

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria: A Study of the Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition by Ousmane. Kane,

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## The Journal of Religion

potent manner. His desire to maintain the development of Santería as a process 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 conclusion, his study would have been further enhanced by the inclusion of a sustained gender analysis throughout the text. Also, while Brown is to be commended 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 Latino/a studies, demonstrating the intersection and unity of these races and cultures within Santería. This book is essential reading for scholars of religion 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 for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition*. Leiden: Brill, 2003. xxi+283 pp. \$92.00 (cloth).

The argument that Islamist movements are modern and technologically progressive 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 modernizing (not backward) side of Nigerian Islam. His work enters into a crowded field in the scholarship on religion and politics in northern Nigeria. The outlines 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 bureaucrats and military officers of postcolonial Nigeria, and through this it developed a Wahhabi-oriented Islam attacking local forms of Sufism while intensifying connections to the wider Muslim world.

According to Kane, Izala's aims were at once theological and political. Theologically its members argued that practices of possession in Sufism 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 dichotomy 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.

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