Review
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potent manner. His desire to maintain the development of Santería as a pro-
cess versus a collection of static essences is fundamental to understanding the
true nature of this religion and can serve as a model for religious studies. The
text can be, however, at times highly theoretical, and the author’s presentation
of Santería is on occasion eclipsed by the academic concerns and debates of
his field.

In addition, while Brown notes the importance of gender in his conclu-
sion, his study would have been further enhanced by the inclusion of a sus-
tained gender analysis throughout the text. Also, while Brown is to be com-
mended by his depiction of the “local histories” of Santería, one can
appreciate that locality only in light of the broader historical narrative of
race and religion in Cuba. Nonetheless, this is an excellent book, one that
is sure to become a classic in the field of Afro-Cuban studies. Brown’s text
forces scholars in the United States and Latin America to question the
boundaries that are drawn between African, black, Latin American, and La-
tino/a studies, demonstrating the intersection and unity of these races and
cultures within Santería. This book is essential reading for scholars of reli-
gion and theologians who explore religion in the Americas in its various
forms and locations.

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KANE, OUSMANE. Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria: A Study of the Society
xxi+283 pp. $92.00 (cloth).

The argument that Islamist movements are modern and technologically pro-
gressive has been central in recent studies of Islam. Ousmane Kane stands in
this tradition, arguing that the Islamist movement Izala (the society mentioned
in the title) mediates social and religious change and represents the modern-
izing (not backward) side of Nigerian Islam. His work enters into a crowded
field in the scholarship on religion and politics in northern Nigeria. The out-
lines of the story are well known: in the 1970s Izala rose under the charismatic
direction of Sheikh Abubakar Gumi; to do so, it drew upon the new bureau-
crats and military officers of postcolonial Nigeria, and through this it devel-
oped a Wahhabi-oriented Islam attacking local forms of Sufism while intensi-
fying connections to the wider Muslim world.

According to Kane, Izala’s aims were at once theological and political. The-
ologically its members argued that practices of possession in Sufism repre-
represented shirk (a denial of the oneness of God) and were wholly un-Islamic
(chap. 5), and, further, they argued against the dependence on sheikhs and
in favor of a greater reliance on studying the primary sources of Islamic law:
the Qur’an and hadith. They denounced Sufis politically as rich materialists
aligned with corrupt royal authorities and agitated for religious and political
reform of the traditional aristocratic system that prevailed in the north and
ultimately for the institution of an Islamic state.

So far this argument is well known, but Kane brings both methodological
and theoretical innovation to his analysis. He takes on the enduring dichot-
omy in studies of Islam that contrasts the modernity of Islamism with the
backwardness of Sufism and situates the discussion of modern Islam solely
among anti-Sufi movements. In this narrative, Islamic practice in Nigeria,
while internally divided, was largely Sufi until the rise of Islamism fragmented it by giving rise to fissiparous reform movements. Kane agrees with the fragmentation (chap. 3) but argues it came earlier, not with reform movements like Izala but with the emergence of a mass Tijaniyya movement in the 1950s under the Senegalese sheikh Ibrahim Niasse. What Kane does is to disentangle reform Islam (the desire to purify religious practice) from Islamism (the desire for Islamic control of political processes). In most accounts these two processes are conflated into the very definition of what Islamism is. By disentangling them, Kane reveals the dynamism and active presence of Sufism within Islamist movements: he argues that some of the defining practices associated with Islamist movements (egalitarianism, mass mobilization, use of media) originated earlier with Tijanis and that to equate Islamism with anti-Sufism is to mistake the nature of Sufism. This is a provocative and insightful argument.

It should be pointed out that Kane is the grandson of the Sufi sheikh Ibrahim Niasse, one of the most important religious figures in Nigerian history and a major opponent of Abubakar Gumi, the leader of Izala. While this gives Kane a motivating factor in his analysis, he has made an enormous effort to separate himself from religious polemics and to provide a balanced account that questions the rhetorical excesses of both sides. In his account of an interview with Abubakar Gumi, for instance, Kane contrasts Gumi’s personal egalitarianism with the hierarchies surrounding Sufi sheikhs, thus acknowledging a key element of Gumi’s charisma often cited by his followers.

At the same time, this means that Kane’s analysis of Izala is partly through the lens of the Sufi reaction to it (emphasized by the fact that his research is based in the Sufi city of Kano). The consequence is that Kane reveals just how divisive Izala’s attacks were in the context of intra-Muslim relations. Izala was heavily dependent on accusations of *takfir*, polemical declarations of other Muslims as infidels. It declared that because Sufis were infidels, Muslims shouldn’t worship with them and in some cases should refuse to eat with them. Izala was accused of disrespecting elders by fomenting tension between children and their Sufi followers. Kane reproduces rumors among Sufis that Izala followers gave their (Sufi) mothers boxes of milk (in compensation for having nursed them) and rams to their fathers (in compensation for the one slaughtered when they were born). In this he brings home well the everyday way that this attack was felt among Sufi followers.

By focusing on followers as well as on leaders, Kane manages to reveal how the rise of movements such as Izala functions on an everyday as well as on a doctrinal level. His work reveals a sociological sensibility that also comes through in Kane’s awareness of the material bases that often underlie doctrinal polemics. This is not central to his analysis but reveals a subtle sensibility and points out how, for many elite followers, connection to Izala meant access to its formidable economic and religious networks in Saudi Arabia and the gulf. Kane provides considerable textual, theological knowledge, but what makes this book stand out and add to our understanding of new religious movements in Nigeria is his sociological imagination and his effort to move beyond the writings of religious leaders to the operation of a movement as a whole.

Brian Larkin, Columbia University.