

# A DAY FOR THE OWNER

## Exposing the Cyber Life and Crimes of Mercedes Morgana Cordova Bonilla Reyes

Compiled and Written by Teresa N. Washington, Ph.D.

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### AN EVERYDAY THIEF

The person known as Mercedes Morgana Reyes, alias Mercedes Cordova Reyes, alias Mercedes Bonilla, alias Mercedes Morgana Bonilla, alias Mercedes Morgana Cordova Reyes, et. al., has been violating my intellectual property rights since spring 2014. With malice aforethought and with the intention to deceive and defraud, Mercedes has **illegally—and without my knowledge or consent**—plagiarized and posted to various social media pages and websites numerous passages from two of my books: [\*Our Mothers, Our Powers, Our Texts: Manifestations of Àjé in Africana Literature\*](#) (June 2005) and [\*The Architects of Existence: Àjé in Yoruba Cosmology, Ontology, and Orature\*](#) (January 2014). Both of my books are products of my Ph.D. dissertation, which was copyrighted and registered in the United States Library of Congress in 2000. As separate books, *Our Mothers, Our Powers, Our Texts* was copyrighted and registered in the Library of Congress in 2005, and *The Architects of Existence* was copyrighted and registered in the Library of Congress in 2013.

Before 2014, Mercedes was a purveyor of “witch/wicca” products. In the spring of 2014 Mercedes adorned herself with a plethora of titles including “Chief Iyalaje-Erelu Fakinsuyil'Aje Afirimaako Iku Ladde,” “Chief Iyalaje-Erelu Mercedes Morgana Cordova,” “Iyanifa Mercedes Morgana Cordova,” and “Iyalaje Mercedes Morgana Bonilla” (<https://www.facebook.com/azramedea>). She also opened a Facebook page she called “Egbe Iyami Aje Temple of America” (<https://www.facebook.com/ajeiyamihouseofharmony/>).

Mercedes knew that she would have to exhibit wisdom befitting her exalted and laughably lengthy titles. Because her personal storehouse of knowledge is meager, she created a Facebook persona that was a patchwork of other peoples' stolen intellectual property, both images and words, with the objective of using this persona and stolen property to defraud her followers.

When I realized that a person was plagiarizing my intellectual property, I swung into action. From 11/15/2015 to 11/21/2015, I submitted to Facebook approximately **246** reports against Mercedes Morgana Reyes for intellectual property violations. Facebook responded by removing the infringing posts.

With her fictional identity in jeopardy, Mercedes responded as any unrepentant thief would, by claiming her page “Egbe Iyami Aje Temple of America” had been “hacked” and by opening another Facebook page that she titled “Egbe Iyami Aje Temple Worldwide.” She also launched a website, “Egbeajeyami.com.” She went on to plagiarize my copyrighted intellectual property without my knowledge or permission 47 more times. From 8/17/2016 to 10/11/2016 I reported these violations to Facebook, and they removed the infringing posts. On 12/13/2018, Mercedes violated my intellectual property rights again by posting information from my books to both of her Fakebook pages and to her website. I submitted reports on the violations, and Facebook removed the infringing posts; her service provider shut her entire website down. [See infringement reports at <https://adayfortheowner.wixsite.com/mysite>]

I am an easy-going person. I am a humble person. I have dealt with this issue in the most low-key manner possible. I thought that once Mercedes knew that I and others were aware of her fraudulent activities she would stop. However, Mercedes Morgana Reyes is a pathological fraudster. After years of playing wack-a-mole, or bop-a-beast, I decided to share this issue and evidence publicly. This was a difficult decision for me, as I want no association with this type of person whatsoever. However, I discussed this issue with my family, my mentor, a colleague, and a *true* òyá, and everyone agreed that I needed to attack this thief head-on with truth.

My objective in sharing this data is to reveal Mercedes Morgana Reyes’ fraudulent activities so that individuals will know exactly who she is and how she operates. I also seek to protect my words and works as they are my and my family’s legacy. Finally, I hope to shed light on a sinister development that is destroying the Ifá-Òrìṣà global community.

## **THE EVIDENCE**

After Mercedes Morgana Reyes’ last theft of my work, 13 December 2018, I scrolled through her Facebook page and found some of her violations that I missed previously. I was delighted to find them because when her posts are juxtaposed to pages from my books, the audacity of Mercedes Morgana Reyes’s thievery is apparent.

## EXHIBIT A

Mercedes Morgana Reyes plagiarizes page 206 verbatim from my book, *The Architects of Existence* (left), as is evident in her Facebook post (right). Note how Reyes tacks on a concluding sentence to give the impression to her followers that the entire post is first-hand information she is giving about her “egbe”.

« Exit The Architects of Existence, Aje in Yoruba Cosmology, Ontology, and Orature – Teresa N. Washington

Similar to the women who accompany the Oya Egúngún processional, the women of Bàrà are chosen to be and to represent Orànyàn because of the magnitude of their Àjé. Furthermore, the term “Father” does not encompass all that these women are, for each is a Mother in whom a father is housed, in much the same way that the iron particle is contained in and protected by a womb of brass.

Babayemi goes on to reveal the origin of Ìyámodé and the Bàbá Bàrà, and his discussion offers evidence of yet another Ìlú Àjé:

Other traditions collected in Oyo say that Šàngó looked upon the women in Bàrà with great reverence for he is reported as prostrating for them. These women shaved their heads clean like men; they did not wear the búbá (the Yoruba women’s upper blouse), and the upper part of the wrapper they put on were tied to the body just above the breasts, the lower part touching the ground. Whenever they happened to leave Bàrà people treated them with awe. Whenever they visited the market, they looted any foodstuff they wanted, and whenever they visited the palace, palace women on their approach, pour water on the ground, shouting that their ‘fathers’ had come to visit them. Whatever these women demanded would be brought out with respect.<sup>167</sup>

From Babayemi’s account, the women of Bàrà appear to have established an Ìlú Àjé just outside of the Oyo Empire. Rather than wage war on them, Šàngó heralded these fully self-possessed women, who found the world deep and rich enough to nourish their divinity and way of life, as the most potent and important entities in his vicinity.

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Egbe Aje Iyami Temple of America

October 22, 2014

Similar to the women who accompany Oya Egungun processional, the women of Bara are chosen to be and represent Oranyan because of the magnitude of their Aje. Furthermore the term Father does not encompass all that these women are, for each is a Mother in whom a father is housed, in much the same way that the iron particle is contained in and protected by a womb of brass. In some traditions collected in Oyo say that Shango looked upon the women in Bara with great reverence for he is reported as prostrating for them. These women shaved their heads clean like men, they did not wear a buba, and the upper part of the wrapper they put on were tied to the body just above the breasts, the lower part touching the ground. Whenever they happened to leave Bara people treated them with awe. Whenever they visited the market, they looted any foods they wanted, and whenever they visited the palace, palace women on their approach, pour water on the ground, shouting that their father's had come to visit them. Whatever these women demanded would be brought out of respect. These women established an Ilu Aje just outside of the Oyo empire. Rather than wage war on them, Shango heralded these fully self-possessed women, who found the world deep and rich enough to nourish their divinity and way of life, as the most potent and important entities in his vicinity. This is why to this day the Egbe Aje Iyami is autonomous from the rest, we don't depend on anyone, we have our own ceremonies, rites and rituals, traditions and government within the Egbe.

Photos: Bara woman 1920, Bara women 1992



## EXHIBIT B

Reyes' Facebook post (right) plagiarizes pages 120-121 of my book *The Architects of Existence* (left). Note that she doubles-down on her fraud by including a copyright symbol © and initials of one of her innumerable pseudonyms with her theft.

The Architects of Existence, Aje in Yoruba Cosmology, Ontology, and Orature – Teresa N. Washington

them, and so on. No! Right from the beginning, old and experienced women would train children by giving them symbols. And you know how the Yoruba are very specific in giving symbols. So they give symbols and administer certain aims and objectives with the symbols. And they will be measuring whether [the child] is active and if he is accepting the symbols. So if he's not accepting the symbols . . . they will abandon [the training]. And those who are training well will go on to be Àjé. So that's it . . .

I'm very close with the function of [Àjé] through my paternal grandmother. I can from my reminiscence understand why this old woman was doing [what she was doing]. I was the only boy. I can see now the treatment of a few of us as opposed to the others. The few of us who received the training have become successful, whereas the others have nothing to write home about.<sup>177</sup>

From àrokò to ààlè to Àjé; from oriki to Ògbóni to Odù Ifá, every aspect of Yoruba wisdom transmission and knowledge acquisition reveals a mastery of semiotics. As Opeola elucidates, some of the most powerful information is transmitted not through words but via symbols which are silent save for the information that they convey to the soul of the recipient of the knowledge. It is the ability to respond to communication on this level that reveals an individual's innate Àjé or lack thereof. The fact that its wisdom

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The Vagina Gives Birth to the World – 109

is conveyed via holistic esoteric communication is precisely why Àjé can never be fully explicated and why it can never be eradicated.

With the foundation provided by Opeola, one is better able to appreciate the experiences of Yoruba artist Moyo Okediji who was made whole by Àjé. In an interview published in *Know*, Okediji reveals that children in traditional Yoruba society are considered gender-neutral—which further emphasizes the significance of the “ó” pronoun—and that the society and the child's interactions therein determine “whether the child will be male or female.”<sup>178</sup> Okediji goes on to divulge that “[i]f you are fortunate enough that these females decide that you can be one of them, they will take you through the process of becoming female.”<sup>179</sup> Okediji became female in this way.<sup>180</sup> Okediji, who often creates art as his female persona, Orisagbemi, makes it clear that to be female is to be supreme, and his revelations elucidate how and why certain men, such as priests of Òkè and Òsun, chiefs of Òwò and the Olówò, and certain manifestations of Èṣù and Sàngó, appear as women: They are entities with male genitalia and/or gender who have necessarily been made whole through Àjé.

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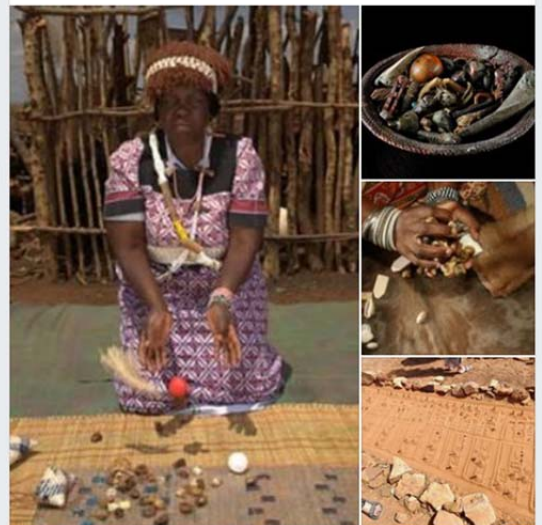
Egbe Aje Iyami Temple of America

April 14, 2014 · 🌐

Some of the most powerful information is transmitted not through words but through symbols which are silent save for the information that they convey to the soul of the recipient of the knowledge. It is the ability to respond to communication on this level that reveals an individual's innate Aje of lack thereof. This type of esoteric communication is also precisely why Aje can never be fully explained and why it can never be eradicated.

photo 1: Iyalaje Afokoyeri

©MBT





## EXHIBIT C

Below Mercedes Cordova Reyes plagiarizes from page 96 of *The Architects of Existence* and, again, compounds her fraud by claiming copyright.

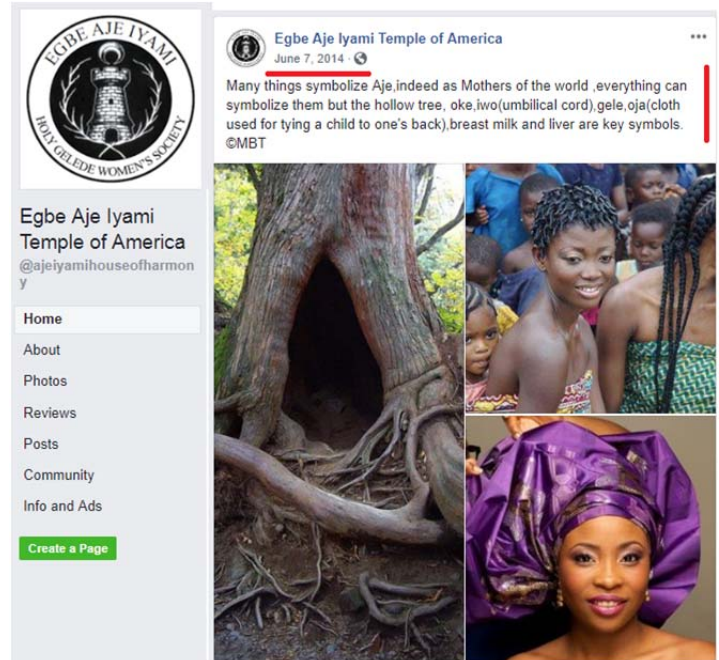
The Architects of Existence, Aje in Yoruba Cosmology, Ontology, and Orature -- Teresa N. Washington

## 96 - THE ARCHITECTS OF EXISTENCE

closeness, mother and child learn one another's rhythms, moods, and melodies, and the child watches, learns from, and respects mother's often ceaseless labors. With the child being privy to all that the mother witnesses, says, hears, and feels, fundamental pedagogical, emotional, spiritual, and psychological ties are formed. It is not surprising that the bonds connecting mother to child are eternal and that the genetic, biological, and material objects that strengthen and signify these bonds are powerful symbols of Àjẹ.

There are many things that symbolize Àjẹ; indeed, as the Mothers of the World, everything can symbolize them, but the òkẹ (amnion), iwó (umbilical cord), gèlè (head tie), òjá (cloth used for tying child to one's back), breast milk, and liver are key symbols. The iwó and òkẹ are essential to existence, but the bonds established by these organs foster a spiritual connection that far outlives their physical roles. The iwó and òkẹ not only provide every human being with her or his only method to exist *in vitro*, but they also endow the fetus with the genetic material that will become his identity and assist in the manifestation of his destiny and, perhaps, divinity. The iwó and òkẹ transmit the powers of the Egúngún and Òrisha to the child along with chromosomes, blood, lymph, tissues, and nutrients. When the

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## EXHIBIT D

Another example of Mercedes' verbatim plagiarism from pages 121 and 122 of *The Architects of Existence*:

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and cosmic Mother Creators. Okediji affirms the fact that, while the male anatomy is inherently limited and limiting, men can be born with Àjẹ, can have their latent Àjẹ developed, can be made women, and can be made whole in myriad ways. I stress here, again, that becoming female and being made whole in these contexts has nothing to do with bisexuality, cross-dressing, hermaphroditism, queering, homosexuality, transgenderism, or any other Western concepts or categorizations. The dynamic being articulated cannot be defined by any Western paradigm, term, experience, or theory, especially not those rooted in the social constructs of gender or in the politicization of sexual orientation, because the dynamic being manifest does not concern sexual orientation or the politics of division: The dynamic at work is that of cosmological completion.

The need for certain men to be complete and the celebration of male completeness are ubiquitous in Yoruba society, from the longings of hunters, to Gèlèdè maskers, to depictions of certain Gods, to the rulers and priests of Òwò, and completion in no way compromises or alters masculinity. As I detail in subsequent chapters, Yoruba culture is also rich with women who house or embody male ancestors or Gods, and these women may be honored as Bàbá. But unlike the man who is made female, or given a synthetic womb, or depicted with ample breasts, Àjẹ need not alter anything to be Bàbá. Àjẹ is complete. She boasts chromosomal completion, Odù Ìwà, the pathway to Òrun, breasts of bounty, and a catalyzing clitoris. With these organs, she creates, births, raises, and

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## 110 - THE ARCHITECTS OF EXISTENCE

encompasses both "male" and "female." When mother's life-producing era has ended, her estrogen decreases and she develops the classic beard of Àjẹ. Mother's beard does not signify masculinity but a woman who is fully suffused with divinity: an entity with two bodies, two faces, vast wisdom, and all power. The beard of the elder woman signifies a Divinity fully manifest on Earth.

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## EXHIBIT E

Mercedes Morgana Cordova Reyes plagiarizes page 208 of *The Architects of Existence*. Note that in my book I consistently reference my sources (Ulli Beier and Babatunde Lawal; below, left); by contrast, observe that Mercedes unfailingly *omits* the names and findings of groundbreaking scholars. Her goal is to fool people into thinking she is giving first-hand information about her “egbe”.

◀ Exit The Architects of Existence, Aje in Yoruba Cosmology, Ontology, and Orature – Teresa N. Washington

## Dance for Your Life

The campaign to remove women from Yoruba culture, secret societies, sacred institutions, politics, and life and to trivialize those women who are indispensable to these institutions has even made its way to Gẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ̀, the society that is devoted to praising Àwọn Ìyá Wà. Babatunde Lawal's and Ulli Beier's findings on the specific roles of women in Gẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ̀ reveal to outsiders what community members have always known: Women are not mere spectators; they are necessarily active agents in every stage of Gẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ̀ festival. Indeed, Gẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ̀ cannot be performed without the approval and participation of the Mothers. The centrality and indispensability of women to Gẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ̀ is analogous to their roles in existence and in society.

Beier finds that “the most important [Gẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ̀] dance is held in connection with the annual festival of ODUÀ.”<sup>171</sup> Once again, the significance of Oduà, who is “the mother of all” and “the pure orisha” who “turns blood into children,” is brought to the fore.<sup>172</sup> It is fitting that Gẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ̀ reaches its apex when honoring Oduà. The Earth becomes an ojùbò to receive full-throated praises from the men and women who were once blood-enriched eggs awaiting the spark of fertilization. As the men and women sing, spin, swirl, and converge perhaps they recall the journeys they took as eggs coursing through fallopian tubes seeking solace in the womb made velvet with fortifying blood. Perhaps they recall the single-minded urgency of sperm traversing silken vaginal walls and seeking justification. They may even be remembering the bliss of being twins dancing Gẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ̀ in the womb: Gẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ̀ is more than a celebration; it is a re-membering of how lives are conceived, how destinies are shaped, and how heads are molded to glowing perfection.

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November 11, 2014

The campaign to remove women from Yoruba culture, secret societies, sacred institutions, politics and life has even made it's way to Gelede, the society that is devoted to praising Awon Iya Wa. Here in the new world women are being said they cannot participate in Gelede, and that is not right. You see women are not restricted to the role of spectator, they are necessarily active agents in the Gelede festival. Indeed Gelede cannot be performed without the approval and participation of the Mothers. The centrality and indispensability of women to Gelede is analogous to their roles in existence and in society. The most important Gelede dance is held in connection with the annual festival of Oduà. Once again the significance of Oduà who is the Mother of all and the pure Orisha who turns blood into children is brought to the fore. It is fitting that Gelede reaches it's apex when honoring Oduà. The Earth becomes an Ojubo to receive full throated praises from the men and women who were once blood enriched eggs awaiting the spark of fertilization. Gelede is more than a celebration, it is a remembering of how lives were conceived, how destinies are shaped, and how heads are molded to glowing perfection.





## EXHIBIT F

Mercedes Reyes plagiarizes from page 232 of my book *The Architects of Existence* (left, below). Note that in my book I site the source, *Music is the Weapon*, and the speaker of the block quotation, Fela Anikulapo Kuti. Endnote 74 gives full citation information. Reyes, by contrast, does not attribute the statement to anyone so that readers will think she is referring to her fraudulent organization. She also includes the copyright symbol © and the initials “MBT”; by doing so, she is blatantly committing fraud.

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mother because he takes care of everything in life.” The relationship between Fela and the Queens was undergirded by reciprocity. But while these women could have married any men and could have left Fela at any time, and many did leave Fela to establish new relationships or to seek success and safer lives abroad, to Fela, the Queens were indispensable.

In the documentary *Music is the Weapon*, Fela’s views on Àjẹ are in full accord with those of the Ancients, and he gives praise where it is due—to the Queens:

In the African community there’re some special women: We call them Ìyáláǵẹ̀. It means women who have special powers to see, to see the future, you know, to see front and back. You know, these are the special women. . . . Important people always have them around, you know, in the African home. Like, I have my own Ìyáláǵẹ̀ in the house . . . who advises me what to do.<sup>74</sup>

This elucidation perfectly illustrates the dynamics of Kalakuta and the reciprocity and power-sharing at work among Fela and the Queens. Fela’s terminology is also important: By using Ìyáláǵẹ̀—and using it fluidly and unapologetically—Fela is not only heralding the power of Àjẹ in an organic way, he is also reminding all Africana women, especially Yoruba women, of their birthright and inherent power.

Fela’s life boasts three primary phases of Àjẹ-empowerment: The awakening orchestrated by Sandra in 1969; the solidification with Funmilayo in the mid-1970s; and the crowning of the Queens in 1978. But the roots of Fela’s Àjẹ, Pan-African consciousness, and activism run deep. His maternal great-great-grandmother, Sarah Taiwo, who was born in the



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Mercedes Morgana Reyes’ fraud is fueled by her manipulation and desecration of Africana women and womanhood and this is evident in **Exhibits F and G**. In **EXHIBIT F** (above), Mercedes includes two photos of women she claims are part of her “egbe”. She claims these women are “Iya I Aje Ogun Toeye, Iya L Aje Oba Tero Pupa (1910)” (left) and “Iya L Aje Egun Tossi” (right). In actuality, the photo on the left was taken by Henry John Drewal, who is also the copyright holder of the image, and is labeled by him as “Ohori-Yoruba woman with kolo tattoo-scarifications (Benin, 1975)” (<http://www.henydrewal.com/photos-films.html>). The black-and-white photo on the right is of Queen Rosalie Gicanda, a Tutsi woman who was born in 1928 and was killed in 1994 during the Rwandan genocide (<https://face2faceafrica.com/article/the-tragic-and-little-known-story-of-the-striking-last-queen-of-rwanda-rosalie-gicanda>). By deliberately falsifying these women’s identities, Mercedes callously and casually violates *all* Africana

women. This desecration especially egregious given that Queen Gicanda was killed during one of the world's worst massacres.

**Mercedes Morgana Reyes has no shame. She also has no respect for Africana women, Africana history, or Africana female power or empowerment of any type. She uses Our African Mothers as props to fool her followers into thinking her organization is historical and filled with Africana women so that she can defraud those followers.**

## EXHIBIT G

The disrespect and desecration of Our African Mothers' is Mercedes Morgana Reyes' trademark, and what I consider to be the most audacious and offensive of her lies and misrepresentations occurs below. In her Facebook post (right), Mercedes claims to be mourning the passing of a woman she calls "Iyalode Ala Ofun III of Ota, Nigeria." Mercedes refers to "Ala Ofun" as a "priestess" and a mentor who personally taught Mercedes "to be a better woman and the importance of Iwa Pele. . ." In actuality, this photo is of Agatha Emeagwali, an Igbo woman and the mother of Philip Emeagwali. Philip includes this image and many more in his photo essay tribute to his mother. Philip heralds his mother because of how she "suffered" to ensure he and their entire family would not only survive but also thrive (<http://emeagwali.com/photoessays/agatha-emeagwali/>).

### My Mother and Me - Philip Emeagwali

[emeagwali.com/photoessays/agatha-emeagwali/](http://emeagwali.com/photoessays/agatha-emeagwali/)



450 x 736 - mama-felicia-grace-nkemdilim-azuokwu-agatha-emeagwali-onitsha-nigeria. mama-felicia-patrick-balonwu-orofo-balonwu. Aunt Mama Felicia's Odu Ceremony ...

My Mother and Me x | Not secure | [emeagwali.com/photoessays/agatha-emeagwali/](http://emeagwali.com/photoessays/agatha-emeagwali/)



Photo taken during Dad's (Akunwata James Nnaemeka Emeagwali) *ichi ozo* initiation into the Ozo Agbalanze of Onitsha Ado n'Idu. *Ich*i ozo is a celebration of achievement and wealth that also elevates the initiates social status. (Taken at Emeagwali ancestral home, Mba Road, Umudei village, Onitsha, 1977)

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**Egbe Aje Iyami Temple of America** shared a photo.  
April 10, 2015

It is with a heavy heart I announce the passing of our beloved Iyalode Ala Ofun III in Ota, Nigeria yesterday afternoon. She was a pioneer always defending women's rights, she taught me to be a better woman and the importance of Iwa Pele to be a better human being and priestess. May your journey back to the Mothers womb be blessed just as your life was. With every death comes a birth, a new beginning I would also like to congratulate my godmother Iyalode Eguntossi she is now our elder and an awesome woman, may your reign be prosperous and blessed always!



The irony of Mercedes' blatant serial violations of African women and culture and her use of the internet to undertake her crimes is that Philip Emeagwali is heralded as one of the "fathers of the internet." His African genius—nurtured and supported by his loving and hardworking mother *and father*—changed our world

([http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1963424\\_1963480\\_1963457,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1963424_1963480_1963457,00.html)).

**Mercedes thought she was posting photos of random disposable African women. She has no clue how deep, rich, and significant *all* Our Mothers are: and she does not care, because Mercedes Morgana Cordova Bonilla Reyes is a morally bankrupt individual whose relationships with Àjé, Ifá, Òrìṣà, and Africa are only as deep as her purse.**

## THE PATHOLOGY OF CRIMINALITY

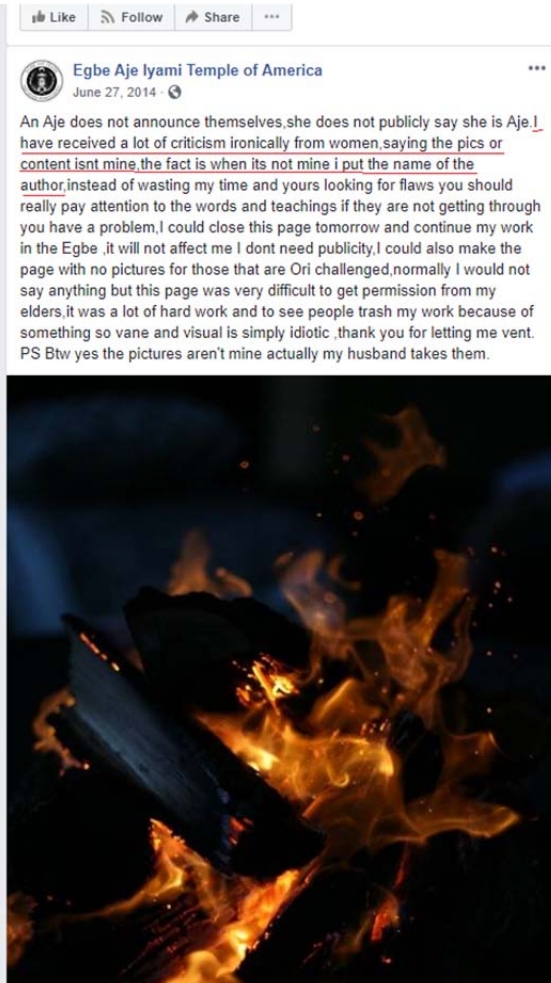
Mercedes Morgana Reyes' Facebook identity is a tenuous fiction; so to protect her façade, she deletes any comment that calls out her deceit. However, cognizant that some people may have seen the critical posts before she was able to erase them, she attacks her critics' ghosts. This manner of operation leads to disjointed posts and comments.



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Egbe Aje Iyami Temple of America

June 25, 2015 · 🌐


When I opened this page I wanted to give a little information about the Mothers, since all I have read till now is either written by men or wrong in some way, when I reference a book, ese Odu or pataki I always mention it's source when there is one. The attacks on Aje are attacks on womanhood if you are a man and you do not do this then you don't have to take it personally, I do not write with one particular person in mind. In my page I will not argue with anyone I think we can differ with respect, those people that write in the hopes that I engage in an argument will be banned, I do not have time for nonsense or pettiness, I have more important things to do, like run the Egbe Aje Iyami Temple of America.



In the 27 June 2014 post (above) Mercedes acknowledges that individuals have accused her of plagiarizing others' copyrighted intellectual property. Her response is to lie and state that "when its [sic] not mine i [sic] put the name of the author." A year later in the 25 June 2015 post (above), Mercedes Cordova Reyes is forced again to address charges of plagiarism. The fact that she lies and continues her thievery is important; this behavior is confirmation that her intention with her Facebook pages and website(s) is to portray herself as the owner of my and other artists' and authors' copyrighted intellectual property in a form of cyber identity theft.


I do not know the persons who called out Mercedes' plagiarism, but I am grateful to them for looking through her smoke and mirrors and consistently telling the truth.

## THE EPITOME OF HYPOCRISY



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**Egbe Aje Iyami Temple of America**  
May 6, 2014

So sad that our community is full of people here in the internet that are not even initiated into Orisa tradition,posting, having groups, and even recommending books about Aje, Orisa and Ifa that will only confuse ,they speak as if they were experts. So sad.

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10 Comments 1 Share

Like
Comment
Share

Most Relevant ▾

Write a comment...

Press Enter to post.

**Egbe Aje Iyami Temple of America** I differ, but respect your opinion

Like Reply · 4y

**Egbe Aje Iyami Temple of America** This is the thing, about Aje all the literature out there is confusing for someone who has not been initiated into the Iyami society, most books are written by men who are not inside, the society lately some by women but still the books are written as if for a class in college no real information, I have come to the conclusion that this is deliberate so women will not take their rightful place within this community. I believe you learn from your elders, initiation and The Mothers themselves, when a book comes out that is worth reading about Aje I'll post it in this page.

Like Reply · 4y

**Egbe Aje Iyami Temple of America** I see you have a community of Awon Iyami also, I happen to believe in initiation, because it was not until that moment that I understood many things about the Mothers also there is no other way to have that information since it went underground and it was passed from woman to woman, nothing has been written about the real ceremonies and about the Mothers themselves, everything is superficial, or fabricated you see I was uninitiated too when I was, I read a book about the Mothers in which the author treated them like Nkisi like a prenda, this is what happens you get confused, yes I believe every woman is born with this power and it is innate and it is organic but it is up to us to choose the correct way to develop it and what better is the sacrifice of initiation, it shows the mothers that you are serious about taking in their secrets, and whosoever really knows the Mothers knows this is a fact. When I was an ale yo I had an idea of what Orisha should be, it was not until I was in Igboju I understood what Orisha was. Once you are initiated there is no room for fabrications, and that's what some people don't like.

(Comments Continued Below)

**Egbe Aje Iyami Temple of America** not written as an initiate as you said its pure academic work, but with her own judgements, she is constantly putting down the male sex in order to move forward as a community we have to move forward together, for someone who is not initiated into Aje her work is confusing.

Like Reply · 4y

**Brian Willson** The problem recommending books while not initiated is you don't know if those books are right. You need elders to teach those seeking. Fellow seekers can only share there own curiosity.

Like Reply · 4y

**Brian Willson** Very good and generous answer.

Like Reply · 4y

**Ayanna Barmore** What books do you suggest I purchase so that I can better myself properly

Like Reply · 4y

**Regina Le Mort** How do you feel about Teresa Washington's work? Academic in its majority as it is.

Mercedes Morgana Reyes' unswerving mendacity is apparent in the post above. Mercedes' lamentations about people "here in the internet" who haven't been initiated but are "posting," "having groups," and "speaking as if they are experts," is about herself. She projects her crimes onto a mythical other like a champion pathological liar. In her second comment, she complains that books by some women are "written as if for a class in college no real information." Jello-

headed contradiction aside, Mercedes is aware that I hold a Ph.D. and have taught at universities in America and abroad. But the irony is that she disparages the work I did to produce the book that she plagiarizes to create her fraudulent internet identity. She ends her comment with a shamefully hypocritical statement, “when a book comes out that is worth reading about Aje I’ll post it to this page.” Mercedes Morgana Reyes illegally posted 80% of my book to her page. Her statement serves as confirmation that her objective is to steal my intellectual property and promote it as her own.

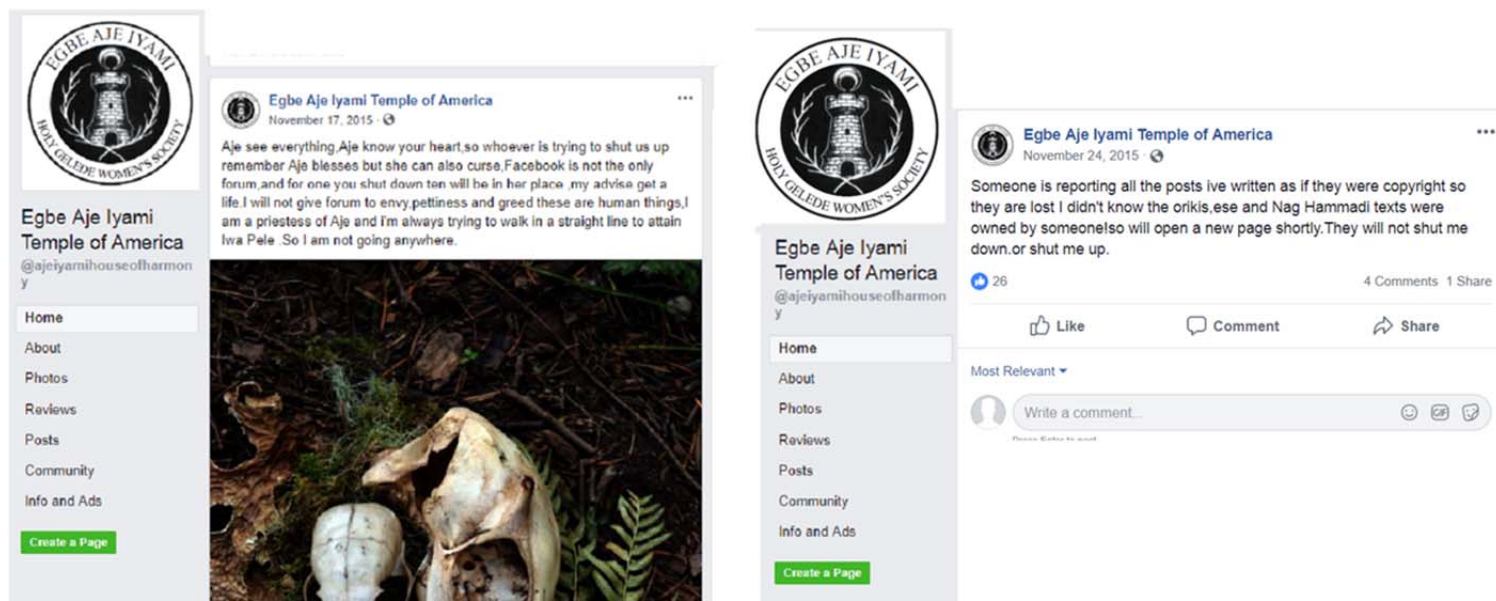
Mercedes Morgana Reyes also seeks to dissuade people from reading my books, because if they do, they will immediately know that she is a plagiarist and a fraud. In Reyes’ third comment of the post above she attempts to negate my work by claiming I am “constantly putting down the male sex.” Having obviously read and found tremendous wisdom in my books, she knows that my work is rooted in the Yoruba principle of “tako tabo ejwapo,” which means men and women must work together to achieve social harmony, balance, and development (see Babatunde Lawal, “Ejiwapo: the dialectics of twoness in Yoruba art and culture,” *African Arts*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2008, p 24+). What is more, I am also the author of [\*Manifestations of Masculine Magnificence: Divinity in Africana Life, Lyrics, and Literature\*](#); it would be difficult for me to be “putting down” men whom I herald as inherently divine.

Also in the third comment above, Mercedes Morgana Reyes is unable to decide which lie to tell about me. Initially she dismisses my work as “not written as an initiate” and “pure academic.” However, she concludes with the admission that “for someone who is not initiated into Aje, her work is confusing.”

The only confusing thing to me is why more people have not seen through her sham.

## THREATS AND RETALIATION

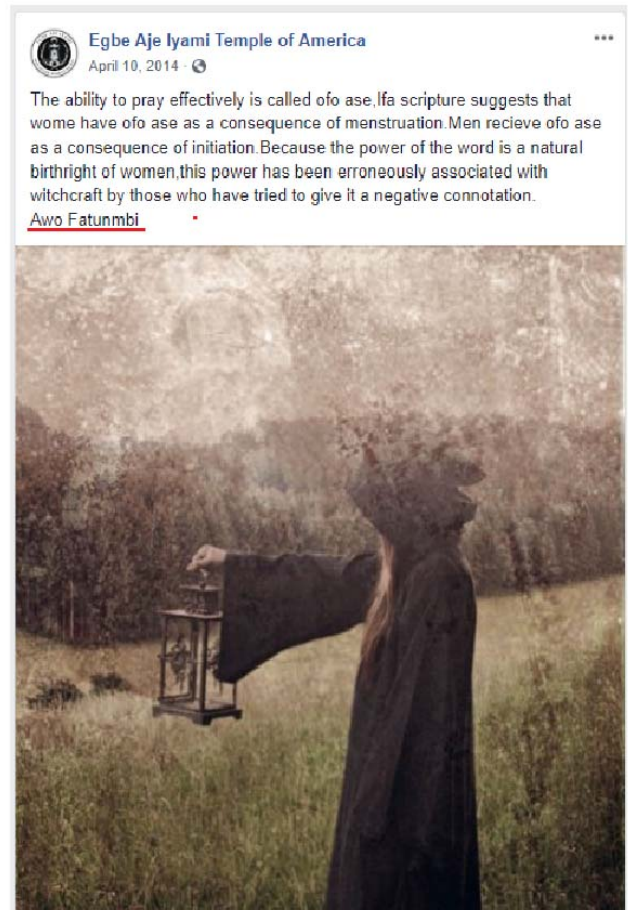
Mercedes Morgana Reyes’ responses to my protecting my property and having Facebook remove what she illegally posted are important. Reyes did not respond with contrition, remorse, or honesty. As is apparent in the posts above, she threatened me and vowed to continue plagiarizing my work on various sites. Her threats and actions are as disturbing as the fact that she thinks she has the right to steal my work and use that theft to defraud individuals and groups.





## ATTRIBUTION FOR SOME. . .

In the Facebook posts below, Mercedes Cordova Reyes attributes passages from posts to Henry John Drewal “(Drewal)” the author of *Gelede* and Awo Fatunmbi the author of *Iwa-pele: Ifa Quest*.



These posts are important because they reveal that Mercedes Morgana Reyes knows right from wrong and legal from illegal. When it comes to my copyrighted intellectual property, she pathologically *chooses* to violate me, my work, and my rights.

## THEFTS OF OTHERS

Because she has no authentic or useful contribution to make about Àjẹ, Òrìṣà, or African spiritual systems, Mercedes Reyes combs the internet in search of passages to plagiarize and photos to defile. In the Facebook post below (right), Reyes plagiarizes a Google Groups post from 2005 written by a user identified as Afolabi (left).

← → ↻ 🔒 [https://groups.google.com/forum/m/#!topic/alt.religion.orisha/Zp\\_VwyN4UKY](https://groups.google.com/forum/m/#!topic/alt.religion.orisha/Zp_VwyN4UKY)

**Afolabi** 12/18/05

Hiya,

It has been one of my main interests, since my initiation to the priesthood lo these many years ago (haha), to maintain the worship of Orishas who are more obscure and lesser known. Here are some basic notes on several of them:

Aje Shaluga - The Orisha of wealth. She is related to Obatala, Yemoja, and Olokun. She lives in an urn similar to one used for Yemoja, although smaller, which should ideally be mostly white with accents of blue. According to the odu in which she is born, she can live near any Orisha. For instance, if the Odu that falls is Oshe (5), she would be kept near Oshun. In addition to the secret elements in her urn, she also contains coins from around the world (which can be a pain in the ass because many countries make their coins from metals which rust) as well as semi-precious stones and seashells, which are the wealth of Yemoja and Olokun. She is a wife of Olokun. Since I received the Orisha I have never been in a desperate financial situation. Her eleke is similar to that of Obatala, largely white, but with accent sections that resemble Olokun's eleke (dark blue, bottle green, and coral).

Olosa - The Orisha of Lagoons. She is another wife of Olokun. She represents the lagoons that precede the ocean. Her symbol is the crocodile and she also, like Aje, lives in an urn that resembles that of Yemoja or Olokun. Mine is in a red clay urn glazed on the inside. Her beads are milky white, dark, translucent blue, and coral.

Ananagu - The Yoruba Pandora. Her curiosity caused her to open the chest containing all the osogbos, thus unleashing them on the world. I call her the "mezuzah" of the Orishas, as she lives at the front door. Her ashe is equated with the "massacre of the innocents" from the book of Exodus in the bible in that any house in which she guards the door will be passed over by Osogbo. I fully credit her with the regaining of my health from the deadly cancer with which I was diagnosed. She is the daughter of Olokun and a Yewa, born in the odu Ofun (10), but she was raised by Yemoja Asesu. She is a cosmic Orisha, as is reflected by the tools in her soper. Her soper resembles that of Yemoja or Olokun. Her eleke resembles that of Olokun, but is marked by groupings of 10 rather than multiples of 7.

Irawo - Born with Orisha Oko, this is the Orisha of the stars. His main tools are a silver shooting star and a thunderstone. He is born directly from Orisha Oko, usually when he is received, but this practice has fallen out of use. He has no eleke and lives in a small dish like that of Elegba. He is associated with astrology and navigation (both manifestations of being guided by the stars).

**Egbe Aje Iyami Temple of America**  
@ajeiyamihouseofharmony

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**Egbe Aje Iyami Temple Worldwide**  
September 12, 2016 · 🌐

Ananagu  
The Yoruba Pandora. Her curiosity caused her to open the chest containing all the osogbos, thus unleashing them on the world. She's the "mezuzah" of the Orishas, as she lives at the front door. Any house in which she guards the door will be passed over by Osogbo, osogbo won't be able to get in. A very close Ocha sister fully credits her with the regaining of her health from deadly cancer with which she was diagnosed. She is the daughter of Yewa, but she was raised by Yemoja Asesu. She is a cosmic Orisha, as is reflected by the tools in her vessel. This Orisha is originally Egbado, and for a long time was lost. She has a pact with Iyami Olorjombodu this gives her the power to elude death. We are making a group for olorishas that need this Orisha to keep costs down. Pm me if interested.


15

Like Comment Share



Mercedes Morgana Reyes' plagiarized Facebook post includes a reference to the experience of a "close Ocha sister." If that "close . . . sister" is Afolabi, why not cite and reference Afolabi and include a link to Afolabi's post? Mercedes doesn't do this because Afolabi's full post includes information about various Òrìṣà that Mercedes no doubt plans to plagiarize in the future. Indeed, her concluding statement reveals she is already figuring out how to cash-in on this Òrìṣà.

## NEW YEAR: NEW LIES

Below is the beginning of an Ifá reading for 2019 posted by Awodele Ifayemi at <https://www.ileifa.org/reading-for-the-year-2019/>. The beginning of this reading, coincidentally and quite ironically, relates directly to Mercedes Morgana Bonilla Cordova Reyes:

 <https://www.ileifa.org/reading-for-the-year-2019/>

### Reading for the Year 2019

Posted By: Awódélé Ifáyemí In: Reading Of The Year  Print  Email

Welcome to 2019!

The reading for this year was completed on Dec 29, 2018 at the Ofun'Di Temple of Ifa located in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

The guidance for this year is provided by the Sacred Odu **Ogbe Irete**. We have been told that we cannot use evil to secure goods and expect them to last for good. This applies not only for our leaders but for our daily affairs as well.

Much has changed that has impacted the collective consciousness of our country. It is my hope we can adhere to Ifa's advice and caution. There is much to lose, not only for us but for the generations to come if we fail to be good Stewards of this planet.

The Odu starts with the following cautionary council:

“ Even if the beginning of wrong-doing is pleasant,  
The end of wickedness will not be good.  
We cannot use evil to secure goods and expect them to be anchored  
firmly.  
These were the teachings of Ifa for the upright one.  
The offspring of the initiated one who treads the earth in humbleness.  
Olodumare is the lord of the land.  
Olodumare is the owner of the judgement.  
Retribution belongs to Olodumare.  
The king of the world will reward everyone  
Precisely according to the work of their hands.



Below is Mercedes Morgana Reyes' attempt to plagiarize Ifayemi's reading while dodging the unavoidable juggernaut of truth. She cobbles together information from various sources and posts a patchwork of idiocy that is criminally offensive to Muslims in general and especially insulting to the millions of Yoruba Muslims who are also Àbòrìṣà. This post is as irresponsible, idiotic, and dangerous as the ignorant impostor who threw it together.



Egbe Aje Iyami  
Temple of America

@ajeiyamihouseofharmony

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Egbe Aje Iyami Temple of America shared a post.

January 2 at 10:23 AM · 🌐

The Odu of the year has been cast for the Ile Oriro Teere in NM it is Ogunda Ogbe .With this said it is a year governed by Oggun and Ochanla, with Esu and the Arara Orisas helping. It is a year that we have to guard our traditions and religion against people from other religions trying to erase our traditions this is one of the only odus that mentions a group by name it says:

"The dishonest traveled for 26 years and failed to return. The dishonest traveled for 6 months more and failed to return. Honesty is the best policy divined Ifa for Baba Imale (Muslim), who was clothed in flowing robes. He was told he would be a liar all his life. He was asked to sacrifice but he refused to do so. Up till today the imale (Muslims) are still lying. They are always saying that they are fasting annually for God. One day Esu asked them why they had been saying that they were fasting for God annually. Are you saying God is dead? Or is God sad? Do you not realize that God is the innate truth? He (Esu) said: 'Hen! You fast for God; God never dies. Edumare is never sick. Olodumare is never sad. Esu was forced to disperse all of them (this is why they speak different languages and don't understand each other). The song Esu sang on that day was: 'We have never heard of Olodumare's death, but that of the dishonest.'"

As we can see by the verse it is a year where our faith will be under siege, as we have seen with the Osun shrine one by one our shrines will try to be erased by other religions, we also have to be aware of dishonest people in our midst, it is a year of change and prosperity also. Baba Aworeni wrote:

"Or are we looking at a Theology of Ifa; which broadcasts the cultural nuances of our religious tradition, as it pertains to the study of the history, a body of knowledge and wisdom with which Olodumare perfected the works of creation. Or as it is categorically defined in the great work of Professor I. Odeyemi in, "What Is Ifa? Or further definition and descriptions and characteristics in the Ounjé Emi from Orunmila Youngsters International.

Ifa is not merely a collection of verses, proverbs, parables and anecdotes. Ifa is God's sacred message to mankind. It is the embodiment of the totality of human existence. It is. As Orunmila (BA) told us in Ejiogbe 1:36, the basis for understanding the beginning and end of all things.

Ifa is coded within 256 Odus or Corpus, each Odu representing an esoteric pigeonhole, itself divisible into 256 sub-holes. Within each of the 256 Odus, there are 1,680 Sacred Verses all presented in Parable – Format. Thus, the body of Ifa consists of 430,080 messages for mankind.

The theology of Ifa is now at the crux of a paradigm shift; which will pit Ifa theological pursuit against the theology of Christianity and Muslim religious ideals and defy us to develop an open dialog amongst the scholarship to give the people a spiritual, ethical, palliative diet in which to see and define the universe and Its Creator/Creatrix.

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Or will the Ifa theological pursuit be defined by standards of what is likened to systemic theology which is: "Systematic theology is a discipline of Christian theology that formulates an orderly, rational, and coherent account of the Christian faith and beliefs. Sub-disciplines are dogmatic, ethics and philosophy of religion. Systematic theology draws on the foundational sacred texts of Christianity, while simultaneously investigating the development of Christian doctrine over the course of history, particularly through philosophy, science and ethics. Inherent to a system of theological thought is that a method is developed, one which can be applied both broadly and particularly.

Ifa Hip Hop or Gangster Ifa a kinder more palatable doctrine with less ethics or rules or everyone doing what they think and not what Olodumare and Ifa wants... Here is the berth that my ex-counterpart said that we had a great difference of theoretical understanding of Ifa/Orisa as if I had never studied for over 40 years this tradition? Again go figure.

Or will our tradition's theology be defined by Wikipedia which are in the background "men who are prejudiced and misogynistic by racial divide, Colorism and Gender bias who leave out the words of Lukumi which reminds us of the Maafa Trans-Atlantic Slave trade and of its Origins in Idoro Mawuse to ones that are culturally bland and indicative of another culture:

Ifá is a religion and system of divination and refers to the verses of the literary corpus known as the Odu Ifá. Orunmila is identified as the Grand Priest, as he is who revealed divinity and prophecy to the world. Babalawo's use either the divining chain known as Opele, or the sacred palm or kola nuts called Ikin, on the wooden divination tray called Opon Ifá.

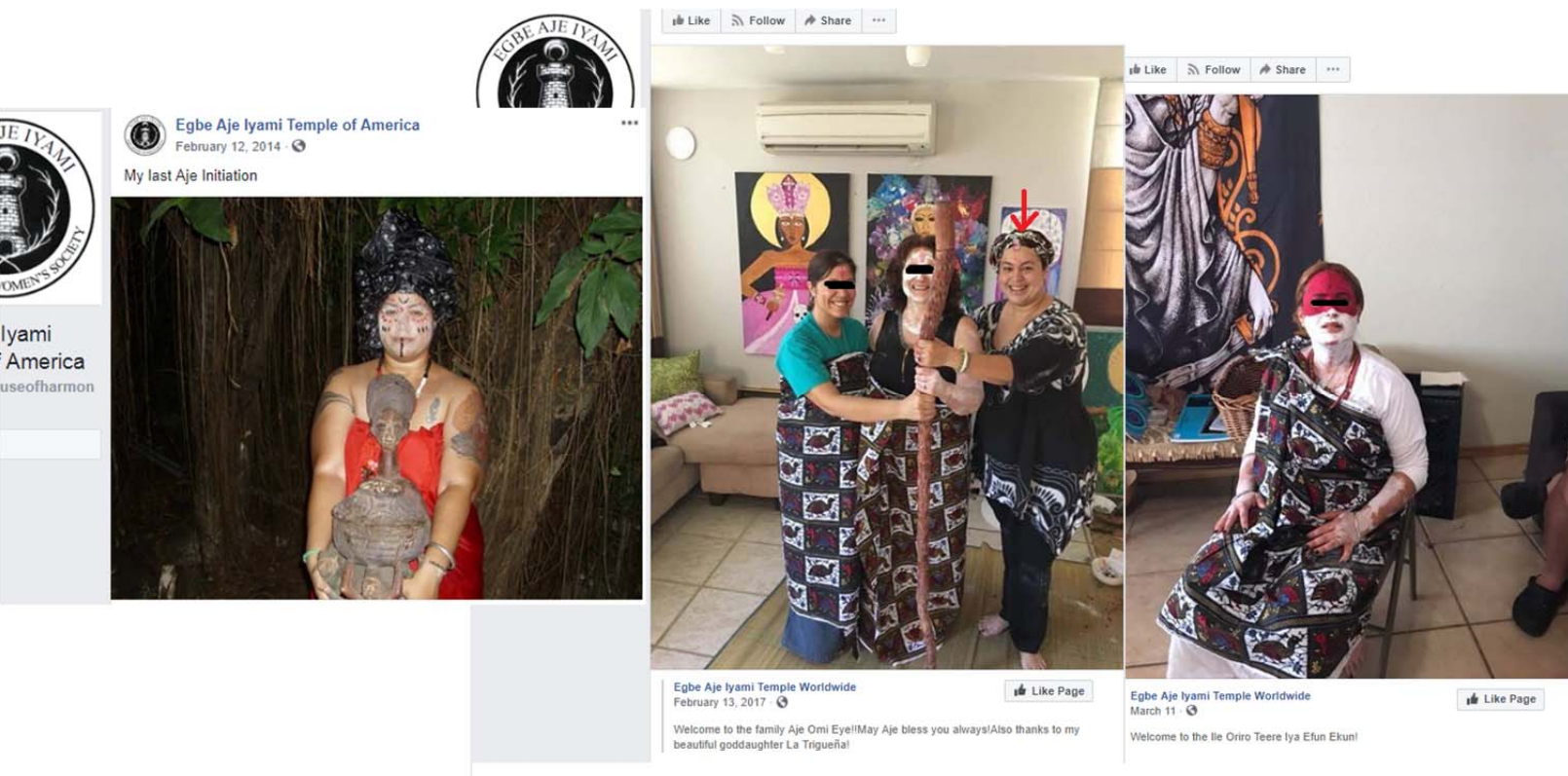
Ifá is practiced throughout the Americas, West Africa, and the Canary Islands, in the form of a complex religious system, and plays a critical role in the traditions of Santería, Candomblé, Palo, Umbanda, Vodou, and other Afro-American faiths, as well as in some traditional African religions.

Here we are raising the issues for the body of Ifa practitioners to see the importance of teaching Ifa/Orisa and for the theologians to get back to the work and job of Teaching, defining and developing a cohesive doctrine which should be passed on for generations to come."

Give 3 cigars to Esu, and also mariwo.

## FAUXYA AND FAUXNITIATES

Why is Mercedes Bonilla Morgana Cordova Reyes violating Africana women and men, disrespecting African culture, making a mockery of African spiritual systems, and breaking federal laws? Money. Her goal is to sell gewgaws, elixirs, talismans, “Orisha” (or I should say *Fauxrisha*) and her real money maker, “initiations.”



The photo on the left is Mercedes Morgana Cordova Reyes painted and posing in a display that could only fool the ignorant. The other photos are some of the women Mercedes has “initiated” into her “egbe.” The person with the red arrow above her head in the middle picture is Mercedes. Mercedes has conducted and publicized many “initiations” since 2014. If each person pays \$1,000 to \$2000—or more depending on gullibility—that is a sizable profit. And all she had to do was paint herself and hold a carving, open a Facebook page, steal, and lie.

When your “priestess” is a fraud, a thief, and a liar, what has she initiated you into? At best, she has ripped you off; at worse you’ve been initiated into an ẹgbẹkẹgbẹ or perhaps an ẹgbẹ-igbé.

Yoruba ontology is rooted in iwà (character) and Mercedes’ actions, methodology, and intentions clearly mark her as aìníwà. She has no character; she has no authentic wisdom, knowledge, or understanding. Because of her void, she steals from those who intrinsically possess what she can never obtain.

Mercedes Morgana Reyes' character is identical to that of the enslavers, the "beasts of no nation,"<sup>1</sup> the colonizers who have inflicted innumerable miseries on the world since they emerged from their caves. These "animal[s] in human skin"<sup>2</sup> will not stop unless they are forced to. They will usurp everything they can and destroy everything they cannot steal. As Ayi Kwei Armah reveals in *Two Thousand Seasons*, that is their "way."<sup>3</sup>

## THE WORKER, THE WORK, AND THE WONDERS

I am thankful that my ancestors gave me divine endowments and tools so that I do not have to connive to thrive. I am grateful for my work ethic, my tenacity, my respect for those who came before me, and my curiosity, for they have led me to and through unimaginable wonders.

My life's work began, in the logical place for a lifework to begin, when I was a child listening to my biological mothers and watching and learning from their Work. The more I learned about our wisdom and powers from my mother, Motherdear, aunts, and great aunts, the more I needed and wanted to learn. That I would eventually travel to the source of Àjẹ and study in Nigeria was not only logical; it was inevitable. However, the ancestors who were pulling me to West Africa were often in a tug-of-war with my elders. The only time I saw my Motherdear cry is when I left for Nigeria. I will never forget her profile, because that is all she would show me. She would not look at me or hug my neck, no matter my encouragement or pleas. Her tears flowed like the Mississippi River down her cheeks. She thought she would never see me again. She could easily have been correct.

Unlike many individuals who travel to Africa, I went with a one-way ticket and a mission: to learn as much as I could about Àjẹ, the source of my and my mothers' powers and identity. As a lifelong Pan-Africanist scholar, I was proud to matriculate as a doctoral student at "Great Ifẹ," also known as Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), which is a mecca of wisdom, culture, and knowledge. Living in Ilé-Ifẹ, the root of Àjẹ and the home of humanity and the Gods, was revelatory.

I had no idea when or if I would return to America; I was focused on the road ahead of me, and I needed that focus because I was to have experiences that were life-altering, life-threatening, and life-enriching—sometimes all at once. When I caught malaria and was so sick I could not walk, "Strongman Chris," my brother from Cameroon, literally carried me to the campus infirmary. The nurse told Chris that because my fever was too high for me to be treated, he had to remove my clothes and pour buckets of ice water over my naked body to bring my temperature down. I cried like a baby, but with the tenderness and resolve of my own mother, Chris bathed me in ice water and saved my life. Months later, my blood seemed to turn into ice in my veins when I learned that George "Afrika" Iwilade, my brother-revolutionary, was killed by cultists who sneaked into his dormitory and murdered him in his bed while he was sleeping. When the Ifẹ–Mòdàkẹkẹ war reignited, I was crouched down listening to bullets pierce and graze our bus as my fellow crouching passengers begged Allah, Èdùmarè, Chineke, Şàngó, Ògún, Jesus, and other Gods to get us out of the market that had become a war zone.



Studying at OAU, “Africa’s Most Beautiful Campus” and Ilé-Ife, the city of 601 Gods, was routinely astonishing, spiritually and culturally. I was privileged to study with some of the deepest minds in the world and the pillars of African culture and knowledge. And the wisdom is deep throughout Nigeria. For example, during a visit to the University of “First and Best” Ibadan, every corner I turned put me in the presence of a wisdom keeper who was delighted to “gist” with me and give me rare books that one cannot find in America. Because I was not in Nigeria for a set amount time and had not come to be initiated and immediately return to America, I found myself welcomed into underground wisdom systems and political movements. But one of the things that humbles and inspires me to no end is the fact that some of my former students are now shining conscious African-rooted professors themselves who are creating a new generation of wisdom keepers and wisdom workers!

Living in Nigeria and earning my Ph.D. there was the most important decision I have made in my life. That decision, rooted in the red clay of Mississippi, gave me the gift of another mother, Chief Oyeronke Igbinola the Ìyálájé of Ifẹ, who opened the doors of sacred wisdom that revealed to me my truest self. She showed me the divinity encoded in my DNA and in the blood of Onímólẹ which flows in my and my daughter’s veins. My Nigerian and Ghanaian mothers and fathers and professors and students are still teaching me. There is not a day that goes by that I don’t sip from the waters of wisdom in which they drenched me.

While living in Nigeria, I travelled and studied throughout Yorubaland. My quest for knowledge also took me to Benin Republic, Ghana, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Togo, and Morocco: Once my Liberian brothers taught me how to cross borders, I was unstoppable! During this time, northern Nigeria was so peaceful that I used to travel to Sokoto to avoid the chaos and *ṣakara* of the southern Nigeria-Benin Republic border. From Sokoto I would travel to Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and back. On one trip from Sokoto to Niamey, I realized I was the only woman on a bus filled with Muslim Hausa-Fulani men. There was never a thought in my or anyone else’s mind that I would be touched at all, unless someone was assisting me with something. I marveled in silent pride at the dignity of these men.

There is tremendous power in being an African in Africa, and I reveled in that power. I am proud of the fact that no one I met anywhere in Africa, including Morocco and later Egypt, ever gazed on me and thought I was an American. I knew that my survival and success hinged on me being who I was: an African indistinguishable from other Africans; an African subject to the same cruelty and kindnesses as all other Africans. As it relates to kindness, the concept of “southern hospitality” does not come from brutal and vicious Caucasian enslavers; it comes from Africans in America who uplifted, aided, and supported one another despite their oppression, humiliation, or chains. I routinely witnessed and was the recipient of the African hospitality that birthed its “southern” counterpart.

The love, complexity, loss, courage, wisdom, consciousness, power, and empowerment that I gained in my life I put in my books. My goal is to craft books that will provide the reader with the tools she/he will need to do what are arguably the most important and most difficult things in this world: liberate one’s self and embrace and manifest one’s inherent divinity.

My books are an extension and crystallization of my lifework and mission; my books also serve as my daughter's inheritance. I have no money to give her; we literally budget every meal to the last penny and the last morsel. However, the lessons in my books can do more for her than any amount of money and serve as the most nourishing soul-food in this world. Given the seriousness of my works to me, my family, and the global African world and given the lifelong effort I have put into them, I will not allow my scholarship to be played with, raped, stolen, or chopped and screwed by anyone for any reason.

I am ever ready to do battle with thieves, liars, con artists, racists, literary rapists, and prevaricators—and these people are many. Mercedes Morgana Bonilla Cordova Reyes is not an anomaly; she is, sadly, the norm.

## TRESPASSES OF THE PAST

After I published *Our Mothers, Our Powers, Our Texts: Manifestations of Àjé in Africana Literature* in 2005, I found that a “priestess” with seventy-leven titles had plagiarized my work and had even redefined herself based on my analyses. She also tried to cleverly reshape my analyses and dress them up as her own for a publication. She encouraged her friend, another “priestess” of the seventy-leven, to follow her suit and rip-off my work. This individual and her cohorts published a plagiarized version of my book.

I was so naïve and open-spirited that when I saw new books being published about Àwọn Ìyá Wa and Àjé I was excited for the authors and was delighted that *Our Mothers* were getting their respect. I did not know that the “respect” was actually due to thieving “priestesses” gang-raping my wisdom and concealing their emptiness with my words and hard work.

What I find most amusing about all of this is that these persons—with vainglorious titles, who bear elaborate names that they struggle to pronounce, and who shout about their “initiations” from every rooftop—all had to stoop and steal from me, Betty Jo's Babygirl.

To further the dissemination of ignorance and con artistry, certain charlatans are trying to create a dichotomy in which they posit that “academicians” (like me) do not have knowledge comparable to that of “initiates” (like Mercedes, I guess). This imaginary bifurcation appears to be the result of some Westerners' feelings of inferiority before and hatred of Africana intellectualism and genius. This fictive dichotomy also furthers fraudsters' economic agendas: “Initiation” has become a huge and hugely profitable *business*, especially among fraudsters. At present, so many “initiations” are occurring and immediately promoted on Facebook—and just as quickly called into question or invalidated—that the conscientious ones among us must question the relevance and true purpose of this practice.

As it relates to me, my goal is to further the liberation of Africana people and the revelation to each of us our inherent divinity. Information about my personal life will not further those objectives. But what is most significant is that I respect and cherish my relationships with my Self and my Mothers far too much to commercialize or commoditize who I am, what I have been made privy to, and what I have eternally been and will eternally be. To put it another way, the

Earth doesn't need a certificate of cosmic acceptance or a celestial megaphone to proclaim its place in the cosmos. *Your* existence provides ample proof of the Earth's truth.

If I were lowdown enough to try to capitalize on the sacred—or if I had nothing sacred to honor and protect—I would also be shouting from rooftops about my “initiation,” throwing my seventy-seven titles in the face of anyone who came near me, and amassing an army of dupes. But that is not what I have ever been or will ever be about. When the square upon which you stand is truth, you don't need lengthy names, mile-long titles, or bling. In fact, it is becoming clear that many people are using ego boosting titles and flashy accessories to cover their emptiness and conceal their wickedness.

Mercedes Morgana Reyes and people like her represent everything that is wrong with Ifá-Òrìṣà today. They are a virulent disease that is killing the culture and perverting the sacred. Ifá-Òrìṣà has become a haven for fraudsters, charlatans, and con artists. Ifá-Òrìṣà is a spiritual system that has been twisted into a capitalist religion through which one can buy titles, initiations, and even “Orisha.” Some people, such as Mercedes Morgana Reyes, don't even bother to journey to the Continent for initiation. They simply create personae with impressive sounding—to the ignorant—titles, post some pictures, and immediately begin charging for “initiations”.

Mercedes Morgana Reyes has conned many individuals, and part of her success is the result of the laziness that leads people to think the most sacred and elemental society in the world has a bizarrely discordant Facebook page; that one can contact the page's racist controller and join a sacred African way of life for a monetary fee; and that posting images of one's self and one's dupes in clownish facepaint confers upon one legitimacy. She has also been successful because of the reverse racism and self-hatred that lead some Africana people, especially some Continental Africans, to believe that the individuals who know the most about Africa and Africana spiritual systems are Caucasians or individuals who have Caucazoid mores, predilections, and/or appearances. Mercedes has also been successful because she and other ignorant individuals think that Àjẹ operates in a manner similar to Ifá, with initiations, beads, signage, and the like: It does not; it never has; and it never will, because it does not need to. Àjẹ is as organic and effortless as the rotations of the Earth . . . there is a reason Àjẹ are also known as Ayé.

## **A DAY FOR THE OWNER**

Many people have been defrauded by Mercedes Morgana Bonilla Cordova Reyes, but there are many who saw through her and called out her treachery. I thank everyone who told the truth to and about this liar. I thank everyone who has given proper attribution to the elders, authors, and artists whose works enriched your wisdom or challenged or angered you. I am grateful to everyone who has read and/or recognized my work, because that is what it is, *work*, and hard work at that.

I am especially grateful to Dr. Funlayo E. Wood a Harvard-educated scholar and true Àbòrìṣà who is the founder of the African and Diasporic Religious Studies Association (ADRSA). Dr. Wood and I were introduced via email and bonded through embrace at a symposium in



Washington D.C. held in honor of the Ọ̀nì of Ifẹ̀'s visit to America in 2016. Funlayo floored me with the dynamism of her truth-spitting speech! She also uplifted me with genuine support and sisterhood and invited me to be a keynote speaker at the ADRSA conference in 2018. I was delighted and honored by Funlayo's graciousness and consideration. But that is her way—not just with me—but with *all* conscious and conscientious people she meets. Dr. Wood is the definition of ọ̀mọ̀lúabí: She stands in the light and illuminates the way for others to join her and shine.

When I told Funlayo that a plagiarist's serial violations and thefts were turning my and my family's lives upside down, she responded with the strength of Ọ̀kẹ̀bàdàn—resolute to stand beside me to fully resolve this issue: That is how **real** warrior-scholar-mothers handle business! Word Life.

Thieves, liars, plagiarists, con artists, Fakebookers, and the like are busily crafting ways to bamboozle, hoodwink, and reap what they have not sown.<sup>4</sup> To combat them, we need more wisdom working warriors like Ìyá Funlayo. We need more honesty in Ifá-Ọ̀rìṣà. We need more courageous truth seekers and wisdom keepers. We need to read more closely and look more deeply. Our future depends on it.

A Nigerian proverb warns that “every day is for the thief . . . but one day is for the owner.” Mercedes Morgana Bonilla Cordova Reyes has enjoyed approximately 1367 days of thievery. With this document, I, the owner of my words, research, hard work, and books, claim my day of retribution.

A luta continua!

**PLEASE NOTE:** *The bulk of the evidence in this essay is my copyrighted intellectual property, whether the excerpts are from my published book(s) or from a plagiarized Facebook page. Other data included in this essay exists in the public domain, is freely accessible, and appears here in accordance with the Fair Use Act. The evidence of Mercedes Bonilla Cordova Morgana Reyes' thefts comes straight from her public Facebook page(s), and until she or Facebook deletes or alters the posts, interested parties can scroll through her timeline and find the exact information I share here and much more. I was able to easily find the various sources she plagiarized by simply selecting some key phrases and doing a Google search. The images can be easily found in a Google image search.*

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<sup>1</sup> Fela Anikulapo Kuti and Egypt 80, “Beasts of No Nation,” *Beasts of No Nation/ODOO* (Fak Ltd., 1989).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ayi Kwei Armah, *Two Thousand Seasons* (London: Heinemann, 1973), 3, 104.

<sup>4</sup> Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, *Matigari* (Trenton: Third World Press, 1998), 18.