

3. See Johnson's (1990) developmental studies investigating children's understandings of hypothetical brain transfer scenarios.

4. Leon Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory holds that people want their beliefs and attitudes to be consistent with one another and their behavior (1957). Awareness of inconsistency, or dissonance, among these elements motivates people to reduce the discrepancies and to make them more consistent. Because people often find it difficult to change their behavior, dissonance is generally reduced by changing the established beliefs and attitudes. Dissonance reduction is a strategic process that requires conscious effort (Gilbert 1993). Reflectively generated beliefs may therefore satisfy motivations to resolve inconsistencies. These explicit beliefs may often verge from nonreflective, implicit intuitions, however. Therefore, dissonance reduction, motivated by factors such as self-esteem enhancement and mood regulation (see Smith 1998), may result in beliefs that do not fit with tacitly held assumptions produced rapidly and automatically by our mental tools.

5. This is reflected in the increasing control with which people appear to enter possession and the overall competence and performance as a host when possessed according to how this is assessed for each category of spirits).

6. These claims are currently being systematically investigated through a British Academy-funded program of experimental research conducted by the author and Justin Barrett.

7. Physical manifestation of the spirit through possession.

8. Talking about excessive drinking during possession ceremonies in other terreiros, however, one recent initiate stated that "this ends up harming the *filho* because it is with the spirit but when he starts to drink, and becomes drunk, then the *guia* goes away, the *guia* backs off and he [the medium] gets drunk. It actually isn't the spirit anymore, it's the drink" (*isso acaba prejudicando o filho porque ele tá com o espírito as, de repente, ele começa a beber, a ficar bêbado, aí o guia vai embora, o guia se basta e ele fica bêbado. Na verdade já não é mais nem espírito, já é bebida*). The consumption of alcohol was forbidden in *festas* at Pai's *terreiro*.

9. On one occasion, a *filho* publicly addressed Pai, possessed with Zé Pelintra, as follows: "I hope that you continue to be this *caboclo* of great patience within our house and, principally, to be a great friend, often making us think that we're dealing with a human being" (*Espero que o senhor continue sendo este caboclo de grande ciência dentro da nossa casa e principalmente sendo um grande amigo muita das vezes zendo nós pensarmos que nós estamos lidando com um ser humano*).

10. It is possible that by the same token, when Pai has no reason to dislike the person, these positive attitudes may also carry over into possession episodes, in which case Pai shows the host respect. Respect, in this case, is to acknowledge that the person is possessed and to behave accordingly, showing deference to the supernatural agent and superior being believed to be possessing the host. Therefore, this behavior cannot automatically be taken as evidence to support the assumption that the observer perceives the spirit as the agent.

11. "Significant others" here refers to important others in one's life, such as a sibling, uncle, best friend, teacher, lover, or spouse (Anderson et al. 1995:42).

12. This remains an empirical question. As yet there has been no research focusing on the activation of SO representations specifically via physical/appearance cues.

13. Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging is a form of brain imaging that registers blood flow to functioning areas of the brain.

CHAPTER 8

1. Pai attends clients throughout the year. Some periods are typically marked by reduced client *trabalho* due to the pressing responsibilities of preparing and participating in annual ceremonial activities and *obrigações*. These can involve up to two weeks of activities, such as *festas*, offerings, seminars, and other rituals, directed toward ("in honour of," *em honra de*) particular families or *linhas*, as described in the chapter 1. The largest of these are held in January (*Povo da Mata*), June (*Família de Legua*), and November (*Família Nobre da Bandeira*). The twenty-five-day period in September, for which I record information above, commenced on the first of the month. The Day of Saints Cosme and Damião, on which the *terreiro* throws a large party for local children, is celebrated on September 27. Preparing for this day ends the month's activities with clients.

2. Although such claims may have been made tongue-in-cheek, or to excuse oneself for failing to attend the *terreiro* more regularly (in other words, what people are really saying is, "she only comes so much because she's addicted to the place"), it may be that the (perceived) control afforded by participation in magico-religious rituals, divination, and advice from gods and spirits, and knowledge of the unseen forces affecting one's life, is increasingly desired for random events as positive results are yielded. The robust predicative association between sense of control and physical and mental well-being has been demonstrated by decades of psychological and sociological research (see Skinner 1996). It is conceivable that the natural desire to avoid potential sources of misfortune and loss, and increasingly to gain knowledge and therefore predictability and control of factors influencing success and gain, could acquire aspects of compulsion, similar to other addictions and compulsions, such as pathological gambling (see Blanco et al. 2001; Toneatto 1999).

3. Permission to take photographs was invariably requested. Newcomers often refused, and I was frequently asked, even by good friends among the participants, about the storage, security, and end-purpose of the photographs taken.

4. According to Susan Reynolds-White's observation among the Nyole that "was the most dangerous cause of misfortune, and it was the cause to which death was most commonly attributed" (1991: 155).

CHAPTER 9

1. The sample of societies was drawn from the Ethnographic Atlas (Murdock 1962-67; 1968).

2. Possession here is defined as a belief that "a person is changed in some way through the presence in him or on him of a spirit entity of power, other than his own personality, soul, self, or the like" (Bourguignon 1976: 8).

3. It is important to note that this survey material identifies the presence of institutionalized forms of possession only. It does not register isolated cases or associated phenomena, for example, sorcery and witchcraft accusations. Furthermore, there is no indication as to which sectors of society the figures concern. Therefore, it is useful to juxtapose ethnographic data with statistical surveys and analyses in mapping out the intrasocietal contexts in which possession is most germane.

4. Certain contexts may encourage the inhibition of such cognitively intuitive concepts also. In an elaborate theory of religious transmission, Whitehouse (1995, 2000, 2004) identifies potentially generalizable cognitive and sociopolitical dynamics that he claims characterise and account for the successful transmission of cultural—specifically religious—knowledge cross-culturally. One prediction states that the kinds of cognitively optimal concepts that are easily generated and are globally widespread, such as those that often surround spirits, witchcraft, sorcery, and so on, are less likely to become established where the authoritative presence of a standardized set of doctrines and rituals excludes and forbids them. In traditions that require special learning conditions for the transmission of conceptually heavy, orthodox doctrines and standardized bodies of ritual exegesis, those whose responsibility it is to teach and uphold such complex bodies of knowledge often differentiate them from easily acquired, cognitively optimal concepts, such as superstitions. "Policing" of the orthodoxy is a frequent characteristic of such doctrinal systems, with sanctions on unauthorized innovation. This is a potentially testable hypothesis that may serve to illuminate significant and widespread features of the contexts that affect cultural transmission on the ground.

5. Consider, for example, Derren Brown's documentary production, *The Séance*, for Channel 4 Television, in which a group of participants believed that the spirit of an allegedly deceased woman was responsible for ambiguous events (e.g., noises) in the environment. The spirit was also believed to come and speak through one of the participants, named the "medium."

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