

THE FEAST OF GOOD DEATH: AN AFRO-CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION CELEBRATION IN BRAZIL

Sheila S. Walker

The Feast of Good Death

Each year on the Friday evening nearest August 15 in the town of Cachoeira in the state of Bahia in northeastern Brazil, several dozen Afro-Brazilian women begin the reenactment of the complex Afro-Catholic religious ceremonial that their enslaved African ancestors created more than one and a half centuries ago. Catholic processions and masses in honor of the death and assumption into heaven of the Virgin Mary are interwoven with symbols and interpretations fundamental to the Candomblé, the religion of Yoruba origin that is the basis of Afro-Brazilian spiritual life in Bahia and in the other parts of Brazil with significant populations of African origin. The solemnity of the sacred celebration is complemented by an energetic *samba de roda* (ring samba) typical of Cachoeira and based on African dance styles. The *Festa da Boa Morte* (Feast of Good Death) is an exemplary manifestation of the multi-layered reality of Afro-Brazilian culture.

The women are members of the *Irmandade da Boa Morte* (Sisterhood of Good Death) created within the Catholic Church in the early nineteenth century, which numbered up to two hundred women when Cachoeira was a wealthy sugar cane producing area. As the sisters explained, the Virgin Mary died on a Friday and, being without sin, was assumed into heaven in body and soul on the following Sunday—certainly a "good death." Hence the Catholic Feast of the Assumption on August 15. The Virgin is known as *Nossa Senhora da Boa Morte* (Our Lady of Good Death) from her death to her assumption, at which point she becomes *Nossa Senhora da Gloria* (Our Lady of Glory). The real theme of the Boa Morte pageantry, then, is less one of mourning for the Virgin Mary's death, than one of rejoicing for her assumption into heaven.

On Friday evening the sisters carry a reclining statue of Our Lady of Good Death in a solemn procession through the streets to Cachoeira's largest church, where they place the statue in front of the altar. After a mass of mourning for the Saint and for the deceased members of the Sisterhood, they return to their meeting house to serve a dinner to the members of the community who accompany them there.

On Saturday evening after spending the day preparing the feast they will serve on Sunday, the sisters walk together to the church where another mass of mourning is said for Our Lady of Good Death. They again carry the statue through the streets in a funeral procession accompanied by mournful music from one of the town's two bands. The statue is then placed in the museum of religious articles contiguous to the church, where it will remain during the year, and a standing statue of Our Lady of Glory is taken from the museum into the church. Sisters and people who have attended the mass touch the statue to request the saint's blessings, and the congregation eventually disperses.

On Sunday morning, the sisters again gather at their meeting house and walk together to the church, taking their usual places in the front pews for the mass celebrating the assumption of Our Lady of Glory into heaven. In a final triumphant procession, the statue of Our Lady of Glory is carried through the town accompanied by bands playing joyous music, and by many of the people who attended the mass, some of whom help the sisters to carry the statue. At the end of the procession the sisters return the statue to the museum until their next annual procession, and return to their meeting house followed by many people from the town. After serving a copious meal to these guests, the sisters rest for the ring samba they will dance on Sunday evening and repeat on Monday and Tuesday evenings, again offering food to all who attend.

Although the priest who said the masses insisted that the Feast of Good Death was a purely Catholic celebration, numerous indicators suggest that this is not the entire explanation of the event. The most obvious indicator is that a purely Catholic ceremony in Bahia peopled exclusively by Afro-Brazilian women is, while not entirely impossible, at least highly improbable—and in this case is a definite misperception of the complex meanings of the event. In Bahia, the area of Brazil in which African culture has remained the strongest and most influential, the religion of the overwhelming majority of the Afro-Brazilian population, and of much of the non-Afro-Brazilian population also, is the Candomblé. This is true in spite of most Bahians', including Candomblé members' and leaders', formal membership in the Catholic Church, and is consistent with the veneer of Catholicism that has allowed the Candomblé to persist from the period of slavery up to the present in spite of persecution by the political authorities.

The Candomblé is based on the worship of the Orishás, the spiritual beings of the Yoruba people of the current nation of Nigeria, whose religion managed to survive the middle passage from West Africa to the Americas. The Orishás represent major forces of nature and human life, and are intimately involved in the social and individual lives of their devotees. They are honored in ceremonies in which they are believed to come into the human community by manifesting themselves in the bodies of their devotees who have been prepared by initiation to receive them and who, in a trance state, dance the movements characteristic of the Orishás to compelling drum rhythms.

When forced to learn about Catholicism by the Portuguese and prohibited from worshipping the Orishás openly during slavery, the Africans learned the names and characteristics of some of the Catholic saints and established equivalences based on the similar attributes they perceived between them and the Orishás. St. Lazarus the leper, the statue of whom shows his skin covered by sores, was assimilated to Omolú or Obaluaiye, the Orishá of smallpox, which is characterized by skin eruptions. By extension the Orishá of all illness and of death, Omolú can also restore health and life. Maternal Orishás such as Yemanjá, Orishá of the ocean, were assimilated to various versions of the Virgin Mary. And the most exalted Orishá, Oshalá, who was responsible for creating human beings, was seen as equivalent to Jesus on the basis of the importance of both in their respective religious systems.

There are no material images of the Orishás, who are supernatural forces, but the statues of the saints came to represent the equivalent Orishás. And, on feast days for the saints the Africans feigned that they were worshipping the saints to camouflage their real intention of honoring the equivalent Orishás, a subterfuge that insured the preservation of their spiritual reality. Eventually the Africans become Afro-Brazilians began to believe in the power of the saints to help them, but never to the exclusion of the basis of their religious life—the Orishás. Thus, although the Feast of Good Death clearly is a real Catholic celebration that represents more than just a veneer of Catholicism, to say that it is purely Catholic ignores the meaning of much of the sisters' symbolic behavior, and oversimplifies what is actually a complex cultural statement.

For the Friday procession the sisters wear the same elaborate lacey, long full skirts and blouses that they wear to participate in Candomblé ceremonies. They also emphasize that the meal they serve to the community is "white food," which, in terms of absolute color—fish, lettuce and tomato salad, red berry wine—some of it is not. When asked why they wear white and serve "white food," the sisters reply, "Because it is Friday." Friday is the day of Oshalá, who represents peace and wisdom and whose color is white. "White food" in the Candomblé context is food prepared without the red palm oil used in much Candomblé cookery. After Candomblé ceremonies the favorite foods of the feted Orishá are served to everyone in attendance, which is probably the model for the public feasting that characterizes the Feast of Good Death, as opposed to other Catholic saints' days on which there is no feasting. On Fridays, however, no food is prepared with palm oil because of Oshalá. This symbolism of the white clothes and food on Friday suggests that the ostensibly Catholic pageantry may also contain other symbolic behaviors that are more related to the Candomblé than to Catholicism.

For the Saturday and Sunday processions the women dress in the characteristic uniform of the Sisterhood, consisting of a long black pleated skirt, white blouse and head tie, and black stole lined with red satin and worn over one shoulder. Whereas on Saturday the stole is worn with the black side out to express mourning for Our Lady of Good Death, on Sunday it is worn with the red side out to express the joy of her assumption into heaven as Our Lady of Glory. On Sunday the sisters add many chain-link necklaces and bracelets to make their outfits more festive, and perhaps also to symbolize the chains of bondage from which their enslaved ancestresses gained their freedom.

The beauty of the garment is one reason for which members of the Sisterhood say they like belonging to it, some adding that the uniforms are also a source of spiritual protection. Sisters have traditionally been buried in them. The Candomblé again provides the explanation for the meaning of the otherwise not obvious red, black, and white colors of the Sisterhood's uniform, which hardly represent Catholic mourning colors. They are rather the colors associated with the Orishá Omolú, who can both bring and protect from death, a logical association for the Feast of Good Death. Omolú's day of the week is Monday, one of the days of the feast, and on this same Monday a major celebration is held for Omolú in Salvador, the state capital, that also juxtaposes the Candomblé and the Catholic Church.

Most obviously unrelated to Catholicism are what are said by knowledgeable natives of Cachoeira to be the totally private final acts of the complex pageantry. On Tuesday night after

the final ring samba and meal, the sisters celebrate the culmination of their devotion. Entering their other religious reality, they hold a Candomblé ceremony, only for themselves, to honor their Orishás. Then the flowers that served as decor for the celebration for the saint as well as any leftover food are deposited in a nearby river, which is exactly the way Candomblé ceremonies for water Orishás such as Yemanjá end.

That these Candomblé symbols and meanings are integral to the Feast of Good Death does not imply that the goal of the Sisterhood is not to honor the saint. When asked if there were a relationship between the two religious systems, the president of the Sisterhood said that the Sisterhood was one thing and the Candomblé another, then, apparently with no sense of cultural dissonance, ended the conversation with "May Omolú bless you." In addition to her leading role in the Sisterhood, she is an important Candomblé priestess. In fact, almost all of the sisters are initiates and even priestesses of the Candomblé. Thus, although their sincere intent may be to perform a Catholic ritual for their "little saint," as they affectionately call her, the spiritual foundation of the lives of the sisters is the Candomblé, not Catholicism. Hence the basic understandings, meanings, and symbols with which they have infused their Catholic behavior are based on the Candomblé.

The statues of Our Lady of Good Death and Our Lady of Glory are both dressed in a light blue cape over a white dress. These colors suggest an obvious relationship with Yemanjá, the Orishá of the seas, whose day is Saturday, and whose colors are light blue and white, the colors of the ocean. It is noteworthy that the three Orishás—Oshalá, Omolú and Yemanjá— whose color symbols stand out in the Feast of Good Death are among the most important in the Afro-Brazilian pantheon. Oshalá is the father of the other Orishás as well as of people, and in some versions of the mythology Yemanjá is the mother of the other Orishás. They, thus, represent the very fundamental principles of fatherhood and motherhood, hence procreation and the continuity of life, and Omolú represents the triumph of life over death.

The Afro-Brazilian Sisterhoods and Brotherhoods

The Sisterhood of Good Death began in the Church of Barroquinha in Salvador in 1821, and existed in the major towns in the area but died out everywhere except Cachoeira. The first Candomblé temple openly institutionalized in Salvador was also created by women from the Church of Barroquinha. The Casa Branca was officially instituted in 1850, and the other two most traditional Candomblés in Salvador, Axé Opô Afonjá and Gantois, grew out of it. The women who created these Candomblés and their successors have also been members of the Sisterhood of Good Death.

The Sisterhood of Good Death was one of the numerous sisterhoods and brotherhoods of African slaves and freedmen and women created within the Catholic Church in the 18th and 19th centuries. The priests' major motive for creating such organizations was, not surprisingly, to Catholicize the Africans and make them give up their own spiritual beliefs and practices. The African and Afro-Brazilian sisterhoods and brotherhoods functioned as mutual aid and benevolent societies in addition to the at least stated intention of promoting Catholicism. An

estimated 85% of freed Black men and 83% of freed Black women were members of these groups during the years 1790-1826 in Bahia. Their numbers decreased in the second half of the nineteenth century as government agencies gradually took over the social security functions they had fulfilled.(1)

One of the major churches in Salvador, the *Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos* (Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black People), was built by members of the *Irmandade de Nossa Senhora do Rosário* (Brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary), which was created in Bahia in the seventeenth century. In 1704 the archbishop gave the African Brotherhood permission to build a temple, which they finished in 1710, supplying their own materials and working on it after finishing their regular jobs. Our Lady of the Rosary was honored annually by the Brotherhood with a mass and an opulent procession on the second of October until 1917. Inside the church, in addition to a statue of Our Lady of the Rosary, there are also statues of two Black saints—St. Anthony of Catigerona, an African, and St. Benedict the Moor.

The sisterhoods and brotherhoods were originally based on the African geographic and ethnic origins of the members. The first *Irmandades de Nossa Senhora do Rosário* were constituted of men from the Angola area and their descendants, and the *Irmandade do Senhor da Redenção na Bahia* (Brotherhood of Our Lord of the Redemption in Bahia) were men of Gege or Ewe origin from the current Benin-Togo area of West Africa. The exclusive memberships of these initial brotherhoods led to the creation of others grouping men of other African ethnic groups and then of mulattos, and they all eventually began to admit any Afro-Brazilian man as the process of miscengenation destroyed African ethnic purity.(2) The sisterhoods were originally organized along the same ethnically particularistic lines. The Sisterhood of Good Death, like Salvador's first Candomblé, was constituted of Gege women—the same Gege women!

The sisterhoods and brotherhoods have been characterized by a Brazilian scholar as, "the fulcrum of one of the most important positions of resistance and defense of Blacks against slavery in Brazil."(3) European white travelers in Bahia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were impressed by the zeal and enthusiasm of the Afro-Brazilians' "external manifestations of the Catholic religion," but few were aware of the African cultural legacy that remained under the external appearance of religious orthodoxy. The evidence available, mainly in the form of the oral tradition, points to the importance of these institutions as repositories of the African cultural heritage.(4) In a study of the Brotherhoods of Our Lady of the Rosary as a counter-aculturative reaction, Veríssimo de Melo makes the point that such an analytical perspective provides the only way to understand "the interest of the Blacks in a religion, the Catholic religion—totally foreign to their primitive [meaning, I would like to think, original] beliefs."(5)

Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century commentators on these Afro-Catholic institutions reported with some dismay seeing processions for Our Lady of the Rosary accompanied by the music of drums and clarinets as well as fire works, and one observer was scandalized to see a statue of the Virgin "painted black."(6) De Melo concludes that:

... in spite of its apparent Catholic significance, Our Lady of the Rosary was for Blacks a transposition of the idol of their primitive religion—perhaps Yemanjá... Being unable

to worship their gods publicly—because the slave masters did not permit the fetishist(7) cult—the slaves affiliated with the Catholic brotherhoods, where they could, tranquilly, through the process that would be known later as syncretism, worship their African idols in the form of the Roman Catholic saints. Only through the phenomenon of syncretism is it possible to understand the devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary and other saints by the Black slaves.(8)

In addition to providing a context for the religious syncretism that allowed the Africans and Afro-Brazilians to maintain their religious beliefs in disguised form, the sisterhoods and brotherhoods had the important secular function of serving as credit unions through which the slaves saved to buy their freedom in the form of *cartas de alforria*, "free papers". In Bahia some of the enslaved *negros de ganho* were allowed to work for themselves, paying a certain part of their income to their masters and using the rest for their own purposes. This primary role as "liberation banks" was a major preoccupation of the sisterhoods and brotherhoods prior to emancipation in 1888.

In an article on the *Sociedade Protetora dos Desvalidos* (Society for the Protection of the Needy), Salvador's oldest existing autonomous Afro-Brazilian institution, Julio Santana Braga emphasized the Society's central historic role as a credit union, membership in which was limited to African and Afro-Brazilian men who could give proof of having a legitimate income. The Society, which still owns a building in the Terreiro de Jesus in Salvador, and which recently celebrated its 150th anniversary, was founded in 1832 by a free African, Manoel Victor Serra, under the name of *Irmandade de Nossa Senhora da Soledade Amparo dos Desvalidos* (Brotherhood of Our Lady of Solitude Shelter of the Needy). Inspired by the Brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary, the Society had as its goals, in addition to the spiritual (Catholic) instruction and uplifting of its members and the providing of help to the needy, the acquisition of emancipation for all of its members. Like the other brotherhoods, it promised its still enslaved members "free papers", "with which you will enjoy not only eternal freedom in the second transmigration into the next life, but that will also free you in this one from the worst subjugation."(9)

Thus, the brotherhoods and sisterhoods were organizational structures within which Africans and later Afro-Brazilians could organize under the aegis of the Catholic Church to oppose the system of slavery, and in which free Blacks could collaborate with their still enslaved brothers and sisters to increase the ranks of the free. The founders of the Society for the Protection of the Needy were very preoccupied with the question of to whom to entrust their funds, not wanting to entrust them to the priest of the church in which it was founded without numerous precautions because the goals for which the African and Afro-Brazilian men intended to use the money did not conform to the intentions of the church. Such disguised emancipation funds were a prelude to the emancipation credit unions that sprang up beginning in 1834 in the context of the abolitionist movement, in which members specifically pooled their money in the kind of rotating credit system found in much of Africa and the Caribbean in order to buy free papers, without the religious pretense of the sisterhoods and brotherhoods.(10)

Further evidence of the other-than-religious intentions of the Society was that it was not until three months after its founding that the members began to discuss what their religious obligations would be. The decision was that they would celebrate an annual mass for Our Lady of Solitude on November 16, a somewhat minimal requirement for a truly religious organization. The religious goals of the Society, whether primordial in the intentions of the brothers or not, but without which the group could not have been created, were used when it wanted to obtain benefits for its members from the Catholic Church. The fact that the Society began as a Catholic brotherhood did not, however, mean that only professed Catholics were accepted for full membership. Proclaimed Muslims such as Manoel Nascimento, better known by his Islamic name of Gibirilu, were also members, which suggests that Catholic purity was hardly a key issue for the members. The fundamental requirement for membership in the Society was and still is to be a Black man.(11)

Another major function of the brotherhoods and sisterhoods was to assure their members a "good death"—a decent burial, like the African American burial societies in the United States. Members stipulated the conditions in which they wanted to be buried, often dressed in the uniform of the organization, which was probably their finest article of clothing. Church funerals were held for members with all appropriate pomp and circumstance, such that the funerals of poor Blacks on their final day of glory often rivaled those of rich whites.(12) A prominent woman in Cachoeira recently said that she will join the Sisterhood of Good Death when she is older so that she can have a church funeral and be buried in the opulent costume, thus assuring herself a good death.

Such is the context in which the Sisterhood of Good Death began, its major concerns being, like the other Afro-Catholic sisterhoods and brotherhoods, to help its members and to gain freedom for those who were still enslaved. The founders of the Sisterhood made a vow to Our Lady of Good Death that if she would free them from slavery, they would hold a procession and feast in her honor every year. They interpreted their ability to save and buy their freedom as evidence of the Virgin's intercession, and the current sisters' procession continues to fulfill the vow of their ancestresses. That their vow was to Our Lady of Good Death/Our Lady of Glory suggests that their own transition from slavery to freedom was like a resurrection from the death of their life as slaves to a new heavenly life as free women. The yearly ceremonial may, thus, be viewed as an emancipation celebration—the oldest continuous celebration of emancipation from slavery in the Americas, performed by the oldest continuing African American women's organization in the Americas.

The Candomblé and the Sisterhood of Good Death

The Candomblé and the Sisterhood of Good Death represent two different techniques used by the enslaved Africans to institutionalize and successfully maintain the reality and integrity of the African spirituality that continues to be the basis of Afro-Brazilian life, in spite of Euro-Brazilian efforts to eradicate this religious system and replace it with another one based on fundamentally different conceptual and behavioral foundations, and serving antagonistic social and cultural ends. The Sisterhood and Feast of Good Death represent the expression of African religious

forms within the very institution whose explicit mission has been to eliminate them. They represent the infiltration of the Orishás into the Catholic Church. The Afro-Catholic sisterhoods and brotherhoods used what was to be an alienating institution as a cloak of protection within which to express meanings essential to themselves and antithetical to the intentions of the unwittingly complicitous host institution.

The Candomblé, in contrast, represents another style of Afro-Brazilian insistence on preserving their religious integrity—outside of the institutions of Euro-Brazilian society. During slavery and after, to the extent possible the Afro-Brazilians held their Candomblé ceremonies in rural areas distant from their white oppressors. When this was impossible, they devised ways, by equating the Orishás and the saints, to worship their prohibited African spiritual beings in full view of the slave masters, with the approval of those committed to extirpating the African religious heritage.

The Feast of St. Lazarus, celebrated annually in mid-August in Salvador, offers an interesting example of a kind of overt fusion of both forms. While a Catholic mass is being celebrated within the Church of St. Lazarus, Candomblé members carrying statues of the saint go into a trance and "manifest" and dance for Omolú in front of the church. The spatial locus of these two forms of worship inside and outside of the church, in addition to being enforced by the Catholic hierarchy, is symbolically appropriate and reflects the different styles used by Afro-Brazilians to maintain their spiritual life and adapt it to the exigencies of a new and oppressive social environment.

Whereas the sisterhoods and brotherhoods took the Orishás into the Catholic Church, hiding them in the vestments of the saints, the Candomblé took the saints out of the church with which to camouflage the Orishás. Whereas the sisterhoods and brotherhoods adopted and adapted Catholic rituals in order to honor the Orishás in the form of the saints, the Candomblé adapted its own rituals to honor the saints in order to honor the Orishás they represented.

The most extreme form of Afro-Brazilian resistance to cultural oppression, to oppression in general, was the creation of *quilombos*, the independent communities set up in remote places by people who physically escaped from the slave system rather than creating a way to preserve their cultural space within it. Candomblés have been characterized as "internal quilombos," as islands of African cultural self-preservation within Brazilian society.

It is important to acknowledge that the nature of the saints and the Orishás, and hence of the Afro-Brazilians' perceptions of them, is very different. The saints are abstract, and are known to the Afro-Brazilians only in the form of pictures and plaster statues. The Orishás, in contrast, descend to earth to the call of ceremonial drum rhythms to enter the bodies of their devotees, who actually "become" the spiritual beings who have come to dance in the midst of their human community. The Orishás have personalities and likes and dislikes, and they influence the daily lives of their devotees. People's characters and fate are determined by the Orishás, who are their spiritual guides and guardians, not by the saints.

It is significant that the two styles of religious self-affirmation represented by the Sisterhood of Good Death and the Candomblé are not mutually exclusive options for Afro-Brazilians, but that,

on the contrary, the same individuals founded, and their descendants still participate in, and are leaders of, both systems. When the influential priestess of the Candomblé, Axé Opô Afonjá, died in 1967, a funeral ceremony was held, as it had been for her predecessor in 1938, in the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black People. But a Catholic funeral is not sufficient for a Candomblé initiate, and a special Candomblé ceremony for the dead, an *axexéi*, was also held for her.

The Sisterhood of Good Death preceded the official establishing of the Casa Branca Candomblé as an Afro-Brazilian institution growing out of the Church of Barroquinha. The Candomblé temple that eventually became overtly officialized as the Casa Branca, however, existed before the entry of its members into the Catholic Church. According to one account, there are people who attest that the Casa Branca is really more than 350 years old, dating from the beginnings of slavery in Brazil. They say that its original location was in a subterranean spot entered through a hole in a tree.⁽¹³⁾ Although the specifics of this version of the original location are clearly apocryphal, it is undeniable that forms of African religious worship began as soon as the Africans reached Brazil, and not only preceded, but also precipitated the creation of the Afro-Catholic sisterhoods and brotherhoods.

In Cachoeira people say that the Sisterhood of Good Death grew out of a Candomblé whose members were forced into the Catholic Church by a priest who was anxious to end their autonomous religious life, and there is every reason to believe that its origins in Salvador were the same. The original locus of the religious grouping that became known as the Casa Branca was probably underground in the figurative rather than literal sense in that it was secluded in a remote area because of persecution by slave owners, and also because such a location was totally appropriate for a religion based on the forces of nature.

The church's drawing of Candomblé members into itself did not, however, kill the Candomblé, as was the intent. The Candomblé went into the church in the form of the sisterhoods and brotherhoods, going underground in a sense, and it came out again in the form of overt, autonomous institutions. As a result of belonging to the Sisterhood of Good Death, the original sisters were able to secure their freedom, for which they remained grateful to Our Lady of Good Death/Our Lady of Glory. They also, while remaining members of the Catholic Sisterhood, firmly institutionalized their own autonomous spiritual foundation outside of the church. The Afro-Catholic sisterhoods and brotherhoods have almost gone out of existence, whereas the Candomblé continues to flourish and proliferate. The Catholic Church used the sisterhoods and brotherhoods to wage war on the Orishás—and the Orishás won the holy war.

ENDNOTES:

1. Kátia M. de Queirós Mattoso, *Bahia: A Cidade do Salvador e seu Mercado no Século XIX* (São Paulo: Editora HUCITEC, Ltda. 1978), p. 207.

2. Mattoso, p. 208.

3. Veríssimo de Melo, "As Confrarias de Nossa Senhora do Rosário como Reação Contra-Aculturativa dos Negros no Brasil" *Afro-Asia*, Salvador, Bahia, No. 13 (1980), p. 107.
4. Mattoso, op. cit., pp. 209-10.
5. de Melo, op. cit., p. 107.
6. de Melo, p. 109.
7. The ethnocentric term "fetish", traditionally used by Europeans and Euro-Americans in denigrating the religious practices of peoples of color, has generally fallen from use in contemporary scholarship. The term made invidious qualitative distinctions between the "fetishes" and "idols" of so-called primitive peoples and the material representations and paraphernalia of the religious systems of those people who did the interpreting. It is interesting to note the extent to which the "primitive" peoples of much of the world perceived the qualitative equivalences between their own "fetishes," and the crosses, medals and statues of saints, etc., imposed on them by European Christian missionaries. The "primitives" consciously and deliberately substituted the latter for their own, believing them to be quantitatively superior and contributory to the invaders ability to conquer them. Brazil is but one very clear example of this process.
8. de Melo, p. 109, 116.
9. Julio Santana Braga, "Sociedade Protetora dos Desvalidos: Uma Agência de Prestígio" *Monumento*, Salvador, Bahia, Vol. 2, No. 18 (July-Sept. 1982), pp. 34-35, 39.
10. Braga, pp. 35-36.
11. Braga, p. 36.
12. Mattoso, op. cit., pp. 213-216.
13. Jorge Amado, *Bahia de Todos Os Santos: Guia de Ruas e Mistérios* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Record, 1977), p. 169.

WORKS CITED:

- Amado, Jorge. *Bahia de Todos Os Santos: Guia de Ruas e Mistérios*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Record, 1977.
- Bastide, Roger. *Les Religions Africaines au Brésil: Vers Une Sociologie des Interpénétration de Civilisations*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1960.

- Braga, Julio Santana. "Sociedade Protetora dos Desvalidos: Uma Agência de Prestígio," *Monumento* (Salvador, Bahia), Vol. 2, No. 18 (July-Sept. 1982).
- de Melo, Veríssimo. "As Confrarias de N.S. do Rosario como Reação Contra-Aculturativa dos Negros no Brasil," *Afro-Asia* (Salvador, Bahia), No. 13 (1980).
- Lody, Raul. *Devoção e Culto a Nossa Senhora da Boa Morte*. Rio de Janeiro: Altiva Gráfica e Editora Ltda., 1981.
- Mattoso, Kátia M. de Queirós. *Bahia: A Cidade do Salvador e seu Mercado no Século XIX*. São Paulo: Editora HUCITEC, Ltda., 1978.
- Russell-Wood, A.J.R. *Fidalgos and Philanthropists: The Santa Casa de Misericórdia of Bahia, 1550-1755*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.
- Verger, Pierre. *Flux et Reflux de la Traite des Nègres entre le Golfe du Bénin et Bahia de Todos os Santos du XVII au XIXe Siècle*. Paris: Mouton, 1968.