowledge is appropriated. The process through which new knowledge is received and assimilated has become formalized within the Umbanda movement. This process of assimilation is not a significant departure from the manner in which the regional Afro-Brazilian traditions negotiate new knowledge. If an outside alternative approach to a given problem proves effective, it is generally assimilated into the ritual or magical repertoire of the individual or group who discovered it.

Umbanda has preserved this pragmatic attitude but has formalized the process. New knowledge is often submitted for comment to a medium who, in a trance state, interprets and judges it. Since almost all Umbanda members receive spirits—experience trance—there is a broad base for interpretation. Every medium has a special relationship to the belief structure, a sense of involvement and direct participation.³ Moreover, this process of consulting the spirits concerning new knowledge has allowed the incorporation of more esoteric knowledge, which cannot be tested pragmatically. The way this knowledge is ordered derives from Kardecist influences in which a spiritual hierarchy exists. Umbanda is divided into seven lines which group spiritual beings according to geo-cultural criteria. Each of the seven lines is divided into legions or phalanxes. Legions exist for a variety of African deities, Catholic saints, and Amerindian spirits, as well as a legion for each of the following groups: Egyptians, Aztecs, Incas, Hindus, and the Orient (see Bastide 1987: 323-24). Thus it is possible for ideas from Hinduism or Buddhism, for example, to be understood by and incorporated into Umbanda. In the regional Afro-Brazilian structures which lack a defined system for ordering new esoteric knowledge, it would be much more difficult to assimilate such non-pragmatic religious elements.

Historically, the Afro-Brazilian complex, including Umbanda, has been characterized by its position as a marginal culture, while the dominant culture has been defined by Roman Catholicism and Comtean political philosophy (Order and Progress)⁵. This marginalization has been shaped by economic, political, and cultural factors. Recently, this position has become largely cultural, rather than

economic or political. Raymond Williams addresses the issue of marginalization with a more precise vocabulary:

We have to think about the sources of that which is not corporate, of those practices, experiences, meanings, and values which are not part of the effective dominant culture. There is clearly something that we can call alternative to the effective dominant culture and there is something we can call oppositional in the true sense. The degree of existence of these alternative and oppositional forms is itself a matter of constant historical variation in real circumstances. (Williams 1980:40)

When situated against the dominant culture of Catholicism, Umbanda can be seen as an example of such an alternative and oppositional form.

During the era of slavery in Brazil (1606-1888), the practice of traditional religious rituals or ceremonies by slaves was banned because it provided organizational structures which could be used against the slave owner. Afro-Brazilian religious groups were, therefore, viewed as oppositional by both secular and religious powers within the dominant culture; however, even in this climate, Afro-Brazilian religion and culture persisted.

With the emancipation of the slaves in 1888, Afro-Brazilian groups were able to begin the long struggle towards attaining legitimacy. This process was part of a long battle for civil rights and for racial and social equality in Brazil. During this time Afro-Brazilian communities gradually came to be seen as alternative rather than oppositional by the secular state; however, the other component of the dominant culture, the Roman Catholic Church, has continued to view the regional Afro-Brazilian groups, as well as Umbanda, in clearly oppositional terms.

In contrast to Umbanda, Roman Catholicism has a radically different understanding of knowledge and power. Sources of power and means of controlling such power are codified and closed. In Roman Catholicism there is only one legitimate, acceptable power source—the Holy Trinity, all knowledge of whom was revealed in the past. It is believed that an individual cannot possess power originating outside of the framework of institutional relationships. If anything, the existence of another means of knowledge or power only strengthens the Catholic system by reinforcing notions of evil. Knowledge of alternative power sources is seen as contamination and therefore a threat to institutional power. Instead of deriving vitality from new knowledge, this closed system affirms and strengthens itself through the expulsion of foreign knowledge.

From this historical perspective it is now possible to examine how one component of the dominant culture, the Catholic Church—because of a different mythological conception—has attempted to influence the government in restraining the growth of Umbanda. Until the latter part of the 1960s, the Catholic influence was so prevalent in the dominant culture that the Afro-Brazilian groups, including Umbanda, were thought not to represent a religion. Because Catholic mythology revolved around a unified system of knowledge and power, and because Afro-Brazilian traditions held quite disparate beliefs, they were classified as cults and forced to register with state and local authorities through police departments. Section 7, article 141 of the Brazilian constitution guarantees freedom of conscience and religious belief to all, but with a limiting clause: "There will exist freedom of religious practice except for those groups which behave in a manner contrary to public order or good custom" (Kloppenburger 1961:58). The legislative assembly of the state of Pernambuco used this clause to require certified psychiatric exams as a prerequisite for leadership in an Afro-Brazilian group, and it was not until January 15, 1976, that the governor of Bahia revoked a regulation requiring the *Candomblé terreiros* of Salvador to be registered at the police section for games and customs. (O'Gorman 1977:27) An interesting parallel can be seen here with the birth of state control of mechanisms of discipline in Europe:

In England, it was private religious groups that carried out, for a long time, the functions of social discipline (Radzinovitz: 203-214); in France, although a part of this role remained in the hands of the parish guilds or charity associations, another - and no doubt the most important part - was very soon taken over by the police apparatus. (Foucault 1972:213)

During the colonial period in Brazil, the Catholic Church easily marginalized other religious belief systems. However, with the transition to a secular state mandated by the separation of church and state in the Constitution of 1891, it has become increasingly difficult to repress other religious beliefs. The Roman Catholic Church has exploited the vagueness of the constitutional clause which limits the freedom of religious practice. It has accused the Afro-Brazilian groups of illegally practicing medicine, of committing ritual crimes, of causing psychological damage to members, of promoting immoral conduct, and of financial swindling. In these cases, the Church is powerless to do anything except pressure the authorities to take a narrow definition of "public order" and "good custom" and to intervene accordingly.

In some instances, the Church has acted more directly and has taken the Afro-Brazilian groups to court. One such case concerns

"intellectual property" and religious knowledge. The following are excerpts from the ruling in the *Roman Catholic Church v. Umbanda Federation of the state of São Paulo (1946)*, concerning the use of Catholic images in an Umbanda procession. Here, Section 7 Article 141 is invoked: The borrowing of religious imagery with intent to deceive is considered injurious to the rights of other groups and an improper appropriation of knowledge.

Section 1: In response to a protest entered by D. Idilio Jose Soares, Bishop of the Diocese of Santos, against the acts committed by the Federação Umbandista do Estado de São Paulo, of the use in their public ritual of images of Catholic origin and which are distinctly associated with the Catholic faith by religious association. The intent, undoubtedly, is to mystify or blur, causing the impression that the procession is being organized by the Apostolic Roman Catholic Church.

The terreiros of São Miguel Arcanjo and Nossa Senhora da Aparecida, shall no longer be known by those names and the respective saints shall be removed in light of the fact that the names of the saints and the cult of their images are exclusive to the Apostolic Roman Catholic Church and therefore not available for use by the Umbandistas. (Kloppenbug 1961:246)

This court case can be seen as an example of the dominant culture using the judiciary means to prevent the co-opting of knowledge and the assimilation of beliefs.

The Catholic reasoning regarding the use of Catholic saints in Afro-Brazilian ritual betrays an intense fear of having "Catholic" knowledge and access to power used in an alternative way. A Catholic bishop's remarks about how Umbanda groups employ Catholic imagery are revealing:⁶

The diabolic idea which has modified overnight the development of "Spiritism or Umbanda" was born of an ambition to become greater than the Catholic Church. A catholic would never enter a terreiro de Umbanda to ask for the help of Ogum, nor give money to a terreiro which supported Oxossi. A catholic however does believe in São Jorge or would give money to an organization whose patron saint was São Sebastiao. The ingenious device used to subvert the catholics has been to take advantage of the strong association Brazilians have with the various saints. The filling of their terreiros with the images of the saints while at the same time professing a doctrine of spiritism has been effective to the extent that today sixty per cent of practicing catholics also attend terreiros on a regular basis. (Kloppenbug 1961:250)

This commentary represents a notable denial of the historical use of Catholic imagery in Brazil and a misunderstanding of the syncretic nature of Umbanda. The dualistic use of images was one of the earliest forms of interaction between Catholic and Afro-Brazilian ritual and is widely practiced throughout Brazil today. In fact, there is a long-standing similarity between what is considered popular Catholicism and Afro-Brazilian religion. The Catholicism which was

brought to Brazil by the Portuguese colonists beginning in 1530 was a folk Catholicism which in many ways only vaguely resembled the institutional Roman Catholic stance. The Iberian peninsula had developed as a remote, outlying region of the Roman Empire; it had not only become Christianized at a late date, but also had struggled to preserve the polytheistic base of the previous "pagan" faith.

The historical interaction of beliefs and approaches to knowledge and power can be related to Raymond Williams's notion of residual cultural traits within the dominant culture:

The distinction between residual and emergent can be applied to both alternative and oppositional cultures. By "residual" I mean that some experiences, meanings, and values, which cannot be verified or cannot be expressed in terms of the dominant culture, are nevertheless lived and practiced on the basis of the residue-cultural as well as social-of some previous social formation. (Williams 1980:40)

Raymond Williams's notion of residual culture exemplifies the historical relationship between official Catholicism and popular Catholicism, as well as Afro-Brazilian traditions, and their differential approaches to the acquisition of knowledge and power.

A change in this relationship was acknowledged when the Vatican II pronouncement of 1965 recognized the undeniable interaction between Catholicism and local religious traditions (Levine 1986:8-10). The Latin American Bishops Synod issued a similar statement at the Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops at Medellín, 1968:

Religious expressions may be deformed and to some extent confused with an ancestral heritage in which tradition plays an almost tyrannical role. They are easily influenced by magic and superstitious practices . . . and a certain fear of the divine which necessitates more visible concrete expression . . . desire for security, contingency, importance, and simultaneously the urge to adore and thank the Supreme Being. These religious expressions may be the stammerings of an authentic religious sense expressed by means of the cultural elements at their disposal. Faith always reaches man clothed in a cultural language. (O'Gorman 1977:100)

By accepting the continuing impact of traditional religious beliefs on Catholic practice, the bishops essentially recognized that a residual culture exists. "A residual culture is usually at some distance from the effective dominant culture but one has to recognize that, in real cultural activities, it may get incorporated into it" (Williams 1980:41). In the Brazilian context discussed here, the issue of pragmatism in relation to new spiritual knowledge is a legacy of popular Catholicism as well as the Afro-Brazilian and Amerindian belief systems.

The fetishization of power in the popular Catholicism of Brazil evidences this legacy of pragmatism. The most common recognition of the power of the spirit realm and of spirit-directed energy has been the widespread use of amulets. The amulets, worn near a pulse point (on the wrist or around the neck) attract and contain any harmful energy which might be focused by a witch or warlock upon a victim. These amulets from popular Catholicism thus fetishized power against a perceived evil spirit realm. Another example of pragmatic action in relationship to power appears in the travelogue of an American visiting Brazil in 1850:

My friend the vicar had a lad long troubled with a bruised leg The sore resisted all his attempts to heal it. As a last resource, a colored "wise woman" was consulted. She raised a smoke of dried herbs, muttered over the wound, made motions as if stitching its lips up, put on a cataplasm of herbs, sent him home and in a week he was well. Another young slave had a diseased foot; nothing seemed to do it good; and at length his owner gave him leave to visit a dark sorceress, who talked to it, made signs over it, rubbed it with oil, covered it with plaster, and in a few days he was sound too. (Ewbank 1856:247)

This example illustrates the Catholic vicar's willingness to work pragmatically and to seek a solution to his problem from an alternative source, thus acknowledging a source of power outside the Catholic Church. When accepted means of treating the illness proved futile, the vicar sent for a "wise woman." This pragmatic relationship to power is a residual element of both Iberian and Afro-Brazilian culture; in this instance, it was used by a member of the dominant culture.

In contrast to this use of power, the interaction with the spirit realm through possession or trance has not been incorporated into the dominant culture. Popular Catholicism, for the most part, rejected interaction with the spirit realm, although it recognized its existence and took great measures to prevent its influences. Thus, spirit possession represents a non-incorporated residual element. Historical factors, such as the advent of mass media in Brazil, are working to allow the integration of these residual elements, whether incorporated or non-incorporated, into a new, revitalized culture.

The marginal cultures in Brazil share the residual element of pragmatic action with the dominant culture. The vicar, for example, used a power source which could never be incorporated into the Catholic structure of knowledge. This pragmatic use of power also underlies the African and Amerindian belief structures in Brazil. Because they are based on interaction with spirits, these marginal cultures allow for the ongoing incorporation of new sources of power

in their knowledge structures. Only European Catholicism lacks a system for handling knowledge derived from the spirit world.

The introduction of Kardecism into Brazil in the mid-nineteenth century provided a missing component which led to the birth of Umbanda. Kardecism, the complex of beliefs dealing with mediumship and "spiritist" interpretations of the Bible, originated in nineteenth-century France and rapidly gained popularity among the upper socioeconomic levels in Brazil. Allan Kardec, who wrote *The Christian Scriptures According to Spiritism*, believed in consulting the spirits of the dead to gain advice relating to scriptural interpretation and to diagnose spiritual illness. Kardec claimed that *Espiritismo* "counts as its own those adherents belonging to all varieties of religious belief and who still practice their other faith. Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims and even Buddhists. All of them can potentially be spiritists" (Kloppenburg 1961:70). Kardecism was open to other religions because it focused on the spirits of the dead. Moreover, it was attractive to people of many religious backgrounds, since anyone might be interested in contacting dead relatives or other spirits. Although Kardecism was introduced into Brazil in the late 1860s, it remained distinct from the other spiritual traditions which dealt with hypnomatic knowledge until roughly 1908. In that year, a boy in Rio de Janeiro became possessed by an Amerindian spirit while consulting a Kardecist medium.

According to legend, the young man, Zelio de Moraes, was taken to the Spiritist Federation when doctors failed to diagnose a strange illness which was plaguing him. During the session, Zelio went into trance and communicated a message questioning the refusal of the spiritists to accept messages from African and Amerindian spirits. After the spiritists present failed to indoctrinate the spirit, it spoke of establishing a new religion in which African, Amerindian, and European spirits would be given equal recognition. (Brown 1986:40)

Although Kardecism in Brazil provided a European approach to understanding the spirit realm, it was closed to other spirit belief systems. Additionally, the spirits in European Kardecism were considered by many Brazilians to be overly concerned with complicated doctrinal matters. The eventual incorporation of African and Amerindian spirits into early Umbanda, however, allowed for a focus on healing and curing which had practical applications. Thus, as Kardecism became incorporated into the emerging Umbanda tradition, it underwent a significant change which can be attributed to the residual influence of African, Amerindian, and European culture still present in Brazil.

Mass culture in Brazil can be characterized by the acceptance and embracing of this emerging culture. It is estimated that there are roughly 300,000 Afro-Brazilian groups in Brazil. Some of Brazil's most famous writers (Jorge Amado) and singers (Caetano Veloso) are "sons of saint," that is, initiates in the religion (Bramly 1977:4).⁷ Similarly, politicians are constantly trying to associate themselves with the Afro-Brazilian complex as they vie for popular support. The widespread presence of this emerging culture will soon bring into question the validity of the natural equation of the Roman Catholic Church with the dominant culture. As Umbanda continues to grow, the "dominant" culture, lacking an open framework for integrating new knowledge, may soon find *itself* both marginal and residual.

An important aspect of this emerging Afro-Brazilian culture will be the success of Umbanda outside of the Rio de Janeiro-São Paulo corridor where it was born. Umbanda, with its potential to embrace and order new religious practice and doctrine is spreading rapidly throughout Brazil. This is in part due to the Umbanda-dominated "spiritist press," which has penetrated into all regions of the country.

Umbanda, which traditionally has been an oral culture, is developing an eclectic yet well defined body of written doctrine. The implications of this developing body of written literature for the Afro-Brazilian complex as a whole, and the internal dynamics of Umbanda in particular, remain to be seen.

Notes

¹ For the purposes of this paper, *dominant culture* refers to the state apparatus and those empowered by it and to the institutional Roman Catholic Church. When *dominant culture* is employed without a specific reference to either of the individual components, the reference can be understood as the combined influence of the same.

² For an excellent framing of regional/historical impact on syncretism in Brazil, see Roger Bastide [1978, ref. cited].

³ On the other hand, an open belief system can produce anxiety as well as certainty.

⁴ A *terreiro* is the name given the locale where Umbanda meetings occur; this location may vary in size from a single room to a multi-room complex.

⁵ "Order and Progress" is a Comtean motto, which appears on the Brazilian flag. Auguste Comte (1798-1857) was a French social thinker who developed the philosophical notion of positivism, a theory which became highly influential in Brazil.

⁶ *Ogum* and *Oxossi* are deities in the vast pantheon of the Afro-Brazilian traditions; they also exist among the Yoruba. They are frequently associated with the saints listed here.

⁷ *Son of saint* is term designating a man who has been initiated in Umbanda. Women initiates are called *daughter of saint*.

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