

Abstract

This thesis concerns with an ayahuasca church Santo Daime, mainly with the Cefluris line, which is the mostly spread in the world. At the first it describes the evolution of this church, as it evolved from the roots of popular Catholicism, shamanic use of ayahuasca, esoteric teaching, Kardecism and Afro-Brazilian cults (mainly Umbanda) into an independent religious movement. According to its evolution we can see gradual change in the social composition of church's members, when the founder members were poor Amazonian peasants contrary to the present participants of the ceremonies who come from the urban middle class at the most. Next chapters investigate original traditions and an extent to which are their influences still present in this movement. Christian Eucharist, Christian saints and their feasts are the central motives for majority of the ceremonies and the remnant of popular Catholicism. Daime (originally ayahuasca), expressive musical background and healing aspect of the ceremonies are the heritage of the South American shamanism and European esotericism and Spiritism were the sources of theoretical description of the spiritual world, frequently cited prayers and individual meditation techniques. We can observe increased occurrences of the possessive states and an enrichment of the pantheon of worshipped beings during the ceremonies (mainly with caboclos and orixas) with the later adoption of Umbanda into the ritual. In the last chapter we discuss how the movement evolves from the religion of objective truth into the religion of subjective experience in the present. That is influenced primarily by the change of the social composition of the ceremonial participants. They largely come from the urban middle classes, so they want to cultivate their spirituality according to generally preferred values of individualism and subjectivism what corresponds to a general subjective turn in a society.