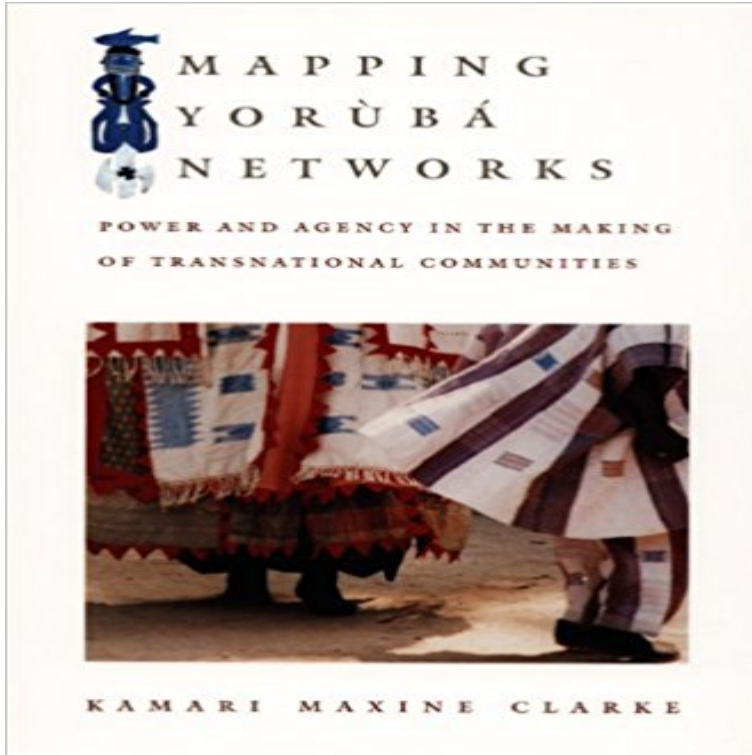


Mapping Yoruba Networks: Power and Agency in the Making of Transnational Communities



Three flags fly in the palace courtyard of Oyotunji African Village. One represents black American emancipation from slavery, one black nationalism, and the third the establishment of an ancient Yoruba Empire in the state of South Carolina. Located sixty-five miles southwest of Charleston, Oyotunji is a Yoruba revivalist community founded in 1970. Mapping Yoruba Networks is an innovative ethnography of Oyotunji and a theoretically sophisticated exploration of how Yoruba orisa voodoo religious practices are reworked as expressions of transnational racial politics. Drawing on several years of multisited fieldwork in the United States and Nigeria, Kamari Maxine Clarke describes Oyotunji in vivid detail the physical space, government, rituals, language, and marriage and kinship practices and explores how ideas of what constitutes the Yoruba past are constructed. She highlights the connections between contemporary Yoruba transatlantic religious networks and the post-1970s institutionalization of roots heritage in American social life. Examining how the development of a deterritorialized network of black cultural nationalists became aligned with a lucrative late-twentieth-century roots heritage market, Clarke explores the dynamics of Oyotunji Villages religious and tourist economy. She discusses how the community generates income through the sale of prophetic divinatory consultations, African market souvenirssuch as cloth, books, candles, and carvingsand fees for community-based tours and dining services. Clarke accompanied Oyotunji villagers to Nigeria, and she describes how these heritage travelers often returned home feeling that despite the separation of their ancestors from Africa as a result of transatlantic slavery, theymore than the Nigerian Yorubaare the true claimants to the ancestral history of the Great Oyo

Empire of the Yoruba people. Mapping Yoruba Networks is a unique look at the political economy of homeland identification and the transnational construction and legitimization of ideas such as authenticity, ancestry, blackness, and tradition.

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