

single sentence  
ONLY!

Yoruba Religion: Santeria

- I. **Santeria** was influenced by Spanish colonial Catholicism and grew up in Cuba (Molloy 478). And an influx of Cuban immigrants over the past thirty years has introduced Santeria to the United States (Molloy 478).
- A. **Santeria** is the best-known religious movement to result from the mixture of Yoruba religions and Christianity (Molloy 478).
1. The Yoruba-based religions are now several hundred years old, but for a variety of reasons they are today the focus of renewed interest (Molloy 478).
  2. Of the West African religions that were brought to the New World, those of the Yoruba people, who live in what is today Nigeria and Benin, were the most influential (Molloy 478).
  3. Slaves were often forcibly baptized into Roman Catholic Christianity, and African religious practice was suppressed (Molloy 479).
  4. In order to survive, the African religions took on an appearance of conformity to Catholic belief and practice (Molloy 479).
  5. On the surface, devotees were venerating Catholic saints, but in reality they were using the images of the saints as representations of their native gods (Molloy 479).
  6. It is possible that apparent similarities in belief and approach between the Yoruba religion and Roman Catholicism permitted syncretism (Molloy 479).
  7. Both systems believed in a single High God, in supernatural beings who mediate between God and human beings, and in the existence of spirits of the dead (Molloy 479).
  8. Both systems trusted in the power of ritual and made frequent use of ritual elements (Molloy 480).
- B. Although the new religions of the Yoruba tradition do believe in a single High God, they differ from Catholicism in that the Yoruba God is in essence a neutral energy that does not show personal interest in individual human affairs (Molloy 480).
1. Human beings must approach the High God and can gain power only by contacting invisible supernatural beings, called **orishas** (Molloy 480).
  2. The orishas are sometimes called gods (Molloy 480).
  3. They may be gentle, capricious, playful, or wise, and they like particular foods and colors (Molloy 480).
  4. They are in charge of certain aspects of nature (for example, oceans, plants, lightning), and they know specialized crafts (such as metalworking) (Molloy 480).
  5. In order to make the orishas strong, to keep them happy, and to extract favors from them, human beings have to keep them fed- and the orishas are not vegetarian (Molloy 480).