

(Eades, 1980, citing Peel, 1967: 118). However, according to Lloyd, most people continue to participate in the annual festivals of their towns (1978: 344).

The new religions in Yorubaland share organizational similarities with the old cults, and Yoruba rites of passage have been adapted to fit the new beliefs. At the level of doctrine, both Christianity and Islam emphasize elements which are important in traditional religion, and there are similarities in the ways in which members of all three religious groups view the supernatural and their relations with it. In short, the faith of traditional Yoruba has not died out in West Africa but has undergone considerable change since the fall of the Empire (Eades, 1980: 118).

Nonetheless, the following discussion is written in the ethnographic present. Clearly, I do not wish to depict traditional Yoruba religion as static or monolithic. The preceding account of variety among West African Yoruba myths should guard against such misinterpretation. My aim is to demonstrate the historical role of Yoruba faith as a state religion and as a variously popular and official mode of apprehending the social order. I intend ultimately to contrast this with the developments of Yoruba religion in Bahia, whose historical and social contexts were quite different.

The Structure of Yoruba Kinship

In the orthodox political theory of the Yoruba state, the nation is organized like a great system of segmentary lineages governed by the descendents of royal founders and progenitors of the greater segmentary patrilineages. Segmentation into smaller and smaller sovereign and corporate groups divides the Empire into kingdoms, kingdoms into towns, towns into ìdílé (major patrilineages), ìdílé into ìsòkó (sublineages, often occupying a single compound), ìsòkó into domestic families, and domestic families into omọiyá, or "little" origun (elementary families). (See Forde 1951: 10-13; Bascom, 1944: 9-20.) Terms vary according to region. The consensus among anthropological observers supports the idea that Yoruba kinship ideology, like the delegation of higher political authority, emphasizes agnatic principles. However, it manifests cognatic elements that cannot be ignored.

As we shall discover, the agnatic principles dominant in the delineation of kinship and authority relations are paralleled in the transmission and worship of the òrìṣà. So, too, are the significant cognatic principles of lineage segmentation. The structures of

spiritual kinship, defined by relations to the òrìṣà, extend beyond the agnatic groups and beyond all kin aggregations of a biological nature in a way that reflects not only the dominant pyramidal form of kinship and polity but also the overlapping tendencies in Yoruba group affiliation, allegiance, and responsibility.

This is not to say that the cult groups are simple morphological overlays of a socio-political order. Their survival in the New World demonstrates that they are more than that. These are strongly spiritual bodies with an importance all their own. Yet we are here concerned about a particular aspect of worshipping groups -- that is, the variety of ways in which they symbolize and give form to flexible systems of political representation and authority, of group solidarity and the interpenetration of loyalties. It should be made clear that the òrìṣà-worshipping groups and the kin-based and political groups to which they correspond do not represent the full range of associations which bind together the highly complex societies of the Yoruba. However, as in Brazil, they circumscribe and give identity to a range of operational groups highly significant in Yoruba people's lives.

The Ìdílé, or Lineage

Kinship terminology follows the Hawaiian model. Terms used in addressing and referring to relatives stress generation differences and relative seniority among kinsmen of the same generation. They express no distinction between relatives through the father and those through the mother or between unilineal and non-unilineal cognates (Eades, 1980: 51; Forde, 1951: 13). Thus, the terminology does not distinguish a member of one's major patrilineage from other kin.

Nonetheless, significant relationships bind together the ìdílé (lit., "stem, or root, of the house") and distinguish one ìdílé from another. Yoruba terminology relating to lineage, lineage segments, households, families, and ego-centered kin groups are vague (Eades, 1980: 51). However, the standard literature has discerned what can be called by this name as one of the strongest regularities of Yoruba social organization. It represents an exogamous patrilocal unit, descended from an ancestor known as its oríṣun. Its membership may occupy one compound or a set of related compounds. These may be scattered through different parts of the town, though they are localized within one town (Lloyd, 1978: 330; Bascom, 1944: 15-16; pace Forde, 1951: 12). Forde reported that 50 to 500 people traditionally claim

membership in an ìdílé, while Lloyd in 1965 observed that lineages in Oke Ewi sometimes number over 1000, including wives and children. In 1944, the ìdílé of the Oni of Ifè included something near 5000 persons (Forde, 1951: 12; Bascom, 1944: 10, 14).

The corporate identity of the ìdílé is evident in several ways. First, the members do tend to live near one another. The lineage myths often tell how the oríṣun (founder) -- who is usually placed in the current and foreshortened genealogies four or more generations above living elders -- left his home town. A dispute over a title is often cited, the founder being the loser. Arriving in a town, the immigrant and his group of kin are welcomed by the king and, the myths say, are granted land in the town for their compound and outside the town for their farms. The king bestows a chieftaincy title on the oríṣun. In their new home the immigrants continued to worship an òrìṣà from their original home, an òrìṣà thus peculiar (in the new home) to the lineage. Except for the royal ìdílé, all ìdílé in a town tend to be equal in status, although those with older chieftaincy titles carry greater prestige. The myths thus serve as a charter for each lineage, defining its position in the town (Lloyd, 1978: 330;

1956: 22). Of all kinship groupings, the ìdílé is considered the most important (Bascom, 1944: 14).

Lineage members can often be identified by facial marks, and the royal lineage has exclusive body markings. Each lineage has a pair of names, one for each sex, by which its members are addressed in the street. Members share common food tabus, the myths often ascribing this tabu to the worship of a particular òrìṣà (Lloyd, 1978: 330-31).

The ìdílé is the group within which descent is traced not only for succession to chiefly and other offices but for control of land and the inheritance of property. Just as a man's self-acquired land and house become the corporate property of his sons and all subsequent agnatic descendants, so are the rights in land and property held to have been granted to the oríṣun regarded as the corporate property of all lineage members.

Representatives of the lineage segments meet regularly to discuss common interests, often in the home of the eldest male member, the lineage head. In Ado, members speak in ascending order of age, the lineage head announcing the conclusions of the group. The committee settles disputes among competing groups within the lineage and endeavors to preserve the rights of the lineage from encroachment by others.

All lineage members have, by virtue of their birth, a general right to as much farm and residential land as they need and a specific right to undisturbed occupation of that land already allocated to them. The lineage meeting allocates land to members, and, today, often sells it to nonmembers. Certain usufructary rights, as to the oil palms, for example, are often reserved to the lineage head, who is therefore burdened with special financial obligations to the kin group. In matters of allocation the lineage head can act only with the authority of the whole lineage; unanimity is presumed in all decisions. The meeting not only settles internal disputes but takes legal action when members of other lineages holding adjacent land trespass or make unrightful claims (Lloyd, 1978: 32-3).

The ìdílé is also an electoral body whose vote selects among candidates for its hereditary chieftaincy title. In some Yoruba towns, the larger lineages hold titles ranking above those of smaller lineages, while in other towns each lineage holds a major title, the minor titles being distributed equitably among the lineages. The hereditary titles should be held by a member of each segment in turn. Although the son of a previous chief is often a prominent candidate through his association with his father during the latter's period of office, the title is open to all ìdílé

members and, failing the appearance of a more suitable candidate, to the sons of women of the lineage. The oba and the other chiefs may interfere in this election only to ensure that the new chief is the unanimous choice of the lineage. The oba accepts the victorious candidate and, with considerable ceremony, bestows the title upon him. Some titles are reserved for the royal ìdílé (Lloyd, 1978: 339-40).

#### Sub-Groups of the ìdílé

With the growth of an ìdílé, Yoruba people recognize segmentations at successive levels corresponding to ancestors of succeeding generations. An ìsòkó is a sub-lineage descending from a patrilineal ancestor three or four generations back. The ìsòkó is often the group identified residentially and politically with the agbo-ilé, or compound. Where the ìdílé is small, it and the largest recognized ìsòkó are coterminous. An origun (occasionally called omọ̀iyá) is a segment whose members are descended from a single wife of a patrilineal ancestor. The smallest origun is one generation in depth and consists of the children of one mother by a man of the lineage. When the ìdílé grows large and proves to be unwieldy, then succession and inheritance pass within these smaller units. Yet these are still identified



as segments of a wider ìdílé (Forde, 1951: 12).

As we have noted, the ìdílé may spread over several closely related agbo-ilé situated throughout the town. If the agbo-ilé of a lineage founder prospers and its members grow in number, the land allotted to it may eventually be completely occupied by houses. If this continues to the point where the compound becomes overcrowded and friction occurs among co-residents, a number of men may move to the compounds of their mothers or their wives. However, this is but a temporary measure; the solution is usually to establish another compound. When one of the sons obtains enough capital, he may do so with the help of any other men of the natal compound wishing to join him. Though all future members share the work and expense of construction, the one who takes the initiative is regarded as its founder and gives his name to the compound.

When the new compound has been completed its members may share it with the founder or continue to live for a time in the old compound or with either their wives or mothers, as the case may be. However, they may erect their own houses as soon as they are able, enlisting the financial aid of their brothers. The process of residential dispersion of the ìdílé may continue indefi-

nitely within the town (Bascom, 1944: 14). However, according to Bascom, if an individual establishes a new agbó-ilé in another town, he apparently establishes a new ìdílé, because though his relationship to the parent group is recognized, the two ìdílé function now as separate units (Ibid.: 16; Lloyd, 1978: 330).

While Bascom (1944, 1969), Lloyd (1952, 1956, 1978), and Forde (1951) have stressed the political and economic centrality of the ìdílé (major patrilineage), several authors feel that co-residence, rather than genealogy, may be crucial in understanding some aspects of Yoruba organization. Johnson (1921), Bender (1972), and Eades (1980), for example, have emphasized the role of the agbo-ilé (compound) in economic cooperation. The agbo-ilé is a strongly corporate group, whose degree of subordination to ìdílé government varies. Moreover, Bender observes that households exist by virtue of living together and are best seen not as localized families but as groups of co-residents, some of whom are related (Eades, 1980: 51).

However, the Yoruba regard the agbo-ilé as a subset of the ìdílé for ideological reasons relating to administration and regulation of marriage. Residence in marriage is virilocal; therefore the residential group

tends to consist of agnatically related males living together, along with their wives and children. Where groups of people who are unrelated happen to live together in the same compound, their joint social life is organized in a way commensurate with assumptions of their relatedness. This is achieved through the extension of patterns of authority, seniority, kinship terminology, and exogamic restrictions which are found in kinship units (Ibid.: 59). According to Forde (1951: 12) and Lloyd (1978: 330), the compound is usually understood to belong to a particular ìdílé, and its incorporation into higher levels of kinship and state organization reflects that status. Kinship, "fictive" and "real," is the ideology by which agbo-ilé (compounds) are integrated politically and economically into ìdílé (major patri-lineages) and by which agbo-ilé themselves express their unity.

The ìdílé is a dispersed subset of a town populace, while the ìsòkó (sublineages) form the central part of individual agbo-ilé. Such compounds include most of the following: an old man and his sons, his younger brothers and their sons, his father's younger brother's sons, together with the wives and children of all these. The old man has moral and political authority over the

group, which may include persons ranging over two to five generations, and performs rituals on behalf of the group. This group of patrilineally related families is usually not a unit of production or consumption. Its significance is residential, ritual, and political. Its head administrator represents the group in the lineage meeting (Forde, 1951: 10; Bascom, 1944: 12-14).

The next smallest social unit is the domestic family occupying part of a compound. It usually consists of a man, his wife or wives, and his unmarried children, along with any other persons -- such as his mother, younger brother, slaves, or pawns -- who may form a basic part of the economic unit under his control. The only Yoruba term describing this unit is ilé té mi (lit., "house that of mine"). It consists of one or several elementary families sharing a male parent and can vary from two to nearly 40 persons. Its senior male member is recognized as the administrative head, delegating responsibilities, judging cases, and distributing certain goods among wives and their children. He is called bǎlé or bàbá ilé, meaning "father of the house" (Forde, 1951: 10).

Upon his death, sons inherit the bǎlé's self-acquired land and belongings, while the junior brothers of the bǎlé inherit the properties he had inherited from

their father. The bālẹ́'s eldest son becomes head of this new lineage segment -- the issue of the deceased. A junior brother takes the place of the deceased in the next ascending segment, acting as the male parent of the deceased's children.

That property which passes to the children is divided into as many equal parts as the man had wives with children. <sup>who is not a member of the idílẹ́,</sup> Nothing may pass to the wife though mothers are vigilant on their children's behalf. Members of the little origun, children of the same mother, share equally regardless of their number, and children of a concubine receive as if their mother were a wife. Some property can be divided equally; other types, such as the house, are held corporately, and any hereditary chieftaincy titles bestowed on the deceased bālẹ́ devolve to one son from each origun in turn (Lloyd, 1978: 331; Bascom, 1944: 20).

A wife and her children can, with good reason, be considered a social unit in themselves, a subdivision of the ilẹ́ tẹ́ mí (the domestic family). The origun is the administrative domain of the mother pending her children's majority. According to LeVine, a Yoruba mother is directly responsible to her husband for the proper functioning of the origun: she may often

receive punishment for significant improprieties on the part of her children. Within the father-centered domestic unit (ilé té mi), wives are ranked according to seniority (LeVine lecture, Harvard University, 18 February 1982) just as brothers living in the compound are ranked according to birth order, and the eldest head of lineage segments presides over the decisions and activities of the lineage.

#### The Yoruba Town

The standard model for the Yoruba town is divided into a number of corporate patrilineages -- land-holding, title-holding, exogamous units which sometimes practice specialized occupations. The model is generally correct, except that in some southern Yoruba towns, like Ijebu and Ondo, the rights that are elsewhere held rigidly within the male line are more widely dispersed. Here, ìdílé are still defined with reference to a male founding ancestor, but, according to Lloyd (1952), membership is open to his descendants through either male or female lines. Thus membership is not exclusive, and an individual can maintain membership in more than one group simultaneously.

In Ijẹ̀bú cognatic descent groups are also land-holding units, and a person can obtain land through membership in several different groups. In Ondo, also according to Lloyd, land is vested in the ruler on behalf of the community rather than in descent groups, and any citizen of the kingdom can farm anywhere within it. In both kingdoms the cognatic system has a strong agnatic bias, both in residence, and, in the case of Ijebu, in land tenure. It has been argued, on the contrary, that the people of Ondo have both a patrilineal ideology and agnatic descent groups. Bender (1970) reveals that although Ondo chiefs claim ownership of the land, the people in fact vest land ownership in strictly agnatic groups and that a man is normally entitled to farm only that land belonging to his father's descent group.

Though debate has centered on Ondo and Ijebu, it is evident that cognatic principles are relevant within the Yoruba's agnatically based transmission of jural statuses and constitution of corporate groups. Throughout Yorubaland, groups of siblings with the same father but different mothers usually live together in the father's compound, but they tend to separate when additional space is required. A dominant focus of segmentation is the origun, the issue of one wife of a

lineage or sub-lineage founder, for, as we have observed, each origun inherits property equally from the bālé (father of the house). (Eades, 1980: 48-51.) Though competition exists also within the origun, children of the same mother are expected to cooperate closely and not to divide property rigidly among themselves. The same principle prevails at the very apex of the lineage segmentation, a female principle defining some major segments of the group (Lloyd, 1978: 331-32). However, the segmentation of the polygynous family is overtly not repeated in each ascending generation, for there is no division of property at these levels.

#### Conclusions Concerning Yoruba Kinship

This brief analysis of Yoruba kinship yields a few important concepts. One is the hegemony of the lineage over a series of progressively lower orders of segmentation, each with its own sphere of authority and control over certain resources. As the generational order of the group becomes smaller from lineage to elementary family, its members share a more particular set of interests. Each lineage and most segments are defined, like the nation and the kingdom, with reference



to a set of male ancestors. The ancientness of each of these ancestors corresponds naturally to the magnitude of the corporate group or sub-group which they define. Male ancestors are central in the process of political and social segmentation which moves from the nation and the Empire into the smaller and smaller microcosms of the town, the lineage and the compound. However, segmentation within the lineage makes reference to female principals as well. It is nonetheless accurate to understand the segmentation of this group into isokó (sub-lineages), agbó-ilé (compounds), ilé té mi (husband, wives, children), and various levels of origun (issue of one wife of an ìdílé member) as an extension of the same segmentary structural principles of Yoruba natural and supernatural kinship.

Owing partly to the legacy of Radcliffe-Brown, the traditional anthropological literature on the Yoruba and other African peoples has drawn a radical separation between kinship and politics. However, this distorts the realities of the traditional Yoruba state. Political institutions extend and modify the kinship-authority patterns of Yoruba family life. Organized on the concept of Èbí, Yoruba political theorists project the state as a replica of the family (Davidson, 1969: 227). Thus, kingdoms are kin groups writ large, circumscribing kinship segments of descending order.

The Yoruba ideology of polity and kinship presupposes a group of spiritual beings, primordial inhabitants of the Earth and ancestors to living people. Elaborations on their familial relations to each other define contemporary relations among macrocosms and microcosms of the pyramidal socio-political order. These mythic social charters are at once the foundation and emanation of sociological patterns.

The simplest model of Yoruba kinship and statecraft might depict microcosm and macrocosm as converging pyramids of agnatic genealogy within a great pyramid converging ultimately upon Ọlórún himself. This image is consonant with the entire cycle of political origin myths detailing the descent of the òrìṣà and the founder-fathers of the Yoruba kingdoms. The picture is embellished by the horizontal division of labor among the òrìṣà as within the state bureaucracies, the trades, and among men and women of the agbó-ilé (compound).

We must incorporate into our understanding the fact that the pyramidal lines of social responsibility and kinship cross each other whenever women marry into and out of the agnatic group and whenever a lineage-founder and his family move from one community to another, both of which happen regularly. When Yoruba kingships, as the kingship of Benin, establish them-

selves over peoples who were not Yoruba, there is an even higher-level crossover. The patterns of òrìṣà-worship reflect these significant qualities of the Yoruba socio-political systems. At each level of socio-political segmentation, as we have demonstrated in the case of Yoruba biological kinship, a particular and more specific concatenation of lines of responsibility and authority intersect. The same phenomenon will be demonstrated for the lines of spiritual authority and responsibility intersecting within the social pyramid.

#### The Worship of the Òrìṣà and Its Transmission: Yorubaland

Bascom reports that when the Yoruba layman is asked, "What is an òrìṣà?" the usual reply is: "An òrìṣà is someone who came from heaven," "An òrìṣà is someone who turned to stone, or disappeared underground," or some similarly vague answer. Although these responses allude to the mythical justifications for the worship of the divinities, they shed little light for the uneducated to see the nature of the òrìṣà (1944: 21). However, Yoruba religious specialists have rendered a more complete body of theological explanation.

The Yoruba believe in many divinities, variously called ẹbọra, ẹbura, and imolé but generally known in

the non-African literature as "òrìṣà." I will continue this non-African tradition for the sake of simplicity. The full number of òrìṣà has never been recorded. Some say there are 400 or 401, others that there are 600 or 601, and some even more; but these numbers appear to be figurative. Some òrìṣà are worshipped throughout Yorubaland and have their counterparts among neighboring peoples; some are fairly widely known; and others are only locally significant (Bascom, 1969: 77; Lloyd, 1978: 343).

Yoruba theologians say that an òrìṣà is a person who lived in the World when it was first created and from whom present-day people are descended. When the òrìṣà disappeared or "turned to stone," their children began to sacrifice to them and to continue whatever ceremonies they themselves had performed when they lived in the World. This worship was passed from one generation to the next, and today an individual considers the òrìṣà whom he worships to be an ancestor from whom he has descended.

It is accepted by all groups of Yoruba people, and apparently in a modified form in Benin and Dahomey as well, that the act of creation was performed at Ifè

by the emissary of Ọlórún, as we revealed in the preceding chapter. The worldly lives of the òrìṣà during this primordial time are conceived as much the same as those of present-day humans: the òrìṣà fought among themselves, traded, raided for slaves, took concubines, made sacrifices, and consulted diviners when they wished to bear children. In the mythology they seem superhuman only in that they came from the Sky, that they turned to stone or disappeared into the ground, and that some of their magic was more powerful than any known by people today (Bascom, 1944: 21-22).

An individual normally worships the òrìṣà of his father, and many worship their mother's divinities as well. Many òrìṣà are identified with a particular ìdílé, in which case all members, male and female, are worshippers by virtue of birth into it. In fact, Lloyd claims that the cults of most òrìṣà are held by individual ìdílé, whose members are especially important participants in the annual festivals for the spiritual benefit of the whole town (Lloyd, 1978: 346).

Children who serve the òrìṣà of their parent are motivated to a certain extent by their affection and respect for that parent. There is no conflict between the parents over the allegiance of their children since an

individual may worship several òrìṣà simultaneously (Bascom 1944: 23-4). After marriage women return home for the annual festival of their own òrìṣà, but they assist in the performance of the festival of their husband's (Bascom, 1969: 77; Lloyd, 1978: 346).

Under unusual circumstances, as grave misfortune, economic losses, or special dreams, a person might undertake the worship of a new divinity. For example, if a woman remains childless in spite of prayers and sacrifices to her husband's and her own òrìṣà, she may seek the help of another òrìṣà. Through divination at her husband's or her own shrine, or by consulting the babaláwo (diviner), she may be directed to a particular òrìṣà or she may choose one because of its reputation for giving children. If she bears a child within a year, he belongs to the òrìṣà who "gave" him to her, and the child is brought up as its worshipper (Bascom, 1969: 77; 1944: 23-4).

Other children are recognized as "belonging" to certain òrìṣà by virtue of certain circumstances of their birth. For example, a child in Ifè born with a prominent tuft of hair on his head must worship Ṣàngó. Such children are aided in their worship by their

mothers, who accompany them to the priests until they are old enough to go by themselves (Bascom, 1944: 24).

However, priests and laymen agree that "Ifá (the god of fate and divination) would never tell a person to worship an òrìṣà which was not already in the family" (Bascom, 1944: 24). When unusual circumstances demand the worship of a divinity that does not correspond to any divinity currently worshipped by known lineal relatives, it is assumed that the prescribed òrìṣà was at one unremembered time worshipped by an ancestor. Priests and laymen consistently assert that all members of an ìdílé, or of a compound, worship the same òrìṣà. And it is true, according to Bascom, that members of the same ìdílé usually share in the worship of the same òrìṣà. Moreover, members of one ìdílé may not only insist that an òrìṣà properly "belongs" to them but that the priests be chosen from their number (Bascom, 1944: 45). In Òyó, the highest and, in most instances, all the titled priestly offices in a cult are vested in certain ìdílé (Morton-Williams, 1964: 25).

So, the composition of the òrìṣà cult groups can be accounted for entirely in terms of two patterns: "inheritance" and "calling." Of these, the former is clearly the more important in Yorubaland. The constant

insistence of priests and laymen that the transmission of the òrìṣà follows kinship lines can be taken as evidence of the predominance of cases in which it is true. This insistence, furthermore, reflects the importance to the worshipper of serving the divinities of his family. Bascom claims that òrìṣà follow the bilateral pattern of descent which defines the exogamous group (1944: 42-3).

However, if every individual carried on the worship of the divinities of both his father and mother, continuing intermarriage alone would necessitate eventually worshipping every òrìṣà. This situation, though theoretically possible, never nears realization. That even the most devout are content to serve five or six òrìṣà indicates that òrìṣà are continually being abandoned. Omitting the factor of "calling" under unusual circumstances, the selection of òrìṣà to be worshipped reflects the patrilineal emphasis of Yoruba kinship, the affection felt toward each parent, and the relative importance of the òrìṣà to the parents. As the patrilineal family name and the social unity of the ìdílé make it easier to keep track of patrilineal ancestors, so do they facilitate remembering the group of òrìṣà these ancestors worshipped. This, combined with the stress on the worship of the father's òrìṣà, yields the result that the cult group in most cases more closely approximates



the agnatic lineage than it does the bilateral exogamous group, but it goes beyond both (Bascom, 1944: 44).

The relation between the ìdílé and the òrìṣà-worshipping group is variable. In some cases the lineage seems to be the basis of a group of worshippers, but other òrìṣà cult groups include nearly all the inhabitants of a ward or of an entire town, while still others are served only by isolated individuals who have been told to do so by a babaláwo, or diviner. Members of different ìdílé may intermarry even when they claim descent from the same òrìṣà (Forde, 1951: 29). Persons of different kindreds, towns, or kingdoms and who are born to the same òrìṣà seem to possess no particular social obligations to one another.

However, for the following òrìṣà worshipped in Òyó, the preponderant majority of one, or in some cases two different ìdílé, are worshippers so that the ìdílé forms the nucleus of the worshipping group: Èḽẹfọ̀n, Èḽẹsijẹ, Érinmì, Èṣìdale, Ijá, Lájamìsan, Mọ̀rẹ̀mì, Qbalufọ̀n, Qbàmeri, Qbaṣin, Odùduà, Ògún, Ojumu, Ókun, Olóòkun, Ômtoto, Qránmiyan, Qrẹ, Òrìṣà Àlase (Olúorgbo), Òrìṣà Ijugbe (Òrìṣà Tẹko), Òrìṣà Ikerè, Òrìṣà-nlá (Qbàtálá), Qsangangan Qbàmákín, and Qṣun.

Nonetheless, the worship of an òrìṣà spreads by means of intermarriage and calling, so that the cult is never an exclusive group (Bascom, 1944: 44).

In the case of Èṣù, Ṣòpọ̀nà, and the Ọ̀yọ́ divinities, there is no single ìdílẹ̀ in the Empire that can be regarded as the basis of the cult group. The counterparts of Ọ̀gún (god of war and iron) and Ṣàngó (of thunder and lighting) can be found all over Yorubaland (Ibid: 38, 44). However, òrìṣà cult groups that circumscribe numerous ìdílẹ̀ tend to be localized in particular towns and kingdoms. For example, Oṣun is the national goddess of Ọ̀ṣogbo, Abẹ̀òkùta is the center of Yemọ̀ja worship, and Ifẹ̀ is devoted to Ọ̀bàtálá. Ọ̀yọ́ is known for Ṣàngó -- whose diffusion, like that of the other Ọ̀yọ́ divinities, probably resulted from the imperial hegemony of the Ọ̀yọ́ kingship (see Abimbola, 1976: 627; Morton-Williams, 1964: 259). The reasons for the connection of these two phenomena should now be at least partly evident. The general correspondence of the hierarchy of cult groups to the political realities of Yorubaland becomes quite striking when we recall that Ṣàngó is thought to have been one of the early Aláàfin of Ọ̀yọ́.

The divinities representing the imperial dynasty of the Aláàfin are worshipped throughout the Empire, while citizens of each subordinate kingdom simultaneously maintain the worship of their common divinity or divinities. Particular ìdílé are likewise the worshippers of a common òrìṣà, eligibility for whose priesthood and sometimes simple membership in whose cult are defining characteristics in this agnatic group. Ìdílé segments of various orders are often distinguished by the worship of an additional òrìṣà which it alone inherited from a common female ascendent who passed on the orisa of her own patrilineage, or by the worship of a common ascendent of either sex who was "called" to the worship of an òrìṣà previously unknown in the ìdílé.

A further complication in the relation of òrìṣà-transmission to membership in socio-political groups is expressed in the town myths, which follow a common pattern in spite of their variance in detail. They are highly similar in form to myths about the founding of the various ìdílé. They tell how the oba of the town was a titled prince or chief in the court of Odùduà at Ifè and that when the capital city became too full, or when Odùduà became old, he sent his children to found kingdoms of their own (Lloyd, 1956: 23). Consistency

with the numbers stated in the orthodox origin myths, however, would suggest that many of these oba derived their crowns only indirectly, that is, through the sanction or defiance of rulers whose crowns truly derived from Ifè. Yet, their authority is understood and justified, at least within their realms, in terms of an amended set of myths.

Conquest is rarely mentioned. Royal myths often fail to acknowledge that the site was inhabited before the arrival of the oba. The hill spirits and divinities which guard the safety and prosperity of the Yoruba town are usually served by the descendants of its founder; the oba must appear as such a descendent and thus appear responsible for the wellbeing of his realm. Lloyd reports that oba who are thought to have gained power over a town and its vassals by conquest and who are not considered responsible for the town òrìṣà appear to have been less secure than others in the past century. Subordinate towns usually retain their myths and divinities but any attempt to assert their worship over that of all the òrìṣà from whom the oba claims descent, and through whom the oba claims the right to rule, would threaten the integrity of the kingdom. Such religious assertion was met in the past with raiding and possible destruction of the vassal town (Lloyd, 1956: 23-5).

Likewise, the myths and divinities of immigrant lineages which settled later in the realm of the oba are not incorporated into the official state church (Lloyd, 1956: 23-5). Yet as the immigrant ìdílé marries into local lineages, it naturally incorporates the local divinities, and, to a lesser extent, its divinities come to be worshipped by other ìdílé. The royal ìdílé incorporates the òrìṣà of those whom it rules as the oba and his offspring take wives from subordinate groups. However, devotion to the òrìṣà defining the origin of the agnatic royal line are most likely to remain central and to diffuse among subject populations.

The òrìṣà cult groups do not correspond exactly to the sovereign and corporate groups and organizations of Yoruba people. They do not duplicate the formal hierarchy of authority and responsibility delineating the state and constituent kin groupings. However, variance from these formal structures in the system of òrìṣà-worship usually represents in a recognizably orderly fashion the interpenetration of the hierarchies and loyalties that bind the citizens of one kingdom to the kingship of a dominating metropole or empire, of an ìdílé in one town to the parent ìdílé and to the town

from which the orişun (founder) migrated, of a wife to her natal îdîlé, and of a child to the natal îdîlé of his mother. The choice to continue in the worship of any òrîşà represents either a voluntary or a forced act of loyalty to particular persons and to the symbols of a particular collectivity. This is not to say that lay worshippers always regard òrîşà-worship as an act of social loyalty or defiance, though they often do. There is evidence, according to Guyer, that lineage segments in some regions consciously define their special corporate identity in terms of submission to a unique set of òrîşà (Guyer: unpublished field notes). This concept will be shown to have prevailed in Bahia. However, the general phenomenon elucidated in the West African literature implies a more subtle operation of cosmological and theological constructs. Through the fulfillment of spiritual demands placed on them by the divine forces of Sky and Earth, persons worshipping the same òrîşà sacralize and enact the links of authority and responsibility that supersede and yet ultimately buttress the formal lines of patrilineal authority and kinship stated in official myths and genealogical charters. They articulate the vertical integration of

lineage segments into lineages into towns into kingdoms into the Empire. They also articulate horizontal linkages between lineages, through marriage, and the linkages of immigrant lineages to the community of origin and to the host community.

#### What the Oriṣa Do

Ọlọrun himself gives each human being his fate and distinctive character before he is born. Thereafter, the person is in the care of his òrìṣà rather than that of Ọlọrun, who, for this reason, has no cult in the World. The òrìṣà give their worshippers the blessing of children, health, and, if their fate permits it, wealth. They are vengeful if affronted through neglect or impiety. It is not in relation to their devotees but in relation to the community and to the World as a whole that various hierarchies of òrìṣà have particular functions -- control over lightning and the tornado, smallpox, the fertility of a farmland and forest, and other activities such as hunting, metalworking, and war.

Within each hierarchy, certain òrìṣà may have specialized roles serving the more generalized function, like the control of lightning. Besides being defined

in terms of their role, òrìṣà are differentiated individually or as members of a hierarchy through prescribed and tabooed offerings, by other tabus observed among their worshippers, by the use of certain drums and distinctive dances in their rites, and by the anthropomorphic idiosyncracies attributed to them. They are thus characterized broadly as having "hot," "hard," or "cool" dispositions. Some are known for qualities, like the arrogance and impatience of Ogun, which are described in their myths and praise songs. A lesser òrìṣà is thought to share in the qualities of òrìṣà heading the hierarchy with which it is associated (Morton-Williams, 1964: 246).

Though in some respects òrìṣà-worship is conceptually like ancestor veneration, it is not the same as the rituals for the orìṣun (ìdílé-founder) or for an individual's deceased mother and father. The ancestors have powers for ìdílé members and their wives, just as the òrìṣà have for their adherents, of bestowing children, health, and prosperity, if properly served. It is the duty of the head of the compound to make an annual sacrifice to the founder to insure the prosperity of the ìdílé in the coming year. This is done on the day that the founder is said to have sacrificed to his



"head," when he was himself alive. In a similar fashion, every individual makes his annual sacrifices at the grave of his father, the father's father, the father's father's father, and as many other ancestors in the male line as he or she can remember. The name of the mother and of other female ancestors are not mentioned when the sacrifice is made, "for they are buried in different compounds," expressing their membership in a different ìdílé. Sacrifices are made to the mother only when a babaláwo (diviner) indicates this as necessary (Bascom, 1944: 22; Morton-Williams, 1964: 247). In this respect, òrìṣà-worship is quite different from the rites for the ancestors.

The displeasure of the ancestors is roused by moral shortcomings in a way that the anger of the òrìṣà is not, since the former are concerned with behavior among kin and in the community, and with the good reputation of their descendents, and not, as the òrìṣà are, with relationships to cosmic forces (Morton-Williams, 1964: 247). As described in Chapter Three, the Yoruba social World occurs at the convergence of cosmic forces. Thus, the worship of the òrìṣà corresponds to the relations among the ìdílé and larger social groups. An ìdílé generally shares in the worship of certain òrìṣà, as does

a town, a kingdom, and the Empire. Unity among these groups is demonstrated with reference to their common progenitor, Olódùmarè (Ọlọrun) and, usually more specifically, his created son Odùduà (Òdua). These latter groups are less bound to one another by specifically and non-mythically definable kin relations and thus, in the African context, by special moral obligations to one another. Yet, devotion to the òrìṣà defines links of spiritual, if not specifically moral, relations which bind the ìdílé to larger social units.

Though the form and importance of Yoruba ancestor veneration varies somewhat, the general pattern is that <sup>for the ancestors</sup> rites are much less important among Yoruba than they are among most African peoples (Parrinder, 1949: 127). The importance of òrìṣà-worship has dramatically superseded that of ancestor veneration. Whereas the rituals for the oriṣun (ìdílé-founder) and for deceased forebears are modest and private, the annual festivals for the òrìṣà involve elaborate ceremonies extending over seven or eight days, when friends and affinal relatives visit the worshippers and join them in feasting, drinking, and dancing. The rites for the òrìṣà are distinguished from those for the ancestors also by a pattern of worship which typically includes special songs, rituals,

and perhaps costumes, a series of priests, and the use of a sacred grove (igbó) or a temple (ilé òrìṣà) at which sacrifices are made and the more important rituals performed (Bascom, 1944: 22).

Both the worship of the òrìṣà and the veneration of the ancestors always occur in groups of people because they touch upon the common concerns of communities and of groups arranged hierarchically within the community and the state. Worship requires efforts, discipline, and submission on the part of the individuals and the group -- ìdílé, town, or kingdom -- that are principally responsible for serving a particular òrìṣà. Worshipping individuals and groups do so not only to secure their own well-being but explicitly for the benefit of the entire surrounding community (Lloyd, 1978: 346). For, though an individual worships a narrowly limited number of spiritual beings, any of the divinities may affect his life. By studious attention to the will and intentions of the òrìṣà, as revealed through divination, and by a careful respect for the norms of àiyé (the ordered World), one can elicit the support of and avoid too much interference from the divinities (Morton-Williams, 1964: 248). It takes no great leap of inference to recognize the worship of the òrìṣà as an ideological corollary to the high level of socio-political hierarchalization and integration of the Yoruba nation.

The Role of the Cult in the Empire and the State

Not only does the worship of the òrìṣà provide ideological affirmation for the pyramidal socio-political order and articulate symbolically tendencies toward interpenetration of allegiances, but the institutional structures of worship link directly and formally with the political processes of the state. We will call upon Morton-Williams's (1964) description of cults in Òyó to demonstrate the point. As the center of the Empire, Òyó is central to our understanding of the national political-religious structure.

Each of the various hierarchies of òrìṣà is worshipped through a cult with a priesthood organized into a hierarchy of offices. There are likewise cult organizations for Egúngún and Orò, and the rites for Oníflè (Earth) are performed by a strongly corporate cult association with a powerful hierarchy of priests.

The Ògbóni society, which has judicial and political functions, penalizes bloodshed, for to shed human blood on the ground is a grave sin against Oníflè. Egúngún and Orò police sorcery and witchcraft. All three of these, and other so-called secret societies, generally punished competition or rivalry with the government and within

the kingdom. However, the principal concern of this chapter is not to describe the especially strong political role of these several religious groups but to discuss the general relevance of the conventional cult of the òrìṣà. In keeping with the general pattern of this people's affinity for voluntary associations, membership in some òrìṣà-worshipping groups is related to profession. For example, in addition to being connected to particular ìdílé, Ògún (God of Iron) protects blacksmiths, who sacrifice to him regularly. These phenomena affirm the general claim advanced here -- that cult groups constitute operational and corporate groups within the Yoruba state; but they introduce complications beyond the scope of this chapter, which intends to point out the most universal and encompassing connections between Yoruba religion and a socio-political order still based fundamentally on the kinship idiom. The role of Ògbónì, however, will yet become important to the present discussion.

As we noted earlier, the highest and, in most instances, all the titled priestly offices in a cult are vested in certain ìdílé. However, as we have also seen, cult members may be recruited from a large number of ìdílé. Thus cult membership results in associations

that consolidate various social groups, including ìdílé and parts of ìdílé in their associated compounds. The organized cult associations are given governmental functions thus complementary to those based on locality. These functions, resting on their control of various religious sanctions, give religious leaders political roles, and provide some of the cults with privileged revenues arising out of their administrative functions.

It may be recalled from Chapter Two that the two main organized groups in the Òyó government are the king with his palace organization, confronted in structural opposition with a corporation of titled officials, the Òyó Mesì (or Òyó Misi), i.e., the Council of State. Ògbóní, a third corporation, holds a mediating role between them, members of the Òyó Mesì controlling seats in the Ògbóní lodge but no priestly offices in it, so that they can participate in deliberations but not command them. The Ògbóní society meets in its lodge in the palace forecourt, where the king is represented by a woman who reports transactions of the Ògbóní to him but cannot take part in its decisions. Members of Ògbóní are recruited from among free Yoruba on the basis of age, wisdom, and prominence in secular or religious life. It works closely with the corporation of Ifá diviners.

These three central governmental corporations -- the Palace, the Òyó Mésì, and the Ògbóni -- all have a hand in the administration of the cults. First, it is the Aláàfin's duty to ensure that all the òrìṣà are worshipped, and in the course of an annual cycle of festivals he receives homage and tribute from each group in turn. He has final authority on the appointment of successors to vacant priestly offices. His three roles -- judicial, religious, and military -- are delegated largely to three eunuchs. The Otun Efa, or Eunuch of the Right, represented his religious person. Each cult group negotiated with the king and his high officials through its official intermediary, who is either a woman of the palace appointed Ìyá-kékeré ("Little Mother") of the cult, or a titled slave, the Bàbá-kékeré, its "Little Father."

Secondly, the main temples of the various òrìṣà hierarchies are distributed throughout the various wards of the town. The principal temple of Ṣàngó, deified Aláàfin of Òyó, is in the royal ward, the others in wards governed by different members of the Òyó Mésì. Lesser temples are set up in the compounds of titled priests. Otherwise, the priests set aside a room as a shrine, while most worshippers set up a shrine in their own compounds. The titled priests, just like compound

heads, frequently communicate with the ward head and join in the periodical assemblies of the ward elders. Titled priests are responsible to the ward elders and to that member of the Òyọ́ Mesì who was responsible for the religious well-being of the ward. Certain members of the Òyọ́ Mesì are responsible for rites important for the whole kingdom. Officials of the Òyọ́ Mesì head the cult of Ọráníyàn, the first Aláàfin of Òyọ́, to whom human sacrifice has to be offered before any war as a condition of success; the cult of Òrìṣà Oko, god of the fertility of farmland and of game in the bush; and the cult of Ògún, god of the use of iron, whose head official commands the advance guards of the army and scouts in defensive war.

The Òyọ́ Mesì, then, has a two-fold function in the administration of the cults. One is a rather general and limited control of cult activities going on in their wards. This control is nevertheless important because the cults were charged with the satisfactory worship of the divinities, whose good will is essential to the strength of the kingdom. In addition, cult associations manage the great magical powers of the divinities, which can be used against the enemies of the state.



The other type of control given to the members of the Ọ̀yọ́ Mesì is as the heads of cults which are vital to the spiritual well-being of the kingdom. Their authority over the cults of Ọ̀rányàn and Ọ̀gún, furthermore, assures them political power in foreign relations, while their authority over the Egúngún gives them power within Ọ̀yọ́

Ọ̀gbóní counts among its members priests of many cults. Through its right to be represented when Ifá is consulted in divination on behalf of the town and to influence the timing and conduct of festivals, Ọ̀gbóní exercises an advisory and a directly administrative function in the control of religious affairs. In all the affairs of the state, the Aláàfin is required to consult the hierarchy of Ifá diviners associated with Ọ̀gboní.

Of all the òrìṣà cults, that of Ẓàngó requires special attention. It is linked closely through beliefs about Ẓango as a deified Aláàfin and, through its organization, with the powers of the Aláàfin. As the king and as a "child" of Ẓàngó, the reigning monarch is thought to be a repository of the divinity's power. The principal temple to Ẓàngó is situated in the Aláàfin's ward in Ọ̀yọ́, although the chief possession

priest lives and maintains his domestic shrine in the ward of the Basorun (Prime Minister). The cult was organized on an Empire-wide basis, with some considerable central control.

Succession to the highest ranks in the cult (a hereditary high-priesthood whose members are not expected to become possessed by the divinity) is vested in certain Òyó ìdílé, most of them living in the royal wards of the town. All the possession priests, though resident in the various kingdoms of their birth, have to come to Òyó for the final stages of their initiatory training and to be equipped with the liturgical objects of the priesthood.

The cult of Şàngó forms a powerful corporation, and outside Òyó it is never fully under the jurisdiction of the vassal state. The powers of Şàngó are used by the Aláàfin in the administration of the more distant parts of the Empire. The Aláàfin in the late 18th century appointed titled slaves as his agents (asojú-oba in Òyó, meaning "king's observers"; also known as ajélè) to ensure the loyalty and fiscal honesty of certain vassal kings, especially along the trade routes to the Atlantic ports.

It is said among the Ègbá Yoruba that under the Empire all the ajéḷè were initiated priests of Şàngó. As such, they were believed to have magical powers and, possessed by the divinity, they were, like other priests of the deified king, accorded royal rank and could confront and make demands upon vassal kings with impunity. In Òyó, not all asojú-oba were Şàngó priests, but those who were not always had Şàngó priests in their entourages.

The cult of Èşù, like those of Şàngó and Ifá, bears special mention. In Òyó, two state officials who were priests of Èşù administered the market. They heard and arbitrated conflicts in the market because in these Èşù was thought to be at work; and they collected market dues from vendors as payment for their services.

I have already hinted at another striking feature of the state-affiliated cults. This is the power of women within their organizational hierarchies. In Òyó, men of various stations -- royals, free men, slaves, and palace eunuchs -- held secular and religious positions within the state. Women too could achieve high state offices, but only through the cults. Certain palace women -- some widows of former Aláàfin and others of

slave origin, but all loosely called ayaba, or "king's wives" -- are appointed intermediaries between the king and cult officials (see Johnson, 1966: 63). Within the cults the structure of authority is usually dual, with separate and parallel hierarchies of offices for men and women. We will see a duplication of these patterns in Bahia.

It should be noted that a few of the smaller cult associations in Òyó were not integrated into the structure of the kingdom. Often, these were cults of òrìṣà locally important in other places, probably brought into Òyó by immigrants -- including wives married from different towns. Shrines to these òrìṣà were set up only in the compounds of worshippers, not in public squares, and their festivals were domestic affairs during which cult members would celebrate in one another's compounds in turn (Morton-Williams, 1964: 251-59). The òrìṣà of immigrant lineages may have been more important in the smaller towns and kingdoms.

### Conclusions

Òyó is both a kingdom in itself and an imperial metropole. So, we see in its patterns of worship, the diffusion of its divinities, and the administrative function of the cults patterns of phenomena which have

occurred in microcosm all over Yorubaland. In this well-studied example we see how the temple and the cult association have been incorporated into the structures of government, expressing political principles of representation and authority that complement and complicate the lineage-oriented mode of socio-political organization.

Òrìṣà-worship and cult affiliation affirmatively symbolize, beyond the ideal of patrilineal and pyramidal structures of organization, the complicated but orderly interlinking of social, economic, and political groups defined within the Empire by kingdoms, localities, towns, wards, and lineages (ìdílé). Ancestor veneration is significant in defining relations within and around the lineage. Together they represent a highly sophisticated state religion which, taken as a theological model of Yoruba socio-political organization, teaches the anthropologist a great deal above and beyond the mythic orthodoxy of West African Yoruba state organization.

The cosmological myths that undergird the worship of the òrìṣà form a basic charter, or set of charters, for the socio-political order. The actual practice of òrìṣà-worship builds on a more complicated conception of relations within àiyé, or the orderly World, and still confirms the larger cosmological and, thus, political

understandings of Yoruba theologians in their time and place. We will see in Chapter Five how cosmological and theological constructs, in a Yoruba mythic vocabulary and syntax, interpret the radically different socio-political conditions of Afro-Bahian life and how they give form to new foci of social solidarity.

## CHAPTER FIVE

KINSHIP, STATE, AND CULT GROUP IN BAHIA

In 1948 there were about 100 terreiros, or temples, in the city of Salvador devoted to Candomblé, and Carneiro estimated at the time that an average of 300 persons were associated with each. Thus, in a city of 400,000 inhabitants, 30,000 were linked directly with African religious groups in this city alone. Presently, in a city of nearly 2 million, the candomblés, as terreiros are alternatively called, have multiplied many fold. Most of the candomblés are located in urban areas and especially in regions of economic importance. Perhaps two dozen operate in the tobacco- and sugar cane-producing regions of the Recôncavo and in the cacao-producing zone near Ilheus (Carneiro, 1948: 58; 1964: 126). Candomblés have existed in the very center of the city since the end of the 19th century (Bastide, 1961: 19; Abimbola, 1976, 40; Woortman, 1975: Chap. IV).

Membership in the candomblés is undoubtedly weighted on the lower socio-economic levels, and it is among these people, poor and mostly black, that Yoruba faith has been transformed from a state religion into a cosmology, an ethic, and a form of social organization

addressing the particular needs of a self-identified African proletariat in a foreign land. Nevertheless, hundreds of thousands of persons, the offspring of Africans, Europeans, and Americans, have learned its theology and have joined its houses of worship. Thus we define "Afro-Bahian" more in a cultural than in a "racial" sense. Persons of higher socio-economic strata are by no means unrepresented. Some members of the sect are owners of business establishments and small manufacturing concerns, labor leaders and political figures, skilled operatives and minor industrial supervisory personnel. When one moves out of the category of active and acknowledged members, those who maintain less formal relations with the terreiros are found in some degree in all strata. Afro-Bahian diviners and priests are widely consulted by the wealthy and well-placed, seeking guidance from the powers these specialists are held to control (Herskovits, 1966: 248).

The term "Candomblé" itself is said to have originated in the designation of an African dance, and in southern Brazil it continues in this usage. However, in most of the country there is no ambiguity in its reference to the African religious practices of Bahia, which, as noted in Chapter Two, show a disproportionate influence from Yorubaland (see Mendonça, 1973: 126 for etymology).



The written historical record shows the existence of centers for the practice of Candomblé as far back as 1826, when, following a slave insurrection, a terreiro in the woods of Urubú at Cajazeira was discovered to have served as a refuge for fugitive slaves and the base for a widespread conspiracy (Nina Rodrigues, 1945: 82; Bastide, 1978: 104). However, Carneiro says that independent African religious institutions probably began in the last half of the 18th century. The new sect lived precariously, subject to overwhelming persecution by police and senhores de engenho, until the Independence and the consequent agitations. The founding of the candomblé of Casa Branca do Engenho Velho, or Ilé Iyá Nàso, probably in 1830, marks the beginning of a new florescence in the organization of Candomblé (Carneiro, 1964: 127).

As adherence to the sect grew and terreiros proliferated, old forms of theology, liturgy, and religious organization which had been appropriate to West African Yoruba society were altered. Like its West African counterpart, Yoruba religion in Bahia developed in connection with its ambient socio-political milieu, one in which the idílé (patrilineages) and other patriarch-centered networks of socio-political authority and responsibility, were unviable in the social organization

of African slaves and proletarians. Yoruba religion gave focus to efforts modifying that milieu, as it nourished communities of the devout in a context that did not incorporate them organically. The florescence of organized Yoruba religion in Bahia is a marvel of sustained political and cultural resistance. Let us consider its conditions.

#### The Destruction of African Kin Groups

Subjective marginality, poverty, and socio-economic instability are the major factors informing the development of Afro-Bahian kinship ideology and family relations. First as slaves and later as nominally free proletarians and sub-proletarians, Africans in Bahia have been subject to the powers of the Euro-Brazilian state, the Catholic church, and the owner classes -- most immediately and particularly, the authority of the senhores de engenho. The experience of Africans and their descendents in Bahia is not homogeneous, from family to family or over time. However, the elimination of well-organized agnatic social groups and the fragmentation of even the conjugal family have been its consistent features.

In Brazil, the kingdom, the town, and the idilé ceased to orient the social world of Yoruba people, and Africans in general were forced progressively to become part of a European-controlled capitalist economy. Traditional social groupings were invariably crushed in the teeth of the slave raids, the "Middle Passage," and the sugar engenhos. Before the 19th century, Bahian slave-owners found it less expensive to import new slaves than to allow families to grow, and after the termination of the slave trade, they enforced sexual license in the name of breeding more livestock. The outcome was the fracturing of male-centered groups of any size and the prevalence of the mother-centered elementary family.

Early plantation staffing policies affected sex ratios among slaves. It was most economical to import a disproportionate number of males to serve in heavy labor (Woortman, 1975: 251). Such conditions disfavored lasting conjugal bonds among African men and women. Furthermore, extremely high mortality rates made any such units quite tenuous. We have already noted the ten-year average lifespan of the slave. As the dynamic center of the colonial and later national economy shifted successively to other regions of the country,

the prolonged stagnation of the Northeastern plantation system likely favored the recovery of relatively stable family units among the slaves. Equally, the mechanization of the engenhos probably reinforced seigneurialistic traditions brought from Portugal and, before emancipation, encouraged a degree of paternalism that stabilized the social existence of the servile classes.

However, even if the nuclear family did appear at times as a residential unit among slaves, it is doubtful that the unit ever took on significant economic dimensions or widespread social significance. It is crucial that the genitor of such a family could never enact the sociological role of pater in any way which can be likened to the ideal role of either the Luso-Brazilian or the West African Yoruba father -- administrative head, protector, and provider.

Senhores de engenho gave little respect to the family life of slaves. The historical record shows frequent instances of the use of studs in the impregnation of slave women. In spite of the influence of the Roman Catholic church, owners seldom encouraged Christian morality when it did not complement their economic interests. In 1875, 660,000 persons of marriageable age were in bondage in Brazil. Of these only one-sixth were either married or widowed. Common-law

unions may have been more frequent (Ibid: 254-58).

An 1869 law prohibited the separate sale of members of the slave family, but this legislation was likely more concerned with the separation of mothers and children than with the separation of men from their offspring or from their wives. Slave children were named after their mothers, and not their fathers, although the owner's name was often added, emphasizing the latter's role as the legitimate pater and master of his chattels (Ibid: 256).

In his analysis of Bahian "Registros de Venda de Escravos" (Slave Sales Registers), Antunes dos Santos (1873) reveals that in a group of 95 slaves sold by Brazilian owners, only two were married and that many slave women who were registered as single were sold together with their children. Moreover, the great majority of the Registros that mentioned the slave's filiation declared only the mother's name. Only two among the 95 were registered with the names of both parents, and only two others with the name of the father alone (cited in Woortman, 1975: 256).

Where the slave father exercised no control over the fates of his children and spouse, where his very dependency contradicted the role ascribed to him in the societies of his origin, and where he could offer little

defense for his family against the constant threat of rape and assault, this father ceased being the focus of kinship and authority relations. It was no longer his role but that of the slave-owner that primarily defined the status of his offspring in the larger community. Even if this system of engenho slavery occasionally permitted the formation of nuclear family units, the ideological and legal components of the system prevented the consolidation of the family as a cultural category.

Laws protecting the familial rights of the slaves did not matter a great deal during the whole of the Colonial and Monarchical periods, as well as during the early phase of the First Republic. What mattered was the local power of the senhores de engenho. The role of the Roman Catholic church was no less ambiguous than that of the law. Religious orders were themselves actively engaged in the slave trade (Ibid.: 260-63; Genovese, 1972: 85-6). Moreover, Roman Catholic authorities often fell under the authority of the local holders of power. In fact, the local priest was often the son of the engenho-owner. These factors compromised whatever protective or "moralizing" role Roman Catholic institutions could have exercised on the lives of the slaves.

So, the conditions of slavery rendered unviable the vertical and agnatic structures of Yoruba kinship and polity, and, moreover, militated against the formation of the type of monogamous family units favored by the model of the politically dominant classes. Not much information is available on the family life of the negros de ganho (semi-independent slaves), but it is generally known that in spite of their minimally greater solvency and frequent residential autonomy from their owners, they were subject to the same authoritarian legal constraints as their counterparts among domestic and plantation slaves.

In 1817 the proportion of slaves to libertos (freedmen) was three to one. By 1872 the number of libertos in Bahia was five times that of slaves (Carneiro, 1964: 95). The final abolition of slavery in 1888 did not transform black people into citizens but, ultimately, into marginals. It is true that the significant number of skilled liberto artisans suffered some lesser degree of marginalization, but, due to the specific socialization process of the slave system, most slaves were unskilled and unable to compete for jobs with skilled and semi-skilled European immigrants. Furthermore, black laborers were subject to a great

deal of racist discrimination in employment. Ideological considerations on the part of the ex-slave likely influenced employment prospects. Ex-slaves often felt that they had to reject subordinate labor in defense of their dignity (Woortman, 1975: 268; Cardoso, 1962; Fernandes, 1971).

By and large, the labor market for black people did not offer prospects for material well-being or political and economic power which differed significantly from those available under slavery. Bahian people were not threatened by as great a flow of European and Asian immigrants as were the inhabitants of São Paulo, for example, due to the lack of economic dynamism in Bahia at the time. That is to say, if there was less job competition, there was also less to compete for. Although Africans and their descendants formed the majority of the population of Bahia, they remained outside the center of political and economic power.

The precarious economic conditions of the lower class likely contributed to the continued predominance among Afro-Bahians of the mother-centered elementary family. In 1950, 60 years after abolition, 45.5% of all adult women in Bahia were unmarried mothers. In 1957, Hutchinson reported in his study of a plantation village that 31% of households were made up of "maternal dyads" (Woortman, 1975: 270).



Thus the basic unit of Afro-Bahian social organization is the elementary family consisting of a mother and her children. During most of slavery and following emancipation, this core group was the basis of food procurement and socio-legal identity. It was the only corporate kin group receiving any degree of legal protection from the profit motives of slave-owning and slave-selling capitalists. It was seldom integrated into kin groups of higher order, although in later times cooperation among grandmothers, daughters, and grandchildren may have constituted a stable, if legally unrecognized, social unit. The administrative and economic roles of the father were at best peripheral, according to Woortman. His role as a political representative was not to be recovered in Bahia.

In a set of findings which is disputed by E. Franklin Frazier, Herskovits lays out the patterns of what may be a wider kinship ideology. He reports that an Afro-Bahian woman is expected to call in her mate when his child merits major punishment and that a man customarily provides clothing and contributes toward the support of his child by the woman from whom he is separated. A mother forbids her children to speak ill of their absent father.

Most revealing are the duties wives and children owe the spirit of a dead husband and father. The ẽgun (Yoruba for "ghost") exacts its tribute in almost complete West African fashion. Though only a widow wears mourning clothes, and an unmarried lover does not, all of a man's children must wear full mourning. The oldest son of the legally married wife, if there is one, or of the oldest lover, becomes the nominal family head and must see to it that the junior members of the family do not want. There is none other than a moral obligation to do this, yet belief is strong, in any event, that a man would fear his father's ẽgun if he failed his responsibilities.

Offerings to the dead man's ẽgun express, according to Herskovits, the inner unity of the group of persons sharing a common husband and father. These offerings are given at the death rites, and, on these occasions, all must contribute -- the wife, lovers, and their children. A woman who has remarried will, if necessary, ask her new husband to aid her in amassing the necessary sum; and he must contribute for fear of the dead husband if he should refuse. Here there is no quarreling. All the women and children, under the leadership of the man's senior mate or oldest son, unite to see that the death-rites, not only in the African

temples but also in the Catholic masses for the souls of the dead, are adequately provided for (Herskovits, 1943: 400). Neither Frazier (1942) nor Woortman (1975) has reported the appearance of this type of social and ritual relations among Afro-Bahian families; so both its universality and its bearing on some significant aspects of economic life are to be doubted. None of the three scholars has claimed that this apparent counterpart to the West African ilé té mi acts as a central administrative or economic unit in Bahian society. The diminution in importance of this father-centered kinship category under slavery and after emancipation remains quite evident.

As speakers of Portuguese, Afro-Bahians have, like the Yoruba of West Africa, assumed an Eskimo-type model of kinship terminology, which does not distinguish maternal from paternal relations and names relatives by gender but, unlike the West African system, not by seniority. However, the mother-centered elementary family is generally the basic unit of consumption and residence. It is no longer situated in the larger complex<sup>x</sup> of the idilé (patrilineage) or the agbo-ilé (compound). It can, however, be located within a larger framework of class, ethnic, and non-kin-based institutional groupings. The most important of these, emically, is the candomblé. In 1888 Afro-Bahians were emancipated

from enslavement on the engenhos and in the cities, becoming to a greater and greater extent the subjects of authority held by new capitalist classes which often overlapped with the largely European owner class of the previous era. As before, they were subject to police actions and, in turn, to the fiats and ordinances of municipal, state, and national governments through which and within which Afro-Brazilians are increasingly subject to the will of international capital. In adapting to the conditions imposed by slavery, proletarianization, and marginalization, Afro-Bahians made the candomblé into a focus not only of worship but for economic cooperation, political protection, and social identity.

### The Candomblé

Within the growing complex of social, political, and economic structures surrounding Afro-Bahians stand the communities of worship known as the candomblés. In Brazil, the highly complex and hierarchal terreiro has taken on not only the status of the West African ilé-òrìṣà ("house of the òrìṣà"), as a focus of worship, but also the role of a nucleus for social integration and solidarity -- a community in itself. The terreiro acts as a voluntary association whose members are bound together in collective responsibility for the

labor required in the worship of the divinities. It provides, simultaneously, cooperative social and economic support and political protection, through its connections with office-holders and prestigious persons, for all those who believe in its mysteries and are associated with its members (Carneiro, 1948: 133; Bastide, 1978: 221).

The terreiro draws its support and, in a narrower sense, its membership, from the Brazilian population at large. There are black, white, and brown Brazilians whose interests vary from curiosity to conviction. Many who come to temples do so to have "work" performed for them -- for purposes of healing, or for divination, or to obtain supernatural assistance in facing hostility, or in achieving desired ends. Many others are bound to the terreiro by sacred and secular office, by regular participation in worship, and by biological kinship to initiates of the temple (Herskovits, 1966: 231-33). The terreiro brings together men and women and young people of various families, ethnic groups, and classes, forming an association that is pivotal in the lives of many Bahians.

As discussed earlier, the terreiros are associated with various "nations," which have historically circumscribed not only ethnic identities but realms of

social intercourse and economic cooperation. During slavery, these nations were often ruled nominally by "kings," appointed by higher political authorities to monitor and discipline slaves (Bastide, 1978: 160; Freyre, 1942: 373). The cantos, or labor teams of negros de ganho, were often associated with the particular "nation" from which the predominance or the entirety of its membership came. However, as linguistic assimilation and genetic amalgamation advanced over time, it appears that the economic and social dimensions of the nation have declined outside the sphere of the candomblé.

The candomblés are quite numerous and have multiplied over the decades. Woortman reported in 1975 that there were then five times as many candomblés as there had been in the 1930's (1975: 271-72). Within each nation, they are linked to each other by genealogical ties resulting from the founding of new temples by priests and priestesses trained in an older temple. The terreiros recognize each other's seniority and lateral relationships among the offshoots of the same house. One of the first enduring candombles founded in Bahia is one of Kétu origin: the Casa Branca do Engenho Velho, also known as Ilé Ìyá Nàso. Its founders were three African libertas called Ìyá Adeta, Ìyá Àkàlà,

and Ìyá Nàso -- the last name recalling the title of the high priestess of Şàngó's shrine at Òyó. We do not know if this woman had actually held that post in Yorubaland. Later, dissident priestesses trained in this first terreiro organized other terreiros which also became famous. These include Terreiro do Alto do Gantois (or Ilé Ìyámasse) and Terreiro Cruz-Santa do São Gonçalo do Petiro (or Ilé Òpó Àşę Àfònjá). By a process of further division, new candomblés such as Ilé Òpó Àşę Aganjú separated from the second generation of candomblés.

Each terreiro organizes a cycle of ceremonies for the various orişá. The seniority of each candomble is respected. For example, Ilé Ìyámasse and Ilé Òpó Àfònjá conduct their ceremonies one month after Ilé Ìyá Nàso, while Ilé Òpó Aganjú observes its ceremonies the next month after Ilé Òpó Àfònjá has observed its own (Abimbola, 1976: 624, 627; Carneiro, 1948: 63-5; Herskovits, 1966: 235).

#### Candomblé and the Brazilian State

The community of believers is internally structured in a manner which unifies families, specifies relations among temple groups and acknowledges the division of Afro-Bahian society into "nations" which formerly served as administrative units of the slavo-

cratic regime. In spite of the suggestion by the Conde dos Arcos that the divisions engendered by African cultural expression supported the interests of the state (see Chapter Two), the Luso-Brazilian state has played an adversary role in the formation of these religious centers. There is little evidence that the Conde or any other sympathizers with his position ever consciously condoned non-European forms of worship among the slaves and libertos. In fact, the provincial government and the senhores de engenho recognized quite early the role of African religion in fomenting the high incidence of African revolt in 19th-century Bahia. The discovery that the candomblé of Urubú had served as the focus of the 1826 insurrection was one factor confirming their fear. Throughout the first half of the 19th century, the senhores de engenho complained vigorously about provincial laws permitting slaves and libertos to gather regularly and unsupervised for worship and secular diversion.

But it was not until after the major Bahian revolt of January 1835 that the Legislative Assembly of Bahia stated the necessity of imposing "certain restrictions against unorthodox cults." Thereafter, all owners of slaves were required to "instruct them in the mysteries of the Christian religion and baptize them," under



penalty of 50 mil reis for failure to comply (Prince, 1972: 228). Harassed by Euro-Brazilians in general and by the public authorities, Afro-Bahians concealed their religious practices in places inaccessible to profane eyes and substituted representations of the divinities with superficial representations of Roman Catholic saints (Ramos, 1939: 82). Yet their own faith remained very much alive.

#### Candomblé and the Law

At the beginning of the Empire, the Constitutional Assembly of 1823 proclaimed that:

Art.º 14 -- A liberdade religiosa no Brasil só se estende as communhões christãs; todos os que as professarem podem gosar dos direitos políticos no Império.

Art.º 15. -- As outras religiões, alem da christã, são apenas toleradas, e a sua profissão inibe o exercício dos direitos políticos.

Art.º 16. -- A religião cathólica apostólica romana e a religião do Estado por excellência, e única mantida por elle.

(F. I. Marcondes Homen de Mello, 1863.  
Cited in Bittencourt, 1937: 174)

Such represented the continuing mood of the law-makers at the beginning of the Empire. Favoring a more liberal legal base, the Emperor Dom Pedro I nullified the first constitution and framed the Carta Constitucional of

1834, which established that

Art.º 5 -- A religião apostólica romana continuará a ser a religião do Império. Todas as outras religiões serão permitidas com seu culto doméstico ou particular em casas para isso destinadas, sem forma alguma exterior de templo.

.....

Art.º 95 -- Todos os que podem ser eleitores, são habéis para serem nomeados deputados. Exceptuam-se:

I --

II --

III-- Os que não professarem a religião do estado.

(Ibid: 177)

Catholicism continued to be the official religion while "all the other religions" were permitted a domestic or individual cult but no right to public, institutional worship. In spite of minor concessions, non-Christian groups were firmly subordinated by the prevailing constitutional arrangements. However, Art.º 179 declared:

Art.º 179 -- V: Ninguém pode ser perseguido por motivo de religião, uma vez que respeite a do Estado e não offenda a moral pública.  
(Ibid: 177)

These principles remained encoded in the legal system until the beginning of the Republic in 1889. The Criminal Code of 1831 authorized the punishment of

any act offensive to the official religion or celebrating the cult of any non-Roman Catholic religion "in a house or building that has the external form of a temple" or "publically, in any place." It stated that "No one may be prosecuted for religious reasons provided he respects the State and does not offend public morality." The definition of "public morality" was left to municipal authorities and the regular police, providing legitimation for the campaign against African religious expression in spite of the façade of religious tolerance projected by the Carta Constitucional and the Criminal Code. The minimum penalty for illegal worship was a fine of 2 mil reis for each violator, and the maximum was the demolition of the temple and a fine of 12 mil reis for each violator (Bittencourt, 1937: 179; Bastide, 1978: 136).

Under the Republic and after the emancipation, the Penal Code of 1890 authorized the punishment of any infringement on the religious rights of Christians and non-Christians alike. However, this Code did not prevent, any more than did the Penal Code under the Empire, legally arbitrary police raids on places of African worship (Warren, 1965; Bittencourt, 1937: 184-87). The Republican Constitutions of 1891, 1926, and

1934 did little more in reality to assure the right of Africans to choose their own form of worship. The Constitution of 1834 declared the inviolability of freedom of conscience and belief and guaranteed the free exercise of religious practices "as long as they do not contravene the public order and good customs." Nonetheless, the temples of African faiths continued to be desecrated. One assumes that the provision against contraventions of "public order and good customs" was often invoked to justify repressive actions against the terreiros. Under the Republic, police frequently invaded temples, interrupting ceremonies, disrupting operations, desecrating sacred objects, and imprisoning priests without the least justification (Bittencourt, 1937: 184-95; Bastide, 1978: 137). Well into the 20th century, in 1947, Landes reported that police raids against Candomblé terreiros continued to present a serious threat to worshippers (1947: 34).

In conclusion, it is a clear if necessary understatement that Candomblé evolved not as a state religion, as did the religion from which it largely originated, but as the faith of people politically oppressed, economically exploited and deprived, socially denigrated, and psychologically estranged. Salient distinctions among the candomblés did at times correspond to those

social and political divisions -- "nations" -- which were manipulated by Europeans in the administration of the slavocratic regime. However, the provincial, colonial, and later national governments of Brazil never incorporated African religious institutions into its structures or even protected the rights of Bahians to worship according to African traditions. Candomblé continued to exist in spite of the prevalence of Roman Catholicism as the religion of the state and the persistent legal and supra-legal persecution of the African religious community by the police. The sect did not fit organically into larger kinship and political structures in Bahian society. Not only did its cosmology acknowledge the legitimacy of the matrifocal elementary family, as discussed in Chapter Three, but its theology expressed the integration of these units into larger networks of spiritual kinship. Candomblé created communities bound together, as I shall explain, by this spiritual kinship, mutual socio-political support, and economic cooperation in an environment where the prevailing powers absolutely opposed it.

The Worship of the Òrìṣà and Its Transmission: Bahia

As discussed in Chapter Three, the most important and basic of the mythic transformations in Bahian cosmology has affected the nature of the òrìṣà and their relation to the human world. Brazilian observers are agreed that the òrìṣà no longer represent to Bahian Nagô and other adherents to Candomblé the ancestors of the nation or of the social group. Nor do they represent the formulators and creators of the global social order. Rather, they are thought of as "donos da cabeça," or "owners of one's head." Represented as deified mortals of royal or noble station, they are universally thought of as "gods from Africa" who, in exclusion from their role in the genealogical-type socio-political charters of the West African Yoruba, still personify natural and social forces like the storm, war, wind, or vegetation. Additionally, they serve as the spiritual protectors of their "children" and the cruxes of spiritual fraternity among Afro-Bahians (Landes, 1940: 264; Carneiro, 1940: 273; Bastide, 1961: 33).

Hence, the manner in which adherents of Candomblé determine their particular relationship to the òrìṣà differs from the method usually applied in West

Africa. In Brazil a person's òrìṣà must be ascertained by the diviners -- the Babaláwo, Ìyálórìṣà, or Babalórìṣà. Like the West African Yoruba, adherents of Candomblé believe that one's relation to a divinity or set of divinities is inborn. However, nothing has been written, to my knowledge, which suggests that members of the same biological descent group generally worship the same òrìṣà.

A person may occasionally "inherit" a divinity that is thought to have attached itself over the generations to a particular family, but this merely means that the divinity must be worshipped by someone in the family or its worship must be provided for, and not that the inheritor must affiliate with a given cult-group. This does not happen often. Some enter the worship of a particular òrìṣà because they were promised before birth to the divinity, and are being troubled because the vow has not been fulfilled. Some join a cult-group because of certain circumstances of birth, which divination revealed as a sign that a divinity had designated the infant as a future devotee (Herskovits, 1966: 245; Verger, 1955: 7). However, the overall preeminence of divination over inheritance in determining one's relationship to the òrìṣà appears to be an exact reversal

of the West African norm.

Unlike West Africa, where there are separate temples for the òrìṣà, in Brazil, generally, and particularly in Bahia, each terreiro is used for the worship of a full range of divinities found in that country. It is relatively unimportant that the terreiro is dedicated to a particular òrìṣà. From the worshippers' point of view, this manner of liturgy makes it possible for an òrìṣà devotee to be familiar with the symbols, the songs, and rhythms of the other divinities, while at the same time observing the deep commitment he feels to his own òrìṣà. It is possible for a West African worshipper of Ọṣun, for example, to be almost completely ignorant of the ways of Yemoja (Iemanja in Brazil). This is so because, as earlier revealed, particular ìdílé (major patrilineages), towns, and kingdoms are more devoted to some few òrìṣà than to others (Abimbola, 1976: 626-27).



### The Òrìṣà-Worshipping Group

Another important reversal of West African patterns of worship is that, in Bahia, in spite of cutting across all biological lines of descent, the group of persons worshipping the same òrìṣà is strictly exogamous. Though under certain circumstances the terreiro itself is exogamous as well, the children of the same òrìṣà are considered brothers and sisters, addressing each other as such, and they are never permitted to marry (see Woortman, 1975: 281-82 on exogamous terreiro). Furthermore, everyone must consult a diviner before marriage in order to be assured about the òrìṣà of his potential mate. It is not considered a good marriage when both bride and groom have a masculine or feminine òrìṣà. Marriages are expected to be all the happier and more fruitful or all the more disastrous to the degree that they reflect the harmonious or unharmonious mythical relationships between the relevant divinities. Disaster comes when two people "make reborn the angers, the hatred, the fights of the òrìṣà" (Bastide, 1961: 293-94; 1978: 225-26; Forde, 1951: 29).

In West Africa, though the group of persons worshipping the same òrìṣà does correspond to defined operational and corporate groups, the worship of that

òrìṣà does not in itself impose any relationship that is not already implied by kinship or political allegiance. Its significance is more expressive than effective. In Candomblé, on the other hand, initiates vowed to the same òrìṣà have ties that cannot be neglected. For example, an older and hierarchically superior initiate who earns her living, say, as a trader, may at any time enlist the assistance of her younger sisters in the enterprise (Herskovits, 1966: 244).

The mutual responsibility of devotees of the same òrìṣà is manifest also in the institution of the ajibona. The ajibona is the ritual sponsor of the initiate, and in fact a god-parent, who may come from the same terreiro as the initiate or may be drawn from another. He or she will always hold the high priestly rank of vodunsi, or ebomin, and must always worship the same divinity as the candidate he or she sponsors. The ajibona is expected to teach the candidate and defray part of the costs of the expensive initiation rites. The relationship between initiate and ajibona is a continuing one of mutual support and can assume the greatest importance should the ajibona later establish a new temple. It is not difficult to see that this institution cuts across the boundaries of the terreiros, kindreds, racial and class groups in a way which unifies the world of Candomblé and therefore the community of Afro-Bahians

(Ibid.: 243-44). It is people's relationship to the òrìṣà that provides its context.

The Structure of the Terreiro

Within the terreiro, concepts of position and interpersonal relations knit personnel into a unified social entity. As in West Africa, the officers are organized in two parallel hierarchies of men and women, as follows:

<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Babalórìṣà	Ìyálórìṣà
( = Pai-de-santo, or "father in sainthood")	( = Mãe-de-santo, or "mother in sainthood")
Peji-gán	Ìyálašè
Baba-kékeré (Pai pequeno)	Ìyá-kékeré (Mãe pequena)
Asòògùn	Ékédi
Ògán	Abian
Alabé	
drummers	
Ebomin (Filho-de-santo)	Ebomin (Filha-de-santo)
Ìyàwó (Filho-de-santo)	Ìyàwó (Filha-de-santo)

(Compiled from Carneiro, 1940: 274; 1948: 138-41; Ramos, 1940: 49-60)

The head of the terreiro may be a woman, known properly as an Ìyálórìṣà, or by a man, a Babalórìṣà. Within those terreiros identifying themselves specifically with the Nagô nation, most chiefs of temples are women. Despite the superior official status of the Ìyálaṣè and the Pejí-gán, or "masters of the altar," the sole substitute for the terreiro chief is the Ìyá-kékeré or Baba-kékeré, the "Little Mother" or "Little Father." The reader will recognize these and other titles from the discussion of religious institutions in Òyó. The Baba- and Ìyá-kékeré are officially equal to the Asóògun, "Sacrificer of Animals," although the former's responsibilities are ongoing while the latter's are limited to ritual occasions. The Ìyá- or Baba-kékeré is usually the "Filho-de-Santo" or "Filha-de-Santo" who is eldest in sacerdotal experience and is therefore best qualified to replace the terreiro chief and to act as his or her intermediary in the administration of the temple.

The role of the Ògán is quite outstanding in the secular functioning of the temple and the social support of its membership. Ògán are wealthy and well-placed or especially knowledgeable persons who act as protectors of the terreiro, with the special responsibility and

privilege of providing money for sacred ceremonies. Ògán, who are well-respected in the larger community bring prestige to the temple. Chosen by the òrìṣà through divination, Ògán are all addressed by the Filhos-de-Santo as "my father," and they, in turn, give their blessing. Collectively, they constitute something of a consultative board for the candomblé. In any difficult situation, the Babalórìṣà or Ìyálórìṣà appeals to them, calling upon their capacity to labor, exercise influence, or contribute money -- whether to assist in the maintenance of order during public festivals, to resolve small breakdowns of discipline, to intervene with the police, or to finance the endeavors of the temple. They serve as the right arm of the chief priest in all matters not directly linked to religion (Carneiro, 1948: 141; Abimbola, 1976: 625; Hamilton, 1970: 355-73).

The Alabé, who directs the drummers, is an important official as well, in that the sophisticated percussion of these initiates is thought to serve as a means of communication between humans and the divinities.

The Filhos- and Filhas-de-santo themselves provide most of the financial support and organization in the affairs of the terreiro. They pay for most sacrifices, clothe their bodies in the manner befitting the òrìṣà they receive, praise the divinities, and thus ensure the continuity of the terreiro. The initiates are differentiated according to "age in sainthood." The Ìyàwó have been initiated less than seven years, and the Ebomin, or Vodunsi, more than seven. The Ékédi are regarded as slaves of the Filhos. Constitutionally unable to receive the òrìṣà, they are employed in subordinate roles, devoting themselves to the care of liturgical garments and ornaments. The Abian are less than Filhos, having fulfilled only some partial rites of initiation.

Generally, the terreiro chief's will is obeyed without question, and he or she has no occasion to resort to extreme measures of coercion except in cases of flagrant disobedience. In some temples, however, chiefs may regulate the conduct of initiates by means of corporal punishment or fines (Carneiro, 1940: 274-75). The privileged status of the Babalórìṣà and the Ìyálórìṣà has its obverse side as well: more extensive duties, more numerous tabus. The higher one rises in the hier-

archy, the greater the onus. Every rung on the sacerdotal ladder brings increased prestige but usually no more money. In the candomblé, giving to the divinities is not a duty but a privilege, which is not granted to everyone and for which one receives part of the força, or power, of the divinities in return (Bastide, 1978: 228).

The terreiro is a community whose hierarchy is based on piety, learning, and innate fitness in the service of the òrìṣà. In a community unifying men and women of diverse socio-economic position, Candomblé abolishes within its sphere every hierarchy except the one based on relative closeness to the sacred. But its devotees are both those who struggle and those who fare well in a surrounding capitalist society rife with inequalities. The candomblé protects indiscriminately the poor, the rich, and those regarded on the outside as political and civil criminals. All who are pious in its faith deserve to be classified as "brothers" and "sisters," entitled therefore to the protection of the temple and its supporters (Carneiro, 1940: 275).

Thus, the informal membership of the candomblé extends far beyond the sacerdotal personnel, and so do the protection and financial support of those wealthy,

powerful, and skilled persons who are honored with the title of Ògán. In this way, the temple redistributes goods and services and offers political protection to the powerless and the needy. However, it does not generally involve itself directly in politics, aside from silently cooperating for its own benefit with those who are in power. Even in the 20th century, direct political action on the part of the candomblé has proven dangerous (Bastide, 1978: 232).

The Candomblé terreiro is a spiritual family, and calls itself that, supporting many of the spiritual, economic, and political needs of its membership. In maintaining its integrity as a spiritual family, it has suppressed within its sphere the reascendence of the family group and has transcended biological kin ties in the structures of association and authority of the group.

Among West African Yoruba, the priesthoods of the òrìṣà are regularly monopolized by particular kin groups, and in many cases an ìdílé (major patrilineage) may insist that an òrìṣà belongs to it. Bastide reports that in Bahia a priest may initiate neither sibling, offspring, nor spouse. A Bahian priest told him, "One cannot be at the same time carnal father and spiritual father to his



children" (1961: 298; see also 1978: 229). Herskovits, on the other hand, writes:

It is clear that all candomblé posts can be inherited but the fact that divination precedes election and that this may indicate a nominee who is no relative of the holder of a given office shows that the rule, if this is one, is by no means always followed (1966: 245).

The Ìyálórìṣà or Babalórìṣà is usually succeeded by the Ìyá- or Baba-kékeré, the "Little Mother" or "Little Father" who has trained for many years in preparation. The initiates of a terreiro are all regarded as the spiritual children of the Ìyálórìṣà or Babalórìṣà, but it is evident that in at least some quarters priests are not permitted to initiate their biological children in the same terreiro. It is apparent in most quarters that neither the priesthood nor the membership of particular temples is circumscribed by corporate kin or social groups of any other sort. The solidarity of the candomblé is integrative, carving out a new and effective social reality around the fractured families of an African proletariat and incorporating the faithful with little regard for their biological relatedness or unrelatedness.

In West Africa, the worship of the òrìṣà acts as an *expressive symbol*, signifying the spiritual aspect of a hierarchy of social solidarities. In Brazil, on the

other hand, the worship of the òrìṣà acts as an *effective symbol* constituting the òrìṣà-worshipping group, the terreiro, and the community of Candomblé as a whole. This is not to say that West African worship does not affirm social groups or that the West African cosmology does not, in its comprehension of the social reality, also affect that reality. On the contrary, as a theological comprehension and as a symbolic enactment of that comprehension, respectively, the worship of the òrìṣà and the cosmology in West Africa also give form to social groups. Everywhere, as Durkheim points out, the ideal is the real in the realm of the social. However, the degree to which the socially atomized Bahian proletariat would ever have come together in the economic, social, and political solidarity of the temples in the absence of the sacraments for the òrìṣà makes the terreiros quite unlike the worshipping communities of West Africa. The worship of the òrìṣà is the main *raison d'être* of the Bahian groups. Yet, in West Africa, an unbeliever remains an active member of the operational social group, retains relations to his maternal group and remains under the authority of the Aláâfin, the q̄ba, the chief, and the headman of the idilé.

By their own recollection and by inference from the òrìṣà worshipped by Bahians, the most religiously influential group of Bahian Yoruba are Kétu descendents (Abimbola, 1976: 624). Though significant contingents came from Òyó, Ìjẹ̀ṣà, and Dahomey as well, Abimbola reports that Yoruba descendents in Bahia generally refer to themselves as "òmọ-Alákétu," or "children of the King of Kétu" (Abimbola, 1976: 623-24; Bastide, 1978: 199). The following song is popularly rendered as entertainment at the opening ceremonies in many terreiros.

Òmọ Alákétu, ìbà í tó.	Children of Alákétu, I salute you.
Òmọ Alákétu, bàí kílèkè.	Children of Alákétu, I salute you
	people rich in costly beads.
Ìyá wá tó pe	Whenever our mothers call on us,
O o á chín piín oyān.	We the children are always long-
	ing for breast milk.
Éníyán a chín pòlórun,	Then we would call upon Ọlórún
Ao leṣè òrìṣà.	Standing at the feet of the òrìṣà.
Òmọ olù o,	Children of the great King,
Álákétu ree,	Behold the children of Alákétu.
Fala yín móla.	Cling to yourselves.
Fala yín mólaa,	Cling to yourselves, ye elders,
Bábá, fala yín mólaa.	Cling to yourselves.

(Abimbola, 1976: 624)

The song reflects the continued significance for the people of their historical origin and of their Yoruba-ness. The text bears an artifact of the Yoruba's kinship-type charter of socio-political authority, whereby the Alákétu is here regarded as the father of his sub-

jects, even when they have left his realm and are enslaved in another land. However, the nature of these Candomblé communities, taking form in Bahia around the worship of the òrìṣà is quite different from that in Òyô's vassal kingdom of Kétu. With its entirely voluntary, and yet highly indoctrinated membership, Candomblé represents a mode of religious and social expression quite different from the traditional state religion of the West African Yoruba Empire.

#### Church vs. Sect

The unity of the Bahian religion consists in certain theological and liturgical consistencies deriving from the dominance of Yoruba religious concepts and Yoruba-inspired organizational practices. Among the various "nations" by which the candomblés are identified -- Nagô, Congo, and even Caboclo (Afro-Amerindian), to name a few -- there is a distinctness of identity, but the broad unity of the candomblés is well recognized by insiders and outsiders alike. It is a unity that is theological and liturgical as well as political and organizational.

In 1937, a group of Babalórìṣà drew up a memorial to the Governor of Bahia, requesting the recognition of African religious organizations. Ramos synthesizes the

text of their petition:

I. Each people has its religion and its special way of worshipping God and the candomblé is the religious organization of the colored people of Bahia, descendants of Negro slaves who brought as a heritage the various African sects into which religious belief was divided. This heritage, even though divided and split, has a right to exist as the expression of a sentiment of human dignity among those on whom it has influence.

II. The able studies of such observers as Nina Rodrigues and Arthur Ramos, as well as the Afro-Brazilian congresses in Recife and Bahia, have proved that there is nothing in these beliefs or practices contrary to public order or anti-moral (Article 113 of the Federal Constitution). Both Nina Rodrigues and Arthur Ramos, as well as the scholars participating in the congresses have demanded the religious liberty of the Negroes as essential. Religious liberty is enjoyed by the Negroes of Pernambuco and was requested by the Bahia congress.

III. The religion of the Negroes is relegated to an inferior position, depending for its practice on the police authorities of Bahia. This inequality must be evident, as it is in contradiction to the constitutional provision of July 16, 1934.

These are the reasons, Your Excellency, that lead us to urge that you recognize the African sects in Bahia and their right to independent existence. (Ramos, 1939: 174-75)

Events led to the formation of the União das Seitas Afro-brasileiras da Bahia (Union of the Afro-Brazilian Sects of Bahia) on 3 August 1937, the purposes of which

were to secure freedom of religious expression and to guard the doctrinal purity of the Afro-Bahian candomblés. Religious leaders established a council in connection with the União, consisting of a representative from each candomblé, to assume responsibility for the normal conduct of the terreiros and, for their own protection, to limit their intervention in political matters (Ramos, 1939: 174-75; Carneiro, 1940: 278).

In the appearance of the União with its implications for the development of an episcopal system of governance, and in other features, Candomblé has proven to be sociologically analogous to a sect. The term is suggested by the terminology of the believers themselves, who, as we see above, alternatively refer to the terreiros as "seitas." However, the distinction takes on an additional significance in the context of sociological analysis. It is my hope to replace the term "cult" with a more descriptive and less potentially derogatory categorization. Where "cult" does not entail an insult, it properly specifies a group focussed upon an individual or upon a single divinity. For example, the cult of Şàngó, in the West African Yoruba literature, tends to refer to the group of persons and the sacerdotal organization which worship Şàngó. The cult, in this

sense, forms only a fragment of the Afro-Bahian temple and of its religious and social world at large. In keeping with the aim of this discussion, it is useful to label the relation between Candomblé and the West African religion from which it originated. The church-sect distinction defined by sociologists of European religion calls to attention several central points of difference between the social roles and geneses of Candomblé and the religion of the West African Yoruba.

In The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches (1976), Ernst Troeltsch outlines a typology current in the sociology of religion. The church is that system of organization which is overwhelmingly conservative, and, to a certain extent, accepts the secular order. It dominates the religious lives of the masses. In principle, therefore, it is universal and seeks to cover the whole life of humanity. Sects, on the other hand, are comparatively small groups whose members aspire to personal inward perfection and aim at direct personal fellowship among the membership of each group. From the beginning, they are forced to organize themselves in small groups and to renounce the idea of dominating the world.

The attitude of the sect toward the world, the state, and society may be indifferent, tolerant, or

hostile, since they have no desire to control and incorporate these forms of social life. Most often, they tend to avoid them: their aim is usually either to tolerate the secular presence alongside their own body, or even to replace profane social institutions with their own fraternity.

Both types are connected with the actual social situation and the role of their respective memberships in society. The fully developed church incorporates the state and the ruling classes and thus becomes an integral part of the dominant existing social order. Hence, the church both stabilizes and determines the dominant social order. In so doing, the integrity of its organization depends on the upper classes and on their development. Sects, on the other hand, are connected with the lower classes, or at least with those elements in the society which are opposed to the state and to the social order. These features actually differentiated the late Medieval European Church from the Euro-Christian sects, and, in Troeltsch's view, they had their foundation in "the structure of the social edifice."

Originally, the term "sect" was used in a polemical or apologetic sense, describing groups which separated themselves from the official Church while retaining



certain fundamental elements of Euro-Christian thought. By the very fact that they were outside the corporate life of the ecclesiastical tradition -- a position which was usually forced upon them -- they were regarded as inferior side-issues, one-sided phenomena, exaggerations or abbreviations of ecclesiastical Christianity. But this clearly represents the viewpoint of the Church. (See Troeltsch, 1976: Vol. I, 331-37). However, it is clear that other factors, sociological and intellectual, have contributed to the formation of traditions in the sects. Both phenomena have been demonstrated in the case of Candomblé.

Obviously confirming features of Troeltsch's understanding of the European case, the West African Yoruba sociologist and believer Abimbola respectfully observes that Candomblé has lost some of the doctrinal and musical sophistication of the West African Yoruba religion, both factors being quite essential to the worship of the divinities (1976: 626). But the appearance of the candomblé -- with its cultivation of strong communities of the devout and oppressed in a context which did not incorporate these communities organically and with a symbolic understanding of the cosmos consonant with their own social experience -- represents something altogether different to its Bahian adherents.

The essence of the church-type is its strong institutional character. The individual is born into it, and, in Roman Catholicism, he comes under its immediate authority through infant baptism. The church-type dominates society, constitutionally subsuming all citizens under its spiritual domain. Yet, its stability is entirely unaffected by the extent to which its theological influence over all individuals is actually realized. The sect, on the other hand, is a voluntary community, whose members join of their own free and individual will. The very life of the sect depends on actual personal service and cooperation. Though the 150-year existence of the Ilé Ìyá Nàso candomblé suggests a degree of continuity that we are inclined to associate with strong institutions, its ideology of membership and authority and the relative youth of most candomblés suggest a difference of considerable degree from the church-type. An individual is not born into the sect; he enters it on the basis of conscious conversion and indoctrination, just as one joins the candomblé (Ibid.: 338-39). Moreover, the Bahian cosmology conveys a strong sense of cultural and psychological separatedness, in a word, from the dominant social order, confirming its likeness to the sect-type.

In West African Yoruba religion, the cults of the divinities are not traditionally bound together in a specifically ecclesiastical hierarchy and organization, as is the Roman Catholic Church, for example. However, all the major cults are integrated into the structure of the kingdom, and, as such, the cults and their hereditary priesthoods represent one level of a highly integrated and institutionalized theocratic state. Our application of the term "church" to a religious structure which stands within the political structures of the state is heuristic and does not contradict the essential features of the type. We have seen how West African Yoruba religion complements and links into the dominant socio-political structures of the Òyó Empire partly by means of the theological indoctrination of a theoretically universal membership. Its theological and cosmological structures imply a universal and all-encompassing order of life, justifying the universal sovereignty of that state. Its institutional structures express, complement, stabilize, and effect lines of authority and interpenetrative lines of allegiance in the Empire, the kingdoms, the towns, and the ìdílé (major patrilineages).

Candomblé shares with the "mother church" a large body of theological concepts and liturgical practices -- including belief in the òrìṣà and their powers; the con-

cept of spiritual kinship through the òrìṣà; the identification of the divinities with particular songs, objects, colors, and natural forces; concepts of sacrifice and possession by the divinities; hierarchal priesthood; and, often, a shared liturgical language.

The depth of their similarities and the full detail of their differences are beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is clear that certain qualities of the sect's theology -- as the modification of the concept of òrìṣà as ancestors -- and the role of its temples in the larger Bahian society are noticeably different. Candomblé originated among Yoruba slaves, proletarians, and sub-proletarians whose social existence was no longer organized within the encompassing structures of Yoruba kinship and statecraft.

The type of comprehension the Bahian cosmology provides for the social relations of Afro-Bahians is considerably more subtle than even the complex relations we see between West African Yoruba religion and social groups. The persistence of basically West African structures of belief in itself restricts the "vocabulary" of the Afro-Bahian's mythic understanding. However, within the Yoruba cosmological idiom, Afro-Bahians are quite articulate about the state of their social life. First, the Bahian image of the social world is no longer one surrounded by the whole and well-circumscribed realms of

Sky and Earth, made of the same piece as the orderly World of kingdoms and of highly extended kinship. Instead, Afro-Bahians are an island torn away from that World, required to call their gods down from Africa. The ethnocentrism and globalness of the West African cosmogony are gone, no longer tenable under the pressure of historical conditions. Changes in the nature of the African family in Bahia, particularly the ascendance of the mother-centered and, less often, the conjugal family -- over the impossibility of the patrilineage and the polygynous family -- are reflected in the Bahian cosmogony. In theology, not only have female divinities ascended to a level of importance unparalleled in West Africa but Odùduà is asserted as a female principle, symbolically allotting maternity a social significance equal to that of paternity. In the Afro-Bahian family, as in the terreiro, the social importance of women as spiritual and carnal mothers is great, for, as stated above, women are the most prestigious terreiro chiefs in Candomblé. The authority of the "Mãe-de-Santo" (Mother-in-Saintliness), or Iyálórìṣà, over the "Filhos-" and "Filhas-de-Santo" (Sons- and Daughters-in-Saintliness) and her responsibility for them extend into social, economic, and spiritual spheres.

The central insight provided by the Bahian theology lies in the alteration of the concept of òrìṣà as primordial ancestors. Where a genealogical idiom of social organization was unreasonable as well as impossible, concepts of spiritual kinship mark off the social unity of Afro-Bahians (who worship African gods), of the terreiro community (which worships them together), and of the òrìṣà-worshipping group (which worships one òrìṣà together). Each of these groups circumscribes, for Afro-Bahians, a certain degree of "brotherhood-" and "sisterhood-in-saintliness," "motherhood-" and "fatherhood-in-saintliness" each characterized by its own rules of authority, interpersonal responsibility, and exogamy.

As a comprehension of categories of spiritual kin, the Yoruba cosmology and practices of worship in Bahia constitute a core of effective symbols in the organization of the Candomblé community. Religious innovation provided a structural principle for new and smaller voluntary communities based on the pious service of the òrìṣà and creating social, economic, and, in significant ways, political solidarity among the oppressed. In particular historical cases, sect-type organizations have been founded rather purely on the basis of factionalism in matters of dogma, but these cases are indeed rare (Troeltsch, 1976: 337). In the

case under consideration, theological innovations seem to have been the outcome of gross changes in the social environment, such as proletarianization, and the efforts of African people to explain other changes, such as the formation of the spiritual family of the candomblé. We are thus affirmed in observing that Candomblé constitutes a sect thrown off from the West African church as a result not of dissent but of kidnapping.

### Conclusions

Traditional social groupings were invariably crushed in the teeth of the slave raids, the Middle Passage, and the sugar plantations. During periods of high demand for cane sugar, Bahian slave-owners found it less expensive to import new slaves than to allow families to grow, and, during periods of economic stagnation, they enforced sexual license in the name of breeding more livestock. At no point did the senhores de engenho or the government regularly respect the integrity even of the slave family. Even after emancipation, tremendous economic insecurity left little room for stable and coherent family groups above the level of the mother-centered elementary family, corresponding to the little origun of the West African Yoruba.

Certainly, neither the idílé (major patrilineage), the isòkó (minor patrilineage), the agbò-ilé (compound) nor the ilé té mi (polygynous household) remained viable options for social organization among Brazilian Nagô. The town and the polity were, in most cases (excluding the quilombos), irrelevant possibilities for the African slaves and workers. The plantations themselves had framed powerful, if odious, social and economic corporate groupings governing the lives of the slaves. Emancipation, however, bankrupted these units and left the atomized and disenfranchised libertos to seek unity and succor elsewhere.

The traditional Yoruba creation myth did not furnish even a nearly accurate model of the social circumstances facing the African in Bahia. In theory and in practice, the patrilineal and patrilocal social relationships stressed symbolically in that cosmogony and cosmology had been overthrown. Some understandings of great importance are expressed in the Bahian mythic reformulation. One is the acknowledgement of the conjugal family and of the importance of maternity where the patrilineage and the polity had lost, perforce, their centrality. Moreover, the transformation of the òrìṣà from great ancestors to "gods from Africa" and "owners of one's head" establish the positive totemic significance of



African-ness and the diminution of biological kinship as the idiom of social unity among African proletarians estranged from their homeland.

The communities in West Africa whose structured integration was articulated in the worship of the òrìṣà were reinterpreted in the Bahian context. Brazilian Africans founded terreiro communities in which they could continue to "feed" the beloved òrìṣà and make them "come down" from their home in Africa to give strength and restore order within these overseas communities of the devout. Though nominally protected by Brazilian constitutional law through much of the history of the country, these religious communities struggled to maintain themselves in the face of violent police persecution and the opposition of municipal officials and the official state religion.

The holy intent of the African worshippers in no way detracts from the value of the terreiros as mutual-aid societies, in which the ritualization of spiritual kinship culminates in the redistribution of goods and services and in the reaffirmation of the social and political integrity of a people.

## CHAPTER SIX

THE SPIRIT OF A PEOPLE:YORUBA RELIGION IN WEST AFRICA AND BAHIA

As we refine our understanding of the particular cultural and historical connections between the Gulf of Guinea and Bahia, it is essential to recall the larger historical context of the spread of African civilization in the Americas. In light of Van Sertima's 1976 study of pre-Columbian culture contacts between Africa and Mesoamerica, there is good reason to believe this diffusion did not begin during the relatively recent forced migration of Africans to the New World. To understand this is to clear the way for a less Eurocentric evaluation not only of the African-Americans but of contemporary American civilization as a whole.

Here I have tried to illuminate one cross-section of the Africa/America connection through the study of the state religion of the West African Yoruba and of the Yoruba sect in Bahia, well noted as the most striking development of Yoruba culture in the Americas. It is one thing to point out the existence of connections, and it is another to grasp the dynamic of diffusion and development. While the progress of this description culminates on the particular innovations of the Bahian

sect, the central analytic focus is to be found on a deeper level: we see on two continents the dialectic interaction of religious meaning and socio-political organization. Our understanding of this phenomenon will hopefully shed light on forms of dynamism in Yoruba religion, both at its origin and in other parts of the diaspora, especially Cuba, Trinidad, and Hispaniola.

What is in West Africa a state religion, expressing and supporting the dominant relations of governance, production, and reproduction, has inspired in Bahia the development of institutions which, though persecuted by the Brazilian state, have attended ingeniously to the social, economic, political, and psychological needs of an oppressed people. As I have tried to show, Yoruba religious ideas have been used to conceptualize and justify specific socio-political relationships. They articulate the sort of standard understandings of role and status on which any institutional arrangement relies. Likewise, the development of social institutions adaptive to these two contexts has given form to cosmological and theological innovations, not only in the newness of the Bahian situation but also in the dynamism of West African politics and kinship-qua-economic relations.

The church/sect distinction describes two dimensions of this dialectic which have been taken apart in the preceding chapters in order to highlight dynamic elements. The first dimension is the conceptual universe, and the second is the field of action. The Afro-Bahian conceptual universe and the West African conceptual universe share a common origin, which seems to have taken form well before the rise of Òyó in an old tradition of Yoruba cosmological and theological discourse. In each context, the conceptual universe defines a field of action. This is the aspect of West African or Bahian society covered by the divine dispensation and governed by religious authorities -- priests or divine kings. The interaction of each conceptual universe with its corresponding field of action should be kept in mind always in this analysis.

The West African religious organization presumes a total coverage of society. Since every person is born of the òrìṣà, every person is bound in service to the divinities. The domain of a particular divinity is defined, more often than not, in tandem with central units of kinship and polity. In the conceptions of Yoruba people, these units seem to have an a priori

existence in the domains of government, production, and reproduction. A West African worshipper is likely to say, "We sacrifice to Oṣala because our father sacrificed to Oṣàlá, as did his father before him" or "because our grandmother, mother of this origun (sub-lineage) sacrificed to Oṣàlá." The reasoning of the priests is far more sophisticated, as we have seen, but the worshipper's reasoning is sufficient to suggest that the idiom of descent from the òrìṣà is generally a metaphor expressing the unity of standing socio-political groups -- like the compound, the town, the kingdom, and the Empire. The field of action for the religion in West Africa is a church, then, not only in the Durkheimian sense, as the corps of worshippers, but in Troeltsch's sense, as an organization encompassing a universal membership and taking its ideological and institutional forms from the dominant relations of production and government.

On the other hand, the candomblé, simply by virtue of being a group of Africans organized for their own purposes, stands in contradiction to the dominant relations of production and government in Brazil. The intensity of the state's persecution through most of

the 19th and 20th centuries stands as clear evidence of the conflict. For most Africans, except perhaps the inhabitants of some quilombos (autonomous Afro-Brazilian settlements), the kinship-polity units of West African social organization were unviable. One option of choice appears in the form of the candomblé. Candomblé institutionalizes a realm of social relations where none of any substance had existed before. When an individual enters into the formal worship of the òrìṣà, he acquires a new set of social responsibilities to his brothers and sisters, fellow "children" of that òrìṣà. The elementary family is integrated into this social network through its members who are initiates, and the benefits may be considerable. To the West African way of thinking, an individual is already brother, sister, or compatriot to others worshipping the same òrìṣà. Should one enter the worship of an òrìṣà generally thought to belong to another socio-political group, it is thought that some forgotten ancestor must have come from that group, but one does not acquire through such worship any new rights or responsibilities in relation to that other group. In Brazil, on the other hand, worship and offerings to the òrìṣà are conceived to effect social relationships.

"Sister, I require your assistance in the market tomorrow" is a request which permits no refusal by a junior initiate of the same divinity. "Father, you must save our brother from the police," said to an Ògán, would never fall upon deaf ears.

The expressive/effective distinction captures some important aspects of the logic of worship in West Africa and Bahia. What it does not imply is an inversion of causal relations. The direction of causation here is not to be determined, for the logic and objects of worship are never solely an effect or solely a cause of the institutional order (see Jay, 1981). Rather, in these two cases they seem to explain and justify relations among individuals and groups. West African patterns in variation among homologous myths, in the assertion of particular òrìṣà in the structures of the state, and, occasionally, in the segmentation of the ìdílé (major patrilineage) show conspicuously the dialectic between liturgical and political structures, between theological understanding and socio-political practice. Bahian cosmology and theology act in a very different institutional and sociological setting, but we see again the interplay of social conditions and theology. In West Africa the logic of expressive symbolism provides the groundwork for the incorporation of all individuals into a universalist church. The logic

of effective symbolism establishes and explains the voluntary association of the candomblé as the field of action for Afro-Bahian religious constructs.

Very much a part of this difference in the extension of the field of action is the priestly definition of the meaningful context, the conceptual universe. In West Africa, the theologian's understanding of the òrìṣà is part of a social charter based on the assertion of nationwide kinship through the divinities. The West African Yoruba cosmos is round and whole, placing the people at the center of an orderly system of vertical responsibilities (àiyé) between Earth (ilẹ̀) and Sky (ilẹ̀ orún).

In Bahia, the òrìṣà are extracted from the biological kinship charter but are retained in the role of ultimate spiritual mothers and fathers, or protectors. Spiritual kinship through the òrìṣà thus defines horizontal and vertical dimensions of social responsibility in the Afro-Bahian community. The orderly and whole Yoruba conception of the cosmos is severely altered. The architectonics of the Afro-Bahian cosmos do not place the faithful in an orderly World (àiyé) at the center of the cosmos; rather, the Bahian "children" of the òrìṣà occupy a self-consciously remote colony, where worship requires



calling the divinities from a distant and supernal Africa. Religious representations here create and signify a social solidarity that defies and transcends the dominant order. The Bahian appeal to the òrìṣà as effective symbols links the theology of the sect to the maintenance of its institutional domain.

These terreiros duplicate in microcosm liturgical dimensions of Yoruba kingdom organization. Like the kingdom, each terreiro worships a variety of òrìṣà and each is led in that worship by the terreiro chief, who, like the oba (king), is responsible for seeing that all officially acknowledged divinities receive proper worship. Each terreiro is dedicated to one principal òrìṣà, which identifies the terreiro also in relation to the terreiro where its founder originated. Analogously, the òrìṣà-qua-founders of the senior Yoruba kingdoms are identified as royal children of Odùduà, first Òni of Ifẹ̀. Like the kingdom, each terreiro is penetrated by cross-cutting networks of òrìṣà-worship which, in West Africa, would define the various allegiances of immigrant ìdílé (major patrilineages). For its part, the terreiro is a spiritual kingdom delimiting a set of social responsibilities and whose membership is connected by spiritual fili-

ation to other terreiros.

It is well to remember that these religious communities, spiritual kingdoms, if you will, stand in the midst of a capitalist society. Worshippers work in factories and in the homes of white people, they sell food and drive taxis, they vote and join unions. Some own businesses, and many more find no remunerative work. They are governed, policed, and punished by agents of the owning classes, in whose conceptual universe the African is primarily a servant, concubine, or criminal. In such an ideological climate, the theology of Candomblé is a radical statement. In the segregated conceptual universe of the candomblé, the African is a child of the gods, a priest, a healer, a teacher, a philosopher, and an organizer. The Afro-Bahian is, moreover, a man or woman with a history, a person not to be defined by the servitude he has endured for a few generations. Such a conceptual universe sustains and is sustained by a spiritual kingdom segregated from the dominant political and economic order and yet mending together the casualties of that order.

In West Africa, the Yoruba conceptual universe literally surrounds the believer, for it is institutionalized in all the most fundamental units of his

or her social existence. The church is all groups chartered on the kinship-polity principle, and religious institutions in Yorubaland are incorporated into the structures of government and kinship organization to express principles of political authority and representation under the universal framework of the *Òyó* Empire. Here Yoruba faith articulates the patrilineal and pyramidal structures of sovereign socio-political organization as well as the complicated but orderly interlinking of social, economic, and political groups defined with the general field of action by kingdoms, localities, towns, wards, patrilineages, and a variety of lineage segments. The cosmological and theological constructs that undergird the worship of the *òrìṣà* form a basic charter, or set of charters, for the state. Moreover, the idiom of this mythic kinship is manipulated by various social and political actors to reinterpret domains of power and privilege. In West Africa, there appears to be no segregation of the religious universe of meaning from the general social order. The same logical idiom of worship comprehends both assimilation and the dissent forming new social segments, which are nonetheless part of the social whole. It is a global conceptual universe.

The Bahian sect maintains a segregated conceptual universe cut from the same cloth as the Yoruba church and yet sewn into a different garment. It continues to describe its internal integrity in terms of its faith in the gods of Africa. It defines individual worth in terms of one's African-ness and relative closeness to the gods of Africa, not in terms of wealth or acculturation in Euro-Brazilian ways. The terreiro is, according to the worshipper, a piece of Africa, yet the spiritual protection of its divinities, the network of responsibility and hierarchy they define, and the self-concepts that they prescribe extend well beyond the temple grounds. Where the people work, where they live, and where they struggle in every way to endure, Afro-Bahians carry with them the knowledge and the symbols of their role in the community of the faithful.

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