

Edison Carneiro and Ruth Landes: Authority and Matriarchy in Candomblé Field Research: 1938-9

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Abstract

This essay focuses on the intricacies of the relationship between Brazilian Ethnologist Edison Carneiro and American Anthropologist Ruth Landes in late 1930's Bahia. It details their experiences performing field research in Candomblé sites, their personal relationship as lovers and academics, as well as the implications of their work together. Landes' controversial thesis informed by her research stated that the Candomblé and its host city, Salvador, Bahia, were matriarchal. The original evidence provided throughout this paper addresses the many criticisms and attacks against Landes' work and her methods and conclusions of her main book *City of Women* (1947). It also sheds more light on Carneiro as an influential and dynamic academic participating in important dialogues of Afro-Brazilian studies in the 1930-1950's.

Colombia University Anthropologist Ruth Landes arrived in Salvador, Brazil in 1938 with the mission to compare race relations between the US and Brazil. In a city of 80% Afro-descent¹, she interacted with a foreign Afro-Brazilian culture, specifically the African-descended religion *Candomblé*. Her controversial book *City of Women* (1947) created a popular narrative of Candomblé as matriarchal. Practiced throughout Brazil, Candomblés are centralized in Salvador, the original colonial capital and historic slave port in the Northeastern state of Bahia. Landes met Bahian Ethnologist, Edison Carneiro who guided her through the field and asserted that “nobody, absolutely nobody, literate or not, Brazilian or not, has had so much intimacy with the Candomblés of Bahia” (Carneiro 1964: 225). As an obvious female foreigner, Landes could not have accessed the sacred spaces of Candomblé without the native male guidance provided by Carneiro. His support throughout the entirety of her career enabled her to become a transnational and controversial authority on Candomblé. Publications informed by their work together created many controversies within both the Brazilian and U.S. academic communities concerning issues of race, gender and nationality. Discussions of Carneiro and Landes’ specific collaboration have generally been sparse, polarized, and misunderstood. Despite the attention given to *City of Women*, writings on this subject generally disregard the work of Carneiro in light of his colleagues Arthur Ramos, Gilberto Freyre, and Melville Herskovits. While recognizing Landes and Carneiro’s personal limitations, this paper provides primary source evidence to clarify false assumptions and misconceptions that have negatively colored the legacy of Landes and the silence of Carneiro.

To contextualize the story of Carneiro and Landes in 1938-9, one must first understand the backgrounds that informed their perspectives and career choices. Both academics worked within the traditions established by their universities; Landes by Boasian Anthropology and Carneiro by Nina Rodrigues in Afro-Bahian studies. To understand the weight of their research, one must recognize the importance of Candomblé and Afro-Brazilian studies for the Bahian state, the Brazilian nation, and Brazilian Academia. Carneiro and Landes’ work participated in a transnational dialogue of emerging African Diaspora studies and conversations on race relations in the Americas. These particular conditions set the stage for the many controversies, disputes and mixed receptions of their work.

The existence and increasing importance of Afro-Brazilian studies can be understood by the history of slavery in Brazil and the formation of the First Republic. Brazil depended on the foundation of slavery after all New World societies², abolishing the slave system in 1888. The extensive history of slavery in Brazil defines many of the country’s economic, social, political, and cultural dynamics. Because of the slave trade’s concentration in the Northeast, and particularly the state of Bahia, the legacy of the forced importation of an estimated 6-8 million³ Africans is as an integral part of the story. One of the main cultural survivals from the African heritage manifests itself in New World religions, specifically Candomblé. As the subject of Landes’ research and an important focus for Carneiro’s ethnography, Candomblé contextualizes the many issues discussed throughout this paper. Candomblé has many variations and adaptations in the Brazilian context, deviating from its original African setting. The constant influx of Africans from the early 1500’s to 1888 to Brazil allowed for continual African influences from various regions to affect and change the Afro-Brazilian culture as a transnational process.

The two most contentious types of Candomblé, thoroughly described by Landes and Carneiro, are the *Nagô* and the *caboclo*. The differences between these types sparked debates and divisions within the Candomblé and the academic community in the 1930-50’s. The emphasis on

the “pure” and “true” African origin valued in the *Nagô*⁴ contrasted with the hybrid, indigenous-influenced *caboclo*. These differences created competition for authority and authenticity in the Candomblé community. Carneiro and Landes’ work supported the tradition of Nagô purity and degradation of the *caboclo* (Dantas 1988). This process began with the search for “Africa in Brazil” by emerging academics in the early 20th Century. Participating in the first Brazilian Universities⁵, their methods focused on the cultural hierarchies of African cultures to rationalize the degeneracy of some blacks over others. This process served to conceal racial prejudice against blacks by elevating particular aspects of their African culture while ignoring the reality of their disproportionate poverty and underrepresentation in the Brazilian nation. This functioned within the policy of “whitening” embraced by Brazil’s First Republic from 1889-1930. The First Republic used positivism to construct social and political policies founded upon assumptions of Scientific Racism as the path to improve the country.

“Whitening” encouraged European immigration and miscegenation to improve the racial inferiority of its largely African descended and indigenous population. To understand this process, Afro-Brazilians became an important subject of study by academics and government officials to discuss how to incorporate ex-slaves into the nation—a difficult question for all post-slavery societies. The studies of Carneiro and his senior colleagues contributed to this dialogue by examining various African sources, which contributed to different manifestations of Candomblé and diversity of the Afro-Brazilian population. Carneiro, Landes and their colleagues, however, had different views and conclusions.

The Candomblé ritual sites—*terreiros*—host the particular Candomblé community for daily activities, rituals and special events. The practice of Candomblé is a demanding lifestyle, requiring worshipers to constantly serve their gods—the *orixás*. The number and types of *orixás* vary depending on the Candomblé tradition, but all are spirits with intense personalities, which must be tended to by the worshipers through offerings. The activities of the *terreiros* are guarded and exclusive for the members of the specific community, access by outsiders is limited. Historically Candomblé faced violent police repression as it was considered black magic, witchcraft, and overall a threat to Brazilian society. Their rituals include practices such as sacrifices, African chants in the Yoruba language, possession, drumming, and dance, which seemed foreign and potentially dangerous to the Euro-Brazilian politicians and landowners. The 1890 Civil Code implemented discriminatory policies against Candomblé and outlawed public drumming, capoeira, and “vagrant behavior” due to fear of black organizing and potential uprisings (2007: 35). The intimacy Carneiro and later Landes had with the internal, sacred spaces of Candomblés as non-practitioners was truly a privilege and rarity during this period.

To negotiate with the public many *terreiros* elect *ogans*—public representatives to support, fund and protect the Candomblé community. One of the most powerful and respected Candomblé leaders in 1930's Salvador, Dona Aninha, recognized Carneiro's potential to serve the Candomblé community in the public sphere and officially designated him an *ogan*, an “honorary post of Candomblé open to distinguished laymen...to give protection to the temple in the form of money and prestige” or “a sort of board of directors” (Landes 1947: 35, 72). This designation gave Carneiro permission to represent the community through his academic and professional opportunities. Candomblé leaders historically designate privileged people to negotiate in the public, because the practitioners are completely dedicated to their spirituality and come from a position alienated and rejected by Brazilian politics and society. As a trained academic, Carneiro assumed his position as an *ogan* strategically in his relationship with Landes

to spread ideas of Candomblé internationally. These ideas in the global context sometimes had unintended consequences which made Candomblé more vulnerable rather than protected.

Edison Carneiro's background from a middle class mulatto family gave him a unique perspective and intermediary position in affairs between the elite academic and the poor black communities. Son of established Professor Antonio Joaquim Souza Carneiro, Carneiro was raised in the city of Salvador, Bahia in the 1920's. Biographers Biaggio Talento and Luiz Alberto Couceiro claim "Carneiro's family has roots in the intellectual nobility of mixed-race Brasil" and they "invested all of their resources in the education of their children" to "ascend to the merit of white-dominated society" (Talento, Couceiro: 2009: 41). In *City of Women* Landes described Carneiro's family as "the kind of family that was sometimes called 'white Negro' because it was so respected." (Landes 1947: 14) Throughout his education Carneiro learned English and even translated some books from Portuguese into English. His skills and value of class over race certainly elevated Carneiro out of the status of rural, poor black communities like the Candomblés. Yet his colored status as a mulatto within academic communities dominated by Euro-Brazilians could not escape him. This factor must be considered as affecting and at times limiting his career possibilities and status within Academia.

After receiving his Law degree from the Federal University of Bahia, Carneiro worked as a journalist for Salvador's prominent newspaper *O Estado da Bahia*. He wrote mostly on issues facing the Afro-Brazilian and Candomblé community within Salvador, revising "the hostile discourse" with reports which "seem to have marked a new posture of newspapers and journalists toward Afro-Bahian culture" (Braga 1999: 204). He conducted field research in the Candomblé *terreiros*, forming relationships with religious leaders and practitioners to better understand the perspective of the subjects and interact within their cultural reality. Landes believed in this personal approach to field research by forming connections with individuals in order to understand the culture. This joint perspective facilitated their bond and collaboration.

Carneiro and Landes' work in Afro-Brazilian studies responded to the dominant theorists, Nina Rodrigues and Gilberto Freyre. Rodrigues, a Bahian Medical Doctor and Researcher in the early 1900's, collected empirical data from the field to analyze medical phenomenon of the black Bahian population. He studied under racially deterministic assumptions by highlighting the equivalence of racial and genetic heritage and the objective biologic inferiority of the black race. He produced a complicated body of work with an attitude of what Historian Anadelia Romo describes as both "racial pessimism and cultural engagement" (Romo 2010: 29). Rodrigues' student and Carneiro's future mentor, Arthur Ramos, continued this legacy with a psycho-analytic perspective. Ramos focused on particularities within the African descended population in Bahia to identify and analyze African traits preserved within the Brazilian context. The Rodrigues tradition served as the authorities in this increasingly relevant topic for the formation of the First Republic of Brazil. Yet the Pernambucan Gilberto Freyre, student of Franz Boas in the early 1920's, presented new theories, which changed the direction of Afro-Brazilian studies.

Freyre transitioned from biology to sociology to explain race relations and created a dominant narrative of the "African in Brazil" as a part of the idealistic racial democracy theory. Racial Democracy suggested Brazil had no racial problems because of the history of genetic mixing of Portuguese, Indigenous and African heritages. From Boas' influence, Freyre approached the studies with a distinctive view of race as different from culture. Freyre's most influential book, *Casa Grande e Senzala* (1933), stressed the importance of physical and environmental factors to explain race relations and highlighted the positive influence of Africans

in the cultural development of Brazil. His analysis fit into President, and later Dictator, Vargas' project of nationalism and construction of the Brazilian Identity in the 1930's and 1940's⁶.

Freyre's work supported the *Regionalismo* (Regionalism) Movement of the 1920-30's which stressed differences between Brazil's Northeast, Interior, Amazon, and South based on their sources of immigration and mix of races. This Regionalist Movement coincided with a period of intense European immigration to the South to promote economic development and social whitening. Freyre's optimistic and simplistic explanations of Brazil's racial harmony frequently sparked controversies and theoretical conflicts. Many Afro-Brazilian activists note that the 'racial democracy' theory, which still dominates today, offers popular society a scapegoat to neglect the real racial problems greatly affecting the Afro-Brazilian majority population. Others believe Freyre captured the unique racial "combination, fusion, mixture" of Brazil as different and more successful than other American countries.

To promote and discuss his new approach publically, Freyre organized the first Afro-Brazilian in 1934 in Recife. The Congress brought together leading international academics on the subject of "the negro in the New World" and worked to deconstruct the studies of racial determinism. The new emphasis on culture shifted to identify how African traits had survived in the New World cultures. This trend became increasingly important in the U.S. to discuss race relations in the post-Reconstruction context and dialogue in new theories of Anthropology and Sociology. This led to the increasing search for "Africanisms" headed by Columbia Anthropologist and vicious critic of Landes, Melville Herskovits (Romo 2007).

Whereas Carneiro sent a paper to the first Congress, he did not attend. Carneiro viewed the organization and activities of Freyre's Congress as elite and inaccessible to the studied black population. To challenge the authority of Freyre's methods and conclusions, Carneiro organized the Second Afro-Brazilian Congress in Salvador in 1937 to bring together "the popular masses, the academics and the specialists" (*O Negro no Brasil*: 1940, "Inaugural Words of the Congress of Bahia"). The members discussed papers and theories presented by Candomblé leaders, Bahian artists, and Brazilian and American academics⁷ with a "democratic orientation" and focus on bringing Candomblé to the public. Candomblé *terreiros* hosted the members and offered performances and parties to celebrate the Afro-Brazilian culture. Both Congresses sought to legitimize Candomblé as a valid Brazilian religion and to protect it from violent police repression⁸. These representations of Afro-Brazil in national conversations often led to the folklorization and symbolic appropriation of Candomblé for the purpose of national culture instead of its ritual practice and spiritual purpose (Matory 2005:165).

This direct collaboration with Candomblé practitioners during the 1937 Congress inspired the creation of the Union of Afro-Brazilian Religious sects, the first public body representing Candomblé in the state of Bahia. The Union was proposed by "the most honorable *mãe-de-santo*⁹ of Bahia" Dona Aninha of the traditional *Nagô terreiro, Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá* and organized by Carneiro. The Union sought to "grant liberty to the religion of the blacks" (*O Negro no Brasil*, 1940, "Inaugural Words of the Congress of Bahia"), as a self-organized body to represent their Candomblé. While conflicting notions of African origin, Nagô purity, and tradition in Candomblé divided the leaders, the public presence of Candomblé challenged the historic 'otherness' of the African religions in Brazil as beyond a primitive "black magic". The Union served to defend the fifth item of Article 113 of the 1934 Constitution, which granted "the liberty of consciousness, belief and guarantee of free exercise of religious cults...religious associations have a legal personality in terms of civil law" (Talento, Couceiro 2009: 61). Carneiro and the Union leaders recognized that through police repression the government was violating this Civil

Liberty. Carneiro and Candomblé leaders organized to improve this situation given their restricted mobilization, support and resources.

The reactions of both Carneiro and Freyre to the rival Congress demonstrate the competition to establish authority on this topic. Freyre responded to Carneiro's Congress (which neither he nor Arthur Ramos attended) in an interview with the newspaper *Diário de Pernambuco*. Freyre criticized the Congress explaining, "I am very disappointed that they will study all the defective, improvised things, that they will only worry about the picturesque and artistic side of the subject: capoeira and samba circles, Candomblé drums, etc" (Carneiro 1940: 98)¹⁰. Carneiro directly responded in defense, explaining in a 1940 article how "the immediate connection with the black people was the major victory of the Congress of Bahia" and the Congress "contributed to create a tone of tolerance about these misrepresented religions of colored men". Ramos too responded on the side of Carneiro, clarifying how "this type of material that Freyre judges as just picturesque, also justly constitutes the biggest scientific interest" (Carneiro 1940: 99). While Carneiro sympathized with poor blacks and Candomblézeiros (members of Candomblé terreiros) he too participated in the elite relations irrelevant to the reality of black communities. These issues consumed Afro-Brazilian studies and contextualized the work of Landes and Carneiro. Carneiro and Landes disagreed on the value and merit of Freyre's theories, whereas while Carneiro rejected his idealism, Landes embraced his ideas as appealing to a U.S. audience.

Generally conceptions of Carneiro's work and career are simplified and unrepresentative of his entire point of view and experience. Only his biographers vouch for his importance and significance in Bahian history, acknowledging that he hasn't been studied or given adequate credit for his significant contributions to Afro-Brazilian studies (Talento, Couceiro 2009: Intro). Carneiro had many particularities as a Bahian academic, including his participation in the communist party, rejection of the racial democracy theory, access in Candomblé terreiros, and books on reconstructive Afro-Brazilian history.

In the early 1930's Carneiro joined the Communist Party of Brazil and the Communist Literary group, Academia dos Rebeldes¹¹ (Academy of the Rebels). The mission of the Academy was to "valorize the local popular culture, particularly, the African and Afro-Bahian culture, which had been marginalized during the colonization process of Brazil" (Soares 2005: Intro). The most famous writers collaborated to create the Journal, *O Momento* and incorporate Afro-Brazilian issues in their literary works. As part of the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB), Carneiro and his circle participated as "the intellectuals and artists who put the political culture of the party into practice... to produce a "genuine" proletarian art as the principal instruments in the political education of the masses" (PCdoB, 2011). While Carneiro identified as communist and participated in this project of the Communist Party of Brazil, his central analyses in his Ethnographic and Historical publications do not have a Marxist argument, but rather a peripheral orientation. As the most relevant revolutionary party of Brazil at the time, known to promote intellectual and artistic participation, PCdoB would have been a viable option in 1930's Bahia. Carneiro's disdain and separation from the government, especially the Federal Dictatorship of Vargas, may have encouraged him to seek alternative political participation. This context informed Carneiro's work and the guidance he provided Landes, even if it did not consume his academic career as one would expect of a truly Marxist historian.

Carneiro did not accept Freyre's vision of racial democracy as reality and sought to change the direction of black studies. The concept of racial democracy discouraged conversations of race due to an allusion of harmony, enabling Brazil to neglect the many

problems facing the majority black population. Within Afro-Brazilian Studies Carneiro called for a change in focus, to “view blacks as living participants” of Brazil with relevant problems, not simply “foreigners” or “legacies of Africa” (Carneiro 1953: 105). Carneiro viewed slavery specifically as a “historical imposition” placed upon Afro-Brazilians rather than a paternalistic institution that acculturated them into the Brazilian nation. He believed that he was reconstructing history to incorporate “black agency and influence”. Despite these intentions, at times Carneiro slipped into discourses that inadvertently supported racial democracy, such as the idea that the blacks were in the process of assimilating into Brazilian society (Carneiro 1957: 3, 5).

Carneiro’s most influential and lasting book, *Candomblés da Bahia* (published in 1948, one year after *City of Women*) explains the history, African lineages, and rituals of Candomblé in a comprehensive and systematic text. It has been re-published in six editions and is currently used by universities and experts. Through this work Carneiro sought to expand the previously accepted supremacy of Sudanese cultures presented by Rodrigues and incorporate the importance of the Bantu and Jeje culture to represent the diversity of African heritage and mixing in the Americas. *Candomblés da Bahia* reinforced the supremacy of *Nagô* culture over the *caboclo* and discussed many ritual practices as reality despite the immense diversity of Candomblés culture. Completed after his fieldwork with Landes, this book reinforces her matriarchy thesis and downplays the historical roles of male priests in Candomblé. While attempting to move beyond racial hierarchies, Carneiro as well as his mentor Ramos, enforced a hierarchy of culture in their works, giving weight to some African heritages over others.

Carneiro is most remembered for supporting Nagô purity and Landes' thesis of matriarchy, yet this presumption reduces the range and significance of his overall career. Carneiro wrote reconstructive black histories to represent the history of Afro-Brazilians and relevant topics in fair and representative terms. His most notable works include *Trajatória de Castro Alves* (1947), *A Cidade do Salvador 1549: Uma Reconstituição Histórica* (1956), *A Insurreição Praieira* (1961), and *O Quilombo dos Palmares* (1946). His work on Castro Alves, the Euro-Brazilian abolitionist poet of the late 19th Century, portrays him as “a republican poet” and “a bourgeois revolutionary”. Carneiro revisited the work of Alves with the belief “the revolution that he planted has not been realized yet, even though Brazil now has abolition and a republic” (Carneiro 1947: Intro). In a letter to Landes Carneiro characterized his work as a successful best seller because of his “political interpretation, entirely new in Brazil” (EC to RL, 7/28/1947, CNFCP)¹². Carneiro’s work on *The City of Salvador: A Reconstructive History* incorporates the role of the African and Afro-Brazilian population in the creation and success of the city, instead of focusing on the white policymakers and slave-owners as the agents of history. Later in his life, Carneiro wrote about a liberal insurrection, the *Praieira Insurrection* in the State of Pernambuco involving the *latifundia*, the governors and the landless in a struggle to control resources after the Independence of Brazil.

Perhaps his most influential book, *Quilombo dos Palmares* (1946), was one of the first comprehensive historical accounts of the autonomous fugitive slave state in the rural North East. Carneiro presented the process, leaders, and organization of the *quilombo* as a successful resistance against the oppressive colonial slave system. Because of its perceived revolutionary nature, the Vargas dictatorship forbid the book from being published, so that the Fundo de Cultura Económica in Mexico published the first edition as *Guerras de los Palmares* (Wars of Palmares) in 1946. U.S. Professor and Translator Samuel Putnam stated in a Book review:

This is a work whose importance should not be overlooked by anyone who is interested in the subject of the Negro and Negro history. He noticed, “there would seem, indeed, in the past to have been something very like a conspiracy of silence on the subject... both Gilberto Freyre in his *Casa Grande e Senzala* and North American scholar, Dr. Donald Pierson, in his book *Negroes in Brazil*, give it only cursory reference (Putnam 1947).

These books demonstrate the range of Carneiro’s point of view and his intention of elevating the Afro-Brazilian population by explaining their essential position in the construction of the Brazilian nation. These ideas informed Carneiro’s attitude and his motives when working with Landes in 1938.

In the 1950’s Carneiro collaborated with celebrated black activist Abdias do Nascimento in organizing the National Black Congress and supporting the first black theater, Teatro Experimental do Negro. The Experimental Black Theater was a revolutionary group in presenting art and stories of the African heritage as a significant public presence despite the ban on black actors and dramas in Brazil. Carneiro contributed to Nascimento’s black newspaper, *O Quilombo*, which dealt with the “life, problems, and aspirations of blacks” (Nascimento 2003) and sought to “invert and revisit ideas of a racial and social democracy of Luso-Brazil” (Guimarães 2002: 11). One of Carneiro’s articles in *O Quilombo*, “The Liberty of the Cult”, discusses the “habitual violence” against Candomblés as the “most disrespected liberty in the history of Brazil”, and asks the public to view the religion not as inferior and worthy of prosecution, but as “the most popular, the most endeared religion of the masses” (Carneiro 1950: 7).

Carneiro changed the direction of his career after moving from Bahia to Rio de Janeiro. Increasingly he shifted his focus from community activism to representations of the African voice in institutions of Folklore. He led the Campaign in Defense of Folklore, an academic campaign aimed at legitimizing folklore as a worthwhile discipline. This power to create narratives of identity and national culture skewed Carneiro from his initial directions described above. He became preoccupied with issues of authority and funding in the academic system, rather than working for the Communist party or defending Candomblé as he had in the beginning of his career. After he left his position as the director of the Campaign, his last project was to translate Landes’ book to Portuguese in 1967, and *Cidade das Mulheres* was one of his last accomplishments before his death in 1972.

Understanding Candomblé and Carneiro’s role in Afro-Brazilian studies in the 1930’s facilitates the comprehension of Landes’ point of view upon arriving in Bahia in 1938. In order to understand Landes’ perspective we must first discuss her personal and professional background and the structures of Boasian Anthropology in the 1930’s.

Ruth Landes’ upbringing informed the way she viewed Bahia, Candomblé and Afro-Brazilian studies in contrast to Carneiro, Ramos, or Freyre. Landes grew up in a Jewish immigrant family with a socialist labor unionist father. After finishing her undergraduate at New York University, she performed social work in Harlem during the Harlem Renaissance and became increasingly interested in African-American culture. As she reflected in a lecture, “I moved in circles, or my parents did, that included Negro scholars, artists, union leaders, newspapermen” (Landes lecture: 4). She began her anthropological fieldwork as a Colombia Ph.D student focusing on gender roles in Ojibwa Native Americans communities. Her books, *Ojibwa Sociology*, *Ojibwa Women* and *City of Women*, brought “to light the previously ignored roles women, as individuals, play in society” (Nord: 5).

Landes' mentors in the Columbia PhD. program, Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict, influenced her work in many ways. Boas, "The Father of American Anthropology", transformed the discipline by focusing on cultural evolution and entering the "native point of view". He emphasized empirical fieldwork, yet recognized cultural relativism and acculturation "as a result of the intensified 'culture contact' characteristic of the modern world" (Cole 2003: 91). Ruth Benedict, in *Patterns of Culture*, argues that all aspects of culture were subject to the determining force of the underlying emotional pattern or configuration of its peoples. This assumption came to be known as *configuralism* and was criticized as cultural determinism in an attempt to fit all aspects of culture as consistent, logical units (Gacs et al 1988: 4). As part of the Columbia Ph.D program, all graduate students were required to lead a field research project to study and report on a different culture. The impact of new environments and freedom of fieldwork frequently led researchers away from the original Boasian structures of their training.

A letter from Ruth Benedict to Landes shortly after she left Bahia demonstrates the ways in which Landes' research served the larger creation of a "science of culture" (Healey 1998: 91). Benedict wrote,

I am to no end excited about what you write of your voodoo priestesses... Can you judge whether Indian groups in any of these regions were exposed to it and might have been influenced? The Bahia study will have to be used, in the final SA report for the Council, with main emphasis on its repercussions on native Indian populations. (Of course this is not the emphasis in your own report on Bahia culture). How is material culture? Are you paying any attention to it as being spread in the Amazon due to Negro influence...? (RB to RL January 12, 1939, NAA)

Benedict's attitude stressed the primitivism of the "voodoo priestesses" and a greater emphasis on Indian populations rather than African-descended populations. The idea of "primitivism" during this period believed that ancient man had purity in his simple civilizations which had been corrupted by modern complexities and innovations. This trend encouraged research on African cultural expressions in Brazil in contrast with the dominant European culture in order to better understand the process of race contacts and national development in racially plural countries (Healey 1998: 89, 93). In many ways anthropological research had pre-conceived ends to fit into a tight and holistic framework of cultures, as Landes described "Boas rushed students to gather the remnant cultures of America's 'primitives', for he thought time was running out" (Landes: "Comment on Field Research").

During this period, anthropology as a discipline opened widely to female academics as Boas "stressed ability not gender". Boas understood that in order to interpret "how females in a particular culture feel or why they act in a certain way", the fieldwork had to be done by a female anthropologist (Nord: 9). Their identities as women influenced their research topics, field site, writing style and career goals as it became their duty to use the female perspective to evaluate women in other cultures (Cole 2003: 55). Leading female anthropologist Margaret Mead, one of Benedict's students and lovers, did not support Landes' methods or her conclusions. Responding to Landes' articles of 1940, Mead considered "Landes infuriating because she kept confusing active and passive male homosexuality, and what is more, acted neither like a lady nor an 'ordinary academic female'" (Cole 2003: 282-3). As historian Mark Healey explains, Mead and Benedict's approach had "gender and sexuality at the center of its analysis." Within this

framework, Landes “attempt[ed] to bring together the cultural anthropology of gender and sexuality” (Healey 1998: 91, 88). This female awareness to some degree resulted in skewed conclusions supporting U.S. goals of feminism rather than the reality of matriarchies or progressive gender relations in the studied cultures. As Healey notes, their’ “idealized constructions naturally tended to downplay violence and domination” (Healey 1998: 93). This is evident in Landes’ idealization of female power and racial harmony in Bahia as a reality presented in *City of Women*.

To prepare for her trip to Brazil, Landes worked at Fisk University in Tennessee under the direction of Sociologist Robert Park, orienting herself with the study of the “negro in the new world”. She was sent to Brazil by Columbia “for the ostensible purpose of learning why this vast land of mixed-bloods-white, Indian and African mixtures-showed no problems of prejudice and racism” (Landes Lecture: 5). Already this Freyrian notion of racial harmony colored her anticipations of her life in Bahia. She had pre-conceived notions of matriarchy as well, in 1970 she reflected: “I guessed, from materials Park and Pierson showed me at Fisk, that black women would figure importantly in Brazil, as they did in the West African Yoruba and Ibo regions, from where they mainly derived”. Landes admitted her inexperience of Brazilian history and Portuguese language because she believed “it was nearly impossible to encounter either in New York” (Landes 1970: 122, 120). These preparations and assumptions informed the context of Landes’ research, even before she set foot on Brazilian soil. Of course unexpected conditions challenged Landes’ preconceptions and forced her to adapt in unpredictable ways.

Landes’ Bahia research materials frequently reference Freyre’s work and his ideas about Brazilian history, race relations and regionalism (Landes Notebooks: 1938). In *City of Women* Landes frequently supported the idea that Brazil “has no race problem” and only sometimes refers to it as “an issue of class, not race”. This idea clearly stems from Freyre’s work, which Landes and most academics supported at the time. In a book review of *City of Women*, author Bertram Wolfe presented Freyre’s racial democracy ideology, explaining to the American reader, “sociologists and statesmen have increasingly set themselves the conscious aim of enriching Brazilian civilization by absorbing all its components, Negro, Indian, Portuguese into a single vari-colored Brazilian culture and a single Brazilian ‘cosmic race’” (Wolfe 1947). This allusion of racial democracy, tied to Landes’ analysis, appealed to many American readers, suggesting an idealist post-slavery Brazil.

Landes’ methodology and practice of fieldwork caused the greatest controversies in her career. Landes worked “solidly in the tradition that defined direct observation and face-to-face encounter as the starting point for useful social inquiry” (Gacs et al 1988: 212). As one of Benedict’s “deviant” students, (Lapsley: 226) Landes conducted her fieldwork by focusing on individuals influenced by their culture rather than culture as full units (Gas, et al 1988: 4). In a personal review of her book, *City of Women* (1947), Landes explained her methodology as a personal and emotional approach. She believed that anthropology “is devoted to understanding people as they live...to see and grasp what people do and feel, what courses their minds and emotions”. Twenty-five years later in a book review, Landes further supported this method, explaining,

Too often the writers overlook the individualities of their informants, as personalities; the methodological implication is, then, that all are alike...Perhaps because writers here think in terms of ‘strategy’ rather than of ‘creativity’...I myself cannot name the Afro-Brazilian

world I knew without instantly hearing, seeing, smelling the vivid actors in it (Landes 1971: "Book Review of *Afro-American Anthropology*").

Future critics rejected Landes' thesis of Candomblé as matriarchal because she did not base her conclusions on scientific observations. These qualifications by Landes show that she never considered conventional science the means or ends to her fieldwork. Her immersion into the studied culture gave Landes an involved perspective, but also put her in situations socially unacceptable for women of her status during her time. The perceived promiscuity of Landes' presence in black, poor, Candomblé communities attracted heavy criticism from Brazilian officials and her U.S. colleagues. Understanding Landes' background, training, and personal inclinations rationalizes her process, conclusions and public reception beyond the traditional dichotomy surrounding discussions of her work as criticism or support.

With this informed background of Landes and Carneiro's academic and personal perspectives of Bahia and Anthropological fieldwork, the details of their field research and relationship can be discussed. Looking at Landes and Carneiro's time together in Candomblé *terreiros* from August 1938- February 1939 clarifies Carneiro's influence and Landes' process which led to her final product, *City of Women*. Landes understood and acknowledged Carneiro's indispensable help during her field research in Bahia. In *City of Women* she explained,

In this land where tradition locked single women in the home or threw them into the gutter, I should have been unable to move about unless escorted by a reputable man...he was the best possible reassurance to the Negroes that I was not an upper-class spy or mere busybody; and to some extent he broke down the discomfort they felt with foreigners (Landes 1947: 14).

Landes knew she wanted to stay separate from the "American Colony in Bahia, about 200 strong". She didn't relate to their luxurious lifestyle, explaining how "they wanted nothing of the place, the people, the life... I turned entirely to Edison and the cult life absorbed us." Her first arranged guide in Salvador, Jorge, "feared and detested" the Candomblés, he tried to convince Landes that "They murder! The Candomblé is black magic! Its superstition! They hypnotize people! They're not civilized! No, forgive me, but I can never accompany you there" (Landes 1970: 130, 133). She met Carneiro through academic circles introduced by Arthur Ramos, and immediately recognized Carneiro as a viable authority and collaborator, explaining "he was only twenty-seven years old, but the number and originality of his studies of Brazilian Negroes and Candomblés and the solidity of his reputation had caused me to expect a much older man." Landes immediately connected with Carneiro and she wondered "how am I to understand Bahia if I do not learn about Candomblé at first hand?" Carneiro and Landes decided to work together, to "pool their resources, their knowledge, their time and observations" (Landes 1947: 13, 35, 14).

Carneiro guided Landes with his knowledge of Bahian Ethnology as well as his unique alliance with *terreiros*. In *City of Women* Carneiro explained to Landes his views on the tradition of Candomblé research,

The aristocratic class always condescends... and when some of them decide to study Candomblé, they get their material by calling Negroes into their offices because they're too proud or too lazy to visit the temples in the country. But *you* will have to go to them.

You can't expect them to act naturally in an office or a hotel. And they will know you respect them if you go to them. I'll introduce you (Landes 1947: 19).

This angle complemented Landes' ideas of individual connections and a personal approach to field research. She understood that for her and other foreigners, "the 'field' is not one's real life... To Edison, on the contrary "the 'field' was his life as well" (Landes 1970: 133). As a guide Carneiro straddled an interesting and difficult boundary of existing within and studying outside his own cultural and social position of mixed-race Bahia.

While Carneiro self-identified as distinctly separate from the aristocratic class, Ruth viewed him differently. She stated he "distinctly was not a man of the people... he never appeared without a hat, jacket, collar, and tie... but unlike the customs of the English-speaking world, the fact of dark race did not preclude him from aristocracy" (Landes 1947: 60, 61). In a personal letter Carneiro responded, "I'm not always satisfied with my portrait, as in the case of my aristocracy, it amuses me to read the things you recall" (EC to RL, 8/28, 1947, CNFCP). Carneiro's peers had similar responses to his demeanor, noting that he only had white friends and consciously presented himself in a bourgeois manner. Perhaps Carneiro misrecognized his status in Bahian society, or perhaps he had to take such measures to maintain his status in an elite white academic community¹³.

Carneiro and Landes had a romantic relationship during their time together in Bahia. While the literature on this subject generally acknowledges their relationship as marginal, it served as a fundamental bond enabling a deeper and more lasting connection and collaboration. Their romance guided them together through what Carneiro called "so many beautiful days in the Candomblés of Bahia" (EC to RL, 2/22/1946, CNFCP) in order to help Landes write a controversial account of Candomblé. Together they became international authorities in Afro-Brazilian studies. He was Ruth's "protector", playing the role of the *ogan* by negotiating Candomblé in the public sphere. Despite Carneiro's feelings towards Landes¹⁴, he valued their "beautiful intellectual contact" over their unrealistic dreams of marriage and a family (EC to RL, 11/18, 1939, 7/14/1939, NAA).

Carneiro's participation in the Communist Party put both himself and Landes in a precarious position while researching in Candomblés, which were already subject to police repression during the Vargas dictatorship. While Carneiro never openly organized as a confrontational Communist militant, he knew the danger of performing his research. In a paper presented at the 1934 Afro-Brazilian Congress of Recife Carneiro acknowledged that "it is known that blacks have supplied a large contingent of members to the ranks of the Brazilian Communist Party" (Dantas 1988: 92). His work eventually led him to imprisonment and exile, threatening both his and Landes' futures as researchers and writers on Afro-Brazilian issues.

The activities and repression of the Communist party give historical context to Brazil's authoritarian *Estado Novo* (New State) under dictator Vargas. In 1936, with expanded presidential authority granted by the revised 1934 Constitution, Vargas created the National Commission for the Repression of Communism with the intent to immediately imprison communist organizers, including Carneiro (Talento, Couceiro 2009: 74). The suspicion and repression of *terreiros* by the Estado Novo resulted from the distinct "otherness" and isolation of Candomblé from dominant white society rather than legitimate threats or links to the Communist platform. As Dantas explains, "there were other reasons for repression against cults, especially a need to control blacks who might use cultural difference (as expressed, above all, in religion) to improve their socioeconomic situation and alter longstanding relations of power" (Dantas 1988:

92). While generally *terreiros* did not align with Communist platforms, they did support their Communist allies, such as Carneiro during his persecution. The traditional *terreiro* Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá, which participated and received members of the 1937 Congress, provided protection to Carneiro and his circle during times of need, revealing the strength of their connection. Former Harvard anthropologist James L. Matory's research confirms that, "Opo Afonja protected 'black cycle' journalist Edison Carneiro, who was also a communist fugitive, from arrest by Vargas' police... Mãe Aninha, the founder of Opô Afonjá, is said to have intervened with President Vargas to protect Candomblé temples generally" (Matory 2005: 162). As a mulatto academic working in Candomblé communities facing police repression and suspicion, Carneiro and his partner Landes, worked in a very precarious position¹⁵.

Seven years after Landes left Bahia and a year before the publication of *City of Women* (which details her exile and suspected communist activity in Bahia), Landes and Carneiro openly discussed his communist activity for what appears to be the first time. Carneiro wrote "I suppose you guessed at Bahia that we all were communists. Well we were, we are" (EC to RL: 5/28/1946, NAA). Landes responded,

No, I did not know that you were a communist, in Bahia, though everyone said you were. But you denied this, you recall, and I did not care to inquire. I think Pierson also knew. I myself am a Rooseveltian New Dealer, and am opposed to many things in the Communist program—but that has nothing to do with my personal relationships (RL to EC, 6/19/1946, CNFCP).

These letters imply that Carneiro did not share this aspect of his identity with Landes despite being her confidant and source of support in most other ways during their time together. This secrecy may have served to protect himself, his comrades and his party, but put Landes and their research in danger.

Landes' supposed ignorance of Carneiro's membership in the Communist Party may not have been genuine but rather a reaction to her own persecution. In 1941, shortly after Landes had returned from Brazil and allegations against her were coming out, the FBI ran a background check. This was common in the U.S. McCarthy era as the "the FBI investigated some anthropologists because of the political activism or affiliations with their spouses, parents, or siblings" (Price 2004: 225) whether they had Marxist analyses or not. In Landes' case, they were concerned by her father's "radical past" as a socialist labor activist (Price 2004: 228). During the investigation the FBI interviewed various colleagues of Landes. Their responses reveal how she was perceived among her academic peers. A supervisor of the Myrdal project told the FBI that "from her slight contact with Landes, she had gained the impression that she was communistically inclined...mainly from an observation of the applicant's dress and ideas". An individual from the University of North Carolina who worked on the Myrdal Study said "they did not approve [of] the liberal ideology she was spreading in relation to the Negro problem" and that "she was very inaccurate in her work, and had the reputation of being rather morally loose". An unidentified anthropologist interviewed at the Bureau of Ethnology said that he'd heard that people in Brazil did not like her "because of her aggressive attitude" (Price 2004: 230, 231). These impressions of Landes by her colleagues show how she was received in the anthropology community as well as their willingness to gossip about her to the FBI.

While it remains uncertain if the Brazilian government read or had intentions to read Carneiro and Landes' letter exchanges, this explanation of Landes' feigned ignorance is plausible.

Such surveillance would not have been uncharacteristic of the Vargas dictatorship during this time. As Price notes of the United States during the 1940-50's "Communism became increasingly associated with activism for racial equality...in many instances it was the Communists' commitment to progressive activism that drew anthropologists into the party because of its stated commitment to racial equality" (Price 2004: 12). Because of the strict and often violent racism of the 1930-50's, their positions on race relations appeared more rebellious and potentially revolutionary in disrupting the current order of society. By this criteria, Price claims that Ruth Landes herself was a Marxist anthropologist. Perhaps within this simplistic view of racial equality as Marxist, both Carneiro and Landes could be considered Communists. However, with a 21st-century orientation, neither of their works explicitly reinforced the most relevant Marxist elements¹⁶.

Landes returned from Brazil in 1940 and as she explained in a letter to Carneiro "was not so scholarly because of the War". She published two influential and controversial articles in 1940 using the analyses from her research: "A Cult Matriarchate and Male Homosexuality" and "Fetish Worship in Brazil". Landes commented on the role of "passive" homosexual males in Candomblé as negating their gender for the desire to be women, to be closer to the matriarch mãe de santo. She explained how some homosexuals sold themselves on the street as prostitutes, while others "confine their femaleness more and more to cult occasions, in secular life striving to imitate the actions of men" (Landes 1940: 394). Her articles also elaborate on the degradation of the caboclo tradition in contrast to the prestige of the Nago. These articles presented a condensed view of her argument and the themes further elaborated in her book, *City of Women* (1947). Landes also translated Carneiro's "Structure of African Cults in Bahia" which appeared in the *Journal of American Folklore* in 1940, so that both her and Carneiro's ideas were being read and discussed throughout the U.S. anthropology and academic communities.

In the interim, before writing *City of Women*, Landes worked for the government in the President's Committee on Fair Employment (FEPC) for the war effort. Her job was to "see that there is no discrimination in employment in war industry or government service because of race, creed, color or national origin" (RL to EC, 4/13/1946, CNFCP). She also worked on a controversial piece called "The Ethos of the Negro in the New World" as a part of Carnegie Commission survey lead by Gunnar Myrdal for *An American Dilemma*, a compilation which omitted her article at the final edition because of a slanderous letter written by Melville Herskovits to Myrdal. Her article appeared scattered, unfounded, and ambiguous.

Many of Landes' problems finding employment can be understood by the perceptions her American colleagues had of her field research in Brazil, because of her behavior in black communities. These perceptions affected her relationship with Margaret Meade who told Ruth in 1940 that "all this nonsense that is going about ties and allegiances and parties and sides ought to be discouraged...don't let yourself be labeled as any given person's responsibility", possibly alluding to her public relationship and Communist scandal with Carneiro (MM to RL, 3/5/1940, MPP). In what appears to be a request for a letter of recommendation, Meade says of Landes "her most conspicuous deficiencies are in the field of organizing...she is better fitted to be a member of a research time or of a department in which she would be a junior member, than to take the full responsibility" (MM to RL, undated, 1940, MMP). This lack of support left Landes "In New York, for an indefinite period, doing nothing" (RL to MM, 9/20/1948, MMP).

Six years after returning from Brazil, Landes explained to Carneiro "after the War I finally got down to the book on Bahia!" (RL to EC, 2/27/1946, CNFCP). World War II not only greatly affected Landes and Carneiro's career opportunities, but also their possibility of reuniting.

As Carneiro applied for a job to live with Landes in London, the British Embassy responded, "because of the European situation British Broadcasting wishes not sign a contract with me nor anybody else." He asked Landes, "Do you think I can go to New York?" As plans fell through he told Landes "We must renounce our marriage... I don't see beautiful horizons, but only shadowy ways" (EC to RL, 7/7/1939, 7/14/1939, NAA). He felt alienated by the U.S. community, complaining how the Brazil-US Institute in Bahia was filled with "people who just want to be well-dressed and talk about useless things" (EC to RL 7-31-1939, NAA). Carneiro asked Landes for advice and contacts to apply for a grant to work at the Guggenheim, but he learned "they only have one place to give and that place is promised to Anisio Teixeira¹⁷, who is undoubtedly more qualified than me to receive it" (EC to RL 12/22/1939, NAA). The obstacles for a Brazilian inhibited Carneiro from reaching the U.S., but it appears that Landes did not provide the same unconditional support Carneiro offered. Eventually both Carneiro and Landes gave up on their joint aspirations, married other people and focused on other ventures, but still maintained contact.

Landes' explanation of her publication process demonstrates how the Macmillan Company influenced the tone and point of view of *City of Women*. In a letter to Carneiro she explained, "they want to publish it, if I will write in the first person. You see, I let myself out...they want the real identities" (RL to EC, 2/27/1946, CNFCP). Landes and Carneiro had discussed the publication process while they were together in Brazil, as Carneiro wrote in a letter right after Landes left Bahia, "naturally you should put me as collaborator, but...the Editor gets the last word" (Letter EC to RL, 8/14/1939, NAA). He felt he deserved a dedication from Landes, as he had dedicated his *Antologia do Negro Brasileiro* (Anthology of the Black Brazilian), recognizing how credit from a Columbian anthropologist would raise his status and future possibilities. In 1940 Carneiro reminded Landes to create a final product, exclaiming (Letter EC to RL, 10/24/1940, NAA) "I am waiting for your book, and hoping the dedication won't be affected because of this year of silence, or because of a new love." Landes intended to dedicate the book to Carneiro, but the publishers considered a dedication inappropriate given he is the book's "leading personage" (RL to EC, 4/13/1946, CNFCP). They told Landes they believed Carneiro appeared a "sympathetic and understanding" character in the narrative. They did not highlight, nor barely acknowledge, his legitimate academic guidance, which enabled Landes' research material for the book.

Carneiro sensed a distortion from their original intentions of 1938 and after reading the final product responded, "I can't accustom myself with the idea that you could not make the book you would have written--a scientific one... I am not always satisfied with my portrayal". Overall he conceded that she "made an honest, real, good, intelligent book" (EC to RL, 7/28/1947, CNFCP). In a 1953 article on the "Studies of the Brazilian Negro" Carneiro stated, "Ruth Landes could not publish a scientific account permitted by her research, as had to use recalled material to compile a book of travel impressions, her *City of Women* frames the studies of the Baiana School of Arthur Ramos very well, so does her notable articles about orixás and homosexuality in the Candomblés". While Carneiro did not explicitly blame the publishers for the limitations of the book, he frequently expressed discontents such as "Landes had to use her field notes 'in a more popular vein' to compose the volume *City of Women*" (Carneiro 1964: 108, 227), as if the final product were out of her control. He maintained Landes' credibility as an authority in the tradition despite the narrative, travel journal style, which at times caricatured the Candomblés rather than qualified observations and conclusions as scientific and therefore true.

One of the mysteries of this story is that Carneiro was unaware, or chose not to recognize Ramos' incredibly negative response to Landes' work. In 1953 he still assumed that Landes, Herskovits, Ramos, and himself all agreed on the theories and direction of Afro-Brazilian studies. However, Ramos had published an article called "Foreign Researchers on the Black Brazilian" in 1942, which completely discredited Landes' Articles on homosexuality and matriarchy in Candomblé. This article virtually slandered her name and credibility as an anthropologist. In his article Ramos described her "dangerous generalizations", "errors in observation", "false concepts", and affirmed that "the research of Brazilian academics invalidates [her] fantasized conclusions" (Ramos 1942: 190, 189, 188). This article seriously affected her future relationships with Margaret Mead, Melville Herskovits and future employers, but brought her closer and more aligned to Carneiro, who defended and supported her until his death in 1972.

In this article Ramos does not once mention Carneiro's guidance in Landes' process. Where Carneiro so proudly connected himself to Landes as her guardian, Ramos chose to exclude him as responsible for her conclusions. Ramos stated that initially Landes

brought him many letters of recommendation from North-American friends and this is why I didn't have any doubts in presenting Dr. Landes to my many friends, including authorities and people responsible who could help her in her project. When Landes left for Bahia [from Rio de Janeiro], I completely lost contact with her... I never saw her again nor knew about her plans (Ramos 1942: 184-5).

Yet Ramos sent Landes' letters of introduction and recommendation to Carneiro, his student with whom he kept in contact. Carneiro wrote to Ramos, "I met Miss Ruth Landes, and have been taking her through Candomblés with me. She is admirable, and much more intelligent than we could have imagined. You never wrote back to me" (Freitas, Lima 1987: 180). Ramos decreased his contact with Carneiro after he connected himself to Landes. Their relationship changed and faltered through the years ranging from mentor, to colleague, to critic, as Carneiro matured beyond simply Ramos' junior scholar.

In 1964, Carneiro publically responded to Ramos in an article entitled "A Falsehood of Arthur Ramos" in which he explained and defended his work with Landes as legitimate and worthwhile. He wrote the article 20 years later, "to repair an injustice that stems from the pride and vanity of Arthur Ramos". Carneiro qualified the guidance he gave to Landes, "nobody, absolutely nobody, literate or not, Brazilian or not, has had so much intimacy with the Candomblés of Bahia", whereas Ramos, "who considers himself now and was considered in the past master of the subject", never conducted research in the field, his only "personal contact with the Candomblés was superficial" (Carneiro 1964: 225). To conclude Carneiro made his position clear, "I was a friend of Arthur Ramos, I am a friend of Ruth Landes" (Carneiro 1964: 225). Throughout his career Carneiro frequently took sides and formed alliances, which may have harmed his credibility in the long term.

In 1970, after Landes' second trip to Brazil in 1967, she candidly and publically reflected upon her relationship and work with Carneiro in the article "A Women Anthropologist in Brazil", also published in the Federal University of Bahia's Journal, *Afro-Asia*. She stated,

Never in the history of field work, I am confident, has anyone been more fortunate than I in the association with Edison. Apart from Edison's repute as a scholar and writer... the

fact was that I could not have stirred a step in Bahia without his, a man's "protection"... I know that the blacks admitted me because he vouched for me... Edison was the only person I trusted, and I leaned on him entirely (Landes 1970: 128, 129, 131).

This trust and close connection had both positive and negative consequences for Landes' future, but undoubtedly brought her, and the ideas she wrote about, into the public eye.

Many Newspapers and professors in the United States reviewed Landes' *City of Women* upon its release in 1947. The headlines demonstrate the exotic and primitive perception U.S. society had of Brazil during this period, including headlines such as "Jungle Priestesses Who Rule 400,000 Men", "Negroes Living Sans Racialism", "Semi-Savage Tale Depicts Voodoo Cult", and "Girl Explorer Tells Jungle Cult Secrets". These newspaper articles reflect the ways in which the public perceived Landes' experience and her conclusions. Generally people recognized the merit of *City of Women* as an "entirely readable book, a "popularly written account of Candomblé", but that Landes "was an impressionable girl" who took a "tourist approach" with "methodological deficiencies"¹⁸. This initial mixed response to Landes as a person and an academic researcher perpetuates to discussions of her work today.

The harshest attacks against Landes' thesis came from Melville Herskovits, Arthur Ramos, and their supporters, who joined together "in virtually shutting down her academic career" (Matory 2004: 246). Herskovits reviewed *City of Women* in *American Anthropologist* in 1947 and took Landes' shortcomings as an opportunity to discuss the question "What kind of training should we give students who are going in the field?" Claiming himself the authority, Herskovits demanded that field researchers "are to strive for detachment no matter where or from what source irritants appear", directly contradicting Landes' methodology personal, individual connections during fieldwork and perhaps alluding to Landes' connection with Carneiro rather than the U.S. authorities. He bluntly claimed that "Miss Landes was by no means adequately equipped to meet the practical problems of field work in the tropics" and "she knew so little of the African background of the material she was to study that she had no perspective". He also definitively stated, "the basic thesis is wrong". Herskovits, Ramos and contemporary Anthropologist Matory sought to disprove her matriarchal and homosexual statements of Candomblé and maintain "that the men have places that are quite as important as those of the women" (Herskovits 1948: "Review of City of Women").

Many academics supported Herskovits as more credible and valuable than Landes. Reviewer Wilton M. Krogan said of *City of Women*, "This book, as a study of African survivals in the New World, does not measure up to similar studies by Herskovits of Northwestern. It lacks his clear, concise writing and his keen insight into relative problems." Similarly Bertram D. Wolfe supported Herskovits main critique of Landes in that she suffered from a lack of preparation on the subject. He reviewed,

She seems to have approached her task rather naively for a professional anthropologist, for, instead of preparing herself by mastering the Portuguese tongue, the parent African civilizations and the rich Brazilian ethnological literature on the subject, she went for a year to Fisk University... 'to get used to negroes'. The same lack of the right sort of preliminary preparation is evident in her sporadic and inadequate references to the Vargas dictatorship" (Wolfe 1947).

This was a popularly negative response to *City of Women* and Landes' form of research. Such accusations of her ignorance and lack of preparation in many ways invalidated her central thesis and the credibility of her book overall.

Landes was unaware of the severity of attacks from Herskovits and Ramos until later in her life. Decades later in a lecture she claimed, "It seems that this [criticism by Ramos] appeared in Portuguese and French publications for 25 years or more, though I didn't know until a Brazilian colleague [Edison Carneiro] wrote essays about it" (Landes Lecture: 6). Towards the end of her career in her article "A Woman Anthropologist In Brazil" she was asked to respond to this criticism (1970). She finally confronted their claims that she was "untrained and unreliable", "used sexual lures to get informants", even so far as she had "run a brothel in Brazil" (Landes 1970: 129). While much of this can be reduced to rumors and personal allegiances, the critics of Landes had valid concerns regarding her methodology, conclusions and their effects on Bahian society.

As a primary source, *City of Women* is extremely valuable and inevitably subjective. Overall the narrative style of *City of Women* provides an accessible medium to examine Candomblé and access her testimonial to rare ceremonies few people recorded during that time. Landes undoubtedly overextended her thesis of matriarchy and failed to contextualize her analysis within the specifically Nagô tradition she was valorizing. In many ways Landes' analysis derived from pre-determined intentions to study gender and elevate woman's status in the United States and worldwide. Her treatment of race relations in this text appears simplistic and short-sighted, accepting Freyre's racial democracy rather than challenging the question of race based on her material surroundings. While her field research methods enabled her to form meaningful connections with individuals and understand the culture in a more intimate way, her decision to stray from the American Colony in Salvador and work as a single white woman was undoubtedly daring and potentially dangerous. Finally, after examining the entirety of Carneiro's work and career, it appears that her treatment of Carneiro in *City of Women* fails to give him proper credit or represent his insight as warranted by the depth of their relationship¹⁹.

Contemporary academics have reacted to the works of Carneiro and Landes in various ways, mostly ranging between criticism and defense. Because this paper cannot address all of the literature referencing Landes and Carneiro, it focuses on the most contentious and developed works. The relevant sources from U.S. academia include *Black Atlantic Religion* (Original 2001) by Former Harvard African-American Studies Professor James L. Matory, and *Ruth Landes: A Life in Anthropology* (2003) by Canadian Professor and Biographer Sally Cole. The sources from Brazilian Academia include *Nagô Grandma and White Papa* (1998) by Beatriz Góis Dantas and Mariza Corrêa's article "The Mystery of Orixás and Dolls: Race and Gender in Brazilian Anthropology" in *Etnografia* Journal (2000).

Matory invalidates Landes' matriarchy thesis and addresses the negative affects her inaccurate analysis had on Brazilian society and Candomblé. While the book addresses much greater themes and details of Candomblé and the Black Atlantic, Matory argues that Landes and Carneiro did not truthfully represent the environment of Candomblés but rather manipulated them to fit their own goals. Matory portrays Carneiro as a wavering academic dependent on others to support and, at times, create his theories. He explains the imagined communities created by Carneiro and Landes respectively as a "Northeastern regional community anchored by an unchanging, premodern innocence" and "a transnational community of women who are sufficiently alike in substance that the 'matriarchy' or gender equality they experience in one place is equally possible in other places." Landes created the "antisexist proposition that

Candomblé demonstrated potential for women's equality elsewhere in the world." (Matory 2005: 195, 190). Landes' manipulated representation convinced generations of readers both in and outside of Brazil that women had a secured, powerful position in Brazilian society despite the reality of male dominance and female submission, in a misogynistic culture. He claims that Carneiro betrayed his own country by promoting Landes' thesis despite the obvious evidence proving the equal prominence of male priests in the Candomblé terreiros. Matory uses intense and vindictive language in this conversation, demonstrating his disdain for the prominence of Landes' matriarchy thesis. He says of Carneiro, "In defense of his country's international reputation, his own venom even exceeds that of Landes" (Matory 2005: 197).

While James L. Matory explains important flaws in Landes and Carneiro's work, his harsh attitude attacks their process. He heavily criticizes Landes' thesis, yet frequently quotes her book *City of Women* as evidence of Candomblé traditions and practices in the 1930's. The work he deems harmful and destructive, he also uses as primary sources in the construction of his own research. Despite its shortcomings and misconceptions, *City of Women* undoubtedly stands as a useful testimony. French born, Brazilian-educated Sociologist Stefania Capone believes *City of Women* to be "vivid portrait of cult life, in which we find the best-known traditional Candomblé in Bahia" (Capone 2010: 215). Overall Matory treats Carneiro and Landes in overly simplistic and negative terms²⁰. Matory's tone is unfortunately unsurprising, as this work won the Melville Herskovits Memorial Prize and continues along similar criticisms of Landes's theories and valorization of Herskovits'.

Defending Landes from the Herskovits and Matory tradition, Sally Cole's biography gives a broad and comprehensive view of Landes' life and career, while focusing heavily on re-legitimizing her work. Cole speaks especially to the gendered aspect of the criticism against Landes and the misconceptions based upon Landes' progressive attitude of gender and fieldwork. Cole's sources reveal Mead's attitude, supported by Herskovits and Ramos, specifically that Landes hadn't acted as "a lady or an ordinary academic female", she "had 'gone native' in the field by taking a local lover". Throughout the text Cole victimizes Landes as "the 'other' and 'matter out of place' in American Anthropology" (Cole 2003: 202). Overall she calls for a revision of traditional conceptions of Landes, viewing her as a "she-bull in Brazil's China closet", a female anthropologist too daring and forward for her time.

While Cole's analysis rightly shifts the overwhelmingly negative conception of Landes, at times her work becomes defensive and idealized. Cole demands a revision of Landes' works as "at the very heart of anthropology". This perhaps over-exaggerates her position and the value of her analysis. Cole qualifies the heavy criticism as "focused on her manners finding her behavior unladylike" (Cole 2003: 242, 224), labeling Landes' femininity as the problem instead of acknowledging the overextended nature of Landes' matriarchy thesis. Her treatment of Carneiro generally shadows him in light of Ramos as the international authority on Afro-Brazilian studies.

Different issues concern the Brazilian literature, which focus on the details of the misrepresentation of Candomblé by Carneiro and Landes, and the consequences in the Brazilian context. Beatriz Góis Dantas explains the legacy of Nagô purity enforced by Carneiro and Landes' work. Though she does not explore the entire of Carneiro's career in the book, she recognizes his efforts beyond the intellectual battle over Nagô purity. She also recognizes his true attempt to legitimize and defend Candomblé against police repression, while at the same time acknowledging that he believed only Nagô terreiros should be registered as legitimate. She examines how Carneiro revised Rodrigues' scientific racism and Sudanese superiority theory, but in many ways still supported his work as foundational. Dantas recognizes that intellectuals

like Carneiro are not solely responsible for reinforcing Nagô purity, as it also depends upon the participation of the practitioners to buy into and enforce the hierarchy of Candomblé. So that as Brazilian Ph.D student Maria Ferreira noted in her thesis, on many occasions “Carneiro represented his informants more than himself”. He allowed himself to be greatly influenced by the powerful *Nagô* leaders Martiano do Bonfim and Menininha, for example, in order to support their goals rather than create his own (Ferreira 2010: 114).

Dantas too uses Landes’ “astute observations” from *City of Women* as primary source proof for her book’s thesis. Dantas quickly proves that Landes strengthened the Nagô versus caboclo division, while acknowledging she may not have been entirely aware of the consequences of her actions. More interesting is Dantas’ analysis of Landes’ perspectives on Brazilian racism. According to Dantas, Landes “perceived the use of the Bahian black as a national symbol” but ultimately “ends up proclaiming our racial and cultural democracy... by disseminating a false idea of black equality, [she] masked racism and cultural intolerance, making them hard to combat” (Dantas 1988: 109, 126). Dantas therefore agrees with Matory on the negative impact of Landes’ work, not specifically because of the issue of “matriarchy” but because of her perpetuation of the racial democracy theory as an even bigger obstacle for the black population of Brazil than Nagô purity.

Mariza Corrêa’s article argues that Landes’ thesis and imagery contributed to the global conceptions of Candomblé and Bahianas as matriarchal. She claims that the work of Ruth Landes and Carmen Miranda were essential in the constructing Bahian mulatta women as a national symbol. This comparison with such a sexualized and politically controversial figure as Carmen Miranda already sheds a problematic light on Landes as an individual, let alone as an academic. Yet Corrêa links these two women by their impact in bringing Bahian culture and specifically Bahianas into the international scene, making the “Brazilian case” crucial in global affairs. Corrêa considers Landes as “the first researcher to explicitly feminize the Afro-Brazilian cults”. But rather than creating this reality she notes that “even before the Bahiana was transformed into a national symbol, it was an intractable reality” (Corrêa 2000: 251, 252). Landes simply brought an exaggerated level global attention to the symbol. This had an unfortunate effect, certainly not intended by Landes, of the commodification of the Bahiana and Candomblé as a cultural symbol of Brazil, often appropriated in the tourist industry today²¹.

While Corrêa gives an unusually detailed description of Landes and Carneiro’s relationship as “intellectual and romantic” she claims that “Dona Heloisa, the director of the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro, was the primary source of support for Landes.” She represents Edison as “a young Bahian mulatto searching for the support of an established white medical doctor” rather than a useful individual and guide to Landes (Corrêa: 2000: 248, 247, 235).

It should be noted that Carneiro is rarely, if ever, discussed in literature without at least a reference or a section on Landes. To a lesser extent this is true of literature on Landes’ work as well. The two are inextricably linked as joint voices in Afro-Brazilian studies. Even this research paper, which began as an examination of Carneiro’s career, led me to a detailed study of his work with Landes as nobody had specifically dedicated a study to their interesting and controversial relationship.

This paper reveals the intricacies of Carneiro’s career and his relationship with Landes as complicated and at times ambiguous. Landes arrived in Brazil in 1938 with a gendered perspective, pressures from the Boasian community and anthropological structures which influenced her process and her conclusions. While her thesis may be over-generalized and to

some degree pre-determined, her process is useful in understanding why her experience in Brazil had such a lasting impact. Examining Carneiro as an individual academic who provided guidance to Landes allows him to be understood as a significant Bahian academic and community member. Carneiro began his career as a communist, journalist and historian working to support and represent the black community as an ally, as a mulatto. Yet these were never pure intentions. Elite pressures, competition for authority, and opportunism frequently seized Carneiro. Perhaps his inconsistent attitude and willingness to form allies left him in the shadows of louder, more daring and ambitious colleagues.

Amidst all these conflicting opinions and reactions, this paper attempts not to take sides and emotionally respond to a controversial topic, but rather to present evidence based on original research. I contextualized this paper within my own experience living in Salvador, Bahia, visiting the same spaces Landes and Carneiro researched 74 years ago and talking with professors directly descending from the schools and theories of Carneiro, Rodrigues and Ramos. It appears that suggestions from Bahian authorities directing me towards a study of Landes' research and experience stem from associations people still make with young, white, American female researchers such as myself in Bahia.

¹ Different estimates of this percentage vary based on the study and criteria of what is an “Afro-descendent”. Of course this is a difficult question to answer as various categories of “blackness” range in Brazil as everywhere. The two most prominent categories are “negro” or black and “pardo” meaning mulatto or mixed-race. Without a doubt the majority of Bahians are mixed-race, not just between African and European descendants but Indigenous descendants as well. The accepted estimation of the African-descended population in all of Brazil is approximately 50%.

² As a slave society with a near black majority, this late date of abolition particularly correlates with that of Cuba (1886), and differs with the US (1867) and former Spanish Colonies (1820’s) as countries with black minorities. The Haitian Revolution (1804), as a much different but relevant process occurred almost a century earlier.

³ Exact numbers on the importation of Africans to Brazil are impossible to obtain due to the nature of source material. The literature estimates between 2-8 million Africans were sent to Brazil. Generally the consensus is that 40% of all Africans imported to the New World went to Brazil, and Brazil has the most African-descended people of anywhere outside of the African continent.

⁴ The word “Nagô originates from the Yoruba culture of West Africa (principally present-day Nigeria). Many of the African slaves brought to Brazil came from Yoruba-speaking cultural regions. The other main cultural groups are the Bantu, the origin of many African-speaking languages mostly in central and eastern Africa as well and the Sudanese, sometimes of muslim religion, originating mostly from the Northeast of the African continent.

⁵ The first university, The Medical School of Bahia, opened in 1808 whereas the first Brazilian University didn’t open until 1934. No University had a Humanities department until 1942 (Source: Assesoria para Assuntos Internacionais-UFBA. “Historical Information”. Universidade Federal da Bahia)

⁶ Getulio Vargas seized power by a military junta and served as Chief of a provisional government from 1930-1934. He continued as the major presence in Brazilian politics for the next two decades as an elected president from 1934-1937, a dictator under the Estado Novo from 1937-1945, and once again as a constitutional president from 1951-1954.

⁷ Papers at the 1937 Congress included those by Edison Carneiro, Melville Herskovits, Donald Pierson, Reginaldo Guimarães, Artur Ramos, Martiano do Bonfim, Aydano do Couto Ferraz, Jorge Amado and others.

⁸ Most of this information came from articles accessed from the *Estado da Bahia* at the Biblioteca Barris in Salvador. See final bibliography for full list of articles. Supporting evidence from Dantas 1988: 117.

⁹ mãe-de-santo literally means “Mother of the Orixá” translated from the Yoruba word *iyalorishá*. They are the female leaders of the terreiros. They are accompanied by the male leaders “pai de santo” and their followers, the “filhos de santos”, Sons of the Saints.

¹⁰ All translations by the author unless otherwise noted.

¹¹ Members of Academia dos Rebeldes included writers Jorge Amado, Sosígenes Costa, Áydano Ferraz, Guilherme Dias Gomes, João Alves Ribeiro, Walter da Silveira, Da Costa Andrade, De Souza Aguiar and Clóvis Amori

¹² A note on citation: The correspondences between Edison Carneiro and Ruth Landes throughout this paper come from two sources. The Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular (CNFCP, National Center for Folklore and Popular Culture) in Rio de Janeiro and the National Anthropological Archives (NAA) of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC. Abbreviations of Edison Carneiro (EC) and Ruth Landes (RL) are used alongside the date of correspondence and the location where the correspondence was accessed. Carneiro wrote in both Portuguese and English in letters to Landes, at times making errors in grammar and syntax. No distinction is made between the author’s translations from Portuguese and the written English of Carneiro.

¹³ His unique intimacy with the Candomblés demonstrates some level of solidarity or understanding with black communities, whether or not this was based upon his racial status is unclear. Certainly many white Brazilians and foreigners such as Pierre Verge and the painter Carybé had similar profound connections to terreiros as *ogans* and practitioners of Candomblé. This discussion of race is inherently tricky and ambiguous, but necessary to consider as a factor in Carneiro’s life and work.

¹⁴ After Landes left Carneiro in Bahia in 1939 his letters become increasingly desperate, with statement such as “I need you”, “I love you, why aren’t you writing me?”, “I must have you again to be happy... my love always protecting and guarding you” (EC to RL 11/18/39, 11/11/1939, 6/8/1939, NAA).

¹⁵ Other academics and activists working in the public sphere also faced difficulties from the Vargas Regime. Freyre too was arrested for organizing the First Afro-Brazilian Congress in 1934 despite its moderate and nationalist character (Dantas 1988: 170).

¹⁶ My personal research and understanding of Marxist historians is limited. I have seen very little to no discussion in the literature of Carneiro or Landes’ Marxist orientation. This subject has yet to be developed. However the absence of a communist discussion in writings on Landes and Carneiro as well as my own research suggests that it was not an integral part of their arguments.

¹⁷ Anísio Teixeira was a prominent educator, jurist and writer who developed the University system in Brazil, mostly in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro. He supported the “Escola Nova” (New School) movement to improve education.

¹⁸ These sources are incompletely cited, and were accessed from the National Anthropological Archives (NAA) of the Smithsonian Institute: Box 59: Reviews of *City of Women*. Rough citations available in the bibliography.

¹⁹ Landes clarified and elaborated upon her relationship, Edison's role in her life and her trip in Brazil in much greater detail in "A Woman Anthropologist in Brazil" (1970). However, much fewer people read this article than her main book *City of Women*.

²⁰ Matory's bibliography lacks many of the sources which clarify Carneiro and Landes' process. He references only Carneiro's work about Candombles: *Candombles da Bahia*, *Religoes Negras e Negros Bantos*, "Candomble da Bahia" in *Antologia do Negro*, "The Structure of African Cults in Bahia". He doesn't use the popular book of articles, *Ladinos e Crioules*, which discusses and clarifies many of these issues in depth.

²¹ Today's tourism industry commodifies many of Candomblés symbolic objects such as dolls, beads, and drums. Tourists can pay to tour famous Candombles, and pay the mães de santos to read their shells and determine their African God. There are different responses to this in the Candomble community and certainly not all *terreiros* participate, some are actively working against it.

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