Afro-Cuban Religious Arts

Popular Expressions of Cultural Inheritance in Espiritismo and Santería

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1 *Religious Pluralism and the Afro-Cuban Ritual-Arts Movement, 1899–1969*

In this chapter, I examine the literature on Afro-Cuban religious arts from 1899 to 1969. I do not offer an exhaustive survey, but a close examination of the texts that I consider the most critical and descriptive of the period in which my four subjects worked, including criminology treatises, academic texts, the literature on historical avant-garde art movements, and Cuban popular-culture magazines. These materials have had an impact not only on the broader written representation of Afro-Cuban religious art, but also on many individual practitioners and their belief systems (including folk Catholicism, Espiritismo, La Regla de Ocha, Palo, Arará, the Abakuá Society, and Vodú, a Cuban variation of Haitian Vodou). Rather than focusing solely on the literature of a single religious practice, my aim here is to consider the broadest discourse on modern Afro-Cuban ritual arts.

The reason for this expansive examination is that throughout the twentieth century many women and men—and especially those working as religious leaders—practiced *more than one* Afro-Cuban belief system. Likewise, trends in the literature contributed to the development of religious-arts practices across multiple Afro-Atlantic belief systems. The core authors featured in this discussion, including Fernando Ortiz, Melville Herskovits, Rómulo Lachatañeré, Lydia Cabrera, and William Bascom, as well as popular-culture sources including the Cuban magazine *Bohemia*, recurrently changed how they described artistic practices. These authors and periodicals often attempted to identify the historical origins of popular religious imagery broadly as either African or European, just as they located the origins of other ritual art objects more precisely, pointing to specific regions—especially areas of West or Central Africa. Such attributions led to the demonization of certain Afro-Cuban ritual art objects and practices while others were deemed exemplary, which I discuss shortly. As a result of these highly variable characterizations, not just scholars, but religious leaders and audiences came to treat the different structures maintained in Afro-Caribbean ritual arts inconsistently.[1]

Through this examination of the foundational literature on Afro-Cuban religious arts, I find that early twentieth-century discourse caused significant debate but did not come to terms with the creative characteristic of hybridity and interaction upon which Afro-Caribbean belief systems thrive. Rather, this overview demonstrates that these complex interactions exhibited by the religious arts provoked scholarly intrigue, which caused some authors to express a desire for the assimilation of Afro-Cuban belief systems into Western religions. Other scholars revealed a bias toward the exclusive discourse of only one belief system. Only recently have scholars begun to consider hybridity and interreligious dialogue as vital to the expansion of the modern Afro-Cuban religious-arts movement.

Fernando Ortiz, Part 1: *Los Negros Brujos*, or *The Black Sorcerers*

The Cuban ethnologist Fernando Ortiz called attention to Afro-Cuban religious studies in his first book, *Los negros brujos*, written between 1902 and 1905. Translated into English here as *The Black Sorcerers*, the work shaped public policy and early-twentieth-century scholarship on Afro-Cuban religious practices.[2] Ortiz wrote *The Black Sorcerers* while living in Spain and Italy after finishing his degree at the University of Madrid in criminal ethnology—a late-Victorian field of study that attempted to predict the criminal dispositions of individuals by means of their race and culture.[3] Ortiz's mentors had encouraged him to examine the criminal disposition of certain members of Cuban society.[4] The resultant book was published in 1906 and reissued for wider distribution in 1917. There have since been a number of reprints of *The Black Sorcerers*. Containing forty-three images, largely drawings of religious objects, altars, and costumes, Ortiz's collected evidence sought to document the visual characteristics of Afro-Cuban criminality.

The Black Sorcerers' primary argument is that Afro-Cuban religions are a mode of cultural "atavism," or a regression to African "primitive" culture. Ortiz characterized this so-called regression by a tendency toward criminal behavior that needed to be eliminated. During his research foray in Cuba in

1902, Ortiz had no more than minimal contact with Afro-Cuban religious practitioners.[5] He claims to have worked with a number of incarcerated Afro-Cuban men and to have had access to their seized religious artifacts, which are featured in the book's illustrations. In his text, Ortiz frequently compares these seized objects to available descriptions of African art and cultural practices. In particular, Ortiz compares Afro-Cuban sculptural elements to art produced by a West African cultural group, known as the Yoruba, that had been particularly amenable to ethnographic research in the late nineteenth century.[6]

By making these comparisons between Cuban and Yoruba arts, Ortiz claimed to have originated the term "Afro-Cuban."[7] He described what he called the "Afro-Cuban identity" by analyzing the common cultural constructs between black Cubans and West Africans—looking not merely at racial identity but also at the two groups' means of cultural expression, such as religious practices.[8] His goal, Ortiz explained, was to define the crimes and identifiable characteristics of the "criminal Afro-Cuban" religious practitioner.[9] *Brujos* were generally "old African men," not women.[10] The number of men dedicated to sorcery was "much greater than that of women."[11] Ortiz then went on to describe the practices and objects employed by these "criminal" groups. His descriptions largely pertained to Palo, the Ñáñigo Society (or Abakuá),[12] and La Regla de Ocha (whose rituals persist into the present day), although he frequently grouped their practices together. An unfortunate result of Ortiz's efforts in *The Black Sorcerers* was that recognizable religious affiliates who celebrated African ancestry now came under suspicion.

Cuban police and politicians subscribed to Ortiz's typology of the Afro-Cuban criminal male, and *The Black Sorcerers* spawned a number of other treatises that duplicated Ortiz's prejudiced views.[13] In his 1908 book, *La policía y sus misterios en Cuba*, for example, the police inspector Rafael Roche y Monteagudo documented his efforts in pursuit of male Afro-Cuban religious practitioners; such arrests were mainly concentrated among the Abakuá men's associations. In the final, and most influential, chapter of *The Black Sorcerers*, titled "The Future of Sorcery," Ortiz proposed converting Afro-Cuban religious practitioners to Christianity. Execution or incarceration of Afro-Cuban religious priests would not resolve cultural differences, Ortiz argued. Rather, he advocated a more systematic approach to the eradication of Afro-Cuban religion practice, including government acquisition of religious art: "In all instances, even when the case does not result in a [prison] sentence, one should decommission all of the idols, images, necklaces, fetishes, altars, *chumbas* and other equipment and things from the sorcerers' temples. Those items that are most characteristic, instead of being destroyed as they have been until now, should go to the museum of anthropology of the national university."[14] Roche y Monteagudo and others did attempt to preserve the most overtly "African" examples of this religious art in museums in Havana and abroad.[15] The police inspector also captured a number of posed images of altars, as well as a few in situ, in black-and-white photographs.[16] In the end, *The Black Sorcerers* was influential not in destroying religious art objects, but rather in preserving the history of Afro-Cuban ritual arts by "freezing" these practices in museum displays.

The history of the Registro de Asociaciones in Cuba is an interesting one, and Ortiz acknowledged that the Registro could play an important role in controlling Afro-Cuban religious practice.[17] The Registro requirement extended throughout Cuba; all mutual aid societies, civic organizations, and social clubs, and particularly religious associations, were required to register with the government and pay taxes.[18] From 1881 through the 1950s, thousands of groups, many of them organized by Cuba's black population, participated in the Registry. In their legal filing papers, some used the term *cabildo* to indicate that they modeled their activities after the colonial-era Afro-Cuban cabildos, or religious fraternities. In 1912, however, the cabildos came under suspicion of organizing for political purposes. As a result, between 1912 and 1913 they were disbanded and their registered leaders, almost entirely men, were placed on trial.[19] Again following Ortiz's lead in *The Black Sorcerers*, in the 1920s the Cuban government implemented new restrictions on Afro-Cuban religious practitioners, but this time focusing on religious art objects. Ortiz had described a particular type of drum used in religious celebrations, which the government now banned. The new ban on the use of *bembé* drums directed police attention toward an entirely new cohort of Afro-Cubans—musicians—also almost entirely male.[20]

Ortiz further singled out a variety of practitioners that he grouped under the label "quacks" (later he would come to see such practitioners as composed largely of women[21]): "In order to understand this . . . fight to destroy brujería at its point of infection, one must not forget that one should consider certain parasites not included in the class of *brujos*. . . . In the first place, I am referring to the quacks who are abundant in number and have many points of contact with the *brujo*, especially as they exploit the phenomena of magnetism and hypnotism, and measure the skill of those inspired by the spirits; and, in the second place, I am referring to the white diviners, who

identify themselves with various names (numerologists, clairvoyants, palm readers, tarot card readers, somnambulists, etc.)."[22] In this passage, Ortiz begins to make an important connection between Afro-Cuban religions and the Espiritismo movement, noting that, "in the first place," the most suspicious spiritual workers are those in contact with the *brujo* (and therefore, black) and thereby relegating "white diviners" to "second place" in his racial hierarchy. Ortiz's central problem with the espiritistas, however, is that, "in general, . . . they do not oppose the indomitable fanaticism of the Afro-Cuban brujo."[23] In *The Black Sorcerers*, Ortiz argued that Spiritist leaders affiliated with African religious expression should be detained and supervised by the police, but he did not advocate that Espiritismo altars be seized. Rather he advocated that spiritually based organizations should be monitored and a census of their numbers maintained. And that's exactly what the Cuban government did, as evidenced by the documents to be found in Cuba's provincial archives.[24]

It has been argued that Ortiz's early work in *The Black Sorcerers* and the Cuban government's resultant policies with respect to the planned demise of the cabildos were responsible for the tremendous surge in the practice of Espiritismo that took place in the 1940s and 1950s.[25] Moreover, the governing white upper class generally approved of Espiritismo. Many groups in the Registry files are categorized as "Espiritismo" even though their licensing papers evidence the groups' broader interest in celebrating African ancestors.[26] Ortiz believed that the Catholic imagery commonly found in the spiritual altars of Afro-Cuban religious practitioners was a positive "dilution," or step away, from African-based practices.[27] To clarify this, in 1924, Ortiz elaborated on this idea that Spiritism provided a structure to temper African identity.[28] He hypothesized that because many Spiritist practices involved

Table 1.1. Registered Espiritismo temples founded in the Province of Holguín

Decade	*Number of temples*
1917–20	1
1921–30	6
1931–40	9
1941–50	31
1951–60	41
1961–70	18

Source: Córdova Martínez and Barzaga Sablón, *El Espiritismo de Cordón*, 203.

driving bad spirits away, the practice might provide a sort of rehabilitation for Afro-Cuban religious practitioners. As a lawyer, and later as a government representative, Ortiz frequently dispensed advice to Cuban government officials on legislation regarding Afro-Cuban religions. Although his earliest work vilified many different Afro-Cuban religious practitioners, which subjected them to constant police persecution, indirectly, this early scholarship helped preserve the Espiritismo movement, allowing the belief system to thrive, especially among black women emerging as important religious leaders of the period.

Melville Herskovits: "Acculturation," "Syncretism," and "Africanisms"

Melville Herskovits, an anthropologist who founded the disciplines of African studies and Afro-American studies during a period of intense racism and segregation in the United States, paid little or no attention to the impact of Espiritismo on black culture. This is curious, because his groundbreaking research on Afro-Atlantic belief systems had a great influences among scholars. Herskovits did read Ortiz's *The Black Sorcerers*, and he somewhat erroneously relied on Ortiz's volume as a primary source. Despite the inconsistency of his research, Herskovits's pioneering theoretical work is still celebrated.[29] Herskovits formulated his most important theory, that of *acculturation*, at the start of his career, in 1927.[30] He devoted much of his subsequent research and writing to this hypothesis of cultural change, and he created the terms *syncretism* and *Africanisms* to support this concept. Here, I shall concern myself with Herskovits's use of Afro-Caribbean art to substantiate the discourse on these terms.

Herskovits described acculturation as "the processes by which human beings absorb the cultures to which they are exposed."[31] For decades, this unilateral definition of acculturation dominated scholarship.[32] In 1936 Herskovits began to write his definitively titled account, *Acculturation*. There, he reviewed a large body of like-minded literature describing acculturative processes around the world. In the conclusion to this survey of acculturation studies, however, Herskovits recognized that anthropologists and their readers were not as interested in adaptations to Western society so much as in evidence of cultural resistances to Western culture.[33] Herskovits's theories on syncretism and Africanisms were therefore an attempt to reinvigorate the study of cultural contact and change.

SYNCRETISM

While still writing *Acculturation*, Herskovits published an article, "African Gods and Catholic Saints in New World Negro Beliefs," in which he argued that "native peoples who have had long contact with Catholicism . . . achieve a syncretism between their aboriginal religious beliefs and the doctrines and rituals of the Church."[34] Defining syncretism as a symbiotic relationship between two religions, Herskovits underscored his sense that non-Western religions could survive only by combining their practices with those of the dominant Western religions. The theory of syncretism was meant to apply generally to many cultures, and Herskovits relied on Ortiz's scholarship in his discussion of Afro-Atlantic religions. Throughout the Caribbean region and in Brazil, he explained, African religious art could be found in believers' homes alongside Catholic imagery—particularly, chromolithographs of Catholic saints.[35] Herskovits did not actually describe his evidence, relying instead on a table to compare Afro-Atlantic deities and their Catholic saint equivalents in Brazil, Cuba, and Haiti.[36]

As table 1.2 shows, Herskovits tended to rely on his own field research only as a secondary source. Among his primary sources, Herskovits relied on both Fernando Ortiz and Raymundo Nina Rodrigues, a Brazilian ethnologist.[37] In their actual work, however, both Ortiz and Nina Rodrigues used broad descriptive language that necessarily left room for interpretation, rather than constructing the more concrete parallels later employed by Herskovits.[38] The two scholars not only compared Catholic saints and Afro-Atlantic avatars, but also included comparisons with ancient Greek and Roman gods.[39] It seems, with so many and varied comparisons among different deities and belief systems, that both Ortiz and Nina Rodrigues wrote with at least one eye aimed at European readers. The abundance of references to Greek and Roman gods also implies a sort of late-Victorian parlor game as a means of study and memorization that compares cultures and religious beliefs. In his famous table, Herskovits cleaned up these references to classical mythology, thereby creating a much neater typology and more of a scientific aura to the research. Moreover, in order to be able to absorb Ortiz's research into his own theory of syncretism, Herskovits included in his table only the best-known deities for which Ortiz had noted a Catholic saint counterpart. In 1945, Herskovits introduced his concept of "psychological ease" into the theory of syncretism: "The process of *syncretism* . . . [is] the tendency to identify those elements in the new culture with similar elements in the old one, enabling the persons experiencing the contact to move from one to the other, and back again, with psychological ease."[40] Here, Herskovits was attempting to place a positive spin on his theory syncretism as a means of transition into a new culture. In chapter 2, I challenge this concept of "psychological ease."[41] There, I describe and analyze the intentionally complex religious displays of the santera Tiburcia Sotolongo. Sotolongo's use of imagery did not put her audience "at ease"; rather, it offered options and presented challenges to her religious clientele and to religious-family members to create their own religious practices. For Herskovits, the idea of "psychological comfort" was one way to make his own leap from the theory of syncretism to his other, later theories somewhat more "comfortable" as well.

AFRICANISMS

By constantly revising his concept of syncretism, Herskovits was able to use it as a springboard to advance his more broadly stated theory of acculturation studies. In the preface to his most important book, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, Herskovits reevaluated his concept, explaining that in actual religious practice there are scales or variations of syncretism: "The very use of the term 'syncretism' helped to sharpen my analyses, and led me to a more precise formulation of problem and of theory. . . . For, . . . it seemed to me that the syncretizing process really lay at one pole of a continuum that stretched from situations where items from two or more cultures in contact had been fully merged to those situations where there was the unchanged retention of pre-existing ones."[42] This represents an important step back from Herskovits's original argument. A table denoting simple one-to-one relationships between specific African deities and specific Catholic saints would no longer suffice; he had realized that there was more subtlety in these relationships. As he explained, "The next essential step was to ascertain the degree to which these reconciliations had actually been achieved."[43] To do this, Herskovits now attempted to measure the degree of African influence that had occurred in the Americas.[44]

For his analysis of Africanisms, Herskovits revisited the cultural attributes of the descendants of Africans across the tropical Americas, once again presenting his conclusions in tabular form (see table 1.3). As with his earlier table on syncretism, the results suggest that measurable data actually exists for what is presented there. However, as Herskovits explains briefly in his essay "Problem, Method, and Theory in Afroamerican Studies," an *actual* examination of evidence would have to be performed by his students and followers.[45]

Table 1.2. Correspondences between African deities and Catholic saints in Brazil, Cuba, and Haiti, as originated by Herskovits in 1937

	Corresponding Catholic saint by country		
African deity	*Brazil*	*Cuba*	*Haiti*
Obatala		(I) Virgen de las Mercedes; the Most Sacred Sacrament; Christ on the Cross	
Obatala; Orisalá; Orixala (Oxalá)	(I)(N)(R) "Nosso Senhor de Bomfim" at Bahia; (N) Saint Anne; (R) "Senhor do Bomfin" at Rio ("because of influence of Bahia")		
Grande Mambo			(M) Saint Anne
Batala			
Shango	(I)(N)(R) Santa Barbara at Bahía; (R) St. Michael the Archangel at Rio; (R) St. Jerome (the husband of Santa Barbara) at Bahia (see the deity Yansan, below)	(I) Santa Barbara	
Elegbara, Elegua, Alegua		(I) "Animas benditas del Purgatoria"; "Anima Sola"	
Legba			(M)(H) St. Anthony; (W)(H?) St. Peter
Esú	(I)(N)(R) the Devil		
Ogun	(I)(R) St. George, at Rio; (N) St. Jerome; (I)(N)(R) St. Anthony, at Bahia	(I) St. Peter	
Ogun Balandjo			(M) St. James the Elder; (H) St. Joseph
Ogun Ferraille			(H) St. James
Osun	(N) Virgin Mary; N. D. de Cándeias	(I) Virgin de la Caridad del Cobre	
Yemanjá	(N) Virgin Mary; (R) N. S. de Rosario (at Bahia); N. D. de Conceição (at Rio)	(I) Virgin de Regla	
Maitresse Erzulie; Erzilie; Erzilie Freda Dahomey			(M) (S) the Holy Virgin, especially the Holy Virgin of the Nativity; (P) Santa Barbara (?); (H) Mater Dolorosa
Saponam	(I) the Sacred Sacrament		
Osa-Osé (Oxóssi)	(I)(N)(R) St. George, at Bahia; (R) St. Sebastian at Rio	(I) St. Alberto; (occasionally) St. Hubert	
Ololu; Omolú	(R) St. Bento	(I) St. John the Baptist	
Agomme Tonnere			(M) St. John the Baptist
Ibeji (Brazil and Cuba); Marassa (Haiti)	(R) Sts. Cosmas and Damien		(H) Sts. Cosmas and Damien
Father of the Marassa			(H) St. Nicholas
Orumbila (Odumbila?)		(I) St. Francisco	
Loco	(R) St. Francisco		
Babayú-Ayí		(I) St. Lazarus	
Ifa	(R) the Most Sacred Sacrament		
Yansan (wife of Shango)	(R) Santa Barbara (wife of St. Jerome)		

Source: Excerpted and adapted from Herskovits, "African Gods and Catholic Saints in New World Negro Belief," 327–28.

Notes: Initials before the names of the saints indicate the sources from which the correspondences have been derived:

(H) Herskovits field data (see also *Life in a Haitian Valley*, chap. 14).
(M) Métraux, "Le fétichisme des nègres du Brésil."
(P) Price-Mars, *Ainsi parla l'oncle . . . : Essais d'ethnographie.*
(R) Nina Rodrigues, *L'animisme fétichiste des nègres de Bahia.*
(S) Ortiz, *The Black Sorcerers.*
(P) Parsons, "Spirit Cult in Hayti."
(R) Ramos, *O negro brasileiro.*
(S) Seabrook, *The Magic Island.*
(W) Wirkus and Dudley, *The White King of La Gonave.*

Table 1.3. Scale of intensity of New World Africanisms, as originated by Herskovits in 1945(only the greatest degree of retention is indicated for each group)

	Technology	*Economic*	*Social Organization*	*Non-kinship Institutions*	*Religion*	*Magic*	*Art*	*Folklore*	*Music*	*Language*
Guiana (bush)	b	b	a	a	a	a	b	a	a	b
Guiana (Paramaribo)	c	c	b	c	a	a	e	a	a	c
Haiti (peasant)	c	b	b	c	a	a	d	a	a	c
Haiti (urban)	e	d	c	c	b	b	e	a	a	c
Brazil (Bahia, Recife)	d	d	b	d	a	a	b	a	a	a
Brazil (Porto Alegre)	e	e	c	d	a	a	e	a	a	c
Brazil (Maranhão, rural)	c	c	b	e	c	b	e	b	b	d
Brazil (Maranhão, urban)	e	d	c	e	a	b	e	d	a	b
Cuba	e	d	c	b	a	a	b	b	a	a
Jamaica (Maroons)	c	c	b	b	b	a	e	a	a	c
Jamaica (Morant Bay)	e	c	b	b	a	a	e	a	a	a
Jamaica (general)	e	c	d	d	b	b	e	a	b	c
Honduras (Black Caribs)*	c	c	b	b	b	a	e	b	c	e
Trinidad (Port of Spain)	e	d	c	b	a	a	e	b	a	e
Trinidad (Toco)	e	d	c	c	c	b	e	b	b	d
Mexico (Guerrero)	d	e	b	b	c	b	e	b	?	e
Colombia (Choco)	d	d	c	c	c	b	e	b	e	e
Virgin Islands	e	d	c	d	e	b	e	b	b	d
U.S. (Gullah Islands)	c	c	c	d	c	b	e	a	b	b
U.S. (rural South)	d	e	c	d	c	b	e	b	b	e
U.S. (urban North)	e	e	c	d	c	b	e	d	b	e

Source: Adapted from Herskovits, "Problem, Method, and Theory in Afroamerican Studies," 53.

Notes: a = very African; b = quite African; c = somewhat African; d = a little African; e = trace of African customs or absent; ? = no report

*Carib Indian influences are strong in this culture.

Herskovits's idea of Africanisms became popular in the academic literature, but by 1990 the scholars V. Y. Mudimbe and Andrew Apter both expressed concern about the stereotypes and generalizations that went into determining what might constitute an Africanism.[46] How can one define any element as representative of the cultural climate on a continent as large as Africa? they asked. Furthermore, based on the elements in Herskovits's original table, from "Social Organization" to "Language," students would have been hard-pressed to explain this terminology and thus expand upon the research. The table also revealed large variations, running the gamut from "a" to "e," in the levels of Africanisms present from one country to another. "Art" was one notable example, ranging from "b: quite African" to "e: trace of African customs, or absent," depending upon the country. Cuban art was deemed to be "b: quite African."[47]

That Herskovits chose art as a cultural category should not come as a surprise given the period in which he was working. By 1945, a number of political and cultural events, including World War II and the avant-garde arts movement that had originated in Europe, were having an impact in the Americas. Major North American museums and collectors were rethinking their interests, and significant investments were being made in Caribbean art. World War II disrupted the interaction between scholars, artists, and Afro-Cuban ritual-arts practitioners, so it is impossible to establish a precise chronology for the evolving research into the Afro-Caribbean arts scene during this time. For example, as Herskovits was presenting his theories on Cuban art internationally, other artists and scholars—including Wifredo Lam, Lydia Cabrera, Rómulo Lachatañeré, and Fernando Ortiz—were becoming increasingly interested in the visual representation of African identities in the Caribbean. These latter individuals began to investigate Afro-Cuban religious practices much more closely, pursuing interviews with religious leaders and longer-term fieldwork. Whereas Herskovits's work and the early research of Fernando Ortiz had grouped many Afro-Caribbean religious practices together, this next generation of scholarship began to at last recognize the complexity and distinctions inherent in Afro-Atlantic religious art.

European Primitivism and World War II: Wifredo Lam and Lydia Cabrera

The early twentieth-century avant-garde art movement was most prominently represented in Europe by artists like Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) and Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), but the movement also brought attention to the Cuban Vanguard artists living in France in the 1930s. However, the Cuban Vanguard found themselves in a peculiar situation in Europe, where the idea of the "primitive" was increasingly in fashion.[48] The European tabloids of the time, combined with the popularity of Hollywood "zombie" films, served to cultivate collectors' interest in this theme.[49] Having spent their youth in Cuba, the artists of the Cuban Vanguard already had significant firsthand life experience of the so-called primitive lifestyle and environment. Most noteworthy for our discussion here is the Vanguard artist Wifredo Lam and the Cuban folklorist Lydia Cabrera, with whom Lam would later collaborate.

Lam's artwork regularly engaged Afro-Cuban religious imagery.[50] The art historian Lowry Stokes Sims has described Lam's experience with La Regla de Ocha in Cuba in the early 1900s.[51] Despite his close ties to Afro-Cuban religions, Sims explains, in his youth Lam was somewhat reticent to engage in religious practice. It was only after living abroad that his interest in Afro-Cuban arts was piqued. In 1936, Lydia Cabrera published her first book, *Contes nègres de Cuba* (Black tales from Cuba), which was representative of and became an important vehicle for the primitivist movement in Paris. The stories she wrote were a combination of tales she had heard during her youth in Cuba and stories she invented herself, and for that reason they are no longer considered historically accurate for the study of Afro-Cuban folklore. Still, after Lam returned to Cuba following the war, he began a collaboration with Cabrera, who had also returned to the island.[52]

There, Lam created some of his most famous paintings, including works that made reference to Afro-Cuban religious symbols. Cabrera was a frequent collaborator, offering her own ideas for titles and content.[53] As David H. Brown has noted, Lam is very learned in the symbols and imagery that he cites from Afro-Cuban Abakuá religious practices.[54] Lam's abstract expressionist work is a cacophony of shapes, angles, and lines and frequently incorporates human and animal features. His paintings do not convey specific mythological narratives, however. Rather, his fantastic creatures and body parts mimic the complexity of Afro-Cuban belief systems as well as the interaction between them.

In a number of his contemporary works, including *The Chair* (1942), one of Lam's best-known paintings, he appears to be reconsidering the use of leaves in certain Afro-Cuban religious altar practices (see plate 2). Among examples in the arts of La Regla de Ocha, altars for the trickster Eleguá or for the farmer divinity Oricha Oko are often installed in leafy environments and

receive collections of leaves as offerings. In Lam's painting, the image is full of contrasts. In the center of the composition he depicts a chair with a vase containing tobacco leaves.[55] The chair—a human-made object—is placed within a forested environment, in juxtaposition to it. Whereas Lam's living plants are a part of the natural background, the vase of tobacco leaves is more significant: the leaves have literally been removed from the living plants by human hands and have then been replaced in the wooded environment as an offering. The chair seems set apart from the forest space and intimates human interaction with nature. Upon this makeshift altar the tobacco leaves reference Afro-Cuban and Afro-Amerindian religious practices, including Espiritismo. Lam's reference to plants and leaves is reminiscent of Lydia Cabrera's interest in Afro-Cuban traditional plants. At the time Lam painted this work, Cabrera had already begun to investigate ritual herbal medicine practices, and she would later work in Havana for more than a decade interviewing priests of Afro-Cuban religions, leading to the publication in 1954 of her most influential book, *El Monte* (The Forest).

Along with Wifredo Lam, Cabrera regularly appeared in the Cuban press.[56] Her presence was noted at a number of social events, and she was often mentioned in regard to her research on Afro-Cuban religion, in which she was said to be making incredible strides in penetrating heretofore impenetrable social barriers. Both Wifredo Lam's and Cabrera's pursuits brought increased attention to the Afro-Cuban religious movement, suggesting that the ritual arts merited far more consideration than they had previously been shown.

Responses from the Afro-Cuban Community: Lachatañeré and the Documentation Movement

In the late 1930s and throughout the 1940s, Lydia Cabrera's and Fernando Ortiz's investigative presence within the Afro-Cuban community caused an increasing stir as they collected diverse materials, conducted research, and, in some instances, even photographed altars or acts of ritual practice. Many members of the Afro-Cuban community—not all of them religious practitioners—viewed the writers' work with trepidation, and the literature published as a result of their investigations did little to quell police and government persecution of Afro-Cuban men and women. In the 1930s, another Cuban anthropologist, a mixed-race man named Rómulo Lachatañeré, emerged onto the scene. Unlike Cabrera's work in *Contes nègres de Cuba*, which was considered more fiction than nonfiction, Lachatañeré's work was deemed more scholarly.[57] His first book, *¡Oh, mío Yemayá!* (1938), consisted of religious stories collected from his fieldwork in Havana. Rather than accept the exoticizing and less-than-subtle observations of Afro-Cuban religious culture in Ortiz's early work, Lachatañeré, whose scholarship arose arguably from *within* the Afro-Cuban community, attempted to reclaim the discourse on Afro-Cuban beliefs: he revised the negative vocabulary that had previously been applied to Afro-Cuban traditions, and he encouraged religious practitioners to record their practices themselves.

Lachatañeré reached the pinnacle of Cuban scholarship in 1939 when Ortiz's academic journal, *Estudios Afrocubanos*, featured his critique of Ortiz's 1906 *The Black Sorcerers*. In this article, Lachatañeré laid the content of *The Black Sorcerers* bare. Although expressing support for the best of Ortiz's intentions, he nevertheless largely dismissed both the language and the descriptive content of the book: "There was erroneous information in the material or catalog of information derived from the incarcerated individuals [in *The Black Sorcerers*]. . . . Perhaps this occurred because the informants at times were very reserved and others had very bad intentions. On the other hand, some material was compared with information coming from inexact sources on Africa."[58] Lachatañeré went on to point to problems with the way Ortiz had cataloged the different arts practices of Afro-Cuban religions. Even more damning, Lachatañeré dismissed Ortiz's use of the term *brujería*, or "sorcery," expressing his own preference for the term *santería*. Although Ortiz ostensibly welcomed Lachatañeré's critique, characterizing it as providing a springboard into his next phase of research, there are significant clues that Ortiz and Lachatañeré held fundamentally different philosophies on Afro-Cuban religions. By the late 1930s and early 1940s, Ortiz had already cemented his reputation as a respected editor and scholar. Ortiz had even played a role in facilitating the publication of Lachatañeré's early work. However, important follow-up pieces by Lachatañeré remained unpublished, or were accepted only by less prestigious presses. Lachatañeré subsequently moved to New York and published through small U.S. presses. Around 1943, Ortiz stopped citing Lachatañeré as a source altogether.[59]

In this period, Lachatañeré achieved a number of scholarly coups that probably drew Ortiz's ire. Lachatañeré's 1942 book, *Manual de Santería*, claimed to be the first positive and authoritative introduction to Afro-Cuban theological beliefs and public-ritual practices. Indeed, the book's very title conveyed Lachatañeré's desire to write the most comprehensive guide on

Santería to that time. Although the *Manual* was thorough, it pretty much ignored the more recent theories that were being promoted by Ortiz at the time, and it also incorporated scholarship that Ortiz increasingly and pointedly shunned.

Lachatañeré's *Manual* was pivotal for the introduction, translation, and acceptance of Herskovits's scholarship in Cuba, but he also used the *Manual* to explain and reframe Herskovits's theories on acculturation and syncretism. Notably, Lachatañeré reworked Herskovits's theories so as to be able to apply them more effectively to Afro-Cuban ritual arts. For example, Lachatañeré disputed Herskovits's claim that religious practices in Cuba were static, noting that he had encountered a great deal of evidence that did not fit into Herskovits's framework. In regard to Herskovits's original one-to-one identification of specific saints with specific Afro-Cuban avatars, Lachatañeré explained in his manual that an oricha might only "*correspond* to," or "be identified with," a particular saint (my emphasis).[60] Such cross-references, he argued, vary enormously and "one has to recognize that this practice is the expression of *a system of worship with local characteristics*" (Lachatañeré's emphasis).[61] Although Lachatañeré accepted Herskovits's table of saints and oricha, he did so with significant reservations: in Lachatañeré's reconfiguration of the table (reproduced in the appendix to the *Manual*) he included a list of suggested art objects and offerings that might complement each divinity, including short descriptions of beadwork designs, lithographs, and fabric flags (*banderas*, or *paños*) using specific colors.[62] The listing of such objects implies Lachatañeré's interest in creative practices that Herskovits had overlooked. Thus, the *Manual* underscored the importance of creative and local variations in Afro-Cuban religious practice, especially among practitioners in Havana (where Lachatañeré worked), but also in Matanzas, Santiago de Cuba, and Guantánamo.

Lachatañeré's *Manual* also presented new and pivotal information for the period. By the early twentieth century, many Afro-Cuban religious families were increasingly advising their initiates to maintain private *libretas*, or notebooks, to keep a record of the rituals they led or in which they participated. Practitioners were generally instructed not to make their notebooks public. These notebooks might contain confidential information about the results of divination; they might describe an individual's relationships with different oricha; or they might relate relevant folklore. They could also contain instructions on how to perform different rituals or divination and how to create ritual arts. By discussing the public aspects of Afro-Cuban religious practice and providing rich descriptive content, Lachatañeré made this information accessible to a larger audience.[63]

The *Manual* also made it clear that many santeros practiced more than one Afro-Cuban religion. For example, throughout the *Manual*, Lachatañeré shows that many Regla de Ocha ceremonies were complemented by both church rituals and rituals originating in Espiritismo. Lachatañeré also noted that the practices of Espiritismo, since its focus is on the imagery of different ancestors and ancestral belief systems, served an important arbitration function in the relationship between different religious practices.[64]

Lachatañeré was not the only one to use the libretas in his research. In the 1940s, both Ortiz and Cabrera were also collecting the libretas of some of the practitioners they interviewed. This rising interest in the personal notebooks of practitioners marks an important trend.[65] For practitioners, the publication of Lachatañeré's *Manual* showed a need for religious leaders to document their practices for the growing community.

Fernando Ortiz, Part 2: *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*

Lachatañeré's 1939 critique of *The Black Sorcerers* created an important window that allowed Ortiz to escape his first book's negative language and theories. By then, Ortiz had already completed his most important work, *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*, which was published the following year (1940) and translated into English as *Cuban Counterpoint, Tobacco and Sugar* in 1947. With this volume, Ortiz completely shed his European training in criminal ethnology. *Cuban Counterpoint* led to a new theoretical approach to Cuban culture and stood as an important revision of his earlier approach to Afro-Cuban religious arts.

In *Cuban Counterpoint*, Ortiz offered one of his few direct responses to Melville Herskovits's early work, criticizing Herskovits's theory of "acculturation" as particularly unsatisfactory in the Cuban context: "Acculturation is used to describe the process of transition from one culture to another . . . but *transculturation* is a more fitting term. I have chosen the word *transculturation* to express the highly varied phenomena that have come about in Cuba as a result of the extremely complex transmutations of culture that have taken place here."[66] Ortiz thus rejected the one-sided cultural assimilation that Herskovits originally championed. As he argued, Africans could not evolve into Europeans in the New World. Rather, the contact between

two traditionally distinct cultures, through transculturation, produced *new* cultural forms that reflected aspects of the parent cultures, but that were new and distinct. In his theory, however, Ortiz did not engage the debate about Afro-Caribbean cultural change directly. Rather, he constructed a provocative argument about the cultural impact of the two products for which Cuba had become most famous—tobacco and sugar. Moreover, he argued, the reverberations of this cultural change had been felt around the world.

This argument about the impact of tobacco and sugar on culture did not immediately draw an audience from those interested in Afro-Cuban ritual arts. *Cuban Counterpoint* primarily sought to correct Herskovits's broader theory on acculturation, but Ortiz was very aware of its possible ramifications for Afro-Cuban religious studies.[67] Unfortunately, during his lifetime *Cuban Counterpoint* never became as influential as Ortiz had hoped. The prejudice implicit in Ortiz's first publication, *The Black Sorcerers*, likely hampered the overall success of *Cuban Counterpoint* among Spanish-speaking scholars. Among English-speaking scholars, Herskovits's theory of acculturation, published first, tended to take precedence over Ortiz's theory of transculturation. Furthermore, Herskovits's idea of Africanisms better appealed to the sensibilities of the Pan-African and Négritude movements, as it made explicit a culturally expressive relationship with blacks' African heritage. With an international reputation, Herskovits was also more willing to wax poetic on his theories, repeating his ideas in new ways to reach a wider audience.

Ortiz's theory, however, provoked a more in-depth effort to document Cuban arts and culture in order to determine both its similarities to the parent cultures and its creative differences. Given this nationalist point of view, *Cuban Counterpoint* was widely accepted within Cuba. Ortiz published a series of articles and volumes documenting the African cultural inheritance of Cuban art forms and the histories of the artists who created them, also noting how these objects were distinctly Cuban.[68]

Bohemia—The Press Embraces Syncretism as a Form of Cuban Nationalism

The articles Ortiz wrote for nationally produced encyclopedic volumes and popular magazines helped set the stage for cultural change in Cuba. Ortiz made scholarly debate on Afro-Cuban religions fashionable. In fact, his project was so successful that even work with which he actually disagreed became popular, including Herskovits's idea of syncretism. Beginning in 1949, Ortiz began a series of articles on "The Study of Cuba's Folkloric Music," which were later expanded into his oft-cited five-volume encyclopedic *Los instrumentos de la música afrocubana*. This work features essays on more than a hundred Afro-Cuban musical instruments, describing each instrument's design and also including Ortiz's interviews with religious practitioners and musicians. Ortiz suggests different regional African origins for many of the instruments, based mainly on their sculptural elements, and he also describes Cuban innovations. Musicians and scholars still rely on this influential work to correlate Cuban musical practices with their African origins.

Many of Ortiz's original articles on Cuban instruments were written for the popular Cuban cultural and literary magazine *Bohemia*. Between 1949 and 1951, in the pages of *Bohemia*, Ortiz also broke with his earlier theory that Espiritismo practices provided a bridge into European and North American culture. Ortiz now presented case studies to show that Espiritismo provided a means to experiment with many different forms of Cuban cultural heritage, noting that many of the espiritistas with whom he worked also worked as santeras or were affiliated with other Afro-Cuban religions. In his case studies, he claimed to have documented different African influences as well as possible vestiges of native Taíno cultural practices, both in art and in ritual performance.[69] These *Bohemia* essays show little interest in possible Spanish colonial influences. Effectively, the importance given to non-European cultural influences signaled the start of a movement to divorce Cuba from any lingering aspects of its Spanish heritage, especially in the island's cultural practices and the religious arts.

Bohemia continued to explore the new Cuban nationalism as exhibited in Ortiz's series on Espiritismo by publishing other series in the same vein.[70] The journalist Manuel Cuellar Vizcaino, for example, wrote on the different folk Catholic saints celebrated throughout Cuba, in which the saints were portrayed as a modern nationalist phenomenon. A *Bohemia* cover in 1949 actually featured the image of Nuestra Señora de la Caridad del Cobre (see plate 3), literally transforming this "*santo*" into a popular cover girl. Our Lady of Charity of the Church of El Cobre—a community in eastern Cuba—is now best known simply as "the Caridad." The Caridad was not an actual saint but one of Cuba's renditions of the Virgin Mary. She was so popular that the Roman Catholic Church officially canonized the Caridad as a manifestation of the Virgin Mary in 1916. Cuellar's *Bohemia* articles chronicled the practices

of many different Cubans celebrating popular saints. Through short interviews and photographs of household altars, these practitioners showed that the images of Cuban saints were used as imagery reflective of the island's multiple cultural histories to draw many different spirits of the dead. The series thus indirectly revealed how pervasive Spiritist practices were in Cuba by 1950. Cuellar's articles described different religious practices with marked ease. In many of his articles, as well as in other journalists' work for *Bohemia*, the text draws a one-on-one connection between a particular Catholic saint and a particular oricha from La Regla de Ocha—for example, "Santa Barbara (Shango)," or "Nuestra Señora de Merced (Obatala)." In this way, the *Bohemia* series is reminiscent of Herskovits's charts, which also contained one-on-one pairings of saints and oricha.

In this period, Herskovits's originally prescribed one-to-one syncretism between Catholic saints and Afro-Cuban deities was more of a reality in popular literature and academic scholarship than in actual practice, which is borne out in my own interviews with religious leaders from the period.[71] In general, few of them, if any, treated saints and oricha as the same entity. Importantly, though, a concrete syncretic relationship between saints and oricha seems to have been embraced by some for political reasons. That is, by presenting Afro-Cuban religions in this way, *Bohemia* was not only celebrating the new nationalism, it was also showing its outright disdain for the enduring government persecution of Afro-Cuban practitioners.[72] As culturally diverse national symbols, the trendy, iconic images of the Catholic saints even became a vehicle for product advertising. For example, one coffee company held a raffle on the Day of the Caridad del Cobre each year, featuring the saint in their print commercials, presumably to attract a larger buying public.[73]

Beyond the dozens of articles discussing different Afro-Cuban religious practices, *Bohemia* also published short fiction on Afro-Cuban religions. One of the more prominent examples is the 1950 piece by Gerardo Del Valle entitled "Cuento cubano: Ella no creía en bilongos" (*bilongos* are packets of prepared herbs and offerings that are often left at an altar). In this story, set in the 1950s, Chela, a practitioner of Afro-Cuban religions, is in danger of losing her husband to Candita, a woman who has renounced her Afro-Cuban religious heritage. The title of the story, "She did not believe in Bilongo," refers to Candita's rejection of the religious preparations and art objects described in the story. The illustrations that accompany the story depict Candita and her lover as fashionable cosmopolitans—with Candita's hair and dress resembling that of a Hollywood actress. This rejection of Cuban arts and culture and the couple's flirtation with North American values damns both Candita and her lover, and their close-knit religious community evicts them. By calling the story a "cuento cubano," or "Cuban story," *Bohemia* underscores the idea of "community" as a nationalist ideal. In *Bohemia*, at least, Cuban literature and Cuban religious arts were representative of national culture.

That *Bohemia*'s readers could identify *bilongo* as well as other aspects of the Afro-Cuban ritual arts marks an important turning point in the acceptance of Afro-Cuban religions in Cuba. As "Ella no creía en bilongo" illustrates, readers were familiar enough with the different ritual languages and arts practices of Afro-Cuban religions that they could accept them in a fictional narrative. Even more important, readers understood the tensions that existed among the various Afro-Cuban religious arts. In the story, Chela visits not only a priest of La Regla de Ocha but also a *palero*, or priest of Palo. However, the story does not privilege one Afro-Cuban belief system over any other. The narrative is a nationalist tale: it is most interested in showing that the other woman, Candita, does not practice *any* Afro-Cuban religion and is thus less a member of Cuban society.

Lydia Cabrera and William Bascom: A New Focus on Afro-Cuban Religions

While *Bohemia* presented its case studies of Afro-Cuban religious practices in a short format to a general audience, others, including Lydia Cabrera and William Bascom, took a more comprehensive and scholarly approach. Both Cabrera and Bascom conducted extensive interviews with practitioners who had been trained in multiple religious practices. The publication of Bascom's "The Focus of Cuban Santería" in 1950 and Cabrera's *El Monte* in 1954 set important new precedents in African diaspora studies. Both Cabrera and Bascom were interested in the natural elements that had been incorporated into Afro-Cuban religious-art objects as a means to connect 1950s practices to those originating in the African past.

Although the research for *El Monte* took more than a decade overall, Cabrera's volume was clearly influenced by the new nationalist discourse in Cuba. She expects a great deal of knowledge on the part of her readers. Her title, *El Monte* (The Forest), refers to the extended metaphor she presents in the text, which compares the grandeur and natural diversity of a forest with

Cuba's cultural inheritance from Africa, especially with regard to religious practices that make use of traditional plants: "Our blacks, in spirit, have not permitted themselves to become less African. They have not been able to renounce their beliefs nor forget the secret teachings of their elders. They devotedly continue their old, magical practices, and all continue to return to the forest. They are directed by the primitive, natural divinities that their ancestors adored and which arrived intact, lodged in stones, in shells, or in [tree] trunks and roots, and that which, like themselves, continue to speak in African languages—in Yoruba, Ewe or in Bantu."[74] In this highly romanticized fashion Cabrera's book presents several chapters of folklore. She also provides an encyclopedia of traditional plants as well as different types of wood and some minerals, discussing each one's properties and physical characteristics as well as the oricha or multiple divinities to whom each element belongs, its potential for healing, and its ritual use. Her documentation of nearly five hundred different herbal elements is still an influential resource among Afro-Cuban practitioners today.

The problem with this massive resource is that many of the priests that Cabrera interviewed were trained in more than one belief system. Her notes for these formal and informal interviews, done between 1939 and 1954, are in the Cuban Heritage Collection at the University of Miami and consist largely of small pads of paper and note cards with no names or dates recorded. *El Monte* very rarely documents which of Cabrera's sources gave her which information. Among her informants were religious practitioners who were not only santeros, but espiritistas and paleros or members of the Abakuá. At the same time, distinctions are often made by the same practitioner in the actual ritual use of certain elements for separate belief systems, or when applied to different arts and altars. However, Cabrera's often confusing discussion of the natural elements in Afro-Cuban ritual practices indirectly locates an important site of pluralist discourse—that is, her information allows us to identify certain commonalities between and among separate ritual-arts practices. The plants and natural elements Cabrera documents are very meaningful across Afro-Cuban religious practices.

Many of the traditional plants that Cabrera documents are used in La Regla de Ocha, Palo, and folk Catholic ritual practices, as well as Espiritismo. For example, among the most visible, sunflowers are often used in La Regla de Ocha to represent the divinity Ochún, but they are also popular in folk Catholic altars to represent La Caridad del Cobre. For practitioners aware of the reference, the presence of sunflowers in altars for La Caridad del Cobre can also indicate Ochún's presence, even if the ritual practices are separate. In La Regla de Ocha, specific natural elements invest agency in the ritual art object, attributing social power to the object and pointing to the presence of an actual divinity. When practitioners are attentive to such cues, these same elements frequently reappear in the arts pertaining to other belief systems and can indicate the presence of oricha or divinities from other Afro-Caribbean practices, depending on the natural elements employed. However, this does not mean that the folk Catholic altar featuring such natural elements can be used for La Regla de Ocha practices. Practitioners familiar with these connections often discuss them at length, particularly because a critical means of training new priests involves imparting the historic religious traditions orally. Cabrera's *El Monte*, alternately described by its readers as "much-loved" or "maddening," shows how difficult it is to represent this dialogic system in an encyclopedic format.

As does *El Monte*, William Bascom's pivotal article, "The Focus of Cuban Santería," argues that these natural elements are the central, most important feature of La Regla de Ocha altars. Bascom presents two important arguments. First, he explains that the relationship between Catholic imagery and Afro-Cuban ritual objects is not important in the actual ceremonial practices of La Regla de Ocha: there is no required syncretism of, or reliance on, Catholic imagery in La Regla de Ocha ritual performances. Unfortunately, Bascom understates this point in his writing, intentionally avoiding any outright critique of his teacher and ongoing mentor, Melville Herskovits. Second, Bascom argues that further research on West African ritual practices, particularly of the core natural elements, including "the blood, the stones and the herbs," will reveal more commonality between African and Afro-Cuban practices, and he therefore urges further comparative studies of African and Afro-Cuban practices.

Both Bascom and Cabrera largely concentrated on La Regla de Ocha in these works. Nonetheless, their research forced both of them to at least consider the multiple religious systems that composed the Afro-Cuban ritual-arts movement. Over the course of his career, Bascom frequently lauded Cabrera's work and noted that similarly extensive research across Africa was essential to document the connections he felt existed. This interest in determining these historical connections made Bascom's essay one of his most widely read publications.[75]

Cabrera fled to the United States shortly after the Cuban Revolution, continuing to write largely about the Abakuá men's associations and Palo.

William Bascom traveled to Cuba regularly. In partnership with his wife, Berta, a Cuban exile, Bascom's later research frequently compared contemporary practices among the West African Yoruba with practices in Cuba. Bascom's interests included musical instruments and divination. This led him to comparative discussions of ritual drums and drumming and studies of divination practices in Nigeria and Cuba.[76] In his research into all of these practices, Bascom's work emphasized the ritual roles of men—in particular, those of the batá drummers and Ifá diviners, who had been persecuted by the Cuban government for decades. Both Bascom and Cabrera chose to ignore practices, such as Espiritismo, that were predominantly led by women and that involved Catholic imagery, which was considered to have few ties to Africa's history in this period.

The 1960s and the Decline of the Espiritismo Movement in Cuba

Though in his eighties, in the 1960s Fernando Ortiz remained interested in transculturation and continued to study Cuban religions and culture. Rising scholars and the new Cuban Revolutionary government regularly requested his guidance on the research of Afro-Cuban religions, but Ortiz refused to accept visitors to his home.[77] Among the government activities that Ortiz appears to have found disconcerting was a new movement against popular Cuban belief systems, including Espiritismo. Ortiz had previously recognized Espiritismo as vital to the rise of La Regla de Ocha practices as well as the awareness of other Afro-Cuban religions.

In the 1960s, organized Catholicism, folk Catholicism, and Espiritismo all came under attack by the Revolutionary government. In this period, Ortiz regularly read the local press and preserved articles and cartoons from a newspaper, *Hoy*, that reported on government actions taken against these religious practices.[78] Among the articles in Ortiz's archives are stories that describe the expulsion of a few dozen Catholic priests in Havana and across the country. The Revolutionary government accused the Catholic Church of gathering arms against it, claiming that the United States and Spain had given money to the church for this purpose.

The actual details of these accounts, however, are dwarfed by the popular reaction to this persecution, also presented in the Cuban media. An untold number of Christian monuments were destroyed and many churches closed.[79] Instances of popular iconoclasm against Catholic churches were accompanied by the Revolutionary government's general mistrust of all religious organizations that relied on Catholic imagery. Beginning in late 1961, the provincial governments determined to close down the registered Espiritismo centers—a process that took a number of years. In the Cuban National Archives the files of the Registry of Associations for extant religious organizations involving Catholicism and Espiritismo that existed in this period are marked "Cancelado" on the front in red pencil. There are also a number of inventories of objects seized by the Revolutionary government from household religious centers. In 1964, a Cuban doctoral candidate, Amadeo Sentí, spent a month touring Espiritismo centers in Cuba.[80] He intended to conduct doctoral research on Espiritismo de Cordón, a particularly popular form of Espiritismo that employed dance, song, and sometimes musicians. Sentí, however, encountered a number of difficulties on his journey. Many of the individuals he attempted to interview suspected he was a government official, there to close down their religious centers. Most Espiritistas were reluctant to speak with him. Furthermore, among the mediums he successfully interviewed, many did not strictly practice Espiritismo, as they were adapting to the prohibitions against Espiritismo practices.

As in Ortiz's articles of 1949 and 1950, many of the espiritistas whom Sentí interviewed also practiced La Regla de Ocha or Palo or other Afro-Cuban traditions. Espiritistas could not sustain a regular clientele, as attendance at the strictly spiritual centers across Cuba rapidly decreased as a result of the persecution.[81] Instead, the Cuban Revolutionary government showed more lenience to the practices of those religions more popularly identified as Afro-Cuban, particularly La Regla de Ocha, Palo, and the Abakuá fraternities. Although Cuba's socialist government has generally frowned upon all religious practices, because they enabled scholars to recast Cuban history, these three Afro-Cuban religions were recognized and allowed to practice during this period.[82]

As a result, a new initiative for national folklore studies arose within a number of Cuban institutions. For example, the government provided funds to many Cuban universities for the study of Afro-Cuban folklore, which was also promoted in public museums and by performing-arts groups. The Cuban government also supported the study of Afro-Cuban religions and the creation of several collections of African art that have become mainstays in the discourse of comparative art history in Cuba.[83] A number of new museums were established in this period (including the Museo de Regla, the Museo de Guanabacoa, and the Casa de África, all of which have become

popular tourist destinations), and Afro-Cuban folkloric history also received increased interest from a number of international museums, which mounted their own exhibits of Cuban culture.[84]

All of these new venues tended to emphasize the display of Afro-Cuban ritual arts, and specifically the objects that had a visual connection to Africa with which audiences could easily identify. Such displays included cases of objects celebrating La Regla de Ocha, the Abakuá fraternities, and Palo. Notably, the collections that were developed in this period, such as that of the Museo de Regla, only cursorily noted the shared relationships among the different arts and altar types, and there was no mention of the Espiritismo movement.[85]

Conclusion: The Tensions of Twentieth-Century Pluralism

The accepted literary canon discussing Afro-Caribbean ritual arts grew exponentially following the Cuban Revolution. Driven by earlier diverging hypotheses on the historical and cultural origins of Afro-Cuban religions, these more recent studies had to confront the difficulties of studying a diasporic culture. Some authors, including Robert Farris Thompson, David H. Brown, and Ysamur Flores-Peña and Roberta J. Evanchuk, found that the origins of culture are often as much an exploration of creativity as they are a question of cultural inheritance.[86] Indeed, Judith Bettelheim, an art historian specializing in Caribbean art, finds that there are many references to the Kingdom of the Kongo (from the earliest period of the slave trade into the Americas) among the cultural origins celebrated in Espiritismo. Similarly, Bettelheim and Janet Berlo, in analyzing the work of José Bedia, show that historical Native American arts appears throughout Afro-Cuban contemporary expression. It is through such multiple cultural references that practitioners recall the different cultural histories of resistance to colonialism.[87]

My research presented here shows that Espiritismo, with its significant emphasis on cultural hybridity in Afro-Cuban religious arts, has introduced audiences to other Afro-Cuban belief systems, thereby allowing them to compare and contrast religious art and imagery. This is an important construct. Afro-Atlantic Espiritismo is a critical site of religious plurality because, more than in any other belief system, the expression of different historical religious beliefs is the means by which an espiritista can appeal to many different spirits of the dead. Espiritismo has allowed audiences who are not initiated into La Regla de Ocha, Palo, or the Abakuá fraternities to experiment with imagery from across these belief systems.

Critics of studies of religious pluralism point to the "irenic" idealism of the idea of coexisting faiths.[88] Throughout my research, I have found that it has been difficult for leaders, practitioners, and scholars to navigate the complex interactions among religions. In the writings of Diana Eck, a professor of comparative religion at Harvard Divinity School, it is religious leaders who act as mediators among different faiths, especially as these groups interact in urban environments.[89] For her, these leaders hail from Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim belief systems as well as Christian groups. Eck's pluralism only minimally engages the idea that religious leaders actually draw upon practices from other faiths, however. As we shall see, in the creation of a larger Afro-Caribbean religious and ritual-arts movement, the leaders of the different Afro-Caribbean religions frequently practiced more than one belief system, relying on multiple arts and altars.

Such hybridity poses important questions. John Hutnyk, a scholar in cultural studies, argues that the concept of hybridity allows for a "hodge-podge" of material that weakens any unified presentation of a cultural movement.[90] Further, he finds that by insisting upon a long list of differences, claims to hybrid identities often make marginalized groups even more marginal. However, the history that emerges in these pages shows how four women have used hybridity to their advantage. Tiburcia, Hortensia, Iluminada, and Carmen forged popular symbols that united their different communities. Specifically, the imagery recreated by these women included the iconic La Caridad del Cobre, the trickster figure Eleguá, and a representation of the colonial-era woman, or *madama*. Moreover, the women standardized through ritual practice the modes by which such imagery was revealed to the public. Rather than simply carving out cultural difference, they mediated certain symbols of hybridity and presented them to an extremely broad audience. Today, even international audiences are increasingly aware of the symbols the four women celebrated.

Unfortunately, perhaps because of the very nature of hybridity, the women's authorship in this process has been erased with time. All of their efforts appear to have propelled Afro-Caribbean religious arts as a whole more than they advanced the women's personal agendas. Therefore, my particular focus is on how the women relied on religious hybridity, or the articulation of pluralism, in their arts practices. None of them forced a unanimous belief system upon their religious family, nor was there a completely comfortable religious

environment, with easy transitions, between their practices. A close analysis of their altars and art practices reveals that Tiburcia, Hortensia, Iluminada, and Carmen relied on the tension that existed between their different ritual-arts practices in order to draw diverse audiences, thus engaging the agency, dynamism, and creativity that would be essential to pass on their beliefs.

2 *Tiburcia and the Nested Spaces of Afro-Cuban Ritual Arts, 1861–1938*

In the wake of the 1912 Negro Rebellion in eastern Cuba, also known as the "Little Race War,"[1] many leaders of the cabildos in Havana were arrested and prosecuted. The leadership of these Afro-Cuban religious fraternities was all male, and among those arrested were members of the organization in which Tiburcia Sotolongo y Ugarte actively participated. However, in this period the police seemed uninterested in persecuting women, and so Tiburcia was able to continue her practice of Espiritismo, folk Catholicism, and La Regla de Ocha with no untoward consequences. Tiburcia created altars and conducted religious services in her private Central Havana home. Her practice employed especially innovative ritual spaces and different artistic media. These household installations captured wider audience interest through visually compelling comparisons of different religious imagery. Practices like Tiburcia's enabled the growth of multiple Afro-Cuban religions in the midst of the volatile circumstances of early twentieth-century Havana.

This case study emphasizes the changing roles of Afro-Cuban women over the course of Tiburcia's lifetime, from 1861 until 1938. Tiburcia's story, from the slave plantation where she was born and raised to her life in Havana City, illustrates how social roles and the spaces relegated to women dramatically changed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By the early 1880s, the Spanish colonial government had officially granted Afro-Cuban religious groups the right to assemble.[2] After Cuba won its independence from Spain in 1898, these laws remained in place. However, as the threat of black political organization mounted, male Afro-Cuban religious practitioners soon faced the brunt of police persecution. As a result,

13. Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 199, 218–19.

14. Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 1–101.

15. Following masculine and feminine orthography in Spanish, a *santero* is a male priest of Santería, and a *santera* is a female priest.

16. Fernández Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, *Creole Religions of the Caribbean*, 175. Some scholars argue that Espiritismo is not a religion because the popular doctrines of Spiritism do not support an organization with a hierarchy of leadership. Because this debate remains unresolved, when describing Espiritismo I will frequently use the term *belief system*, rather than *religion*.

17. I place these words within quotation marks because I want my readers to understand that I am employing a loose, introductory description. I explain my use of these terms in much greater detail in chapter 2, "Tiburcia and the Nested Spaces of Afro-Cuban Ritual Arts, 1861–1938."

18. Many of the original Spanish translations of Kardec's works were published in Spain—for example, *El libro de los médiums*. However, Spanish-language versions of some of Kardec's works were also published in Mexico and Argentina, including the pamphlets *El espiritismo en su mas simple expression* (Buenos Aires: Imp. del' Porvenir, 1885), and *Filosofía espiritualista: El espiritismo* (Guanajuato, Mexico: Imp. de Encarnación Serrano, 1868). The English-language versions of Kardec's two most important works were published as *The Spirits' Book: The Principles of Spiritist Doctrine [Le livre des esprits]* (1893), and *Experimental Spiritism. Book on Mediums; or, Guide for Mediums and Invocators . . . [Le livre des médiums]* (1874).

19. Fernández Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, *Creole Religions of the Caribbean*, 177.

20. See Fu-Kiau, *African Cosmology of the Bântu-Kôngo*; Thompson and Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun*; Thornton, "The Development of an African Catholic Church in the Kingdom of Kongo"; Thornton, "On the Trail of Voodoo; and Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*.

21. Thornton, *The Kongolese Saint Anthony*, 204.

22. Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, 235–71.

23. Bettelheim, "Caribbean Espiritismo (Spiritist) Altars."

24. In his presentation of a "spirit-hierarchy," Kardec does not explicitly define who, in death, becomes a spirit capable of communicating with the living, and who does not. However, he does point to people who are popularly acknowledged as having had higher moral standards in life as those who become more powerful spirits in the afterlife (see Kardec, *The Spirits' Book*, 38–40, no. 100). In *The Book on Mediums*, Kardec does identify some of the individuals invoked in Kardecian Spiritism practices, among them a spirit named "Erastus" who served Saint Peter. Also mentioned is a religious group that channeled a famous member of the French navy who was killed in battle, and another medium who channeled her deceased brother (Kardec, *Experimental Spiritism*, 115, 82, 59).

25. Allan Kardec, *El evangelio según el espiritismo*.

26. Traditionally, during Caribbean Spiritist sessions songs were repeated and prayers recited again and again. This ritual repetition was frequently combined with use of traditional plants, tobacco smoke, and perfumed water, and led to ritual possession.

27. "Scientific Spiritism," or "Espiritismo Científico," is one of the Spiritist practices that *does* follow Kardec's guidelines stringently. Espiritismo Científico centers became popular after the Cuban Revolution in the 1960s, after many of the centers that worked primarily with Catholic imagery were closed by the Revolutionary government.

28. See Córdova Martínez and Barzaga Sablón, *El Espiritismo de Cordón*; and Millet, *El espiritismo*.

29. For examples of creative interpretations seen in the Dominican Republic, see Bettelheim and Berlo, *Transcultural Pilgrim*, 140–45.

30. Fernández Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, *Creole Religions of the Caribbean*, 183–85.

31. Millet (in *El espiritismo*) and Córdova Martínez and Barzaga Sablón (in *El Espiritismo de Cordón*) have described different types of Espiritismo, but I am not able to accurately fit the practices of the women with whom I collaborated into these frameworks since neither the women nor their religious families define either their own style of practice or their predecessor's original style in a manner consistent with the styles described by Millet and Córdova Martínez and Barzaga Sablón. I believe, therefore, that it is preferable to characterize the work of Tiburcia Sotolongo, Hortensia Ferrer, Iluminada Sierra Ortiz, and Carmen Oramas Caballery as important antecedents to the styles described by the aforementioned researchers.

32. See David H. Brown, *Santería Enthroned*, 134–43.

33. David H. Brown, *The Light Inside*.

34. Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island*, 43–47.

35. For more on the definition of "Creole" and "Creolization," see Fernández Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, *Creole Religions of the Caribbean*, 4–7.

Chapter 1. Religious Pluralism and the Afro-Cuban Ritual-Arts Movement, 1899–1969

1. Among the authors addressing contemporary interpretations of this popular literature, Todd Ramón Ochoa presents the pervasive stereotype that "Ocha/Santo does the healing and Palo does the harming" (Ochoa, *Society of the Dead*, 10).

2. I have adopted David H. Brown's translation of the book's title as "The Black Sorcerers" in order to call attention to the tenor of Ortiz's language. Scholars writing about the early scholarship on Afro-Cuban religions have been reluctant to translate the extremely nuanced Spanish term *brujo* into English. It is often translated as "witch," but that involves even more prejudice than "sorcerer." Nonetheless, it is important that audiences who do not speak Spanish understand the exoticizing overtones Ortiz intended for his first book. Using the translation "The Black Sorcerers," which preceded the publication and wider international reception of his book *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*, emphasizes the dramatic transformation of Ortiz's scholarship in the 1940s. In *Contrapunteo cubano*, Ortiz established a new positive tone about Afro-Cuban religions (see David H. Brown, "The Afro-Cuban Festival 'Day of the Kings'").

3. A few prominent criminologists already worked in Cuba, most notably including one "Inspector Trujillo," the author of the book *Los criminales de Cuba y d. José Trujillo*, completed in 1881 and published in 1882. In that work, Trujillo briefly describes criminals

in Cuba, pointing to Afro-Cuban religious practices, particularly among the all-male Abakuá Society, as having incited illegal acts, including homicide.

4. For evidence of this prodding, see the letter from César Lombroso to Ortiz requesting to see portions of the latter's study of *brujería* (in Fernando Ortiz, *Los negros brujos*, 1). For more on César Lombroso, see Gibson, *Born to Crime*.

5. While in Cuba, Ortiz also took the official government exam to become a lawyer (see Barreal, Introduction to *Los negros brujos*). One presumes that preparing for this exam was a time-consuming endeavor.

6. See Ellis, *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*. I was unable to document the reproduction and distribution of Ellis's works in Cuba, but the original text as well as the early-twentieth-century reprints are still available in a number of Cuban libraries. I have also seen copies in various practitioners' homes.

7. In a later article Ortiz admitted his prejudices in *The Black Sorcerers*, but he claimed that the book was essential for the introduction of the term *Afrocubano* (see Ortiz, "Por la integración cubana de blancos y negros," 69–74).

8. Ortiz described his ideas on Afro-Cuban identity more eloquently in his subsequent work (see Ortiz, "Brujos o santeros," *Estudios Afrocubanos* 3, no. 1–4 [1939]: 85–90; and Ortiz, "Por la integración cubana de blancos y negros").

9. In *The Black Sorcerers* and a number of subsequent articles, Ortiz flirted with European tabloid articles that were particularly popular in the years following Cuba's independence from Spain in 1898. To clarify, European audiences welcomed inflammatory material on Cuba after its independence. Ortiz, however, makes only guarded comparisons between Afro-Cuban religious practices and cannibalism, or "Black Magic." Although he cites these tabloid stories as sources, he is careful to state that he never directly encountered any violence in Afro-Cuban religious practices. For the tabloid articles Ortiz consulted, see chapter 8, titled "Notes from the Press about Sorcery," in Ortiz, *Los negros brujos*, 151–79.

10. "Los brujos son, generalmente, viejos africanos" (Ortiz, *Los negros brujos*, 115). Note that, here, *African* is the key word, not *black*. In the early 1900s, race remained a somewhat divisive term for both Ortiz and the Cuban government since such categories were extremely nuanced, involving several sources of ethnicity and thus making the act of categorizing blacks an oppressive and relatively ineffective system (see Helg, *Our Rightful Share*).

11. According to Ortiz, black Cuban women were of little consequence, as early-twentieth-century scholarship had already shown that they served in only a secondary position ("Las mujeres ocupan lugar secundario en la brujería, debido ante todo al carácter sacerdotal de aquéllos, que les da en las sociedades salvajes de donde proceden y en Cuba misma, una posición socialmente predominante; posición incompatible con la abyección en que es tenida la mujer africana en la familia y en la tribu") (Ortiz, *Los negros brujos*, 114).

12. Ortiz used the pejorative term *Ñáñigo* throughout *Los negros brujos*. By 1954, Lydia Cabrera would replace *Ñáñigo Society*, which had become a generally descriptive and highly prejudiced label of black criminal activities, with *Abakuá Society*, thereby better acknowledging the Society's West African cultural heritage (see David H. Brown, *The Light Inside*, 14–12, 195–8; and Cabrera, *El Monte*, 195–220).

13. See, for example, Castellanos, *La brujería y el ñañiguismo en Cuba, desde el punto de vista médico-legal*; Castellanos, *Medicina legal y criminología afro-cubanas* [*sic*]; and Enrique C. Henríquez, "Crímenes de la brujería: La sugestión criminal en los ignorantes fanáticos," Fernando Ortiz Papers. Israel Castellanos, a Cuban police detective, also published a number of books cataloging the head shots of the Afro-Cuban men he arrested. In a later, similar book on women, Castellanos, following Ortiz, largely dismissed the potential for women to become criminals: "In Cuba the criminality of women is very inferior to that of the masculine." Castellanos claimed that the "coefficient of feminine criminality [was] 0.001," compared to a "coefficient of masculine criminality [of] 0.053" (Castellanos, *La delicuencia femenina en Cuba*, 2:96).

14. "En todo caso, aun cuando no se llegase a una condena, deberían decomisarse los ídolos, imágenes, collares, fetiches, altars, *chumbas* y demás enseres y cachivaches de los templos brujos, los cuales, al menos los más característicos, en vez de ser destruidos como se ha hecho hasta ahora, debieran ser destinados al museo de antropología de la universidad nacional" (Ortiz, *Los negros brujos*, 196).

15. Flikke, *Cuban Museums and Afro-Cuban Heritage*.

16. David H. Brown questions whether these objects were indeed originals or fakes made to deceive the police (Brown, *The Light Inside*, 149).

17. Ortiz, *Los negros brujos*, 200. Spain originally enacted the Law of Associations in 1881, which was revived and revamped following independence.

18. Indeed, the registries included groups that proclaimed an interest in any number of subjects, including opera, architecture, and classical languages. Many of the groups that tried to register were never able to obtain official governmental approval.

19. On this topic, see Rolando, *Las raíces de mi corazón*; and Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 193–226. The Cuban National Archives houses many of the records of these legal proceedings against the cabildos and their leaders, and archivists are working to publish these fragile documents. For a sample, see Archivo Nacional de Cuba, "Galería de Imágenes: Documentos del Partido Independiente de Color."

20. On the laws against Afro-Cuban drummers in the 1920s, see Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness*, 229–32.

21. Ortiz wrote a series of articles for *Bohemia* in the 1940s and 1950s, including the essay "Orígenes de los cordoneros del orilé," in which he described the much greater participation and leadership of women in Espiritismo. Most of the *Bohemia* material I consulted is from the scholarly consultation collection in the Biblioteca Nacional "José Martí" in Havana. Please note that these well-used archival copies are often missing their covers, so issue dates are sometimes also missing from my citations here, or in some cases I've inferred the issue date.

22. Ortiz, *Los negros brujos*, 196.

23. Ibid., 197.

24. For example, dozens of police documents are filed under "Espiritismo" in the Archivo Histórico Provincial de Santiago de Cuba. Most document instances of African musical traditions and dance. But despite this evidence, the practice of Espiritismo remained legal in the decades leading up to the Cuban Revolution. For an overview of these documents, see Rebecca Calderón Berroa and María Caridad González, "Algunas consideraciones del espiritismo en la religión oriental a través de documentos de archivos," ca. 2000, Archivo Histórico Provincial de Santiago de Cuba.

25. Córdova Martínez and Barzaga Sablón, *El Espiritismo de Cordón*. The authors look

at the Registry numbers for official temples of Espiritismo in the Province of Holguín and demonstrate a fairly gradual increase in the number of temples until the 1940s, followed by a groundswell of new Espiritismo centers in the 1950s. In their discussion, Córdova Martínez and Barzaga Sablón concentrate on one form of Espiritismo, known as "Espiritismo de Cordón," but their statistical evidence, reproduced in table 1.1, is much more generalized. In the Province of Havana, the Registry of Associations records an even greater number of Espiritismo groups, in the several hundreds during the 1940s and 1950s. The Cuban National Archive maintains thousands of files for the Province of Havana's Registry of Associations. Unfortunately, since these are organized alphabetically by each organization's name, a general survey of the organizations in Havana between 1881 and 1959 would demand several years of research. In contrast, the Registry for the Province of Oriente, which is primarily housed in the Archivo Histórico Provincial de Santiago de Cuba, had always been organized by the denomination of the group, allowing for better statistical research on Espiritismo in eastern Cuba before 1959. Please note that the geographic boundaries for historical provinces in Cuba are organized differently than those for present-day provinces.

26. Many "Espiritismo" groups emphasized the influence of African and Afro-Cuban culture on their spiritual practice. Among dozens of examples in the Registry for Havana are a 1943 charter for recognition by the group Center of Psychic Anthropological Guidance "El Carmelo" and a 1954 application for the Afro-Cuban Psychic Center "Elena Lopez." The first group, "El Carmelo," cites their use of anthropological publications on Africa to facilitate their study of their ancestors' histories. The regulatory handbook for Centro Psíquico Afro Cubano "Elena Lopez" explains that "the association being formed has for its objective to celebrate all of the religious festivities with accordance to the traditions that have been brought to this country by the people who have migrated from the African continent to this beautiful country" (see "Reglamento" of the Centro de Orientación Psíquico Antropológico "El Carmelo," Registro de Asociaciones, 1943; and Dolores Hernández Ponier, "Reglamento de la Asociación Centro Psíquico Afro Cubano 'Elena Lopez,'" Article 1, Registro de Asociaciones, 1954).

27. "A medida que ha avanzado la civilización, se han ido diluyendo tales cofradías fetichistas" (Ortiz, *Los negros brujos*, 86). Ortiz's view is in contradistinction to that of other Catholics in the late 1920s, who saw the popularity of Espiritismo as a conflict for the Catholic Church. One P. Manuel Gómez, for example, published a pamphlet against the "plague" of Espiritismo, which he then distributed throughout Havana (see Gómez, *Diálogos catequísticos contra la plaga del espiritismo moderno*).

28. Ortiz, *La filosofía penal de los espiritistas*.

29. See Baron, "Amalgams and Mosaics, Syncretisms and Reinterpretations"; and Jackson, "Melville Herskovits and the Search for Afro-American Culture," 95.

30. Herskovits, "Acculturation and the American Negro."

31. Ibid., 211.

32. In the late twentieth century the anthropologists Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw would argue that Herskovits's early understanding of acculturation was too strict and that individuals are equally likely to reject or react to the new culture to which they are exposed rather than accept a new culture unilaterally (Stewart and Shaw, *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism*, 6).

33. In his suggestions for future research, Herskovits poses example questions for future scholars, including: "What of aboriginal custom persists? What of Mohammedan practice has been taken over? What amalgams of culture have resulted?" For Herskovits, all future acculturation studies would conclude with a description of the "contra-acculturative movements" (Herskovits, *Acculturation: The Study of Culture Contact*, 121–36).

34. Herskovits, "African Gods and Catholic Saints in New World Negro Belief," 321.

35. The use of chromolithographs of Catholic saints is more popular in Haiti (Herskovits, "African Gods and Catholic Saints in New World Negro Belief," 321, 323).

36. I have included the footnote annotations and information from Herskovits's original table. Since its original publication, the table has reappeared in many different versions, and always without Herskovits's citations. The citations are important because some of the works on which Herskovits relied have since been entirely discredited. For example, Seabrook's *The Magic Island* and Wirkus and Dudley's *The White King of La Gonave* are now seen as testaments to the racism and postcolonial backlash of their time, rather than as fully accurate accounts. While no one discounts that Herskovits performed his own fieldwork, his fieldwork rarely substantiated the scholarly evidence he often cited (see Blier, "Melville J. Herskovits and the Arts of Ancient Dahomey"; Blier, "Field Days"; and Price and Price, *The Root of Roots, or, How Afro-American Anthropology Got Its Start*).

37. Ironically, throughout *The Black Sorcerers* Ortiz also cites Nina Rodrigues's comparisons of Afro-Cuban oricha with Catholic saints, elevating Nina Rodrigues's 1896 study as the most important antecedent to his own work. In the 1896 work, however, Nina Rodrigues was primarily interested in making a late-Victorian-inspired comparison between the classical gods and African diasporic divinities (see Nina Rodrigues, *L'animisme fétichiste des nègres de Bahia*).

38. Ortiz began *The Black Sorcerers* with a disclaimer that, "apart from some clarifications and observations with respect to their locality, the [original African] identity is not always known" (Ortiz, *Los negros brujos*, 23). Ortiz also believed that some reidentification and reinterpretation of his source materials was certainly a possibility in the future.

39. Nina Rodrigues and Ortiz relied on E. B. Ellis's popular account, *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, which is also peppered with classical references (see Nina Rodrigues, *L'animisme fétichiste des nègres de Bahia*; and Ortiz, *Los negros brujos*, 68–83).

40. Herskovits, "Problem, Method, and Theory in Afroamerican Studies," 57.

41. Erika Bourguignon, a psychological anthropologist who worked in Haiti in the 1940s, also challenged Herskovits on some of his concepts. She found that although Herskovits proposed important theories on psychological anthropology, he did not follow through with actual psychological studies (Bourguignon, "Relativism and Ambivalence in the Work of M. J. Herskovits").

42. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, xxii.

43. Ibid., xxiii.

44. Herskovits, "The Contribution of Afroamerican Studies to Africanist Research," 19.

45. See Herskovits, "Problem, Method, and Theory in Afroamerican Studies," 52–54.

46. See Apter, "On African Origins," 252; and Mudimbe, "Which Idea of Africa? Herskovits's Cultural Relativism."

47. Herskovits, "Problem, Method, and Theory in Afroamerican Studies," 53.

48. Martínez, *Cuban Art and National Identity*.

49. Halperin, *White Zombie*.

50. David H. Brown discusses the Abakuá symbols used by Lam in *The Light Inside*, 174–90.

51. Sims, *Wifredo Lam and the International Avant-Garde*, 34–36.

52. Bettelheim, "Wifredo Lam and the 1940s Paris Art Scene," 90.

53. In the late 1940s Lam's most famous work, *La Jungla* (1942–43), was purchased by New York City's Museum of Modern Art (see Ortiz, "Wifredo Lam y su obra vista a través de significados críticos").

54. Brown, *The Light Inside*, 174–90.

55. For the identification of the leaves, see Poupeye, *Caribbean Art*, 62.

56. See the society pages in *Bohemia* throughout the 1940s and early 1950s, in which Cabrera and Lam intermittently appear.

57. In 1936 Lachatañeré published at least two articles, "La fiesta de Changó (Cuento afrocubano)" and "La caída del casto Orisaoco (Cuento afrocubano)," in the academic journal *Polémica*, which was printed in Havana. Both essays are reprinted in Lachatañeré, *El sistema religioso de los afrocubanos*.

58. Lachatañeré, *El sistema religioso de los afrocubanos*, 197.

59. In the introduction to Lachatañeré's *¡Oh, Mío Yemayá!*, Ortiz introduced Lachatañeré as a *criollo* of mixed descent, talking about Lachatañeré's Haitian parents and their migration to Cuba. This curious aside now appears to have been a way for Ortiz to lessen the author's credibility as a man of Afro-Cuban ancestry. Ortiz was intimating that Lachatañeré was no more of an authority on Afro-Cuban *santería* than himself (Ortiz, "Predisposición al lector," xxvii–xxxvi).

60. In Lachatañeré's argument that the language on syncretism needed to be relaxed, as evidenced by his reference to "correspondences," his discussion was a forerunner to that of Michel Leiris (cf. Lachatañeré, "El culto a los 'santos' en Cuba," and Leiris, "Note sur l'usage de chromolithographies catholiques par les vodousaints d'Haïti").

61. Lachatañeré, "Manual de Santería," 97–98.

62. Ibid., appendix table 1, 138–39.

63. Ibid., 140–45.

64. Ibid., 98.

65. In chapter 3 I discuss the mid-century work of the espiritista and santera Hortensia Ferrer. Hortensia Ferrer would not publish her work, but she kept several books of personal notes and a small library of photographs of her Espiritismo altars for the use of her initiated godchildren and religious clientele.

66. Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint, Tobacco and Sugar*, 98.

67. "The concept of transculturation is fundamental and indispensable for an understanding of the history of Cuba, and, for analogous reasons, of that of America in general. But this is not the moment to go into this theme at length, which will be considered in another work in progress dealing with the effects on Cuba of the transculturations of Indians, whites, Negroes and Mongols" (Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint, Tobacco and Sugar*, 103).

68. Ortiz's vast output is difficult to catalog. One admirable bibliographic study is Jane Gregory Rubin, *Miscelanea II of Studies Dedicated to Fernando Ortiz*.

69. See Ortiz, "Lo que no hay en Guantánamo"; Ortiz, "Los espirituales 'Cordoneros del Orile'"; Ortiz, "Buscando luz en Monte Oscuro"; Ortiz, "Una moderna secta espiritista de Cuba"; Ortiz, "Los muertos sacaos"; Ortiz, "Una cubana 'danza de los muertos'"; and Ortiz, "Orígenes de los cordoneros del orilé."

70. Among the articles published in *Bohemia* that discuss both the Cuban saints and the Afro-Cuban oricha are Baeza Flores, "Visitando el Santuario del Cobre"; Costa, "Presencia cubana de la Virgen de la Caridad"; Cuellar Vizcaino, "Ochún y Yemayá"; Cuellar Vizcaino, "Babalu Aye y los altares"; Cuellar Vizcaino, "En el día de la Virgen de la Caridad"; Cuellar Vizcaino, "Nuestra Señora de la Merced"; and Pizzi de Porras, "Un santuario a Santa Bárbara."

71. George Brandon also makes this argument; see Brandon, *The Dead Sell Memories*, 174–87.

72. José Anibal Maestri's "Los ritos africanos: El bembe" is another *Bohemia* article that relies on direct comparisons between Catholic saints and Le Regla de Ocha oricha to reproach the police for their continuing raids on the homes of Afro-Cuban religious practitioners.

73. See the ad for Café Pilon titled "Concurso Monumental Café Pilon" in the *Bohemia* issue for 11(?) September 1956.

74. "Nuestros negros, en espíritu, no han dejado de ser menos africanos. No han podido renunciar a sus creencias ni olvidar las secretas enseñanzas de sus mayores. Continúan fielmente sus viejas prácticas mágicas y para todo siguen recurriendo al monte, dirigiéndose a las primitivas divinidades naturales que adoraron los antepasados y les legaron [*sic*] vivas, alojadas en piedras, en caracoles o en troncos y raíces y a las que, como aquellos, siguen hablándoles en africano, en yoruba, en ewe o en bantú" (Cabrera, *El Monte*, 13).

75. The essay was reproduced in a number of edited collections about Cuba (see, e.g., Smith, *Background to Revolution: The Development of Modern Cuba*). Its wide distribution solidified Bascom's conclusions (and concomitantly, those of Lydia Cabrera), and they became a part of Cuba's cultural revolution and nationalist discourse.

76. See Bascom, *Sixteen Cowries*; and Bascom, "Two Forms of Afro-Cuban Divination."

77. See Portell Vila, "Dos Epocas," 89, for evidence of Fernando Ortiz's reticence to personally engage with younger scholars. Likewise, the unusual division of Ortiz's estate after his death in 1969 into multiple institutions also indicates his uncommunicative stance in the decade following the realization of the Cuban Revolution.

78. In my research in the Ortiz Papers at the Instituto de Literatura y Lingüística, I found that Ortiz frequently clipped articles from *Hoy* and the supplement *Hoy Domingo* but did not preserve the entire copy of the periodical. I am therefore unable to provide complete citations for the newspaper clippings I discuss herein.

79. In the early 1960s many people rescued sculptures of the saints from the closed churches, and it is now very common to see these figures displayed in homes throughout Cuba (interview with Zenaida Justíz, Havana, 7 November 2002).

80. See Sentí, *Diario del viaje*. Sentí's study is available in Cuba's Biblioteca Nacional "José Martí."

81. The peak in Espiritismo practices precedes the growth in Santería practitioners. Between 1947 and 1970, in total, 643 women and 233 men were initiated into Santería in

Matanzas, the capital of Matanzas Province. The accompanying table reflects La Regla de Ocha initiates in the period before and after the Cuban Revolution.

Table N.1. La Regla de Ocha initiates in the period before and after the Cuban Revolution

Year	*No. of Initiates*	*Year*	*No. of Initiates*	*Year*	*No. of Initiates*
BEFORE THE CUBAN REVOLUTION					
1947	6	1948	32	1949	25
1950	22	1951	24	1952	21
1953	23	1954	23	1955	28
1956	36	1957	35	1958	34
AFTER CUBAN REVOLUTION					
1959	34	1960	47	1961	60
1962	99	1963	80	1964	68
1965	73	1966	48	1970	35
1971	43	1972	150	1973	139

Source: Argüelles Mederos and Hodge Limonta, *Los llamados cultos sincreticos y el espiritismo*, 157.

82. Nicola Miller, "The Absolution of History." For discussion of historical revision emphasizing Afro-Cuban heritage, see David H. Brown, *The Light Inside*, 237–42. Katherine Hagedorn's 2001 book, *Divine Utterances*, also discusses the emergence of the Conjunto Folkórico Nacional (the National Folkloric Dance Troupe) in the 1960s as a means of historical revision.

83. David H. Brown, *The Light Inside*, 211–36, 262–63; Flikke, "Cuban Museums and Afro-Cuban Heritage."

84. In 1963 the "House of Cuban Culture" was established in the socialist state of Czechoslovakia. The government there was attempting to loosen the reins of socialism in order to foster more cultural production, and a museum that displayed Cuba's newfound history appears to have been an example for the Czech people to recreate their own history (see "Otro pedazo de Cuba en el corazón de Praga: La casa de la cultura cubana," *Hoy Domingo* clipping, 1963, Fernando Ortiz Papers).

85. In March 2013 the Museo de Regla opened permanent exhibition space for the arts of Espiritismo.

86. See Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*; David H. Brown, *Santería Enthroned*, 238; and Flores-Peña and Evanchuk, *Santería Garments and Altars*.

87. Bettelheim, "Caribbean Espiritismo (Spiritist) Altars," 312–30; Bettelheim and Perlo, *Transcultural Pilgrim*.

88. See Schmalz, review of "Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras," by Diana L. Eck, 593.

89. See Eck, *A New Religious America*.

90. John Hutnyk, "Adorno at Womad."

Chapter 2. Tiburcia and the Nested Spaces of Afro-Cuban Ritual Arts, 1861–1938

1. I discuss Gloria Rolando's breakthrough film on the Little Race War in the Conclusion. For more on the war, see Castro Fernández, *La masacre de los Independientes de Color en 1912*; Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 193–226; Fermoselle, *Política y color en Cuba*; and Rolando, *Las raíces de mi corazón*.

2. Howard, *Changing History*, 154–55.

3. By using the term *racialization*, Keith and Cross might initially appear to be addressing racial difference—black versus white—but many of the essays in their collection deal with cultural issues, such as the interaction between Puerto Ricans and Dominicans. As they note, even in the same city block, important interactions can occur among the various cultures residing there, and also between and among residents of differing economic and social classes (see Keith and Cross, "Racism in the Postmodern City," 26).

4. I am also here following the methodological precedent of David H. Brown, who analyzed the spatial configurations of different types of Afro-Atlantic religious altars in 1980s Union City, New Jersey (see Brown, "Altared Spaces").

5. Jaruco City and the Jaruco Municipality are located in contemporary Mayabeque Province, which was once part of historical Havana Province (*Libro IV de difunciones*, alt. 61, vt #300, Archivo de la Parroquia San Juan Bautista).

6. Many other plantations in the Jaruco diocese had greater numbers of enslaved peoples but did not permit their communities to hold religious services. Consequently, these plantations were not well documented by the Church in this period.

7. Interview with Nelson Castellanos Tápanes (town historian) and Sergio Delgado (an affiliate of the Museo Municipal de Jaruco), Jaruco City, 18 March 2004.

8. Interview with Nelson Castellanos Tápanes and Sergio Delgado, 18 March 2004. The government also used the term *Espiritismo* to describe certain religious groups (see Havana Registry of Associations, National Archive, Havana). Christine Ayorinde discusses the government's forced application of specific terms to describe social groups in the Registry beginning in the 1880s and continuing through the Cuban Revolution (Ayorinde, *Afro-Cuban Religiosity, Revolution, and National Identity*, 37–38).

9. See "Bautizos de Jaruco, 1861, Libro 6," Archivo de la Parroquia San Juan Bautista.

10. Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 125. A monument in the Jaruco parish cemetery records that 3,272 men from Jaruco died during the War of Independence.

11. Broad Street (*Calle Ancha de Norte*) in Central Havana is now San Lazaro Street.

12. See Lobo Montalvo, *Havana*.

13. Fermoselle, *Política y color en Cuba*, 90.

14. See the Registro de Asociaciones, 1881–1976.

15. In this, the new Cuban government was heavily influenced by the U.S. government, since the term "Spiritism," or "Spiritualism," was already in use among black North Americans (Bermúdez, "Notas para la historia del espiritismo en Cuba").

16. Interviews with Olga Calvo Puig, Havana, 2002–4. My conversations with Olga Calvo Puig formed an important part of my research from October 2002 through April 2004, and inevitably also included various members of her family (including Radamés Corona, Ángela Calvo Puig, Zenaida Calvo Puig, Josefina Calvo Puig, and Neida Lee Puig),