

1 **Mental Health Aspects of Afro-Caribbean Religious Practices: Santeria (Ocha/Lukumi) Religion**

2 **SYNCRETISM**

- Integration or accommodation of cultural traits
 - Language
 - Cuba: (Spanish-Yoruba-Bantu)
 - Haiti: (French-Congo-Yoruba-Fon)
 - Family customs
 - Health beliefs & practices
 - Religious beliefs and rituals
 - Other areas of cultural life
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3 **Afro-Cuban Santeria**

- A cultural blend of Roman Catholicism and Yoruba religion
 - Yoruba culture is found in Nigeria (West Africa)
 - Symbols, rituals and beliefs were re-interpreted and fused into a new system
 - SANTERIA (REGLA OCHA)

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6 **SELECTED AFRO-AMERICAN SYNCRETISMS**

7 **Elements of the SYNCRETISM process....**

- Emphasis of the Roman Catholic in the role of Catholic Church (during colonial times)
- Similarities of colors, symbols, powers, stories (mythology), etc.
- Rituals in honor of the saints originally used by the slaves as a disguise to continue the Orisha worship

8 **Santeria: Basic Structure**

- ✓ Each person is born with a guardian Orisha
 - Similarities with Christian "guardian angel"
- ✓ Concept of ACHE
 - Power concept similar to other "forces" found in different religions; supernatural energy.
- ✓ Initiation into Santeria Rituals: "Casa de Santo" (Padrino, Madrina – "Yyalocha", "Babalocha")
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9 **The 'religious' family
("Ile" or Casa de Santo)**

Padrino (Godfather) or Madrina (Godmother)

Ahijado(a) Ahijado(a) Ahijada(o) Ahijada(o)

10 **INITIATED PRACTITIONERS: PRIESTS & PRIESTESSES OF SANTERIA**

- SANTERO/SANTERA
- BABALAWO
- ITALERO
- PINALDO
- Santeria believers (i.e., followers): ALEYOS

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Afro –Cuban Deities

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ELEGUA

God of Destiny and the Crossroads

Colors: Red and Black

Numbers: 3, 21

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OGUN

Warrior; God of iron & metals

- Colors: Green and Black
- Number: 7
- Sacred places: railroad tracks

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OCHOSI

Warrior; god of justice and divine hunter

- Colors: Gold and Blue
- Number: 3
- Sacred places: jail house, any legal/law-related building

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OBATALA

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CHANGO

God of thunder and drums

- Colors: Red and White
- Numbers: 4 and 6
- Sacred places/objects: Royal palm tree, Ceiba (silk cotton) tree; double-edge ax

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DIVINATION TECHNIQUES

- DILOGGUN – COWRIE SHELLS:
 - ODUS
 - PROCESS OF DIVINATION
- COCONUT – OBI:
 - 4 PIECES
 - POSITIONS INTERPRETED
- EKUELE NECKLACES
 - USED BY BABALAWOS

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HACER SANTO ('making saint')

- 1 year priesthood initiation period
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- Observance of taboos & restrictions
- Dress in white
- Transition stage to full priest/priestess status
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43 **Causes of Disruption and Intervention Methods**

- 1
 - Trabajo
 - Brujeria
 - Bilongo
 - Presence of the Dead
 - Punishment by the Orishas
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- 2
 - Despojos
 - Limpiezas
 - Rogacion de Cabeza
 - Collares (Necklaces Rituals)
 - Ebbos/Adimus
 - Hacer Santo

1 **How did it all start?**

- Slavery and the African Diaspora
- Syncretism: integration or accommodation of cultural traits from both the European (French) and African cultures (West and Central African cultures)
 - Language (French-Bantu-Arawak-Fon)
 - Family customs; health beliefs & practices, etc
 - Religious beliefs and rituals
 - Etc.
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2 **VOODOO: ORIGINS, PRIESTS, RITUALS**

- AFRO-AMERICAN SYNCRETISM
 - West African cultures (mostly Dahomey & Fon cultures) + French culture (the military, art, Masonry + Roman Catholicism)
- PRIESTS AND INITIATED PRACTITIONERS
 - Houngan – males (Papa Loa)
 - Mambo – females (Maman Loa)
 - Hunsì – females – helpers to houngan or mambo
 - Bokor – black magic (Petro) practitioners
 - Pere Savanne – herbalists, bush priests
 - Hungenikon – Choìs master in a Voodoo Temple

3 **VOODOO GODS AND SPIRITS**

- LOAS (Les mysteres)
 - Supernatural beings in Voodoo (translated as “gods” , “divinities”)
- LOAS RACINE
 - Inherited ancestral spirit(s) of a family
- Two branches:
 - RADA – family of loas and its rituals (benevolent rituals)
 - PETRO – family of loas and its rituals (usually malevolent, aggressive magic)

4 **SELECTED GODS & SPIRITS**

- Gran Maitre – Creator Deity – Origin of all things
- Legba Attibon
 - Attributes/Characteristics: Crossroads, destiny, old man in crutches
 - Syncretism: St. Lazarus, St. Anthony
 - Symbols: Crutches
 - Colors: Red
 - Offerings: Smoked foods, mottled rooster

5 **Vodou Botanica: Legba & Ogu**

6 **Legba Atibon**

7 **VOODOO GODS & SPIRITS**

■ Ogu Feray

- ☐ Attributes/Characteristics: Warrior/soldier, fire
- ☐ Syncretism: St. James the Elder
- ☐ Symbols: Sabre, sword driven into the earth
- ☐ Colors: Red
- ☐ Offerings: Red rooster, bull

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9 **VOODOO GODS & SPIRITS**

■ Damballah

- ☐ Attributes/Characteristics: Principle of goodness, luck, happiness
- ☐ Syncretism: St. Patrick
- ☐ Symbols: Springs, rivers, water falls, snakes, rainbow
- ☐ Colors: White
- ☐ Offerings: Anything white, hens, milk, rice

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11 **DAMBALLAH**12 **VOODOO GODS & SPIRITS**

■ Erzulie

- ☐ Attributes/Characteristics: Sensuality, love, promiscuity
- ☐ Syncretism: Our Lady of Sorrows, Virgin Mary
- ☐ Symbols: Hear with piercing sword, mirrors
- ☐ Colors: Blue, pink
- ☐ Offerings: Toiletries, perfumes, refined dishes, rice, chicken

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13 **VOODOO GODS & SPIRITS**

■ Baron Samedi

- ☐ Attributes/Characteristics: Death personified, Lord of the burial grounds
- ☐ Syncretism: All souls day (Nov 2)
- ☐ Symbols: Dark (black) clothes, dark glasses, walking cane, cross
- ☐ Colors: Black
- ☐ Offerings: Black goats, birds, rum, cake

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VOODOO GODS & SPIRITS

■ Gede

- ☐ Loa of the dead
- ☐ Usually conceptualized of as a family of dead spirits
- ☐ Inhabit the cemeteries and underground places
- ☐ Colors are purple, white and/or black
- ☐ Possession signaled by obscene gestures and signals
- ☐ Nov. 2 (All souls day)

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VOODOO RITUALS■ Rituals

- ☐ Service – ceremony in honor of the loas and ancestral spirits
- ☐ Manger loa – ceremony intended to feed the loa (food offerings and animal sacrifice)

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VOODOO RITUALS

■ Rituals (continued)

- ☐ Baptism – Ceremony to settle a loa in the head
- ☐ Salutations and Libations – Water sprinkled to the 4 cardinal points
- ☐ Mystical marriage to a loa

17

VEVES

- Sacred drawings used to invoke the LOAS