

FERNANDO ORTIZ

**CARIBBEAN AND
MEDITERRANEAN
COUNTERPOINTS**



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Edited by Stephan Palmié



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Introduction: Caribbean and Mediterranean counterpoints and transculturations

Stephan Palmié

Fernando Ortiz Fernández (1881–1969) was the defining intellectual of twentieth-century Cuba, where he is affectionately known as the “third discoverer of Cuba” (after Columbus von Humboldt, that is), an epithet that Juan Marinello (1898–1977) bestowed upon him. Ortiz has also been widely hailed as one of the foremost theorists of postcolonial Latin America, a pioneer of African American anthropology, and an important theorist of Caribbean (and, more generally, peripheral) nationhood. However, despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that Bronisław Malinowski wrote an introduction to Ortiz’s perhaps best-known monograph, *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* (Ortiz 1940) (the only of his books translated into English (Ortiz [1947] 1995),¹ Ortiz’s impact on anthropology in the global North has remained surprisingly slight

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1. See Fernando Coronil’s (1995) introduction to the new edition of *Cuban Counterpoint*, published by Duke University Press, and Enrico Santí’s (2005) well-documented treatment of the issue for some intriguing speculations about how and why Malinowski and Ortiz (who met in Havana in 1939) may have wanted to recruit each other into their own projects. As Le Riverend (1991) points out, Ortiz’s conception of *transculturación* was, in fact, antithetical to Malinowskian functionalism. As Santí (2005) argues, Ortiz may have wittingly let himself be recruited as a pawn in a long-standing conflict between Malinowski and Melville J. Herskovits, with whom Ortiz maintained a polite but far from cordial relationship.

— an example, we might say, of the marginalization of anthropological contributions from the non-Anglophone or Francophone periphery so characteristic of the twentieth-century history of our discipline.²

This volume cannot claim to redress this imbalance. Its goal is a somewhat different, rather more modest one. It is based on the proceedings of a symposium organized by Joan Bestard Camps, Jaume Mascaró Pons, and me in the spring of 2019 to honor the fiftieth anniversary of Ortiz's death, and held in Ciutadella, on the Spanish island of Menorca, where Ortiz grew up. What the volume seeks to enable is a conversation between Mediterraneanist and Caribbeanist anthropologists, a dialogue that has, so far, hardly taken place, despite Werner Cahnman's (1943) early encouragement and Sidney Mintz's (e.g., 1966, 1996) operationalization of concepts of Mediterranean origin in aiming to characterize the Caribbean as a "sociocultural region." I emphasize the term *dialogue*, for even though the explicit comparison of the Caribbean to the Mediterranean is of long standing,³ the aim of the initial symposium was to present

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2. Notable exceptions are Coronil (1995) and João Gonçalves (2014). Interestingly, Ortiz's conceptual apparatus has been more readily appreciated by literary scholars (e.g., Rama 1982; Pratt 1992; Yúdice 1992; Beverly 1999; Santí 2005). See Mark Millington (2005) for a nuanced critical assessment of what we might call the transdisciplinary career of Ortiz's *transculturación* (incidentally in a volume on urban and architectural transculturations in Latin America). Edward Said's (1993) notion of contrapuntal analysis shares some features with Ortiz's conceptions, but Said never mentions Ortiz; neither does Ahiwa Ong (2003), who takes the concept from Said. Coronil (1995: lii n35) recounts an amusing episode where Walter Mignolo and Frederic Jameson scoured Said's book as well as Claude Lévi-Strauss's *Mythologica* for references to Ortiz — only to find none. See also Pavez Ojeda, this volume.
 3. The comparison arguably dates back all the way to Fray Bartolomé de las Casas' 1561 evocation of Diodorus Siculus in analogizing the Spanish *encomienda* forced-labor regime in the Caribbean to the system of enslavement that the Romans had imposed upon Iberia itself (Lewis 1983: 17). But it is no accident either that Alfred Thayer Mahan, the architect of Theodore Roosevelt's gunboat diplomacy policy in the Caribbean, begins his magnum opus *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* with a comparison of naval and land campaigns in the Punic Wars (Mahan 1890). The rival strategic concerns by the United States and the Soviet Union after 1959 over what since 1898 had been an "American lake," namely the Caribbean Basin/Karibiiski Basin, echo not only those of the Christian/

debates between anthropologists and historians from Cuba, the United States (US), Latin America, and Europe concerning Ortiz's signature concept of *transculturación* and its relevance to a globalized world of the twenty-first century, where some of Ortiz's persistent themes arguably have regained significance. These themes revolve around issues of racial and cultural difference, as they have once more attained urgency in the intensely politicized debates about immigration and nationhood, both in Europe and the Americas. In organizing the symposium from which this volume draws, our goal was not to probe, yet again, the validity of Caribbean and Mediterranean regionalist conceptions of cultural areas and their gatekeeping concepts (Appadurai 1986, 1988; Fardon 1990; Lederman 1998; Bashkow 2004; Guyer 2004). That the disciplinary augury, the *Annual Review of Anthropology*, published the last summary statements on Mediterraneanist anthropology in 1982 (Gilmore 1982) and on Caribbeanist anthropology in 1992 (Trouillot 1992) should be ample evidence that both fields might profit from the kind of cross-fertilization that our symposium aimed to, and we think did, achieve. A close rereading and discussion of Ortiz's work — spanning as it does both regions — is a step in this direction. Key for it is a focus on Ortiz's signature concept of *transculturación* and his contrapuntal methodology from a critical comparative perspective.

The term *transculturación*, which Ortiz coined in his 1940 monograph-length essay *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*, represents one of the earliest cases of what anthropologists nowadays have come to associate with postcolonial “theory from the South”: a concept developed from an explicitly peripheral epistemological vantage point and launched as a corrective to European and North American conceptual formulations (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012). On the basis of Cuba's historical experience, Ortiz rejected mid-twentieth-century American acculturation research as underwritten by assumptions of a cultural gradient between locally dominant population sectors (usually White or light-skinned) and those subaltern populations (often Black, Native American, or of recent immigrant origin) exposed to “acculturative pressure” by the former. With the endorsement of Malinowski (himself not a stranger to the Mediterranean world), Ortiz instead proposed a

Ottoman conflicts since the fall in 1453 of Byzantine Constantinople (the Havana of early modern Europe) but those between Spain and its northern European imperial rivals that began in the second half of the sixteenth century.

dialectical vision of complexly entangled processes of *desculturación* and *neoculturación* affecting all sectors of societies of the post-Columbian Atlantic (albeit differentially so), and resulting in what we, today, would conceptualize as processes of cultural emergence (Iznaga 1989; Le Rivere 1991; Coronil 1995; Santi 2005; Palmié 2013). In this sense, perhaps the most important lesson Ortiz has left us with is a premature vision of what we now understand as the essentially indeterminate and underdetermined nature of cultural process, unfolding as it does through our own actions, though under conditions not of our own choosing (cf. Pina-Cabral 2020).

At roughly the same time, sociologist Cahnman (1943) elaborated what, to my knowledge, was the first systematic attempt to chart the dimensions along which the Mediterranean and Caribbean regions might be compared. Harking back to Alexander von Humboldt's characterization of the Caribbean as the "American Mediterranean" (in the sense of a sea that unites rather than separates societies on its shorelines),⁴ Cahnman's formulation antedates Fernand Braudel's ([1949] 1973) conception of a "global Mediterranean of the sixteenth century," and anticipates recent attempts at conceptualizing "thalassic" histories (e.g., Gilroy 1993; Horden and Purcell 2000; Bailyn 2005; Ho 2006; Subrahmanyam 2007; Abulafia 2007, 2011; Armitage 2009). It also encourages us to posit a global Caribbean along the lines of Sidney Mintz's (1966) paradigmatic formulation of the Caribbean as a region definable less in terms of cultural commonalities (which undoubtedly exist) and more in terms of sociohistorical processes that shaped the parameters within which intra-regional cultural differences (as well as similarities) came to develop. At the time that Mintz wrote, both the Caribbean and Mediterranean had barely become foci of sustained anthropological inquiry, although, of course, archaeologists and folklorists had been working in both regions since the nineteenth century.⁵

4. For a searching exploration of the multiple afterlives of von Humboldt's metaphor, see Gillman (2022).

5. In fact, the institutional beginnings of both endeavors are datable to the period of decolonization and the Cold War. The inaugural symposia were organized, for the Caribbean, by Vera Rubin at the American Academy for the Advancement of Science in 1957 and, for the Mediterranean, by Julian Pitt-Rivers and John Peristiany at Burg Wartenstein, Austria, in 1959.

Some thirty years after his signature 1966 essay, and with a nod to Alfred Kroeber's use of the ancient Greek concept of *oikoumenê*, Mintz (1996) once more emphasized that any anthropological conception of the Caribbean as a unit of analysis must proceed from the historical fact that agro-industrial sugar plantation colonialism based on African slave labor had been undertaken there by diverse European powers.⁶ It was the political and economic context of export-oriented plantation agriculture driven by enslaved labor that generated the conditions under which the societies of the region emerged from what Ortiz would have called ceaseless processes of transculturation. This is a perspective that, for example, Dionigi Albera (2006) and Christian Bromberger (2006), more than a decade ago, came close to adumbrating in their retrospectives on the turmoil that Mediterraneanist anthropology underwent since its institutionalization by Julian Pitt-Rivers, Julio Caro Baroja, Ernestine Friedl, John Peristiany, John Campbell, Ernest Gellner, or Pierre Bourdieu in the late 1950s and 1960s (see Herzfeld 1984 and Pina-Cabral 1989 for now classic critiques of the first wave of anthropological studies of the Mediterranean). Instead of reifying supposed traits — “honor and shame,” “amoral familialism,” “hospitality,” and so forth⁷ — and positing a “cultural area” endowed with stable attributes and limits, Albera and Bromberger saw the future of Mediterranean anthropology in the study of how social processes activate or diminish the perception and politicization of difference both on micro- and macro-sociological scales (cf. Driessen 2001; Herzfeld 2007). Borrowing an apt phrase from Martinican poet Edouard Glissant (1997: 221), one wonders whether the Mediterranean, once seen as a “civilizing sea” that attracted and concentrated (even if in often violent ways), has become a sea that disperses, refracts, and corrupts, in Horden and Purcell's (2000) sense (cf. Abulafia 2007; Palmié 2014; Ben-Yehoyada, Cabot, and Silverstein 2020; Shryock 2020).

This appears to be no less true in regard to a dimension that Mintz never tired of emphasizing: the “precocious modernity” of the Caribbean region. Building on Ortiz (1940), Eric Williams (1944), and C. L. R.

6. Not incidentally, slave labor-driven sugar cultivation was an institutional complex of Mediterranean origin; see Verlinden (1970); Mintz (1985); Abulafia (2008).

7. Some of which have Caribbean counterpoints, such as *sinceridad* and *choteo* (Mañach [1928] 1969), or “reputation” and “respectability” (Wilson 1969).

James (1963), Mintz posited the growth of Caribbean traditions out of violent processes of modernization (Palmié 2002; Scott 2004). In this sense, Caribbean modernity precedes the modernization of Europe, in terms of the sheer scale of the mobilization of land, capital, credit networks, labor forces, infrastructure, and technology in Caribbean plantation economies. It also did so in regard to the brutal deracination of the enslaved Africans — the first truly “modern individuals” in James’s sense — who came to repopulate the islands after their native populations had been all but exterminated. As Ortiz ([1940] 2016) noted, the sheer violence of Caribbean processes of “modernization” may have given rise to traditions that were as much *sui generis* as they were coeval to, if not in advance of, those of the few Mediterranean regions experiencing modest forms of industrialization.⁸

At first glance, this moment appears to be at odds with just about any of the traditional themes of Mediterraneanist anthropology, where vectors of inquiry had long turned toward the ancient, not modern, character of the patterns structuring Mediterranean lives. But as Jane Schneider and Peter Schneider (1976) argued long ago, and Naor Ben-Yehoyada (2014) has more recently elaborated in a provocative essay, the seeming incompatibility of “the Mediterranean and modernity,” so that “where the one ends the other starts — be it chronologically, geographically, or conceptually” (Ben-Yehoyada 2014: 107), needs to be rethought in regard to the political-economic, social, and ideological dynamics underlying (necessarily uneven) processes of region formation. Could Ortiz’s contrapuntal conception of history, and his more encompassing concept of transculturation, allow us to “reconstruct the Mediterranean not on the basis of a time-bound definition, but through the many and varied processes of maritime region formation it has undergone” (Ben-Yehoyada 2014: 117) and continues to undergo in the twenty-first century?

This may well be a point worth dwelling upon. As mentioned before, much like the Caribbean, the Mediterranean entered the purview of socio-cultural anthropology only since the middle of the twentieth century. What is more, both regions did so, arguably, not just under the

8. Catalonia comes to mind here. But note that the seed capital for the rise of the region’s textile industry was drawn from Cuban plantation fortunes and, to a lesser extent, Catalan involvement in the post-1820 illegal slave trade to Cuba, a topic that might well be treated along the lines of the analytics suggested by Eric Williams (1944) with regard to the British Industrial Revolution.

sign of decolonization (that dealt a death blow to the trope of the primitive isolate and its methodological correlates, such as American salvage ethnography) but also in the context of a disciplinary reorientation toward an anthropology of “complex societies.” Hence it was only toward the end of the 1950s that both the Caribbean and the Mediterranean regions became locations for field sites in which Euro-American anthropological careers could become plausibly launched.⁹ It may be to over-generalize, but in both cases the inescapable historicity and heterogeneity of the subject of our discipline began to dawn upon its practitioners (as Michel-Rolph Trouillot [1992] would later argue for the Caribbean case): these were neither small-scale societal units, nor homogeneous “culture areas” in the old Boasian sense; and attempts to define them as such resulted more in sterile controversy than in genuine advances in research. In the end, difference, as much as generalizable similarity — perhaps unsurprisingly — turned out to be the common denominator. (Sidney Mintz’s 1966 attempt to bracket “cultural themes” in favor of common historical determinants in the formation of Caribbean cultures might have provided a significant lead to Mediterraneanists at the time.)

What is more, the histories of both regions are deeply and complexly intertwined: if ethno-religious difference was the main motor of conflict in the Mediterranean after the fall of Constantinople and the end of the Spanish reconquest,¹⁰ then race (in whatever changing forms this concept assumed over the centuries) was to structure violently antagonistic forms of consociation in the Caribbean. In the aftermath of the Salamanca debates between Bartolomé de las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (Hanke 1974), monogenesis (and hence Christianization) became the template on which Spanish colonialism acquired legitimacy. Yet preconquest ideas about *limpieza de sangre* (originally conceived of as the heritability of ethno-religious dispositions) soon came to structure

9. The key institutional sites were Columbia and Oxford Universities. The first was home to Julian Steward’s “Puerto Rico Project,” the second to the initially less coordinated studies of Pitt-Rivers and Peristiany, somewhat grudgingly sponsored by E.E. Evans-Pritchard. The latter had only a few years earlier authored a historical study of the Sanusi order in Cyrenaica (Evans-Pritchard 1949) — next to Westermarck (1926) arguably the first monograph on a Mediterranean topic by a professionally trained social anthropologist.

10. Not incidentally the fall of Grenada, Fernando and Isabela’s order to expel the Jews, and Columbus’s setting sail all occurred in that crucial year 1492.

the legal architectures of racial hierarchies in Spain's colonies, thus laying the groundwork for what increasingly transformed into ideas of heritable biological otherness (Ortiz [1946] 1975). But the emerging concept of race, as Ortiz (1940) pointed out and Williams (1944) was to elaborate more fully, may well have been a product of political-economic factors as well, giving rise in some areas to legalized, genealogically anchored abjection (such as in the Anglophone Caribbean), in others to a sliding scale between racially based unfree industrial subjugation under sugar, slavery in smaller-scale coffee production, urban artisanal self-employment or sub-proletarian freedom, and a White-dominated tobacco yeomanry.¹¹ All with their own "subcultural" properties and characteristic lifeworlds, as Julian Steward and his students documented for Puerto Rico (Steward et al. 1956): Ortiz's counterpoint refracted through locally divergent agro-industrial histories. To be sure, a similarly product-focused — and mode of production-oriented — form of analysis seems difficult to imagine for the Mediterranean, though the regionally divergent impact of maize (as exemplified in Pina-Cabral's contribution to this volume) could be one such point of comparison. So might be the massive reorganization of both regions toward tourism as a main source of revenue in the second half of the twentieth century, the structural adjustment and austerity measures imposed upon both regions by the end of that century, and the attendant questions of national sovereignty (Bonilla 2015; Knight and Stewart 2016).

Mediterraneanists have by and large been more reflexive about the promises and pitfalls of their changing conceptual apparatus and common enterprise than have Caribbeanists. In the latter case, recent key debates have centered on the notion of creolization (Mintz 1996, 1998; Khan 2001; Price 2001, 2007; Palmié 2006a, 2007), though some reflection on the history of their regional specialization has taken place as well (Carnegie 1992; Yelvington 2018; Palmié 2022).¹² Still, I would venture to argue that the literatures produced by specialists in both regions

11. But see Stubbs (2011) on Ortiz's (perhaps unwitting) complicity in reproducing the myth of tobacco's association with whiteness and anticolonial nationalism.

12. Caribbeanists might do well to take note of Herzfeld's (2007) retrospective assessment and reformulation of the notion of "Mediterraneanism" that he once helped launch. Perhaps not surprisingly it echoes some of the themes that I adumbrated (Palmié 2008, 2013, 2019) in regard to the notion of Caribbean "Africanism."

might be seen as an unrealized counterpoint, very much now in Ortiz's terms: consonances as well as dissonances unheard in relation to each other, but possibly discernible once put into perspective.

Don Fernando between two worlds

The 2019 symposium in Menorca was not the first conference to honor Fernando Ortiz's scholarly contribution. In 1955, the Cuban Sociedad Económica de los Amigos del País organized a symposium to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of Ortiz's first publication, the proceedings of which were published in three volumes (Sociedad Económica de los Amigos del País 1955–57), and in 2000 a group of New York-based scholars organized a “Fernando Ortiz Symposium on Cuban Culture and History” at the City University of New York's Bildner Center, which resulted in a collection of essays (Font and Quiroz 2005). But our current endeavor is the first to situate the origin of the great Cuban polymath's work in its proper transatlantic context, and to probe its relevance not only for the Americas but the Mediterranean as well. While the main aim of this book is to discuss the continued — or perhaps renewed — salience of the conceptual apparatus that Ortiz laid out in *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* and several other publications, we also sought to ground Ortiz's mature vision in his earliest experiences in the Balearic archipelago. As María del Rosario Díaz (2011, 2019, 2021) has argued, contrary to received accounts (e.g., Di Leo 2005), Ortiz's unique vision of dynamic as well as scalar ethno-racial and cultural diversity (which he revised several times during his long career) may well be sought in his youthful perceptions of Menorca's heterogeneous cultural heritage. Born in Havana in 1881, Ortiz grew up in Menorca, and it was there that he wrote his first ethnological essays, such as a collection of some five hundred *mals noms* (nicknames) of the island's people (Ortiz [1895] 2003b) or a study of popular Menorcan celebrations (Ortiz 1908). He also wrote his first literary texts there (Ortiz [1895] 1997).

At the time, Menorca looked back on a long and turbulent history, and its present was characterized by ties to Spain's last remaining Caribbean colonies. Originally a part of the Roman province of Tarraconensis, Menorca was invaded by Islamic forces in 903 and remained part of the Caliphate of Córdoba until 1287, when it was violently incorporated into the Christian kingdom of Aragon (see Bowman, this volume). Beginning with an invasion by the British Royal Navy in 1708, the island

changed hands several times during the eighteenth century, but largely remained dominated by a British military presence until it finally passed back into Spanish possession with the Treaty of Amiens in 1802. Menorca had thus ceased to be a British colony almost a century before the young Cuban's arrival there. But during Ortiz's youth, the island was characterized by powerful processes of emigration to Cuba and North Africa. Ortiz's own presence on Menorca was a result of these processes: emigrant financial remittances from Cuba had provided the seed capital for Menorca's industrialization, primarily through the shoe industry (one of the leading factories belonged to the family of Ortiz's mother) but also through forms of colonial export business. These "modernization processes" — and now quite in line with James's and Mintz's formulations — were contingent upon the transformation of the island's political economy, and they found expression in a renaissance of the Catalan language and culture, driven — just as on the mainland — by an increasingly self-conscious bourgeoisie that, more often than not, had gained social ascendancy through the profits realized in colonial ventures.

The young Ortiz could follow this revitalization of the autochthonous culture and language through the guidance of his teacher and mentor Joan Benejam, an adherent of Krausist educational doctrines, with plausible connections to socially radical spiritism (see Horta, this volume). It was Benejam and his liberal intellectual circle who instilled powerful respect for local cultures in the young Ortiz (Portella Coll 2004; Díaz 2019; see also Valdés Bernal, this volume). There is also good reason to believe that Ortiz's first experiences on the island were instrumental in his development of a sensitivity to cultural complexity and transcultural processes, enhanced, rather than stifled, by the hegemony of an arch-conservative local Catholic elite. To be sure, Ortiz's later contacts with Spanish criminologists and positivist sociologists such as Rafael Salillas (1854–1923), Constancio Bernaldo de Quiróz (1873–1959), or Manuel Sales y Ferré (1843–1910) during his legal studies in Barcelona and Madrid came to orient his early interest in the culture of *la hampa* (marginalized populations) both methodologically and theoretically (Naranjo Orovio and Puig-Samper 2005; Di Leo 2005). As both Sarró (this volume) and Pavez Ojeda (this volume) elaborate, the texts he published under the sway of these theories make for troubling reading. But Ortiz changed his mind several times during his long and impressively fruitful career, and we suggest that the initial inspiration for Ortiz's abiding concern with non-hegemonic cultural expressions and dynamics ought to be sought in his formative years in Menorca's (however antagonistically

cosmopolitan) social environment, where staunchly conservative Catholic monarchists coexisted with some of Europe's most radical spiritist reformers (see Horta, this volume).

Ortiz's unique perspective on cultural heterogeneity and nonhierarchical forms of dialectical articulation thus merits rethinking from a Mediterranean perspective and with a view toward the migratory crises that have agitated European political debates in the 2010s (Ben-Yehoyada, Cabot, and Silverstein 2020). To hold the symposium on which this volume is based in Menorca was, therefore, crucial. We not only hoped to shed light on Ortiz's thought by grounding it in one of the late nineteenth century's more conflictedly cosmopolitan Mediterranean environments; we also aimed to encourage a systematic exploration of the salience of Ortiz's thought for the future of a postimperial, or better perhaps postcolonial, Europe that now has to come to terms with the inevitable processes that Ortiz, in another geographical and historical context, conceptualized as "transculturative."

The stakes in such a transregional debate are considerable. Even though the demise of the former Second World has affected the Caribbean in powerful ways (Scott 2014), what Sarah Green (2013) calls the "relocation of Europe" in the aftermath of 1989–91 and the current convulsions European politics have been undergoing in the course of the so-called refugee crisis bear rethinking in a comparative perspective. Here it is not only that the fences that Spain erected in 1995 along the borders of its two North African enclaves, or the wall the Israeli state build in 2000 along the West Bank border during the second Intifada, set an effective (though rarely acknowledged) precedent for US President Trump's Mexican border wall project (Ferrer-Gallardo 2008; Bowman, this volume). Rather, the patrol of Mediterranean waters by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX)¹³ also bears uncanny resemblance to the expansion, during the 1990s, of a "water border" into the Caribbean Sea to staunch the flow of Haitian refugees to the US (Noll 2003; Andersson 2014; Kahn 2016, 2019, this volume). Are these attempts on the part of a Schengenized "Fortress Europe" to contain an "unwanted Mediterranean" to its south? Are they symptoms of a failure of the classic regionalist principle of hospitality? Or are they signs of a scalar recalibration of citizenship and universal humanity that point beyond the Mediterranean itself (Ben-Yehoyada 2016)? At the beach

13. See Campesi (2022) for a comprehensive review of the history and changing modus operandi of FRONTEX.

of Barcelona, a monument clocks in every migrant who has drowned while attempting to cross the Mediterranean in *cayucos* or *pateras* (hardly seaworthy smuggling vessels). The figure for 2017, the year that Bestard, Mascaró, and I conceptualized the symposium, was upwards of three thousand.

Hence, when I speak of a postcolonial Europe, I mean this not just in a geopolitical or chronological sense. Nor is what I aim to indicate merely the condition of a continent that has lost its former imperial status.¹⁴ In organizing the symposium, we rather envisioned critical attempts at commensurating the postcolonial moment in Europe's former "periphery" with the postimperial condition of what today still remains a "core," albeit in a very different sense than Immanuel Wallerstein's (1974–79) distinction between cores and peripheries of the "Modern World System" aimed to convey almost fifty years ago. In particular, we wanted to ask if the Caribbean perspective that informed the mature Ortiz's vision of a Cuban national culture project, endorsing massive cultural heterogeneity and hybridization, might not, once properly extrapolated and recontextualized, provide a lens through which to contemplate and critique the burgeoning rhetoric of cultural incompatibilities that has become a euphemistic surrogate for expressing racial antagonisms in many parts of contemporary Europe (as Verena Stolcke argued more than twenty years ago [1995], reprinted in this volume; see also Balibar 2003; Hervik 2004; Silverstein 2005; Rogozen-Soltar 2017). How can we, as Stuart Hall (1996) might have put it, compare European and Caribbean postcolonial conditions in the early twenty-first century? And might Ortiz's mid-twentieth-century concept of *transculturación* still provide a fruitful angle around which to focus such discussions?

In short, the goal of this volume is to situate problems of global scope within a frame centered on the historical peculiarities of Ortiz's two formative social and cultural environments: Menorca and Cuba, insular both, but trans-oceanically entangled at one and the same time. The reason why such a focus could be illuminating lies not so much in the hypothesis that Ortiz's twentieth-century Caribbean and the twenty-first-century Mediterranean (and Europe more generally) share historical

14. As Talal Asad (2002: 218) has argued, "Europe's colonial past is not merely an epoch of overseas power that is now decisively over. It is the beginning of an irreversible global transformation that remains an intrinsic part of 'European experience' and is part of the reason that Europe is what it is today."

commonalities (though that certainly is the case as well) but in points of analytical interest that have, so far, not received sustained exploration. While not wanting to resort to undue hyperbole, the aim of this book is to look at the world while contemplating one man's work in, and about, two small islands in two very different, but also profitably comparable, seas. As this collection of essays stands, it certainly raises more questions than it manages to answer in any but the most provisional fashion. Cross-regional discussions are hard to engineer, and harder to focus. Yet there is much to learn from them. Comparativism may be an "impossible method" (Candea 2019). But it is an eminently fruitful heuristic.

To raise questions, rather than to reinforce the consensus of an all-too-specious present, is, or at least ought to be, our vocation. Fernando Ortiz certainly thought that way. To speak with him once more, raising questions (even if we cannot answer them) may well be our duty in the face of what he called "the cooking of history" (Ortiz [1940] 2014) — in our case the sheer, and essentially unmitigated, provisionality of any conclusions about our world that we may draw in the face of an unknown future relentlessly rushing toward us and forcing us to rethink our vision of what it may mean to inhabit and act in our present, for better or worse. This is an ethical, not just a political question. Ortiz, who abandoned an active career in politics after about 1940, thought so, too (Gonçalves 2014). His former nationalist vocation had transformed into an intellectual one, his vision of a future Cuban nation into one generalizable to the rest of the world.

Cooking with Ortician recipes: The chapters

This volume is divided into five sections: Balearic Beginnings, Border Worlds, Afro-Cuban Fetishizations, Linguistic and Culinary Perspectives, and Ethnographies of Transculturation. They describe an arc of perspectives that emerged at the initial conference, one that was augmented by additional submissions. The contributions range from celebratory assessments of Ortiz's thought and career to critical applications of Ortiz's conceptual apparatus, to current political issues, and on to critiques pointing toward the limits of Ortiz's own projects and the uptake of his theoretical formulations in contemporary anthropological scholarship.

The first section, "Balearic Beginnings," is dedicated to illuminating the Mediterranean, or even specifically Menorcan, origins of some of Ortiz's lifelong concerns, and his role within larger Hispanophone

intellectual networks. While it has often been argued that the thoughts of the young Ortiz were crucially shaped by his legal studies in Madrid (Di Leo 2005), María del Rosario Díaz (2011, 2019, 2021) has shown that his first ethnographic and essayistic attempts date to his Menorcan years. Written in Menorquín (a local variety of Catalan), his collection of *mals noms* (Ortiz [1895] 2003b) already prefigures his later lexicographical efforts (Valdés Bernal, this volume), while his folkloristic essays *Principi i prostes* (Ortiz [1895] 1997) indicate his equally lifelong penchant for culinary metaphors: the very title, “appetizers and desserts,” is a riff on Menorcan *costumbrista* writer Ángel Ruiz i Pablo’s folkloric collection *Per fer la gana: Caldereta d’articles menorquins amb molt poch suc i una mica de pebre cohent* (To whet the appetite: A Menorcan stew of articles with very little sauce and a bit of hot pepper). The young Ortiz evidently saw himself providing the starters and desserts to Ruiz i Pablo’s main dish: an emblematically Menorcan fisherman’s stew that, or so we may venture to guess, could still have been on Ortiz’s mind when he coined the famous metaphor of Cuba as an *ajiacó* (an equally emblematically Cuban stew) in 1940 (Ortiz 2014; cf. Palmié 2013; Gonçalves 2014). But what also may have originated in the Balearic-Catalan context is Ortiz’s lifelong interest in spiritism.

It has been suggested that Ortiz’s first contact with spiritism occurred at the University of La Habana, which he attended between 1895 and 1898 (Díaz Quiñones 1997; Lago Vieito 2002: 69–70); or perhaps through Cesare Lombroso, who had become a proponent of spiritism when Ortiz met him while working at the consular office in Genova in the years 1903–6 (Alvarado and Biondi 2017).¹⁵ But as *Gerard Horta* argues in his contribution, there are strong indications that Ortiz may have been exposed to Catalan spiritism, possibly even through his high school teacher, the Krausist educational reformer Joan Benejam. Despite intense Catholic repression (Abend 2004), Barcelona was one of the major centers for the dissemination of Kardecian spiritism, becoming the site of the First International Spiritist Congress in 1888, attended by numerically strong Balearic and Cuban delegations. Yet while nineteenth-century spiritism in the US and Britain was known for its reformist orientation,

15. Lombroso would come to preface Ortiz’s self-declared “notes towards a criminal ethnology,” *Los negros brujos*, with the suggestion that further research should focus on whether Ortiz’s Cuban *brujos* manifested “mediumistic, spiritist, or hypnotic phenomena” (Lombroso, in Ortiz [1906] 1973: 1).

embracing issues such as women's rights, free universal education, sexual liberation, or prison reform, what is fascinating about Catalan spiritism is that it not only fused with the socialist workers' movement but also with radical Bakunian anarchism (Horta 2016). For decades after his return to Cuba, Ortiz maintained contacts to both Catalan spiritists and anarchists, and in his major early works on spiritism (Ortiz 1915, 1919) it is clear that, while not a believer himself, he was very much in sympathy with spiritism as what we might call the religion to end all religions. Favoring, as spiritism did, progressive and emancipatory causes — republicanism, science and technological advancement, public education, and the dissemination of high culture — it comes as no surprise that it circulated among liberal “regenerationist” elites in both the Mediterranean and Caribbean as one of first media-driven global movements (Stolow 2009); but it also quickly diffused toward popular social sectors, experiencing multiple “transculturative” refractions in the process (Román 2007).

We see here an aspect that *Consuelo Naranjo Orovio's* chapter foregrounds by situating Ortiz in the general intellectual context between Spain's catastrophic loss of the last remainders of its empire (the so-called “generación del '98”) and the fall of its Second Republic to Franco's fascist forces in 1936. Monitoring the growth of an intellectual network accruing from Ortiz's lifelong correspondence with European and Latin American intellectuals,¹⁶ Naranjo Orovio shows how key contacts engineered by Ortiz and his friend and personal emissary to Spain, José María Chacón y Calvo, generated a web of interinstitutional collaborative relations. These help explain Ortiz's turn, by the late 1920s, from his earlier fixation on Lombrosian “criminal anthropology” as a means to civilizational uplift, and the lamentation of Cuba's “national decadence” and “tropical psychology” (as he called it in his early political writings), toward history, folklore, and ethnography as the foundations for a non-Eurocentric, anti-racist, and *uniquely Cuban* national cultural project.¹⁷

16. See the excellent four volume compilation of Ortiz's correspondence edited by Pérez Valdés (2014–18).

17. Thomas Bremer (1993) reports a hilarious anecdote in which, in 1934, Ortiz told a visiting Italian journalist who intended to interview him on Cuban legal reform and crime among Black Cubans that, as far as criminal law was concerned, “I am dead.” Whatever other miscommunications may have occurred in the aftermath is unknown, but soon afterward an Italian criminological journal published a lengthy sympathetic obituary of Ortiz.

As with Ortiz's contemporaries José de Vasconcelos in Mexico, Gilberto Freyre in Brazil, and Jean Price-Mars in Haiti, this project crucially involved the rehabilitation of the contributions of subaltern populations to thoroughly hybridized national cultures. It rejected, perhaps with inspiration from Oswald Spengler,¹⁸ European ethno-nationalism and pointed toward what we might today call a post-pluralist future (Strathern 1992). We can debate here whether the results conform more to the notion of peripheral nationalism as a "derivative discourse" (Chatterjee 1993), a "provincialization of Europe" (Chakrabarty 2000), or an instance of "theory from the South" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012). But it is clear that, all invocations of José Martí's "Nuestra América" notwithstanding, the communities so imagined were fundamentally *bounded* ones.

This is what the essays in the second section of this volume, "Border Worlds," aim to interrogate by harnessing elements of Ortiz's conceptual vocabulary to the analysis of attempts to contain and subvert precisely the kind of integrative dialectics that the mature Ortiz had come to adumbrate. Focusing on the phenomenology of the US–Haitian water border as it has taken shape since the 1980s,¹⁹ *Jeffrey Kahn* seeks to transcend the methodological nationalism of Ortiz's thought. To be sure, Ortiz repeatedly spoke of *all* of the Americas as a processual constellation, a seething and boiling of races and cultures, as he put it. Yet his focus remained on the *olla de Cuba*, the Cuban pot stewing away on the hearth of history. Pushing this container metaphor to its limits, Kahn examines how we might come up with a vocabulary that enables us to focus on what occurs at, or beyond, the "lip" of any single "pot," be it Menorca's *caldereta* or Cuba's *ajiaco*. Early on in *Los negros brujos*, Ortiz ([1906] 1973) coined the metaphor of "communicating vessels" to envision unplanned cultural interchange, but what Kahn — like Glenn Bowman, also in this section — is concerned with is not just flow but deliberate blockage. Both authors focus on the promise and limitations of dialectical models in the conceptualization of social and political boundaries, thereby sounding out the limits of Ortiz's theoretical contribution for both the Mediterranean and Caribbean in the early twenty-first century.

In both cases we are dealing with regions with long histories of violent interimperial conflict, where national formations only belatedly

18. Spengler was popularized in the Hispanophone world through Ortega y Gasset's *Revista del Occidente*.

19. The US–Haitian water border has become modular for various other maritime border zones, including those of the Schengen region (Kahn 2016).

emerged after the turn of the twentieth century as a result of the Spanish–Cuban–American War that destroyed the last vestiges of Spain’s empire, the breakup of the Ottoman Empire and the international mandate-zones that replaced it, and the gradual dismantling of the British Empire after the Second World War.²⁰ These were processes that transformed, and then often froze, what hitherto had been fluctuating zones of (however conflicted) ethnolinguistic and religious coexistence into bounded territorial units. Though their effective sovereignty often remained questionable,²¹ what these new political entities shared, at least in theory, was the status of containers of populations whose movement beyond territorial borders of their respective nation-states was tightly circumscribed by regionally hegemonic centers of power. The result, in many instances, were political and economic pressure cookers, not the homey kettle that Ortiz may have imagined.²²

This was certainly the case in Haiti where, by the late 1970s, the violence and disastrous economic mismanagement of the US-backed Duvalier regime unleashed increasingly large waves of migrants seeking refuge across the Florida Straits, thus prompting an anxious reorganization of US immigration and migrant-interdiction policies. As Kahn details, the result was an evolving frontier zone constituted, legally and bureaucratically, by the surveillance and interdiction sorties of Coast Guard cutters that effectively extended US sovereignty up to the coastal waters of Haiti. It finds its extraterritorial land-based equivalent in the camps of the military base at Guantánamo Bay. But of course, *ethnographically*, US bureaucratic and tactical reason is not the only form of understanding that prevails in the maritime borderland that has emerged in the northern Caribbean over the past forty years. This is where Kahn returns us to Ortiz in an elegant exploration of how the ever-evolving

20. Fascinating as the case of the *departmentalisation* of the French Antilles in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War is in this respect — Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana, and parts of Saint Barthélemy are effectively part of the EU — it would lead too far afield to discuss it here (but see Bonilla 2015).

21. One thinks of US interventionism and gunboat diplomacy in the Caribbean, its massive support of the Israeli state, or its role in the wars in the Balkans after the breakup of Yugoslavia.

22. Perhaps ironically, in the years 1930–33 Ortiz himself went into exile in Washington, DC, during the last years of the US investment capital-backed Machado dictatorship.

conjunction between US naval might and Haitian smuggling vessels has “cooked” the northern Caribbean sea into a plurally “securitized” space: one where Haitian migrants tactically deploy mystical forces just as US and Bahamian authorities deploy technological ones in an ontologically compounded game of hunter and prey.²³ Harking back to Annemarie Mol’s (2002) call to consider multiple ways of “doing the world,” Kahn effectively provides us with a language to consider the ontological heterogeneity of worlds (such as the one which Ortiz was self-consciously inhabiting), while not jettisoning the essentially dialectical moment of their articulation.

As Kahn rightly puts it, such “border magic,” much like the purported “African survivals” that Ortiz first tried to eradicate and then came to embrace as part and parcel of Cuba’s national culture,

is clearly not some static survival from a primordial past but a set of practices that have responded to the changing limits and possibilities of Haitian maritime mobility under conditions of political instability ... and intensifying border securitization. ... The whole ritual economy that surrounds these voyages is inseparable from the historical dynamism of hunting and dodging that both the cutters and the smugglers engage in across Caribbean seascapes. The use of *djab* [demonic supernatural aides to migration], then, is an extreme, and relatively new, response to a perceived intensification of foreign policing power in the waters around Haiti, itself a response to the opening of maritime migration routes between Haiti and the US in the 1970s.

What we see here, thus, is what Marshall Sahlins (1981) might have called a “structure of the conjuncture,” or, alternatively, what (without proper reference to the colonial context) Evans-Pritchard (1937) termed the “new magic” called for by what he lamentably regarded as merely “new situations” and so unfortunately left woefully undertheorized.²⁴

23. Juliette Hallaire and Deirdre McKay (2016) provide a suggestive parallel for the passage between northern Senegal and the Canary Islands, where FRONTEX surveillance technology similarly appears to have entered into a dialectical conjunction with Maraboutically enhanced Senegalese fishermen who try to evade them when ferrying aspiring African migrants to Spain’s Atlantic outposts.

24. To an extent, one might add, it also led Max Gluckman (1959) to issue his rather unfortunate remarks on the Mau Mau rebellion as an instance of “the magic of despair.”

In many ways, this gives us new purchase on a prerevolutionary Cuban nation-space simultaneously inhabited by American investment capital, African gods, corrupt politicians, esoteric confraternities, and revolutionary forces:²⁵ all of them “enacting Cuba” in a ceaseless dialectic between heterogeneous, but partly overlapping, modes of being and forms of predication, as Philippe Descola (2014) might put it.

Such transculturative “structures of the conjuncture” have, of course, arisen again and again in the Mediterranean world, and for centuries — at the least since the antagonistic, but often highly fruitful, cultural interchanges between Byzantium in the east and Christian northern Spain in the west with the Caliphates of Baghdad and Córdoba. Here *Glenn Bowman’s* essay comparing postimperial (in this case post-Ottoman) forms of religious coexistence and boundary maintenance with contemporary moments of wall-building provides an intriguing — and in many ways illuminating — counterpoint to Kahn’s. Where the latter focuses on a modality of securitized border regimes that emerged into global prominence in the aftermath of American legal experiments with fluctuating cartographies of maritime sovereignty traced out in the routes taken by interdiction and surveillance crafts, Bowman’s essay deals with uneasy ethno-religious “choreographies of cohabitation” in the Balkans and the Levant. There, the gamut runs from the careful maintenance of distance and difference in convivial “neighborly” intersectarian sharing of sacred places, to the ritualized avoidance among sectarian strangers congregating at holy sites, to the contestation of the Other’s right of access to, property over, and co-presence in, spaces sacred to more than one ethno-religious community. The extreme end of the spectrum features the violent walling in, or walling out, of populations deemed in need of containment, as human “matter out of place” (Douglas 1966), and subjected to sovereign states of exception, often in the service of performative affirmations of identity.

At first glance, these scenarios appear difficult to commensurate with the mature Ortiz’s vision of transculturative processes, and Bowman certainly has a point when he argues that Ortiz’s youthful experience of Menorca’s oppressive mono-sectarian environment may have provided

25. We know that the communist labor leader Aracélio Iglésias was also a member of the male initiatory society Abakuá, which uneasily coexisted with Havana’s dockside syndicalist movement and whose ritual titleholders directly contracted with international shipping lines (López Valdés 1966; Palmié 2006b).

a foil for his subsequent discovery of Cuba. But we should not forget here that, as mentioned earlier, Cuba's long history of plantation slavery (which reached its apex only in the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century) made its legacy of race — and not religion — the touchstone for intercommunal antagonism there. José Martí's visionary antiracism and the participation of large numbers of free and recently freed Afro-Cubans in the Wars of Independence (1868–78, 1895–99) notwithstanding, only ten years after the formal inauguration of the Cuban Republic, the violent suppression of the Partido Independiente de Color (a political party founded by disgruntled Black veterans of the Cuban Liberation Army) in 1912 occasioned the slaughter of thousands of its non-White supporters (Helg 1995; De la Fuente 2001). Of course, given its colonial heritage of the Spanish-American *casta* system, Cuba never developed the binary racial culture based on legal hypodescent (as was characteristic of British North America and the US), and its degree of interracial conviviality, rather early on, led to the inclusion of phenotypically “white” Cubans in African-derived ritual forms of initiatory consociation.²⁶ But as we will see in Sarró's and Pavez Ojeda's essays in the next section of this volume, it was precisely Spain's perceived failure to contain the racial/cultural other that anxious Cuban modernizers under the sway of Euro-American racist ideologies bemoaned at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Cuban annexation by the US had been a topic of discussion in both countries since at least the declaration of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, and the failure of negotiations in Madrid in 1867 arguably precipitated Cuba's first War of Independence (1868–78). But the preemption of Cuba Libre's impending victory over Spain in 1898, and the ensuing military occupation of the island by US forces, deeply impacted the future of what, due to the Platt Amendment, effectively became a neo-colonial republic. That, upon the second US intervention in 1906–9,

26. The most spectacular case surely occurred in 1857 when Andres de los Dolores Petit, the holder of the *Isué* title of the Abakuá *potencia* (chapter) Bakoko Efó, swore in the new *potencia* Mukarará Efó, composed entirely of socially White men (Palmié 2006b). But as David Brown (2003) has documented, as early as the first years of the twentieth century, a group of elderly African priests (*babalaos*) of the Yoruba-derived Ifá oracle initiated a Spanish immigrant, Bonifácio Valdés, into their ranks. He now counts as the apical ancestor of a number of initiatory lineages of *babalaos*, not just in Cuba but globally.

Teddy Roosevelt spoke of Cuba as “that infernal little negro republic” did not help much, either, in the minds of young Ortiz’s fellow republican elites (not all of them socially White, mind you). Needless to say, most of them had imbibed the racialist discourses about the necessity of ethnolinguistic purity for the success of postcolonial nation-states emanating from Europe and America at the time. And needless to say, too, what stung them most was not just the ethno-racial hybridity of the “nation” that they had inherited from their unwanted American liberators, but the — to them — embarrassing fact that the census conducted by the American Military Occupation forces had revealed that some 13,000 first-generation Africans were still alive in Cuba in 1902 (Palmié 2002).²⁷

From this emerged the publication with which the then twenty-five-year-old lawyer Fernando Ortiz established his national reputation. His book *La hampa afrocubana: Los negros brujos* is rarely discussed these days, and more often than not (especially in Cuba) it is written off as a youthful aberration, even if it presaged Ortiz’s lifelong interest in Cuba’s African cultural heritage. Ortiz himself belatedly aimed to foster this assessment of his early work. Responding, in 1939, to a critique by his former protégé Romulo Lachatañeré — at a time, in other words, when he had long cast aside the positivistic racialism of his youth — or again in a talk he gave at the Club Atenas (the most prestigious Afro-Cuban cultural institution of the republican era) in 1942, Ortiz quite rightly claimed that prior to his own efforts, Cuba’s African heritage had remained unexplored by scholars and was subject only to gross rumors and distortions (Ortiz 1939, 1943). Only a few years earlier, Ortiz had presented a batá drum ensemble at La Habana’s illustrious Teatro Campoamor as the classical music of Cuba (Ortiz 1938), and in 1946 he was to publish a devastating critique of any conception of race (Ortiz [1946] 1975; see Palmié 2016). Yet what he failed to acknowledge in his response to Lachatañeré and his talk at the Club Atenas is that he had radically changed his mind.²⁸

27. Among them still counted the then ageing founders of the cult of Ifá in Cuba, such as Remigio Herrera, better known by his Lucumí name Adechina. Along with five other Africans then living in La Habana’s municipality of Regla, he innovated the initiatory mechanisms in a way that secured the reproduction of their ritual practices to this date (Brown 2003).

28. In an interesting essay Lopes de Barros (2012) argues that Ortiz had not changed his mind but had merely transposed his earlier criminological

As both Sarró and Pavez point out, *Los negros brujos* makes for troubling reading. Their contributions take us into the third section of this volume, “Afro-Cuban Fetishizations.” This is not the place to situate Ortiz’s early thought in the tradition of positivistic criminology that he imbibed during his studies in Spain, nor to probe the influence of Lombroso, except to note that Ortiz strategically reconfigured the latter’s concept of atavism: what for Lombroso were individual instances of regression to lower evolutionary stages that produced “criminal types” (identifiable by bodily features or “stigmata”), for Ortiz, gained sociological significance in the Cuban case:

In Cuba a whole race entered into the criminal underworld. At their arrival, the blacks collectively entered into the lowlife of Cuba, not as if they had fallen from a higher level of morality, but as incapable, momentarily at least, of ascending towards it. ... Nonetheless, one cannot say in a rigorous manner that the blacks, on entering Cuba were not honorable and instead immoral, given the relative character of honorability and morality in sociological perspective. The blacks were honorable with respect to their criteria for morality; they were not insofar as they now had to regulate their behavior in accordance to the more elevated criteria that the whites had [developed] for themselves and for those whom they dominated. (Ortiz [1906] 1973: 20–21)

This, as *Ramón Sarró* argues, led Ortiz to identify the true danger to Cuba’s civilizational progress. He saw it not so much in the African *brujos* still alive at the time of his writing. Even though their “superstition-driven” actions were reprehensible and noxious, and so needed to be contained by drastic legal and policing measures, they at least acted out of good faith and would soon die out anyway. What worried the young Ortiz instead was that island-born creole Blacks — who, after all, had grown up in a “civilized milieu” — were (as he thought) cynically reproducing and transforming their elders’ practices, even spreading them into Cuba’s White population. Sarró’s comparison of the young Ortiz with his illustrious older contemporary Sir James Frazer (or Sigmund

arguments for social hygiene into a culturalist idiom of “race-free” nationhood under the impact of the Nazi holocaust. While there may be something to this line of reasoning, the volte-face that Ortiz performed undeniably dates back to the 1930s.

Freud, for that matter) is thus altogether appropriate.²⁹ As Frazer (1927: 218–19) opined:

Among the ignorant and superstitious classes of modern Europe it is very much like it was thousands of years ago in Egypt or India, and what it now is among the lower savages surviving in the remotest corners of the world. ... It is not our business here to consider what bearing the permanent existence of such a solid layer of savagery beneath the surface of society ... has upon the future of society. The dispassionate observer, whose studies have led him to plumb its depth, can hardly regard it otherwise than as a standing menace to civilization. We seem to move on a thin crust which may at any one moment be rent by the subterranean forces slumbering below.

In fact, the affinities between Frazer and the young Ortiz go further than just that. Like Frazer, Ortiz — as Sarró points out — was a lifelong rationalist for whom Catholicism and African-derived religious complexes were not just equally in need of explanation but impediments to any scientific apprehension of the world. As Ortiz wrote in 1906, “The Catholic cult practiced in Cuba was in effect not essentially distinct from that of the fetishist, and the differences that existed between them were merely formal, and less intense than what is generally and vulgarly believed because of inherited prejudice and lack of dispassionate objective observation” (Ortiz [1906] 1973: 154). As it so happened, the last monograph that Ortiz published during his lifetime, *Una pelea cubana contra los demonios* (Ortiz 1959),³⁰ pursued this line of thought to its logical end: if a seventeenth-century Cuban priest had exorcized a legion of demons from the body of an enslaved African woman (no matter his economically

29. As Camacho (2007) points out, here Ortiz anxiously drew on Edward Tylor’s remark about the universal fetish-philosophy being “[s]o strong” that the “European in Africa is apt to catch [fetishism] from the negro, and himself, as the saying is ‘become black’” (Tylor [1871] 1958: 245). At that point in his career, the ultimate specter for Ortiz was not only an incomplete de-Africanization of Cuba’s Black population but the creeping Africanization of White Cubans (cf. Palmié 2012). Obviously, by the time he coined the concept of *transculturación*, the nightmare of cultural hybridization had turned into a beacon of hope, and a powerful antiracist platform.

30. Two volumes of addenda were published posthumously; see Ortiz (2000, 2003a).

rational personal interests), and got a deposition from Satan himself juridically notarized, then perhaps not just the seventeenth-century inquisitor but the young Ortiz's own African wizards stood vindicated.

Commencing from a consideration of the young Ortiz's fetishization of "African fetishism," *Jorge Pavez Ojeda's* essay extends this line of analysis throughout Ortiz's long career. At the conference on which this volume is based, Pavez's contribution incited some of the most heated debates, for two reasons. First, it suggested that Ortiz moved on from his youthful positions to fetishizing the Cuban nation and, in a later turn, Afro-Cuban musical expression. But it also raised the question of whether we all, gathered at the site of Ortiz's adolescence, might not be fetishizing Ortiz himself. At first sight, Pavez's critique certainly stings. But let me elaborate to show how we might perceive it as the fruitful provocation he intended. The first thing to note here is that, as Pavez himself makes clear, the career of the fetish in Western thought, and so also in our discipline, is a complex one. A depreciatory term right from its first appearance in the lexicon of European languages, its career in anthropological thought seemed over by the first decades of the twentieth century. Until, that is, William Pietz, in a series of incisive publications (1985, 1987, 1988), properly historicized its emergence into European discourse, and freed it from the ethnocentric and polemical implications the term had carried in Western social theory. Instead, the post-Pietz fetish emerges as a material switchboard between disparate regimes of value, an irreducibly historical translational operator that stabilizes the semiotic operations that it is harnessed to, even as it mystifies them.

Contrary to Fernando Coronil (1995) who, in his introduction to the new edition of *Cuban Counterpoint*, sought to claim the mature Ortiz for orthodox historical-materialist fetish criticism, Pavez presents a more nuanced picture of Ortiz's changing material semiotics. He argues that they move away from Ortiz's initial strategy of dislocating the fetish's source of power and seduction from the realm of religion to that of science (cf. Palmié 2011) and take on affirmative valuations of objects and practices as emblematic of his equally transforming vision of the essence of Cubanness. Key here is that Pavez's analysis emphasizes the productive and progressive nature of these transformations. His aim is not to unmask or denounce Don Fernando as an unwitting fetishist. It is to show one (among surely several) logical threads underlying and shaping the trajectory of his work, as it came to embrace new material signifiers of a nation in transculturation. These ranged from

lexical objects to Indo-Cuban artifacts, emblematically Cuban plants, and their commodified products; to *afrogrista* poetry, dance, and musical forms; and to Afro-Cuban musical instruments. All of these Ortiz considered living documents of what, by the 1940s and with a nod to Miguel de Unamuno, he began to call *africanía* and *cubanía*: willed acts of identification rather than mere attributions of origin or geographical distribution (as was the case for *africanidad* and *cubanidad*, respectively). What we find here is a more or less gradual shift in what Webb Keane (2003, 2018) might call Ortiz's "semiotic ideology." But what never changed was his object of signification, Cuba's national culture. As Pavez rightly notes, the result is more akin to Walter Benjamin's dialectical images than Theodor Adorno's negative dialectics, let alone Lévi-Strauss's structural transformations: contrapuntal, rather than synthetic, evocative rather than analytical, radically historical rather than formalistic.

In the end, Ortiz's eyes remained on the fetish of the Cuban nation and its transforming, forever unfinished culture, threatened as the former appeared through political-economic dependence and the latter through cheapening commercialization. But if we agree with David Graeber's (2005) assessment of fetishism as a sign of social creativity, then we might not only imagine that Don Fernando could have concurred with Pavez's interpretation of the long arc of his work, but might, ourselves, take courage in collectively fetishizing it as an operator of transvaluation in our own ethnographic and theoretical endeavors (see Gomes da Cunha, this volume, for a particularly compelling example).

The fourth section of this volume, "Linguistic and Culinary Perspectives," begins with *Sergio Valdés Bernal's* assessment of Ortiz's lexicographical contributions to the study of Cuban varieties of Spanish. As Valdés details, Ortiz was by no means the earliest to document the colonial transformation wrought upon "the companion of Empire," as Antonio de Nebrija prophetically styled his standardization of the Castilian language (Spain remains multilingual to this day), published the same year that Columbus embarked on his multiply fateful voyage.³¹ But Ortiz may have been among the first to appreciate these linguistic transculturations not as aberrations, induced by processes akin to creolization

31. As Ortiz (1942) put it, with Columbus two worlds discovered each other, with highly unequal consequences.

on both phonetic and lexical levels,³² but as a weapon to be wielded by postcolonial cultural nationalists. In a move akin to that performed by Haitian and Martiniquan proponents of orthographic *deviance maximale* some two generations later, by the 1920s Ortiz had come to wield linguistic *cubanisms* (preferably of African or Indo-Antillean etymology) as a weapon against the neocolonial stranglehold the Spanish Royal Academy of Language was exerting upon Spain's former colonies by its definitions of linguistic orthopraxy.³³

Ortiz's earliest ventures against such linguistic neocolonialism can perhaps be seen in his vituperative reactions to the attempts by the Spanish goodwill emissary Rafael Altamira to install a pan-Hispanic unity based on the "language of Cervantes" in Cuba, Argentina, and other former Spanish colonies (Ortiz 1910). But it found its mature expression in what Gustavo Pérez Firmat (1989) has felicitously called Ortiz's two "contradictionaries," *Catauro de cubanismos* (Ortiz 1974, in its final form) and *Glosario de afronegrismos* (Ortiz 1924). In the latter we often find Ortiz relishing contradicting the *Diccionario de la Real Academia* and sometimes even marshalling non-sanctioned Cuban usages for perfectly Spanish lexical items (such as in the entry on the distinctly Cuban pragmatics of *madre* in Ortiz 1924). As Valdés notes, Ortiz kept revising these works in light of his ethnographic experience, authorizing a new, alphabetized version of the *Catauro* only late in his life (published posthumously in 1974 as the *Nuevo catauro*).

The postcolonial dilemma Ortiz was writing against was well formulated by Juan Marinello in 1932:

The American writer is a prisoner. Firstly of his language. Then of the learned fetters of Europe. ... Language is among us the strongest factor of Spanishness, the most powerful obstacle to a vernacular

32. I use *creolization* here in the loosest of senses. The question why (with the possible exception of Colombian *palenquero*) no Spanish-based creole language ever stabilized in the Americas continues to be much debated among creole linguists but does not concern me here. For a critique of the Martiniquan *creolité* movement, see Price and Price (1997).

33. Ortiz, of course, knew of his teacher Benejam's lexicographical efforts concerning Menorquín, but it would be fascinating to know if Ortiz was aware of the contemporaneous efforts of the architect of the nationalist standardization of Catalán, Pompeu Fabra i Poch (Costa Carreras 2009).

idiom, for we are born into a language, as into the world, without an opportunity for choice: as soon as we begin to think, as soon as we begin to live, Castillian is already our only language. We exist through a language that is ours while still being foreign. Language has a life of its own. We struggle to secrete creolisms onto the mother tongue, and when we make a serious effort to innovate our speech, we come up with forms that lived a youthful existence centuries ago in Andalusia or Extremadura. Or that could have had such an existence. (Marinello, cited in Pérez Firmat 1985: 192–93)

Ortiz's answer was to look toward Africa and (to some extent) to Cuba's indigenous past in a strategic fetishization of Cuban linguistic *différance*, as Pavez might say.

However, as *Amanda Villepastour* provocatively argues in her contribution, the plight of the postcolonial subaltern who cannot speak in a language other than that of the erstwhile colonizer was not only that of Ortiz and his fellow nationalist intellectuals. In a somewhat different sense, it also affected practitioners of Afro-Cuban ritual traditions, among whom the end of the slave trade, after about 1860, began to erode the bilingualism between their African first languages and a (possibly pidginized) Spanish register known as *bozal*. As Ortiz realized as early as 1906, by the time of his writing, some of the African languages of everyday communication among first generation Africans of similar ethnolinguistic origin were well on their way to transforming into esoteric sacrolects (Ortiz 1906: 141), registers, in other words, with increasingly metapragmatic rather than referential functions (Wirtz 2008, 2014). Of particular interest to Ortiz was that of Lucumí, the ritual language of Regla de Ocha or Santería and Ifá, the lexicon of which he, following the lead of Nina Rodrigues in Brazil, traced to what the scant Africanist literature at their disposal led them to believe was Yoruba (Palmié 2013: 49–50).

Now, whatever Lucumí may have been when it consolidated among enslaved Africans from the Bight of Benin in the course of the nineteenth century, the irony is, as Villepastour notes, that by the beginning of the twentieth century, and not least due to Ortiz's own efforts, it came to be perceived as a corrupted form of Yoruba, not just by scholars such as Ortiz's daughter-in-law Lydia Cabrera,³⁴ but increasingly

34. Cabrera explicitly entitled her Lucumí-Spanish glossary *Anagó: vocabulário lucumí (el Yoruba que se habla en Cuba)* (Cabrera 1957). But in

among practitioners of Regla de Ocha and Ifá as well. This is not the place to chronicle the protracted convergence of Yoruba religious cultures and their purported New World equivalents at what I have called “the ethnographic interface” (see Palmié 2013: 33–77), and Villepastour merely wants to establish it as the background for a trilingual ethnographic translation experiment that she conducted together with the academically trained Yoruba priestess Doyin Faniyi in La Habana in 2018. As she and her cosmopolitan Yoruba friend were to find, the translation model established by Ortiz as early as 1906 (Wirtz 2008) was alive and well in the *ilé ocha* (domestic cult group) of Francisco “El Chino” Ung, an *oriaté* (cowrie divination specialist) from La Habana’s municipality of Regla who, despite his traditional Cuban orientation,³⁵ enjoys attention from Cuban scholars and an international religious clientele alike.

Villepastour had certainly tried to carefully engineer the triply interlinguistic encounter — an ethnographically fashioned “contact zone,” as she might put it (or a deliberately fashioned novel “ethnographic interface,” as I would say). Yet after her Yoruba companion’s back-translations moved everyone to tears, she began to worry about the potential “transculturative” impact of her and Doyin Faniyi’s input into the interlingual contact zone that had opened up in Francisco Ung’s house. Here, Villepastour’s reflexive qualms are well taken — though, or so I would argue, only up to a point. The fact is that the likes of us — anthropologists — have played as much of a role in fashioning what we, today, know as Afro-Cuban religion as our informants have in fashioning the “anthropology thereof” (Palmié 2013). I do not know if Don Fernando would have agreed with this judgment. Reflexivity was not his game. But

many ways, Cabrera herself was a latecomer: in the collection of an *olocha* (priest of the Regla de Ocha), a friend of mine in Regla, I once found a mimeographed typescript dated “Guanabacoa 1954” in which the author had translated the English glosses for Yoruba words in Bishop Samuel Crowther’s 1872 *A Vocabulary of the Yoruba Language* into Spanish. Clearly the assumption must have been that Yoruba was as mutually intertranslatable with Lucumí as English was with Spanish!

35. Ung is “traditionally Cuban” in the sense of an attempted fidelity to Cuban ritual forms — as opposed to other priestly figures who are internationally active in La Habana such as Frank Cabrera or Victor Betancourt. The latter have opted for an overhaul of their practices in line with models of “Yoruba tradition” currently emanating from itinerant Nigerian priests such as Taiwo Abimbola.

neither was it that of pretty much any anthropologist writing before the 1980s. Toward the end of his long, active career, Ortiz began writing essays for the magazine *Bohemia* on issues pertaining to *abakuá* and *espiritismo de cordón* that he was investigating at the time. One of the latter, which he entitled “Tata Mbumba, my colleague in Songo” (Ortiz 1949), went as far as Ortiz would go in commensurating (however tongue-in-cheek) his own efforts to those of his ethnographic interlocutors. Still, if any one non-priestly figure played a role in the making of contemporary Afro-Cuban religion, it was he.

Or was he? Are there aspects of Afro-Cuban ritual practice that escaped Ortiz’s framing and codification of “authentically” Cuban Africanness? This is a question raised by *Elizabeth Pérez* in a searching essay that focuses on some of the contradictions in Ortiz’s life-long and changing penchant for iconizing culinary metaphors in the service of social theory. As she demonstrates by a careful reading across the entire spectrum of his massive oeuvre, his interest in cuisine much antedates his fabled *ajiaco* metaphors of the 1940s. As it turns out, his interest in Afro-Cuban sacrificial cuisine goes all the way back to *Los negros brujos* and its questionable sources. In this work his (scant) knowledge of the practices of what one of them, the British colonial officer A.B. Ellis, in 1894 had still wisely called *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (Ellis [1894] 1966) led Ortiz (aided by Nina Rodrigues’s prior work in Brazil) to objectify Cuban Lucumí ritual as “Yoruba” in nature and essence. Now, there is a point to be made that such a sense of Yorubanness not only post-dates the missionary encounter in Nigeria itself (Peel 2001) but that — as Matory (2005) and I (Palmié 2013) have shown — it was equally conditioned by a transatlantic dialogue taking shape around an “ethnographic interface” that opened up between scholars and practitioners both in Cuba and Brazil only shortly thereafter. Nonetheless — and this is where Pérez’s contribution lies — however much the practices that were to congeal into Regla de Ocha and Ifa were “Yoruba-based” or “inspired,” parts of their history in Cuba seem to have bypassed the codification of a line that Ortiz, however inconsistently, drew between “authentically” pure “africanía” and “authentically” hybrid “cubanía.”

Rather, as Pérez’s culinary practitioner authorities maintain — ethnographically, in print, and online — the *ajiaco* (even Afrocentrically anglicized as *ajiako*) is not at all the hybrid antidote to unmitigated (or celebratorily pure) Africanity that Ortiz may have seen it as. Even though Ortiz’s writings have filtered back across the ethnographic interface and

may now be informing what his anthropological successors like Lisa Pérez or I are studying, fact is that some *orichas* and the dead enjoy an *ajiaco* crowned by a boiled or roasted pig's head. If, as Christopher Davis (1999) put it so well, we should treat notions of Africanity as projects rather than primordialities, then Ortiz's blind spots may turn into opportunities for research — as he himself hoped for in his last writings on Afro-Cuban cuisine.

The fifth and last section of this book, “Ethnographies of Transculturation,” seeks to put Ortiz's conceptual apparatus to work in a variety of ethnographic scenarios. Excepting Campbell's essay, the results of their endeavors are less focused on the Mediterranean or the Caribbean region (at least as envisioned by Ortiz). But they all present suggestive efforts probing how we still might operationalize the Cuban savant's insights in our ongoing work.

A bit of a “Tale of Two Modernities,” *Olivia Gomes da Cunha's* contribution is set in Moengo, a Ndyuka Maroon village in Suriname's Cottica region, that, by the second decade of the twentieth century, came to transform into the South American epicenter of aluminum's “light modernity” (Sheller 2014): a bauxite company town complete with electric lights, a planned street pattern, river landings suitable for cargo ships, Dutch managerial personnel, American technicians, and a largely alien labor force imported by American capital through Dutch colonial channels working in dynamite mining and in a state-of-the-art bauxite processing plant. But Gomes da Cunha's essay is also a tale of two substances, white clay and red earth, as they relate to gardens and devastated forests, to civil war, displacement, and return, to earth spirits and mining prospectors, to ancestors and purchased demons, kinship and contractual labor, healing and mineral poisoning.

Although Gomes da Cunha eschews Ortiz's allegorical devices, and, following Marilyn Strathern ([1991] 2004), aims to expose partial connections rather than delineate (however open-ended) dialectical relations in which Ortiz sought to ground Cuba's future, her essay brilliantly demonstrates the continued promise of engaging with Ortiz's thought in the form of ethnographically grounded theory. Thus, when her interlocutor Sa Mari recounts how the very demise of the aluminum industry allowed her to carve out a livelihood as it left behind far more plentiful deposits of kaolin or *pemba doti* (a ritually highly salient substance) than had ever been collected by Maroons from riverbanks before, we see not just how the ruins of extractive capitalism can give way to novel human lifeworlds (Tsing 2015), but how these are, in Sa Mari's case, at one

and the same time infused with a deep sense of Ndyuka historicity and cosmology. We likewise gain a vivid understanding of how Ndyuka relations with deities and spirits are contrapuntally articulated with Moengo's industrial operations when photographs of Ba Dii, a former bauxite prospector-cum-*sabiman* (ritual specialist), document his assertions that his spiritual mediation came to be expected from his fellow workers and union members. One of these depicts him in his work uniform pouring libations of rum and *pemba* near the company machinery asking the *goon gadu* (earth spirits) for permission and protection in violently despoiling their domain, so as not to cause loss of life and limb among the workers or burden their descendants with divine vengeance. These surely are not the actions of "neophyte proletarians" aiming to confront "occult economies" by mistaken means.³⁶ Ba Dii's actions are indications of the deep, if partial, imbrications of the kinds of modernities that the homophonous names Mungo (its spelling in Ndyuka) and Moengo stand for, the contrapuntally articulated lifeworlds emerging from them, and their "ontological multiplicity" (in Kahn's terms).

As *João Pina-Cabral* might argue, this is only what is to be expected. Given what he calls the condition of "metaphysical pluralism" inherent to any form of social life — precipitating, as it does (without becoming subject to much conscious reflexivity), the sets of dispositions that afford the "situational selections" (as Bowman terms it) through which we participate in each other's social personhood — intersubjectivities are thus inescapably contrapuntal: every individual, as Ortiz ([1946] 1975) put it, is a hybrid, not just genetically but in her social being — a changing polyphonic constellation, a dish composed of essentially underdetermined ingredients and cooked by an indeterminate process. We (or at least some of us) experience ourselves as wholes — rather than sums of heterogeneous parts — only through eliding our multiple participations.³⁷

36. This is what Michael Taussig (1980) and much of the 1990s literature on African witchcraft and neoliberalism mistakenly suggested. Much like Andean silver and tin miners, Colombian cane cutters, or African migrant laborers on the Zambian copper belt, the Suriname Maroons had been part and parcel of the global capitalist world system since at least the conclusion of the Dutch peace treaties with them in the 1760s (on which see Thoden van Velzen and Van Wetering 1988).

37. This arguably is an effect of the premium that Western ideologies of personhood have placed, since at least John Locke's time, on skin-bound

The series of counterpoints from the Alto Minho region, Portugal, that Pina-Cabral presents us with might thus just as well have started with that between his youthful fieldwork in the late 1970s and his current perspectives. Having grown up in Mozambique, and educated at the University of the Witwatersrand and Oxford University, much of rural northern Portugal in the years immediately following the overthrow of the Salazar dictatorship must have been a foreign homeland for him — just as for the young Ortiz arriving in Cuba in 1895 in the middle of an anticolonial war. In both cases, the authors faced situations of bewildering complexity. Pina-Cabral does not particularly emphasize the issue, but when he speaks of his interlocutors' desire to acquire land to plant patches of maize and wine (and so fully become *vizinhos* in their own and everyone else's eyes), it is clear that the hillside villages in Alto Minho — like all “remote areas” (Ardener 2012) — had long been full of “strangers”: in this case returnees from migrant labor in northern Europe or North America, but also (one presumes) from the far-flung corners of Portugal's former empire. What is more, the Minhotos themselves turn out to be strangers in their own land, where — as in Ortiz's Cuba — the question of autochthony is modified by the supposition of an unknown anterior population. Mythical *mouros* in Pina-Cabral's case, vaguely known Talayotics and Tainos in Ortiz's.

As it turned out, what seemed to be a classically southern European peasant society, then on its way to inclusion in its encompassing nation-state's accession to the European Union, appeared to be peskily unbounded, lacking any clearly delimitable autonyms for its segments, and seemingly bereft of any connection to the national history then being made in Lisbon and other urban centers. Indications of bounding strategies were there, to be sure. But as Pina-Cabral recounts, it was only when he began to understand his friend and ethnographic interlocutor Morgado's strategies for assessing the value of plots of land for sale that the “ontological weight” of maize in Minhoto sociality dawned upon him. There was no counterpoint in that regard, excepting salaries for wage work in the rapidly Europeanizing towns. How many carts of maize a certain plot might be expected to yield was all that counted — and whether that parcel would ever be planted with that crop was immaterial (by then it was likely not to be put to such use anymore). Much

individuation, and of the kind of “retrospective realignment of the past” (Danto 1965) by which not only history but biographical memory is constructed (among most Euro-Americans, that is).

like sugar in Cuba (where industrial plantation agriculture only took off in the aftermath of the Bourbon reforms of the 1790s), maize was a latecomer crop to Alto Minho, replacing, one presumes, a variety of pre-Columbian “stuffs of life.”³⁸ But by the time Pina-Cabral and Ortiz set out to study the affordances of these crops in the shaping of coherent (if by no means homogeneous) forms of life in Alto Minho and Cuba, the later crop, *milho*, had long consolidated in its ontological weightedness.

Roger Canals presents us with another case of ontological multiplicity in the case of the iconology of the cult of María Lionza in Venezuela and Barcelona. As Canals argues, appearing as they do in multiple modalities — naked Indian, white queen, mestiza, sexualized/non-sexualised, beneficent/sorcerous — images of the deity are constantly created and recreated according to an intensional logic that drives the proliferation of its extensions: “original copies” that take the form of statues, images, and Facebook online altars whose auratic charge resides precisely in their constant creative “updating.” Originally rural and possibly relatively an-iconic, the cult of María Lionza attained the rudiments of its current iconography only in the 1950s with the creation, for the purpose of state-driven populist celebrations of indigeneity, of a statue of a naked Indian woman astride a tapir (a copy of which still straddles a major highway in Caracas) and the transformation of a portrait of the wife of Napoleon III into the deity’s royal manifestation. A case of bricolage, if there ever was one!

Since then, and especially toward the end of the twentieth century, the cult of María Lionza’s iconology has steadily evolved toward a semi-otic ideology that predicates the auratic quality of its imagery — mental, material, and corporeal (in Belting’s 2011 sense) — on the hieratic efficacy of novel singularities, be they actualized in pictorial form or in the bodily hexis of possessed devotees. We are here close to Orthodox theories of icons, and, indeed, devotees of María Lionza who create such images, much like Greek or Russian iconographers, tend to disavow their own agency (Herzfeld 1990). But we are also close to the long Iberian tradition of apparitions and *invenciones* (Christian 1981) — and of course not without good reason. If the Iberian conquest of the New World featured apparitions of Santiago Matamoros riding in the clouds, then surely we should not be surprised at the Catalan La Montserrat (a Black Virgin, mind you, known affectionately as La Moreneta) taking

38. See Manuel de Paz Sánchez (2013) on what we might call the Iberian counterpoint between maize and wheat.

her seat in María Lionza's *corte celestial* along with El Negro Felipe and el Indio Guaicaipuro among her exiled followers in Barcelona. All this may be little else than the momentary result of those "complex transmutations" that Ortiz's theory of transculturation (or better, perhaps, his suggestive notes toward such a theory) would lead us to expect. Having assimilated Tarzan and cinematic Vikings for quite some time now, who knows what "iconic paths" María Lionza will take in the future. But perhaps "expect" is far too strong a word here. In the universe that Don Fernando laid out for us, contingency is all there is.

Brian Campbell's chapter returns us to the southern shores of the Mediterranean, evoking a genuinely interesting and largely unknown convergence between Ortiz's thought and that of the eminent Spanish philologist, historian and cultural theorist Américo Castro, and illustrating the multiple ironies of a case of engineered transculturation in Spain's North African enclave Ceuta. Perhaps the closest European equivalent to Ortiz's theory of Caribbean heterogeneity and hybridity is, indeed, to be found in the work of Castro, who exiled himself to Argentina and the US during the Spanish Civil War and was, in fact, invited by Ortiz to lecture at the Instituto Hispano Cubana de Cultura in 1938 (Naranjo Orovio and Puig-Samper 2005). Not unlike Gilberto Freyre in the Portuguese case, Castro (from whom the concept of *convivencia*, in its current usage, seems to originate) argued for the origin of early modern Spanish culture (and Spanish "national character," more generally) from the — however conflicted — contact between Christian Visigothic, Sephardic, and Islamic cultures during Al-Andalus's seven centuries of existence. Ortiz and Castro met for the first time in 1928 when Castro gave a series of lectures at the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País (Pérez Valdés 2014 II: 340n10). They occasionally corresponded afterwards, but there are no explicit indications of mutual influence. Still, how intriguing it is to think that the one sought determinative heterogeneity and hybridity in Spain's past, while the other projected it toward Cuba's indeterminate future.

Be that as it may, Campbell's early twenty-first-century Ceutans certainly live with the ideologized legacies of Castro's vision (as well as those of his contemporary detractors),³⁹ projected into top-down

39. First and foremost among them Castro's contemporary, fellow student of Menéndez Pidal, and co-emigré to Argentina during the Franco years, Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz. See Fancy (2021) for a brief introduction to their disagreements. As Campbell notes, for the longest time, historians

policies aiming to domesticate ethno-religious (but not class) tensions in the name of a fragile, and quite possibly unravelling, Ceutan exceptionalism: a twenty-some-years-old experiment at “transculturation from above” that could go wrong any moment now. For, ironically, in the absence of effective measures to address socioeconomic inequality, the very attempts on behalf of Ceuta’s municipal government to sponsor ever newer forms of interreligious spectacle have not brought under control the transculturative process evidently underway in Ceuta, but instead rekindled ethno-religious resentment. Might one outcome of transculturative processes be a move toward purification? If so, the Ceutan case may well hold a cautionary lesson in regard to an uncritical extrapolation from Ortiz’s mid-twentieth century formulations to twenty-first century Europe.

As Campbell puts it, the ideology of *convivencia* “explicitly sought to transform religion from a moral ideology that politicized Ceutans along sectarian lines into a folkloristic curiosity that could be playfully exhibited and fused with other folkloristic resources belonging to other groups,” thereby alienating — and potentially radicalizing — just about every ethno-religious community involved. Walled-in (in Bowman’s sense) as Ceuta has been for centuries, its policies of first reifying its diverse ethnocultural segments (by means of recognition and fiscal patronage)⁴⁰ and then asking them to hybridize perhaps cannot be seen as anything but an affront by those who can least afford to buy into the well-meant but evident charade of *convivencia* turned *connivencia*: Ceuta’s underprivileged Muslim population, now being courted — irony of ironies — by the law and order programs of the right-wing Vox party.

Ortiz did not live to see a similar turn in Cuban cultural politics after the end of the militant atheism of the 1960s and the “quinquenio gris,” a period of massive repression of non-state sanctioned forms of cultural expression in the early 1970s, including in literature and film. But it is reasonably clear that the enforced policy of “transculturation” that sails under the (contested) name of *convivencia* in Ceuta may well harbor the seeds of its own undoing. A final lesson perhaps in uncritically applying

have variously engaged in, but also bemoaned, the harnessing of medieval Al-Andalus to present political projects ranging from fascist designs on Morocco to current debates about immigration and diversity on both the left and the right.

40. It is no accident that Campbell here evokes M. G. Smith’s (1965) very un-Ortician, but no less Caribbean “plural society” model.

Don Fernando's hopeful mid-twentieth century analytics to our contemporary world in the third decade of the twenty-first century.

In lieu of a conclusion: Of soups and social theory

This book closes with an afterword by *Charles Stewart* and a reprint of *Verena Stolcke's* — now virtually prophetic — analysis of the rise in Europe of rhetorics of “cultural incompatibility.” First published as the “1993 Sidney Mintz Lecture” in *Current Anthropology* more than twenty-five years ago, Stolcke's essay has retained a strikingly contemporary ring, given the accession to parliamentary status of populist neofascist movements in Hungary, Poland, Greece, and now Germany, Spain, and Trump's US, and the ongoing Syrian and Central American refugee crises.⁴¹ Framed in terms provided (virtually simultaneously with the first publication of Stolcke's article) by the likes of Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis on the academic end, or Robert Kaplan and Thomas Friedman on the journalistic one, the rise of anti-migrant sentiment, Stolcke insisted, is not simply racism 2.0 in an age of economic globalization. As she notes, already by the end of the 1970s formerly right-wing anti-immigrant rhetoric was not only moving toward the political center but became subject to a semantic overhaul. Working off the language of liberal multiculturalism and the politics of recognition, on the one hand, and pop ethology, on the other, the rhetoric of cultural fundamentalism in its perhaps most pernicious form openly acknowledges the equality of all humans and insists on cultural self-determination as a right, but then mobilizes both concepts to argue for cultural sameness as a requisite for national belonging among formally equal citizens (Silverstein 2005). The insidiousness of this logic is that it presents the resident majority

41. Let us not forget here that Stolcke wrote quite some time before 9/11 unleashed a wave of Islamophobia in much of the West, and a good decade before FRONTEX was instituted as an extra-communitarian border patrol in 2004. The beginning of Syria's civil war (2011) lay some twenty years in the future, as did the founding of the AfD party in Germany (2013), the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris (2015), Donald Trump's redoubled efforts to build a US–Mexico border wall and his Muslim travel ban (2017), the Windrush scandal in Britain (2018), the entry of the ultra-right Vox party into the Spanish parliament (2019), the storming of the US Capitol (2021), and the war in the Ukraine (2022).

population (never mind its social, economic, and often cultural diversity) as being under threat by the imposition of alien cultural forms emanating from refugees who often escaped the very regions that structural adjustment programs, European and American investment capital, and political interference have destabilized or made otherwise precarious.

Much could be said here about the role of US policies toward the Caribbean and Central America (officially as well as commercially) over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in precipitating northbound refugee flows. And more could be said about the compounding of old-style racism by cultural fundamentalist rhetorics that arguably played a considerable role in the storming of the US Capitol by a motley crew of white supremacists, conspiracy theorists, neo-Confederates, and right-wing extremists of other stripes on January 6, 2021.⁴² But I would like to end on a note that brings us back to Don Fernando and his signature image of the Cuban *ajiaco* as a hopeful analytical trope by contrasting it to the *caldosa* in Special Period Cuba and the French *soupe identitaire*.

Were Fernando Ortiz alive today, he would not recognize the culinary transformations the foods he once enjoyed in Menorca and Cuba have undergone. The main ingredient of the Menorcan *caldereta* of his youth, Mediterranean lobster, no longer is the “trash fish” that it once was, and the old fisherman’s dish is now sold to tourists at comparatively exorbitant prices. The *ajiaco* that Ortiz allegorically extolled in the 1940s disappeared from the culinary habitus of everyday Cuba by the beginning of what Castro, in 1991, declared to be a “Special Period [of wartime measures] in Times of Peace.” Upscale versions of it may well now be offered in tourist restaurants on the island, and the original version is surely available in Miami — petrified in its exilic nostalgic value, one imagines, no longer subject to further addition of ingredients, its cooking process halted. But even during the nutritionally slightly better days of the opening years of the twenty-first century, it would have been difficult (though not entirely impossible) to assemble its ingredients in Cuba (Garth 2014). What took its place is the *caldosa*, a rather impoverished version, cooked from “cualquier cosa que

42. The date of January 6 — el Día de los Reyes — adds an ironic wrinkle that would not have been lost on Ortiz who had written extensively on how the Afro-Cuban *cabildos de nación* (voluntary associations of free and enslaved Africans organized along neo-African ethnic lines) ruled the streets of Havana on that day (Ortiz 1921, 1924–25; cf. Palmié 1993).

aparezca” (whatever may appear) at the bodega on the rationing card, or “por la libre” (i.e., what could be had for a nonsubsidized price), or from the black market. I am not sure when collective *caldosa* cooking entered the repertoire of political organizing strategies of the Comites de Defensa de la Revolución, but by the late 1990s, a nightly *caldosa* every few months had become part and parcel of the few opportunities for “collective effervescence” that the Revolutionary state could still afford its citizenry.⁴³

We can only guess at what Don Fernando would have thought about the conscription of his thought into what even Fidel Castro, in 1985, conceded was an ideology of a classless, raceless social being that nonetheless had perpetuated forms of racial exclusion in the absence of corporate races. Obviously, in the aftermath of the disastrous campaigns in Angola, the *ajiaco* metaphor had already run precariously thin. But given the sociology of the emigration process, by the time the post-Soviet economic crisis hit Cuba with full force in the early 1990s, vital remittances from the US were largely flowing to the relatives of earlier, socially White Cuban émigrés, leaving their darker-skinned compatriots open to accusations of black-market racketeering and tourist prostitution. At least to some degree, the result was the opposite of the gradual deracialization of Cuba that Ortiz had once envisioned. Given the extreme scarcity of resources, and a dual currency system that privileged those with access to hard currency, the saying, popular in the 1990s, “hay que tener FE” (not faith but family in the exterior) took on an ominous ring for phenotypically darker Cubans who had previously profited from the Revolution’s attempts to enforce color blindness. I do not want to unduly dwell on this issue here, but if Ortiz’s hero José Martí had once proclaimed that Cubanness, by definition, had to transcend racial categories, then the return of inequalities along phenotypical lines in the Special Period debased both Martí’s and Ortiz’s visions for Cuba’s future. The hopeful *ajicao* had given way to the *caldosa* of Cuba’s real existing socialism.

But Don Fernando would have been equally aghast at hearing of what is cooking in Europe at this moment — such as the *soupe identitaire* that the French right-wing groups Bloc Identitaire and Solidarité des Français were dishing out at soup kitchens in the Parisian banlieux and elsewhere. This was a pork-based stew that French ultranationalists,

43. This much-impooverished soup has since seeped into the celebratory occasions of several Afro-Cuban ritual traditions, most notably the relatively new “cajón pa’ los muertos” (itself a creation of the Special Period).

beginning in 2003, served in impoverished neighborhoods so as to test the willingness of Muslim *and* Jewish citizens to live up to the culinary culture of La Grande Nation (Smith 2006). Of course, the French state banned the practice in late 2006, and, even though an injunction was granted by a judge who ruled that this practice could not be deemed racist (*Guardian* 2007), the European Court of Human Rights upheld the ban in 2009 (Salles 2009).⁴⁴ Here we have a symbolically violent travesty of commensality that forces those who cannot partake of the malevolent identitarian gesture into the position of the other who rejects the Mausian gift, however poisoned it is.

Neither is the idea of taunting Muslims and Jews with pork-laced dishes a particularly novel or ingenious one. As Eric Dursteler points out for the case of early modern Spain, pork and wine functioned as technologies supposedly revelatory of interior dispositions toward cultural disloyalty. For “Spanish authorities food was of particular interest in the broader conflict [between Christians and Muslims] because, unlike belief in religious dogma, food was viewed as an external, measurable mark of the interior individual,” Dursteler (2020: 220) tells us. And he continues: “Indeed, a popular inquisitorial guide prescribed giving ‘forbidden foods’ to converts to gauge their religious commitment: ‘Those who refuse will be considered as suspected of heresy’” (Dursteler 2002: 224). The analogy to contemporary forensic DNA phenotyping and face recognition technologies (M’charek 2013, 2020; Hopman and M’charek 2020) seems to suggest itself: the search for diagnostic signs of otherness has come to be replicated in the cruelty of stochastic DNA-based technologies that — while dispensing with the odious vocabulary of race — appear to know a Muslim when an algorithm unleashed upon DNA big data correlated to pixelated face profiles predicts one. As Stolcke anticipated, under the impact of such forensic technologies race has become “an absent presence” (M’charek 2020), haunting both French soup kitchens and European forensic crime laboratories in the Derridean sense of the term.

Here we need to ask ourselves to what extent Ortiz’s mid-twentieth-century analytical allegories still have a purchase on a world in which semiotically and technologically updated versions of the essentialist discourses against which he wrote from the 1940s onward have once more

44. Only six years later, the controversy erupted again, this time over the abolishment of pork-free alternatives in French public-school lunches (Chrisafis 2015).

gained the high ground in Europe.⁴⁵ This is a question of considerable urgency. In a thoughtful afterword to a collection of essays exploring medieval analogies to our contemporary situation, Jeffrey Cohen (2007) speaks of “intertemporalities,” and “wrinkles of time,” and explicitly mentions *soupe identitaire* as an “archive” of medieval sectarian violence. “The Jews, the Christians and the Muslims of today’s Paris,” he writes, “are not the same as the Jews, Christian, and Muslims of the Middle Ages. Yet pig soup and the lines of community and exclusion it is supposed to materialize really are part of the food’s enduring medieval temporality, now transported into a present clearly haunted by medieval crusade (as violent legacy, as nostalgic fantasy)” (Cohen 2007: 298).

Such haunting is evident when Santiago Abascal, leader of Spain’s far-right party Vox, calls for a renewed Reconquest of Spain to liberate it from its Muslim migrant presence. It is an attempt to “uncook” the history that European imperialism wrought, to unscramble the inevitably hybrid condition that not just Europe’s former periphery but the former core of the capitalist world has taken on in the aftermath of decolonization and neoliberal economic globalization. *Soupe identitaire* as an anti-*ajiaco*: a soup that divides rather than unites. Being offered to the presumptive “other,” it constitutes a blatant denial of the classic Mediterranean principles of hospitality and convivial commensality. Here, the fiction of a past of cultural homogeneity precipitates projects of violent purification, in Bruno Latour’s (1993) sense. But it is a fiction that, as Ortiz might have predicted, remains subject to the dialectics of “the cooking of history” and so invariably produces its own sets of Latoureaan hybrids: novel forms of exclusion and domination conforming to the fault lines of the contemporary global political economy, rather than effecting a return to an imagined pristine and clearly bounded past that never was.⁴⁶ All there was then were violent, but ultimately

45. As Ortiz (2014: 465–66) put it shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War: “What will we say of these German, French, English, or Italian races, which do not exist except in the fantasy of those who labor to convert a changeable concept of history into a hereditary and fatal criterion of biology? What will we say of that Spanish race? It is a pure fiction, but it is officially exalted each year on the 12th of October, ‘the day of the race,’ with perfumed rhetoric.”

46. As Eric Hobsbawm (1972: 9) put it quite some time ago: “Modern nationalist movements, which can almost be defined in Renan’s words, as movements which forget history or rather get it wrong, because their

unfruitful, attempts at disambiguation, and much of what there is now are renewed fights against windmills in which lives are damaged or lost.⁴⁷

Obviously, to confuse the contemporary “cultural fundamentalist” moment with the racism and ethnonationalism against which Ortiz wrote some eighty years ago would be a mistake. His vision of a “possible, desirable, and future deracialization of humanity” (Ortiz 2014: 463) now belongs in the realm of “futures past” (Koselleck 2004). Yet perhaps a return to Ortiz’s thought — as an instance of theory from the South *avant la lettre* — may help us perceive intertemporalities between the current situation and his mid-twentieth-century struggle for a contrapuntal analytical language in which to cast a conception of culture and sociality as ever-emergent constellations of difference. Our current efforts at making anthropological sense of identitarian sorting, bounding, and walling as attempts to ward off the moment of transculturation — whether in the Caribbean or the Mediterranean region — might arguably benefit from such a return to the old Cuban-Menorcan savant.

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objectives are historically unprecedented, nevertheless insist on defining them to a greater or lesser extent in historical terms and actually attempt to realize parts of this fictitious history.... All these [attempts], it must be repeated, are not in any sense ‘restorations’ or even ‘revivals.’ They are innovations using or purporting to use elements of a historic past, real or imaginary.”

47. Perhaps the most shocking case known to me concerns the ghost ship containing eleven petrified corpses of West African migrants that washed ashore in Barbados in May of 2006. As if in a truly horrific “wrinkle in time” that tragically folded the Middle Passage in with the current European border control regime, perhaps as many as a hundred prospective migrants to the EU, headed towards the Canaries from Cape Verde, were cut off by their middlemen and neglected by FRONTEX patrol boats. They drifted to their death by dehydration in the same currents that had once carried the enslaved to the Caribbean (Tremlett 2006).

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BALEARIC BEGINNINGS

Fernando Ortiz (and the spiritists?) in the Balearic Islands and Catalonia

Gerard Horta

Prior considerations

Anthropological fieldwork on, and debate about, diverse theoretical approaches to trance states has been abundant. In fact, an internet search on trance across human societies brings up more than ten thousand articles and monographs in social sciences and the humanities. As Ioan Lewis (1986: 44) pointed out decades ago, it is impossible to embrace the totality of anthropological knowledge produced in regards to this social phenomenon. A panoramic, synthetic reading would lead us from modern classics, such as Czaplicka (1914) and Shirokogoroff (1933, 1935) to the latest contributions. Yet in contrast to the immense quantity of studies and publications on trance and its multiple global manifestations, the field dedicated to spiritist socioreligious movements based on the one hand on the work of Allan Kardec¹ in Europe, and

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1. Hippolyte-Léon Rivail (1804-1869), aka Allan Kardec, French socialist pedagogue who systematized the theory and practice of spiritist mediumship in a dozen published works between 1857, with *Le livre des esprits*, and 1868. He also founded, in 1858, the important *Revue Spirite: Journal d'Études Psychologiques*. His works gained a broad international readership and spread to the colonies of the Western powers; in fact Kardec is considered as the paradigmatic father of European spiritism (Horta 2001: 147-66).

on the other on that of Andrew Jackson Davis in the United States,² represents only one small part. This is not to devalue the magnificent works that precede us: it is simply a statement of statistical fact. It is undeniable that things have changed, especially starting in the 1980s, but the anthropological gaze directed at trance during the first two-thirds of the twentieth century centered primarily on nonindustrial, “non-Western” societies. During most of the twentieth century, European and North American anthropology has abstained from, and on occasion even resisted, focusing its analysis on trance in Western societies. What were the motives for this hesitation? The answer is: an acknowledgment, explicit or tacit, of the dominant ideology in the West and the separation between “rationality” (bourgeois) and “irrationality” (all other social manifestations) derived from it. Likewise, in order to situate studies of the development of social movements like spiritism—without which it is difficult to understand Western modernity—it is necessary also to consider early anthropology’s distinction between established monotheistic “religion” and all other magical-religious manifestations, dumped in the pit of primitivism, infantilism, and phantasmagoria.

In the general framework of trance, the receptacle for spiritist flows is the body, and, consequently, society. If societies are incarnated in the bodies of their people (as taught by Boas, Mauss, Efrón, Birdwhistell, Goffman, Hall, Douglas and others), the tremors of history are projected on society in all their intensity by way of these same bodies, as

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2. Andrew Jackson Davis (1826-1910), North American spiritist who publicly identified as a “seer,” author of *The principles of nature: Her divine revelations and a voice to mankind* (1847), and of *The philosophy of spiritual intercourse* (1851). In these works he established the basis of spiritism in the United States. Jackson recognized that he had been strongly influenced by the Swedish scientist and mystical rationalist Emanuel Swedenborg, by the socioreligious movement of the Shakers, and by the magnetist practices introduced in Europe by Franz-Anton Mesmer. He founded the weekly *The Present Age* (1853), dealing with themes of syndicalism, cooperativism, and social reform; the publication included sections on clairvoyance, psychology, and animal magnetism. Jackson synthesized the modern practice of spiritism and, in the United States, its articulation in forms that paralleled those of the church (missionaries, places of worship, religious ministers). Thus the distinctive antihierarchical horizontality of European spiritism made it an authentic corrective to North American spiritism (Horta 2001: 153-55).

Rousseau, Swedenborg, or Marx and Engels (whose *Communist manifesto* in 1847 describes capitalist society with the lexicon of a geological treatise) had argued. In the context of Christianity, such collisions between two worlds, or invasions from a beyond that is recognized in the here and now—in which invisible powers penetrate human bodies—took place in Europe between the Montanists of the second century CE and later; in the Middle Ages and afterwards amongst Quakers, Chiliasts, Anabaptists, Jansenists, Convulsionnaires, *camisards* of Occitania, Spanish *alumbrados*, and Italian *tarantistas*, among so many others; and still later among the possession cults originating in Pentecostal forms of Protestantism or charismatic Catholics, who affirm the literal presence of the Holy Ghost in the bodies of the congregation. There is, in effect, a double collision between earth and heaven—the visible and the invisible—and between body and society.

One should keep in mind that trance and its derivatives turn into an instrument of conceptual and social control over the world. This permits the use of its discursive content as explanatory principles to benefit the established, systematic use of the body. The body appears as a meaningful reality at the point where, for whatever reason, no other more inclusive aspect of reality is accessible to generally subaltern social sectors (Lewis 1971), among whom practices of trance flourish. To the extent to which those who experience trance lose ordinary consciousness and do not remember what has happened, it is their social circle that interprets the signs expressed by those who are in a trance. Trance becomes a collective phenomenon, which is why anthropologists need to address the context in which it occurs, the interpretations societies construct around its signs and manifestations, and the ways these interpretations are instrumentalized with the objective of affirming or destroying established social orders, whether in empirical or symbolic terms.

As anthropologists we dispose of the classical definitions and typologies of non-Western trance phenomena which have been elaborated by Firth (1959, 1967) as possession/mediumship/shamanism; by de Heusch (1971) as possession/shamanism; by Bourguignon (1976, 1979) as trance/possession trance; by Duvignaud (1977) as trance/possession; and by Rouget (1980) as ecstasy/trance. However, beyond how Bourguignon and Duvignaud coincide in rigidly distinguishing between trance and possession, I situate spiritism as the contemporary materialization of mediumship in Western societies.

Which brings me to Fernando Ortiz. Perhaps—just perhaps—Ortiz needed to justify his interest in spiritism in strictly academic terms,

situating it in the teaching received at the Universidad de la Habana and tracing the boundaries between the socioreligious forms of African origin that already existed on the island—such as Santería and Palo (which the young Ortiz categorically treated as primitive and inferior)—and Kardecist spiritism. As we shall see below, there is a plethora of studies concerning the relation between Kardecist spiritism and Afro-Cuban religions: from the initial taxonomies of Afro-Cuban possession and mediumship by Martín (1930) and Basulto Paz (1938), to the typologies of Bermúdez (1967, 1968), and the subsequent analysis by Román (2007) regarding the complex ideological and social roots and different gradations of the boundaries of Kardecist spiritism in Cuba in the 1880s. The studies of Palmié (2002) are extremely critical of the instrumentalization and dominant historiographic classifications in Western academia that hierarchized and inferiorized—based on notions of science, reason, progress, and modernity—not only the generically named Afro-Cuban religions, but also the experience and conceptualization of the experience of the popular Cuban classes descended from slaves.

It is important to note that in Western Europe and the United States, the origins of spiritism lay in the freethinkers' movement (with the political, syndicalist, and cultural left), which gave rise to the first manifestations of feminism, antimilitarism, and the struggles for secular education, for the social reintegration of prisoners, for conflict resolution via dialogue and mediation. Yet despite the fact that spiritism belonged to the variegated milieus of a modernity that was not bourgeois, but collectivist, and that championed positivism as a path to scientific knowledge, it is necessary to move carefully when making totalizing generalizations: see for example Linse's (1996) work on the historical connections between German spiritism and conservative social forces, even, in the 1930s, with Nazism.

For these reasons, it is essential to distinguish—starting in the final third of the nineteenth century—the diverse types of instrumentalization of Kardecist spiritist practice according to social class. The political, economic, and cultural projects that derive from it gave rise to complex differentiations. On the one hand, we recognize in its origins a spiritism with a social base that is bourgeois, aristocratic, and even—for example in certain parts of Spain—with a military presence, and fundamentally masculine. On the other hand, we see a spiritism with a proletarian social base (as was the case in Catalonia) with the extremely relevant presence of women—the originating nucleus of Catalan feminism—and with a

strongly disruptive political, economic, and cultural project clearly opposed to the capitalist social order. Such paradoxes, arising from the contradictions of class, gender, nation, and cultural model, also form part of spiritism's development in Cuba.

Finally, I should clarify that due to limitations of space, the historiographic dimensions of this chapter cannot be accompanied by an account of the lives of spiritist activists from Menorca, Mallorca, or Catalonia. Over the years, I have written and published widely on the diverse biographical trajectories of participants in the spiritist circles of the Catalan countries, and refer readers to that work.

Shadows and silences: The presence of the departed

The relationships, on different levels, that Fernando Ortiz (1881-1969) maintained with the heterogeneous world of social practices and representations classified as “Cuban spiritism” have been the object of numerous studies. Among the best known are those of Lago Vieito (2002, 2010), who offers diverse sources, above all starting in the 1990s. “Cuban spiritism” refers to an approximation of a social aggregation in which Santería and spiritism fed into one another to the point of configuring what Romberg (2003) denominated “santerismo” (see Hernández Aponte 2015: 207). We have numerous investigations by Cuban authors about this movement, starting with the aforementioned studies by Martín (1930), Basulto Paz (1938), and Bermúdez (1967, 1968), and up until the present. By the 1980s, foreign anthropologists began to investigate Santería and the wide range of Afro-Cuban theorizations and popular practices (see the detailed inventory by Galván Tudela 2018: 4-33), as well as the reciprocal imbrications between these conceptual systems in contemporary Cuban society. Here it is necessary to once again highlight the studies of Palmié (2002) and Román (2007), together with more recent contributions such as those by Espirito Santo (2016), Millet (2016), Pérez Massola (2017), and Camacho (2019).

However, the origins of Ortiz's connection with the spiritists—where, how, and when his interest in spiritism was born—remain unclear. This is due to the lack of relevant information on the period he spent on Menorca (1882-1895), and the almost complete lack of documentation concerning his time completing a degree in law at the Universitat de Barcelona (1898-1900), which he followed with a doctorate in law

in Madrid (1901).³ His disturbing *Hampa afro-cubana: Los negros brujos* (Afro-Cuban riffraff: The black witches, 1906)—I write “disturbing” because of the racist hypotheses that appear in this work, as Ayorinde (2004) and Palmié (2010) point out—dedicated to his teacher in Menorca, Joan Benejam, marks a problematic beginning of his ventures into the world of the Cuban popular classes, which was to grab his attention and eventually lead him to address the so-called spiritism of “cordón.”

No one today can seriously dispute that the intellectual beginnings of Ortiz as an academic, in Cuba at the beginning of the twentieth century, reproduce the classist and racist ideology of Western bourgeois culture by treating the socioreligious manifestations of the subaltern Cuban classes descended from slaves as inferior, barbarian, atavistic, and primitive. Martínez-Alier [Stolcke] (1974) traced the social divisions between the descendants of Black slaves and the white dominant class, descendants of the colonizers as well as later immigrants, throughout the nineteenth century. As Argyriadis put it (2005: 87), what was at stake in Ortiz’s studies if not the de-Africanization of the “masses of Blacks” whose practices were conceived by Ortiz himself as antimodern and contrary to public health? In that first publication, in 1906, we observe the initial period of Ortiz’s work, characterized by its Lombrosian and Ferrian (after E. Ferri) biological-racial perspective, with a positivist basis,⁴ linked to Spencerian evolutionism, as numerous authors, such as Galván Tudela (1999), have noted. This explains Ortiz’s use of concepts like race, amorality, innate delinquency, atavistic delinquency, etc. Yet Ortiz’s intellectual development would result in a second period in which races are replaced by cultures. In this way, appealing to concepts like “transculturation” and “*cubanía*” or Cubanness, Ortiz arrived at the “*ajiaco*”: a process of constant fermentation in Cuban society throughout its history, as in Palmié’s brilliant analysis (2010: 46–48). Authors such as Drummond (1980), Brandon (1993), and Galván Tudela (1999: 229) had already pointed out that, despite it all, in this second phase Ortiz does not expand on multiethnic relations, in the resistance of various incorporated cultural elements, in the variety of adjustments and exchanges, in the selective processes that those relations generate, nor in

3. At the time, after two centuries of military occupation in Catalonia, the Spanish state still prohibited Catalan universities from offering doctoral courses.

4. Due to the influence of his professor Manuel Sales i Ferré during his doctoral studies in Madrid.

how they are inscribed in the framework of unequal power relations in the global context of the construction of the Cuban national identity. Ibarra (1990: 1340) synthesizes this first publication and Ortiz's first stage in the following terms:

Our compatriot found himself situated within the society he studied, the Cuban one, but the psychic and cultural phenomena of the ethnicities of African origin were appreciated from the ideological universe of white Cuban intellectuality of Spanish origin. The reiterated ethnocentric allusions and the amorality of the religious and social conceptions of the Afro-Cubans, subsequently rectified in the twenties and thirties, reveal the viewpoint from which Ortiz judged the process of transculturation. Being Cuban was not enough to scientifically recognize, through a labor of empathy, the values of the Afro-Cubans themselves. In the first three decades of the 20th century, Ortiz had not yet achieved a superior vision that would permit him to simultaneously integrate, from the "exterior" and from the "interior," the magical world of the Afro-Cubans in its appropriate conceptual system.

Yet once we move beyond the troubling origins of Ortiz's thought, another question arises that has, on the whole, been neglected. Someone surely must have asked—with all possible accuracy, perspicacity, and intellectual depth—if there are any links between Ortiz's intellectual path as it relates to his vision of the construction of the Cuban national identity, and the theoretical and social developments of contemporary Catalanism in the last third of the nineteenth century and first third of the twentieth. This is an exciting line of inquiry that has not yet been explored in depth and that exceeds the objectives and space available for this chapter, but I make note of it now to place it on record. Back in Cuba in the first decades of the twentieth century, Ortiz maintained friendships with Catalan and Catalanist scholars such as Joan Amades, Pere Grases, Pere Bosch i Gimpera, and the Balearic Joan Comas (Díaz 2011: 3). But Ortiz also maintained relationships with spiritists, freemasons, and anarchists, some of them of Catalan origin and as favorable to the independence of Catalonia as they were to that of Cuba. He was in contact, for example, with the Catalan anarchist exiled in Cuba, Adrián del Valle Costa, with whom he translated the work of Mark Raymond Harrington, *Cuba before Columbus*, published in 1935. Ortiz never lost his Menorcan and Catalan roots. On September 11, 1918 (the National

Day of Catalonia, a holiday that commemorates Catalonia's loss of independence to the Franco-Spanish armies in 1714), he held a conference in the Centre Català of Havana entitled "Cuba and Nationalism in Catalonia," of which the Barcelona-based Cuban historian Rodríguez Quintana (2019) has published the following fragments:

I will not offend your culture, nor the culture of anyone who truly feels themselves to be cultured, in my attempt to demonstrate that Catalonia is a nation. Only those who are blinded by envy or spite still deny that Catalonia comprises a unified geography, it possesses a literary and artistic unity; it has its own history, it has its own spirit and as such an indestructible national personality. If all nations have rights, they must also be given to Catalonia. ... I do not know whether sooner or later; I do not know whether inside or outside the political framework of Spain; but I do know, because it is the deduction of the most elementary sociological laws, that Catalonia will gain sole domain over Catalan politics, it will become the master of Catalan destinies, and will one day resume the interaction between its own history and its peculiar language.

Twenty-three years later, on September 11, 1941, he gave a speech entitled "For the Freedoms of Catalonia and Cuba, for the Triumph of Universal Democracy," again in the Centre Català in Havana, while the Spanish state, under the new fascist rule fully established in 1939, carried out a brutal repression. The subjects of Ortiz's relationships and political positions regarding the claims of Catalan national identity have been minimized in historiographical terms, to a certain extent, in Cuba as much as in the Catalan countries, though this would be the subject of a different essay.

When and where does Ortiz's interest in spiritism arise?

According to Ortiz himself, his interest in spiritism was born in Havana when he studied law (1895-1898) and his professor González Lanuza introduced him to the lectures of Allan Kardec. Was this really so? Ortiz had arrived in Ciutadella (Menorca) in 1882 accompanied by his mother Josefa Fernández González (who died in 1906) and his grandmother Rosario González. They were taken in by a maternal cousin of Josefa's, Teresa Cardia González (1851-1901) and her husband, Llorenç Cabrisas

Sastre (1830-1912). Cabrisas had emigrated to Cuba in 1845 where he had worked as a merchant and a soap manufacturer in his Havana factory, La Estrella, before returning definitively to Menorca in 1882. As an *indiano*, a Spanish emigrant who made it rich in the Americas, he participated in the social and political life of the island through the patronage system, for example with the construction of the new Ciutadella Municipal Hospital in 1894. In his palatial residence, which contained a vast library, he hosted military officers, politicians, and musicians, and held piano concerts and chamber music. Young Ortiz lived “in the house of a rich uncle, in a cultured and studious family, with his refined mother. His uncle was the town mayor” (Díaz 2010: 1).⁵ Ortiz lived in this family setting until 1895 (though his relationship with Ciutadella and Menorca would continue until 1901 [Portella 2011]). He learned Catalan—as an adolescent he would write his first two works in Catalan: *Principi i prostes* and *Culecció d’els mal noms de Ciutadella* (Appetizers and desserts, and Collection of the nicknames of Ciutadella). He would bear witness, in the mansion where he lived, to the visits of the person who would become his grade school teacher, the pedagogical reformer Joan Benejam i Vives (1846-1922),⁶ and those of the writer Àngel Ruiz i Pablo (1865-1927) and the archduke Luis Salvador of Hapsburg (1847-1915) (Díaz 2010: 2), whose brother Juan (1852-1890?) was fascinated by occultism.

Ortiz’s intellectual milieu and education during his childhood and adolescence featured Benejam, and later, as a university student in Barcelona (1898-1900) and Madrid (1901), the Valencian, Sales i Ferré (the only sociology professor in Spain at the time), as well as other figures relevant to the field of sociological and pedagogical renewal according to Krausist precepts. Alzina (2010: 4) points to the three main sources of pedagogical renewal in Mallorca and Menorca in the final third of the nineteenth century: republican or “regionalist” bourgeois reformism inspired by the ideas of the Free Institution of Education, propelled by Francisco Giner de los Ríos starting in 1876 (Alexandre Rosselló, Mateu Obrador, and Guillem Cifré de Colonya); the European movement for pedagogical renewal, which advocated for a thorough reform of the

5. Díaz’s information derives from the doctoral thesis of Ellen I. Diggs (1944), who collected Fernando Ortiz’s family memories and facts directly from him.

6. For numerous authors, among them Colom Cañellas (1996: 31), Joan Benejam is the chief representative of the educational renovation in Menorca.

concept and methods of teaching (Miquel Porcel, Gabriel Comas, Joan Benejam, Joan Capó, etc.); and third, workers' initiatives with socialist (Fèlix Mateu i Domeray) or anarchist contents (Joan Mir i Mir), all of them in a context of total Catholic control. This, on a large scale, was the pedagogical world that surrounded Ortiz.

It is important to contextualize Catalan and Balearic spiritism in the nineteenth century in order to determine whether in the circle of adults close to Ortiz we might find, recognize, trace, or confirm any indications or evidence of spiritist connections in the family, social, and cultural environment in which the child became a cultured and "well educated" adolescent. I have proposed from the start a general perspective on the anthropological studies of trance in order to elucidate the emergence of Catalan spiritism in the second half of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, and to illuminate the relationships Ortiz maintained with the social currents in which spiritism and modern pedagogy flourished in Mallorca and Menorca at the time, so as to reveal the connections that Ortiz might have made, one way or another, with the potent spiritist socioreligious movement before settling down in Cuba at the end of his university studies.

Emergence of Catalan spiritism

By means of techniques associated with ecstatic uses of the body, from 1860 to 1939, subaltern sectors of Catalan society handled a set of expressive resources originating in a need that started in the body and ended in the universe. Halfway between the body and the universe there was society, of which a transformation was needed in order to reach the correct destination, under the dizzying name of God or Revolution. What religion could have become that of the dispossessed, if not that of possession—spiritism?

Spiritism was one of the most important socioreligious movements in Western Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. In Catalonia, it played a crucial role in the processes of social modernization arising from the broad spectrum of freethinking, trade unionism, and the political left. As mentioned before, its links with collectivist social projects, the occultist trends which thrived throughout the nineteenth century, and the influence of the sociocultural patterns of several heterodox medieval religious movements, allow us to understand the meaning of the multiplicity of

models which Catalan spiritism appealed to and was nurtured from (Horta 2001).⁷

Eighty years ago, Marcel Mauss established that any bodily manifestation needs to be understood as a social manifestation through which the totality of processes involved in the ideal representation and material constitution of societies is mediated, frequently in conflictual ways, either on an individual or collective scale (Mauss [1937] 1950). Accordingly, one could say that there is no such thing as a “natural” bodily behavior, because the physical body is determined by the social body (Douglas 1970). In the case of Catalan spiritism, the potential for social emancipation was articulated around the body as well, which became a place for the incarnation of new social dynamics. This movement, which spanned from some years before the Sexenni Democràtic (1868-1874) up to the Civil War (1936-1939), should not be understood as a “perversion” of Catholicism, the propagandist work of “mentally unstable people,” or the “agitation” activities of a “conspiratorial” society, which are the three main points of view that usually prevail outside the social sciences when dealing with heterodoxies to which a religious origin is attributed. It should rather be understood as a movement of rationalization, in line with the processes of modernization that were taking place in nineteenth-century industrialized societies (understanding modernization as secularization, politicization, subjectivization, economic and cultural homogenization, etc.). In a context in which legal and formal equality and freedom of economic circulation were strongly demanded, all the aforementioned processes prepared and laid the foundation for the convulsive expansion of capitalism (Weber 1921).

In this context, the spiritist project of rationalization attempted to combine its distinctive value as an integral conceptual system with its goals of individual and collective transformation. Spiritism stood for a project of modernity that went beyond capitalism and advocated social emancipation by ordering the world in every aspect of the experience of daily life, postulating a holistic explanation that encompassed both the terrestrial and celestial order. The holistic and transformative tendency of Catalan spiritism is quite clear: the rationalization of behavior spiritists defended implied what Weber would describe as the substitution of

7. The following pages present the results of research that included the analysis of hundreds of archival primary sources from the Catalan countries—spiritist, but also Catholic, theosophic, and anarchist (Horta 2004, 2016, and 2017).

the “inner submission to customs ... with the planned adaptation to an objective situation of interests” (Weber 1921), that is, the articulation of means, context, and goals based on concrete models from which to give a certain meaning to life and to the world. This meaning stemmed from the everyday needs of wide subaltern sectors of nineteenth-century Catalan society. The issue at stake, then, is to figure out how a strong movement for social change, rooted in the Catalan working class to the point of becoming a truly popular power (Maffesoli 1988),⁸ was based on bodily practices: mediumship.

In 1861, ecclesiastical civil servants in Barcelona burned three hundred spiritist publications illegally smuggled into the country from France. But this *auto-da-fé* only served to increase spiritist presence and popularity in Catalonia. The public circulation of spiritist newspapers and journals was prohibited until 1868, and after 1874 many closures, fines, trials, and exiles followed, which made Catalan spiritism the most harshly repressed in Europe. But the network built during the previous years encompassed an increasingly broader area, which included the translation and publication of spiritist books by the theoretical systematizer of spiritism in Europe, Allan Kardec. The publishing house *Imprenta Espiritista*, which was established in Barcelona by J.M. Fernández—who maintained correspondence with Kardec himself since 1858—published what is likely to be the first Spanish translation of Kardec’s most famous book. The number of reprints of the book is a sign of its wide circulation among Catalan spiritists. The Catholic Church’s self-confidence regarding its monopoly of the sacred began to stagger.

The celebration of the First International Spiritist Congress in Barcelona—at the *Saló Eslava* on *Ronda de Sant Antoni* (September 8-13, 1888) projected the strength of Catalan spiritism on a global level. Catalan, Spanish, French, Belgian, Italian, Russian, Romanian, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Peruvian, Mexican, Venezuelan, Argentinian, and American delegations attended. The topics discussed included the following: the acknowledgment of spiritism as a positive psychological and social science and, at the same time, as a “secular religion”; the vindication of gender equality and the emancipation of women; the promotion of secular education in order to transform society on the basis of charity, reason, justice and law; the need for a prison reform aiming at the social

8. A “blind tool” in the service of “revolutionary causes,” or “satanical” ones, according to the Catholic authorities of the nineteenth century (see *Boletín Oficial Eclesiástico del Obispado de Barcelona* [1863-1899]).

reintegration of prisoners; the complete rejection of war industry; the call for a social, political, and cultural revolution that would originate in the inner self of the individual; the pressing need for cooperativism as a way of organizing production and reconciling the forces of capital and labor, following Jean-Baptiste Godin's Familistère model in France⁹; the need for associationism and mutual aid societies in order to promote material and moral collective welfare; the worldwide abolition of slavery; the gradual elimination of political borders and the gradual disarmament of permanent armies by means of spoken word and the press; the secularization of cemeteries and the introduction of a unified and compulsory birth certificate; the introduction of civil marriage; the abolition of the death penalty and life imprisonment; the role of cosmopolitanism as a guiding principle for social relations; and the promotion of universal communion and solidarity between all beings. The draft of the bylaws for an International Association for Arbitration and Peace aimed at preventing and solving the conflicts between different peoples through dialogue was presented in the congress. Spiritism was literally conceived as a secular, antiauthoritarian, and egalitarian religion, aiming at fostering the superior ideal of the collective good (*Primer Congreso Internacional Espiritista*, 1888).

There is no doubting the Catholic origins of a relevant portion of the spiritist movement, due to the overwhelming control exerted by the Church over people's lives during the first half of the nineteenth century. But migration from the countryside to the city during the second half of the century, and the ensuing gradual loss of control of the faithful by the Church, reinforced the possibility of this transfer from rural Catholicism towards urban spiritism. In the context of the freedom of worship achieved after the 1868 September Revolution, the associations usually categorized as "politico-cultural" blended with those categorized as "religious" (spiritism, freemasonry, and later theosophy). Among the first spiritist propagandists we find well-educated freethinkers (few of them from the upper classes, but with the material means for translating and publishing the initial publications).¹⁰ In participatory assemblies people

9. At the congress, J.F. Miranda presented a project for a Universal Cooperative Association.

10. A parallel can be seen in Quakerism because of the shared projects of social reform and emancipation of women, and because in both cases the assembly became a means and a space of revelation, free from any ritual hierarchization.

established communication with the spirits of the dead, shouted, cried, fell in prostration, and experienced the “inner conversion” of those for whom faith alone could fully explain their own experience, without any mediation by the Catholic bureaucracy. Here the struggle between the “sacred conviction” and the “sacred law” which Max Weber applies to the processes of modernization took place.

Catalan spiritists defended a direct, autonomous and nontransferable experience of transcendence. Here we can glimpse the mark of the gnostic trends of the first centuries of the Christian era. Conceptually, spiritists would be nothing more than an updated reverberation of their core ideas: criticism of the dualism between spirit and matter, and criticism of social injustice and ignorance as a means for oppressing society.

Analysis of thousands of pages from nineteenth- and twentieth-century archival sources on Catalan spiritists shows how, in the heyday of positivism, they accepted the scientific experimental method in order to empirically demonstrate the feasibility of contact between the living and the dead. This was the origin of metapsychical and parapsychological practices, and led spiritists to present themselves, first and foremost, as an “integral and progressive science.” They asserted the infinity of the inhabited worlds, the eternal existence of the spirit, and mediumistic communication as proof of the survival of the human soul beyond physical death. At the same time, they reinterpreted the Bible and other orthodox Christian sources in order to prove their doctrines and thoughts. In fact, spiritists presented themselves as “the contemporary form of the revelation”: if their homeland was the universe (whereas for anarchists it was the world), emancipation had to take place on a universal level, and not only at a social level, as anarchists defended from the 1870 Working Class Congress of Barcelona onwards. Spiritists invited everyone to study and research at their centers so that they could conclude that their claims were correct. Considering the high rate of illiteracy among the working-class population, this implied learning to read and write, and also formulating thoughts and arguments regarding their own problems, thus acquiring the tools for collectively expressing on a deeper level the process of raising an awareness alternative to the dominant classes, in political, economic, and cultural terms, and to the Catholic Church, in religious terms. A network of associations was developed by means of the creation of hundreds of spiritist societies, each one with a library, mutual aid societies, free medical “hypnotic and hydromagnetic” centers, coeducational and secular schools, newspapers, journals, and other

publications in which the working class expressed their voice, and cooperative associations.¹¹

The minor attention of anthropologists and historians to Western spiritism has gone hand in hand with an oversimplification of the reasons that explain its spread throughout Europe and the United States. The following reasons have been asserted: first, it offered an explanation of telepathic phenomena; second, it “demonstrated” the existence of life beyond death; third, it soothed the pain of hardship; fourth, it satiated the human need for salvation; and fifth, it channeled the morbid curiosity towards the unknown through sessions with a medium. Although these are five crucial reasons, an account of spiritism as a system is still lacking. Other key reasons must be mentioned: the importance of healthcare for the popular classes—who could not afford to pay orthodox physicians—through mediumistic intervention or free-of-charge hydromagnetic, hypnotic, or homeopathic centers; the desire felt by many people to know the future, stubbornly determined to contact spirits that would answer their questions through the medium; the demand by subaltern classes for behavioral models, practical guides corresponding to the difficulties and necessities they faced in different aspects of daily life; the fact that women’s lives were under the total control of priests, and that the feminine raising of awareness of the need to break free from this control was parallel to their participation in the spiritist movement on equal grounds with men; the fact that a population excluded from the tools of “high culture”—such as reading and writing, in the nineteenth century—could fulfill its need for knowledge and learn to read and write by joining spiritist centers; the fact that, as workers were learning to read and write, they decided to do so in order to express their place in the world in accordance to their own cultural models, thus affirming themselves as conscious subjects who rejected existing society in order to trigger new social dynamics and transform the status quo; or, finally, the personal and ludic satisfaction obtained through the spiritist social life at the centers, which included reciting poems, commenting on and discussing texts, organizing conferences, and enjoying celebratory parties, dancing, and singing.

The multiple reasons that, in the Catalan case, justify its practice by the subaltern classes rest in its formation as an integral systemic

11. In Rubí (Catalonia), there is a cooperative association that remains in operation to this day which was originally founded and run by the Catalan spiritist center *La Veu de l'Ànima* (The Soul’s Voice), established in 1904.

alternative to nineteenth-century bourgeois and Catholic society. Spiritism represents the irrevocable emergence of a parallel society, the society of the dispossessed, advocating the old egalitarian ideal, which lost so many battles during the nineteenth century due to state repression. The spiritist experience was a cooperative one: men, women, and children gathered together to talk and share thoughts that were not dead, but alive, and which found expression in what were for them material and tangible realities, regardless of whether the scientific character of mediumistic practices was confirmed or not.

Synchronicities

Did spiritism exist in Menorca in the period from 1882 to 1895 when Ortiz lived in Ciutadella? (Or until 1901, the year until which the young student continued visiting the island?) The answer is clearly in the affirmative: we have records of two spiritist centers founded before 1888, the Centro Espiritista in Maó and the Centro Espiritista El Buen Deseo (The Good Wish) in Villa-Carles (Es Castell). Both sent representatives to the previously mentioned First International Spiritist Congress held in Barcelona from September 8-13, 1888. Also, between January 1895 and July 1897, the Spanish language magazine *La Estrella Polar: Revista Espiritista y de Estudios Psicológicos* (The North Star: Spiritist Magazine for Psychological Studies) was published in the town of Maó (Menorca), under the consecutive direction of Francesc Parés Llansó, Pere Ponseti, and Joan Espí i Saranya, who were quickly excommunicated by the Catholic bishop of the diocese. Joan Espí, a spiritist and labor activist, participated alongside the anarchist, spiritist pedagogue, mason, and syndicalist Joan Mir i Mir (1871-1930) in the 1898 founding of the cooperative society El Porvenir del Obrero (The Worker's Destiny) in Maó, which gave the local working class access to consumer products at lower prices. In the spiritist magazine *La Estrella Polar*, I have located two articles by the pedagogue Joan Mir i Mir: "Patriotismo" (1896a) and "Tolerancia" (1896b). Mir later wrote in the republican workers' press (*El Porvenir del Obrero*, publication of the previously mentioned cooperative, and *La Voz de Menorca* [The Voice of Menorca]), and he took part in the group of Menorca pedagogues that, at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, realized the need to reduce the illiteracy rate and make scientific and technical knowledge available to the working class. As indicated by

Alzina (2018), together with pedagogues like Joan Benejam and Gabriel Comas, Joan Mir dedicated his life to struggle for a more rational and thoughtful education.

As regards Joan Benejam, the son of a sailor, we have excellent studies of his existential, social, and pedagogical trajectory (Adroveret al. 1986; Colom Cañellas 1996; Vilafranca 2002a, 2002b; Motilla Sales 2003, 2004). Vilafranca (2002b: 313) remarks that in 1862, Benejam, at the age of sixteen, obtained permission from the rector at the Universitat de Barcelona to study to be a schoolteacher. During the four years he resided in the city, he stayed in the house of his father's friend, Nicolau Flórez Maurant, a "frenzied progressive" who introduced the young Benejam to associationist workers' circles and syndicalist lectures. Certainly, I have not found any explicit mention of spiritism by Benejam in the pedagogical works I have been able to explore, despite the abundant interrelations, proven and sustained, between spiritism—and freemasonry—and the movements for pedagogical renewal that existed at the time in Catalonia as well as in the Balearic Islands (Sánchez i Ferré 1990; Horta 2004; Peñarrubia 2006; Palà Moncusí 2015; Terrassa 2017; Flaquer 2017; Alzina 2018; Marín 2018). A prolific lecturer and participant in innumerable congresses, Benejam published forty books and more than seventy articles in the press, the most noteworthy of which include *La enseñanza racional* (Rational education, 1888-1889); *El buen amigo* (The good friend, 1900-1904); *La escuela y el hogar* (School and home, 1906-1909); and *Alma de maestro* (A teacher's soul, 1915-1916). One should not forget the relation between spiritism and pedagogy was extensive across the Spanish state during the final third of the nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth, until the fascist victory in Spain in 1939. Nonetheless, does the absence of explicit references to spiritism by Benejam mean such relations did not exist? I will present two discoveries that, if I am not mistaken, are revealed here for the first time. The Barcelona spiritist magazine *Revista de Estudios Psicológicos* (Journal of Psychological Studies) 1897, no. 5, which was the first Catalan spiritist periodical, founded in 1869 under the name *Revista Espiritista: Periódico de Estudios Psicológicos* (Spiritist Journal: Periodical of Psychological Studies) reports on the reception of two of Joan Benejam's books in the following way:

Scientific harmonies: Portraits of nature in verse, by Joan Benejam. Library of the La Escuela Prctica, Ciutadella de Menorca. 1 peseta per copy.

The prolific director of La Escuela Práctica [Practical School] and ingenious inventor of the “Didascosmos”—an apparatus no school should go without in order to aid the study of geography—presents this little tome of forty portraits written about cosmogonic, cosmological, biological, botanical, zoological, and anthropological themes, ending with a hymn to the Creator, written in true octave.

The topics dealt with do not lend themselves to tight meter or verse; as such the occasional defect—literarily speaking—that the book suffers can be forgiven, and it is to be supposed that the author compromised in favor of clarity and the brief explanation of the principles he deals with.

The present tome, dedicated to study in primary school, will bear optimal fruits, as its style lends itself to retention, and its foundation is composed of very good teachings.

Our friend Benejam is to be congratulated.

El lazarillo [The guide dog], a children’s comedy in two acts and written in prose, an original work by D. Joan Benejam. This is another of the works that constitute the commendable “Library of La Escuela Práctica,” ably directed by that prolific author.

In a portrait both simple and lamentable, *El lazarillo* offers us the triumph of virtue, the determination and filial affect of a poor worker, over the idleness, the squandering, and the irreverence of one who was pampered by fortune, who in the end recognizes his errors and begins to make himself anew.

We judge it to be most suitable for this work to be used in schools, given the moral lessons it will inculcate among the pupils.

Thirteen years later, the Barcelona spiritist magazine *Luz y Unión* (Light and Union), 1910, no. 7, dedicated a column to celebrate the appearance of another book by Joan Benejam, *El problema educativo* (The educational problem), published in Ciutadella that same year, and from the column it can be gleaned that it was the author himself who sent it to the magazine.

In other words, although we have found no documentary trace of an explicit mention by Joan Benejam—the foremost personage in Ortiz’s formal education on Menorca—regarding spiritism, we have discovered two examples of two very important Catalan spiritist publications that, on different dates (1897 and 1910), disseminated his work. In the first case, the editors of *Revista de Estudios Psicológicos* dedicated an affectionate acknowledgment of Joan Benejam’s work, acclaiming his intellectual

work and referring to him as a “friend.” Could it be a merely instrumental interest on Joan Benejam’s part to publicize his pedagogical work? Could it be a matter of the self-interest of people close to Benejam, from pedagogical or spiritist circles? Whatever the case, it is the first time that this link has been noticed and documented, and it confirms that Benejam and the spiritists reciprocally recognized one another’s existence and works.

Fullana Puigserver (1994: 205) discusses the 1875 creation of a spiritist collective in Palma de Mallorca that regularly received copies of *Revista Espiritista* from Barcelona, and of another spiritist magazine from Alacant, *La Revelación* (The Revelation), founded in 1872. In the realm of Balearic spiritist publications, we know of the existence of one such magazine in Mallorca in 1881, lasting only a brief period of time, *El Espiritismo* (which published articles by, among a great many other authors, the French astronomer Camille Flammarion and the director of the Catalan spiritist magazine *La Luz del Provenir* [The Light of Destiny], Amalia Domingo Soler [Horta, 2004]). In fact, only four issues were published, all during 1881. Among the magazine’s editors we find the already mentioned Fèlix Mateu i Domeray, son of a Mallorcan indiano and a biracial Cuban woman, who came to spiritism from Protestantism (Peñarrubia 2006: 183), and was a founder, together with the republican Ignasi Cortacans, of the *Unió Obrera Balear* (UOB or Balearic Workers’ Union), a political, syndicalist, and cultural entity with a socialist tendency (Flaquer 2017). Fèlix Mateu also directed a publication with the same name (1882–1886) and founded the newspaper *La Voz del Pueblo* (The Voice of the People). In those days, the upper echelons of the Catholic Church in Mallorca and Menorca already denounced the dissemination of spiritist publications from Barcelona and Alacant in the Balearic Islands (Terrassa 2017: 64). As such, it is a documented fact (Peñarrubia 2006: 172, 179) that the fundamentalist sectors of the Catholic Church of Mallorca vehemently attacked Fèlix Mateu in their paper *El Àncora* (The Anchor) over his connections to spiritism, freemasonry, federalist republicanism, and socialism, as well as for his attempts to encourage the feminist movement of Mallorca. In turn, the reciprocal support between Catalan and Mallorcan spiritism has been confirmed in the person of the already mentioned Amalia Domingo Soler, a chief proponent of secular education—free and with mixed-gender classes—and of the literacy campaigns that spiritists and freethinking pedagogues carried out in those times.

In the socioreligious, political, and cultural context of Menorca in the second half of the nineteenth century, one must emphasize the

important presence of freemasonry, well organized in numerous lodges, as pointed out by Morales (1995) and Sanllorente (1998). In Ciutadella, there were two: Hijos de la Patria (Sons of the Fatherland, whose Worshipful Master was Vicent Marquès i Monjo) and Torre de Babel (Tower of Babel, whose Worshipful Master was Josep Robert); in Villa-Carles (Es Castell), there was one, Kadmon; and in Maó, twelve, Amigos de la Humanidad (Friends of Humanity), La Alianza Fraternal (The Fraternal Alliance), Hijos de Ruth (Sons of Ruth), El Mallete (The Mallet), Asela, Hermanos de la Humanidad (Brothers of Humanity), Triángulo (Triangle), Justicia (Justice), Carmona, La Creación (Creation), Karma, and Concordia (Concord). The substantial figure of three thousand active freemasons is mentioned for Menorca alone in the period from 1870-1890. Later, many freemasons would abandon their organization to join republican and progressive athenaeums or social centers, given that at the time, Spain was ruled by the deeply totalitarian monarchical regime of the Bourbon kings. As for Mallorca, the presence of eight lodges has been documented in the towns of Palma (6), Lluçmajor (1), and Manacor (1).

The origins of freemasonry in Menorca date back to the eighteenth century and come from the British presence on the island (Morales 1995). After that it experienced a gradual growth, especially during the Sexenio Democrático (the brief democratic period spanning 1868-1874). Morales (1995) explains how the newspaper *El Menorquín* (The Menorcan) of Maó, in its August 17, 1870 edition, referred to an event held by the Amigos de la Humanidad lodge on the 11th, 12th, and 13th of that month, which was attended by 870, 1,954, and 3,435 people, respectively. The situation in Ciutadella, where Ortiz lived, was distinct, given that the lack of freethinking journalistic media and the intense implantation of Catholicism in the dominant social fabric implied tough social control over the associative spectrum that converged in the broad field of freethinking (spiritists, masons, republicans, organized workers, etc.).

Another connection between the freethinking and politically leftist popular milieus of Ciutadella and spiritism is the result of the link between this town (situated on the west of Menorca, closest to Mallorca) and the Mallorcan town of Capdepera, just a few kilometers over sea to the west. In effect, the fishing village of Capdepera—on Mallorca's extreme eastern edge—was one of the most noteworthy nuclei of Mallorcan and Balearic spiritism at the end of the nineteenth century. Terrassa (2017) splendidly traces the origins of the *gabellí* (meaning, of Capdepera) spiritist movement and its sustained, extensive, and intense

transformative social action starting in the 1870s: the organization of the mutualist workers' societies El Auxilio Mútuo (Mutual Aid) and La Palmera (The Palm Tree), syndical combat through the Unió Obrera Balear, struggle for civil marriages and secular, mixed-gender, and free education, the self-organization of the women of Capdepera and the boosting of the Agrupació Socialista Femenina (Feminine Socialist Association), a secular reformulation of leisure time with the introduction of the first modern dances, anticlericalism, and an anti-ritual rebuttal (from a Protestant basis) of the Catholic Church. Terrassa's work demonstrates the connections between spiritists on the different Balearic Islands—frequently through maritime traffic—and between spiritists on the Balearic Islands, Catalunya, the Valencian country, and the island of Sardinia. In fact, the role of the French spiritist publisher Maurice Lachâtre (1814-1900) in setting up a distribution axis for spiritist publications in the form of the triangle between Paris, Barcelona, and València, has already been shown (Horta 2004).

Lachâtre, a writer and philologist—*Histoire des papes* (History of the popes), published in 1843 in ten volumes and destroyed in 1869 by judicial order; *La republique démocratique et sociale* (The social and democratic republic), published in 1849; and the *Nouveau dictionnaire française illustré* (New illustrated French dictionary), 1865-1870, considered the largest encyclopedia of its day—set himself up in Paris as a publisher. In 1855 he was fined and sentenced to a year in prison for publishing *Les mystères de peuple* (The mysteries of the people), by Eugène Sué; in 1856 the French authorities again sentenced him, this time to five years in prison for publishing the *Dictionnaire française illustré*. Lachâtre evaded the law and fled to Barcelona, where he set himself up as a bookseller (he did not return to Paris until 1871, when he went to join the uprising of the the Commune, and he remained in the French capital after he was amnestied).

Returning to the Menorcan spiritists, the amount of public support that the spiritist activists associated with *La Estrella Polar* in Maó expressed in defense of the Catalan priest Jacint Verdaguer, accused of being a spiritist by the ecclesiastic Catholic hierarchy of Barcelona in 1895, is remarkable (Horta 2002). Verdaguer was one of many visitors, some heterodox, whom Luis Salvador of Hapsburg received in his Miramar estate in Deià. The archduke first discovered Mallorca in 1867 and established residence on the island in 1872. His knowledge of the Balearic Islands is reflected in the seven volumes of *Die Balearen in Wort und Bild geschildert* (The Balearic Islands described in word and picture),

published in Leipzig between 1869 and 1884. Mallorca became his second home, and he would write three volumes in Catalan, one of them a compilation of Mallorcan *rondalles*, folktales that he collected orally (*Rondalles de Mallorca*, 1895).

What might have been the resonance of all this hubbub of spiritist blossomings and proclamations in the household of the young Ortiz? As has been stated, we know that one of the adult visitors to the residence was the writer Àngel Ruiz i Pablo, who complained in one of his books (*Doce días en Mallorca: Impresiones de un viaje en 1892* [Twelve days in Mallorca: Impressions of a journey in 1892]) that Mallorcan painters in those days, instead of painting the bodies of saints and virgins, painted spirits (Terrassa 2017: 56).

Can it be doubted that spiritist disquisitions were featured in the social gatherings that Ortiz must have been party to in the house in Ciutadella? Of course it is uncertain, but it is improbable that across so many years, the topic of spiritism did not appear in conversation at least a few times.

We have referred in earlier pages to the First International Spiritist Congress held in Barcelona in 1888. Did Cuban and Menorcan spiritist delegations participate? Indeed, they did. The minutes of the Congress (*Primer Congreso Internacional Espiritista. Septiembre 1888 Barcelona*, 1888: 64, 67-68, 75, 174-175, and 207-208) attest to the presence of representatives from both places.

Nonetheless, it is necessary to first ask if Kardecian spiritism existed in Cuba at the time. The answer is clearly affirmative: in the last third of the nineteenth century, there were centers and publications in multiple towns on the island. Yet the existence of spiritism in Cuba does not invalidate the ascertainment of customs derived from the classificatory schemes that young Ortiz promoted when distinguishing this philosophical and positivist spiritism, originating in France and the United States, from the concepts, organizations and activities of Cuban subaltern actors descended from slaves and practicing socioreligious forms of African origins.

If I have cited Palmié (2002) and Román (2007) multiple times, it is due to the incisiveness with which they explain the customs, superpositions, reciprocal influences, and the bridges and gulfs between the two social worlds. And here it becomes necessary to specify, once more, that inside the borders of Kardecian spiritism (whatever they may be), the dimensions of class and gender become decisive for unraveling its social development in empirical (political, economic, cultural) and theoretical

terms. It is not my goal here to review earlier studies, but to establish the effective existence of a Kardecist spiritism in Cuba, whose presence was already denounced, in 1874, by the director of the *Revista Católica* of Cuba, Eduardo Llanas (1874: 542-45). Llanas characterized the Cuban spiritists as children of the wealthy urban classes on the island, in contrast to the protagonists of the influences, confluences, and refluxes of African origin, practiced in a rural environment by the subaltern classes (Lago Vieito 2002: 28-31). There is also the following account by Hernández Aponte (2015: 228, 231) regarding the public denunciations by the Catholic Church in those years:

On April 10, 1875, Father Benigno Merino y Mendi, chief vicar and governor of the bishopric of San Cristóbal de La Habana while the seat was vacant, emitted a pastoral letter against spiritism. On March 18, 1881, the Archbishop of Cuba also sent out a pastoral letter against the doctrine. On February 27, 1884, another one against the newspapers that propagated it. On June 5, 1888, the bishop of Havana expressed his concern over spiritism and its attacks on Catholicism. ...

On October 15, 1885, the bishops of the ecclesiastical province of Santiago de Cuba emitted a pastoral letter in which they repudiated spiritism.

Concerning the sources of this Cuban spiritism, two basic origins have been suggested: while Martín (1930) proposes that Cuban spiritism came from the United States, Basulto Paz (1938) defends the France-Spain-Cuba trajectory and emphasizes the relevance of the Spanish language in this circuit of transmission (with the first works published in Spanish in Andalusia and Catalonia already in the 1850s and 1860s, almost in parallel to the publishing output of Allan Kardec). González García and Ortega Suárez (2001), among others, identify Catalan émigrés to Cuba as responsible parties for the arrival of Kardecian spiritism on the island in the second half of the nineteenth century. This is a perfectly feasible hypothesis and in fact there are Catalan last names among the Cuban spiritists of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries.

Returning to the First International Spiritist Congress in Barcelona in 1888, the Cuban delegation was the third largest. There is documentation of representation for the Centro La Reencarnación (Reincarnation) from Havana, Centro El Salvador (The Savior) from Sagua La Grande, the Spiritist Society of Matanzas, Centro Lazo Unión (Bond

and Union) from Cienfuegos, and Centro San Pablo (Saint Paul) from Malpáez, five in total (*Primer Congreso Internacional Espiritista: Septiembre 1888 Barcelona* 1888: 64). Cuban spiritist publications present at the Congress comprised *La Buena Nueva* (Good News, a magazine founded in 1886 in Santi Espiritu), *La Nueva Alianza* (The New Alliance, 1888), and *La Alborada* (Daybreak, 1888, in Sagua la Grande).

Starting in 1857, the first nuclei of modern spiritism in Cuba arose in Havana, Sagua la Grande, Colón, Matanzas, Santi Espiritu, Manzanillo, Caibarien, and Santiago de Cuba (Castillo 2005: 22). And the first spiritist publications appeared starting in 1874: *La Luz de Ultratumba* (Light from Beyond the Grave, 1874), *La Ilustración* (Enlightenment, 1878), *Luz de los Espacios* (Light from Space, 1881), *La Antorcha de los Espíritus* (The Torch of the Spirits, 1882), *El Buen Deseo* (The Good Wish, 1884), *Luz del Evangelio* (Light of the Gospel, 1885), and the three already cited at the 1888 Congress.

The Cuban delegates in Barcelona were Eulogio Prieto (property owner, merchant, and president of Centro El Salvador, who served as one of the secretaries of the Congress); Tomás de Oña (property owner and merchant, ex-president of Centro El Salvador); and Juan J. Garay (publicist and director of the spiritist magazine *La Alborada* from Sagua la Grande) (*Primer Congreso Internacional Espiritista: Septiembre 1888 Barcelona* 1888: 71). Cuban spiritist activists participating in an individual capacity were Mariano Martín, primary school teacher from Sagua la Grande; Jesús Lorenzo Díaz, a merchant from Sagua la Grande; José R. Montalvo, also a primary school teacher from Sagua la Grande; Hilario Aldaz, merchant and secretary of Centro El Salvador in Sagua la Grande; Celestino Puente and Nicolás López, merchants, from Centro El Salvador in Sagua la Grande; Jaime A. Bonet, doctor, from the same center; Dolores Bonet, the only woman, from the same center and with no recorded profession; the industrialists José Aboal and Francisco Cabrera, from the same center; S. Tro, infantry lieutenant, from the same center; S. Juno, mechanic and vice president of, once again, Centro El Salvador in Sagua la Grande; Miguel A. Chomat, lawyer, ex-president of Centro La Reencarnación in Havana; Justo Muñoz y Montoya, employee, from the same center; José Lorenzo Díaz, property owner from Rauducelo; Eulogio Horta, writer, columnist, publicist, and translator of Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Mallarmé, from the Centro Lazo Unión in Cienfuegos; Eustaquio Delgado, property owner from Santo Domingo; the civil servants Doroteo Valle, from Guanabacoa, and J. Quintana, from Havana; and Teodoro Venero, from Havana (*Primer Congreso*

Internacional Espiritista: Septiembre 1888 Barcelona 1888: 207-208). Clearly, what we have is an extremely masculine representation from Cuba's wealthy classes practicing Kardecist spiritism, though there also were popular sectors originating in immigration from Europe, basically Catalan and Spanish. The Cuban delegation was one of the largest at the Congress, the minutes of which (*Primer Congreso Internacional Espiritista. Septiembre 1888 Barcelona* 1888: 175) record the end of Eulogio Prieto's opening remarks, with the final words:

... receive this fraternal embrace for your initiative and the brilliant success achieved by this First International Spiritist Congress, a pick-axe that will demolish the fanaticism and ignorance of the people.

Inspired and firmly convinced that in a day not far off, light will shine all over the earth, we continue to march forward, waving Spiritism's glorious banner and its comforting doctrines [*heartily applause*].

Two years later, in 1890, the Spiritist Society of the Island of Cuba was founded, unifying twenty-three associations (those of Matanzas and Oriente were unable to participate).

As for the Menorcan delegation, we have record of the presence of the Centro de Instrucción Espiritista (Center of Spiritist Teaching) of Maó and the Centro Espiritista El Buen Deseo of Es Castell, though no proof has been found of the physical presence of Menorcan spiritists amongst the delegations to the Barcelona congress of 1888.

Fernando Ortiz (1914): "I am not a spiritist"

At this point, I suppose it has become clear that the intention of this chapter is not to sketch the parallels between the criminological spiritism of Kardec and Lombroso and that proposed by Ortiz, nor to delve into the origins of Cuban spiritism, nor to trace the paths that, once in Cuba, led Ortiz to his studies. My initial desire was to search for direct connections between the field of Balearic and Catalan spiritist thought and activism and the young Ortiz. In this sense, the current text may constitute a tremendous failure: the evidence is suggestive, but no more than that. Despite it all, I would like to underscore that Ortiz's *La filosofía penal de los espiritistas*, dedicated to the criminologist and Italian spiritist Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909), begins with the sentence quoted in the section heading above, "I am not a spiritist" (Ortiz [1914] 2012: 11). The

Cuban anthropologist continues by affirming that he does not believe in the intangibility of dogmatism even when it is called “scientific” and then writes: “reason, which distanced me from other religious creeds that terrorized my childhood, has impeded me from abandoning that of the spiritists, despite the sweetness of its mystique and the suggestive progress of its religious idea” (“Neither am I Catholic,” he assures later on).

However, let us reread his words: “reason, which distanced me from other religious creeds that terrorized my childhood, has impeded me from abandoning that of the spiritists.” When I read this I understood that I had set off down the wrong path, regardless of Ortiz’s confession with regards to his immersion in spiritism. Take note: Ortiz’s immediate family was comprised of his mother, Josefa Fernández González, Josefa’s maternal cousin, Teresa Cardia González (who, as an active participant in the religious life of Ciutadella, gave an image of Saint Theresa to the Carmelite nuns, and whose husband sponsored numerous religious events [see the bibliography: unknown author, date unknown]), and Teresa’s husband, Llorenç Cabrisas Sastre, who did not have any known connections to spiritism but took part in educational projects with Benejam (Díaz 2010: 2). And among the assiduous visitors to their residence, we can find figures like Joan Benejam i Vives, formally unconnected to spiritism except perhaps for the mailing of his own works to Catalan spiritist magazines; Àngel Pablo i Ruiz, a fervent anti-spiritist; and Luis Salvador of Hapsburg, who gave refuge to Jacint Verdaguer—accused of practicing spiritism—in his mansion, and whose brother, Juan, was interested in the occult. Certainly, Ortiz’s first daughter with Esther Cabrera—herself the daughter of the reputable Cuban intellectual Raimundo Cabrera (1852-1923)—whom he married in 1908, was named Isis, a prototypical name in the Western occultist world of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

So when Ortiz refers to “other religious creeds,” that can only be interpreted as a reference to the Catholic education practiced both in the school in Ciutadella where he studied and in the other educational center, the seminary, with students of both places being acquainted and meeting frequently. What’s more, the dominant—even suffocating—socio-religious atmosphere in Ciutadella at the time was directly of a Catholic root, and had been for centuries. Appealing to reason in the face of dogmatism, as Ortiz did, is precisely a founding principle of the spiritism of the nineteenth century on a global scale: here we find the “sweetness of its mystique” and “the suggestive progress of its religious idea.” It is possible, then, that Ortiz learned of spiritism from its

detractors, in his family environment as well as in his education. It is also possible that persons like Joan Benejam or Luis Salvador of Hapsburg might have acted as a counterweight to the Catholic vision of spiritism that he would have been taught, first in his family environment (principally through his mother and aunt), secondly from the conservative perspective of Àngel Pablo i Ruiz, and thirdly by his school teachers. It is true that we are only dealing with possibilities, but we do so because they are completely plausible.

In the section, “Object of this study,” which serves as the introduction to *La filosofía penal de los espiritistas*, Ortiz clarifies his intention that the following pages should not appear to be:

the work of a sectarian, nor that of a propagandist, nor that of a fanaticized contrarian, but rather [as] a serene and cold labor that attempts to objectively reflect observations and conclusions obtained by analyzing, from the point of view of criminology or penal philosophy, one of the most suggestive and widely divulged modern religious philosophies. (Ortiz [1914] 2012: 12)

Further on, Ortiz locates this explanation in his will to champion “the study of criminological principles that the history of religions have discovered through the evolution of the religious idea,” which is to say, he proposes to address his research to the right of punishment enjoyed by the gods, and the purpose of the suffering they inflict, and their penitentiary methods, in the mode of a *theological criminology* that covers the whole time and space of human societies, as a complement to the study of their institutions and penal codes. The Cuban anthropologist is perfectly conscious of the grand spiritist paradox as a “reasoned and experimental” religion: at the same time that spiritism denies the prevailing materialism, it becomes the user of its technology, or, in other words, it champions scientific positivism as a means to knowledge. Hence the interpretation that he carries out (ibid.: 13) regarding the fact that in Allan Kardec’s work one finds many of the principles that will later orient contemporary criminology: the penal materialism of criminologists of the time, principally Cesare Lombroso, established basic questions that were already entertained by “antithetical spiritualism.” Ortiz asks himself if philosophy might not be able to discover more transcendental coincidences between spiritism and penal criminology, to the extent that the conversation around punishment is inherent to the conversation on good and evil. And he concludes: “spiritism’s criminological aspect is

sufficiently curious to merit the effort” (ibid.: 13). Can anyone doubt that Ortiz was deeply familiar with the work of Allan Kardec? *La filosofía penal de los espiritistas* constitutes an authentic, solid explanatory and analytical treatise on Kardecian spiritism.

All of this leads to various points of interest in relation to Ortiz’s intellectual trajectory. Díaz Quiñones (1998: 175-92) speaks of the intellectual *beginnings* of Ortiz—a reference to Edward Said’s *beginnings*—even if he completely omits the basis of Ortiz’s formal education in Menorca. Nonetheless, Díaz Quiñones (ibid.: 183) logically refers to the explanation Ortiz gave for his interest in spiritism (Ortiz [1914] 2012: 7-8; published originally in the *Revista Bimestre Cubana* 9: 30). There, Ortiz recounts how his initial immersion in spiritism came about in the period he studied criminal law at the Universidad de La Habana (1895-1898), when he added to his formal academic lectures those held by the professor José Antonio González Lanuza (1865-1917), who placed a special emphasis on Allan Kardec. Thus, Ortiz confronts the criminological studies of those who would become his teachers in Genoa in 1902, Cesare Lombroso and Enrico Ferri, with the Kardecian hypothesis of the transmigration of souls. Here we see the full quote:

Already one score years ago [that is to say, 1895-1896], when in the halls of my beloved Universidad de La Habana I studied Criminal Law, the course with Prof. González Lanuza—then the most scientific of the Spanish domains—initiated me in the ideas of criminological positivism, and complemented these scholarly lectures with works quite alien to the university, which he simply put at my disposal or that my investigative curiosity sought out with a fervor.

Among these were religious lectures, which then as now gave me a special delight and awoke in my soul a singular interest. It was then that I discovered the fundamental books of spiritism, written by Hippolyte-Léon Rivail, or Allan Kardec, as he liked to call himself, reviving the name with which, according to him, he was known during a prior incarnation in Druidic times.

Given the simultaneity of my university studies on criminology and my happenstance philosophical studies on the spiritist doctrine, the enthusiasm that Lombrosian and Ferrian theories on criminality awoke in me led me to specifically investigate how that interesting French philosopher, who dared to present himself as a reincarnated druid, thought about the same penal problems. (Ortiz, *Revista Bimestre Cubana* 9 [1914]: 30, cited in Díaz Quiñones [1998: 183])

At no point in his life does Ortiz refer to his childhood and adolescence in Menorca to situate the origins of his interest in spiritism, nor does he even refer to his experience in Barcelona—at which university, in 1894, the rector initiated an expulsion hearing against the spiritist professor Manuel Sanz Benito, tenured in Metaphysics and of Krausian influence (Palà 2015: 99, 142). We will never know with certainty whether it was necessary for Ortiz to justify his intellectual exploration of spiritism on the basis of the intellectual development inherent in the academic environment, in this case Cuban, and whether this required him to turn the page on what he experienced in his family life or as a primary student in Ciutadella. In this sense, perhaps this chapter proves to be completely devoid of positive results. Even so, if anything should be considered well established regarding Ortiz, then whether he knew it or not, he was surrounded by spiritists everywhere and at all times. Another fact that must be considered is that, according to Ortiz's own account, when in 1898 he moved to Barcelona to continue his law studies, he knew perfectly well what spiritism was, and Barcelona at that time incarnated the explosive heterogeneity of spiritist activism in the most intensive way. In sum, I find it difficult to negate the possibility that he would have come into contact with spiritists, more so when we recall that his own tutor, Joan Benejam, maintained relations, at least epistolary ones, with the spiritists of Barcelona.

Díaz Quiñones (1998) establishes the genealogical origin of the concept of transculturation, associating it with the spiritist concept of the transmigration of souls. It is not the objective of the present chapter to discuss this suggestion. But we can interrogate the motives for which, in Díaz Quiñones's account, spiritism is subjected to a political judgment for its hierarchical understanding of progress and race (which Román 2001 also echoes). Ironically, this is a judgment which at no moment is also applied to the evolutionist anthropology of the time for its unilineal conception of progress. Once again we see the paradoxes of an anthropological discipline that in the nineteenth century turned to the concept of culture as an explanatory source for the heterogeneity of human societies, rejecting the racial explanation, yet was not averse to appealing, in specific cases, to essentializing uses of the concept of race.

On April 7, 1919, Ortiz was invited to the Teatro Payret in Havana by the Sociedad Espiritista de Cuba. There he gave a lecture entitled "The Phases of Religious Evolution," in which he affirmed: "Spiritists! One who does not participate in your mysticism serenely tells you: You are faithful to a sublime faith! You may be those who with the greatest

purity approach the ideal of marching towards God for love and for science!” (Ortiz 1919: 80). It is worth remembering that the spiritist acceptance of this slogan goes back a long way: we can find the same words in the celebration of the First International Spiritist Congress of 1888 (1888: 66), in which spiritism is presented as a “great stage ... in the pageant of human development, to which it will contribute more than any other philosophical or religious idea, as it proclaims its fundamental slogan, *Towards God for Love and for Science*.” The Catalan spiritist magazine *La Unión Espiritista* (The Spiritist Union), founded in Barcelona in October 1896 and published by the Centro Barcelonés de Estudios Psicológicos (Barcelona Center for Psychological Studies) printed on its masthead, “Towards God for Love and for Science.” As pointed out by Ramírez Calzadilla (2003: 14), in his lecture at the Teatro Payret Ortiz affirmed something he would repeat again and again throughout his work: his conception of spiritism as a “pretension of being the faith in the future, based in science.” A year later, in 1920, the First National Spiritist Congress of Cuba would be held in the very same Teatro Payret, with the participation of 562 delegates, 113 spiritist centers, and 336 attendees in a personal capacity (Castillo 2005: 24).

Conclusions

Throughout his life in Cuba, Fernando Ortiz fraternized with a heterogeneous spectrum of people who professed all sorts of ideological practices and formulations, including socioreligious ones. We have not been able to respond to the question of whether his knowledge of spiritism really originated in the period between 1895 and 1898 when he studied at the Universidad de La Habana, as he himself claims, or if it is in fact earlier and dates to his childhood in Menorca. It is possible that, in a milieu populated with spiritists, in Menorca as in Barcelona (and in Paris, where he lived in 1905), these connections would have taken place one way or another. I have looked for signs, enunciations, tracks, and traces of these connections to my fullest ability, and perhaps we should momentarily adopt as our own Palmié’s assertion (2010: 33): “Don Fernando remains every bit as ambiguous in the silence of death as he was throughout his vociferous life.”

And if it had all begun to take shape when he was fourteen years old in Ciutadella, with Ortiz’s reading of that novel about Paris, its mysteries and catacombs, that he found in his mother’s library? The book led him

to write a story full of “deaths and intrigues,” as Díaz (2010: 3) would write, following Diggs (1944). Might it have been *Les mystères de Paris* by Eugène Sue (1843)? The gritty underworld, physical and moral misery, goodness, evil, redemption, and social critique... And the *Revue Spiritiste* of 1861, which echoed Sue’s novel. And Eugène Sue himself, like Victor Hugo, George Sand, Honoré de Balzac, and so many other members of the Académie Française, visiting the salon of Madame Delphine de Girard, who acted in so many such cases as the gateway to spiritist practice in Paris in the mid-nineteenth century (Horta 2004: 29).

Perhaps.

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A network of networks

Fernando Ortiz, crossroad between cultures

Consuelo Naranjo Orovio

The Spanish-American intellectual community at the beginning of the twentieth century

My research fits within studies of intellectual networks that have, at times, led to academic structures. These networks gave rise to further, new networks, and to sustained discourses that nourished a national, regional, and Latin American identity. In many cases, individual volition and personal contacts are the origin of these networks, encouraging exchanges of correspondence. Sometimes, institutions gathered up these initiatives and brought them together into shared efforts that generated common projects.

A network was slowly woven together, one that aspired to Latin American unity through shared culture, and which took shape in correspondence full of news, projects, and ambitions. The idea of intellectual networks has been used by other authors, such as Eduardo Devés-Valdés, who defines such a network as “a group of people engaged in intellectual activities who contact each other, get to know each other, exchange work, write to each other, develop joint projects, improve communication channels and, most importantly, establish bonds

of mutual trust” (Devés-Valdés 2007: 30).¹ Therefore, when I refer to networks I mean the reciprocal relations between people over a long period of their lives, carried out in correspondence, ideas, experiences, meetings, congresses, publications, projects, and institutions. All of these, in these instances, contributed to building and strengthening the network(s). In other words, we are looking at a map of polycentric and interwoven, national, transnational, and transatlantic networks in which some agents were nodes of an intellectual community. This study of such networks in and beyond Latin America is based on written correspondence that allows us to go back to the origin of some institutions, journals, and book collections, and that encouraged relationships and led to the emergence of new ones. Through such epistolary study, we can trace the intellectual connections and the cultural fabric that was created. The letters contain the agreements, discrepancies, and logical tensions within the networks that led to disagreements and ruptures, and the abandonment and appearance of new spaces of communication and collaboration (Pita 2017: 44).

As part of an intellectual community, intellectuals were able to generate forms of action, institutions, and materials that aimed at contributing to their countries’ regeneration. What is more, they were agents of Hispanic Americanism. All of them, united by the idea of culture and education as the ultimate goals of their work, were enriched by their different experiences of travel and periods of residence in various American and European countries. They were connected by their interests in researching, educating, and disseminating. Therefore, with their research, classes, and conferences, they built transatlantic bridges and developed new ways of thinking and of understanding culture and cultures, with both their own and shared characteristics (Abellán 2005, 2007; Naranjo Orovio and Puig-Samper 2002).

A trust in the idea that civilization (understood as a shared culture) was one of the main instruments of regeneration prevailed in these intellectuals’ work, many of them being Arielists.² Hailing from diverse

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1. “el conjunto de personas ocupadas en los quehaceres del intelecto que se contactan, se conocen, intercambian trabajos, se escriben, elaboran proyectos comunes, mejoran los canales de comunicación y, sobre todo, establecen lazos de confianza recíproca.”
 2. José Rodó Enrique was one of the most important Latin American intellectuals of the early twentieth century. In *Ariel*, the most popular of his books, published in 1900, he argued that Latin America had its own

American and Spanish settings, they agreed that regeneration and modernization were some of the primary goals they sought to achieve, and that education was the most appropriate way to do so. Those who thought education was the underpinning that would encourage change raised their voices from Spain to America, supporting a shared culture and promoting dialogue among Hispanic Americans and between them and Spaniards based on new content and projects. According to Pedro Henríquez Ureña, a civilizing ideal and cultural unity were the foundations for building *Nuestra America*:

Our America must affirm its faith in its destiny in the future of civilization Let us expand the spiritual field: let us give the alphabet to all men; let us give each one the best tools to work for the good of all; let us make the effort to approach social justice and true freedom; let us move forward, finally, towards our utopia.³ (Pérez 2010, CXIV [158]: 160)

Writing from Cuba in 1913, Fernando Ortiz encouraged establishing a dialogue based on culture and civilization:

And this is what Spain had to do, bring us culture, a great deal of it, because when Spain reigns due to its culture and the scientific genius of its new men, then, yes, all of America will be genuinely Spanish, even the one that speaks English, because at the present time civilization is what unites peoples, moves races, breaks up continents, amalgamates the faithful of different religions, spreads all languages, and gives life, gives hope and future.

Without an intense and dominant civilization, race is a true armor without a warrior to pull it along; language, a mouth without a tongue to encourage it; religion, a bell without a clapper Culture for all, otherwise we would continue in this macabre spectacle

culture and thought, different from the values of Anglo-Saxon culture. The Latin American intellectuals who followed his ideas were known as *Arielistas* (Rodó 1900).

3. “Nuestra América debe afirmar la fe en su destino en el porvenir de la civilización Ensanchemos el campo espiritual: demos el alfabeto a todos los hombres; demos a cada uno los instrumentos mejores para trabajar en bien de todos; esforcémonos por acercarnos a la justicia social y a la libertad verdadera; avancemos, en fin, hacia nuestra utopía.”

of ambitions and nullities, of spite and arbitrariness surrounding a dying nationality.⁴ (Ortiz 1913: 187-88)

Like other intellectuals, Ortiz was critical of the lack of interest in culture and education that existed in Cuba. In response to this, he confessed, in a letter sent to his friend José María Chacón y Calvo on December 27, 1922, that in order to evade the present, he took refuge in the study of the past, and worried that if illiteracy continued to prevail, Cuba was heading towards an abyss. The same skeptical and pessimistic tone appears in the letter he sent to Chacón y Calvo on May 23, 1923 (Gutiérrez-Vega 1982: 30-31). Notwithstanding these intimate confessions, Ortiz kept his faith in culture and maintained his desire to cooperate with other countries throughout his life. His scholarly work is the expression of such faith and desire, and of a spirit that encouraged unity based on his broad conception of culture and his integrated idea of nationhood. In 1928 Ortiz wrote “the man who has nothing to learn from another country is an ignorant man who is not prepared to receive the mental nuances that each people has as its own, inherent in its personality.”⁵

Intellectuals like Ortiz, who shared the idea that culture would be the starting point for encounters, developed projects promoted by economic sectors, institutions, and universities and were supported by Latin American and Spanish ones such as the Universidad de Puerto Rico (University

4. “Y esto es lo que debía hacer España, traernos cultura, mucha cultura, porque cuando España impere por su cultura y por el genio científico de sus hombres nuevos, entonces, entonces sí, la América entera será verdaderamente española, hasta la que hable inglés, porque en los tiempos que corremos la civilización es la que une á los pueblos, la que mueve a las razas, la que rompe los continentes, la que amalgama fieles de religión distinta, la que difunde todos los idiomas la que da vida, la que da esperanza y porvenir.

Sin civilización intensa y dominante, la raza es una verdadera armadura sin guerrero que la arrastre; el idioma, una boca sin lengua que la anime; la religión, una campana sin badajo.... Cultura para todos, so pena de seguir en esta farándula macabra de ambiciones y de nulidades, de despechos y de arbitrariedades alrededor de la nacionalidad agonizante.”

5. “el hombre que nada tiene que aprender de otro país, es el hombre ignorante que no está preparado para recibir los matices mentales que tiene cada pueblo como cosa propia, constitutiva de su personalidad.” Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, Havana (BNJM), Colección de Manuscritos (CM) Ortiz, Folder 259.

of Puerto Rico), the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Buenos Aires (School of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Buenos Aires), the Instituto de Filología de la Universidad de Buenos Aires (Institute of Philology of the University of Buenos Aires, created in 1923), and the cultural institutions founded in Buenos Aires (1914), Montevideo (1918), Mexico (1925), Havana (1926), San Juan de Puerto Rico (1928), and La Paz, Bolivia (1931). In Spain, the Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas (JAE), founded in 1907, was the main institution in charge of educational and scientific renewal. Several research institutes that were created during these years depended on this institution. One of them was the Centro de Estudios Históricos (Center for Historical Studies) in Madrid. Its founding in 1910 coincided with the enactment of the Real Orden (Royal Decree) of April 16 1910, which entrusted the JAE with the promotion of Latin American relations. This ambitious project of exchange and cultural promotion fell in part on the Centro de Estudios Históricos (López Sánchez 2006).

These institutions promoted a dialogue based on new ways of viewing and understanding each other, and shared common goals, like cultural extension and bibliographic and educational exchange. These were solid platforms of rapprochement which generated other crossed and connected networks (Naranjo Orovio 2007).

An integrating ideal through education and culture

The intellectuals who were part of this intellectual community in Latin America and Spain were convinced that culture was the key element for society's progress, along with its role in fostering dialogue between peoples. With regard to Latin America, culture was also the thread weaving a web that crafted unity for the Latin American world. This was a unity arising from the diversity and heterogeneity of its peoples and cultures; a unity arising from respect for differences and the belief that heterogeneity provides cultural wealth. For the intellectuals engaged in this project, as Pedro Henríquez Ureña indicated in 1914, "the ideal of civilization is not the total unification of all men and all countries, but the total preservation of all differences within a harmony"⁶ (Henríquez

6. "el ideal de la civilización no es la unificación completa de todos los hombres y todos los países, sino la conservación completa de todas las diferencias dentro de una armonía."

Ureña 1952: 203). In defense of the Hispanic community, the Dominican writer highlighted the significance of culture as one of the principal components that would make Hispanic America a community with its own identity and strength, capable of dialogue with both Spain and the United States. “En busca de nuestra expresión” (in search of our expression) was how he defined the recovery and valorization of all the elements that shaped Hispanic American identity, which was the goal of much of his work (Henríquez Ureña 1976-1980 [1980: t. X]).

Fernando Ortiz thought of Cuba in similar terms to those used earlier by some of his Hispanic American peers. Like them, his commitment was not only that of an intellectual but also that of a politician, as had been that of Alfonso Reyes, José Vasconcelos, or Pedro Henríquez Ureña, among others. Ortiz dissected the problems that his young nation had to face and put forward some proposals to solve them, so that “Cuba y su independencia se salvaran para la civilización y la libertad” (Cuba and its independence would be saved for civilization and freedom). He denounced the lack of national integration and the danger to the country’s sovereignty and independence from the early years of the twentieth century. In 1923, in the midst of an economic crisis, while analyzing its origin, he wrote “Our homeland is going through a dreadful crisis. It is not a government crisis. It is not a party’s crisis, it is not a class crisis, it is the crisis of a whole people,”⁷ pointing to the lack of education of the people as one of the country’s main problems: “Cuba’s future is, therefore, undermined at its core national defenselessness due to ignorance [is] more dangerous.... In Cuba, more than other peoples, to defend culture is to save freedom”⁸ (Ortiz 1924: 6).

In his writings, Ortiz pinpointed some of the key characteristics of society that endangered national integrity and sovereignty. These included ethnic heterogeneity and socioracial tensions, which were the result of the structure of the slave-owning society of previous centuries and the racialization of social relations and cultural practices. And, like other Hispanic American intellectuals influenced by regenerationist thought, he condemned decadence and felt that culture and education were the

7. “Nuestra patria está atravesando una pavorosa crisis. No es la crisis de un gobierno. No es la crisis de un partido, no es la crisis de una clase, es la crisis de todo un pueblo.”

8. “El porvenir de Cuba está, pues, minado por su base ... más peligrosa [es] una indefensión nacional debida a la incultura. En Cuba, más que otros pueblos, defender la cultura es salvar la libertad.”

means that could generate a new society. At the beginning of January 1914, at the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País (Economic Societies of Friends of the Country), Ortiz reflected on education and work in a conference called “Seamos hoy como fuimos ayer” (Let’s be today as we were yesterday). In this speech he stressed that both were the pillars by which peoples achieved progress:

“The former good Cubans of the Sociedad Económica, by founding magazines, newspapers, schools, chairs, museums, botanical gardens; funding scholarships abroad; importing teachers; publishing books, memoirs and reports on all Cuban problems, show us how the work of a group of men of good faith can turn a depleted factory into a people and a nationality”⁹ (Ortiz 1914).

Over the years, Ortiz tenaciously stressed the power of education, which made peoples strong and free, and only in “la verdadera cultura,” “puede hallarse la fortaleza necesaria para vivir la vida propia sin servidumbres” (true culture, can one find the strength needed to live one’s life without bondage) (Ortiz 1919). Ortiz emphasized that education and culture were the key elements for society’s transformation and the bringing together of peoples, and were the basic instruments with which Cuban people would have to fight so as to fortify and consolidate their nationality (Ortiz 1940, 1991). He defended the idea of the regenerating power of culture in several of his works and speeches, such as in “La decadencia cubana” (Cuban decadence), a lecture given on February 23, 1924: “In Cuba, more than in other nations, to defend culture is to defend freedom [Let us strengthen the homeland] with all the cultural weapons, through the only plan capable of renewing Cuba and giving it a new sense of glory; opening prisons for the past, roads for the present, and schools for the future”¹⁰ (Ortiz 1924: 6, 33).

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9. “Los antiguos buenos cubanos de la Sociedad Económica fundando revistas, diarios, escuelas, cátedras, museos, jardines botánicos; costeando becas en el extranjero; importando profesores; publicando libros, memorias e informes sobre todos los problemas cubanos, nos demuestran cómo la labor de un grupo de hombres de fe puede hacer de una factoría esquilhada un pueblo y una nacionalidad.”
 10. “En Cuba, más que en otros pueblos, defender la cultura es defender la libertad[Fortifiquemos la patria] con todas las armas de la cultura, mediante el único programa capaz de renovar a Cuba y darle nueva virilidad de gloria; abriendo cárceles para el pasado, carreteras para el presente y escuelas para el porvenir.”

Ortiz's activities as a politician (he was a member of the Liberal Party where he held several positions in the House of Representatives between 1915 and 1926) and as an intellectual were marked by the events of the time, when some like himself considered that patriotism and civility were the means that would help Cuba overcome its economic and social crises and strengthen its sovereignty vis-à-vis the United States. Regenerationism also influenced his actions, as he was concerned about ethnic and cultural integration as the basis for building a new society. His civic attitude and regenerationist convictions led him to consider the culture and education of citizens as the starting points for progress. On April 2, 1923, he promoted the establishment of the Junta Cubana de Renovación Nacional Cívica. The renewal and regeneration of the political, cultural, and moral environments were concerns that brought together associations of different character and ideology to make up the Junta Cubana de Renovación Nacional Cívica, whose manifesto was announced in several print media, such as the *Revista Bimestre Cubana* and the *Heraldo de Cuba*. Other organizations appeared that year, such as the Movimiento de Veteranos y Patriotas (Movement of Veterans and Patriots) and the Grupo de los Trece (the Group of Thirteen)—protagonist of the Protesta de los Trece. In their programs they called for the fight for *virtud doméstica* (domestic virtue) and denounced economic dependence on the United States, the lack of sovereignty, and the monopoly of the country's wealth and assets by foreign capital.¹¹

At the 1924 speech that Ortiz gave at the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País de la Habana entitled “La decadencia cubana” (Cuban decadence), he condemned “el pavoroso riesgo de disolución que corría la patria... (apartada) del fulgor de la civilización” (the dreadful risk of dissolution the country was taking... [separated] from civilization's radiance):

11. In the 1920s, different civic groups and associations emerged in Cuba. The Veterans and Patriots Movement and the Group of Thirteen were some of them. The Group of Thirteen was composed of students and intellectuals: Julio Antonio Mella, Juan Marinello, Jorge Mañach, Rubén Martínez Villena, José Antonio Fernández de Castro, etc. In 1923, the Group of Thirteen held a protest at the University of Havana. This protest was known as the Protest of the Thirteen. They demanded reforms in the University, for example, university autonomy.

The Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País cannot remain silent and inactive in this extremely serious period our country is going through, without denying its luminous past and without affronting the memory of its founders, great Cuban rulers and patricians, who, in the darkness of a slave-holding and absolutist colony, were able to light the flame of national culture, and enliven it, and sustain it when the onslaught of tyranny and corruption sought to humiliate and defeat Cuba's nascent conscience.¹² (Ortiz 1924: 5)

Obsessed with Cuba's cultural and ethnic integration, Ortiz turned to history, ethnology, and anthropology to find the foundations on which to build a strong and sovereign nation. Ortiz assigned history great value as an instrument of knowledge about Cuban society and culture and he looked to it to discover the origins of peoples and their cultures and traditions. He outlined a method of observation and recovery of the past as early as 1905, in the article "Las supervivencias africanas en Cuba" (African survival in Cuba), published in the *Cuba y América* magazine. In it he urged researchers "to initiate increasing observation of its determining elements [of African survival], isolate true African from other [cultural forms] deriving from different races, and trace them back until pinpointing their overseas location and their expressions in the native environment. The field is wide and as one gradually observes, African leavening is found in many aspects of our customs and ways of being"¹³ (Ortiz 1905: 8).

This article also pointed out the need to study scientifically the ethnic and social components of Cuban society, as well as to analyze its

12. "La Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País no puede permanecer callada e inactiva en este gravísimo período que atraviesa nuestra patria, sin renegar de su luminoso pasado y sin afrentar la memoria de sus fundadores, grandes gobernantes y patricios cubanos, que en las tinieblas de una colonia negrera y absolutista supieron encender la llama de la cultura nacional, y avivarla, y sostenerla cuando los embates de la tiranía y de la corrupción querían humillar y rendir la conciencia naciente de Cuba."

13. "Iniciar la observación ascendente de sus elementos determinantes [de las supervivencias africanas], aislar los genuinamente africanos de otros de distinta raza, y remontar el estudio hasta precisar la localización ultramarina de aquellos y sus manifestaciones en el ambiente originario. El campo es vasto y poco a poco que se observe, se encuentra la levadura africana en muchos de los aspectos de nuestras costumbres y modos de ser."

characteristics in order to arrive at a proper definition of its psychology. Only in this way

can the psychological synthesis of Cuban society be successfully attempted, without taking the risk [of] giving opinions based on false prejudices The task of gathering all possible positive observations on the black factor, in its African origins, must be done soon. [Their study] must be based on the observation of African survivals, which, assimilated to varying degrees, can still be discovered, or have already disappeared.¹⁴ (Ortiz 1905: 8)

Although during these first years Ortiz had not yet developed the kind of inclusive imaginary in which a positive valuation of all the island's cultural contributions could be found, in this text he did already point out the need to study the participation of the "black race" in society's evolution alongside the study of the other foundations in order to, as he said, "definir sociológicamente lo que somos, lo que hemos sido y ayudar a dirigirnos con fundamentos positivos hacia lo que debemos ser" (sociologically define what we are, what we have been and help guide us on a positive basis towards what we should be) (Ortiz 1905: 8).

History provided Ortiz with the data to unveil the function of each phenomenon and its transformation. From knowledge about the origin of each event and element that had contributed to the formation of Cuban culture, he was also able to make comparative studies that demonstrated the proximity and contact between different cultures, and their structure. In history he found the origins of the Cuban nation, and based on these he created an inclusive national imaginary. Careful study enabled him to retrieve the foundations on which nationality, forged slowly and continuously over the centuries, rested.

As were other intellectuals, Ortiz was aware that to consolidate nationality—the integration of all social forces and the country's sovereignty—it was necessary to build a project in which all the heterogeneous

14. "podrá intentarse con probabilidades de éxito la síntesis psicológica de la sociedad cubana, sin incurrir en el riesgo [de] dar opiniones fundadas en falsos prejuicios El trabajo de reunir todas las posibles observaciones positivas en torno al factor negro, en su originalidad africana, debe hacerse pronto. [Su estudio] debe partir de la observación de las supervivencias africanas, que asimiladas en diverso grado pueden descubrirse todavía, o han desaparecido ya."

parts, sometimes in conflict and tension, would find their space (Puig-Samper and Naranjo Orovio 1999; Naranjo Orovio 2001; Palmié 2010).

However, unlike others, Ortiz did not base nationality on a historical community but on the evolution of all the communities that at some point inhabited Cuban soil. This national project was drawn up through the concept of transculturation. Via transculturation, Ortiz explained the processes of contact between different cultures in which dissimilar elements were combined and transformed into new ones. These new elements, which emerged in historical developments, were the foundations that shaped and defined Cuban nationality. Ortiz was interested in the result of the process, and therefore he attributed the same importance and function to each of the elements. For Ortiz, the nation's strength and the prospect of its sovereignty relied on their harmony.

On the other hand, the tension that arose when trying to reconcile different traditions and combine conflicting factors surfaces in the “counterpoint” that Ortiz depicts in his writings. Here, the historical, ethnographic, lexicological, and anthropological study of each different element precedes the analysis of the final result. Ortiz's definition of culture and nationality did not come from the concept of “race,” but from the study of pasts and the analysis and assessment of each of the components found in the cultures that had populated the country. For him, Cubanness was a category of culture. This culture was the outcome of the fusion of all the country's ethnic contributions. In “Los factores humanos de la cubanidad” (The human factors of Cubanidad) Ortiz referred to the process of continuous identity formation in Cuba as a “caldo denso de civilización que borbullea en el fogón del Caribe” (thick broth of civilization that bubbles on the Caribbean stove). Through the metaphor of food, of a stew called *ajiaco*, Ortiz explained the formation of Cuba's identity as a continuous process in which the components are diluted, transformed, and come to enrich a whole: the transculturation process (Ortiz 1940a). Just as other Mexican and Brazilian intellectuals did—José Vasconcelos and Gilberto Freyre—Ortiz devised an inclusive national imaginary that would serve more than just to explain the formation of culture and nationhood in Cuba. Through this nationalist and inclusive imaginary, he tried to give coherence to a young country that was beginning its journey as an independent nation, with the burden of its recent past, and financially linked to a powerful foreign nation. By forming this nationalist imaginary, in which culture was seen as an integrated whole, Ortiz attempted to overcome the socioracial tensions that, in his eyes, were endangering the country's independence. In his

works *El contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y del azúcar* (Cuban counterpoint: Tobacco and sugar) and “Los factores humanos de la cubanidad” (The human factors of Cubanidad), both published in 1940, Ortiz defined transculturation as the way to “express the wide variety of phenomena that arise in Cuba due to the highly complex transmutations verified here; without knowing these, it is impossible to understand the evolution of Cuban people, not only in the economic sphere, but also in the institutional, legal, ethical, religious, artistic, linguistic, psychological, sexual and other aspects of their lives”¹⁵ (Ortiz 1978: 93).

In the *El contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y del azúcar* Ortiz stated:

No human factor was more transcendental for Cubanness than the inhabitants’ ongoing, radical and contrasting geographic, economic and social transmigrations; than that perennial transience of purposes and that life that is constantly uprooted from inhabited land, always at odds with the sustaining society. Men, economies, cultures and desires, everything here felt foreign, provisional, changeable, “birds of passage” over the country, at its expense, against it and to its displeasure.¹⁶ (Ortiz 1940b: 255)

Ortiz dug into all the national and international archives that kept documentation on the country’s history. For this work in Spain, as president of the Academia de la Historia de Cuba (Cuban Academy of History) Ortiz chose José María Chacón y Calvo in July 1925 as the director in Spain of the Comisión Misión Permanente (Permanent Mission Commission), formed in Cuba that year to find the documents related to the island’s history. Chacón y Calvo’s official appointment guaranteed a monthly salary for carrying out this job. The correspondence between

15. “expresar los variadísimos fenómenos que se originan en Cuba por las complejísimas transmutaciones que aquí se verifican, sin conocer las cuales es imposible entender la evolución del pueblo cubano, así en lo económico, como en lo institucional, jurídico, ético, religioso, artístico, lingüístico, psicológico, sexual y en los demás aspectos de su vida.”

16. “No hubo factores humanos más trascendentes para la cubanidad que esas continuas, radicales y contrastantes transmigraciones geográficas, económicas y sociales de los pobladores; que esa perenne transitoriedad de los propósitos y que esa vida siempre en desarraigo de la tierra habitada, siempre en desajuste con la sociedad sustentadora. Hombres, economías, culturas y anhelos todo aquí se sintió foráneo, provisional, cambiadizo, ‘aves de paso’ sobre el país, a su costa, a su contra y a su malgrado.”

Chacón y Calvo and Ortiz contains traces of the monthly shipments of the documents that Chacón y Calvo had collected in the Spanish archives and sent to Cuba. Among these documents were some from the Archivo General de Simancas and the Archivo General de Indias in Seville. In the list of documents obtained in Seville, there were some about the first years of the conquest, as well as photographic reproductions of the island's cartography.

Chacón y Calvo's appointment to this position was not accidental, but due to the friendship that had united them for years, which led Ortiz also to appoint him as his representative managing the publishing rights of some of his books in Spain. Ortiz also admired the intellectual stature of Chacón y Calvo, and the work he carried out after his arrival in Spain. They were united by the projects they shared and the idea that they had about culture and nationality: culture as one of the main pillars of the nation's cohesion. Culture was a "patriotic enterprise" for Ortiz, or as Chacón y Calvo said, "an imperative to save nationality an area of national coexistence where the most diverse ideologies can converge, as long as they affirm the postulates of Cubanness and the values of a spiritual and free culture"¹⁷ (Balboa Pereira 2011: 82-85).

Some aspects of this shared story are illustrated in the following pages. In 1923, recently elected president of the Sociedad de Amigos del País de La Habana (Society of the Friends of the Country of Havana), Ortiz founded, jointly with Chacón y Calvo—its promoter—the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano, an institution whose headquarters was at the Sociedad de Amigos del País. With its founding, Chacón y Calvo fulfilled the idea he had set out in 1913, as president of the Sociedad Filomática, of forming an Inter-American network of folklore societies that would contribute to organizing "el alma de la unidad étnica de América" (the soul of American ethnic unity) (Mesa Olazábal 2010). Chacón y Calvo's project was to establish the society in Havana and for it to have branches in other cities of the country: "No es un folklore local ni regional, lo que quiere formarse: es un folk-lore nacional, un folk-lore cubano" (It is not local or regional folklore: what is wanted to be formed is national folklore, Cuban folklore) (Chacón y Calvo 1914b).

17. "un imperativo para salvar la nacionalidad la zona de convivencia nacional donde pueden coincidir las más diversas ideologías, siempre que las mismas afirmen los postulados de la cubanidad y los valores de una cultura espiritual y libre."

The *Archivos del Folklore Cubano* was founded in 1924 as a journal for the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano. The articles in *Archivos* were an important means of disseminating the image of Cuban society that Ortiz wanted to present, in which transculturation had generated a rich cultural mix. Some of his studies reflect how the “diálogo entre lo general y lo científico occidental, y lo creativo y lo mestizo local” (dialogue between what is general and what is western scientific, and what is creative and what is local mestizo) was articulated (C. Ortiz 2003: 710). Other publications that contributed to the creation of the national imaginary and diffusion of Cuban culture were *Revista Bimestre Cubana* and *Estudios Afrocubanos*. The first issue of *Archivos del Folklore Cubano* provided readers with guidance on the journal’s objective: to recover the rich traditional heritage of Cuban legends, rites, languages, music, and romances in which Hispanic and African traditions had become intertwined.

Ortiz promoted Cuban culture, the “patriotic” enterprise, through the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano, the *Archivos del Folklore Cubano*, and the Institución Hispano-Cubana de Cultura founded on November 22, 1926.¹⁸ This latter institution’s connection with Spain, especially through the JAE, is important to the study of the formation of scientific and cultural networks and, in this particular instance, the creation of a Latin American intellectual community. Through the Institución, as I will explain later, an academic exchange between Cuba and Spain was made possible and the beginning of a new way of dialoguing was established, in which science and culture were fundamental, prevailing over religion and race.

Cuba and Spain: Dialogues based on culture

The new transatlantic cultural relations, encouraged since the earliest years of the twentieth century by intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic, were not without conflict. As in any intellectual community, differences and disagreements arose within it, which on some occasions were ironed out and on others were the cause of rupture. Ortiz’s relationship with Spain and its intellectuals was also marked by these encounters and misunderstandings triggered by the clash of the different ways of conceiving Hispanic-American unity, the significance of Spanish heritage

18. For a study of journals as propagators and articulators of intellectual networks, see Pita 2009; Granados 2012.

in America, and the role that Spain had to play in a new framework of relations with Latin American republics. The relation with Spanish intellectuals and Ortiz's debates with Rafael Altamira or Miguel de Unamuno are well documented¹⁹; therefore, in this chapter, I focus on the dialogues that were established on the basis of a broader conception of culture and science.

The intellectuals' interest in popular traditions was undoubtedly one of the topics of study that contributed to the establishment of a transatlantic intellectual community. Among the most active groups in Spain was the one led by Ramón Menéndez Pidal. As director of the Centro de Estudios Históricos in Madrid, Menéndez Pidal managed to articulate an academic project that gradually expanded with the participation of Spanish and Latin American philologists and historians, and which was nourished by new projects and ideas coming from Latin America. Most of the Spanish professors were trained under his direction and, together with their colleagues in the Americas, they contributed to establishing a dialogue between American and Spanish worlds, weaving two-way networks that served to debate jointly the shared history of Spain and the Americas. Supported by other institutions and colleagues from Latin America and the United States (in particular from Columbia University), new philological schools were founded (such as the Instituto de Filología in Buenos Aires) and paths were laid, on which Spanish Republican exiles during and after that country's civil war travelled years later when wandering around the Americas. Several distinguished Latin Americans studied and worked at the Centro de Estudios Históricos in Madrid, including Alfonso Reyes, José María Chacón y Calvo, Pedro Henríquez Ureña, Silvio Zavala, Ángel Rosenblat, Rodolfo Barón, Antonio S. Pedreira, Aníbal Bascuñán (Naranjo Orovio 2007).

There are abundant examples of the intellectual network generated around common intellectual concerns. One of them is the correspondence between Menéndez Pidal and Mexican Alfonso Reyes during the latter's trip through Extremadura, where Reyes heard a popular song

19. For studies of the relation with Spanish intellectuals and Ortiz's debates with Rafael Altamira, Miguel de Unamuno, and Pedro Dorado Montero, see Ortiz 1910; Serrano 1987; Naranjo Orovio and Puig-Samper 1998, 2005. Part of the correspondence between Ortiz and Unamuno is included in Ortiz 1987. In this book you can read the letters on pages 5-15: "Carta abierta al ilustre señor Don Miguel de Unamuno, Recto de la Universidad de Salamanca" (5-10); "A Unamuno" (11-13); "No seas bobbo" (14-15).

being recited—a Spanish romance brought to the Americas, and sung by some girls playing in a circle in the plaza of Cáceres, Extremadura, where he recognized it.²⁰ The numerous letters that Menéndez Pidal exchanged with Latin American intellectuals hold within them the intellectual network nodes that I have been commenting on. In the case of Cuba, Chacón y Calvo was in contact with Menéndez Pidal from 1913 to 1914, to whom he sent some of his work and offered himself as a collaborator for the project of the *Romancero General del Mundo Hispánico* that Menéndez Pidal had started in 1900. Chacón y Calvo's letters and studies about Cuban folklore and the publication of several works about the island's romances encouraged him to collaborate with the group of philologists at the Centro de Estudios Históricos after his arrival in Madrid in 1918, where he had been appointed as secretary of the Cuban Legation. From then on, Chacón y Calvo was Ortiz's direct correspondent in Spain, and the interlocutor for many projects that Ortiz undertook in Cuba. Within a few years, the network of Latin American philologists, scholars of popular traditions and romances, had expanded and connected with others interested not only in Spain or Latin America but also in the United States through the Hispanic Society of New York. These included Max Leopold Wagner, and some other anthropologists from North American universities, such as Aurelio Macedonio Espinosa, who maintained constant contact and carried out joint projects with Menéndez Pidal (C. Ortiz 2007). One of the projects that Fernando Ortiz had begun in Havana was to demonstrate African influence on Cuban culture. He thought that it would only be possible to value African influence in its proper measure by knowing about it, at a time when the only valued components of Cuban culture were those coming from Hispanic culture and, to a certain extent, from indigenous culture. In just a few years, Ortiz's studies on Cuba's African-derived traditions and lexicon showed how much the legacy of African cultures helped shape Cuban culture. The creation of the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano, as already mentioned, and of its communication channel, the *Archivos del Folklore Cubano*, were essential in the recovery of the country's entire cultural legacy, including the African legacy (Moore 1997).

The *Archivos* are not only interesting for their contents. They make it possible to follow the intellectual network set up by Ortiz with other

20. Letter from Alfonso Reyes to Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Cáceres 3 de mayo de 1920. R024006. Archives of Fundación Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Madrid.

countries and colleagues. Although Ortiz had a strong relationship with anthropologists and jurists from Spain and Italy from the very beginning of the twentieth century, through the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano and the *Archivos*, he strengthened his cooperation with colleagues from the United States, Great Britain, and some Latin American countries where there were similar societies, such as Chile and Argentina. The influence of his work expanded the scientific community to different countries on both sides of the Atlantic: Brazil, Mexico, France, Spain, etc. Both Ortiz and Chacón y Calvo worked on creating a larger intellectual space that would bring together the institutions that studied folklore. The collection of popular romances and traditions present in popular culture was, for Ortiz, the first phase of a broad and ambitious project that would reflect the cultural wealth of the country, as it had in other countries. These studies were similar to those that Menéndez Pidal's students and the teacher himself had been conducting in Spain since 1910. Ortiz encouraged Latin American scholars in their own countries, who were interested in popular literature, to engage in this type of fieldwork from the first few years of the twentieth century. They did so, for instance, in Mexico and in Santo Domingo, where romances were still preserved in oral tradition. Some of the letters, whose senders and/or recipients were Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Pedro Henríquez Ureña, Alfonso Reyes, and José María Chacón y Calvo, refer to the collection of romances and popular traditions, which were carried out in different countries, and to the exchange of their studies (Narajo Orovio 2021). The letters map out knowledge circuits and show the various contact points throughout the world. In the letter that Henríquez Ureña sent to Menéndez Pidal in 1914, he mentioned the works of three young literature teachers from the Escuela Preparatoria in Mexico, Antonio Castro Leal, Manuel Toussaint y Ritter, and Alberto Vázquez del Mercado, who also founded the Sociedad Hispánica de México (Mexican Hispanic Society), which had eight active members, among them Chacón y Calvo.²¹ Ortiz wrote to Chacón y Calvo from New York on May 20, 1924, commenting on sending the *Archivos del Folklore Cubano* to the London-based American Folklore Society, where he hoped it would be well received. The dissemination of culture and knowledge were common goals shared by the intellectual community members:

21. Letter from Pedro Henríquez Ureña to Ramón Menéndez Pidal, México 13 de mayo de 1914. H014002 (1-4). Archives of Fundación Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Madrid.

I think we can get a good representation for the English society. You could write to your colleague Altunaga [Rafael Rodríguez Altunaga], from the London legation about this matter, and get him interested in exchanges, etc. Since we are talking about an enterprise of Cuban cultural diffusion (I was going to use the word 'patriotic,' but it is so wrongly used!), it is convenient to obtain the broadest exchange in all countries.²² (Gutiérrez-Vega 1982: 36)

In Spain, Ortiz relied on the close collaboration of his friend Chacón y Calvo. Ortiz involved him in all his projects, particularly those related to philological studies. Chacón y Calvo was the one who introduced the interests of the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano in Madrid. Immediately after its creation, the *Revista de Filología Española*, directed by Menéndez Pidal and published by the Centro de Estudios Históricos since 1914, reviewed it. Excited by the news, Menéndez Pidal solicited more information about the society and about its regulations because the idea of forming a folklore society was present in Spain as well (Gutiérrez-Vega 1996: 307). From Havana, in two letters dated March and May 1926, Ortiz, after asking Chacón y Calvo to request an article for the magazine from Menéndez Pidal, expressed his joy for having achieved it:

Cuban folklore. I swell from reading his paragraphs about our *Archivos*. Menéndez Pidal's praise has me full of vanity. Wouldn't it be possible to obtain some lines of commendation from the master for the *Archivos* so they could be published in them, and serve as a stimulus to the many lazy people around us? (Gutiérrez-Vega 1982: 55)

I'm very enthusiastic about your news of a collaboration by Don Ramón, the Maestro, for the *Archivos*. High Mass in the cathedral of Toledo! I am waiting for your bibliographical notes on the last books by that hero. (Gutiérrez-Vega 1982: 58)²³

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22. "Creo que podemos procurarnos una buena representación para la sociedad inglesa. Ud. Podría escribirle a su compañero Altunaga [Rafael Rodríguez Altunaga], de la legación de Londres, sobre el particular, interesando canje, etc..... Tratándose de una empresa de difusión cultural cubana (iba a decir 'patriótica', pero ¡está tan mosqueada ya la palabreja!), conviene obtener el canje más amplio en todos los países."
23. Folklore cubano. Me hincho de leer sus párrafos sobre nuestros *Archivos*. Ese elogio de Menéndez Pidal me tiene lleno de vanidad. ¿No será posible obtener del maestro unas líneas de encomio a los Archivos para que fueran

The collaboration between Menéndez Pidal, Chacón y Calvo, and Ortiz continued ever since. The three are seen together in the Comisión de Folklore Cubano (Cuban Folklore Commission), founded in 1937 as a result of Chacón y Calvo's effort to institutionalize folklore studies on the island, especially after the disappearance of the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano in 1931. Its creation was related to Chacón y Calvo's return to Cuba in 1934 to take over the Directorate or Department of Culture of the Ministry of Education. He combined this job with directing the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas (Institute of Historical Research) and the Instituto de Altos Estudios (Institute of Higher Studies) in 1937. Although his position did not allow him to carry out other projects—such as founding an Institute of Philological Investigations—it did facilitate the establishment of the Comisión de Folklore Cubano, as well as the trip of the Spanish philologist, who stayed on the island from the end of 1936 until June 1937, invited by Ortiz through the Institución-Hispano Cubana de Cultura (IHCC). It was also Chacón y Calvo, who, from his position at the Cuban embassy, helped Menéndez Pidal and his family leave Madrid after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. During his stay on the island, Menéndez Pidal not only gave lectures but also worked with the folklore groups formed by the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano to rescue romances in Cuba (Bruquetas de Castro 2018).

Attentive to the intellectual and scientific movements developing in Spain, Ortiz strengthened the contact he had with Spanish intellectuals since the early twentieth century. He was a member of several Spanish academies, such as the Real Academia de la Lengua (Spanish Royal Academy), the Academia de Ciencias Morales y Políticas (Academy of Moral and Political Sciences), the Academia de la Historia (Academy of History), and the Academia de Jurisprudencia y Legislación (Academy of Jurisprudence and Legislation). In 1925, he proposed to create an academy on the island, similar to the Spanish one, that would be a “very positive benefit for Spanish culture and the defense of the language.” In this negotiation, Chacón y Calvo mediated with Menéndez Pidal, who

publicadas en ellos, y servirían de estímulo a los numerosos zánganos que nos rodean?

Estoy entusiasmadísimo con la noticia que me da de una colaboración de don Ramón, el Maestro, para los *Archivos*. ¡Misa mayor en la catedral de Toledo! Estoy esperando sus notas bibliográficas de Ud. acerca de los últimos libros de aquel prócer.

supported the idea and took steps towards its implementation with Antonio Maura, president of the Real Academia Española.

At the end of 1926, Ortiz's intellectual commitment to other Spanish-speaking countries and to Spain was embodied in the creation of the Institución Hispano-Cubana de Cultura (IHCC), also called "La Cultural," which he presided over for as long as it existed until 1947. For Ortiz, a cooperative spirit, science and culture would be the inspirations encouraging the new institution, opposed to the intellectual xenophobia of some Cubans, which he described as mean, ridiculous, and suicidal. He introduced his idea at the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País de La Habana on November 12, 1926, emphasizing that the exchange of intellectual relations with other countries is one of the most powerful means to achieve a country's cultural growth.²⁴

The founding act of the IHCC shows the support Ortiz received and its words show how beneficial the institution would be for scientific development, in addition to its "valor inapreciable de fortificar la conciencia de nuestra propia capacidad [en el original aparece tachado de "nuestra raza"] para realizar las empresas más fecundas del saber humano" (priceless value for strengthening consciousness about our own capacity [in the original document "our race" is crossed out] to carry out the most fruitful enterprises of human knowledge). Some of those present at the meeting referred to the role that other Latin American cultural institutions were playing in promoting relations with Spain. Ramiro Guerra, a member of the Sociedad and a leading historian and intellectual, announced the donation of 15,000 pesetas by Avelino Gutiérrez, president of the Institución Cultural of Buenos Aires, so that the IHCC could begin its life and join in the diffusion of Spanish culture, and others highlighted the benefits that both countries would obtain. The institution agreed to appoint the President of the Republic of Cuba and the Ambassador of Spain to the island as honorary members, and to pay tribute or homage to Santiago Ramón y Cajal, president of the JAE.²⁵ With this project, Ortiz managed not only to articulate relations between Cuba and Spain, but also to join the widest transatlantic network in which different countries participated from different professional spheres.

Ortiz was supported by a number of intellectuals in this project. A few days after the founding of the IHCC, in the letter that Ortiz sent from Havana to Madrid on November 24, 1926, he commissioned

24. BNJM, CM Ortiz, Folder 217.

25. BNJM, CM Ortiz, Folder 203.

Chacón y Calvo to send him the statutes of the Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas, since he thought that that institution could be his counterpart in Spain, given the experience that the JAE had demonstrated in the exchange of teachers and scientists between Spain and some countries in the Americas. He also left the negotiation of Menéndez Pidal and Ortega y Gasset's trip to Cuba in Chacón y Calvo's hands, with whom the teachers exchange would begin. His aim, and in this Ortiz coincided with other American and Spanish intellectuals, was to create a Hispanic-American exchange circuit that would be sustained by the teachers' stay: "I believe that in due course it will be possible to establish the Hispanic-American exchange circuit: Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Santiago, Lima, Mexico and Havana. Could you exchange views on this with the good people of the Junta de Ampliación?"²⁶ On this matter, Chacón y Calvo answered by saying that in Madrid they thought that the Spanish teachers' trips could be more useful if the guest teacher gave conferences in different places during one single trip. Therefore, Chacón y Calvo was in charge of sending Ortiz the scheduled trips to other nearby Hispanic-American countries in order to learn if the journey could be extended to Cuba.²⁷ Ortiz also commissioned him to find out if the Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas could be the representative of the IHCC in Spain. On March 3, 1927, Ortiz wrote to Ramón y Cajal, president of the JAE, requesting that the Junta be the representative of the IHCC in Spain (Gutiérrez-Vega 1982: 66-67). In the letter, he told Ramón y Cajal that the Junta was the institution that scientifically guaranteed him a successful academic exchange project, and gave him the names of some lecturers they hoped to have in the coming months, Flores Lemus, Francisco Bernis, and Américo Castro.

Some conflicts arose in the relationship between the two institutions, mainly due to the choice of professors. The letters between Ortiz and Chacón y Calvo reflect these tensions and how they were overcome each time they surfaced. In order to reconcile interests and maintain

26. "Creo que llegue en su día a ser posible establecer el circuito de intercambio hispanoamericano: Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Santiago, Lima, México y La Habana. ¿Podría Ud. cambiar impresiones acerca de esto con la buena gente de la Junta de Ampliación?" Letter from F. Ortiz to J.M. Chacón y Calvo. La Habana 24 de noviembre de 1926. BNJM. CM Ortiz, Folder 407. Correspondencia Variada.

27. BNJM, CM Ortiz, Folder 407.

the IHCC's independence and nonpolitical character that Ortiz had defended from the beginning, they agreed that the IHCC would be in charge of selecting the Spanish professors, and it would be done from Spain only when the selection of one was urgent, Chacón y Calvo being responsible for negotiating with a member of the Junta. As agreed, the IHCC would finance the trips of the Spanish professors, who would also be paid 2,000 pesos for their lectures. For this purpose, they hoped to count on the contribution of the Ministerio de Instrucción Pública of Spain and the help of the Compañía Trasatlántica Española which had contributed to teachers' trips to other countries. To cover the expenses, the IHCC also received support from the University of Havana and the economic assistance of some Spanish businessmen and regional centers on the island. Throughout the years of collaboration with Spain, the IHCC also received occasional funding from the Ministerio de Instrucción Pública of Spain for tickets to Cuba. On February 21, 1928, Ortiz commented to José Castillejo, secretary of the JAE, on the importance of having established a triangular friendship between Spain, the United States, and Iberian America, and expressed his interest in continuing to foster that friendship.²⁸ In a letter dated August 22, 1927, Castillejo explained to Ortiz that given the mixed nature of the IHCC, as an Institución de Ampliación de Estudios and as a Sociedad de Conferencias, the speeches would be given at the University of Havana and other venues where the talks would reach a wider audience, such as the members of the IHCC. In the same letter, he mentioned his idea of founding a chair of Spanish culture at the University of Havana, in which professors of different fields would work and also collaborate with the IHCC, where they would give two lectures a month.²⁹ One year later, on July 20, 1928, Ortiz shared with Chacón y Calvo his idea of creating a magazine in Madrid that would be linked to the IHCC in order to further connect both intellectual worlds.³⁰

The relationship between the Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas (the Junta) and the Institución Hispano-Cubana de Cultura (the IHCC) was not free of problems and tensions, above all because of the selection of professors, but also because of other issues that raised suspicions. One of the most visible moments of tension occurred when Cuban intellectuals Felix Lizaso and Jorge Mañach

28. BNJM, CM Ortiz, Folder 261.

29. *Ibid.*

30. BNJM, CM Ortiz, Folder 407.

commented, in May 1936, on the possibility of the IHCC being a subsidiary of the Instituto de las Españas, which was founded in 1920 and directed by Federico de Onís, a Spanish professor at Columbia University since 1916, and financed by the Spanish Republican government. In the letters he exchanged with his friend Chacón y Calvo, Ortiz said that he thought that idea was absurd because it would lead to the “Hispanization” of the IHCC. Ortiz’s nationalist position prompted the words he wrote in the letter to Chacón y Calvo on May 15, 1936. As he had proven at other times in his life, Ortiz knew how to differentiate and value the country’s internal political issues and relations with other colleagues and institutions. His “patriotic” sense outweighed the cordial and working relationship he had with Federico de Onís:

I confess I won’t lend myself to that maneuver concocted in New York. Given the nationalist sensibility that currently exists in Cuba, which I will continue to channel in order to defend ourselves against foreign interference, it seems to me that opening an institution with a Spanish flag now is the height of the nonsense, and precisely to the detriment of the effective intelligence between both peoples.³¹

Months later, once the Spanish Civil War had begun, Ortiz insisted that the Spanish teachers who went to Cuba had to be apolitical. On September 1, 1936, he wrote to Chacón y Calvo: “Aquí también estamos todos a uno y otro lado del Guadarrama y falta la serenidad necesaria para oír al adversario” (We are all here too on both sides of the Guadarrama and we lack the serenity required to be able to hear the adversary) (Gutiérrez-Vega 1982: 110-11).

The idea Ortiz had of culture clashed with “patriotism and vile xenophobia.” He said so in a letter dated January 11, 1928, and sent to Miguel Galliano, a member of the delegation of the IHCC in the city of Manzanillo. In it, he explained the island’s need for culture and openness. Contrary to the opinion of some who thought that Spanish culture was irrelevant and could not contribute much, Ortiz indicated that culture

31. “Confieso que yo no he de prestarme a esa maniobra fraguada en Nueva York. Desde la sensibilidad nacionalista que existe actualmente en Cuba y que habré de seguir canalizando para defendernos contra las injerencias extranjeras, abrir ahora una Institución con bandera española, me parece el colmo de los disparates y precisamente el perjuicio de la efectiva inteligencia entre ambos pueblos.” Ibid.

was always valid regardless of where it came from: “Cuba necesita ... cultura, cultura y más cultura, de España, del Norte, de todos los vientos, si no queremos perecer en el paludismo de cenagosa incultura a muchos quieren reducirnos” (Cuba needs ... culture, culture and more culture, from Spain, from the North, from all directions, if we don't want to perish in the ignorant swampy malaria that many would like to see).³²

Ortiz was convinced that culture was the key to the progress of societies and the ambassador between countries, and he did not cease to expand networks to other academies. We find an example in his letter to Chacón y Calvo, on February 23, 1928, in which he tells him that during the conference that James Brown gave at the IHCC, which was attended by several U.S. politicians, including the ambassador, he took the opportunity to put forward the idea of triangular friendship. This idea coincided with the thesis of “triangular friendship” presented by William Shepherd (1928). By “triangular friendship” Shepherd meant the cultural collaboration between Puerto Rico, the United States, and Spain. Puerto Rico would act as the meeting point between two cultures. This project was promoted by the University of Puerto Rico at the beginning of the century, and in the 1920s it took shape on the island with the signing of a collaboration agreement between the University of Puerto Rico, the Centro de Estudios Históricos de Madrid, and Columbia University (Naranjo Orovio, Luque, and Puig-Samper 2002). Considering that Federico de Onís had managed to reach a collaboration agreement with the three institutions mentioned above, Ortiz asked Chacón y Calvo to present this idea in Madrid, since he thought it had been well received by the American authorities in Havana.

During the time that the IHCC lasted, Ortiz achieved the objectives he had in mind. This institution, as well as the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano or the *Archivos del Folklore Cubano*, were platforms for bringing universal culture closer together. The project of forming a folklore association that would transcend national boundaries was a joint project of Chacón y Calvo and Ortiz. In 1940 Ortiz put forward the idea of creating a regional association in which several Caribbean countries would participate during the Second Inter-American Meeting of the Caribbean in Ciudad Trujillo, which they could call the Sociedad Folklórica de los pueblos del mar Caribe. That same year, on May 2nd in Havana, Ortiz submitted the foundations of the project of the Instituto Iberoamericano José Martí, an educational institution for the mutual

32. BNJM, CM Ortiz, Folder 259.

dissemination of the different cultures of all America.³³ The faculty exchange would involve the whole of the Americas. This time Ortiz left out Franco's Spain. Instead, he continued to foster the arrival of Republican intellectuals on the island, as far as he could. As of 1936, the Spanish exodus became the driving force of much of the correspondence between various Latin American and Spanish intellectuals. Letters are often calls for help, or sometimes provide news of the whereabouts of several colleagues and friends with whom they shared projects and classrooms, now scattered around the world. These interwoven relationships helped host many of these Spanish intellectuals. However, the importance of these pages of history, beyond the reality of exile, is seeing how institutions, projects, and publications contributed to the dissemination of knowledge and, while their circuits expanded, new networks proliferated. The incipient intellectual community of the early twentieth century succeeded in breaking down barriers and establishing transatlantic bridges that prevailed over time.

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33. BNJM, CM Ortiz, Folder 411.

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BORDER WORLDS

Border dialectics and the border multiple

A view from the northern Caribbean

Jeffrey S. Kahn

A common rendering of the history of twentieth-century anthropological thought goes something like this: way back when, anthropologists focused on geographically bounded, often small-scale, cultural entities until, when confronted with the empirical realities of globalization, they opened up their methodological horizons and flung themselves into the multi-sited (Marcus 1998), heterogeneous assemblages (Collier and Ong 2005) of an increasingly interconnected world (Candea 2007). Some accounts of this pivot towards a more unwieldy anthropology emphasize the discipline's embrace of political-economy—world systems theory and its progeny come to mind (Mintz 1977; Trouillot 1982; Wolf 1982)—while others skew more toward an appeal to the “hybridity” of emergent “cultural” forms (Bhabha 1994; Clifford 1988; Hannerz 1987). The interest in the latter has, as is well known, spawned a cascade of signifiers meant to discount a focus on the pure in favor of “pastiche” (Keesing 1990), “mestizaje” (Anzaldúa 1987), and “creolization” (Clifford 1988; Hannerz 1987).

Creolization, a concept loosely inspired by Caribbean histories of contact and mixing, was, for a time, perhaps the most fashionable metaphor wielded in studies of the newly valued instability of “culture” (Hannerz 1987; Khan 2001; Palmié 2007a; Stewart 2007). It is not, however, the first Caribbean-derived trope to play such a role. That distinction appears to belong to Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz's concept of

“transculturation” ([1940] 1995: 98) and its metaphorical embodiment in the *ajiacó*, a Cuban stew of multiple layers, consistencies, and elements that never ceases to cook ([1940] 2014: 460–61). Decades before anthropology’s reflexive turn kicked off a celebration of hybridity (Behar [1993] 2003; Clifford 1988; Rosaldo 1989), Ortiz had introduced transculturation as a substitute for acculturation, the latter concept laden with the assumption of assimilation and culture loss. Instead of the narrative of a dominant, “Western” culture winning out over an inferior alterity, transculturation offered a conceptual model that acknowledged the mutually transforming “creativity of cultural unions” (Coronil 1995: xxvi).

The transculturation concept has been revived once again in Anglophone anthropology, most notably through Stephan Palmié’s creative reconjugation of the *ajiacó* metaphor, which he poetically renders as a “[h]istory [that] cooks us all” (Palmié 2013a: 371).¹ In the image of the churning, bubbling stew in which we find ourselves, the emphasis is on emergence over ontological fixity, diachronic transformation over synchronic stability. To recycle one of Palmié’s turns of phrase, “once we choose the *ajiacó* as a metaphor circumscribing our perspective, the world of clear-cut units is lost to us”; what we get instead are, “at best,” a series of “unstable gradations by which one [sociocultural formation] mutates into the other” (Palmié 2013a: 101).

My contribution to this volume on Ortiz’s thought returns to his original use of the *ajiacó* as culinary trope, revisiting, with a sympathetic eye, the shortcomings of its spatial politics. In particular, I have in mind the national scale of the *ajiacó* metaphor, the limits of which I choose not to see as a barrier to further inquiry but rather as an invitation to stray beyond its spatial frame—that is, an invitation to examine certain “in-between” spaces of the global system of sovereign nation-states where groups coded as socioculturally distinct run up against one another in hyperregimented environments designed to preclude the mixing that Ortiz, and others following him, have so productively highlighted. The goal then is not to negate the usefulness of the *ajiacó* metaphor—all metaphors have their deficiencies after all—but to take its implications seriously, to see its weaknesses, and to use them as a productive provocation with which to jump forward into other conceptualizations.

1. As part of her theorization of contact zones, Mary Louise Pratt (1992) also adopted the concept of transculturation, following its introduction into literary studies by Uruguayan critic Angel Rama.

With that in mind, let me return to what I mean by the limitation of the spatial politics of Ortiz's culinary metaphor. Ortiz's acknowledgment that "all peoples" have been subject to transculturating forces (Ortiz [1940] 1995: 98) remains tempered by his strong sense that discernible cultural boundaries exist in the world, consequential boundaries that allow him to speak of Cubanness, for instance, in ways that conform to a nationalist agenda, however moderate (Gonçalves 2014: 447). While Palmié's creative and productive reimagining of Ortiz may jettison such bounded territorial units and their equation with distinguishable cultural units, Ortiz's vision, despite all the mixing it alludes to, is still that of a bounded world (one, it is worth noting, in which territorial borders tend to coincide with cultural ones). The ajiaco metaphor is, after all, not simply a liquid metaphor. There is a pot there. And for Ortiz, what was of interest was the *olla cubana*, that Cuban "pot placed in the fire of the tropics" ([1940] 2014: 461).

If we are to take Ortiz's metaphor seriously, then, and follow it from the scale of the stew to a broader scale, what we encounter is not merely a view of ingredients at different stages of mixing in a single pot but, rather, a host of pots delineating their own processes of cooking and thus of transculturation. This vista, again following the logic of Ortiz's metaphor, reveals a set of more discernible boundaries than exists within the stew itself. What we have is not just a stew but a world of containers, though not, of course, hermetically sealed containers. Still, to put it a bit differently and to step out of the trope of the ajiaco, the scale of multiple containers presents us with a world of borders.

Where do these borders fit into the story of an endlessly cooking history? Gloria Anzaldúa, whose work has spawned a whole literature on borderland cultural formations, offers one vision:

A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants. (Anzaldúa 1987: 25, emphasis added)

This unnatural line, Anzaldúa tells us, is an open wound from which "the lifeblood of two worlds merg[es] to form a third country—a border culture" (25). The borderlands and border cultures, in other words, straddle and overflow the juridically determined border line—that "grat[ing]" "edge" of "two worlds" (25). The legally defined, territorial border and

the more amorphous borderlands exist, in other words, in relation to one another and yet are not coextensive; the latter exceeds the former. For Anzaldúa, liquid metaphors evoke the fluidity of this borderland culture, which, like the sea, she tells us, “cannot be fenced” (25). With this language of water and blood, the focus is on a mixing, certainly, but it is also a focus that no longer homes in on what exists within a given potpourri. To return to Ortiz’s metaphor, what is of interest spills across and cannot be contained by the lip of the pot in which the ajiaco stews.

Anzaldúa draws her readers’ attention to the hybridity that exceeds territorial borders, and Ortiz brings to life the mixing within them. But what of those highly regimented sites that seem to make up the border itself? As numerous scholars have noted, borders, those “unnatural” divisions (Anzaldúa 1987: 25), do indeed exist in the world despite the now long-familiar cries of crumbling sovereignty and borderless globality that have rung out since the 1990s (Heyman 1995; St. John 2011: 5; Yeh 2018: 4). Whatever instrumental failings borders may have as efficacious technologies of mobility governance, they exist as juridical entities, built environments, and spaces of bureaucratic order that have effects in the world. They often do indeed constrain (people and goods, for instance), however variably.

More than that, these borders (much like the borderlands with which they are contrasted) occupy space. Borders aren’t always as thin as Anzaldúa makes them out to be. Given the vagaries of jurisdictional forms and the fictions they create, the spatiality of the border can be quite variable, contracting or thickening depending on context. How else, for example, would it be possible to imagine an immigration inspection station at an interior airport as outside of the United States or a noncitizen indefinitely paroled into the United States as continuing to exist, juridically speaking, outside of the territory (Shachar 2007)?

Borders, moreover, are not merely empty interstitiality. To invoke Ortiz’s metaphor again, the pot’s edges, and what lies between them, as opposed to its simmering interior, are also worth looking at. And while it may be true that the border as process and site does not fit easily with the material entailments of the ajiaco trope, any theory of history’s cooking must reckon with what’s going on at the border—as opposed to merely the borderlands or the interior. So what kind of cooking, if any, is transpiring at the border?

To explore that question, I will be looking at the dynamic encounters of the US immigration border that have emerged in the watery spaces of the northern Caribbean and in its land-based appendages at

Guantánamo Bay. Once an oddity, given the dominance of firm land in imaginaries of territorial sovereignty, the forms and techniques of this maritime migration border have given birth to a new paradigm of migration policing in the aqueous thresholds of the global North (Kahn 2019a; Mountz and Hiemstra 2012). These spaces are ostensibly sites of, at once, bureaucratic sterility and threatening contact. In the northern Caribbean, they are often seen as the meeting point between mobile embodiments of US sovereign power (the Coast Guard vessels and aircraft that patrol these waters) and what have long been imagined within US public culture as “disorderly,” primarily Haitian, subjects of policing and containment (Kahn 2019a). In these fraught spaces of encounter, one finds uneasy interpenetrations of sociocultural forms coded as distinct from one another but also a dynamic polarity of mutual constitution. To illuminate these two aspects of emergent border formations, I argue, it is necessary to recognize their ontological multiplicity, to borrow a phrase from Annemarie Mol (2002), but also their dialectical co-constitution, two conceptual characterizations all too often presented as antithetical to one another. In what follows, I offer a view of border dialectics and the border multiple with the hope of elucidating some of the forms of dynamic, historical “cooking” that may be unfolding in the in-between sites of a world of sovereign nation-states.

Offshore bureaucratic (b)orders

The port and the ship have long been imagined as sites of cosmopolitan connection (James [1953] 2001; Linebaugh and Rediker 2013), conjuring up visions of worldly, although often violent, encounters in the heterogeneous “contact zones” forged through Euro-American empire and capitalist expansion (Pratt 1992: 6). And yet, as Laleh Khalili has noted, the megaports of the globe have been dramatically reshaped over the past century in ways that render them increasingly “inaccessible, invisible, hidden behind the veils of security and bureaucracy and distance” (2020: 3; see also Cowen 2013). Similarly, the US military has sought out increasingly insular naval stations, whether by depopulating islands like Diego Garcia (Vine 2009) or by engineering semiautonomous sea-basing platforms designed to free up the military supply chain archipelago (Bélanger and Arroyo 2012) from the “iron mountain” of unstable littoral port depots (Parker 2010: 16). While such bounded logistics hubs depend on racialized labor regimes to function (Cowen 2013; Khalili

2020; Lipman 2009), the enclaving practices through which they have been rebuilt present a radically different image of the port, and also the ship, than the familiar hodgepodge aesthetic that still lingers in popular imaginings of maritime life.

In the Caribbean, the United States has driven a process of intensifying maritime securitization that combines both enclaved ships and enclaved bases as part of its law enforcement objectives. Part of this increase in US-directed surveillance and direct policing interventions has involved an offshoring of migration control functions typically identified with territorial borders, but which have been extended hundreds of miles outward into international and even foreign territorial seas. The rise of this now global paradigm of human mobility governance developed, in the first instance, as a means of containing what the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) saw as a wave of undesirable Haitian maritime migration in the early 1980s (Kahn 2019a). Today, US maritime migrant interdiction operations in the Caribbean consist of Coast Guard cutter surface patrols overseen by the agency's District 7 offices in Miami, air patrols launched from the Operation Bahamas Turks and Caicos airfield in Inagua (the southernmost island of The Bahamas), and a small-scale detention facility at Guantánamo Bay known officially as the Migrant Operations Center. This policing regime operates largely sequestered both from its target populations—primarily Haitians—and other social and economic milieux outside of its own contained networks of governance and provisioning. Insofar as interactions between the law enforcement personnel of interdiction and the largely Haitian populations it surveils are concerned, there is little here to suggest a setting propitious for the kinds of transculturations Ortiz imagined as taking place within the boundaries of national territories.

Take the patrol craft of this regime. There is a striking contrast between the formality and isolation of the Coast Guard cutters—the vessel type most often used in migrant interdiction operations—conducting surveillance runs and the fluid environment in which they operate. For one, the cutters move across a terraqueous frontier-like space that encompasses sea lanes, ocean expanses, and numerous port cities that, in combination, far exceed the formal lines of territorial demarcation characteristic of the non-places (Augé 1995) of border thresholds (St. John 2011; Yeh 2018). Certainly, they cross juridically significant lines in the sea, lines visible on digital and paper charts depicting the territorial waters of Haiti and other island nations in the region (Rankin 2016; Kahn 2019a). But their zone of operation is also an extended space that

is defined less by fixed linear boundaries than by its overlapping interstitiality. Cargo vessels, tankers, wooden sloops, luxury cruise ships, and Coast Guard vessels of various nations sail this in-between space and their passengers and crew intermingle, to varying degrees, in the cities and towns at the water's edge.

In other words, the vessels that ply these passages dwell for extended periods of time in the realm of Anzaldúa's "sea [that] cannot be fenced" (1987: 25). Oceanic liminality means that the in-between of the system of sovereign nation-states is not restricted here to the "grat[ing]" edge of the "dividing line" of the territorial border (ibid.). Still, the physical isolation of these surveillance craft—the cutters do not seem to make extended port calls in Haiti—bears little resemblance to the borderland fluidity Anzaldúa's aquatic metaphors are meant to evoke. Both physically and socially, cutters appear largely impervious to interactions with the surrounding social environments they police—Haitian coastal towns and cities. Certainly, cutter crews are heterogeneous in class and ethnoracial terms, but they remain intentionally walled off to sustained encounters with those actors deemed exterior to the border apparatus itself—Haitians and other migrants. This is not merely a feature of the cutters' physical sequestration, but also an effect of their status as sites of rigid discipline, specialization, and bureaucratic reason.

Although cutters seem island-like and often range for several weeks at a time without coming into port, they are also always integrated into a wider surveillance network within the border regime itself, one that facilitates continuous communication and coordination with a range of onshore sites, from the an airfield on Great Inagua in the southern Bahamas to the US Naval Base at Guantánamo Bay. While the former augments the surveillance footprint of the cutters with sorties of Jayhawk helicopters that feed information to cutter operations specialists, the latter supplements the detention capacity of the ships, and has done so on a regular basis since 1991 (Kahn 2019a). This is because not all interdictees are destined for rapid transfer to the Bahamas, or a quick, direct return to Cap-Haïtien, Haiti's northern port of choice for repatriations in recent years. Some interdictees are brought, instead, to Guantánamo, where they are held in custody at the base's Migrant Operations Center pending the outcome of an asylum hearing and, in rare cases, resettlement in third countries.

In this sense, Guantánamo is a land-based appendage of the cutters and vice versa, each supplementing the other in this terraqueous border space. Guantánamo, however, is not a mobile military ship, like

the cutter. It is, of course, a base town. As such, its isolation relies not merely on expanses of sea water, but fences and mine fields that wall it off from Cuba, the country with ultimate sovereignty over the territory on which it is built—a formal sovereignty indefinitely held in abeyance as a result of the terms of a lease negotiated under conditions of imperial coercion that grants the US “complete jurisdiction and control” over this forty-five-square mile expanse but not “ultimate sovereignty” (Lipman 2009: 24). In addition to being separated from the rest of Cuba, there is an internal spatiotemporal bordering in effect vis-à-vis the asylum seekers held at the base: procedures of migrant screening have led to relatively short stays —when compared to refugee camps elsewhere (e.g., Malkki 1995)—for the tens of thousands of Haitians who have passed through Guantánamo. When those stays have been prolonged, whether that be with the small numbers held in the HIV quarantine camp between 1992 and 1993 or the larger numbers given “Safe Haven” in 1994 and 1995, confinement to razor wire-encircled tent cities has been the norm (Kahn 2019a; Lindskoog 2018; Loyd and Mountz 2018; Reynolds 2003). Moreover, military commanders have long attempted to regulate contact between the military personnel running the camps and the asylum seekers confined therein.

In more recent years, the numbers of Haitian detainees have dwindled to only a handful at any given time, though they are often, it would seem, permitted to move about the base and, in some instances, to work as they await repatriation or resettlement. Still, Guantánamo is hardly the picture of a typical border town or “middle ground” frontier (White 1991: x). It is a bounded, highly securitized space, subdivided into component spaces of further regimentation, and the Haitians who have found their way there have long been contained, confined, and subject to both militarized policing and bureaucratic sorting in prison-like settings.

What one finds, then, in the northern Caribbean passages patrolled by Coast Guard cutters and in the peripheral outpost that is Guantánamo Bay are rather conventional border institutions within a more amorphous borderland. The cutters, as floating law enforcement sentinels, and Guantánamo, as their detention appendage, are enclaves within this space. Although enclaved, they are porous, albeit in a way that locates them nearer to what would be a pole of impermeability if one were to imagine a broader spectrum of more or less closed “porous enclaves” (Harms 2015: 152) or porous bureaucratic orders (cf. Gershon 2019). At least this is the case insofar as the interactions and exchanges with the targets of their policing power are concerned. If history is cooking here,

as it in some ways surely is, it is transpiring under conditions designed to stymie the types of borderland *mestizaje* so prevalent in other contact zones. Still, these spaces are not hermetically sealed, bounded capsules in a swirling, simmering stew. They are both partially open to their surrounds and partially constitutive of the complex processes unfolding in the wider borderlands of which they are a part. How though, is one to conceptualize this recalcitrant semipermeability and these relations of co-constitution?

The border multiple

The institutions that actualize this US offshore border present themselves, much as all administrative actors and bodies, as devoted to bureaucratic reason. Of course instrumental reason of the bureaucratic type is always embedded in wider cosmological framings (Herzfeld 1992; Sahlins 1976). The weighing of means and ends must rely, after all, on the *value* attributed to certain ends as well as the deontological limits to the use of particular means, both of which exceed instrumental calculation itself. At the same time, bureaucratic reason also exemplifies, for many, its supposed opposites—opacity, obstructionism, and self-defeating formalism (Hoag 2011; Hull 2012; James 2012). Indeed, bureaucratic power is often suffused with magical properties (Giordano 2015) and bureaucratic orders thrive on a fetishization of procedure (Sandvik 2011). Still, “enchantment” has nonetheless long stood out as bureaucracy’s antithesis (Weber 1946; Horkheimer and Adorno [1944] 1997). As such, the quasi-standardized genres of discursive and material repertoires that make something recognizable as bureaucratic also produce a sense that there are other repertoires—like magic—that are foreign to and incommensurable with them.

It should be no surprise then that when Haitian ontological commitments to the efficacy of other-than-human forces (de la Cadena 2010) appear within the bureaucratized space of a Coast Guard cutter or within the camps of Guantánamo Bay, they are marked as alien by those charged with governing such regimes. This alterity is further enhanced by the spatial practices of maritime policing and offshore migrant detention. Cutters, as I have noted, remain isolated from those they surveil and Guantánamo operates as a largely hidden enclave inaccessible to most. Perhaps more importantly, however, these spatial distinctions are enhanced by longer-durée imaginaries of Haitian alterity within

racializing US visions of threatening migrant populations and the association of Haitian ontologies—including, but not limited to, Haitian Vodou—with irrational “superstition” (Dash 1997; Glick-Schiller and Fouron 2001; Kahn 2019a; Stepick 1998; Ulysse 2015).

While dominant imaginaries of bureaucratic reason and Haitian mystical alterity establish a binary of military rationality and primitive mysticism, Haitian magic and Coast Guard planning nevertheless appear in proximity to one another in the day-to-day operations of migration policing. Consider this snippet from an interview I conducted with a cutter officer recalling the screening of Haitian interdictees on his vessel’s flight deck prior to their transfer to The Bahamas:

[T]he second group definitely claimed that the trip was all put together by this lady. They had a name for her, [but] I don’t remember her name. [She] was, for lack of a better word, the pimp of sorts who organizes this illicit activity. . . . This lady threatened them; she put voodoo hexes on them; told them if they came back they would die, they would, you know, be cursed, you know, all those sorts of things.

The officer was careful to note that claims to this effect were consistent among the interdictees. I had been embedded with this same cutter as an observer a week prior to the patrol that led to this interdiction, and the Haitian-American interpreter who rotated out partway through my stint aboard the vessel had also mentioned that similar statements had been made by those interdicted on a previous patrol. Although the officer asserted no judgment with regard to these “hexes,” a hint of embarrassment could be detected as he strayed into what was likely an uncomfortable topic for someone more at home discussing patrol tactics than Haitian ritual esoterica.

What exactly this talk of “hexes” is about, however, is not entirely clear. My own interlocutors on the northern coast of Haiti, the likely point of departure for these vessels, seemed to think that this type of magical coercion would be unnecessary to dissuade potential informers given the expectation that norms of silence vis-à-vis the identity of smugglers are more efficiently and effectively enforced with physical violence in Haiti—whether directed at the informer upon their return or at their family members left behind. Nonetheless, this reference to hexes is consistent with Haitian idioms of *pwen*—a Haitian Kreyòl term that Karen McCarthy Brown has glossed as a “ritual condensation,” often an object but sometimes an utterance, that brings human and other-than-human

“energies” into an “exquisite focus” necessary to engender transformations in the world both salubrious and pernicious (Brown 1996: 67; see also Richman 2005). Regardless of what these Haitian interdictees were actually referring to—and acknowledging such statements may have been deformed in translation or may have been fabricated by the Haitian interdictees to avoid answering questions from Coast Guard intelligence officials—the officer’s allusion to “hexes” and “curses” conjures up a world of Haitian magic within the sphere of the cutter. Out of place as it may have seemed to the crew and officers, this magic had apparently arrived onboard.

Consider, also, the following archival trace from the early days of formalized migrant detention at Guantánamo Bay. In December of 1991, thousands of Haitians were being held on McCalla Airfield, an abandoned asphalt runway on the southwestern portion of the windward side of the base. Following the ouster of Haiti’s first democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and the violent repression of his supporters, the US Coast Guard encountered a dramatic surge in boats leaving Haiti. Due to legal entanglements that initially prevented quick repatriations, the Coast Guard cutters tasked to interdict these vessels were rapidly overloaded with asylum seekers. Rather than simply offload the Haitians on US soil, the cutters eventually brought them to Guantánamo where the INS hoped they would be able to carry out their screening interviews without the intervention of US courts.

As one might expect, these Haitian asylum seekers were not pleased to be warehoused on the hot tarmac of an abandoned airfield, uncertain as to whether they would be returned to the violence they had fled or permitted to move onward to the United States. On December 14, detainees rose up in protest and took control of one of the camps. The following day, they attempted to break out of the airfield’s concertina wire boundaries. According to an official Marine Corps history of the incident, on the night of the fifteenth the following transpired:

The migrants conducted what appeared to be a voodoo ritual. Some wrapped themselves in white sheets and walked to the four corners of their compound, which represented the four corners of the earth, to consult with the spirits. They then drew strength from the earth by lying down on the ground near what appeared to be a makeshift voodoo shrine. (A voodoo shrine typically includes representations of Christian and voodoo religious figures and other objects shrouded

in symbolic meaning, such as candles or glass jars). The general and his staff worried the next step might be a blood sacrifice of some sort. One officer thought some of the Haitians believed that a sacrifice would hasten the arrival of the “magical bird” that would take them to Florida. Another officer remembered hearing a threat by the malcontents to start throwing babies over the fence if their demands were not met within 48 hours. Still there was some semblance of order in the camp. (Reynolds 2003: 14)

What to make of this?

In one sense, the reportage exhibits a typical exoticizing attunement to the whiff of any salacious Haitian ritual activity and a recycling of well-worn tropes of human sacrifice that harken back to racist nineteenth-century accounts of Haiti—in particular, the publicity surrounding the *Affaire de Bizoton*, an alleged case of ritual murder taken up and amplified by foreign commentators eager to besmirch Haiti’s international reputation (Ramsey 2011: 84). Still, this trace in the archive tells us something a bit more interesting than the fact that the brigadier general running the camps and his staff were not immune to stereotypes of Haitian alterity.

Whatever actually transpired on the night of December 15, 1991, it would seem some sort of ritual did take place, which is also unsurprising. Life does not cease to be lived once one steps into a detention camp, even at Guantánamo. What is more interesting, though, is that here one finds an instance of ritual that is deemed not merely extraneous to the functioning of this bureaucracy of containment—that is, something alien to the instrumental processes of maintaining the border and the order of the camps—but, for many, something ontologically incommensurable with reasoned governance more generally.

To grasp the anxiety this incident seems to have provoked, one must position it within a wider context of the widespread and longstanding denigration of Haitian ritual practice (Ramsey 2011; Ulysse 2015), a context that includes, for instance, the former Mission Director of the US Agency for International Development in Haiti’s repeated, public attempts over many decades to convince US publics that “voodoo” is simply incompatible with “western development” (see, e.g., Harrison 2010). At Guantánamo, an appendage of the US offshore border, this presumed incommensurability of worlds crops up once again in the form of ritual expressions, which, whatever they may have been, emerged as a part of the border but also, as the tone of the above-quoted archival trace makes

clear, alien to it. Moreover, they did so within the official history of the camps.

The “hexes” that follow interdicted Haitians aboard a cutter and the “rituals” that unfolded in Camp McCalla at Guantánamo Bay are not the only instances of this co-present incommensurability. Over the years, my interlocutors have shared stories of bottled ablutions carried onto the base for purposes of passing asylum-screening interviews; shape-shifting, more-than-human beings known as *lougarwou* wandering the McCalla Field camps in human form by day and animal form by night; extensive Vodou healing ceremonies in Guantánamo’s HIV quarantine camp; and the intercession of the *spirits (lwa)* of the Vodou pantheon on migration voyages at sea. Again, although regimented, regulated, and bounded, the spaces of the border apparatus are not devoid of these interpenetrations.

One might presume that the total institutional character (Goffman 1961) of these transitory spaces constrain the possibility of emergent, hybrid social forms, at least insofar as the contributions from hyperregulated populations are concerned. How, then, is one to understand these intercalations? One possibility, following the ajiaco metaphor again, would be to construe these eruptions as the moment where new ingredients are deposited on the surface of a cooking borderscape but not yet integrated into the stew itself, an analogy I find less than compelling.

Another way of handling these entangled arrangements of social forms would be to recognize certain elements as variably foregrounded or backgrounded in numerous social constructions of a single, objective border reality. Sociologist Annemarie Mol would call this approach “perspectivalism” (2002: 12). What the cutters are and what transpires on them, for instance, would be one thing for the Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security brass, and White House officials and another thing for the Haitians who encounter them on their journeys northward, although the underlying reality each position describes remains the same. The Coast Guard perspective would deemphasize (or background) the relevance of “hexes” and “curses” as hints of irrational superstition impinging on bureaucratic space. Haitians, in turn, *might* foreground these elements as effective magic that are central to understanding what is transpiring on Haitian sloops and Coast Guard cutters. A similar structure of perspectives could be imagined as existing at Guantánamo Bay with regard to the camp rituals. Mol’s version of perspectivalism, when applied here, would suggest there are two, or a potentially infinite variety of, constructions of a singular border reality. Various constructions (or constructions of constructions) could be

evaluated, in turn, based on the fidelity with which they capture an underlying reality that always remains the same, however many representations of it proliferate.

Mol, among others (de la Cadena 2010; Viveiros de Castro 2005), has objected to the way perspectivalism figures a singular ontological referent (nature) antecedent to interpretation (culture) and how it neglects the “enactment” (Mol 2002: 32) of reality through “sociomaterial practices” (ibid.: 6). In place of the epistemological underpinnings of perspectivalism, which is often concerned with how well a representation matches the underlying reality it denotes, Mol offers a version of ontology in which the social scientist shifts attention from representation to how an object is “enacted,” or “done” (ibid.: 6–7, 36). She uses the case of atherosclerosis—a condition of the blood vessels—to illustrate her method, demonstrating how this disease is enacted as a different object in the laboratory (excised cross-sections of vessels), the clinic (descriptions of pain and physical examinations), and the operating room (plaque removed from vessel walls), although it bears the same name across these spaces. The different “doings” of atherosclerosis are not just different representations, but, instead, instances in which separate, although not entirely distinct, atheroscleroses are brought into being. What is not emerging in these sites, Mol says, is a series of *interpretations* of a single object. Atherosclerosis—or diabetes, or tuberculosis—is, instead, multiple.

Different enactments may be multiple, for Mol, but they are not, as I mentioned, entirely distinct, and it is this rendering of “multiplicity” that has the potential to offer a way of talking about and understanding the border interdigitations I have been discussing. As Mol puts it, the body that interests her and which is enacted in the clinic and the laboratory is “more than one—but less than many” (ibid.: 55). By this Mol means that what is enacted as atherosclerosis in the pathology lab (stained slides of tissue samples) and in the clinic (talk about pain and physical examinations of the leg) consist of sets of phenomena that are not identical but which are not exclusive of one another either. There is overlap in what is being enacted.

Consider the following juxtaposition illustrated abstractly in Figures 1 and 2. Mol’s version of perspectivalism postulates a “plurality” (a term of art she uses in contrast to multiplicity) of *representations* of a single set of phenomena. This is represented in Figure 1 in which one can see two constructions (Representation 1 and Representation 2) of one array of referents. One could render the diagram more concrete by substituting

actual representations, such as different “social constructions” of the disease atherosclerosis. What is important, though, is that the relevant difference here exists at the level of construction, or interpretation, which I have identified in Figure 1 as manifesting at the level of representations—hence the two different representations listed. If one looks to the level of the referents, the set of elements are identical for Representations 1 and 2. What one is seeing in this diagram are two different *constructions* of a single reality.

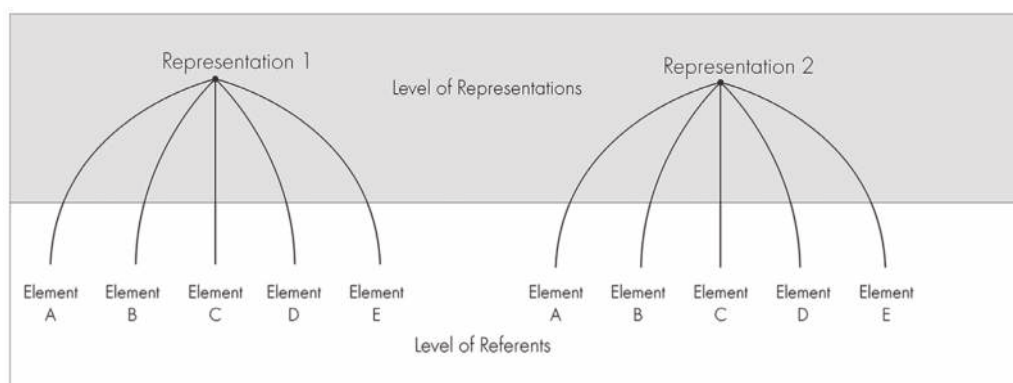


Figure 1: Abstract representation of “perspectivalism” containing two representations of a single reality.

Multiplicity, by contrast, may involve a single *named* phenomenon (in Mol’s case, again, atherosclerosis), but it will have different, although *not entirely different*, sets of referents assembled along with it. In Figure 2, for instance, one can see the shared and diverging sets of elements grouped under a single name (Name “A”) used to identify two entities (Entities 1 and 2). To be clear, these elements are not some prediscursive real. They are enacted—or assembled or gathered. They are not a nature that remains impervious to culture. Moreover, they may be sociomaterial entities and practices themselves that assemble other sets of referents along with them. What is key is that the referents gathered under a given sign—here, the Name “A” shared by Entities 1 and 2—are not entirely distinct; they overlap, allowing, at times, the different entities *qua* assemblages to “hang together” (Mol 2002: 84).

This articulation of multiplicity is useful for clarifying one mode through which forms—material or otherwise—intercalate when assembled under a concept or a related array of practices. With regard to the US offshore immigration border in the northern Caribbean, its enactments may include, for example, concertina wire, hardback tents, cutter

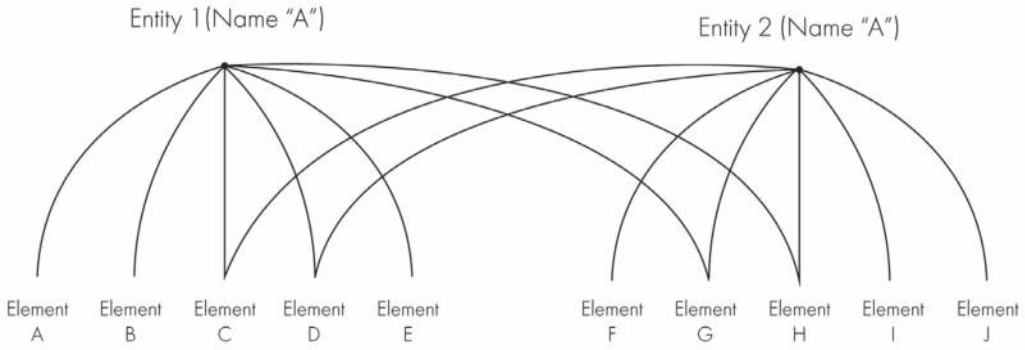


Figure 2: Abstract representation of ontological multiplicity. Entities 1 and 2 bear the same name (“A”) but assemble different elements, although not entirely distinct sets of elements. “A” is multiple.

decks, legal opinions, administrative guidance, and Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) surveillance technology, but not pwen, Vodou deities, and related rituals. Another border enactment might include concertina wire, cutter decks, pwen, and Vodou deities. A third might include concertina wire, hardback tents, cutter decks, legal opinions, administrative guidance, FLIR surveillance technology, pwen, and Vodou deities, although the pwen and the deities may be imagined, and so enacted, differently than in the second enactment. Figure 3 depicts this (overly simplified) array in a similar manner to the purely abstract illustration in Figure 2. One can see the different “doings” of the offshore border and how they interdigitate elements *marked* as “alien to” or “belonging with” one another. Each enactment (Border 1, Border 2, and Border 3) brings into existence a different, although not entirely different, border. The border is multiple.

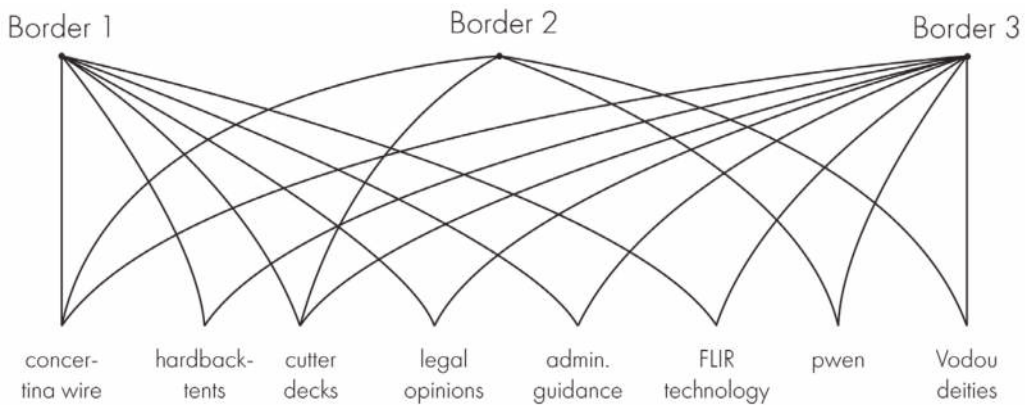


Figure 3: Model of border multiplicity. Each border (1, 2, and 3) assembles different, although not entirely different, sets of elements in its enactment.

In thinking through these forms of mutual imbrication, one is forced to move beyond the homely and romantic metaphor of the *ajiaco* and its pot. For one, the brief temporality of these interactions and the densely scripted context in which they occur are not obvious sites for the types of “cooking” Ortiz imagined. What we see here is less an *ajiaco* than a meeting of oil and water in which ostensibly incommensurable elements are copresent without appearing to mix.

The concept of multiplicity offers a way to illuminate the porosity of social orders without resorting to metaphors of melting or stewing, which, when applied to the contexts I have been describing, radiate potentially misleading connotations of mutual absorption. To be certain, Mol’s own characterization of what she is up to with multiplicity and enactments is a bit more ambitious than I have let on here—like other, quite different, versions of the ontological turn, she claims to have moved away from epistemology and its subject/object binary (2002: 5, 50; cf. Henare, Holbraad, and Wastell 2007). While I am skeptical that Mol has transcended representation, the version of multiplicity I have provided here allows one to see some of the nuance of how forms may interpenetrate one another even while “intentional hybridi[zation]” (Palmié 2013b: 467; Bakhtin 1981)—the deliberate incorporation of heterogeneous elements into ritual, linguistic, or other repertoires—remains strictly anathema, as is the case in highly regimented settings like cutters and detention camps.

Scholars of borders cannot ignore these instances in which the “a bit of this, a bit of that” (Brenneis 2013: 370) quality of contact zone assemblages exists as a multiplicity of mutual imbrication in which overlapping arrangements of referents may bear the same name without being identical (again, see Figure 3). Perhaps this is how the early moments of any cooking of history manifests itself in hyperdisciplined contexts bent on stymieing hybridization. I am not sure if that is the type of stewing Ortiz had in mind, however, when imagining the “*olla cubana*,” the “Cuban pot” (Palmié 2013a: 101) that holds the *ajiaco* of Cubanidad. What I do know is that by drawing on a version of Mol for inspiration, one can visualize and conceptualize a porosity that is characterized by overt, visible forms of multiplicity under conditions in which certain types of hybridization are resisted. At the same time, such a rendering of the border multiple is insufficiently attuned to less visible forms of oppositional mutual influence and, even more importantly, their historical dynamism, a topic to which I now turn.

Border dialectics

Nearly all policing exhibits an inherently oppositional dynamic (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006), one often described in terms of the relation of hunter and prey (Andersson 2014). Moreover, it is mutually influencing. In the remaining pages, I argue that the dynamism of the border policing being carried out in the northern Caribbean—and, to be sure, in other aqueous sites across the globe—is not fully visible to the analytic frame of ontological multiplicity. To see it and to discuss it, one needs more than a sense of performative enactments. One needs to be attuned to the dialectics of mutual shaping that emerge in the relations of migration-control policing forged in the waters around Haiti.

In certain circles, dialectical methods, much like “critique” (Latour 2004), have become unfashionable. More to the point, the ontological multiplicity that Mol elaborates in her work was meant to substitute for a dialectical approach said to cling to the essential duality of subjects and objects. Nowhere is this rejection of dialectics more clear than in the work of Bruno Latour, who regards dialectical reasoning as little more than an endless drawing of “loops and spirals and other complex acrobatic figures” to overcome the dualism of nature and culture—an attempt, he argues, that further reifies the polarity it seeks to overcome (1993: 55). As Latour explained nearly three decades ago, dialectics “enlarges the abyss that separates the Object pole from the Subject pole” while attempting to abolish it (*ibid.*: 57). In lieu of poles that transform from one into the other, Latour offers something else—quasi-objects and quasi-subjects that exist below and between such dualisms (*ibid.*: 51). These “hybrids”—the hole in the ozone layer, genetically modified organisms, cyborgs—he tells us, are not products of an oscillating polarity. They are hopelessly knotted threads of “nature” and “culture” that dialectics, and other efforts at what he calls “purification,” struggle to see (*ibid.*: 50, 55).

In many ways, Mol’s ontological multiplicity is an offspring and elaboration of Latour’s antidialectics. The depictions of the border multiple to which I have been gesturing and Latour’s articulation of quasi-objectivity/quasi-subjectivity as a substitute for dialectical analysis are, however, insufficiently dynamic to capture the histories unfolding in the US/Haiti border zone. Or, rather, they are insufficiently dynamic in the right way.² An attention to the flux and mutually penetrating forces—as

2. Latour and Mol are, of course, not antihistorical: they are interested in change (that is what translation and enactment is about, after all), but the

opposed to pure, polarized categories—that dialectical analysis elucidates (more on this in a moment), can, however, illuminate what is unfolding in the maritime borderlands of the northern Caribbean. This is in large part because the development of these borderscapes has been shaped by a play of opposing forces between those who surveil and those surveilled.

As I have described elsewhere (Kahn 2019a, 2019b), Haitian migration voyages come in an array of types. Some involve high fees and fast-moving motorized vessels darting between the north of Haiti, the southern Bahamas, and the Turks and Caicos Islands (St. Jacques 2011). Others involve concealing human cargo in lawfully circulating vessels, including the steel freighters that regularly travel between ports in South Florida, The Bahamas, and Haiti. The most iconic form of smuggling, however, involves illicit voyages in wooden sailing vessels organized by professional racketeers or, in rarer instances, amateur groups of consociates—often sailors from a single community.

In the years after interdiction's launch in 1981, would-be organizers of smuggling ventures have come to accept that long-distance clandestine voyages on wooden sloops—the fore-and-aft rigged vessels also used for coasting and interisland trade throughout Haiti—will come to naught without the assistance of nefarious, other-than-human entities known widely as *djab* (Kahn 2019b). These *djab*, which are distinguishable from the canonized spirits, or *lwa*, of the Vodou pantheon, render vessels invisible to Coast Guard cutters, aircraft, and satellites, engulfing them in mist or making them appear to those scanning the water like waves breaking over a reef. The *djab* provide a degree of situational awareness and potential unrestrained mobility that exceeds human capacities. Organizers have to prenegotiate for these services, usually through a ritual intermediary and for a price. The emergence of this new role for *djab*, entities that have long been present in Haiti, is a direct result of the development over the past forty or so years of what many perceive to be a nearly omniscient US and Bahamian capacity to surveil the water routes of the northern Caribbean.

In the north of Haiti—long one of the key departure points for smuggling ventures—migration vessels are for the most part bound for The Bahamas. One young man, Amos, an experienced participant in multiple clandestine voyages and a captain of a small sail ferry that carries

quasi-object illuminates, primarily, a synchronic arrangement, the time frame of enactment tends to be of limited scope, and the aversion to dialectics hides as much as it reveals.

passengers and supplies on Haiti's northwest coast, mirrored other sailors in insisting to me that having a djab accompany voyages of these kinds is a necessity. *Angajman* (agreements) with djab are mediated by a *bòkò* (sorcerer), he explained, and require careful negotiations followed by specific ritual interventions, including depositing *bagay mistik* (enchanted objects) into the sea at prescribed times. Such negotiations and many other ritual aspects of the *angajman* are executed in secret. More visible are the use of scarves provided by a *bòkò* and wielded by those who carry them at moments of potential calamity. "You can arrive somewhere and a [patrol boat] shines a light on you, and you brandish the scarf, and the light dies out," Amos recounted. "That's something *mistik* [magical] revealing itself," he added. Although objects like this are usually referred to as *pwen* (Richman 2005), distinctions are made between items used as part of an *angajman* with a djab and those that operate with their own forces, so to speak, distinct from djab. I have heard repeatedly that simple *pwen* (that is, those unrelated to a djab) are not only less potent than djab but are also a different type of entity altogether. While these kinds of terminological distinctions vary regionally, what is clear is that there is a general sense that certain materialized forces are inadequate when it comes to migration voyages while other entities, frequently described as djab, are seen as efficacious.

Without the protection of djab, success is unlikely. If you end up out at sea, and the "hunter' plane [a Bahamian or US surveillance aircraft], if it's flying, [and] you don't have the magic to deal with it," Amos explained, "you've lost A patrol vessel will be waiting for you." There is a broad consensus around this idea of the indispensability of djab in migration voyages. I encountered it time and again throughout the northern and southwestern coasts of Haiti over the course of more than a decade and a half of fieldwork. Smugglers from the North and Northwest are resigned to the fact that coming into contact with US air and sea patrols is inevitable for anyone attempting to reach Nassau or other points beyond the southern fringe of the Bahamian archipelago by sail freighter. To elude detection, the organizers of migration voyages must enhance their capacities by enlisting the assistance of djab.

On the opposite side of Haiti, out on the tip of the southwestern peninsula that extends below Cuba's southern coast, the migration economies are entrenched in a different physical geography than those operating in the north—one less dependent on The Bahamas—but the djab are equally indispensable (if not more so). One organizer of a small-scale migration voyage from the early 2000s put it in simple terms: "you

cannot go without a djab.” Another fisher and repatriated asylum seeker who had made a voyage attempt in the mid-1990s amplified this by making it clear that *pwen* would not suffice; one needed the help of a djab to have any chance at all. At some point over the years since US maritime migrant interdiction operations began, the sense that djab play an integral role in bypassing the surveillance gauntlet of the US offshore immigration border had become common knowledge for anyone slightly in the know. Indeed, organizers market their ventures with this in mind, bragging about past successes in relation to their ties to efficacious djab.

Border magic is clearly not some static survival from a primordial past but a set of practices that have responded to the changing limits and possibilities of Haitian maritime mobility under conditions of political instability (Beckett 2019; James 2010; Kivland 2020) and intensifying border securitization (Kahn 2019a). The whole ritual economy that surrounds these voyages is inseparable from the historical dynamism of hunting and dodging that both the cutters and the smugglers engage in across Caribbean seascapes. The use of djab, then, is an extreme, and relatively new, response to a perceived intensification of foreign policing power in the waters around Haiti, itself a response to the opening of maritime migration routes between Haiti and the United States in the 1970s.³

To engage djab is a serious matter. These nefarious spirits are costly to work with in both moral and economic terms.⁴ As Amos put it, when one goes to *bòkò* for help with migration voyages, they ask not for an animal sacrifice, which are typical in many ritual exchanges, but for a *bèf san plim*—a “hairless bull,” the euphemism for a human being. Organizers can push back and reject such demands, but I have heard it repeated that doing so dooms a voyage, a fact that leads many to assume such dealings have taken place in secret. Adding to this sense of hidden machinations, the details of any given djab contract circulate almost exclusively in the domain of rumor, and the supposed provisioning of the djab is itself shrouded in mystery: the djab is said to take the promised individuals in its own way and in its own time—through illness or accident or other means (a fact that makes this “taking” different from the “sacrifice” that camp officials feared at Guantanamo). Moreover, this kind of “sacrifice”

3. While an earlier group of Haitians did arrive in the United States by boat in the 1960s, repeated boat voyages did not begin until the 1970s.

4. For further details on the moral implications of djab contracts and the difference between *lwa* and djab, see Kahn 2019a. Karen Richman (2005) has also written on similar topics, albeit in a different ritual setting.

for the purpose of self-advancement is considered outside the bounds of legitimate ritual practice. As such, it is impossible to ignore the emotional impact that this commonly held assumption vis-à-vis the human cost of contemporary migration voyages must have on those imagining such exits from Haiti. The turn to *djab* indicates, in other words, an unfortunate but seemingly obligatory *escalation* in tactics in which other, less costly forms of magic and other-than-human assistance are seen as either inapposite or insufficiently potent. As such, it reflects a polarizing dynamism in which the competitive searching and eluding of this borderscape have coemerged in opposition to one another.

Because migration and border policing in the northern Caribbean is an unevenly evolving, unstable *contest*, it is necessary to approach its processes with a dialectical approach capable of illuminating the border's palpable oppositions and transformations. As David Harvey has noted, "[i]n the dialectical view, opposing forces, themselves constituted out of processes, in turn become particular nodal points for further patterns of transformative activity" (1996: 54). Far from positing pure, preexisting polarities, this dialectical perspective recognizes how things, processes, and forces are, at times, "*constituted as oppositions*" (ibid.: 54, emphasis added) that appear as "permanences," a concept Harvey borrows from Alfred Whitehead (ibid.: 55). A range of "transformative activities", in others words, "congeal" (ibid.: 55, 54) to give form to a sense of opposition, itself constituted through a relational process in which apparent polarities take in the forms against which they are counterposed, effectively operating within one another.

Engaging with these border dynamics dialectically illuminates a type of mutual interpenetration of forms and an ongoing relational *dynamism* that is not captured in the notion of multiplicity described earlier.⁵ At a multidecade scale, the rise of maritime migration policing, the reformatting of Haitian ritual practice in response, and the continual adaptation of policing tactics have shaped one another. Even in time scales of the short term (weeks, as opposed to decades), cutter crews and smugglers are engaged in mutually influencing performances, tactical shifts, and interpretive speculation.

Take, for instance, the following mutual recalibration of tactical maneuvering among the Coast Guard and Haitian smugglers. After

5. Even if multiplicity is about practice and enactment—processual terms—it does not dwell on the oppositional dynamism I have sought to capture here.

I joined a cutter patrol as an observer in 2017, one of the officers on-board explained the shifts in on-the-water situational knowledge that had unfolded over the course of their assignment to maritime migrant interdiction operations off of Haiti: “we were running around slow at night [at first], looking at what we thought would be . . . exit points,” but later “we learned from the ships, the sail freighters, that had been making it, or were caught, when they left, how long it took to make it, and then we figured out when they went by our area.” This intelligence, in turn, led to an effort to discern patterns in the muddle of ship departures and, eventually, to a decision to rearrange patrols with the goal of creating what the upper echelons of the officer hierarchy on the cutter thought was a more appropriate configuration of air and surface patrols. Similarly, Haitians observe the cutters as they make intentionally performative (for deterrence purposes) appearances close to shore, head out to sea, and even appear elsewhere down the coast. With this counterintelligence, voyage organizers create their own sense of cutter surveillance itineraries that they then use in scheduling their own migration voyage departures. Because the layers of surveillance are deep (Kahn 2019a: 232), they still must turn to other-than-human forces to guide them, and it stands to reason that such ritual processes play a role in the planning as well. Actors on both sides of the border, in other words, observe, imagine, and respond to one another in what amounts to relations of mutual recalibration.

Because the US offshore border regime and the smuggling assemblages that seek to subvert them are locked in this mutually influencing relation of competition, each set of actors operates both in opposition to one another but also, as it were, within one another. Each time a cutter shifts its patrol coverage in response to changes in Haitian launch patterns and routes (suspected or actually observed); each time the Coast Guard details more assets to the waters around Haiti and Haitians respond with an increase in departures (something that occurred during the early 1990s); each time Coast Guard vessels encounter a Haitian sloop and Haitians have boarded that sloop, in part, because of the hope that the organizers are operating with the assistance of other-than-human entities who can circumvent the cutters; each time this oppositional dynamic unfolds, the border apparatus and the smuggling assemblages transform themselves by imagining, and thus taking into themselves, the presumed thoughts and actions of their ostensible antagonists. This co-constitution is variable in degree and kind—in fact, it is difficult to trace with any certainty at all. But it is indisputably there. At the most basic

level, it is hard to deny that if Haitian migrants were not taking to the sea, there would not be a similar need for the cutters to be policing these waters hundreds of miles from US shores—at least not in the way they do now. And if the cutters were not surveilling and patrolling these waters with the intensity that they do, the need to enlist *djab* would not be what it is presumed to be.

This competition yields deeper mutual inflections as well. The offshoring of the border, as noted earlier, involved a search for sovereign freedom. The US Immigration and Naturalization Service, stymied by lawsuits filed by Haitian asylum seekers on US soil, moved seaward in order to throw off the shackles of legal constraint, a move justified by long-existing doctrinal commitments within US jurisprudence that construe border spaces as exceptional sites *vis-à-vis* typical rule of law norms (Kahn 2019a). Although produced through law—and deeply legalistic in its self-ordering—the offshore border’s liberation from the constraining legalities of US domestic law mimicked, to an extent, the type of lawlessness the US immigration bureaucracy imagined as characteristic of its Haitian targets. At the same time, Haitian smugglers’ enlistment of *djab* reproduced the presumed omniscience and unhindered mobility of the Coast Guard cutters they sought to evade. In this process, one finds hints of the mutual redefinitions that Jean and John Comaroff have described in relation to a postcolonial dialectics of law and dis/order, whereby criminality takes on characteristics of the neoliberal governance regimes that seek to regulate it and vice versa (2006: 5). Here, however, what emerges is a border dialectic of sovereign exclusion and aspirational mobility explicitly self-constituted in terms of a competitive bipolarity of the police and the policed within the aquatic interstices of national sovereign divides.

To examine this dynamic bipolarity is not to accede to an ontology of pure, oppositional categories. This is so even if the actors involved in this dynamic of searching, chasing, evading, and capture espouse an ontological duality within these border games. Still, it is significant that this borderland space is organized to an extent around a professed border antithesis of insides and outsides, police and policed. In recognizing the mutual influence that such a dialectic generates, however ambiguous, one can also reject its own terms of distinction, its dividing lines, its alterity-generating essentialisms. In its place there exists a large-scale formation in which cutters and smugglers are more mutually entangled than the border events at sea and boundary fences of Guantánamo might indicate. More than that though, it is a processual, mutual reformatting, but

it is processual in a particular way—its movement is inextricable from its structure as an oppositional dynamic.

Conclusion

Border spaces, as threshold sites of national insides and outsides, are often characterized by an intentional insularity that they share with the boundedness and regimentation of other total institutions. Such practices of self-isolation (vis-à-vis wider social worlds) are expressive acts designed, in the instance of migration control, to mark juridically defined boundaries (however thick and disaggregated they may become) as distinct from the seeping borderland formations that overflow and surround them. These are anxious sites where wider notions of the viability of the sovereign state form and the national “culture” it houses (Anderson 1991)—the existence of which is presumed even in Ortiz’s own notion of a transculturated *Cubanidad*—play out, often in media-tized, deeply performative displays (Andersson 2014).

The hyperregulated structure of such border institutions and their multiscale acts of boundary maintenance (from the microlevel of bodily discipline to larger scale transformations of the built environment) make them difficult to study as sites of contact and mixing. How so? Well, on the one hand, one might assume they would be the most obvious sites of the historical cooking Ortiz has described because of their position at the interstices of national spaces (cf. Heyman 2012). And yet, they are also the least likely sites for discernible transculturation because of their regimentation, their compressed temporalities (turnover and duration of contact is meant to be short), and their materially and juridically engineered sequestration.

Of course, border institutions are never perfect manifestations of whatever designs gave birth to them. They do not exist as ideal expressions of pure bureaucratic reason and discipline. In thinking about the unintended porosity of border spaces, the version of ontological multiplicity and dialectical analysis I have been elaborating can be a useful conceptual tool to shed light on such “imperfections” (a term I use ironically). There is something to be said for the forms of interdigitation that are part of the idea of the border multiple. Bits of enactments marked as core elements of the US migration control regime itself and those coded as “Haitian” emerge together, occupying the same space both physically and discursively—the latter apparent from the eruption of “voodoo”

rituals, “hexes,” and “curses” in official accounts of a border apparatus within which such forms stand out as alien irrationality. Rather than a plurality of constructions of a singular, unchanging reality, what exists out on the waterways of the northern Caribbean is a multiplicity of enactments that intercalate forms marked as part of US border institutions and those marked as extraneous to it.

Moreover, these sociomaterial configurations assembled at sea and at Guantánamo are not identical, but they are also not entirely distinct. While Mol prefers the imagery of objects sitting “side by side” (2002: 149) when describing how enactments hang together, in the case of the terraqueous border of the northern Caribbean, one can say that these assemblages overlap and interpenetrate. Perhaps we would be stretching the metaphor of the *ajiaco* too thin to account for such multiplicities.

The lens of border multiplicity is not, as I have argued, dynamic enough to account for what is going on in these confrontations. Or rather, it is not dynamic in the right way. Emphasizing enactments is about emphasizing process, certainly. But its antipathy toward dualism renders it less attuned to the tensions of professed polar dynamisms, which is problematic given that many border enactments organize themselves around an escalating play of opposing forces. The hunting and evading of the maritime borderlands generates an oppositional relation that dialectical thinking is calibrated to illuminate. Rather than reifying the binaries of police and policed, US border institutions and Haitian migrants, border dialectics homes in on the way each takes its ostensible other into itself in an ongoing co-constitution.

To return to Ortiz, whose work is both the subject of this volume and whose *ajiaco* metaphor has served, here, as a productive goad to ponder the challenges of conceptualizing the manifold ways history is cooked, it is worth noting that we should, perhaps, not force any single metaphor to bear the weight of an entire field of conceptual possibilities. The *ajiaco*, after all, was innovative when conceived and has been wonderfully productive in the hands of Stephan Palmié, whose pragmatic semiotic elaboration of the concept has given it new life. Metaphors are tools of analysis tailored for specific tasks, after all, and Ortiz’s target of analysis was national interiors and the many-layered stew churning within them, not the in-between spaces of a global system of sovereign nation-states. Quite simply, neither the lip of the *olla* (the pot) in which the *ajiaco* cooks nor the spaces in between the edges of these national caldrons—the *olla cubana* being only one—took center stage for Ortiz.

In the end, perhaps Ortiz merely selected the wrong metaphorical pot. Rather than the *olla cubana*, he might have chosen something larger in scope: a frame closer in scale to Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* (1993), for example, with its expansive shift to a sea-spanning space of counter-cultural formations, an *olla atlántica*, in other words. Certainly, a frame is needed that is capacious enough to render visible the border multiplicity and border dialectics I have been parsing. Of course, other, more terraqueous and atmospheric metaphors are at hand as well, like Elizabeth Deloughrey's tidalectics (2007: 2) (an elaboration of poet Kamau Brathwaite's concept of the same name), with its tidal metaphor and its cyclical, as opposed to teleological, dialectics; Stephan Palmié's "weather systems" as analogies for "processual constellations" (2007b: 297); or Tiffany Lethabo King's evocation of the shoal (2019), an offshore space of liminal materiality and shifting emergence, neither fully terrestrial nor fully aquatic. Certainly, questions of tropic choice are at times about taste, to wield another culinary metaphor. At other moments, the choice is more consequential. And to select the appropriate utensil, one must have appropriate utensils at hand—ones designed to bring to the surface something worth seeing, like multiplicity or dialectical dynamism, in the murk of our cooked existence.

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Strategies of dealing with the other

Coexistence and exclusion

Glenn Bowman

Menorca, where Fernando Ortiz was raised, has historically been a locus of potential maritime crossings. As such it can be seen as emblematic of the tensions that have long afflicted Mediterranean regions where Jews, Christians, and Muslims are brought into contact. A short review of Menorca's history more than reveals these tensions.

Occupied by Christian and Jewish communities, the latter by the second century CE (Mound 1997: 175), the island by the fifth century was noted—by the bishop who would destroy it—as having a Christian-Jewish history of “warm civility ... [marked by] the sinful appearance of ... longstanding affection” (Severus, cited in Abulafia 1994: 14). By the early fifth century Bishop Severus had organized Iamo (later Ciutadella) into a “Christian stronghold” (Hunt 1982: 108) set off against Mago (now Mahón), itself notable for a mixed community of Jews and Christians with several Jews in powerful and prestigious positions. In 418 CE, inspired by the recent arrival on the island of the relics of Jerusalem's Saint Stephen, Severus mobilized a mob of Iamo's Christians to attack Mago, burning its synagogue and eventually forcing the island's entire Jewish population to convert to Roman Christianity (Hunt 1982: 109-13; Shaw 2011: 304, 436-37, 474).

Thirty-seven years later the Arian Vandals conquered Menorca, holding the island for eighty years for what Merrils and Miles call “purely

strategic reasons” (Merrills and Miles 2010: 140) and what Henry Gruber convincingly argues was for commercial ends linked to control of western Mediterranean trade routes (Gruber 2013: n.p.). No effort seemingly was made to convert its “staunchly Catholic” population (Mound 1997; Gruber 2013).

In 533 the Vandals were forced out by Byzantine forces under Belisarius, formally instating Menorca within the governance of the Byzantine Empire, although very much as an outlier on the far western reaches of Byzantium. Archaeological evidence, summarized by Ontiveros and Florit (2013), indicates the development in the first centuries of Byzantine occupation of a Christianized landscape with coastal and inland basilicas as well as monastic life, all manifesting a concern with “evangelising and servicing the rural communities” (Ontiveros and Florit 2013: 38). In the latter years there seems to be a strong possibility of a “Byzantine-Muslim period (707-903) with a local population unchanged from the time of the Byzantine dominion and with an external Islamic power that manifested sporadically on the [Balearic] islands” (ibid.: 33).

In 903 Menorca was occupied by Issam al-Khawlani, serving the Caliphs of Córdoba. From the advent of Islamic rule a concerted program of Islamization was set in place, involving the construction of mosques, baths, inns, and other social loci. Nonetheless, until the late twelfth century Christian and Jewish institutions and communities were tolerated, and even fostered in the interest of Mediterranean trade. Through the twelfth century tolerant Islamic rule was repeatedly disrupted by the fundamentalist Almohads who took the island from the rulers of the Banu Ghaniya dynasty in 1185, again in 1187 (holding it until 1201), and again in 1203 (remaining in power until 1229). By 1203 almost the entirety of the population had converted to Islam.

In 1229 the Catalan King Jaume I conquered Mallorca, creating *ex nihilo* what David Abulafia claims was “a settler society ... [effecting] the steady evaporation of its Islamic community, whose members left the island, were sold into slavery, converted to Christianity, bred themselves out of existence” (Abulafia 1994: 31). At the same time, Mallorca’s Christian rulers increasingly “drew limits, physical, legal, economic, even moral, around the Jewish community” (ibid.: 31), confining it to a special quarter in order to avoid contamination of the Christian community. However, when, three years later, the smaller Balearic island Menorca was in turn taken by King Jaume I, a pact was agreed upon with the Muslim inhabitants, placing them under fealty to the King of Aragon

and requiring of them tribute and military assistance when demanded in return for effective autonomy. For the next fifty-five years Menorca existed as “a tolerated notch of Muslim-inhabited land within a Christian kingdom” (ibid.: 65).

Tragically, however, in 1287, when Alfonso III of Aragon took control of Menorca on the grounds that it was seen to have violated its oath of fealty, the Muslims of Menorca were not offered the safety of becoming *Mudéjars* (“the tamed”) via conversion to the religion of their conquerors. Alfonso III ethnically cleansed the whole of the Muslim population of the island, slaughtering the great majority of men and selling those surviving, along with the women and children, into slavery (Abulafia 1994: 65, 68-72).¹

As many as forty thousand Menorcan Muslims are likely to have been taken into slavery, inaugurating what Henri Bresc sees as a seminal moment in the development of Western attitudes to slavery (Bresc 1987: 89-102). The dehumanization entailed in changing the status of persons one enters into agreements with not only to subjects of massacre but also to chattel put on the market is an indicator both of increased royal authority and of radical communal othering. Alfonso III and his successors subsequently sought to repopulate the land with Christians (initially a small number of Muslim slaves were bought in to work the land), and although the infertility of the countryside supported only pastoral populations (leading, as with the cleansing of Highland Scotland, to Menorca becoming a major exporter of wool) the deep ports of Ciutadella and Mahon were eminently viable for trade and were populated with churches and the manors of nobles.² Muslims had no subsequent presence in Menorca’s fiercely Catholic demography.

Over the following three hundred years the Jewish communities of the Balearic Islands endured various regimes of toleration and suppression. In the early fourteenth century a program of persecution by the Church led to onerous conditions which were lifted only to be followed

1. Jews remained, functioning in the same trades (merchants, moneylenders, cartographers, and laborers) as had earned them tolerance under the preceding Muslim rule.

2. Ciutadella was destroyed in 1558 by an Ottoman fleet commanded by Piyale Paşa and Turgut Reis. All who survived the attack were sold into slavery in Constantinople’s slave markets although the city was soon rebuilt and its population re-established (in part through buying slaves back from the Ottomans).

by a massacre in Majorca in 1391 (three hundred dead, significant forced conversions), then by tolerance and resettlement and, finally, under Ferdinand of Aragon (1413-1416), a reimposition of policies of enclosure and radical curtailment of contact with Christians foreshadowing the practice of “encystation” analyzed later in this chapter. In 1435 a flurry of rumors led to anti-Jewish rioting across the Balearics and to mass forced conversion. When, following the launching of the Inquisition in 1478 by Isabella and Ferdinand II as a means of consolidating their fragmented kingdom under the banner of a militant Catholicism, even these *conversos* were subject to serious persecution. Consequently there was no avowedly Jewish presence in Menorca until the British (occupying the island from 1713 to 1781) promoted the immigration of North African Jews as a counterpoint to the island’s Catholic majority. This nominal forced mixing sparked resentment among the Catholic population, and when the Spanish Duke of Crillon defeated the British in 1781 the small Jewish population of approximately five hundred was deported.

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The history I have sketched here has correlates throughout the Mediterranean basin, although Menorca is notable as a limit case for evincing the entire spectrum of possible relations between different religious communities, ranging from intercommunal amity through tolerance and separation to forced conversion, enslavement, and ethnic cleansing. Any assumption of inherent identitarian antagonism towards others is undermined by sustained periods of coexistence and conviviality, while popular support for attacks on communal others throws into doubt assumptions of any essential human openness to difference. Intriguingly, Abulafia, following Henri Bresc in attempting to understand the treatment of Menorca’s Muslim population after Alfonso III’s conquest of the island, sees that dehumanization as a symptom of “the growing power of the state” (Abulafia 1994: 71) and argues that “the reappearance of slavery in the Christian Mediterranean world is ... a symptom of the centralisation of government during the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries” (ibid.: 71).

As will be evidenced in the various contemporary cases referred to in the following pages, centralization of governance entails the forging of a “people” alleged to be represented by that power, and will, with notable exceptions discussed below, involve the construction of an other,

or others, who are “beyond the pale” of the criteria for inclusion.³ Ferdinand II and Isabella, for instance, launched the Inquisition to unite the Christians of their diverse realms against internal enemies (Jews, former Jewish and Muslim converts, and other heterodox communities) just as, one thousand and sixty years earlier, Bishop Severus mobilized a Christian population against not only Menorca’s Jews but also those who entertained close civil relations with them. In both cases entities with the power to impose their wills on subject populations construct, by force and/or ideology, an image of an imagined community into which some find themselves interpellated while others are excommunicated by the governing entities (as well as, sooner or later, by those who recognize themselves in that imagined community). In the late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century developments analyzed by Abulafia, as with the next century’s Inquisition, the orchestration of inclusion and exclusion was effected by state powers—in fact by the powers of states both committed to expansion and simultaneously threatened in that commitment by other states against which they had to mobilize a people. However, as in the study below of priestly relations in Jerusalem’s Holy Sepulchre, the entities producing and enforcing imagined communities may be local and not linked to a higher state authority.⁴

The aforementioned exception to state centralization and exclusion is manifest not only in mid-thirteenth-century Muslim Menorca as a short-lived “tolerated notch of Muslim-inhabited land within a Christian kingdom,” but also in the much more enduring example of the Ottoman Empire from the middle of the fifteenth century through its long nineteenth-century decline into its early twentieth-century dissolution. After a long period of expansion through conquest, culminating in a decade (1453-1463) in which Constantinople fell and Serbia and Bosnia were conquered, the Ottoman state institutionalized the Quranic practice of *Ahl al-dhimmi* as the *millet* system (Barkey 2008: 130-32,

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3. The pale refers to a fence, erected in the fourteenth century, separating that part of Ireland under English rule from that not under its control. To be “beyond the pale” was to be outside of the rules and institutions of English society and effectively in the realm of savagery. The phrase has evolved to refer more to behavior and culture than to physical location.
 4. Relations between the Greek state and the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre have long been strained, and the Greek Orthodox hierarchy in Jerusalem is effectively autonomous in its control of extensive properties in Israel/Palestine (Nachmani 1987).

and *passim*). There, organized non-Muslim communities, brought into the state through the extension of Ottoman power over pre-existing societies, were absorbed by the empire and allowed to maintain legal and authority structures pertaining to their respective communal lives while acknowledging and bowing to the overarching authority of the state (not unlike the situation of Menorcan Muslims between 1232 and 1287). This subsumption of communal identities within a centralized administrative structure—a model followed in the twentieth century by Tito’s Yugoslavia—differentiated between religious communities while at the same time allowing and encouraging relations between them, particularly in the context of the market (Barkey 2008: 109–19; see also Lockwood 1975: 195–211 on Yugoslavia). Communal identity, later to be awakened as national identity, was here institutionally subordinated to and constrained by the authority of the imperial state.

The intercommunal stability of the southern Mediterranean region under Ottoman sovereignty indicates that policies of incorporation rather than erasure were for the most part successful. The explosion of genocidal violence against Armenian, Syrian, and Greek Orthodox populations between 1914 and 1922 as the Turkish Republic—with its ethno-religious conceptions of identity—emerged from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire mirrors, in its exterminatory marking out of others, the examples of Catholic extirpation provided above. It in turn gave rise to the respective expulsions of the Muslims of Crete and mainland Greece and as well as the Pontic Greeks of Turkey during the population exchanges of 1923 (Clark 2006). These early twentieth-century ethnic cleansings were a result of the emergence—most visibly in the southern Mediterranean but also throughout the southern fragments of the Austro-Hungarian empire—of “national” discourse out of the wreckage of imperial systems.⁵ These were regions in which intercommunalism had previously been a variously eminent aspect of social and political life. The emergence of nation-states was fostered in the Balkans by Woodrow Wilson’s disastrous argument that every “nation” should have a state of

5. “[I]nter-state conflicts ... tended to occur in the geographical zones where the disintegration of the Habsburg, Romanov, Hohenzollern and Ottoman empires provided the space for the emergence of new and often aggressively nervous nation-states, which sought to consolidate or expand their territories through force” (Gerwarth 2017: 4). Such consolidation and expansion involved not only territorial disputes but also the erasure of national others within the newly nationalized territories.

its own, and in the Mediterranean Middle East when aspirations towards autonomy fostered by the *capitulations* were turned into enactable realities by the postwar interventions of the French and British mandates.⁶ With nation-states came the legitimation of the idea of a people the nation represented. In the Balkans the *narod* (definition: people, nation) were defined in ethno-religious terms while in the Mediterranean Middle East both the British and the French reified *millets* into political entities with distinct interests and agendas.⁷ The consequence for the former is most saliently illustrated by the history of now Former Yugoslavia in which, first in the fractious period preceding the post-World War I Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and then in the Second World War period of intercommunal struggle and slaughter, and most recently in the period following the fragmentation of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, vicious religio-ethnic conflicts plunged the region into a series of what can only be called popular wars of ethnic purification. In the Middle East, particularly in the eastern Mediterranean, sectarian communities made political entities by French and British mandate policies have struggled for hegemony in ways that have repeatedly thrown Lebanon into civil war, have allowed a small ethnic minority to grasp and hold dictatorial rule in Syria, and have enabled the formation of a “nation-state of the Jewish people, and them alone”⁸ on a land occupied by a congeries of Muslims, Christians and Jews.

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Over the past thirty-five years I have carried out field research in Israel/Palestine, Yugoslavia, and three of the latter’s successor states (Serbia,

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6. The *capitulations* were treaties conferring rights and privileges to resident or transient subjects of European states trading in the Ottoman domains, rendering them exempt from prosecution, taxation, and conscription (see Friedman 1986).
 7. Turkey was never mandated and has, in the wake of its purging of Armenian and Greek minorities, gradually shaped itself into a nation of Muslim Turks although it remains aggressively mobilized against a sizeable Kurdish minority (itself Sunni, Shi’a, Christian, Jewish and Yazidi).
 8. Statement by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on March 10, 2019, reiterating the core point of the “Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People” passed by the Knesset on July 19, 2018. <https://knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/BasicLawNationState.pdf>, accessed April 11, 2020.

Macedonia, Kosova). I have furthermore done exploratory fieldwork on both sides of Divided Cyprus. This work has developed in two directions which are both antithetically opposed and deeply connected: intercommunal mixing and the erection of walls against the other, either for exclusion or for enclavement. My findings also provide a useful counterpoint to play off against the Cuban practice of transculturation, particularly as it has been fruitfully developed by Fernando Ortiz.

Ortiz links transculturation to deculturation, “the loss or uprooting of a previous culture” (Ortiz [1947] 1995: 102), followed by “the consequent creation of a new cultural phenomenon” (ibid.: 103) through resettlement. While this progression is clearly applicable to Cuba, where everyone (other than the exterminated Native Americans) had previously been uprooted and subsequently thrown into what he calls the *ajiaco*, the constantly augmented stew which is *cubanidad* (Palmié 1998: 367ff.), it does not apply to any of the instances presented above. Thus, rather than attempting to use transculturation to discuss the settings I have studied, I will look at some of the strategies of culture contact carried out between established cultures working to maintain their identities in the face of others. The first part of this chapter will deal with mixing or sharing—particularly around religious sites—between communities with disparate identities, and will examine some of the strategies by which this coexistence is worked out. The latter part will examine processes of walling out and walling in cultural others. While nominally touching on walling out in the cases of Melilla and Ceuta (where Morocco is separated from Spanish territory or, more saliently, Africa is excluded from the European Union) as well as on the two territories of Divided Cyprus, it will for the most part develop the themes in relation to Israel/Palestine where walling out and walling in have contrapuntally engaged each other.⁹

* * *

Choreographies of cohabitation

Research I have carried out on intercommunalism has focused on what are generally, but mistakenly, described as shared shrines. Although

9. This essay draws on work that has been published elsewhere, most notably in Bowman 2007, 2010, 2011, 2015, 2016, and 2019.

persons of different sectarian affiliation will revere the same sites, and often the same figures, they often do not see those sites or saints as the same. While the presence of the other is not usually disputed, worshippers recognize difference and find ways of maintaining their sectarian identities, either by marking distinctions in their practices or arranging visits so they do not coincide with those of the others. I thus refer to these sites as mixed shrines and the practices of revering at them as mixing.¹⁰ Central in most instances to this possibility of mixing is the simultaneous fixity of the name of a site, or a figure revered, and the unfixity of the signified of that name. The object of identification—say, the name the shrine—is what Saul Kripke, Charles S. Peirce, and others have termed a rigid designator. Peirce describes its construction in personal terms: “I believe in mooring our words by certain applications and letting them change their meaning as our conceptions of the things to which we have applied them progress.”¹¹ Peirce’s idea that nominatives might retain their form while shifting their meanings as changing experience so necessitates can easily be extended beyond personal histories to those of communities scattered in their diversity and developing over time while retaining nominal allegiance to a term of identification, such as Palestine. It can also allow different sectarian communities to revere the same places without confusing their reverence with that of others who attend and worship at the same places.

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10. At various points below I will, either in respecting the terminology of persons to whose work I am referring or as a shorthand for apparent amity in intercommunal activities, use the terms “shared” or “sharing” without implying a merger of identities or a syncretism of practices and/or beliefs.
 11. From *A treatise on metaphysics*, 1861-1862, quoted in Short 2007: 264. What Peirce describes is an “initial baptism” (Kripke 1980: 96-97) whereby a word is linked to a reference prior to being passed on to different contexts along a chain of communication in the course of which the referent shifts while still being indicated by the same word. Slavoj Žižek, parsing Kripke, writes that “it is the word which, *as a word*, on the level of the signifier itself, unifies a given field, constitutes its identity. It is, so to speak, the word to which ‘things’ themselves refer to recognize themselves in their unity. . . . It is not the real object which guarantees as the point of reference the unity and identity of a certain ideological experience—on the contrary it is the reference to a ‘pure’ signifier which gives unity and identity to our experience of historical reality itself” (Žižek 1989: 95-96 and 97; see also Kripke 1980 and Vološinov 1973: 79-80).

I will here analytically consider sites I have investigated in West Bank Palestine, Jerusalem, and Macedonia (now, in a third name change in twenty-seven years, “the Republic of Northern Macedonia”). Colleagues have studied shrine sharing in the Mediterranean and across the globe without necessarily committing to the position I’ve sketched out above.¹²

The social contexts of cohabitation and antagonism

When we discuss the social aspects of cohabitation and/or antagonism it is important to delineate carefully what terrains are being occupied or contested. I would argue that we are here discussing places rather than spaces; places in this context are lived-in spaces or, in more academic terms, sites of inhabitation, while space denotes an area, of general or unlimited extent, indifferently providing the physical setting for such places. The *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that “place” is “a space that can be occupied ... a particular spot or area inhabited or frequented by people; a city, a town, a village.”¹³ Spaces are far more easily shared than places, if sharing is the correct term to use when referring to coexisting in contiguous space. When suitably organized, entities can move past and around each other in space without effecting significant contact. Movement in shared places, however, entails negotiation, commensality, and at times conflict insofar as persons occupying place not only coexist with each other but are very much aware of the fact of that coexistence. In the late Michael Sorkin’s fascinating discussion of traffic in *Giving ground: The politics of propinquity*, we see on the one hand a modernist mode of organization that channels persons and vehicles into nonintersecting pathways in order to give priority to unimpeded flow at the expense of relations between entities moving across the same terrain: “Modern city planning is structured around an armature of ... conflict avoidance. Elevated highways, pedestrian skyways, subway systems and other movement technologies clarify relations between classes of vehicles for the sake of efficient flow” (Sorkin 1999: 2). On the other, Sorkin

12. See, for edited volumes, Albera and Couroucli 2012; Barkan and Barkey 2014; Bowman 2012b; Bryant 2015; Hayden et al. 2016; and the website <http://sharedsacredsites.net>.

13. Place, n.1. *OED Online*. March 2013. Oxford University Press (accessed 19 April 2013). See also Casey 1997, 2002; and Massey 2005.

shows us a more traditional setting in which flow is impeded by repeated intersection and the necessary and mutually aware sharing of place:

Typically Indian traffic is completely mixed up, a slow-moving mass of cows and pedicabs, motor-rickshaws, trucks and buses, camels and people on foot, the antithesis of “efficient” separation. Motion through this sluggish maelstrom does not proceed so much by absolute right as through a continuing process of local negotiation for the right of passage. (Sorkin 1999: 2)

In the latter case we are shown not only a space occupied by persons and entities but a place in which those inhabiting the terrain are linked together by what he terms “a primal rite of giving ground ... the deference to one’s neighbour that urban existence daily demands” (ibid.). Here, rather than a skein of distinct and mutually disengaged pathways encompassed within a common space we see a place inhabited by a diversity of persons and objects, shared through processes of mutual recognition and accommodation.

I would like to look further at this issue of “giving ground” in the particular context of shared holy places in the post-Ottoman eastern Mediterranean so as to evaluate how such places are shared, what sorts of situations support that sharing, and what sorts of events or developments disrupt it. In a neighborhood a multitude of different groups of people are tied together into a community by networks that variously engage them as individuals and groups. Shared practices of being in a neighborhood enable both the recognition of the difference of others and the framing of that difference as something beneficial rather than problematic. Foregrounded here is the issue of whether we can see local communities, and the set of relations that constitute them, as forms of what Pierre Bourdieu called *habitus*.¹⁴ Practices of interaction and negotiation of place experienced through living in a community imprint themselves in individuals as preconscious dispositions to act, and interpret, in the future in accordance with those earlier experiences. A person’s dispositions are neither habits nor consciously applied rules but tacit knowledge, often embodied,

14. The concept of *habitus*, itself a Latin translation of the Greek *hexis*, has a long genealogy stretching back nearly two and a half millennia from Bourdieu’s *Outline of a theory of practice* (1977) and *Logic of practice* (1990) via Mauss’s *Les techniques du corps* (1935) and Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae* (1a2ae, 49–54) to Aristotle’s *Nicomachean ethics* (1098b33).

learned through the “prestigious imitation ... [of] actions which have succeeded and which he has seen successfully performed by people in whom he has confidence and who have authority over him” (Mauss 1979 [orig. 1935]: 101). As Mauss, and Bourdieu after him (Bourdieu 1990: 53), make clear, it is this process of internalizing social practices (actions, interpretations, self-presentations) that imposes the social on the individual and that, in effect, maps the neighborhood—and its modes of incorporating and negotiating with internal difference—onto the selves who traverse it. “Giving ground,” recognizing the right of the other to be in the same place as oneself as well as committing to the rites of negotiating her presence, is a core element of the habitus of neighborhood.

Two ethnographic studies, one on South India and one on the North, exemplify the ways neighborhoods constituted by nominally distinct religious communities (communities that are elsewhere mutually antagonistic) are able to share place peacefully. The first text, Jackie Assayag’s *At the confluence of two rivers: Muslims and Hindus in South India* (2004), discusses what might be called a situational syncretism whereby Muslims and Hindus are able to celebrate at each others’ religious festivals because, in the course of the communities living together for nearly a millennium, cultural elements that might have in the past been the exclusive properties of distinct communities have unconsciously become part of an annual cycle of neighborhood practices and thus, in effect, common property:

The religion of Mohammed insinuated itself very gradually in a Hindu environment already segmented by numerous castes, sects and local traditions. This mixture of disparate elements gave rise to many subtle and complex forms of acculturation caused by alteration, addition, superimposition and innovation, which vary from region to region. So by absorbing elements that were no longer either strictly Hindu or Muslim, but may have been the result of an earlier assimilation, these cultural forms allowed movement between systems of action and representation that seemed to be mutually exclusive. (Assayag 2004: 41)

Anna Bigelow’s *Sharing the sacred: Practicing pluralism in Muslim North India* (2010) treats a seemingly more conscious process of intercommunal cohabitation in the town of Malerkotla, located in the Punjab, a far more conflicted region than Assayag’s Karnataka. Bigelow notes that the town’s cultivated tolerance might be seen as a response to Malerkotlan

residents' horror of the sectarian cleansing that afflicted the Punjab during Partition (as well as of the violence of subsequent sectarian riots that have taken place in the region over the past few decades), leading to their recognition that "all religious groups are in some regard vulnerable ... [making them] cognizant that their wellbeing depends on their positive relations with others" (Bigelow 2010: 10). She, however, demonstrates fulsomely that overt intercommunalism is at the same time a projection of "the vibrant community life in the streets and homes and shrines of a locale" (ibid.: 223). In each case the "cultural property" of one sectarian community is seen by members of adjacent communities as theirs as well, not because they wish to appropriate it but because, via a process of living with the "owners" of the property and engaging with them in their quotidian lives, that property and the practices surrounding it have come to be seen as common. In both instances sharing in religious celebrations and festivities is an extension of the habitus of a shared communal life.¹⁵

This is not, of course, to say that an identical script of community response is instilled in all the community's members by their participation in a neighborhood. While the term disposition suggests a tendency to interpret situations and act in response to them in certain ways familiar from past engagements with similar events, Bourdieu's work, like Mauss's before it, makes clear that there is play in the system of application allowing for accommodating specificities of context, of individuality, and of intention. A disposition is a proclivity rather than an imperative. Part of what accounts for the lability of persons' responses in communities in general and mixed communities in particular is the multitude of identities at play in any individual's experience of everyday life. The concept of "situational identities"¹⁶ enables us to recognize that a multitude

15. See, too, the essays collected in Albera and Couroucli 2009 and 2012, and Bowman 2012b.

16. "Situational identity" is a concept generally assumed to have been generated by, although it is not specifically used in, the theory of the dramaturgical construction of social identity developed in Erving Goffman's *The presentation of self in everyday life* (1959). Well before then Max Gluckman had elaborated the concept of "situational selection" whereby individuals shape their behaviors, in different social contexts, so as to conform to the values and practices of groups they there associate with: "the shifting membership of groups in different situations is the functioning of the structure, for an individual's membership of a particular group in a particular situation is determined by the motives and values influencing him

of identity contexts exists in even the least complex of societies, and that when a community creates complexity to the extent of encompassing multiple ethnic and/or religious identities, the opportunities for a proliferation of identity strategies expands commensurately. At different moments of interaction within the community, different dispositions will be called to the fore. Thus in one instance you might be working with someone as a co-worker or in an employee-employer relation whereas in another, sometimes even contiguous with the first, you might be called on to represent a family or a religious denomination. Each of these situations will call on distinct dispositions and may in fact call for enunciating those dispositions in ways that improvise on previous enactments. What is important to stress is that none of these enacted identities are primary other than in situations—some of which will be elaborated below—in which the primacy of one of those identities is staged as more important than, either subsuming or obviating, others. Recognition of the situatedness of identity articulations allows us to understand the ways numerous linkages can be made between diverse persons within a community, but also to see that certain events or developments might render previously amenable identities incommensurate and thus conflictual.

Nonetheless investigation of the character of neighborhood bonds resonates with Bigelow's investigation of Malerkotla's "daily work of community maintenance" (2010: 122) and indicates that in most instances communities will seek to perpetuate communal cohesion. The concept of *habitus* makes clear that the degree to which people are who they are is a consequence of the appropriateness of their learned dispositions to settings the same as, or not unlike, those in which they imbued those dispositions. Radical reworkings of those settings—either through intercommunal conflict and separation or through migration or exile—threaten selfhood.

Muslims and Christians in the monastery of Sveti Bogoroditsa Prechista

The powers people imagine as working in and on their world are social powers, imagined in the image of their own experience of the world.

in that situation. Individuals can thus live coherent lives by situational selection from a medley of contradictory values, ill-assorted beliefs, and varied interests and techniques" (Gluckman 1958: 26).

Let me expand on this using an ethnographic encounter I had in Kicevo, Macedonia, in April 2006. I had been researching, with the help of Elizabeta Koneska of the National Museum of Macedonia, Muslim and Orthodox Christian uses of Sveti Bogoroditsa Prechista (the church of the Holy Mother of God Most Innocent) outside of Kicevo, itself a mixed Muslim and Christian town. In the course of examining the context of shared shrine practices, we interviewed the imam of the local Sunni mosque. He, trained in the renowned Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo, responded to our queries about Muslims attending the nearby Sveti Bogoroditsa monastery by asserting that he had never gone there and never would. He nonetheless went on to explain that he would advise members of his congregation to go to the monastery for help with particular problems because

the world of demons, like our world, is made up of Christians and Muslims. When someone is afflicted by a Muslim demon I can deal with the problem, but when someone is troubled by a Christian demon there is nothing I can do, so I send them to the church. (Interview Kicevo, April 30, 2006, translation Elizabeta Koneska)

What is of interest here, besides the concept of a mirror world of demons that replicates the demography of the lived world, is that—in *this local context*—the imam seems to acknowledge no incommensurability between this vision of the interaction of the demonic and the human worlds and that of a more orthodox Sunni theology with its considerably more strict definition of domains, borders, and pollutions.¹⁷ Here relations between the human and the demonic world are analogous to those occurring in the quotidian world of social interaction, and rites and obeisances made in the human world engage an economy of reciprocity with the demonic.

Just as the demonic world mirrors the intermixing of Muslim and Christian while maintaining the difference between the two, so too do movements within the ritual space of the church maintain that differentiation, even as Muslims “tap into” Christian rituals to ward off Christian demons. Sharing the space of the Sveti Bogoroditsa monastery’s chapel does not entail a syncretic blending of identities, just as interacting on

17. As I will show below, when the world of religious orthodoxy impinges upon local practices it disrupts this intercommunalism, asserting property and propriety issues at the expense of sharing.

the streets and in the markets of Kicevo and its satellite villages does not effect an effacement of sectarian identities (compare Lockwood 1975: 195–211). Muslims within the walls of the church appear, on initial observation, to go through the same procedures of reverencing the saints and the sites of power as do the Christians: they circulate through the church, they light candles in front of the icons (particularly those of the iconostasis before which they lay gifts of clothing, towels, and sometimes money), they proceed to the rear left of the church where, like the Christians, they pass a string of cross-inscribed beads over their bodies three times before crawling three times through a passageway beneath a pair of healing icons toward a well from which, in leaving, they take water to splash on their faces and carry home in bottles for healing (see Bowman 2010: 206–209, for a more detailed description). Closer observation reveals that this apparent mimicry is subtly but significantly differentiated. Muslims, holding back from Christian groups, introduce small but important differences of deportment. They do not cross themselves, they bow their heads to but do not kiss the icons, and in praying they silently mouth Muslim prayers while holding their hands close to their chests with their palms up. Muslims here work an environment they know through the social world they share with their Christian neighbors and in so doing both engage in ritual acts that they have learned are efficacious from their neighbors (and their own imam) and render appropriate obeisance to the powers resident in the place (the Virgin Mary, the saints, the Mother Superior, and the nuns). At the same time they refuse to violate their own identities by sacrilegiously adopting the signifiers of Christians as though they were their own. Here, in a religious setting we have an interaction analogous to what Sorkin describes in the dense streets of Indian cities: “the continuing process of local negotiation for the right of passage” (Sorkin 1999: 2).

Property and propriety in Jerusalem’s Church of the Holy Sepulchre

The “sharing” described above—a sharing extending into religious places the same modes of intercommunal mixing one sees in the everyday interactions of neighbors in the streets and workplaces of the region—differs substantially from the types of interactions one sees between strangers in sites they commonly revere, but not in common. I will try to resolve that seeming contradiction between commonly revering but not in common through again referring to the rigid designator discussed by

Peirce, Kripke, and Žižek (see also Vološinov 1973: 79–80). Generally, in a world of shared experience, rigid designators suffice to indicate objects and experiences common to those sharing that world, subsuming idiosyncrasies of personal experience or contextual application. However where quotidian experience is not shared, identical signifiers may conjure up very different signifieds for the communities using them, and the differences may in fact prove to be incommensurabilities. In earlier examinations of the politics of Palestinian identity before and after Oslo (Bowman 1988, 1994) I wrote of the different ways the name Palestine signified to communities in different locales of exile, both outside and inside the borders of historic Palestine, a future homeland and a reunified people. So long as those populations remained isolated from each other those disparities of understanding remained relatively unproblematic, but once Oslo effected a regathering of the Palestinians from the various sites of their dispersion serious conflicts erupted between groups over what Palestine should be, what Palestinians should be like, and who in fact was even truly Palestinian.

Something very similar happens at holy places with constituencies that gather from dispersed locales. Rather than neighbors sharing a sacred place, we talk here of strangers coming together in the same space. The Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, known to Orthodox Christians as the Anastasis, lies at the center of an extended web of narratives dealing with the death and resurrection of Jesus.¹⁸ When I carried out field research on Jerusalem pilgrimage in the early 1980s, the Holy Sepulchre, like several other sites throughout the sacred topography of Jerusalem, was visited by pilgrims from twenty-seven distinct Christian denominations (these, for the most part, further divided into distinct regional, national, and linguistic communities) as well as by a multitude of tourists, many from Christian backgrounds, but also many non-Christians. Five sects had places within the church—the Greek Orthodox, Catholics, and Armenians occupying the most territory, with the Coptic and Syrian Orthodox holding tiny chapels—while a sixth, the Ethiopians, had two external chapels and a rooftop. Despite that sectarian landscape

18. Despite the difference in name the location of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus is established at the heart of New Testament biblical narratives so that that idea of the place (regardless of language) can function as a rigid designator even when imaginings of its actual location can differ by several hundred meters (hence including the Anglican Garden Tomb outside the Old City walls).

the church was swept daily by crowds of pilgrims and tourists flowing indiscriminately through the corridors and chapels.¹⁹ Such heterodoxy within a limited space could give rise to “traffic problems” (pushing, expressions of hostility, and occasionally fights, usually between individuals not traveling in organized groups), but for the most part conflicts were avoided by what appeared to be spontaneous traffic management. This took place not through “local negotiation” but because groups moving through the church effectively enclaved themselves into mobile units flowing past and alongside each other without either engagement or significant mutual recognition (Bowman 2011: 376–77). These groups, often individually made up of people coming from the same locale or brought together prior to the visit by an institution or a leader, constituted in-groups able not only to insulate themselves from others but also, under the authority of spiritual or secular guides associated with the respective groups, to ensure that their perceptions of the sites and events they encountered confirmed and built upon their expectations. Such a mode of engaging with holy sites protected the integrity of the connection between rigid designators and the experiences they signed while preventing the cognitive dissonance of others’ readings of those shared designators from disrupting that alignment.²⁰ While individuals within these groups shared with each other an experience of place, they simultaneously related to members of other groups like bodies in space, moving past and around them without effecting significant contact. Thus, while this site might nominally be termed a shared site, the character of this interaction throws doubt on the applicability of the term.

The relations described above rarely become conflictual because while those involved share the same space they rarely share the same place. For the majority of pilgrims traveling in mobile enclaves the experience of holy places provides an intimate confirmation of their perception of the reality of those sites and of the pilgrims’ personal relations to that reality; seeing the real place, without being forced to acknowledge the dissonance of others’ interpretations of its reality, provides a sense of spiritual ownership that visitors take back to their places of origin.²¹ Strangers do

19. The Greek Orthodox Katholicon (primary chapel) was, however, normally closed to all but the Greek Orthodox.

20. These strategies were carried out throughout Holy Land pilgrimages and, one suspects, across other forms of organized travel. See Schmidt 1979.

21. Those whose experiences do not live up to their expectations, or in fact seem to refute them, may be impelled to deny that the sites are the “real”

not need literally to own the place because they do not live there. For them it is enough to experience the place and possess the knowledge of its reality.

Relation to place is very different for the monks and priests who move through, and live in the immediate vicinity of, the church. Here we see institutionally shaped situations which resonate with the scenarios sketched respectively by Ron Hassner (2009) and Robert Hayden et al. (2016). These religious officiants see themselves as owning the holy sites in a much more literal way, and their conception of property—and of propriety (an etymologically related term)—can be conflictual when others who are not of the same community have similar claims on the sites and different conceptions of the modes of deportment proper to them. The Franciscan, Armenian, and Greek Orthodox brotherhoods that care for their respective chapels within the building²² are brought into daily, often conflictual, contact with others whose sense of the site's significance, the legitimacy of its possession, and the appropriateness of ritual activities carried out therein differ on numerous points. Although these men cohabit the Holy Sepulchre and its neighborhood, they do not share locale and dispositions in the ways set out earlier. Jeff Halper describes the monasteries of the Christian Quarter in the late Ottoman period as each enclosing radically different life worlds, redolent of the nations of the monks' origins (Greece, France, Armenia) rather than of Jerusalem (Halper 1984). In many ways, at least in terms of self-sufficiency and ideological closure, the situations in the monasteries have not changed much. These insulated habitus produce literal neighbors who are, in effect, strangers. Unlike pilgrims who move past each other in the holy sites as migratory strangers, these hierophants are continuously forced to deal in "their" holy places with the presence of others who see those places as their own. For the monks and priests, the holy sites in the "shared" space of the Anastasis or Holy Sepulchre are organically connected to the "pure" cultural spaces of the monasteries, and the presence

sites (either because the real sites are elsewhere or because they have been effaced by time) or may be forced to question their previous assumptions and beliefs.

22. The Coptic, Syrian, and Ethiopian Orthodox, who possess chapels because of historic precedent, are small communities with little political or economic power, and their presence in the church is rarely challenged by the dominant religious communities (although they fight among themselves over the territories they do control; see Bowman 2011: 389–91).

of others in their spaces, much less the attempt of those others to claim the spaces as their own, is anathema. Whereas in the above cited situations of urban Indian traffic and Macedonian shrine sharing mutual investment in common ground gives rise to generally amenable and decorous ritual processes of negotiation over co-presence, in the Holy Sepulchre quotidian encounters between representatives of the respective churches are only prevented from breaking into open violence by the regimen of the Status Quo, a system of spatial and temporal regulations initially imposed by the Ottoman state and currently maintained through fear of the open intercommunal warfare and state side-taking that its rejection would provoke.²³

At the core of this conflict is not a simple issue of property ownership; actual property can—as the tenets of the Status Quo themselves assert—be shared, albeit through complex ritual regimes. We are instead looking at issues more closely tied to propriety, and through that to identity. Monks and priests associated with the Holy Sepulchre are able, when outside of domains demarcated as sacred, to relate to secular locals and even to members of other fraternities in nonconflictual—sometimes even amenable—ways (Tsourous 2015). In contexts where religious identities are foregrounded, however, particularly in the choreographies of movements through the spaces of the holy sites, they become representatives of their particular religious community or “defenders of the holy places” (Bowman 2011: 386), as members of the Greek Orthodox Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre called themselves in the wake of a vicious fight with Armenian monks over contested space in Bethlehem’s Church of the Nativity. In these contexts they, and the places they protect, manifest the truth value of their church and its theology; their presence in the places, and the rituals they carry out there, are seen to suture

23. See Fisher-Ilan (2004) for one of many examples. See Cohen (2008) and Bowman (2011, 2014) for different interpretations of how and why the Status Quo is maintained. Although these closed communities share qualities with the aforementioned ghettos as well as with the encysted domains discussed below, they differ insofar as the perceptually hostile environs which surround them do not have the power to, in the final instance, exterminate them. Should, however, the balance of powers that structure the *status quo ante* break down—as is already occurring insofar as the Israeli government refuses to recognize the status quo and has taken sides in intercommunal struggles between Christian communities—smaller and less powerful communities may be forced out of the Anastasis as has, in effect, already happened with the Copts (see Bowman 2014: 217-20).

their dogma and their orthopraxy to Christian revelation. The presence of others carrying out their apostate rituals and asserting their authority in those places constitutes what Laclau and Mouffe term an “antagonism” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 93–148)—literally a radical denial of their own assertions of identity as the sole vehicles of the true church.

It is in this context that property, and the propriety of liturgical demeanor therein, becomes an issue of overarching concern. Concern with overcoming the antagonism presented by the presence of other belief communities is what motivates the insistence of the various religious communities that they own holy places and drives the demands of religious authorities worldwide that shrines and holy places be purged of heterodox practices and persons. The politics of the rigid designator is insistence that there is but one signified for the signifier. While this may appear to take the shape of straightforward demands for sole possession and inhabitation of a holy place, beneath that demand is the assertion of the truth value of a core identity and the insistence that no other representation can lay claim to the place where that identity manifests and celebrates itself.

Sveti Nikola/Hadir Bābā: Simultaneity of place

The concept of property functions in various ways in sites we refer to as shared. In the case of Sveti Bogoroditsa Prechista, Muslims attending the monastery’s church do not in any way dispute the Macedonian Orthodox Church’s ownership of the site, visiting and using it with due deference to the nuns who live there. The Mother Superior and the majority of the nuns are in no way threatened by the presence of Muslims in the church, appreciating their generosity (“they give more than the Christians”) and recognizing coexistence within the site as a welcome consequence of the long-term good relations of Muslims and Christians in the nearby town and surrounding countryside (see Bowman 2010: 209–12).²⁴ In another Macedonian site I have written on, Sveti Nikola in Makedonski Brod, Sufi and Sunni Muslims praying in the church recognize the authority of the Orthodox caretakers, yet simultaneously

24. Although one university-trained novice, recently relocated to the monastery from the capital, Skopje, expressed hostility toward Muslim visitors, refusing to give them holy water and claiming they were planning to “steal” the church (Bowman 2010: 209).

associate the edifice and the tomb within it with the Bektashi saint Hadir Bābā. Relations between the Christian visitors from the town and the Muslim visitors from neighboring settlements are cordial, and lubricated—as at Sveti Bogoroditsa—by the generosity of Muslims whose copious gifts are auctioned off to support the town’s main church. Intriguingly, in the case of Sveti Nikola/Hadir Bābā mutual commitment by both communities to the continued sharing of the site is manifest in the simultaneous display of Sufi and Christian iconography within the church (Bowman 2010: 203–206).²⁵ In both instances, as at the shrine of Haider Shaikh in Malerkotla described by Bigelow, the local communities as well as the officiants at the religious sites commit themselves to maintaining within the shrines forms of intercommunal cooperation cognate with those taking place beyond their perimeters.

Changes in the wider context of social relations, resulting in a breakdown of conviviality, can fracture that commitment, making way for one or the other community to attempt to force the other from the shrine; such an expulsion would mirror that effected in the surrounding social world. Religious authorities, often backed by individuals of influence over local members of one or the other local religious community, may exploit frictions or fissures in the local community to push for the purification of a shrine. Even, however, in such instances the perceived sanctity of a site may be retained by the general population so that not only might members of the religious and ethnic communities banished from the site return, covertly and sometimes overtly, but also, as relatively amicable intercommunal relations in the surrounding locale are re-established, the site may again begin to be shared (see Bowman 2012a: 215–17).

Shrines such as the Anastasis or Holy Sepulchre are very different from those such as Sveti Nikola/Hadir Bābā and Sveti Bogoroditsa Prechista insofar as rather than being perceived as properties of the local community (in both the sense of belonging to the local milieu and being characteristic of that social formation) they are presented as standing outside of their immediate context, belonging instead to ideologically constituted communities that may originate, and even reside, at a substantial physical and cultural distance from their literal site. For pilgrims visiting such sites from afar the holy places belong

25. Although, as I describe in my study of the site, perceived imbalances of display that ostentatiously stress Christian ownership do give rise to grievement (Bowman 2010: 203–206).

to them in a spiritual or devotional sense. They ideologically imagine the place as a spiritual possession that, once witnessed, can be taken home for meditation and validation, but their desire to literally possess the place rarely extends further than their wish to collect relics (oil, candles, carved olive wood crosses) that metonymically connect them with the place. For resident clergy, however, such holy places not only belong to their sects in a spiritual sense but must literally belong to their churches, since possession of the site both confirms their core identities as guardians of the holy places and authorizes and amplifies the sanctity of the site through their provision of appropriate liturgical practices (and their blockage of heterodox practices). Here the presence of others not only presents an integral challenge to their identities but also desecrates the sanctity of that central site (Hassner 2009). Tolerance in this context is in effect no more than enforced cohabitation (Hayden 2002).

Strangers and neighbors

The distinction between space and place set out earlier is key to understanding the emergence of antagonism in shared or mixed sites. Space, as an encompassing container, is able to hold a number of entities without their having any relation aside from that of contiguity. Place, as a site of inhabitation, can contain differentiated bodies, but these, by sharing place, enter into relations with each other. Thus, on the one hand pilgrim groups, converging on the same holy sites from different places of origin, are able to flow around and past each other, each pursuing their own realizations of their own envisionings of the significance of the sites they temporarily occupy. The place each group inhabits is effectively rendered discontinuous with the places of others, and interaction is kept minimal and impersonal. On the other hand, neighbors of different sectarian affiliations can meet in local holy places, engaging with each other through media of negotiation and mutual recognition analogous to those they use in their everyday interactions outside of holy ground. Here each group simultaneously occupies the same place and must engage modes of mutual accommodation, rendering that coexistence as nonconflictual and as mutually beneficial as possible. In the instance of the Holy Sepulchre or Anastasis, a situation not unlike others worldwide in which religious powers work to present a site as a pure signifier of an exclusive identity that must be defended from the pollution of other forms of

worship,²⁶ two or more communities attempt to construct, and inhabit (literally and ritually), exclusive places at the same time in coterminous spaces. Such cohabitation is, in terms of their respective discourses, an impossibility, and thus the presence of the other presents a literal antagonism that must either be overcome through expulsion or succumbed to by withdrawal; the structure of this particular relation is that of both Hassner's and Hayden's conceptions of the impossibility of sharing. The "stand-off" that is the current status quo effected by the Status Quo is an ideological impossibility, and the Holy Sepulchre/Anastasis will remain a flashpoint, surrounded by the tinder of cadres of ideologically motivated monks, until either a discursive shift in the respective theologies replaces antagonism with fraternity or one group successfully expropriates and cleanses the site.

In the post-Ottoman sphere—where conceptions of nationalist identity increasingly impose themselves on domains where previously national identities had served as markers of nominal difference within mixed communities²⁷—places, secular or sacred, that had been shared are transformed into the exclusive properties of ethnonational groupings. Sharing, or even mixing, is there rendered contentious, and local events in which individuals with different allegiances clash come to be read more widely as indubitable signifiers of irresolvable antagonisms. Once such a discursive shift has taken place, and shared sites have been transformed into terrains on which struggles for possession take place, it becomes increasingly impossible to imagine contemporary cohabitation and sharing, and the image of coexistence fades into a utopian fantasy of a distant "Ottoman" past. Such a process of dissolution, to which Susan Woodward refers, with reference to Former Yugoslavia, as the "Balkan Tragedy" (Woodward 1995), appears to be the course onto which the Samuel Huntington "Clash of Civilizations" discourse (Huntington 1993, 1996) is routing us, and at its terminus we too may sadly look back on the project of secular enlightenment as no more than a utopian fantasy.

26. A salient example is the 1992 destruction by Hindu activists of the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya in order to clear the site for the construction of the Sri Ram Janam Bhumi Temple commemorating the birthplace of Lord Rama (an avatar of Vishnu). See Hayden 2002: 208-12.

27. See Bowman 2015, as well as my discussion of the Titoist treatment of "national" versus "nationalist" identities in Bowman 2003: 229-30.

Walling out and walling in

Walls between territories serve many purposes, and these must be considered before generically grouping them as tactical devices for preventing contact with the other. The Great Wall of China, like Hadrian's Wall, was established to keep "barbarians" from endangering claimed territory. Donald Trump's controversial wall between Mexico and America is allegedly designed to keep out an imagined flood of drug dealers, rapists, and other variations on a threatening other (while serving as a ploy to keep his xenophobic base on side). The "Green Line" demilitarized zone dividing Cyprus was initially established in 1964 by the UN to keep ethnically defined antagonists apart, and it was extended in 1974 when Turkish forces established fencing, ditching, walling, and mining along its Northern face. Similar exclusionary walls now exist along the borders between Morocco and Ceuta and Melilla, between Greece and Turkey, between Bangladesh and India, and a multitude of other national peripheries. In most, if not all, of these instances of exclusion a population of the other already exists within the protected territory, demonstrating that the wall is simply part of a strategy to deintegrate an already mixed society. There are, furthermore, walls within integral territories that indicate internal processes of exclusion; among these are the walls of gated communities, the barriers between Protestant and Catholic areas in Belfast, and the now dismantled Cutteslowe Wall (1934-1959) separating council housing from more prosperous properties in North Oxford.

Other walls are designed to keep people in: the Berlin Wall, which was erected across the full interface of East and West Germany in 1961 and dismantled in 1989, was designed to prevent East Germans from escaping to the West. One must also consider practices of ghettoization such as that of Jewish communities in Venice (established in 1516 and opened in 1797 when Napoleon's troops burnt down its gates).²⁸ In the Venetian case the Jewish community was domiciled in isolation from the surrounding society and was there able to maintain and develop its own cultural practices without the threat of extinction. Other ghettos are more about exterminatory isolation as were both the Warsaw Ghetto established by the Nazis in 1940 or the concentration camps into which

28. The word "ghetto" is derived from the Venetian enclosure of its Jews. The aforementioned early thirteenth century enclosure of the Jews of Mallorca is analogous in practice but not in terminology.

Jews and other “undesirables” (communists, gypsies, homosexuals, Jehovah’s Witnesses, etc.) were moved to be murdered.

In the following I examine a particular example of an other’s walling within the territory claimed by a state (even if in violation of international law) which, while not literally exterminatory, is certainly directed towards the isolation and both the political and economic disempowering of the religio-ethnically defined other. In discussing the practices the state of Israel directs against Palestinians within the territories illegally expropriated following the 1967 war, I use the term “encystation”²⁹ to describe the process of containing and isolating a people seen as threatening to the existence of the surrounding nation-state. The structure of this particular practice, while in some ways very much shaped by the specific historical, cultural, and political setting of Israel/Palestine, can be seen in many other instances worldwide where, to borrow a term from Giorgio Agamben, societies produce “states of exception” (1998) and enclose their internal others within prisons, ghettos, camps, or analogous cells. The use of the biological metaphor of encystation in the Israeli case also, intriguingly, introduces another opposed process wherein a people, protected within the womb-like protective cell of the nation-state, develops to a sufficient maturity to enable its empowered emergence into the international setting.

Walling as encystation: A socio-historical inquiry

In January 2015 the Egyptian government under Abdel Fattah el-Sisi completed the extension of a free-fire buffer zone at the Egyptian-Gazan border from five hundred to one thousand meters. This construction (which involved the destruction of at least twelve hundred houses in Rafah) consolidated the process of enclosing Gaza that the military regime had inaugurated soon after coming to power, canceling the policy of el-Sisi’s predecessor’s government of permanently opening the Rafah Crossing to movement in and out of Gaza. The buffer zone links

29. Encystation is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “the process of becoming surrounded with a cyst” (1971 E: 153). My use of the term here, as developed below, draws not on a medicalization of sociocultural processes but on the metaphoric aptness of the dual sense of a cyst as both “a closed cavity or sac of a morbid or abnormal character [and] ... a cell or cavity containing reproductive bodies, embryos etc.” (1971 C: 1306).

up with the shell Israel has—since its early efforts at walling Gaza in 1991—built up around the whole of Gaza, incorporating palisades, fences, three hundred-meter buffer zones (these expropriating Gazan land, unlike that of the Egyptians which are on Egyptian territory), naval blockades, airspace closure and sealed gates. Israel has, with the connivance of Egypt, literally closed the population of Gaza within a sac; this short section will examine the metaphorical implications of that encystation—metaphorical implications with deep historical roots and very literal consequences.

Encystation as the process of enclosing within a cyst is more than a metaphor for the encircling of Palestinian communities within the territories over which Israel claims sovereignty, insofar as both the biological and the social processes are acts of quarantining matter believed to put the surrounding social body at risk. Although Israel, as now Egypt, claims that walling is a matter of security (used, as the former claims, for the prevention of Palestinian attacks on Israeli civilians³⁰ and, as the latter asserts, for the prevention of Salafist entries into Egyptian territory), encystation is—at least in the Israeli instance—a long-standing practice that works on the Palestinian and Israeli populations to very different ends. Encystation differs from the term “encapsulation” as used by Frederick Boal (1994) and “enclavement” by Mary Douglas (2001) in that it emphasizes a bodily metaphoric of disease and generation resonating with a biopolitics deeply embedded in Israeli conceptions of nation and statehood.

The use of the metaphor encystation to describe Israeli practices draws on the idea that the shell surrounding encysted materials is analogous to the walls³¹ Israel erects to divide Israeli and Palestinian

30. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs asserts unequivocally that “it cannot be clearly stated that the Palestinians’ right to freedom of movement must take precedence over the right of Israelis to live” (<http://security-fence.mfa.gov.il>, accessed April 2011, since removed, reposted at http://www.aboutisrael.co.il/eng/site.php?site_id=307&parent_id=296, accessed April 5, 2019, before being removed again).

31. Whether these be buffered bulldozed strips of between twenty and forty meters in width containing two three-meter barbed wire topped fences, a ditch, another fence with electronic movement sensors, two raked sand trace strips, and a paved patrol road, or eight-meter high stretches of concrete wall crowned with smoked-glass windowed watchtowers protected by ditches, patrol roads and supplementary fences. Other “walls” may be

populations. Palestinians are always susceptible to being walled off from their surroundings wherever they might be. This is strikingly manifest in the operations of the Border Police, a police unit under the command of the Israeli military which is supposed to patrol borders as well as ports and airports. In practice, the Border Police go into operation wherever Palestinians confront Israelis in what the authorities perceive as a political manner.³² When Ariel Sharon's September 28, 2000 "visit" to the Haram ash-Sharif (which provoked the Second Intifada) sparked demonstrations in Arab towns and cities within Israel's 1949 borders, it was the Border Police that was sent into the Galilee to suppress these, at the cost of thirteen Israeli Arabs shot dead. Borders, whether those drawn by the Wall or those of Closed Military Areas which any officer can declare at whim, pertain to Palestinians and are erected wherever and whenever a Palestinian is seen to impinge upon or question Israeli sovereignty over the land. As is evident in Israeli incursions into Gaza and the West Bank to assassinate activists or arrest government ministers, in Israel's numerous invasions of Lebanon, and in its January 18, 2015 air strike on the Syrian Golan Heights, a similar logic operates: Arabs must remain passive and in place while the Israeli military can go anywhere it wants to ensure that quiescent immobility.

Gaza and the West Bank are clearly delineated by borders, marked by the aforementioned eight-meter tall walls and buffered and ditched fences (effectively sealing the territories to Palestinians but leaving them permeable by military assault from Israel and, in the case of the West Bank, the free movement of settlers). The logics of encystation operate differently in the two cases however, and I will investigate the operative and conceptual differences between the two applications through examining the relevance to both Gaza and the West Bank of Agamben's concept of the sovereign exception.

mobile, such as the Closed Military Areas declared by Israeli soldiers or Border Police (far from any literal borders) to seal off sites of real or potential confrontation between Israelis and Palestinians.

32. This internal mobilization of a force—unconstrained by civil law—meant to protect national borders from foreign enemies was mimicked by Donald Trump and the US federal government in its use of the Department of Homeland Security's US Customs and Border Protection forces against US citizens in Portland and other American cities while attempting to suppress Black Lives Matter demonstrations.

Sovereign exception

Agamben, in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign power and bare life* (1998), speculates on the extraterritoriality of persons excluded from the conceptual and legal domain of the nation-state within which they nonetheless live. Unlike the diasporic extraterritoriality of persons or communities belonging to a national collectivity but located outside national territory (such as Israeli settlers or Jews outside of Israel), the “outside inside” that Agamben examines is exemplified by the situation of detainees in Guantanamo Bay: “the detainees of Guantanamo do not have the status of Prisoners of War, they have absolutely no legal status. They are subject now only to raw power; they have no legal existence” (Raulff 2004: 610). These detainees, like Jews in the Nazi camps (Agamben 1998: 166–80), are held within the embrace of the state but without the protection that state affords its citizens:

The exception that defines the structure of sovereignty is ... complex. Here what is outside is included not simply by means of an interdiction or an internment, but rather by means of the suspension of the juridical order’s validity—by letting the juridical order, that is, withdraw from the exception and abandon it. The exception does not subtract itself from the rule; rather, the rule, suspending itself, gives rise to the exception and, maintaining itself in relation to the exception, first constitutes itself as a rule. The particular “force” of law consists in this capacity of law to maintain itself in relation to an exteriority. We shall give the name relation of exception to the extreme form of relation by which something is included solely through its exclusion. (Agamben 1998:18)

As was the case for those imprisoned in the concentration camps at the core of Agamben’s argument, the withdrawal of the juridical order from the Palestinians behind the wall is not a matter of disregard but one of dehumanization (the production of what Agamben terms “bare life,” defined as “life exposed to death” at the hands of sovereign violence [1998: 88]). The enclosed populations are carefully regarded—profiled, branded with identity cards, confined to specified areas, tracked—while simultaneously denied the rights or legal status accruing to citizens of the incorporating state. The encysted are brought far more under the control of the state than its citizens but, rather than enjoying protection by the state correlative to that control, stand in constant risk of extermination

by it. For Agamben this construction of an inside (the sovereign juridical order of the state) by the inclusion of an excluded population (the threatening other) is a central rhetorical (and practical) move by modern sovereign powers. This interiorization of a national exteriority not only provides its citizenry with evidence of the protective power of the state but simultaneously grounds—on the threat that incorporated other presents—that state’s demands to increase its power over, and reduce the rights of, its own citizenry (see King-Irani 2006; Agamben 2005).

Yehouda Shenhav and Yael Berda (2009) commend the analytic grip of the concept of sovereign exception, but query its apparent lack of a genealogy (its ahistoricism) and, in rectifying that, show not only how it evolved in British colonial practice under Lord Evelyn Cromer in Egypt and Lord George Curzon in India,³³ but as well how its application by the British and later the Israelis changed from the Mandate Period until the wake of the Second Intifada. Constant to the sovereign exception’s colonial application is the assumption of the potentially violent irrationality of the colonial subject and the consequent necessity of revealing colonial sovereignty to that subject as “a phantom organ that manufactures miraculous decisions, but that conceals the locus of the decision making process, the inner working of its machinery, and its criteria of judgment” (Shenhav and Berda 2009: 342). In the contemporary Israeli instance, racialized profiling of the Palestinian is “based on an all-powerful instant *classification as security threat* ... rel[ying] on the belief that inside every Palestinian—regardless of age, residence or profession—hides the ghost or demon of a Palestinian terrorist” (ibid.: 355). Israeli sovereignty, in other words, manifests itself towards the Palestinian population as simultaneously illegible and irresistible, unpredictable and brutal.

Earlier profilings acknowledged the Palestinians’s inherent violent irrationality, but were accompanied by different strategies for bringing it under control. Historically, the face that the sovereign exception shows to the subject population will very much depend on that population’s perceived use value. As Neve Gordon shows, Israeli policy between the 1967 occupation and the First Intifada was that of employing “numerous forms of control to craft an economically useful Palestinian society while reducing the inhabitants’ political aptitude” (Gordon 2008: 206;

33. The warm relation between Benjamin Netanyahu’s government and that of India’s Narendra Modi is likely fostered by their respective attitudes to their internal others (Palestinians and Muslims) which appear to have been inherited from British colonial practices.

see also Bornstein 2002).³⁴ With the First Intifada Israel radically curtailed its dependence on Palestinian labor and simultaneously withdrew from managing Palestinian civil life, shifting “the governing paradigm ... to control of the Palestinian population seen from the single vantage point of ‘Israel’s security’” (Shenhav and Berda 2009: 338).³⁵ Although orders were given to the military to avoid killing civilians, Israel emphasized its sovereignty over the Palestinians through “the implementation of the entry-permit regime and the pervasive practice of incarceration, torture and beatings in order to repress the population’s political aspirations” (Gordon 2008: 206; see also Kimmerling 2003). However with the Second Intifada

Israel adopted a new approach toward the Palestinians which rendered them, in many respects, expendable.... In place of the politics of life that had characterised the OT [Occupied Territories] until the Second Intifada, a politics of death slowly emerged. The paradigmatic practice of this new politics is the extrajudicial execution which in contrast to incarcerations or even torture does not intend to shape or alter Palestinian behavior, but to do away with “recalcitrant” individuals. (Gordon 2008: 206-207)

Gordon notes the escalation of killings of Palestinians after September 2000 (the number of Palestinian fatalities during each year of the Second, or Al-Aqsa, Intifada was more than all of those killed during the first twenty years of the occupation), an escalation highlighted by its savage attacks on Gaza and Gazan residents in 2008-2009, 2012, 2014, 2018 and during the “Great March of Return” protests (March 30,

34. Gordon notes that during this period “Israel invested considerable resources in closely monitoring the nutritional value of the Palestinian food basket in order to ensure that its policies were decreasing Palestinian susceptibility to disease and making inhabitants more useful in economic terms” (Gordon 2008: 207-208).

35. Israeli policies of curtailing its dependence on Palestinian labor and importing immigrant workers to replace it undermines parallels between Israel and South Africa. South Africa’s apartheid regime, and the neoliberal systems that have replaced it, reflect that country’s dependence on black labor; Israel, in the wake of the First Intifada, has for the most part moved away from the use of Palestinian labor (except in the West Bank settlements), and thus no longer *needs* its Palestinian population, putting that population at greater risk than that of simple exploitation.

2018-December 27, 2019). This trajectory continues to escalate significantly. One hundred and sixty seven Palestinians were killed by the Israeli Defense Force and settlers in the West Bank in 2022 while the IDF killed another fifty three in Gaza. Between 1 January and 27 January 2023, under the new right wing Israeli government, thirty Palestinians have been killed, with nine killed on the 26th during an IDF raid in the West Bank city of Jenin (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-64410607>, 27 January 2023).

Concurrent with the institutionalization of assassinations and other forms of extermination of Palestinian militants was that of a policy of weakening the general population so as to sap its will to resistance. Dov Weissglass, in 2006, announced a policy, grounded on research by the defence ministry into minimal daily caloric needs, of taking the Gazan population to the edge of, but not into, starvation: “the idea is to put the Palestinians on a diet, but not to make them die of hunger” (quoted in Rabbani 2013: 8). This policy took a particularly cynical turn when, in response to Israeli and international criticisms of IDF killings of protesters during the Great March of Return, orders were revised to demand crippling of protesters by firing into their legs, resulting in amputations and an impossible stress on Gazan medical facilities and economy.³⁶

The path mapped here between valuing a subject population as a labor pool and judging it expendable and collateral to the extermination of resistance activities traces the development of Israeli policy towards Gazans from surveilled incorporation to the isolate bare life of the camp.

A matter of degree

I initially assumed (Bowman 2007) that there was a qualitative difference between the walling of Gaza and that of the West Bank insofar as the encystation of Gaza seemed much more brutal and all-encompassing than that of the West Bank. Gaza’s wall tightly encysts a population which is exclusively Palestinian; the area is, aside from military

36. <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/1-700-gazans-could-face-amputations-due-to-the-lack-in-health-funding-unwarns-1.7216987> (May 9, 2019, accessed April 11, 2020). See too <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/.premium-gaza-doctors-injuries-in-border-protests-worst-since-2014-war-1.6014013> (April 22, 2018, accessed April 11, 2020).

incursions, closed to Israelis. Israeli policies, not to mention invasions and bombardments, have effectively destroyed the economy, radically restricting the provision of water, electricity and, as mentioned above, food. The expendability of the Gazan population was made very clear in operations Cast Lead, Pillar of Defense, and Protective Edge through Israeli willingness to destroy occupied apartment blocks in putative pursuit of Hamas or Islamic Jihad militants as well as, on August 1, 2014, to raze an entire neighborhood, killing its inhabitants, so as to prevent the holding hostage of a single Israeli soldier. The West Bank wall appears to operate according to a different logic in drawing a border between Israel and the West Bank (a border which violates the 1949 armistice line in order to massively extend Israeli sovereignty into Palestinian territory) and allowing, within that border, a degree of mobility and an as yet adequate supply of goods and services to West Bank Palestinians. What Gordon refers to as the “politics of death” is not yet there endemic; although assassinations and targeted killings—both at the hands of the IDF and militant settlers—are increasingly frequent. Collateral damage is however nowhere near as extensive as it has been in Gaza. Despite these differences the implications of post-Oslo developments have shown that Israeli policies are fundamentally the same for both areas but that Gaza is further along the road to encystation and bare life than the West Bank. The difference is temporal rather than qualitative.

Oslo II (1995) following on the original 1993 Oslo Accords divided the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) into three administrative divisions: Areas A, B, and C. Area A was designated as being under full civil and security control by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and closed to the Israeli military and police forces. Joint Israeli and Palestinian policing would take care of security concerns in Area B, although all civil issues (water, electricity, sewage, health provision, education, etc.) pertaining to Palestinians living in Area B would be the exclusive concern of the PNA. Area C was placed under full Israeli security and civil control. The “Interim Agreement,” signed by Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat under the aegis of American president Clinton, stated that areas B and C would, aside from concessions to be negotiated, be handed to full Palestinian control in the wake of the permanent status agreements. Over the subsequent decades, no progress towards any agreement over permanent status has been reached³⁷ and, insofar as it is evident that Israeli

37. Only two percent of promised interim withdrawals from thirteen percent of the West Bank were carried out after the Wye River Agreements

state policy is at a minimum to ensure that no such progress can occur, and at the maximum (currently announced as state policy) to facilitate the annexation of at least sixty percent of the Occupied Territories, it is important to investigate the status quo established by areas A, B, and C.

Area A, under full civil and security control of the PNA, initially consisted of somewhat less than four percent of the West Bank (Schlaim 2000: 528), and was effectively the territories occupied by the major Palestinian cities: Bethlehem, Jericho, Ramallah, Qalqilya, Tulkarem, Jenin, Nablus, and eighty percent of Hebron (the remainder of which is designated as settler property). East Jerusalem, annexed by the Israelis in 1980, has never been included. Area B makes up approximately twenty-two percent of the West Bank and contains some four hundred and fifty Palestinian villages and their surrounding lands. In this region civil affairs are the concern only of the PNA while security is nominally the joint concern of the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli military. The protocols, however, point out that “the [Palestinian] Council will assure responsibility for public order for the Palestinians. Israel shall have the overriding responsibility for security for the purpose of protecting Israelis and confronting the threat of terrorism.”³⁸ The Palestinian National Authority, in other words, polices the Palestinian population but is required to step aside to make way for IDF intervention when Palestinian activities are seen to threaten Israelis or Israel’s security concerns; such activities include responses by Palestinians to attacks by settlers on individuals or communities, and civilian resistance to settlement expansion onto Palestinian lands. Settlements, theoretically restricted to Area C, frequently expand into Area B expropriating private lands for building or cultivation and sparking local resistance then suppressed by the Israeli military (see Eldar 2012).

Post-Oslo II negotiations allowed Area A’s territory to expand between the Wye Agreements (1998) and the outbreak of the Second Intifada (2000) by incorporating parts of Area B so as to eventually make up some eighteen percent of the West Bank. Nonetheless the ‘islands’ of Area A are discontinuous and surrounded by Area B territories wherein

(1998), and these were reoccupied during Operation Defensive Shield (2002).

38. Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Annex I: Protocol Concerning Redeployment and Security Arrangements, Article V.3 (Areas B and C) <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/577f8dd050bb55aa85256f1800676155?OpenDocument>, accessed April 11, 2020.

all security is controlled by the Israeli military. Palestinian movement through the West Bank is systematically impeded by security barriers and checkpoints. This enclosure ensured from the beginning of the zoned system that should militant Palestinian activity deemed problematic occur within the urban areas these can immediately be closed off and isolated by IDF movements. Since 2002, when Israel's 'Operation Defensive Shield' reconquered all the major Palestinian towns and made the IDF responsible for security throughout, settlers and soldiers regularised frequent incursions into the regions. Hillel Frisch writes that this "essentially changed areas designated A to the status of B, where the IDF became responsible for security. Nothing characterized that change more than the preventive arrests carried out by the IDF almost on a daily basis ever since" (Frisch 2016). Effectively Area A is no different from Area B today as the IDF moves through the Palestinian cities freely without PNA or international resistance.

Area C is by far the largest portion of the West Bank, originally making up approximately seventy-three percent of the whole but now roughly sixty percent. Sixty-eight percent of this is allotted to settlements and their lands, twenty-one percent is designated as closed military zones, and eight percent is made up of so-called nature reserves. The entire region is under Israeli civil and security control, but the civil administration concerns itself only with a resident settler population of in excess of 400,000 (Katz 2020) leaving a substantial majority of the 300,000 Palestinians who live there without connection to the water network, blocked from building by restrictions on Palestinian construction, and deprived of basic amenities such as schooling and medical facilities.³⁹ Palestinian movement through and within Area C is fiercely monitored and restricted by a permit system, permanent and flying checkpoints, roadblocks and settler-only roads. All Area C is slated for annexation.

In effect, despite the impression that the West Bank is encysted as a unit within the Apartheid Wall or Separation Barrier, the facts on the ground reveal the region is itself shattered into a multitude of discontinuous Palestinian cysts encompassed by Israeli-controlled territory under the sovereignty of a combination of Israeli state military and armed settlers. As the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs argued strongly in May 2006, it is difficult to any longer speak of the West Bank as an entity: "a combination of checkpoints, physical

39. <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/area-c-west-bank-key-humanitarian-concerns-august-2014>, accessed April 11, 2020.

obstacles and a permit system has effectively cut the West Bank into three distinct areas.... Within these areas further enclaves have been created—also bordered by checkpoints and roadblocks” (UNOCHA 2006). 2,750,000 Palestinians in Areas A and B live in one hundred and sixty five isolated ‘enclaves’. Another 300,000 cling insecurely to 530 ‘residential areas’ (Haas 2014) in Area C. Freely moving amongst them, depriving them of land, rights and often lives, are 490,493 Israeli settlers⁴⁰ under the protection of the immense security apparatus of the IDF.

The speed and efficiency with which Israeli troops are able to impose full closure on the cities and towns of the West Bank was first demonstrated during the reconquest of the West Bank during the Al-Aqsa Intifada of 2000. The militarization of Areas B and C by a combination of the IDF and settlers renders the villages in those regions highly susceptible to expulsions in the event of Israeli perceptions of their posing heightened security threats, or indeed of Palestinians in general doing so. The current state of affairs, in which right-wing nationalist provocations by Israel and government plans to annex the majority of the territory threaten to spark a third intifada, could well bring about such actions at any time, especially in the light of Israeli sabre rattling towards Iran and the general tumult of the Middle East. Were that to happen the situation of Gaza could easily be reproduced in the urban areas of the West Bank with open warfare on an encysted population swollen by refugees flooding into the cities from the villages of Areas B and C.

The scenario above might be seen as apocalyptic, but it is important to stress that the groundwork is very much in place to allow its enactment when Israeli politicians judge that the time is right. Gaza, like the Gazan population, has been judged expendable by Israel; its groundwater is salinated and heavy with pollutants and it does not have the biblical aura that makes Judea (and to a lesser degree Samaria) so desirable to religious ethnonationalists. It would be difficult—politically, practically and ideologically—to do with the people of the West Bank what has been done with those of Gaza (so many of whom are themselves refugees, or descendants of refugees, from the ethnic cleansing of the territory that became 1949 Israel), but this may simply be a matter

40. 2022 settler statistics from <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-settlements-population-1970-present>, Palestinian statistics from the Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics 2021. Census material on Palestinians in Area C cannot be collected by the Palestinian Authority and is not being gathered for public release by Israeli agencies.

of waiting for the opportune moment. At present escalating emigration, particularly of those with the potential to build a viable Palestinian entity to counter Israel's project (see Kårtveit 2014), is quietly carrying out the labor of politicide while the encirclement and etiolation of those who remain works to fragment the sense of national community, substituting a simple will to survive for aspirations to self-determination and national sovereignty. At present there are parallels with the fate of the Islamic population of Mallorca after 1229 and that of the Jewish population of Menorca after 1478. Whether and when Israel opts for surgical intervention depends on many factors, but the equipment for reducing and in time removing the cyst is already at hand.

Imperial sovereignty

I return to the concept of encystation. Cyst has a double meaning: it is both a closed sac in which morbid matter is quarantined so as to protect the surrounding body and a cell “containing reproductive bodies, embryos etc.” providing a defensive membrane within which a fetal entity can develop until it has grown sufficiently strong to emerge into the world outside. It is in the latter sense that Israel, as a homeland for the Jewish people, was conceptualized by Herzl and the late nineteenth-century Zionist pioneers who saw the land as a place distant from Europe and its anti-Semitism where Jews, weakened by centuries of discrimination, could shelter while developing into what Herzl termed “real men.”⁴¹ Herzl's program was to leave Europe, with its discriminatory laws against Jewish participation in civil society, in order to establish a state where full civil rights would enable Jews to develop the social and political maturity Europe denied them (Herzl [1896] 1993). Although a number of Zionists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century considered different, and more accommodating, strategies of engagement with the existing populations of the land they had chosen as a haven, including the assimilationists of the First Aliyah and the binationalists of Brith Shalom (Wallach 2013), the Iron Wall strategy of Ze'ev Jabotinsky, which declared that coexistence with Arab populations would only be successful if those populations were subdued by overwhelming Jewish military might, won out (Jabotinsky 1923; Bresheeth 2020).

41. From *Complete Diaries* I, 19, cited in Kornberg 1993: 166. See also Bowman 2002: 456–63; Bowman 2010.

As a protected space within which a people could shelter and grow strong without encountering challenges and debilitating competition, Israel's founders envisaged not only the need for strong defences against an outside but also means for ensuring that any internal challenge to the development of sovereignty would be contained, expelled, or destroyed (Kimmerling 2003). It is tragic but unsurprising that this solution to Jewish exclusion and ghettoization involves the exclusion and ghettoization of a population native to the liminal zone in which Herzl imagined the Jewish people maturing into real men. Nonetheless, in addition to the problem of territory (solved in large part by expulsion and then settler colonial expropriation of land), a very real internal challenge to the existence of Israel as a Jewish state was and is the radical diversity of both the cultural backgrounds (Ashkenazi, Sephardic, Mizrahim, African, Asian, etc.) and the very different socioeconomic conditions of the diasporic Jewish populations that immigrated into Israel. Current Israeli practices of surveillance, control, and walling are not primarily meant to protect the Jewish civilians and state institutions from attack by a hostile non-Jewish population, but more vitally to protect Jewish identity, and the state which has founded itself on it, from dissolution from within by producing a scapegoat population whose exclusion strengthens the solidarity of the community out of which it is driven. By encysting Palestinians Israel stages for its own population a continuous performance of threat on their own doorsteps, impelling that population to huddle defensively despite its radical heterogeneity while simultaneously guaranteeing that the contained and curtailed Palestinians (and their supporters) produce dramatic yet relatively impotent gestures of resistance. Any questioning of state policies, and of the politics of fear, from within the Jewish community is deemed treasonous because suicidal, and can only be the result of Jewish self-hatred; criticizing Israel from outside is viewed as simply and purely anti-Semitic and proof of the necessity of a militarized defensive state. All of these attacks serve to further fortify the walls the Jewish state and its supporters have thrown up around an essentialized, and constitutionally incohesive, Jewish community.

Israel is, of course, no longer the enclave state of a previously ghettoized people. With its massive army, its nuclear capabilities, and its high-technology economy it has entered forcefully into the global community of mature states. Nonetheless, in still wanting to pose itself as a protective womb for a threatened people, it engages in policies both at home (refusing Palestinians even the semblance of self-determination [Kimmerling 2003]) and in the global setting (where it seeks to extend

its protective wall outwards so as to encompass and protect all the members of a globally distributed ethno-religious population it sees as its concern) that increasingly make it appear as a pariah state whose values are incommensurate with international standards and whose claims to represent the Jewish people are facing challenges from within that people.

In lieu of a conclusion

I have here brought together work I have carried out in the past few years in order to throw light upon strategies of existing with the other that may be of use in thinking with the exciting work Fernando Ortiz produced in the course of a long and productive life in the contexts of Cuba and Menorca. Ortiz in his Menorcan youth was harshly criticized by the Catholic press for an article he had written in *El Noticiero* in 1894, and reputedly was expelled from the Catholic collegium he had been attending. This experience of the monosectarian and intolerant society that had evolved out of Menorca's long and often violent history of struggle for Catholic hegemony opened him to the Cuba that he found to be in many ways its obverse even though it too could be brutal in its inequalities. Cuba had a ferment which enchanted him. The fact that every community there appeared as part of a constantly augmented and reconfigured *ajiaco* meant it differed massively from what he had experienced as Menorca's traditionalist inflexibility. As Ortiz's work, and the metaphor of *ajiaco*, convincingly demonstrates, Cuban society was a world of expatriated communities whose identities were in polyphonic relation with each other. In this context transculturation is a powerful metaphor for examining identity politics. In the Mediterranean Ortiz left behind (although it was always in his thoughts contrapuntally) the ground on which communal identities interacted was firmer and shaped by more settled hegemonies. Nonetheless, the legacy of the Mediterranean's own rich and contested ferment as the crossroads of local and world cultures is apparent in the existence in all of its relatively new nation-states of ethno-religious others who themselves struggle to assert and maintain identities. As I hope to have shown in the preceding pages, there are means by which empowered groups and their others can negotiate coexistence as well as processes through which communities in power can isolate and obviate the identities of others. Coexistence, and the compromises and disavowals it entails, is one strategy; another

is rejection through displacement and walling off. This research, like Ortiz's and that of other participants in the Ortiz symposium, casts light on the complexities of interrelations and on the manifold variations of dealing with self and other in space and over time.

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AFRO-CUBAN FETISHIZATIONS

True *brujos* and imitators

A reading of Fernando Ortiz's *Los negros brujos* (1906)

Ramon Sarró

The majority of human things come in pairs
—Alcmaeon of Croton

The purpose of this chapter is to offer a possible reading of a text that has proved to be particularly difficult to analyze: Fernando Ortiz's first book, *Hampa afro-cubana: Los negros brujos (apuntes para un estudio de etnología criminal)*, normally known as *Los negros brujos*. The book, published in Madrid in 1906, is not a coherent volume with a clear argument.¹ Rather, as the title humbly indicates, it is a collection of *apuntes*

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1. The book was published in Madrid by the publishing house Librería Fernando Fé in 1906. Owing to mobility limitations in these COVID-19 times, I have not been able to consult again this version, which I had used to prepare the oral paper on which this chapter is based. I am using instead the second edition, also published in Madrid (Ortiz 1917). Two chapters were sacrificed in this second version and were reprinted instead in the 1916 *Los negros esclavos* (Ortiz [1916] 1975). Some alterations were made to the text, with important implications for his views on race, as Patricia Catoira has demonstrated (2005). Edward Mullen (1987) offers valuable resources to contextualize the two versions within Ortiz's corpus. Curtis Barnett (1986) and Jerome Branche (1996) assess their impact in the literary and artistic Cuban vanguard.

(notes) that aims to bring together data on *brujería* (“witchcraft”) and to give a clear indication of how to eradicate this phenomenon, since the activities of *brujos* (“witches,” “sorcerers”) are linked to criminality. In the following, I will be economical in terms of translation, and write about *brujería* instead of “witchcraft,” and *brujo* instead of “sorcerer,” “witch,” or “witchdoctor.” In the language game of Ortiz’s book, these concepts are very loaded, and translating them would create more problems than solutions. I will also use other Spanish concepts such as *hechicería* (which Ortiz uses as a synonym for *brujería*), *hechicero* (synonym of *brujo*) *curanderismo* (healing), *adivinatora* (fortune-teller), *Gitano* (Spanish for “Gypsy,” but without the derogatory element the term has in English-speaking countries), and *daño* (an illness produced by someone else’s evil intention).

Los negros brujos lacks the respect for transcultural coexistence and the skepticism on the essentialism of “race” that we find in Ortiz’s mature works. The author, who later became without any shadow of doubt the most central figure in Cuban anthropology (and by extension one of the most important ones in Latin America), as well as one of the most influential voices in the battle against racism from the early 1940s onwards, has rightly been praised as one of the first scholars to value the contribution of Afro-Cuban elements in Cuban national identity (Cairo 2002). Yet, it is difficult to guess by reading this early work that he would later boast such unique recognition and status. There is room to suspect that reactions to it, including reactions from the African-descendant populations, helped him rethink his early formulations, which testifies to his openness for dialogue (Iznaga Beira 1982: 3). His intellectual progress, however, is not the object of my study, rather I focus here simply on offering an interpretation of this complicated text.²

I have also had to be rather economical with the many debates that Ortiz’s book has generated in Cuba and elsewhere about the lack of

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2. The bibliography on Ortiz in Spanish is huge, and his work is constantly studied, analyzed, and critically edited or reedited by Cuban scholars. The classic works by Garcia-Carranza (1970) and by Le Riverend (1973) continue to be very useful resources to start navigating the bibliography. For non-Spanish readers, less familiar with the contribution of this scholar to world anthropology, I consider the collected volume edited by Mauricio A. Font and Alfonso W. Quiroz (2005) a very solid platform from which to start.

respect for Afro-Cuban spiritual practices and the relevance of this criticism for the always thorny field of defining “religion” and how to study it.³ One could argue that the book lacks an understanding of the religious practices of people of African origin as spiritual practices—a blind spot that makes it very problematic today. The lack of spirituality and the author’s insistence on a rather pragmatic use of ritual may accord, counterintuitive as it may sound, to a possible postcolonial criticism of religious studies, according to which too much, rather than too little, “spirituality,” in a Eurocentric and theocentric sense of the word, has been imputed to African practices. The Ugandan anthropologist and poet Otok p’Bitek (1970) argued this case in a neglected but provocative study recently rediscovered by decolonial African studies.

I will also leave it to other scholars to assess the work from a Lombrosian point of view and to place it within the context of the reception of Cesare Lombroso’s school in Cuba (Lombroso himself was author of a prologue to the book). One could argue that the book lacks a critical distancing between the criminal investigator and the anthropologist researcher (see Valero 2012 for the “hybrid” nature of Ortiz’s early methodology). This lack, in my view, could be important for the historiography of ethnographic method (Frazer himself, let us remember, starts *The golden bough* with a detective-like intention: why does the priest of Nemi have to be killed, and by whom?), but I will leave this aspect for another time.

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3. In several contributions to *Estudios Afrocubanos* in 1939 (reprinted as one single piece in Lachatañeré 1961), Cuban anthropologist Rómulo Lachatañeré incisively criticized Ortiz’s use of the “discriminatory” concept of *brujería*, arguing that it is impossible to use it as an analytical category; Ortiz partially responded to the criticism. The debate helps us understand why Ortiz chose that concept and what the limitations, and advantages are of viewing African practices as we would a “religious” system (Argyriadis 2005). It is also interesting from an ethnographic method viewpoint, because Lachatañeré was in fact offering a vindication of ethnography and claiming to be better at using it than Ortiz. The debate has been summarized by scholars (e.g., Gutiérrez 2002). Castellanos contextualizes it in the relationship between Ortiz and Lachatañeré (Castellanos 2003: 153–85), while López (2012) helps us place it in a wider context of African-American studies in Cuba and the United States. I know that Olivia M. da Gomes Cunha has also dealt with it in her most recent work (Cunha 2020), which came out too late for me to incorporate here.

I hasten to add that I am not a specialist in Cuba or Ortiz. My interest in the book emerged purely by coincidence, when I found a copy of the 1906 version by accident in my own library (there is a long story behind this dreamlike claim) and its title resonated in my mind with many of the debates about witchcraft and anti-witchcraft that Africanist and African anthropologists and philosophers have been keeping alive for decades (e.g., Bond and Ciekawy 2001). Reading the book, I soon became disappointed, as it was clearly written under the aegis of a racial theory that made its empirical findings useless, as far I am concerned. As Alfredo Triff has argued in a short but poignant essay on Ortiz's progress (in which he cleverly plays Ortiz's theory of race off against Martí's earlier "Mi raza"), one may find it easy to praise Ortiz's later books, as he lived long enough to change his perceptions and ideas, but *Los negros brujos* is certainly a most problematic study on the connections between race, belief, and criminality (Triff 2019).

In my reading, I have tried to find a possible link between the notes in the book that show a continuity around the pairs of "true" and "false" brujos, of reality and appearance, of "Blackness" and "creolization." This link relates to many topics pertaining to the study of African religious practices and especially their duplicitous aspect, as though some practices were authentically African while others are spurious copies. One might recall, for instance, the difficulties Evans-Pritchard encountered when he had to deal with what he called new forms of magic associations among the Azande, which struck him, in comparison with the "traditional" witchcraft (to which he had just devoted five hundred pages), as not being authentically Zande, but rather "foreign and abnormal modes of behaviour" (1937: 512). Closer to my own fieldwork in West Africa, I have been impressed by how, among African peasants (as well as among some scholars), some forms of "new" religious movements are described as "shadows" (Sarró and Temudo 2019), as though *real* religion was to be found elsewhere (in Islam and Christianity, in this case). In the following, I explore what I call—slightly modifying a concept of Lévi-Strauss's (1949: 108-25)—the "archaic illusion" to which Ortiz falls prey, as he always projects the true brujería elsewhere, to a rapidly disappearing past, and analyzes the perceived present reality in terms of mimetic simulacra. In doing so, I hope it will be of interest to scholars of what Christoph Wulf has called the "mimetic faculty" (Wulf 2013) and those interested in the ebb and flow of perceptions of authenticity and copy that have pervaded African and Black Atlantic religious culture and performance and its study (e.g., Njoku 2020).

The crime scene

As with Frazer's *The golden bough*, it all starts with a murder. According to the press (which was all Ortiz was able to consult at first as he gathered his notes on *brujería*), a little girl named Zoila was assassinated to remove her heart, or some other viscera, so as to manufacture a *brujería* (according to Ortiz, this is the name of objects used in *brujería*). The perpetrators were said to have believed that by giving the White girl's bodily substance to be consumed by a Black woman, an ailment (a *daño*) the latter was suffering could be cured. The leader of the alleged murderous gang/ritual association was a man called Bocu.⁴ The murder, which took place in El Gabriel (Province of Havana) in November 1904, shocked the whole country, and there was a lot of media interest in it. Ortiz was in Spain at the time and followed the case from a distance, learning about it from the articles that the newspaper *El Mundo* dedicated to it in November and December that year. Today we know that the suspects were immediately released but, under pressure from the White community, the investigation was reopened, and the perpetrators ended up sentenced to death.

Ortiz mentions Zoila's case many times in his book, although in a very disordered way that makes it impossible to reconstruct what happened.⁵ There are a total of twenty-five occasions in the book where Ortiz uses the same journalistic information to comment on, or deduce, different aspects of *brujería*. On two occasions he reintroduces the case as if the reader had not yet heard of it, and the first time he mentions the case, he does so without any introduction. Furthermore, to make it clear that he is merely reproducing information he has collected, the book includes a very long interlude in which Ortiz offers up a series of newspapers cuttings and notes. Although on two occasions Ortiz states unambiguously

4. Ortiz says the name had also been spelled as "Bocourt" (Ortiz 1917: 199) and suggests a connection with Haiti. In many other parts of the book Ortiz makes it clear that the Revolution in Haiti had made people migrate to Cuba and that many of the *brujería* practices he is describing are very likely of Haitian origin. It is tempting to see the pair "Haiti-Cuba" as parallel to the one "true brujo-brujo criollo" but the data on Haiti is too scant in this book to make any deep analysis of the place of Haiti in Ortiz's scientific imagination.

5. For a very suggestive analysis of the almost surreal way in which the "notes" construct, or rather suggest, murder, see Mullen (1987) and, above all, Cunha (2015).

that the case is “exceptional” (p. 100 and p. 356), he has no qualms about using it as a prototype and extrapolating from it to understand *other* cases, even those from the past. This extrapolation contradicts Ortiz’s own claim that the case of Zoila demonstrates the influence of Haitian *brujería*, previously unknown in Cuba (p. 100).

In short, there is no doubt that the Zoila story was poorly conveyed to Ortiz and that Ortiz, deliberately or not, tells it very poorly to us, his readers. In fact, it has continued to be poorly told until very recently. For example, quoting Lachatañeré, Edward Mullen writes that the defendants were all lynched “by an angry mob” (Mullen 1987: 38), which does not correspond with historical reality. Thanks to the work of Aline Helg (1990) and many others (e.g., Bronfman 2002), we can reconstruct what happened, at least partially, and of course contextualize it theoretically (Palmié 2002; Mailhe 2011; Cunha 2015). Although it is not true that the defendants were lynched, it is true that it was the enraged White population that instigated the reopening of the case, leading to the eventual condemning of the alleged murderers to death. It was not a lynching in the strictest sense, but the Whites came in a considerable crowd (some fifty people) to knock on the judge’s door to demand justice.⁶

As Helg has pointed out, the Zoila case happened at a time of racial resentment, in which the population with African ancestry, which had fought hard for the country’s independence, felt excluded from the nascent nation by the White elites (Helg 1995; Bronfman 2002; Cortés-Rocca 2005).⁷ We read in Helg (1990, 1995) that the person who most encouraged the Whites of El Gabriel to go to the judge’s house to demand justice was none other than Eduardo Verela Zequeira, editor-in-chief of *El Mundo*, whom Ortiz thanks for sending him all the information that was appearing in that newspaper. It is obvious that Ortiz’s audience were White Cubans and that it was to them that the supposed violence of the Black population had to be scientifically explained, and not the other way around. That Ortiz did not think the White rage had to be scientifically explained was particularly unfortunate, because the case of El Gabriel clearly had a component of racial hatred in which there was a lot of layered history that not even Ortiz could completely avoid:

6. To contextualize the reason for the “lynching” in Cuba at that historical moment, I recommend Palmié 2011.

7. This resentment is palpable in the autobiographical story of the former slave and later *cimarrón* Esteban Montejo (Barnet 1968).

It was necessary, in the case of the murder of the girl Zoila, for the brujo to declare that the *daño* of the sick woman was ancient and caused by the Whites in times of slavery, so that ... it would be necessary to use the blood and the beating heart of a White girl, murdered especially for the occasion. (Ortiz 1906: 173, my translation, italics in the original)

Ortiz's question was: how could one explain a crime as heinous as the murder of Zoila or any of the other crimes he describes in the book? On pages 171–172 we read that a sexagenarian old man (of African descent) from the Pelayo sugar mill, where thirty or forty small children had disappeared, kept dozens of children's bodies piled up under his wooden floor, with which, Ortiz suspected, he made "fetishes" for his customers. Cabangas, another brujo we read about (not situated in any specific moment in time), "used an *embó* [ritual object], partly composed of a foetus, to achieve the fertility of one of his concubines" (Ortiz 1917: 172–73, my translation), and we read of a similar case in Abreus. Other examples are offered in the interlude of the book, the above-mentioned collection of newspapers articles and information which, to me, suggests not that the population of African descent was violent, but that Ortiz was criminalizing practices simply because they were carried out by people of African origin. But overall, apart from the Abreus, Cabangas, and Zoila cases, the book offers very little data. It is Ortiz's re-use of these three cases many times and from different angles that could lead the inattentive reader to wrongly assume they are reading a book that contains a great deal of ethnographic data. The lack of spatial-temporal precision probably works in the imagination of the reader to essentialize Afro-Cuban brujería as an ahistorical constant:

The murder of the girl Zoila must be interpreted as a case of simple hechicería; just as it is believed in Africa that by eating the brain of an enemy warlord one acquires his entire worth, and that the child breastfed by many women will possess numerous intellectual gifts, so it has been believed that the heart of a girl, eaten by a barren woman, will bring about the fertility of the latter. (Ortiz 1917: 174, my translation)

The comparison between eating a girl's heart and collectively breastfeeding a baby allows the author to veil the fact that what is at stake here is not the eating of just any girl's heart, but that of a *White* girl.

Interestingly, on the following page, Ortiz accepts that many more cases of missing children may be due to *brujería* and ends the paragraph and section with a tantalizing sentence: “After 1906 there have been several more cases of White children being killed by Black *brujos*” (Ortiz 1917: 179, my translation).⁸

Much of the information that Ortiz offers in *Los negros brujos* comes from police officers or other authorities, as well as from journalists and newspaper editors. Not only has the author no qualms about using information collected from police officers, but he has even fewer qualms about offering them some advice on controlling *brujería*. He suggests police officers should keep an eye on African dances, because sometimes authentic ritual practices, *brujos*, or criminals are hidden under the guise of simple play or dance. It is, he claims, necessary to be vigilant, not to lower the guard: the microbe of *brujería*, as Ortiz so scientifically puts it, can attack anywhere.

Among the means of suggestion by which *brujos* manage to surround themselves with a nucleus of followers are the African dances that they perform periodically to the sound of drums if they can, with the appearance of innocently having a good time. The authorities, especially the rural ones, might increase their zeal in the surveillance of such dances, which can cover up religious festivals, denying permission to those suspected of *brujería*, inspecting the places where they are held, etc. (Ortiz 1917: 400, my translation)

The notion that, underneath the cover of play, ritual and *brujería* thrive is, from my perspective, very relevant. For I intend to highlight in this chapter the role played in Ortiz’s argument by the distinction between seriousness and play, between authenticity and imitation, and in a certain way between the rural world and the urban world (*brujería* is, for Ortiz, much more prevalent in the rural than in the urban domain). But before developing this theme, let me return briefly to Frazer.

8. This phrase, obviously, does not obtain in the 1906 version. On several occasions in the 1917 edition Ortiz makes it clear he has reworked the original text and that he has kept on investigating the phenomenon. In a footnote on page 296 he asserts that all the information that has appeared since 1906 pertaining to *brujería* would suffice to write an entire new volume.

From “true brujos” to brujos criollos

Just as Frazer had to prove that magical thinking underlay the ritual murder at Nemi (where a runaway slave had to kill the king-priest in order to replace him), so Ortiz has to prove that magical thinking underlies the ritual crime of Zoila. And that is why Ortiz’s book, like Frazer’s, becomes a long compendium of practices and beliefs that serve to comparatively demonstrate to us how the “primitive psyche” functions. If one bought into Ortiz’s arguments, one would be convinced, after reading *Los negros brujos*, that it is indeed possible for people whose psyche is very primitive or childlike (to continue with his own terminology) to believe that a sick Black adult woman could be healed by eating the heart of a healthy White girl. In fact, if we follow Ortiz, we have to recognize that the brujos who killed the girl did not act in bad faith, but on the contrary, in good faith, even altruistically (p. 211).

It is important for Ortiz (and for me) that his reader (my reader) be aware that, in 1906, he was writing at a time of historical transition, when the Afro-Cuban brujos in the strict sense were disappearing. At that time, first generation slaves, brought from Africa, had either already died or were very old, and even their island-born Creole children were no longer young. Therefore, the authentically African brujería, like that behind Zoila’s case, was clearly on its way to extinction. So, the reader might ask, why worry so much? Ortiz would have answered that it mattered so much precisely because it was a moment of transition, in which African brujería was disappearing as the African population died out and a new brujería was emerging among the younger generations that, if society did not defend itself, could be much worse than the old. “New situations demand new magic,” wrote Evans-Pritchard (1937: 513). New magic demands new scholarly and policy scrutiny, Ortiz would probably have added.

The historical transition in Cuba in 1906 awakened Ortiz’s awareness that there were two types of brujo: the brujo negro proper (which, using Ortiz’s terms, I will call from now on the “true brujo”); and the brujo negro criollo, which sometimes, but not always, included Mestizos. According to Ortiz, the first is authentic, bases his knowledge on African tradition, and works in good faith and credulity (I would say “sincerity,” though this is not a concept Ortiz uses); the second lives off deception:

Nowadays there are many Black Criollos and even some Mestizos dedicated to the practice of brujería. They have not waited to acquire

the prestige of old age, and are throwing themselves into parasitism, eager for laziness, still young and without the *studies* and experience required to know in depth the traditional element of their ancestors' brujería, which contributes to the fastest denaturalization of the rites and of the genuinely African fetishist practices. It is most common for these brujos criollos to have inherited their job directly from their fathers, which may perhaps indicate a survival of African priestly oligarchies. (Ortiz 1917: 197, my translation; "studies" is italicized by Ortiz)

Following a very consensual line or argument in nineteenth-century anthropology (Ortiz cites, to support this crucial point, an erudite list of early anthropologists, such as John Lubbock, Edward B. Tylor, Julien Girard de Rialle, André Lefèvre, Armand Corre, as well as some criminologists), our author could not imagine that African individuals suffered from doubt as they navigated their religious oceans. African believers were imagined by Western scholarship to be immersed in a universe of certainty, free of doubt and falsehoods. As the direct inheritor of African religious culture, this ontological and spiritual certainty or "credulity" also applied to the "true brujo" (pp. 209–10). In sharp contrast, the brujo criollo distances himself from good faith and credulity to become a hypocritical fake (*hipócrita farsante*, p. 76). The brujo criollo can imitate the behavior of the "true brujo" but also boasts the faculty that Ortiz calls "mimetic adaptation" (p. 246)⁹: he is able to adjust to the White universe, copy behaviors, and incorporate occult practices from Europe such as cartomancy and astrology into his brujería.¹⁰

A contradiction in Ortiz's book, however, is that "true brujos" are not conceived as *totally* incapable of pretending. The author grants them a certain ability to deceive, to be able to disguise. For example, they can

9. Ortiz mobilizes a large body of Spanish concepts linked to the semantic field of the fake, always in relation to the activities of the brujo criollo: *imitación, simulación, disfraz, plagiado, disimulo, farsante, hipócrita*, and variations of them.

10. While it is obvious that Ortiz was familiar with European theoreticians of mimetic behavior (Gabriel Tarde is occasionally cited in the book), it may be relevant to note here that the perception that African-descendant Cubans were good imitators had already been explored by Bachiller y Morales, an author who very explicitly influenced Ortiz's text. Bachiller dedicated an entire chapter of *Los negros* to the "spirit of imitation" (above all, religious imitation) of African descendants (Bachiller y Morales 1887: 132–37).

hide the evidence of a murder, making it look like they killed a pig to disguise the blood of a human victim, etc. (Apparently, this is what the *brujos* who killed Zoila tried to do upon being found out.) The contradiction is also visible when Ortiz claims that Bocu, no doubt a “true brujo,” managed to deceive the authorities by claiming that he was not a brujo because he worshipped Saint Barbara (p. 58). Under the disguise of Saint Barbara, he prayed in reality to Shangó, an African spiritual entity, in the same way that he worshipped Elegbará under the image of a Catholic *anima sola* (Ortiz 1917: 70). In many other places, however, Ortiz presents Bocu as the archetype of the “true brujo,” who, living in the world of immediacy and good faith, would be incapable of pretending. To pretend or to disguise supposes, in Ortiz’s theory, an intellectual evolution that only *brujos criollos* have achieved.

Towards a theory of religious allotropy

Simulation is central not only when Ortiz studies the distinction between “true *brujos*” and *brujos criollos*, but also when he comments on some aspects of traditional African (or Afro-Cuban) ritual practices, notably spirit possession. In describing how in some rituals the “saint” (a concept, in his view, syncretic between Catholicism and animism) is incorporated into humans, Ortiz tells us:

The saint gives mainly, naturally, to women. Men often simulate the attack by throwing themselves to the ground making diabolical contortions, sticking out their tongues, showing the white of their eyes, and so on. But the simulation is easily discovered. It is tolerated, however, when no one is actually possessed. (Ortiz 1917: 138, my translation)

The claim that women are “naturally” possessed is problematic as it is unclear why it should be “natural” for the saint to “give to” (i.e., take spiritual possession of) women rather than men.¹¹ However, in suggesting

11. Ortiz gives other examples of possession among women on pages 184–185, where he copies the detailed account that Francisco López Leiva had published in the journal *La Discusión* (August 13, 1903) of a ritual of *Maroons* in a *palenque*, a ritual in which the first person to be seized by the spirit was a woman. López Leiva was describing what had been witnessed

that women are imitated by men and that possession per se is part of a mimetic game, part of a theatrical spectacle, Ortiz offers a tantalizing glimpse of an idea that was only developed, certainly as far as Africanist studies are concerned, following the work of Michael Leiris much later (Leiris 1958).

Let us return to the brujo criollo, whose brujería, by the way, Ortiz does not hesitate to call “modern,” anticipating debates about the relationship between witchcraft and perceptions of modernity that infused anthropology for more than two decades from the 1990s (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993; Geschiere 1997; Shaw 1997; Moore and Sanders 2001).¹² Ortiz never tells us what he understands by “modernity,” but it seems clear to me that new forms of brujería appear to him as “modern” because he establishes elective affinities between modernity and two fundamental concepts: mixture and falsehood.

In the first place, the brujería of the brujo criollo mixes African witchcraft, European and Gitano divination, science (albeit in a “pseudoscientific” way: Ortiz 1917: 176, 210, 354), and politics (e.g., Ortiz mentions that the mixture of a modern brujo criollo includes the Cuban Republic’s coat of arms on a shrine, p. 88):

Some brujos, Black Criollos, have learned from the Whites the art of throwing the cards ..., joining this *civilized* divinatory procedure to the primitive form characteristic of Africa. (Ortiz 1917: 185, my translation, italics in the original)

In the second place, the brujería of the brujo criollo has a strong flavor of falsehood. Whereas the “true brujo” became such, Ortiz tells us, “by the direct route of either inheritance or vocation” (p. 243), the brujo criollo can make him or herself ex nihilo, with no reference to legitimate sources of learning. The combination of mixture and falsehood allows brujos criollos to plagiarize practitioners of occult arts from other places, for example, Europe:

and reported to him by insurgent Cástulo Martínez. A much more anthropologically mature Ortiz took up the analysis of this ritual again decades later, in one of his last articles (Ortiz 1961; see Ferrer 1999: 34-35).

12. A recent critical reappraisal of this literature is offered by Kroesbergen-Kamps 2020. For a possible use of the “witchcraft and modernity” boom in the context of socialist modernization in Cuba, see Palmié’s critical analysis 2011.

All over the world, in the miserable little village as in the great capitals, more or less famous and respected modern sibyls live parasitically in misery or in luxury, somewhat or not at all convinced of their prodigious talents ... who know how to give their practices the necessary *chic* and modernity The current sibyl has plagiarized from the *Gitano* the art of throwing out the cards and reading the good fortune ... and uses psychic phenomena (somnambulism, hypnotism, magnetism, mediumship), whose explanation is studied by modern science. (Ortiz 1917: 282, my translation)

The modern sibyl, who does not even fully believe in her powers, plagiarizes the *Gitano*, who must be immersed in the ocean of belief, if not planted on the rock of ultimate certainty. The arts of falsehood allow the *brujo criollo* to distance himself from his ancestor, the “true *brujo*,” adopting a different “clinical eye” (Ortiz’s words), an eye capable of diagnosing reality in a different and more distant way. As modernity advances, as society evolves, says Ortiz,

The *hechicero* is losing his prestige. He needs, in order to reaffirm his personality, to harvest in the fields of what is called home-made medicine, popular therapeutics, *curanderismo*, for which greater intellectual acuity, greater insight and experience, and a better *clinical eye*, if I may say so, is required than that which most *brujos* demonstrate in their wild *hechicerías*. (Ortiz 1906: 213–14, my translation)

It is thus established that, just as men imitate women in the cults of possession, so the *brujo criollo* imitates the “true *brujo*” in the practice of *brujería*. But how do you explain the success of this practice? According to Ortiz, that an Afro-Cuban *brujo* has an audience, people who follow him, is normal if you take into consideration the “primitive psyche” that makes them (both the *brujo* and his audience) believe in *brujería*. There is a democratic, horizontal sharing between the beliefs of the *brujo* and those of his public (p. 209). But who does the hypocritical, phony *brujo criollo* attract? This is where it is very important to keep in mind that for Ortiz, human beings, both men and women, always believe in something, for good or for bad. In this sense, what Ortiz had to offer to religious studies was considerably original. Following the British anthropologist Edward Clodd (1895, 1896), Ortiz borrows a metaphor from chemistry and states that he sees the fundamental property of religion in “allotropy” (p. 252). Just as coal and diamond are allotropes, that is,

are structurally different forms of the same element (carbon), however different their material manifestations, so Catholicism and animism, or fetishism, are allotropes of the same substance, religion, which is a basic need of the human spirit that makes us believe in spirits and gods, a substratum that underlies culture.¹³ For Ortiz, who distances himself from his master Cesare Lombroso (who saw some moralizing advantage in evangelical Christianity), this religious substratum does not serve much purpose, although he accepts that in some cases it may have helped to transform amoral beings into moral ones.

What I am interested in pointing out is that, for Ortiz, the *brujería criolla* has to knock on the door of some fears, “conscious or unconscious” (p. 355), which underlie the universal human psyche. We should also bear in mind another very important element in the young Ortiz’s thinking, an element that prefigures the famous theory of “transculturation” he developed decades later (Ortiz 1940). This element, expressed once again with a scientific metaphor, consists of presenting religions, and cultures, as “communicating vessels” (p. 285). Individuals who live together are subject to constant “physical and psychic transfusions” (p. 32) that explain why beliefs can be passed from one to another and why the common substrate emerges more explicitly. Ortiz states that in Cuba, even in the time of slavery, Whites and Blacks were in contact with each other “from childhood” (pp. 263–64).

Beneath the loincloth of civilization

The best way to see the importance of this idea is by quoting an excerpt from Ortiz’s book that we can easily inscribe in debates about imitation that have permeated Caribbean culture since it was published (if not since Bachiller y Morales), and touching Fanon (1952) and other

13. From a reconsideration of the history of anthropology, Ortiz’s theoretical angle on religion may be very important. The “official” founder of the European anthropology of witchcraft (Evans-Pritchard 1937) saw Zande witchcraft as “belief” but not as part of “Zande religion.” For Ortiz, however, the “communicating vessels” between beliefs in gods and beliefs in *brujos* exist because both beliefs are part and parcel of the same human capacity. Following Ramirez Calzadilla (2005), I would suggest that the Atlantic-Iberian background of Ortiz’s life may be very relevant to understand his early theory of allotropy.

intellectuals as well as V. S. Naipaul's novel *The mimic men* (1967). Says Ortiz:

The healers (*curanderos*) and fortune-tellers (*adivinatoras*) are nothing but evolved and specialized brujos, and therefore exercise their parasitism among the higher classes, despite the relative intellectual superiority of the latter: such parasitism in some cases becomes externally refined culture, without touching the marrow, which remains wild. The popular expression in Cuba of *Indians with a frock coat* [*Indios con levita*] pronounced by a Parisian woman,¹⁴ has a more general application to this question than is commonly believed; even in the Ville Lumière itself,¹⁵ on whose boulevards, as a Frenchman, Bérenger-Féraud, says . . . , there are as many gullible people as in central Africa. (Ortiz 1917: 392, my translation, italics by Ortiz)

There are many evolved, specialized, “modern” brujos, those brujos criollos who sell their services as curanderos and adivinatoras. But if people listen to them it is because we humans share a common “marrow that remains wild” in our psyche. We find thus in our author a theory of culture or of civilization very typical of his time; it is one used by Freud, for example. According to this theory, culture is but a thin layer that covers our primitive psyche, to which it is easy to return in moments of crisis or personal weakness:

When we suddenly hit one of life's many pitfalls, it is as if the shock ripped through the layer of culture that covers us and left our child psyche exposed, unprotected, defenseless, exposed to all the onslaughts of superstition, ignorance and evil. (Ortiz 1917: 288–89, my translation)

In some respects, Ortiz reminds us of Joseph Conrad, author of the *Heart of darkness* (1899), more than he reminds us of the founder of psychoanalysis, particularly so when Ortiz reminds us of what happens “to

14. By “a Parisian woman” Ortiz is referring to Sarah Bernhardt, who in 1887 had caused a scandal in La Habana when she derogatorily called Cubans “Indians in frock coats” (Depestre Catony 2018).

15. *Ville Lumière* (“city of light”) was a common phrase to refer to Paris in nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

European colonists who are in constant communication with indigenous Africans”:

In spite of their relatively notable psychological advance, black superstitions attract them, produce a kind of vertigo in them and they fall into them from the height of their civilization, as if the upper layers of their psyche suffocated them, they detach themselves from them and return to primitiveness, to the nakedness of their spirit, which a remainder of modesty attenuates with a simple loincloth of civilization. (Ortiz 1917: 286, my translation)

Ortiz goes on to cite Tylor on the influence of the surrounding culture upon colonists in Africa: “So strong is the pervading influence, that the European in Africa is apt to catch it from the negro, and himself, as the saying is, ‘become black’” (Tylor 1871, vol. 2: 15).

Although Ortiz must have been as offended as any other Cuban by the arrogance of Sarah Bernhardt in describing Cubans as Indians wearing frock coats, in the quote above he seems to suggest that, in a way, she was right. Many Cubans are Indians with frock coats, in the same way that many inhabitants of Paris are, as the folklorist Bérénger-Féraud argued in 1896, as gullible in their beliefs as many an inhabitant of the African continent. All of us are, at some point, susceptible to being fascinated by the “irrational” background that underlies the thin layer of protective culture. We can all be afraid of the unknown, as Ortiz states, quoting, or so he claims, the famous psychologist Théodule-Armand Ribot:

Adult man, although his fear is always based on experience, sometimes manifests (at least the ignorant, the primitive) some vague, unconscious fears of the unknown, of darkness [*tinieblas*], of mysterious powers, of spells, of sorcery, of magic. (Ortiz 1917: 286, my translation)¹⁶

This is where the “heart of darkness” comes into play. And to emphasize this, I would like to compare the very beginning of Ortiz’s book with the

16. This is supposedly a citation from the Spanish translation of Ribot’s *Psychologie des sentiments* (1896), but I have not been able to locate it in Ribot’s book (either the Spanish or the original French version), which offers a sophisticated account of the relationship between fear and religious belief.

words with which it ends. The book opens with a somewhat uncanny epigraph:

*Partout je sens, j'aspire, à moi-même odieux,
Les noirs enchantements et les sinistres charmes
Dont m'enveloppe encor la colère des Dieux . . .*

*Everywhere I smell, I inhale, to myself odious,
the black enchantments and sinister charms
in which the wrath of the Gods still wraps me . . .*

These verses belong to “La magicienne,” a sonnet by José Maria de Heredia, a famous French poet of Cuban origin.¹⁷ The title of the poem was also the title of one of the *Idylls* (Idyll II) of the third-century BC founder of bucolic poetry, Theocritus. In Theocritus’s idyll, a female magician uses spells to attract a lover who tries to leave her. In his variation, de Heredia gives an intelligent, and to some extent “demystifying” turn to the relationship between the woman, the spell, and the runaway lover.

It is surprising that Ortiz selected this sonnet to introduce his book. Unlike Theocritus’s story, de Heredia’s sonnet is not about incantations or magic charms but about the power of seduction. The lover wants to escape the spell of the woman, but he fails because he is “enchanted” by her beauty and her persona, but not by any occult magic. In the bit skillfully selected by Ortiz, however, it seems that the poem is, indeed, about “black” and “sinister” magic and enchantments.

I find it most skillful, as a literary ploy, of Ortiz to play with his readers at the opening to his book in this way. He invites them (or at least me) to investigate, to dig into the sources of de Heredia’s poem, to discover that the poem is not about enchantment but rather about disenchantment, even if it, at the same time, aims to help us understand that we can be uncannily attracted by the charm of a person or of an entire race.

This playful use of de Heredia’s decontextualized fragment contrasts with the final sentence of the book, where Ortiz plays with another famous literary author, Goethe, a defender of progress and science, who ended his life, or so the legend states, with a very enlightening cry of “Light! More light!”

17. José Maria de Heredia was a cousin of José Maria Heredia, one of the intellectual ancestors of the independent nation of Cuba.

Above all light, much light, because superstitions only nest in the shadows. Let us spread education, let us popularize scientific truths. One of our masters said it: *Only the truth will dress us with the manly robe*. (Ortiz 1917: 402, my translation, italics in the original)

The phrase “only the truth will dress us with the manly robe” was pronounced by José de la Luz Caballero (1800–1862). Ortiz does not even have to mention the name of the great intellectual. The manly robe, *toga virilis*, was the white cloth worn in ancient Rome by young men to mark that they had passed from youth to adulthood, that they were now responsible citizens. There is a strong contrast between the beginning of the book, a female fascination (the magician and her natural charm) and the end, a male initiation (the incorporation of *men* into civic life)—a contrast as strong as that between the possessed male and the possessed woman he imitates, and that between the brujo criollo and the modern sibyl he imitates. Willingly or not, Ortiz establishes a series of structural oppositions between woman and man, between appearance and reality, and between “true brujo” and brujo criollo (later he will add an opposition between temple and museum) that permeates and, indeed, structures his entire narrative, no matter how fragmented and disorganized it looks at first.

The belly of the fetish

The Goethean scream of “Above all light” is inscribed, like the entire book, in a logic of nation-state construction. Ortiz has a scientific vocation: he wants to explain the world, but with the purpose of building a postcolonial public space. Such a space must be *defended* against the polluting microbe of the criminal brujo, and it must be the governor’s task to ensure that the bug (or, at least, those infected by it) is well isolated and, if possible, re-educated for reintegration into society. The last part of the book is devoted to the need for control, surveillance, changes to the law, and increased education. Enlightenment will come from politicians who know how to make the appropriate reforms. And they must be politicians who take witchcraft seriously.

How can it be that after so much skeptical deconstruction of brujería, Ortiz invites us to take it seriously? He is very adamant on that point. The problem with the famous witch hunts in the West, he tells us, was that they were carried out by states that believed in God and

the Devil, but certainly not in witchcraft. They sent to the fire “unhappy women who today would go to the care of psychiatrists” (1917: 378, my translation). While the Inquisition was uselessly persecuting these unhappy people (as well as “those guilty of intellectual or political independence”), the people who were really performing criminal acts or being “parasites” of society freely roamed about getting on with their business and propagating their activities, creating secret brotherhoods, spreading pseudoscience, deceiving uneducated people, and living off the ignorance of the others. The modern state, says Ortiz, should accept that these people exist, because the cases analyzed in his book prove, or so he claims, that they do. This was, among other things, the intention of the book: to unmask real witches, not to prove that beliefs are irrational but to prove that witchcraft *exists*. Its practitioners are there, and they must be persecuted in a different way to a common criminal. When they are detected, they must be punished. In 1906 “true brujos” are practically nonexistent, but the brujos criollos certainly abound. Let the police watch their dances, let the state spy on their meetings since we never know how clever they are at deceiving us with their arts of dissimulation.

The best illustration of this state-iconoclastic attitude against brujería (and in effect against Afro-Cuban religious practices) is the image of the *jimaguas* twins confiscated by the police in Abreus (see Fig. 4).

Both *jimaguas* were wrapped in a red cloth covered by a black one and adorned with glass bead necklaces that held keys and coins. On the inside of the wrapping, in the hollow part of the *jimaguas*, human remains were found, together with horns, roots, earth, nails, stones, as well as other blood-soaked filth. (Ortiz 1917: 73, my translation)

Taking for himself the role of state lawmaker, Ortiz proposes, in what he calls a “civilizing campaign” (Ortiz 1917: 399) that objects confiscated from the shrines, such as these ones, should not be destroyed, but taken to the museum in the name of science:

The idols, images, necklaces, altars, *chumbas*¹⁸ and other equipment and gadgets from the brujos’ temples should be confiscated and not

18. *Chumba* is a vessel used in Afro-Cuban ritual. Ortiz shows one of them in one of the images in the book (Ortiz 1917: 130), also reproduced and analyzed in Brown (2003: 265).



Figure 4: *Jimaguas*. From Ortiz 1917: 72. Courtesy of Maria Fernanda Ortiz, representante sucesores Fernando Ortiz.

destroyed, as has been the case up to now, but sent to one of our museums. ... A recommendation ... would suffice to move the goodwill of the lower judicial authorities in favor of the proposed conservation of these objects in the interest of science. (Ortiz 1917: 391, my translation)

What he does not tell is how such objects were confiscated from a religious altar *sine ira et studio*, which, he had previously reassured us (1917: 14), was his scientific motto.

Conclusion

Immersing oneself in Ortiz's first book is useful precisely because of its problematic nature. It shows us the ethnographic ingenuity, the archaizing illusion, the fascination with a mystery we imagine ever more distant.

It is an iconoclastic book, which wants to be a hammer, a witches' hammer like the *Malleus maleficarum* of the Dominican Inquisitors of the fifteenth century. For the author, the "scientific" analysis of the ritual object must show that there is nothing inside. For us, today, it forces us to ask ourselves, with Marc Augé (1988), if it is not precisely the hollow nature of the "God-object" that allows the generation of meaning and the materialization of relationships. Incapable of imagining the possible meanings of the empty object, Ortiz was convinced his book was full of meaning. For us, it is instead Ortiz's difficult book that ends up being a hollow object that only the imagination of the reader manages to fill with some intention. I have done this by paying attention, on the one hand, to the game that the author establishes between types of brujos, and, on the other, to the nationalist aspect of the project, which aimed to destroy ritual particularities in order to build universal modern "temples," be they museums or laboratories. Seen under the light of the huge literature that has been produced in the last twenty years and more on witchcraft (especially on witchcraft in Africa), the book is disturbing. Ortiz invents brujos, there is no doubt about it. His work is part of that technology of the imagination that consists of fabricating brujos out of thin air from fragmented information of people's rituals and some crime data that is impossible for us to contextualize and assess. He fabricates them only to immediately punish them with his hammer. But if the book fails to diagnose and analyze the real problems of society, perhaps we can make it work as a vaccine?

When I read the book in the light of Jean-Pierre Warnier's provocative essays on the role that anthropologists have played in the invention of the sorcerer in Africa, manufacturing a category from faint shadows (Warnier 2017, 2018), I wonder if we have really advanced as much as we think, and if we are not, still today, wrapped in perfume by the wrath of gods. De Heredia invited us to see the woman and not the *magicienne*. Had Ortiz learned the lesson, he would have tried to show us the men and the women, not the brujos and brujas. The poet's invitation, however, remains open. That Ortiz failed to follow it (in this book) should not deter new generations from trying, and indeed he himself became a much more careful and respectful analyst in his later work. This book, perhaps the first ever written by an anthropologist entirely dedicated to the problem of witchcraft, thirty years before Evans-Pritchard's major contribution, is part of the intellectual development of one author, but also of a discipline that needs to always revisit its own history.

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The fetishes of Fernando Ortiz

Jorge Parvez Ojeda

In his introduction to the 1995 Duke University Press edition of Fernando Ortiz's *Cuban counterpoint: Tobacco and sugar*,¹ Venezuelan anthropologist Fernando Coronil proposed reading the epistemology of Ortiz's *Cuban counterpoint* as "a counter-fetishistic interpretation that challenges essentialist understandings of Cuba history," returning both commodities "to the social world which creates them" (Coronil 1995: xxvii). According to Coronil, Ortiz had shown that tobacco and sugar "can appear as autonomous agents only because they are in fact social creatures, that is, the products of human interaction within the context

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1. The extant editions to date of this classic essay include those produced by: Juan Montero in La Habana (1940), Knopf in New York (English translation by Harriet de Onís, 1947), Rissoli in Milan (Italian translation, 1962), Universidad Central de Las Villas in Las Villas (1963), Consejo Nacional de Cultura (National Council of Culture) in La Habana (1963), Editorial de Ciencias Sociales en La Habana (1963), Biblioteca Ayacucho in Caracas (1968, 1978 and 1987), Vintage Books in New York (English translation by H. De Onís, 1970), Ariel in Barcelona (1973), Insel-Verlag in Frankfurt am Main (German translation by Maralde Meyer-Minnewald, 1987), Editorial de Ciencias Sociales in La Habana (1991), Duke University Press in Durham, NC (English translation by H. de Onís, 1995), Música Mundana in Madrid (1999), Cátedra in Madrid (2002), Mémoire d'encrier in Montréal (French translation by Jacques-François Bonaldi, 2011). All the mentioned editions include the original introduction by Bronislaw Malinowski.

of capitalist relations of production.” Counter-fetishism had, argues Coronil, allowed Ortiz to present sugar and tobacco as “consummate impersonators,” and unmask them using “the fetish power of commodities as a poetic means to understand the society that produces them” (Coronil 1995: xxviii). Ortiz’s counter-fetishism would in this sense come to constitute a radical critique of reification, allowing challenge to “both conservative interpretations that reduce history to the action of external forces, and humanist and liberal conceptions that ascribe historical agency exclusively to people” (Coronil 1995: xxx). Counter-fetishism would allow “a critique of Western humanism essentialization of the individual and its hierarchization of cultures” (Coronil 1995: xxx).

In his desire to recover Ortiz for the cause of historical materialism, Coronil adopts the orthodox notion of commodity fetishism as a critique of mystification. This is a negative notion of the fetish, which has been interpreted by the philosophy of consciousness as deception, artifice (*feitiço*), falsehood, or phantasmagoria (Marx), caprice (Linneus, De Brosses), arbitrariness (Locke, Hegel), error (Hume, Kant), or illusion (Bosman, Marx), a property of peoples who have not been touched by the Hegelian “advance of the spirit.” This ethnocentric negativity toward the fetish—which had emerged from the encounter between Portuguese merchants and the peoples of the Kongo—has dominated critical Western philosophy from Hegel and Hume through to Marx, Freud, and Adorno, with the notable exception of Auguste Comte (Pouillon 1970; Pietz 2005; Morris 2017). While it is certainly appropriate to treat fetishism and counter-fetishism as key reference points for a reading of *Cuban counterpoint*, the reasons for this are quite different from those proposed by Coronil.

The renewed problematization of fetishism in Africanist and Amerindianist anthropologies has allowed development of an understanding of fetishes as materialist operators of a critical technology that takes an affirmative form in theories of value, accumulation, singularity, performance, and the heteronomy of political decision-making (MacGaffey 1977; Augé 1998; Taussig 2004, 2010; Graeber 2005; Bazin 2008; Menard 2011; Morris 2017; Matory 2018). This constitutes an important politico-epistemological turning point in the use of the notion of fetish. This shift came about largely due to the genealogy proposed by William Pietz, who claims that the historical function of the fetish “was to translate and transvalue objects between radically different social systems ... the fetish could originate only in conjunction with the emergent articulation of the ideology of the commodity form that defined itself within

and against the social values and religious ideology of two radically different types of non-capitalist society [Christian feudalism and African lineages]" (Pietz 1985: 6-7). Pietz draws a detailed picture of each of the four processes that proceed from the "irreducible materiality" of the fetish: historization, territorialization, reification, and personalization. Accordingly, for Pietz, "the fetish might be identified as the site of both the formation and the revelation of ideology and value consciousness" (Pietz 1985: 13). The remainder of this essay will focus on three distinct stages in Ortiz's extensive and intensive textuality, examining the force and the place that fetishism and Ortiz's fetishes acquire as "collective objects that reveal the truth of all historical objects," that is, as "the truth of the thing"—a truth of the thing that "neither signifies nor refers back to anything beyond its own self" (Pouillon 1970: 144),² and is the *sum* of all that happens to it (Bazin 2008). The selected time periods allow us to observe: (1) Ortiz's "counter-fetishist" criminological investigation of witchcraft (*brujería*), carried out between 1906 and 1917; (2) his "fetishistic" research on Afro-Cuban music (1935-1955), and (3) his "fetishistic" work on the economic and sociocultural history of the formation of the Cuban nation (1935-1940).

African fetishism and Afro-Cuban "*feticheros*" (1906-1917)

Any search for counter-fetishism in the work of Fernando Ortiz must lead ineluctably to his problematic first work, *Los negros brujos* (*The black witches*, originally published in 1906). In this text, the young lawyer shows himself a devotee of organicist positivism, seeing in African "witchcraft" a dangerous "survival of fetishism" that threatened the "moral progress" of the equally young Cuban republic (Ortiz [1906] 1995: 146). Ortiz posited what he called the "superstitious fetishism" of Africans as an incubator of "delinquent germs," presenting fetishist "black witches" as a Lombrosian type of innate or "born criminal" (Ortiz [1906] 1995: 182, 186). Having been born in Africa, these social "parasites" "still conserve traces of their African morality, which propels them into criminality" (Ortiz [1916] 1975: 27-29). This is what, for Ortiz, distinguishes the black African from the black criollo, who the lawyer staunchly declares to be "amongst the most morally progressive black men of our America"

2. Here and throughout, unless otherwise specified, translations from texts originally published in French or Spanish are the author's own.

(Ortiz [1916] 1975: 70). In 1906, the year in which *Los negros brujos* was published, Marcel Mauss had just proposed that the entire category of the fetish should “disappear definitively from science,” on the grounds that it amounted to nothing more than “an immense misunderstanding between two civilizations ... and an act of slavish obedience to colonial usage” (Mauss 1905-1906: 309). Ortiz, the criminologist, was meanwhile proposing the eradication not of the category, but of the bodies and subject practitioners of fetishism. “Black witches” were to be enclosed in a penal colony, and their fetishes enclosed in museums. In this way, the proposal to “de-Africanize” Cuba and de-fetishize the black race (Ortiz [1906] 1995: 193-95) perpetuated both the “misunderstanding between civilizations” and obedience to “colonial usage.”

Anthropologists of the Afro-Cuban people (Palmié 2002; Brown 2003a, 2003b; Bronfman 2004) have shown that the criminalization of Africans and efforts to eradicate fetishist cults did not, strictly speaking, lead to the disappearance or destruction of fetishes. Rather, they were captured by a different regime of fetishization: the one created and sustained by positivist science and primitivist museology. Necklaces, shells, drums, trays, and ritual documents were seized by the police and handed over to “scientists” as objects which fed the latter’s own disciplinary power (Ortiz [1906] 1995: 108-109, 136, 196). The Benjaminian distinction between cult value and exhibition value therefore unfolded in both fields: the religious and the scientific. Once extracted from the fetishistic practices of the Afro-Cuban cults, the captured fetishes fed the fetishism of scientific culture. Science then administered the different grades of classification offered by the museum (exhibition and concealment), driven by a need to validate the effectiveness of a disciplining knowledge. The museum and scientific journals operate, accordingly, as apparatuses capable of both revealing the fetish (the museum exhibit placed on show) or hiding it (the secrets of the museum vault). In contrast to works of art serialized by technical reproduction (Benjamin 1991), the fetishes do not lose their singularity as things, because they acquire the semiotic function “as signs, not of *brujería*, but of the productivity of a science that they served to constitute” (Palmié 2002: 247). Fetishes thereby become signs whose auratic quality proceeds from science rather than from religion, substituting the secretive regime of magic with a regime of secrecy that seeks to “protect” social morals from the supposed obscenity of the objects of scientific study. Resting on the foundations of a biopolitics of social hygiene, scientific publications exhibited photographs of the bodies of black witches who had been condemned to death, treating the

corpses as fetishes and auratic images whose deactivation would enable the moral progress of the nation (Pavez 2009). Ortiz's subsequent exploration of Kardecist spiritism—carried out when he was still a young criminal lawyer—constitutes possibly his final attempt at antimaterialism, insofar as it treated the secret space of the cult as a site dangerously contaminated by a fetishistic materiality of African origin. White spiritism therefore seemed to offer the clearest path to confronting black materialism in the traditions of the secret cults, as Ortiz made clear in his 1919 lecture on “sociological vulgarization,” delivered at the Payret Theatre for the Cuban Spiritist Society: “Fetishism over there in the barbarousness of primitive times; spiritism here in the luminosity of our own times, aspirant to be the faith of the future, based as it is on science ... Fetishism is immoral religion, Catholicism is moral religion, spiritism is amoral religion—without dogmas, rites, idols, or priests” (Ortiz, quoted in Lago Vieito 2002: 77).

The program of de-fetishization and “de-Africanization” set out in *Los negros brujos* was to have very concrete effects, with the book taken up and used as a “scientific” document during the trials of Africans and Afro-Cubans accused of witchcraft (Chávez 1991). In more than one such case, the outcome was the passing of a death sentence, followed by execution (Castellanos 1916). Ortiz had had in mind a eugenicist program, aimed at isolating “incorrigible witches” in a penal colony and exhibiting their objects in a museum, rather than the destruction of both objects *and* subjects of witchcraft by way of the death penalty (something which he always opposed). Nonetheless, the judicial and criminological apparatus thought differently, drawing on the arguments of Ortiz the criminologist to justify the imposition of capital punishment. The death penalty was, moreover, aggressively defended by Ortiz's own disciple, Israel Castellanos (1914: 8): “the only known ‘delinquenticide’ is capital punishment, and that was made for the savage figure die-stamped by Criminology.” This episode may help us understand the importance Ortiz himself attributed to his main legal work, a proposal for a criminal code for Cuba (1926). Viewed in this light, this text becomes a form of self-criticism and politico-judicial reparation for a lethal racist persecution for which he must at some level have felt responsible (Rojas 2019).

Identifying key turning points in Ortiz's trajectory from clues found in both his published and unpublished works has consumed the energies of various generations of his readers. Tipping points in his journey away from the determinisms of his youth include his ethnographic encounters with adherents of spiritism, members of the *cabildos* and mutual societies,

musicians at Afro-Cuban celebrations, and artists from the Afro-Cuban vanguard. To these were added his studies of literature and documentation on African and Cuban linguistics, and of papers belonging to Afro-Cuban cultists themselves (the so-called *santería* notebooks) (Palmié 2002; Pavez 2016). We need not detain ourselves here considering the various proposals and counterproposals that have been made as to candidates for inclusion in the list of milestones. For present purposes, it is sufficient to remark that after the 1906 publication of *Los negros brujos*, Ortiz's interest in materiality and fetishism, far from fading, was redoubled. Over time, however, it came to take the inverted form of an ever more affirmatory valuing of the associated objects and artifacts, treated as agents of culture.³ Ortiz thereby traced the opposite path to that taken by modern philosophical discourse, as analyzed by Esposito (2003, 2005). His starting point was certainly a deterministic and hygiene-based criminological discourse, centered on an "immunization paradigm" (*inmunitas*) saturated with the use of biotic metaphors to refer to social problems (with the "black witch" variously described as a "parasite," a "germ," a "virus," a "microbe," or a "cancer"). However, he transitioned toward a discourse that affirmed the national community (*communitas*) and contributed to its ethnogenesis. This integrationist paradigm of cultural nationalism would give rise to the concept of "transculturation," which Arcadio Díaz (1999) sees as prefigured in the spiritist notion of the "transmigration" of souls, studied by Ortiz in his *Filosofía penal de los espiritistas* (*The penal philosophy of the spiritists*, 1915). This progressive, paradigmatic inversion of Ortiz's counter-fetishist approach to the materiality of culture took place over the course of the 1920s and 1930s. It led Ortiz finally to embrace both "cultural" artifacts (Indo-Cuban and

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3. The fetishized objects that open up the possibility of a mutation in the paradigm probably include Cuban historical documents and archives, texts whose value as a fetish object Ortiz would seek to enhance in 1911 through the creation of a "Cuban Collection of Rare and Unpublished Books and Documents" (Colección Cubana de Libros y Documentos Raros o Inéditos; Ortiz 1913). The collection included works by José María Callejas y Analla (*Historia de Santiago de Cuba*, 1911), Henri Dumont (*Antropología y patología comparada de los negros esclavos*, 1922), Ortiz (*Un catauro de cubanismos*, 1923), Pedro José Guiteras (*Historia de la Isla de Cuba*, 1928), James J. O'Kelly (*La tierra del mambí*, 1930), Alexander von Humboldt (*Ensayo político sobre la Isla de Cuba*, 1930), José Antonio Saco (*Historia de la esclavitud de los indios, seguida de la historia de los repartimientos y encomiendas*, 1932), and Mark R. Harrington (*Cuba antes de Colón*, 1935).

Afro-Cuban instruments and “idols”) and “natural” products (tobacco and sugar). He came to treat both categories as fetishes that contained, in condensed form, the genesis of the Cuban nation. This political, epistemological, and affective inversion was made possible by the seductiveness of the fetish, a characteristic that was already prefigured (and resisted) in the counter-fetishism of Ortiz’s “de-Africanization” program.

Particularly notable moments in the process include Ortiz’s studies of the ethnology, archaeology, and prehispanic history of the island of Cuba (*Historia de la arqueología indocubana*, 1922, revised in 1935), proceeding from his study of Indo-Cuban objects such as idols, tools, vessels, ornaments, carved stones, and skulls. The research that it contained was an essential basis for the protagonistic role that he later gave to tobacco, first in *Contrapunteo cubano* ([1940] 1991a), and later in *El huracán* (1947), his work on the interpretation of symbolism in Indo-American art. The key place of the earlier research is confirmed by the extensive analytical attention that Ortiz pays, in *Contrapunteo*, to the material and spiritual culture associated with the consumption of tobacco in Indo-America. This discussion is given its own dedicated chapter, “Additional Chapter VIII, On tobacco among the Indo-Antilleans” (Ortiz [1940] 1991a: 114-210), which is longer even than the book’s main essay.⁴

Another line of enquiry pursued by Ortiz that proved extremely fruitful for his change of direction was the linguistic (philological, etymological, and lexicographical) research that underpinned *Un catauro de cubanismos* (1923) and *Glosario de afronegrismos* (1924). Neither work respected the formats and styles considered proper to academic linguistics, and both have been heralded as starting points for Ortiz’s literary experimentation (Pérez Firmat 1989: 17). They have also been identified as the beginning of his contribution to Cuban cultural independence, seen as a disputation for the *criollista* affirmation of a national language. For Gustavo Pérez Firmat (1989: 32), the meaning of Ortiz’s “*cubanismo*,” as a lexicographical practice for which he coined the neologism “*cubanía*,”

4. As Enrico Santi aptly notes after his reading of Ortiz’s and Malinowski’s correspondence, the importance that the Cuban anthropologist gave to the history of tobacco is enforced by his attempt “to adapt” *Cuban counterpoint’s* book to an English audience, proposing “to recompose the materials in the book, that is, to put together a new book entitled “Havana tobacco,” so that tobacco would be the central theme and sugar would just be a theme for comparison” (Ortiz to Malinowski, February 11, 1941, cited in Santi 2004: 10).

was precisely this practice of collapsing the separation between subject and object, explanation and example, *cubanidad* and *cubanismo*, culminating in a kind of ekphrasis by which “that which is Cuban” (*lo Cubano*) is explained “in Cuban” (*en cubano*).

Alongside these lines of investigation, Ortiz also began to approach Afro-Cuban ceremonies and rituals in a less prejudiced manner (his 1921 short history of Afro-Cuban *cabildos* is an early example). In this he would come to converge, just a few years later, with a then nascent Afro-Cuban literary and artistic vanguard, producing memorable encounters with Alejo Carpentier, Amadeo Roldán, Lydia Cabrera, and Teresa de la Parra, during visits to abakuá *plantas* in Marianao (La Habana). In 1927, the same year Ortiz began his collaboration with the composer Roldán, an imprisoned Carpentier wrote *¡Ecué Yamba-Oh!*, and Cabrera travelled from Paris to begin research on Afro-Cuban cults (Ortiz 1952-1955 vol. 4: 85; Carpentier 2000: 15; di Leo 2000; Park 2012).

The early 1930s saw the beginnings of the political consolidation of the Afro-Cuban Negroist movement, which stretched across music, poetry, and narrative forms. The literary innovations wrought by the Afro-Cuban poetry of Nicolás Guillén, Emilio Ballagas, Regino Pedroso, and Marcelino Arozarena, working with the phonology and sonorities of Afrodescendant song, formed part of the broader international Negroism movement in which Luis Palés (Puerto Rico) and Langston Hughes (New York City) were central figures. From early on, Ortiz would celebrate “mulatto poetry” written in Cuba as part of “Afro-Cuban poetry” and the product of “linguistic mestizaje” (which he defined as “white art with black motifs”). In this, he attempted to distinguish mulatto poetry from the Black or *Negrista* poetry of the international Black Movement, inscribing it instead as part of the canon of a “national poetry” (Ortiz 1934, 1937; Moore 1994; Arnedo 2001). For Ortiz, the lyrical relationship of mulatto poetry with musical instrumentation (artifacts) was distinctive, setting it apart from the versions of that relationship that existed in American Negro or Romanic (Romance) folklore, as promoted in La Habana by 1930 visits from the poets Langston Hughes and Federico García Lorca (di Leo 2001).

Fetishes in music (1935-1955)

Ortiz’s 1935 essay on the “xylophonic *clave*” in Cuban music can be considered the founding text in which he begins to positively fetishize the

instruments of Afro-Cuban music. It also marks the starting point of a more literary form of essay writing, incorporating the kinds of rhetorical flourishes that would develop in ever more sophisticated forms in Ortiz's subsequent writing. After the essay's publication, Ortiz got involved in producing two musical performances that incorporated sets of batá drums. The events took place in 1936 and 1937 in Teatro Campoamor, a setting traditionally associated with Havana's "high culture" (Ortiz [1937] 1991d).

Shortly afterward, Ortiz encountered two people with whom he would go on to collaborate. Both meetings were decisive for his musicological thought and scholarship. The first was with master composer Gaspar Agüero, with whose help Ortiz corrected previous musical analyses that he had carried out with Gilberto Valdés, director of the "Afro-Cuban orchestra" that had presented the 1936 batá drum performances. Ortiz later wrote that this first performance had used "profane drums, [at best] an approximate imitation of orthodox ones." This was because the instruments had been made with skins tuned to the pitch of A, in order to allow them to be played as part of an orchestra in which "white instruments" also featured (Argyriadis 2006: 52-53). The musicological studies Ortiz carried out in association with Agüero in and after 1948 instead used "authentic *ilú* [batá], played and tuned by genuine *olúbatá*" (Ortiz [1950] 1993: 272; 1952-1955 vol. 5: 240).⁵

The second meeting worthy of note was between Ortiz and Mercedes Valdés, the young Afro-Cuban singer known as "little Che" (*la pequeña Che*). Valdés, who had studied with the drummers Pablo Roche, Raúl Díaz, and Trinidad Torregrosa of the district of Regla, was hired by Ortiz from 1944 onwards to be an "illustrator" at his conferences. At the major presentation that he gave in the main lecture hall of the Universidad de La Habana in 1954, he referred to her publicly as "a living ethnographic document" of Afro-Cuban musical culture (Giro 2009 vol. 4: 251-52). Thus Ortiz creates a fusion between, on the one hand, a material register (archive) as a living cultural object, and on the other, a performer as mediator of registers, senses, and generations. Through the acquaintance of Mercedes Valdés, Ortiz's fetishization shifted from a bodily organ (the singer's voice, as musical instrument), toward a musical artifact (the "living document," as site of inscription and instrumental organ). Attribution

5. Here, Ortiz seems to be confusing *olú batá* (the owner of a set of batá drums) with *omo Añá* (a drummer who has been consecrated to Añá) (Argyriadis 2006: 53).

of musicological value underwent a transition in the opposite direction, whereby Ortiz began to shy away from the spectacle provided by “imitation” drums (now considered heterodox or “profane” artifice), preferring the spectacle provided by drums he considered “authentic” (because they carried the auratic vitality of the “sacred”). What goes unnoticed here is the technological and industrially mediated nature of what enabled the encounter between Ortiz and Mercedes Valdés in the first place. The occasion for their meeting was the radio program that she presented on the station Cadena Suaritos, the first known Afro-Cuban radio program in history (ibid.: 251-52). Also rendered invisible are the criteria by which the authenticity of the drums was judged, and the exercise of ethnographic and musicological authority involved in declaring a certain *omo añá* (drummer) to be “authentic” even if he was obliged to earn his living playing “profane” music for cabaret shows (Argyriadis 2006: 53-58).

The five volumes of Ortiz’s *Los instrumentos de la música afrocubana* (1952-1955) collect together two decades of accumulated scholarship on musical instruments. As David Brown points out, in one of his books on Afro-Cuban religion, these works offer neither an ethnography nor a musicology. Rather, they provide an “organology,” “which classifies Afro-Cuban music-making artefacts into categories and meta-categories of instrument types” (Brown 2003a: 192), following the Sachs-Hornbostel method. Their anatomical study of the instruments forces them to speak as fetishistic objects working toward a national ethnogenesis. The organs of music, such as the “xylophonic *clave*,” the *bonkó*, *enkomo*, *sesé*, or *batá*, are presented as a “condensed high-density reality” (Bazin 2008: 532). Each individual *clave* can be turned into a singular fetish, just as occurs with each *nganga*, *nkisi*, or *boli* in Cuban, Kongo, or Bambara religions. The fetishism of the singularity of the *clave*—of each individual *clave* and of every played rhythm (“*toque de clave*”)—challenges what Leonardo Acosta refers to as the “myth” of the invariant nature of the *clave*. This myth, which treats the *clave* as an instrument capable of producing only a single, unchanging rhythm “without variations,” was propagated—according to Acosta—first by Eliseo Grenet and Alejo Carpentier, and then by Cuban musicians who had established themselves in the United States, “to intimidate and confuse North Americans and others who presumed to venture into our rhythms” (Acosta 2014: 145-46).

Ortiz’s 1935 essay on the “xylophonic *clave*” was later incorporated into his encyclopedic *Los instrumentos de la música afrocubana* (1952-55). In it, Ortiz repeatedly asserts the singular nature of the *clave*, which he attributes to its nature as a properly natural “mulatto” and “mestizo

creature”: “the *clave* as a historical Cuban singularity: not Spain, not Africa, not America, not Asia” ([1952-1955] 1999 vol. 1: 118-19); “[a] Cuban musical instrument, quite simply Cuban, with nothing more needing to be said” (ibid.: 128). Nonetheless, Ortiz also considers the materiality of the making of each *clave* as testament to its singularity. He points out the wide range of woods that are used to make the sticks that will be hit together, the choice of which influences the distinctive sounds and tonal variation that will result: *ácana* (or *anchras dissecta*), *yaití* (or *excoecaria lucida*), *jiquí*, *dagame*, *sabicú*, *varía*, *yaba* (*audira inermis*), *jabí* (also called *quiebrahacha*), *guayacán negro*, *palo santo* (also called *guayaco*), *granadillo* (*brya ebenus*), and other types of tropical hardwood. In all cases it is the internal part of the wood that is utilized. This part is generically referred to as “heartwood” or “tree bone” (*madera de corazón* or *hueso de árbol*), which Ortiz interprets as “like magically conjuring the spirit of the tree back to life” (1999 vol. 1: 121-22). From the magical auratization of a wooden stick as a tree spirit, it is but a short step for Ortiz, the “organologist,” to begin to simultaneously sacralize and romanticize the sound (voice) of the subject: the *clave*, which is feminized:

There is something in this unique and reiterative sound that verges on the sacred. It is not hoarse and deep like the sound of the drum, [which is] man-like voice or made of elements to be feared; rather its womanly sound, repeated into infinity with only feather-light variations, contains, like the voice of the drum, an occult hypnotic power, a power of magical seduction. It calls to the ineffable with tenderness, with the subtleness of pre-animal nature ... in the orgasmic and carnal rhythm of the bongos, the *clave* is like a kiss or a sigh that starts a melody of pure love. (Ortiz [1952-1955] 1999 vol. 1: 133)

Ortiz here conceives of the *clave* as a feminine whole amidst masculinized drums, even though he also reproduces popular usage, in regarding the two sticks that make up the *clave* as having distinct genders. The active stick is considered to be male and the passive stick female, based on a criterion of sexual fetishism treated by Ortiz as “almost universal ... which lends *anima* to objects and gives them personality” (ibid.: 121). The anatomy of a sexualized corporality is also present in the metaphors of intervening and inscribing *claves* by way of markings, “mutilations,” and wear and tear. These “modern *criollo* inventions,” while they serve to singularize each instrument, nonetheless perturb Ortiz, who considers them a product of its popularization on the commercial musical scene.

[I]n modern times the *clave* is altered to the point of mutilation, when it is wanted to sound in the salons and cabarets alongside other, more complex and more resonant instruments, as happens in the popular dance orchestras of today. So the *clave* players “cure” the *clave*, that is to say, they etch some grooves or a notch on the female stick so that it will sound a deeper pitch Puerto Ricans night-clubbers “fatten” the male stick to bring its voice lower, for the same reasons that Cubans mutilate the female stick (*sacan un bocado*) in order to mute it ... the wear and tear caused by the percussive strike can be noted at the center [of the male stick]. (Ortiz [1952-1955] 1999 vol. 1: 116)

Worried by these socially accepted “mutilations” of the sacralized auratic body of the traditional *clave*, and suspecting that to be a singular thing was incompatible with being a serial commodity (Kopytoff 1991), Ortiz declared the *clave* to be threatened by the market and “in grave danger” ([1952-1955] 1999 vol. 1: 133). On the one hand, he excoriated the “mechanized” or “rubber” *clave*, which sounded, he claimed, “with the inexpressive coldness of a metronome set running in a snow-bound country” (ibid.: 130). He was also, however, concerned by the demands and pressures brought by the adoption of the *clave* into mass culture and show business, since by his lights this meant that “the same forces that disseminate and exploit it, are strangling it” and denationalizing it:

the *clave* married into money, hired herself out, and made her own voice sick she runs around out in the world, and is applauded every-where, but she has become anemic, and her *cubanía* is fading away. She still sounds a note of sex in orchestras, but now that sex is paid for and loveless ... she is a victim of mercantilization ... placed before a microphone and in the enclosed spaces of dissolute urban nightlife, the *clave* can no longer sing with her beautiful little voice, that voice that emerges from the very heart of the *guayacán* tree, because the female stick has been cut with grooves or with a notch, like a tracheotomy that makes her hoarse ... the *clave* is losing her original worth and her sensitive refinement.” (Ortiz [1952-1955] 1999 vol. 1: 133-34)

The undoubtedly questionable masculinism of Ortiz’s sexual metaphors serves to reveal the traditionalism of his religious fetishism. This leads him to propose saving the *clave* from the market, and from the “pimping that adulterates it,” “returning to the wilds and to the spontaneity of folklore” (ibid.: 135). Although Ortiz attributes masculine gender to

drums, they also are for him victims of modernity and of a society given to spectacle. They lose their “authenticity” not by mutilation, in this case, but due to the ad hoc methods of their production. “Fantastical” and full of artifice, this making breaks with the ritual conditions in which they would be consecrated and used in the sphere of the numinous, authentic, and spontaneous music-making of “the Blacks.” This is why Ortiz examines drums such as the *sesé namokimban* of legendary abakuá Efori Muna Tanzé in search of “deposits of dark, formless materials impossible to identify” inside them. He writes that “years later, we discovered that the substance was in fact the power (*carga*) of the *sesé*, [whose purpose was to] protect the four dignitaries of an abakuá Power (*potencia*) (Iyamba, Mocongo, Empegó and Isué)” (Ortiz 1952-55 vol. 5: 63-64, 74-75). Here like nowhere else, “the fetish contains.... It is content to contain, and makes reference to nothing beyond itself” (Bazin 2008: 535). The musical organ as fetish “does not represent, it expresses.” Each instrument concentrates and accumulates to itself the marks of its use and its historical potency. It is “the sum of everything that happens to it,” “the summary of all the previous stories in which it was actively immersed” (ibid.: 543). Such is the case, for example, of a particular *batá iyá* drum on whose skin “could be seen the marks of six machete blows, which legend tells were made on a day that drums were being confiscated by the police—their owners tried to destroy them, rather than see them lost” (Museo Nacional de la Música 2013: 160). A photograph of this self-same *iyá* was chosen by Ortiz to illustrate his description, in the fourth volume of *Los instrumentos*, of the largest drum of the *batá* (1952-1955 vol. 4: 207, 279).

Ortiz’s fetishism operates on a new plane of consistency in *Los instrumentos*, where concern with the materiality of rhythms and media replaces the contrapuntal analogies with economy and religion that structure his *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*. In *Los instrumentos* he moves on from the organicism of transculturation to an organography of instruments as material media for the expression of an unresolved dialectic between the seriality of inheritance, repetition, and conservation, and the singularity of medialities (produced by the clash between their historical agencies). In this particular version of instrumental reason, organology absorbs in its fetishes the hands, mouths, and ears of practitioners, performers, and human mediators.⁶ The human figure appears as

6. Pace Coronil (1995: xxix), I contend that there is not, either, any counterhumanism to be found in Ortiz. Rather, his fetishism enters into a

what survives the clash between medialities, materials, and durations in the sound space. With this organology, Ortiz attempts—with only limited success—to de-align himself from what Julio Ramos (2014: 60) calls the “racialization of rhythm” produced by Negroist binarisms. Although he never reaches the full heights of an epistemological rupture with the paradigm of the “great divide,” in some parts of the work, Ortiz questions the binary divisions that associate rhythm with the black, the popular, and the corporality of dance, while ascribing melody to the white, the educated, and the sphere of spiritual reflection (Ortiz [1937] 1991d: 92; [1950] 1993: 220–43). At other points, he appears to reproduce similar binarisms: “in the black African psyche, the emotional, the aural, and the kinetic predominate over the reflexive, the visual, and the contemplative. The black African is generally speaking an extrovert” ([1950] 1993: 121). Ortiz’s disciple, Argeliers León, suggests that “the enormous accumulated weight of quotations taken from the most diverse of sources, led him [Ortiz] to mistakenly deny to the African, the self-same aesthetic capacity and ability to consciously adopt artistic forms that he acknowledges and defends elsewhere in the book, and now cedes as though it were the European who were the owner of this mold and pattern of what can be thought of as aesthetic” (León 1993: 13). This becomes visible in the texts where European sources are juxtaposed, in latent tension, with Afro-American sources (Zora Neale Hurston or Alain Locke), or actual African sources (N. C. J. Ballanta, Maximilien Quenum, H. W. Odum, G.B. Johnson, and Oluwole Alakija Ayadela), from which Ortiz rescues notions such as “vocal art” and “microtonality” (Ortiz [1950] 1993).

The fetishism found in the texts *Los instrumentos de la música afrocubana* and *La africanía de la música folklórica de Cuba* oscillates inconsistently between the two constitutive tendencies of acoustic modernity that Ana Ochoa (2006) has defined as “epistemologies of purification,” on the one hand, and “epistemologies of transculturation,” on the other. In 1950, Ortiz reiterated his view that “popular Afro-Cuban music is seriously at risk” ([1950] 1993: 98), and that “mercantilism has mesmerized Afro-Cuban music into corrupting and abasing itself in the international to and fro of a ‘music trade’ that is as unscrupulous as trafficking in women is now, and the black slave trade was before it” (ibid.: 105).

head-on collision with his humanism, (given the oxymoronic nature of a “humanistic fetishism”). A similar contradiction—between purification and transculturation (Ochoa 2006)—likewise creates a tension that runs through the whole of Ortiz’s work.

This corruption, denaturing, and mercantilization, whereby musical exploitation is treated as on a par with the slave trade, supposedly dated back precisely to 1936, the year of the very presentation that Ortiz had sponsored at the Teatro Campoamor. This was the moment at which “the batá drums and songs made their way into the microphones, the phonographs, and now and again even to the philharmonic orchestras in their concert halls, even into films in the cinema; but, and we will stand firm and say it, this music is often neither true nor orthodox. This profane resonance contains something of the heretical, something simulated” (ibid.: 88). This was because drummers who could be judged “authentic” or “orthodox” by Ortiz’s criteria were few and far between. They did not lower themselves to the buying and selling of music, and kept much of their repertoire secret. Other drummers meanwhile were not consecrated master players.

Thus Ortiz, on the one hand, defended criteria of authenticity, tradition, and purity in regard to certain instruments and music, criticizing inventions and examples of artifacts that he considered “fantastical” and “falsely exotic” (Ortiz 1952-1955 vol. 1: 395). On these grounds, he drew a distinction between the fetish drum destined for cult use (to which was attributed cult value, in a manner analogous to his valuing of tobacco in *Contrapunteo cubano*), and the traded or tradeable drum that was destined for use in shows (commodified like sugar). In *Los instrumentos* he therefore drew up a virtually canonical list of “authentic” drums—i.e., those that had been consecrated with “añá” or “fundamento.” Twenty-five sets of batá drums produced in Cuba made it onto the list, dating from the first production of a set by the *olubatá* (consecrated drum maker and master) Atandá. The drums were all associated with a total of twenty *olubatá* drum makers, each of which was also a consecrated *omo añá*, i.e., an authorized drum player (Ortiz 1952-1955, vol. 5: 320). A consecrated drummer becomes, in his role as maker and authorized interpreter of both the fetish object and the fetishized sound, part of the fetishist agency that Ortiz seeks to decipher. This is the case, for example, of Pablo Roche Akilakuá, known as “Brazo Poderoso” (Powerful Arm), described by Ortiz as the person who:

has made and sworn various sets of batá-añá. Two in 1943, one of them for the *olosáin* Gregorio Torregrosa, better known as “Goyo,” who died on 22 April 1949 and whose *batá* are at the old *Yemayá cabildo* in the town of Regla, now presided over by the *yalocho* Beba; and another set, of mahogany, for the excellent *olubatá* José Calasanz

Frías, who they call “Moñito.” Okilákpá made another set in 1950 for that same *alaña*, Mr. Frias. (1952-1955 vol. 5: 319)⁷

On the other hand, Ortiz promotes transculturation as displacement of the use value of fetishes, a displacement from the cultural to the exhibitive which must nonetheless be authorized with reference to universalist aesthetic values, of which he sets himself up as the archauthority. Thus, for example, he writes that “[t]he batá are the most meritorious instruments in Afro-Cuban music, and their appearance in clean air, their presence in places free of religious entanglement, will be saluted with the artistic approbation of universal music” (Ortiz, 1952-1955 vol. 5: 322). He went on to congratulate himself in his role as master of ceremonies, presiding over this coming-out at the show he organized at the Teatro Campoamor in 1936: “All the Yoruba nomenclature and vernacular of the batá was published by me in 1936” (ibid.: 340; [1937] 1991d: 82-96). Shortly before the publication of *Los instrumentos*, in what could have been intended as a riposte to Adorno’s critique of jazz as a vulgar, vitalist, and spontaneous fetishization, Ortiz ([1950] 1991c: 251) defended *re-bop*, *be-bop*, and *bop* as innovations in jazz, “impetuously invaded by a new Afroid frenzy,” consisting of “a complete and abundant weaving together of rhythms, and a profusion of dissonant harmonies.” This enthusiastic defense anticipated what would come to be known as *cu-bop*, and Ortiz took the opportunity to pay homage to Mario Bauzá, Machito, and particularly to the great drummer Chano Pozo. He expressed the hope that Pozo’s name would not be forgotten, “like those of so many

7. In the first publication in which Pablo Roche is mentioned, the only figure in the photographs who is individually identified is Ortiz himself. Standing at one edge of the stage, he is identified as “the speaker” who authorizes and explains what is unfolding (Ortiz 1946: 19-60). A decade later, by contrast, Ortiz also includes two photographs of “Powerful Arm.” The first is a reproduction of the same photograph of a batá trio that previously appeared in *Estudios Afrocubanos*, although this time Roche is named, as *Kpuataki* with his “batá orchestra.” The other photograph is a close-up portrait where he is also ascribed his name, surname, and musical title (Ortiz 1952-1955 vol. 5: 235 and 323). In the accompanying text, the author describes him as “[a] dark-skinned Cuban, son of *criollo* parents and grandson of four African grandparents, from the Arará, Lucumí y Gangá [ethnicities] he represents the third generation in Cuba of a family of *aláña* who are probably descended from other remote generations of drummers.”

anonymous artists who have kept alive the musical art of genuine *cubanía*" (ibid.: 254). Luciano "Chano" Pozo was conga player of the Belén sextet and of the "Los Dandys de Belén" group in La Habana, and also *ocobio* of the abakuá Nation Muñanga Efo (Díaz 2012; Acosta 2015). He was to go on to great success in New York, where in 1947 he introduced congas to Dizzie Gillespie's Big Band, contributing to the creation of be-bop and Latin jazz. He co-composed with Gillespie the tunes "Manteca" and "Afro-Cuban Suite," and made "Abasí," the first known recording in the abakuá ritual language (Miller 2009, 2012). The following year, he was murdered by a drug dealer. It is surprising, therefore, that in *Los instrumentos*, published only a few years after Ortiz paid homage to Pozo in the Education Ministry's publication *Mensuario de Arte* (Arts Monthly), the wonder drummer is referred to in the cold clinical terms of a criminologist describing a drug addict: Pozo is described as "crazy," and is practically blamed for his own murder. Although a photo of Pozo playing the congas was included, there is almost no reference in the text to his musical achievements (Ortiz 1952-1955 vol. 5: 216, 399). While Pozo's skills had at least been mentioned in *La africanía de la música folklórica cubana*, even here they had been relativized by reintroducing the ethnic hierarchy between Yoruba and Kongo, the liturgical and the mundane: "the virtuosity of Chano Pozo, despite his double-handed flourishes on the conga drum, could never reach the heights of the marvellous polyrhythms of the Afro-Cuban batá drummers in the *lucumí* liturgy, when three musicians, each playing double-handed, play a total of six skins" ([1950] 1993: 97).

The aesthetic universalism to which Ortiz aspires for Afro-Cuban music is without a doubt inspired by the project of the modernist composer Amadeo Roldán, the "Cuban Stravinsky," who studied the pluritonicity of bonkó drummers, and with whom Ortiz visited abakuá *plantes* in around 1927 (Ortiz 1952-1955 vol. 4: 85). For Roldán, stylization is the disposition that allows for the leap from the vernacular to the universal;⁸ the "cleansing" that he proposes is a work of denationalization, as is made abundantly clear in his 1933 letter to the North American composer Henry Cowell:

8. In the same way that Alejo Carpentier proposes a leap "from folklore to the spirit of folklore," to "contain the dispersion of sound" (cited in Ramos 2014: 56).

my ideals are above all to achieve an essentially American art, a totality independent of the European, an art that is ours, continental, worthy of being universally accepted, not for any current of exoticism that it may contain ... but due to its intrinsic importance, its value in itself as a work of art, because of the contribution our art can make to universal art. ... To study, to develop, to energize the folklore of our countries, not with the aim of constructing works with purely local or national character, but with universalising ends. (Quoted in Giro 2009 vol. 4: 78)

Roldán is not afraid of machines, and he is interested in exploring sound and melodic and percussive “autochthonous instruments,” “in order to de-nationalize them” and achieve “the continentalization of our art”: “from the technical point of view, one of the most promising possibilities for the music of the future resides in the development of quarter tones and the interpretation of music by mechanical means” (Roldán, cited in Giro 2009 vol. 4: 78). In this way, this program anticipates the radical dissonances produced by John Cage’s use of sound objects in interpreting Roldán’s *Rítmicas* for percussion instruments, subverting the instrumentality of music with an aesthetic that appeals to the “materiality of making” against the “metaphysics of rhythm” (Ramos 2010: 70-73; 2014: 56-61). Ortiz’s transculturation would instead seek the universality of a Cuban rhythm, inspired not so much by a “fetishism of rhythm” as by a fetishism of the instrument transcultured in Cuba, de-Africanized and in the process of nationalization. The fetish is the materiality of the Cuban process of making, which offers the promise of a future “neoculturation.” Trapped in this way in the nationalist cult, Ortiz cannot go as far as Roldán, for whom discordance and off-beats constitute opposition to the mestizophile fetishization of polyrhythm, fusion, and mixing—thereby challenging the myth of racial democracy, and the “ideology of mulatto synthesis,” with their insular nationalism.

As a scientist, Ortiz lived the “essential tension” (Kuhn 1982) between innovation and tradition. Innovation is indispensable for a living tongue, while tradition tends to turn a language into a dead one. The medium of sound transculturation seems to be decisive in this tension: the technical innovations of phonography and radio broadcast, to capture the real; and photography and cinematography, open to the imaginary; and the typewriter that registers the symbolic (Kittler 1999). In his criticism of the “dollarization” that prostitutes and vulgarizes folklore as a mass spectacle, Ortiz intuits a capitalism-turned-religion that no longer

needs “the active co-operation of Cuban drummers,” because “they know too much music” (Ortiz [1950] 1991c: 254). The thriving market of the spectacle consumes musicians as an offering to the fetishes, sacrificed on the altar of mass popularity as happened to Chano Pozo, La Lupe, or Héctor Lavoe (Ramos 2010: 69).

With *Los instrumentos de la música afrocubana*, Ortiz turned his attention to the objects of his early criminological research, back in the era when the drums were officially banned. This time around, however, he inverted the value assigned to the musical organs. From negative fetishes of a criminalized Africanness, they became affirmative fetishes of Cuban transculturation. The catalogue of the Fernando Ortiz Collection, preserved in the National Museum of Music (Museo Nacional de la Música 2013), gives an account of the origins of the instruments—güiros, *agbés*, *chequerés*, marímbulas, tumbadoras, and *biankomeko* or batá drum sets—seized by police in the raids that they carried out between 1902 and 1936 on the houses of santería, and abakuá. The instruments, held as criminal evidence, were deposited in the Havana courthouse before being handed to the National Museum. They finally made their way into Ortiz’s personal collection. Studying them decades later, he added his own organographic inscriptions to the festive, religious, police, and judicial inscriptions that the fetishes already contained, condensed, and bore. As David Brown (2003a: 157) aptly indicated, the control of these objects passed from the hands of the police to the hands of the ethnographers, and in the process “one hand washed the other.”

The two fetishes of the nation (1935-1940)

The 1935 essay on the “xylophonic clave” heralded not only a fetishism of musical objects, but also a “literary” practice in Ortiz’s essay writing.⁹ This literary turn coincided with the heyday of Afro-Cuban poetry, when it achieved prominence in the Black Poetry movement. In those years, Ortiz’s writings on “mulatto poetry” and the black poetic vanguard show traces of the epistemological project that would shortly be articulated under the term “transculturation.” Against this backdrop, Ortiz’s comments on Eusebia Cosme, the Afro-Cuban “reciter” of black poetry, are revealing. Cosme’s art is presented as the continuation of the project of “de-Africanization,” pursuing the teleological horizon of mulatto

9. I am grateful to Julio Ramos for drawing this point to my attention.

nationalization. In this way, Ortiz's emphasis on the "white thought" and "white art" that supposedly underpin a poetry that he does not want to call "black," stands in notable contrast to the "epistemology of purification" that can be discerned in the treatment that he would give some years later to the Afro-Cuban singer Mercedes Valdés. In his texts about Cosme's poetic performances,¹⁰ Ortiz celebrates the musicality that the artist gives to the poetry, and her "hieratic gesticulation." He attributes them to the "extremely rich melodic treasure of Yoruba liturgies," but also notes that "Afro-Cuban art is still in the early stages of its transfusion from one world to the other," and that therefore "Eusebia Cosme makes us long for a more complete artist." This "more complete" artist, according to Ortiz, would be "a mulatto who combines the beauty of her womanly form with the beauty of her voice, and who has the art of singing and dancing with that imitative fidelity that can only come from the repetition of the same ritual trance No, there is more: not one, but various mulatto women will be needed for the sacred choir of the millenarian gods" (Ortiz 1936, cited in Gelado 2011: 10).

Uncomfortable with the figuration of a single performer who transcends the boundaries and limits between codes, genres (music, poetry, dance, theatre), art, life, and gender, Ortiz seems to want to restore some cultural discipline, by having the black woman return to the chorus line, thereby also dissolving her disruptive individuality. Viviana Gelado (2011) has drawn attention to this conventionalist blind spot of Ortiz's, and his insistence on attributing "lack" and "incompleteness" to Cosme's art and to Afro-Cuban art in general. Thus, for example, in his mention of the rumba, at its creative height in those years: "We have the *rumba* seen and heard, the *rumba* enjoyed; but one day the mulatto poet will give us the subjective *rumba* of its performer, like a *cante jondo* emerging from the abyss of its essential Africanity" (Ortiz 1936, cited in Gelado 2011: 10). The rumba, or the mulatto poetry, become mere minor preludes and precursors, "still at their beginnings" (because they were popular and comic, rather than highbrow and tragic). Ortiz is awaiting something that he considers greater and more advanced, as is made clear by what he said the first time he introduced Eusebia Cosme: "her

10. In her performances Eusebia Cosme recited and declaimed texts of the great exponents of black poetry of the day, such as Luis Palés Matos, Nicolas Guillén, Emilio Ballagas, Regino Pedroso, Langston Hughes, James W. Johnson, Paul L. Dunbar, and many more (Gelado 2011: 5).

recitation might perhaps one day have to be regarded as a prologue ... to integral Cuban theatre” (Ortiz 1934: 213).¹¹

This teleology of national culture contains the traces of the lineal evolutionism that underlies the notion of transculturation, and which surfaces clearly in the “rhetoric of the incomplete” that Pérez Firmat (1989: 49) highlights as an epistemological constant in Ortiz’s thought and writing. The writings of Ortiz and others are, like Cuban culture itself, marked by the unfinished, as transition and deferral between a present state, and a state yet to come that constitutes a horizon of expectations. In *Contrapunteo cubano* ([1940] 1991a), the theoretical schema that Ortiz sketches around the category of “transculturation” sets out three phases of transition of cultural formation, although his depiction betrays clear signs of conceptual indecision. Firstly, he states that an initial “deculturation” phase is followed by “acculturation” and “finally [a phase of] synthesis of transculturation” (Ortiz 1991a: 87). A few pages later, however, he changes the name of the final phase to “neoculturation,” and “transculturation” becomes the name of the “process” that is made up of “all the phases of the parabola” (ibid.: 90). If “transculturation” is the name of the cultural process and of an “indefinite deferral” of its result (Pérez Firmat 1989: 22-25), then it carries within itself the teleological orientation, the desired search for a “national synthesis” where “neoculturation” is what is lacking: the unfinished state of the project of the nation and of transculturation itself. This lack is what produces a “schizoid culture” according to Ortiz, writing in 1950.

The concept of “transculturation,” and the three-phase schema, also however come into being owing to the need to provide a positive reading of the process of contact and interaction between cultures (and the “permanent deferral” of resolution). They do so in a form more comprehensive than allowed for by the notion of “acculturation” that was current in North American anthropology at the time (Herskovits 1938). “Acculturation” was unsatisfactory in that it emphasized subsuming and dissolution into the other, that is, the dialectical negativity of the process of resolution. In this sense, the emphases on transition, transit, and

11. The discussion about mulatto poetry was to become particularly intense between Cuba and Puerto Rico, where Luis Palés Matos published “black poetry” before Nicolás Guillén did so in Cuba, and where Eusebia Cosme was widely regarded and celebrated as an exponent of a Negroist, rather than mulatto or Afro-Cuban, movement (see the various contributions to *Revista Bimestre Cubana* vol. 38, 1936).

the transformation of culture as rootless wandering also distinguish this epistemology from an antipositivist ontology of inhabiting and existential rootedness such as that found in Heidegger, and recovered in Schmitt's theory of a "*nomos* of the earth" at the moment of maximum imperial expansion of the Third Reich and of notions such as *Volkgeist* and *Lebensraum* (Villacañas 2008: 261-79). Ortiz's proposal would go on to be rejected by the Afro-Americanist anthropologist Melville Herskovits. Herskovits defended the programmatic concept of "acculturation" with the specious argument that it was a prior concept, which had supposedly already made its way into general use. In so doing, Herskovits also rejected Malinowski's defence of the etymological relevance of Ortiz's "transculturation."¹²

As a theory of wandering and encounter, transculturation is presented through the practice of the "counterpoint," a musical figure turned writing style and method. Counterpoint resounds with the dialogical and responsorial genres of Afro-Cuban music—such as antiphonal liturgies, the controversial structure of the rumba, the counterpoint verses of "*curros* blacks," and the point and counterpoint of *guajiro* song. All of these came under the scrutiny in Ortiz's musicological laboratory. The counterpoint method allowed Ortiz to set out two possible conceptions of fetishism, around two products whose associated mental images are given auratic form as fetishes: tobacco and sugar. This dichotomy can already be detected in the distinction that Marx draws between political-religious fetishism and economic fetishism; between a politico-theological fetish such as the materiality of religion, and a fetish of the economy and of capital such as commodity abstraction (Morris 2017: 189)—that is, "affirmative" and "negative" fetishes, respectively (Menard 2011, 2017). From this perspective, *Contrapunteo cubano* no longer represents an Adorno-style demystifying essay of negative dialectic. Rather, it is an unfolding of Benjaminian "dialectic images." Its critical productivity is given by the juxtaposition and clash between the times and materials of the two fetishes—tobacco and sugar—which also represent the main agricultural products through which Cuba has historically inserted itself in global capitalism.

Tobacco and sugar allow for a narcography that unveils what Julio Ramos (2010: 57) called the "colono-pharmaceutical-dependent

12. See Ortiz's correspondence with both of these authoritative figures in English-speaking anthropology, in its British and North American variants, in Santi 2002.

condition of modernity,” in direct contradiction with ideas about the autonomy, will, and sovereignty of the modern subject. These organic materials are also pressed into service to reinforce the dualism of a world order in which the center possesses culture, while the periphery has nature (Coronil 1997). Both tobacco and sugar offer at one and the same time stimulation (innervation), which activates the work of the forces of production, and anaesthesia in the face of the overexploitation of the workforce in order to alienate the value of its labor. Both substances are today condemned by a global biopharmacopolitics, which nonetheless grows as a market for immunization against what Michael Taussig (2004: xviii) calls “transgressive substances,” in a book about gold and cocaine that wants to “speak as a fetish.” Taussig describes a search not dissimilar to the one undertaken by Ortiz in *Contrapunteo cubano*, to allow the fetishes to take over the writing: “combin[ing] a history of things with a history of people forced by slavery to find their way through these things,” for which “nature itself is released along with the rush of the time-compacted magic of gold and cocaine” (2004: xix).

Contrapunteo cubano offers images of tobacco and sugar as global historical agents that provide evidence of the dialectic between capital and labor, as well as between use value and exchange value, following what Pietz (2005) calls the “chiasmic structure of social fetishism.” In this operation, it becomes obvious that Ortiz favors the expressive singularity of tobacco as a historical object and an affirmative fetish, and is critical of the serial and equivalent nature of sugar, as a commodity that responds to the mystifying principle of general equivalence of capital, that is, as a negative fetish. For this reason, as Rafael Rojas (2004) and Enrico Santí (2004) have pointed out, *Contrapunteo cubano* is not just a decisive intervention—endorsed by Malinowski—in international anthropological debates. The essay also represents Ortiz taking a stand with regard to the ideological debates of Cuban economic nationalism, with the endorsement of the Cuban Herminio Portell Vilá’s prologue to what Santí (2004: 11-12) terms Ortiz’s “critique of sugarcane” (*crítica de la caña*). Portell Vilá highlights the nationalist affirmation of cultural and political independence contained in tobacco (as the fetish and stimulant of the nation) and the denial of that will by the imperialist capture of sugar and the sugar industry (as a commodity fetish of colonial alienation). But this identitarian reading does not account for the migrant philosophy affirmed in a notion of transculturation that is also designed to undermine the autochthony myths promulgated by criollo indigenist discourses of “proto-Cuban-ness” (such as Montané and Cosculluela’s “*homo cubensis*”

in archaeology, or Sánchez de Fuentes's *ciboneyismo* in music). Ortiz's antiautochthonism differs, at the same time, from the vernacular cosmopolitanism of Amadeo Roldán, with the latter's accent on rupture, dissonance, and off-beats. It attempts instead to sustain a horizon of nationalist expectations, looking forward to a time when the hoped-for conciliation of classes and races will become a reality. The prospect is redolent of the allegory of peaceful coexistence between tobacco and sugar, which ends in a generative copulation: "if sugar and tobacco have their contrasts, they never were in conflict one with the other ... they were never enemies. There is then, for the versifiers of Cuba ... no 'Quarrel between Mr. Tobacco and Mrs. Sugar,' but a mere exchange of confidences which must end, as in the fairy tales, in weddings and happiness, in the marriage of tobacco and sugar, and the birth of alcohol" (Ortiz [1940] 1991a: 80).

Contrapunteo and transculturation would be simply a transformative mythological variation in the musical game of contrapuntal opposition—a Lévi-Straussian *mythologique avant la lettre*—were they not also dialectical images that juxtapose and crash together fetishes and their temporal trajectories. "In just one day in Cuba, millennia and ages went by; we might say "culture-years," if such a measure were admissible in the chronology of peoples," wrote Ortiz ([1939] 1991b: 22) in the lecture where he proposed an anthropology of transculturation and Cuban-ness. His vision differs from the formal and analytical discourse about transformations proposed by Lévi-Strauss's structuralism, since Ortiz lays out the narrative of transculturation in images and rhetorical figures that articulate historical, religious, economic, political, social and sexual knowledge. The transculturation of tobacco and sugar therefore allows a counterpoint between two fetishes and two fetishisms. Tobacco is quality, sugar is quantity (Ortiz [1940] 1991a: 20, 30). Tobacco has the singularity of a work of art; sugar has commodity equivalence (*ibid.*: 20, 33). As with Marx denouncing the move from religion to mechanization (Morris 2017: 195-96), tobacco appeals to the artisan capabilities of the hand and the ear, whereas sugar shreds the arms, and the very lives of laborers with its industrial machines (Ortiz [1940] 1991a: 33, 43). Tobacco is the singular, a product of intelligence; sugar is the serial, produced by mere force (*ibid.*: 22, 47). Tobacco produces gardens, whereas sugar gives rise to factories (*ibid.*: 26). Tobacco has shamanic use value, whereas sugar has capitalist exchange value (except in Virginia where, of course, the North Americans, unlike the Cubans, industrialized tobacco production early on) (*ibid.*: 50). This is why tobacco is magic, while

sugar is science (ibid.: 39). Tobacco is produced in the silence kept by the craftsman, while sugar is produced among the din of industrial machinery (ibid.: 77): the contemplative silence of religion, versus deafening industrial noise; affirmative fetish, and negative fetish. There is no possibility here of a mythological transformation of the meaning of one into the meaning of the other, in the same way that the raw can become the cooked, the naked clothed, and honey tobacco ash, in the mathematical manner of Lévi-Strauss. This is because transculturation is here more of a historical and material process than an intellectual and symbolic one: it is the historico-material product of a society in all its multiple, simultaneous, and heterogeneous temporalities.

The final flourish of *Contrapunteo cubano* also anticipates Lévi-Strauss's *Mythologiques* in its opening up of dualities (all of which can be derived from an opposition between nature and culture) to the inclusion of a third term. Just as Lévi-Strauss (1965) added the "rotten" to the raw and the cooked, in the closing pages of *Contrapunteo* alcohol is born from the copulation between tobacco and sugar. Alcohol becomes the inheritor of the "Satanic spirit" of tobacco and the "highly impure" material of sugar, whose "sweet entrails," made fertile by ashes, incubate that which has been turned rotten by fermentation (Ortiz [1940] 1991a: 80). The binary counterpoint is thereby opened up to become a "Cuban trinity," just as in Lévi-Strauss's "culinary triangle" the dichotomy of the raw and the cooked is opened up to the work of the rotten. In the year before *Contrapunteo cubano*, Ortiz proposed the metaphor of transculturation as the "cooking of *ajiaco* stew." He advanced this idea in his lecture on "Human factors in Cuban-ness." The metaphor of cultural transformation as "indefinite deferral" (Pérez Firmat 1989) and as "the cooking of history" (Palmié 2013) inverts the Lévi-Straussian operation that transformed the opposition between the raw and the cooked (Lévi-Strauss 1964) into an opposition between honey (used, like sugar, as a sweetener) and ash (the by-product of the burning of tobacco) (Lévi-Strauss 1966). In the terms of Lévi-Straussian variations on the cooked, things which, like *ajiaco*, have been long simmered would undoubtedly appear as the product of high culture (in contradistinction to both the raw and the rotten). They would also appear highly elaborated (so having some affinity with the rotten, but in opposition to the roasted, as Ortiz himself reminds us, when compared to the decomposed elements that can also be placed into *ajiaco*: "Everything edible went into the broth, meat that had not been cleaned and was sometimes already putrefying, unpeeled vegetables, often with maggots that gave them more substance"). The

cooking of the ajiaco by boiling was, then, interpreted as the work of culture as historical production, while elaboration through decomposition (the fermentation of alcohol) was taken to be a direct expression of nature as reproduction (Ortiz [1939] 1991b: 15).¹³

The “Cuban trinity” as the inclusion of a third term—“with alcohol in mind, the counterpoint will be over” (Ortiz [1940] 1991a: 80)—is also reminiscent of the “trinitarian formula” developed by Marx in the third volume of *Das Kapital* (Book III, section 7) to refer to the illusory “natural unity” of capital-profit, land-rent, and work-wages. Here the commodity, as a negative fetish, is the bearer of the naturalizing or mystifying illusion. In *Contrapunteo cubano*, the mystification of tobacco and its transgressive power expresses resistance to mercantilization, and the “natural unity” of the trinity tobacco-sugar-alcohol is an allegory of the reproduction of a national ethos marked by the pathos of transgression: tobacco and alcohol as mystical—noneconomic—operators of the historical reproduction of the nation. Ortiz’s particular reading and interpretation of Marx is a subject that requires further research. What we can say for certain is that between 1945 and 1947, the Cuban insistently and enthusiastically—although, as it turned out, unsuccessfully—advocated the publication of a manuscript by Domingo Villamil, entitled “Thomas Aquinas and Karl Marx.” In letters to the director of the Mexican publishing house Fondo de Cultura Económica, Ortiz singled out the book’s major finding: “the economic component of Communism is not heretical, it coincides exactly with the communist thesis to be found in [the works of] Thomas Aquinas” (cited in Arguelles 1983: 102). Here we encounter once again a gesture typical of Ortiz, one that also appears in his fetishism, his positivism, his historicism, and his culturalism: the reconciling of opposites or *coincidentia oppositorum* (Díaz Quiñones

13. The quite evident affinities between Ortiz and Lévi-Strauss led Fernando Coronil, Walter Mignolo, and Frederick Jameson to go to great lengths to seek some reference to Ortiz in the work of the French ethnologist: their search was fruitless (Coronil 1995: lii n. 35). Two possibilities remain: either Lévi-Strauss read Ortiz but did not cite him—which would reaffirm the diagnosis of a certain Eurocentrism in Lévi-Strauss’s scholarship—or Lévi-Strauss did not read Ortiz. This latter would reaffirm both the advanced nature of Ortiz’s anthropological thinking, and Lévi-Strauss’s lack of interest in “peripheral” American thinkers. It would also lend supporting evidence to the structuralist thesis by which a limited store of symbolic oppositions lend themselves to multiple possible variations.

1999), an organicist ideal of social harmony reminiscent of both Comte and Spencer. In this persistent gesture of Ortiz, everything converges around Cuba as the great and principal fetish, a “great *nganga*” (Figarola 2012). In this sense, Ortiz’s fetishism reminds us of the fetishism of society that Taussig (1993) finds in Durkheim’s totemism. Society understood as a thing takes on material form in Australian *churinga*, which accumulate markings left by each generation. Durkheim sacralizes the totem fetish and in so doing, sacralizes the social: “It was Durkheim and not the savage who made society into a god” (Evans-Pritchard, cited in Taussig 1993: 226). Ortiz’s fetish god is the Cuban nation, whose phylogenesis can be explained by the organicist transculturation of the fetishes of its nature, given material form in Ortiz’s own writing. “Visible manifestation of *maná*” for the Indian (Ortiz [1940] 1991a: 119), and taboo for whites (219): Ortiz calls on his readers to “prefer Cuban tobacco” above all others, even going so far as to claim that it is less carcinogenic (101). The history of sugar, on the other hand, resists such affirmatory treatment because it has been overdetermined by the global history of commodities, exploitation of contracted labor, and capitalist extraction of surplus value. It has, in other words, made only a weak contribution to what David Graeber (2005) called the “social creativity” of fetishism. This fact would lead Ortiz to turn back to focusing on the cult of Afro-Cuban musical fetishes, since these, like tobacco and Indo-Cuban symbols, were open to the reciprocity of the gift. Stephan Palmié’s (2006) call to “think with *ngangas*,” in theorizing both exploitation and reciprocity, is therefore apposite.

A final note on counterpoint and fetishism

The writing in *Contrapunteo cubano* does not only draw on Hispanic literature, as Ortiz himself points out when he situates it in the allegorical model of the theatrical satire piece “Pelea de don Carnal y doña Cuarema” (The Quarrel Between Mr. Carnival and Mrs. Lent), written by Juan Ruiz, also known as “the Archpriest of Hita” (Ortiz [1940] 1991a: 1; Pérez Firmat 1989). Counterpoint, as allegoresis and as a method of ambivalent fetishization, also draws from the Afro-Cuban music and poetry that Ortiz had studied over the previous decade. In the history of music, counterpoint emerges when different structural distributions “become perceptible, and can be distinguished one from another by differences of tone, pitch, timbre, and rhythm.” (Lévi-Strauss 1971: 1012) In

his programmatic analogy between music and mythology, Lévi-Strauss places emphasis on the initial existence of two “media of composition”: the confrontation of “structures with other structures” (forms), or the maintenance of a structure while “transforming its sensory support” (sounds). Conceptual music would, however, go on to separate the phase of the elaboration of structures, from that of their application to sensory supports. Latent structures would no longer be a function of sounds, generating a kind of “anti-music,” a mathematics of the senses later applied to sound (Lévi-Strauss 1971: 1248-51). Counterpoint in Ortiz was treated as something still proper to traditional music, producing meaning as a function of sound or sensory support, but belonging to a musical tradition that was not European but African, as in the *abakuá* music duel (confrontation), where “the horizontal axis of counterpoint is displaced toward the vertical, toward harmony” (di Leo 2001: 108). An analogous kind of displacement can be discerned in *Contrapunteo cubano*, between the teleological horizon of mestizaje (dialectical substitution) and the process of transit and transformation per se (transculturation as an instantiation of cooking or suspension of the dialectic).

Ortiz takes this musical structure and adds allegoresis as a method of fetishization, that is, as a way to produce auratic images of fetishes, allowing a “harmonious” coexistence between their antinomic values. This allegorization in the service of an unresolved dialectic makes possible a displacement between fetishes and their mental images (instruments, tobacco, sugar, nationhood). It is suspended in the precise moment in which alcoholic fermentation gives rise to the trinitarian form, a “neo-cultural” synthesis that therefore becomes not a reasoned image but excess and drunkenness, where fetishes no longer feed on transculturation, but rather work towards it.¹⁴ The historical-cultural counterpoint evoked

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14. The same year that *Contrapunteo cubano* was published, Lydia Cabrera produced an edition in Spanish of her book *Contes nègres de Cuba*, originally published in Paris in 1936. In his prologue to the Cuban edition, Fernando Ortiz presented its author as a “transcriber and collector of black legends,” that is, a “white translator” of “black folklore” of “Yoruba origin” (Ortiz [1940] 2000: 5-6). In this way, by reading a literary work as an ethnographic anthology of Afro-Cuban folklore, Ortiz exposes the limits of his ethnographic “realism,” falling back on the master narrative of organological fetishes. Cabrera, on the other hand, would go on to perfect dialogism in works based entirely on the “referred speech” of her Afro-Cuban informants (di Leo 2000). These works do not attempt to “put the fetishes to work,” by holding them as images of “*cubanía*,” but to allow

therefore involves anesthesia and stimulation, nation and empire, black and white, but it is also intensified as an epistemological counterpoint between sound and meaning, language and thing, image and fetish. Ortiz's allegory does not present itself as the "*facies hippocratica* of history as petrified, primordial landscape" (Benjamin, cited in Jay 2003: 15), but rather as the antiphonic, diglossic poetics of Black Antillean poetry. The abundance of available rhetorical resources (metaphor, hyperbole, paralepsis, prosopopoeia) is pressed into the service of a writing that draws on imagery (*ajiaco, embullo, catauro, manigua* or *monte, mayuba*). This allows this particular narrative method to alternate between critical distance from certain fetishes, and the collapsing of that distance by fetishization through auratic images.

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Afro-Cuban fetishes to speak through a polyphonic and heteroglossic elaboration of their dialectical images (Cabrera 1954, 1958).

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LINGUISTIC AND CULINARY PERSPECTIVES

The lexicographic studies of Fernando Ortiz Fernández

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In the same year that Columbus arrived in the New World, Antonio de Nebrija published in Salamanca *Gramática castellana* (Castilian grammar), the first grammar book of a Romance language, identified by the author himself as a “companion of the Empire.” As was to be expected, when Cuba was conquered and colonized by the Spaniards in 1510, the companion of the Empire was imposed as the official language, since Ferdinand III, king of Castile and Leon from 1217 to 1252, established by royal decree that Castilian¹ was the official language of the Hispanic kingdom instead of Latin—to the detriment of Galician, Asturian, and Leonese.

During the first decade of the sixteenth century, the first urban settlements were founded in Cuba, becoming true foci of biological and cultural fusion between the native population and the Europeans. The development of the colony through the exploitation of its natural wealth forced the Spanish authorities to bring in Amerindians from nearby regions, such as the Lucayas or Bahamas, Lesser Antilles, Mexico, Yucatan, Honduras, Colombia, Venezuela, and even Florida. In addition to Amerindian labor, there was the importation of slave labor from

1. The *Diccionario de la lengua española* (Real Academia Española 2014: 460) notes that the term is “(from lat. *castellānus* ‘belonging to the castle’). adj. 1. Native of Castile, Spain.”

distant sub-Saharan Africa during the early periods of the colony, and of “contracted” Chinese and other Asian laborers during the second half of the nineteenth century. In the multilingual and multiethnic colonial setting and reinforced by the continuous and extensive immigration of Spaniards,² the colonial and ecclesiastical authorities from the beginning supported the use of Castilian as the official and transactional language of the colony, better known then as Spanish.³

The miscegenation between diverse individuals of Hispanic and non-Hispanic origins was giving birth to a new ethnic component, the Creole⁴—already mentioned in the epic poems “La Florida”⁵ and “Espejo

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2. “The language is not, as many assume, the most constant link between Hispanoamerica and Spain, but emigration, without which the language itself would have degenerated into diverse dialects or languages”(Suárez 1924: 129).
 3. “From the occit. *espaingol*, and of the lat. mediev. *Hispaniolus* ‘of Hispania,’ Spain)” (Real Academia Española 2014: 945).
 4. The word *criollo* (creole) in Spanish is derived from the Portuguese *crioulo*, and that from *criar* (to raise), and is what the descendants of Europeans, Africans, and people of other ancestry born in the country are called. According to Corominas and Vigneaux, the oldest documentation of this Portuguese word dates back to 1632, but is already documented in Spanish in José de Acosta in 1590, in the Spanish of Peru in 1740, and in French in 1598. Taking into consideration that Escobedo’s poem “La Florida” was written between 1598 and 1600, this would be another early record of the creole voice in Spanish. This confirms to us the existence of a percentage of the population at the end of the sixteenth century that, due to a complex process of biological, cultural, and language miscegenation, would form a Cuban culture, an identity, and the Cuban modality of the Spanish language, as a national language. See Arrom, Arrom, and Weiss 2005: 119-32.
 5. “La Florida” is the name of an extensive poem written by the Andalusian Franciscan Fray Alonso de Escobedo (?), in which he describes his journey through America including a few days in the town of Baracoa, the first town founded in Cuba by the Spaniards in 1511, and a very short stay in Havana, built in 1519 in its current location, and from there to Florida, a Spanish possession governed from Cuba. Although Escobedo made no chronological reference in his work, it was apparently written between 1598 and 1600. See Gallardo Blanco 1968. The part of the poem dedicated to Cuba is twelve pages long, from page 199- 211 of the manuscript, and was reproduced in Lezama Lima 2002 vol.1: xvi-xxiv: “Even when

de paciencia”⁶ (Mirror of patience) in the seventeenth century—which over time increased its numbers and conquered vital areas of the colonial cultural and socioeconomic fabric. Hispanic immigration itself, in turn, was shaping the way of speaking of the Creoles due to the predominance of western Andalusians in it until the middle of the seventeenth century, surpassed thereafter by a majority of Canary Islanders who forged Cuban peasant culture. The subsequent nineteenth-century migrations of Galicians, Asturians, and, to a lesser extent, Catalans, failed to erase the “southern” nuance imposed by Andalusians and Canarians. And this would make a difference in the pronunciation of Spanish on this island side of the Atlantic, which would give rise to the American *koiné*⁷ of the so-called “Antillean period,” that is, when the so-called “language of the islands” was formed (Cuba, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico) (Guitarte 1983: 172), which would then expand through the rest of the mainland Spanish colonies with their “seseo,” “yeísmo,” exchange of /r/ for /l/ and other features (Valdés Bernal 2015: 227-73).

These realizations of the use of the Spanish language in our country, Cuba, by the Creole were already noted in one of the first documents on Spanish spoken in Cuba. I refer to the account of the Creole Pedro Espínola: “Sobre los defectos de pronunciacion y escritura de nuestro idioma y mèdios de corregirlos” (On the defects of pronunciation and writing of our language and means of correcting them), published in 1795. The same year also saw the “Memoria que promueve la edici3n de un Diccionario provincial de la Isla de Cuba” (Memorial to promote the edition of a provincial dictionary of the Island of Cuba), written by another Creole, José María Peñalver (1795: 106-114), who explained in it the need to develop a dictionary that reflects the semantic enrichment of

Creoles don’t have Spanish as our first language, we know how to use Spanish fluently.”

6. “Espejo de paciencia” was written by the Canary Islander Silvestre de Balboa y Quesada (1563—1649?) who arrived in Cuba between 1590 and 1600. In 1604 he was in Manzanillo, at the time when the historical facts that his poem relates occurred, It was written between the years 1604 and 1608 and makes reference to a “Salvador, negro criollo.” See Saínz 2005.
7. Name of the common Greek language (from gr. κοινή koiné, ‘common’) derived from the Attic, which was commonly used in the Greek world after the conquests of Alexander the Great, a term used in linguistics to refer to the common language resulting from the union of certain language varieties.

numerous Hispanic words, the emergence of new ones, as well as words of Amerindian and sub-Saharan origin that are used by the majority of the population and that hinder communication between the colony and the metropolis even in commercial transactions.

Thus, at the end of the eighteenth century there was a Cuban modality of the Spanish language, typical of the Creole, whom we can already call Cubans,⁸ which would continue to evolve in the following centuries and would accrue the idiomatic support of Cuban culture and identity. And this was because from the eighteenth century the fundamental growth of the Cuban population, already Spanish-speaking, depended basically on the descendants of immigrants, that is, the Creole.

The natural reproduction of the population made it possible for non-Spanish-speaking immigrants to assimilate culturally and idiomatically. We must not forget that the vast majority of voluntary or forced immigrants were male, whether they were peninsular non-Spanish-speakers or from another non-Iberian origin, which prevented the proliferation of endogamous marriages that would have enabled a more zealous preservation of the linguistic-cultural legacy of their components and might have led to a situation of multilingualism. The high sexual imbalance among immigrants of all kinds led to mixing with the Creoles, an element of Spanish-speaking assimilation of considerable importance. Thus, during the colonial period, homogeneous marriage predominated between people born in Cuba (59.39 percent), and more than 95 percent of mixed marriages with foreign residents involved Cuban women (Guanche 2013: 56-77).

Finally, the above-mentioned accounts set the guidelines for the study of the Spanish spoken in Cuba in later periods—that is, pronunciation and vocabulary, that is, phonetic-phonological and lexicographic studies.

Peñalver's call was taken into consideration only by the Dominican-Cuban Esteban Pichardo y Tapia⁹ with the publication in 1836 of the *Diccionario provincial casi razonado de voces y frases cubanas*, which was expanded and revised by the author himself in the last and fourth edition

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8. "Cubanía is consciousness, will, and root of homeland, it emerged first among the people born and raised here, without return or retreat, with the soul rooted in the earth. The Cubanía was sprouted from below and not rained on from above" (Ortiz 1940b: 10).
 9. "Born in the heart of the Island of Santo Domingo, I emigrated in my childhood with my family to the center of Cuba ..., I have covered almost the whole Island for ground and water ..." (Pichardo y Tapia 1875).

of 1875, and which constitutes the most important lexicographical work on Spanish spoken by Cubans in the nineteenth century. In his extensive prologue he even took into consideration traits of pronunciation and made notes about the Spanish spoken by Chinese,¹⁰ whose immigration began in 1847, as well as about the speech of the Black “bozales,”¹¹ otherwise known as the non-Creole Blacks, and about the Black “curros” introduced to Cuba from Andalusia in the early nineteenth century,¹² in addition to noting that “the Black Creoles speak like the White people of the country of their birth or their neighborhood” (Pichardo y Tapia 1875: 12). Thus, in colonial Cuba there was a diglossic situation,¹³ in which two modalities of the same language converged: (a) the one spoken mostly by the Spaniards and the descendants defending colonial interests who used the rules of pronunciation imposed by the metropolis,

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10. “The Chinese or Asians, who already predominate mainly in Havana, have not formed a dialect, nor has the populace taught them more than a word, Chao-chao Tabacúa: they quickly learn and clearly pronounce the Castilian words, albeit with the Creole accent like the Yucatecans, and cutting *rr* and sometimes swapping the *r* and the *d* for the *l*, whose last sound they produce excessively, saying (e.g.) ‘luse de sopa molacha: aló con flijole’: Dulce de sopa borracha: arroz con frijoles” (Pichardo y Tapia 1875: 12).
 11. “Another debased and confused language is heard daily throughout the entire island, wherever you like, among the black *bozales* or natives of Africa, as it occurs with the French Creole of San Domingo; this language is common and identical among the negroes, whatever nation they originated from, and it is preserved eternally, unless they arrived as small children: it is a disfigured, slurred Castilian, without concordance, number, declination or conjugation, without a strong *R*, nor *S* or final *D*, often switching *Ll* for *Ñ*, *E* for *I*, *G* for *V*, &; in short, a jargon the more confused the more most recent their immigration; but that can be understood by any Spanish-speaker aside from some common words that need translation. To form a slight idea of this, let us find one of the least difficult responses: ‘yo mi ñama Frasico Mandinga, nenglito reburujaoro, crabo musuamo ño Mingué...’” (Pichardo y Tapia 1875: 11).
 12. “... in Havana and Matanzas some of those who call themselves *Curros*, use the *i* for the *r* and the *l* for the *g*. ‘poique ei niño puee considerai que mejoi dinero que papei.’” (Pichardo y Tapia 1875: 12).
 13. Here we use the concept of diglossia in the sense that Ferguson uses it: “one particular kind of standardization where two varieties of a language exist side by side throughout the community, with each having a definite role to play” (Ferguson 1972: 232).

and (b) that used by the Creole.¹⁴ The incorporation of the bulk of the population into the nineteenth-century emancipatory struggles (1868–1878, 1877, 1895–1898), regardless of class or ethnolinguistic origin, led the Spanish language, in its Cuban form, to become much more widespread as a means of communication throughout the country, which prevented regional or local use of other languages, as was the case with French and French Creole in the Cuban east due to a large migration movement from Haiti.¹⁵

Once the Spanish-Cuban-American war had ended and the Republic of Cuba was constituted in 1902 after the first American intervention (1899–1902), interest in the study of Cuban Spanish was renewed. Despite initial attempts at acculturation by the intervening American government during the second occupation of the Cuban archipelago (1906–1909), the Spanish language, in its Cuban form, was always an important factor in the preservation of the Cuban cultural identity, as it continues to be today.

In 1921, Constantino Suárez y Fernández,¹⁶ an Asturian writer and journalist based in Cuba from 1906 to 1921 and better known as El Españolito, unveiled his *Vocabulario de voces cubanas* (Vocabulary of Cuban words) (Suárez y Fernández 1921) published simultaneously in Havana and Barcelona. The intention of its author was to turn it into a supplement to the 1914 fourteenth edition of the Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy, perhaps as a criticism of the academics of the time, who with an incorrect Eurocentric pan-Hispanic approach almost

14. The author of the *Provincial dictionary* himself recognized that “people of literature, who write correctly, even as they work hard to perfect their pronunciation in their older years, finally tire I, for myself, must confess that in conversations that are of not too intimate character, I begin carefully distinguishing the *C* and *Z* of the *S*, the *Ll* of the *Y*, the *V* of the *B*; but soon I forget everything, and it’s goodbye prosody” (Pichardo y Tapia 1875).

15. The consolidation of Cuban ethnos and its spoken language is confirmed by population censuses: 43.05 percent native population in 1861, 62.41 percent in 1877, 74.51 percent in 1887 and 89.03 percent in 1899 (Guanche 2011: 108).

16. Born in Avilés, Spain, in 1890, he settled in Cuba from 1906 to 1921, after which he returned to the Peninsula, where he died in Madrid in 1941. He always kept in touch with Cuba from his country of origin and continued his collaboration with Cuban newspapers.

overlooked the rich and diverse lexicon of Spanish spoken on the blue side of the Atlantic, the American, as José Martí called it.¹⁷

Fernando Ortiz Fernández's (1881–1969) first approach to the study of Spanish spoken in Cuba was a brief and impressive review of Suarez's *Vocabulario* published in the Havana journal *Revista Bimestre Cubana* (Ortiz 1921a). Ortiz recognized that Suarez's book constituted the necessary update of the already outdated *Provincial dictionary* of Pichardo y Tapia, so he emphasized that the *Vocabulario* provided "considerable documentation of the study of Cuban philology" (ibid.: 61). However, he warned that Suarez was unable in the *Vocabulario* to collect all the wealth of the Cuban Spanish of those days,¹⁸ noting moreover that some of the etymologies related to indigenism were borrowed from the first edition of the work *Lexicografía antillana* (Antillean lexicography) by the Cuban jurist and politician Alfredo Zayas (1914).¹⁹ Zayas's book, pathbreaking as it was at the time, subsequently revived the tradition initiated in the previous century by Bachiller y Morales,²⁰ who focused his lexicographic studies on the contribution of American indigenous languages to

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17. José Julián Martí (1853–1895) was a Cuban politician, thinker, writer, journalist, philosopher and poet, founder of the Cuban Revolutionary Party and organizer of the Cuban War of Independence (1895–1898). He belonged to the literary movement of modernism and is considered a national hero in Cuba.
 18. "If the object of the *Españolito* has been to catalog all the species of the Cuban lexicographic frond, it has done well, although it has fallen short" (Ortiz 1921a: 62).
 19. Alfredo Zayas y Alfonso (1861–1934) was a Cuban jurist, speaker, poet, and politician, who became president of the Republic from May 20, 1921 to May 20, 1925. In 1895 he was arrested and deported to the Peninsula for his independence activities, where he would spend the war years and where he wrote many poems at the Modelo Prison in Madrid. He returned to Cuba in 1898 and devoted himself to Cuba's independence under the US military occupation, and also actively participated in the country's literary life. Although his government was characterized by corruption in many different sectors of society, he managed to return to Cuba's sovereignty on the US-occupied Isle of Pines and was the first president to allow uncensored freedom of the press.
 20. Antonio Bachiller y Morales (1812–1889) was a historian, university professor, journalist, bibliographer, and Cuban Americanist. He studied pre-Columbian America and contributed to the study of bibliography in Cuba and Latin America. His most recognized lexicographical work is *Cuba*

Spanish spoken in Cuba, a trend that has continued to have followers to the present day.²¹

Other objections that Ortiz voiced with regard to the *Vocabulario* were that Suarez overlooked a whole series of Cuban expressions very in vogue at the time (*aborita, enseguidita, el pinto de la Paloma*, etc.) and the omission of many words of African origin rooted in the speech of Cubans (*ampanga, bilongo, calalú, quimbamba*, etc.) as well as of vocabulary related to slave trafficking (*pringar, boca abajo, muleque, ranchador*, including some originated by English traffickers such as *luku-luku* [from “to look”], *tifi-tifi* [from “to thief”], etc.). He also clarified that “not a few of the Cubanisms are Ibero-Americanisms” and that both, more often than not, are Andalusianisms that are either still alive or have already disappeared in the motherland of the root of our culture” (Ortiz 1921a: 63). On the other hand, Ortiz emphasized that “fortunately, the Ibero-Americans have a philological tradition not any less than the Spanish and not a few recognized masters” (ibid.: 64) many of which he mentions. But despite all the observations he makes, Ortiz acknowledges “the work of Españolito, as a very plausible contribution to that field of Cuban and Ibero-American culture” (ibid.: 64).

Undoubtedly, Suarez’s *Vocabulario* and the review written by Ortiz served as a stimulus for the elaboration of one of his most appreciated lexicographic works. We refer to the *Catauro*²² *de cubanismos* (1921b), originally published in serial form in the *Revista Bimestre Cubana* between 1921 and 1922.

In the introduction, Ortiz noted the following:

If Suarez’s *Vocabulario* is an appendix to the 14th edition of the *Diccionario de la lengua castellana* by the Royal Spanish Academy, this minuscule behemoth that follows will in turn serve as an appendix to the vocabulary of Cubanisms, where it belongs in the dog-eared academic catalogue. (Ortiz 1921b: 51)

primitiva: Origen, lenguas, tradiciones e historia de los indios de las Antillas Mayores y de las Lucayas (2nd ed., 1883).

21. Examples include: Félix Ramos y Duarte 1951: 388-404; Francisco J. Velez 1958-1959; José Juan Arrom 1980; Sergio O. Valdés Bernal 1991/1993.
22. Basket made with *yagua* (a part of the palm tree trunk) to transport things, e.g., eggs, fruits, meat.

The *Catauro de cubanismos* greatly enriched and updated the vision of the Spanish spoken in Cuba at the time, as it collected popular creations such as *desconflautar* (to talk nonsense, obstruct), *fajatiña* (synonymous with *fajazón*, violent, heated confrontation or fight) and others of great use, as well as more new meanings for various words, and incorporated vocabulary of sub-Saharan origin that had been overlooked by the Cuban lexicographers who preceded Ortiz. The *Catauro* is a lexicographic work much better founded than those of Pichardo, Zayas, and Suárez because it takes into consideration the opinions of foreign authors whose works analyze words that are common in the Hispanic-American sphere. In addition, to support his etymological analyses Ortiz resorted to a vast and diverse literature on aspects beyond the specifically linguistic.²³

By the time *Catauro* was compiled, its author had already gone through the studies of jurisprudence that had familiarized him with criminology, which in turn had brought him close to the study of sociology and ethnography, as is reflected in his books *Hampa afrocubana: Los negros brujos (apuntes para un estudio de etnología criminal)* ([1906] 1917), and *Hampa afro-cubana: Los negros esclavos: Estudio sociológico y de derecho público* (1916). At the same time, he had felt the need to transcend a broader level of anthropological studies to confront the analysis of the Cuban cultural complex, as he would recognize years later.²⁴ Therefore, it can be thought that Ortiz underwent a similar process by giving linguistics a place of special importance within his research as a part of culture. Thus, this first collection of Cubanisms became an indicator of an intuition that was soon systematized, since language was always an inescapable authority and a challenge for the achievement of any study he undertook. In short, at the time of its publication, *Catauro* became a work that renewed the field of Cuban lexicography.

As an extension of *Catauro* (1921), in 1923 Ortiz released the article “Una ambueta de cubanismos” with the following clarification:

23. Examples include: Lucien Adam 1879, Feraud Bérenger 1879, Julio Calcano 1897, Henry Craven 1883, J. Dard 1826, A. B. Ellis 1894, Carlos Gagini 1919, Henry H. Johnston 1919–1922, Tíneo Rebolledo 1900, Gabriel M. Vergara Martín 1922, among others.

24. “It would be futile and wrong to study Cuba’s human factors by their races. Apart from the conventional and indefensible nature of many racial categories, it is necessary to recognize its real insignificance for Cubanness, which is but a category of culture. To understand the Cuban soul, you don’t have to study races but culture” (Ortiz 1940b: 16).

Then there are other Cubanisms, few, just a handful, from those collected by our last strolls through the Cuban mountains, savannahs and islets, in search of other rich things of the soil. May they serve to fill *El catauro*. (Ortiz 1923a: 297)

This confession by Ortiz shows us that he was not an armchair researcher, that in his journeys around the country he was collecting the necessary information that later overturned his work and with which he underpinned his correct observations and descriptions (see Valdés Bernal 2006).

In the preliminary introduction to the first serial edition of *Catauro*, Ortiz suggested that he was preparing extensive work on the words of sub-Saharan origin. Meanwhile, in 1921 he released his article “Los cabildos afro-cubanos” (1921c) in which he emphasized that Cuban religions of African origin arising in Cuba largely served as refuge and preservation of certain modes of communication during the celebration of worship, such as Kikongo and Umbundo in the so-called Regla de Palo Monte or Conga, the Yoruba in the case of the Regla de Ocha and Ifá, the Ewe and the Fon in the cult called the Regla de Arará, very similar to the Haitian vodou for sharing the same Beninese origin, and the Efik and Ibibio, predominant in the speech of the members of the Abakuá Society (see Valdés Bernal 1987, 2017). Later, he published his article “Los afronegrismos de nuestro lenguaje” (1922), in which he offered a brief and profound outline of the reasons justifying the survival of these linguistic remnants in the Spanish spoken in Cuba. He clarified that there was no predominance of one sub-Saharan language over the other, because the enslaved Africans introduced to the country were numerous and of very diverse ethnolinguistic origin. He explained that they were scattered in plantations and factories, that even in barracks or shelters the planters always made sure to group Black people from different backgrounds together, so that none of their languages would serve as an interethnic means of communication, and they would always be forced to turn to the language of their enslavers. Ortiz also referred to the *bozal*, an Afro-Hispanic modality of colloquial Spanish that served as a bridge language between slaves and their masters and even among Black people of different ethnolinguistic groups themselves. In addition, he drew attention to English-based expressions that went from Black jargon to bozal, later widespread in Cuban Spanish at the time, such as fufú (mashed plantains) from food-food, among others, and certain vocabularies that went into the popular speech of

Cubans from the above-mentioned religions, such as *asere*,²⁵ *bembé*,²⁶ *butuba*,²⁷ *monina*.²⁸

In this same article, Ortiz again mentioned that he had already drawn up a glossary of “about 500 index cards of Black or Mulatto words” (1922: 334). Such declarations allow us to confirm the idea that Ortiz was very careful in his extralinguistic research on the sub-Saharan legacy. On the one hand, the elaboration of the two books on the Afro-Cuban underworld already mentioned gave him part of the historical and socio-economic background to understand the phenomenon of what he would later call transculturation in his momentous book *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y del azúcar* (1940a), a phenomenon that, among others, generated the Afro-Hispanic linguistic exchange that produced numerous words and some expressions, and enriched the lexical level of Cuban Spanish. Moreover, in this same article he highlighted how difficult it was to study the sub-Saharan contribution to Cuban Spanish, a difficulty that persists in part even now:

As soon as the scholar has barely managed to open a path through the tangled foliage, to this day, the difficulties appear little less than insurmountable, not precisely because these studies were abandoned until just a few years ago, but because of the multitude of languages and ramifications that are presented to the observer. (Ortiz 1922: 323)

The first serial edition of *Catauro*, as well as the second, published in 1923 in the form of a book and with the title of *Un catauro de cubanismos: Apuntes lexicográficos*, suffer from the flaw that the lexicon is not sorted alphabetically,²⁹ which makes it a real headache to consult for a specific

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25. Appellation to address a person in a tone of confidence in colloquial speech, which derives from the sociolect of the Abakuá (an Afro-Cuban men's initiatory fraternity).
 26. Name of the festive ritual celebration in honor of the orichas or deities of the pantheon of Regla de Ocha.
 27. Word used in colloquial speech as synonymous with “food.” It comes from the Abakuá sociolect.
 28. In colloquial speech this is used to address a person in a tone of trust. It is a very common word in Bantu languages, meaning “friend.”
 29. “This book, in the incoherent form as it appears, is a direct reproduction of the ‘lead’ that we were to publish in the *Revista Bimestre Cubana*, during the years 1921 and 1922” (Ortiz 1923b: 15).

word. Forty years later, Ortiz returned to *Catauro* with all that he had learned and made a new version published in a posthumous edition by the Editorial de Ciencias Sociales in 1974 with its content organized alphabetically. Indeed, the *Nuevo catauro de cubanismos*, as this new edition is called, is more than an alphabetized extension, because it is a renewed qualitative and quantitatively superior version, which maintains its value as a work of consultation for anyone who is interested in the study of the lexical level of our Cuban language, both synchronously and diachronically.

When *Catauro* was published as a book in 1923, the prologue again signaled that:

And this year we hope to finish the *Glosario de afronegrismos*, which we have already scheduled, and the index cards which will go into this *Catauro* today are like shavings that the gouge tool has sent flying to discover the ebony heart that is the subject of our eager labor. (Ortiz 1923b: 16)

However, we would still have to wait for his crowning work of Cuban lexicography, since in the same year of 1923 he unveiled other sub-Saharan remnants in our national language in his article “La cocina afrocubana”³⁰ which was subjected to deep review by Ortiz himself later and reissued at different times and in various publications.³¹ In these new editions, he added new words and deleted others, such as *yucca*³² and *aguaji*,³³ which he had mistakenly defined as sub-Saharanisms. Ortiz’s corrections show that he remained constantly informed about the development of lexicographical studies of his time, and that when it was necessary to rectify an error, he recognized it.

In 1924, *Glosario de afronegrismos* (1924a) finally came to light as the culmination of all his linguistic research on the legacy of sub-Saharan

30. The article was published in three parts: *Revista Bimestre Cubana* 18, 6 (1923): 401-23; *Revista Bimestre Cubana* 19, 5 (1924): 329-36; and *Revista Bimestre Cubana* 20, 1-2 (1925): 94-112.

31. Ortiz 1956a, 1957, 1966.

32. Arawak name for cassava, also known as *mandioca*, a vocabulary of Tupi origin, whose tubers have a high alimentary value.

33. Arawak name for the fish *Mycteroperca bonaci*, which is very similar to grouper or *Epinephelus marginatus*.

Africa in our Cuban language. In this work we find Ortiz's revelation with respect to his idiomatic concerns:

This Glossary is not the main work of our desires, but rather a secondary study, initiated by the need not to forget the field of African influence in our work, which has already distracted us for a few years, to appreciate in all its sociological value the meaning of the Black population in our homeland, especially in the culturally inferior population layers, where the Black factor has left its mark the most. (ibid.: xiii)

The *Glosario* became a depository of all the words that Ortiz collected as he entered the study of the African presence in Cuban culture. Each word was semantically analyzed and he outlined its likely etymology. Another contribution of the *Glosario* was the groundwork for the term "Afronegrism," since in the scientific terminology of the time it was common to use Africanism:

We did not want to call them that, because that diction of preferential geographical significance does not give the exact idea. These words do come from Africa, but not from the Arabs, from the Turks of Egypt, or from the Boers of Transvaal, etc., but specifically from the "Black people of Africa." And that is why we have preferred to coin the words Negroafricanism or Afronegrism which we consider to be a good alloy. (ibid.: xiv)

As the prominent Cuban historian and essayist Manuel Moreno Fraginals (2006: 12)³⁴ demonstrated, Ortiz coined the term, and it was even documented in the *Diccionario* of the Royal Spanish Academy beginning from 1983.

Later, Ortiz extracted related words from the Glossary and published them in the form of articles.³⁵ It is worth emphasizing the one dedicated

34. Manuel Moreno Fraginals (1920–2001) was a prominent Cuban historian, essayist, writer, and professor, perhaps the most internationally known Cuban historian thanks to his work *El Ingenio*, published in 1964, an extensive and detailed study of the economies of slave plantations in Cuba and the Caribbean..

35. See Fernando Ortiz 1924b. He reproduced the index cards corresponding to the voices *bongó*, *bruja*, *coco*, *gangá*, *oyá* and others in Ortiz 1928b: 62-75, 116-119. He reproduced some denominations of the Afro-Cuban

to the “Etymology of the word mambi” (1924d: 32, 56),³⁶ in which he defines the Kikongo origin of the word as used to refer to Cubans who in the nineteenth century participated in the wars for the independence of Cuba, and which, by extension, the Filipino insurgents who fought against Spanish colonial power in their country were also called.

Truth be told, the *Glosario de afronegrismo* was a milestone in lexicographical studies aimed at documenting the wealth of contributions of the languages of sub-Saharan Africa to the Cuban modality of the Spanish language. However, today it warrants a serious assessment in light of the most up-to-date linguistic research, since some of the words collected are actually Arabisms, Gypsyisms or Indo-Americanisms. What is more, Ortiz collected in this work a whole series of ethnic denominations that had already fallen into disuse by the end of the nineteenth century; that is, they were not part of Cuban daily speech. But to indicate as much does not lessen, in the least, the importance of the *Glosario*, since Ortiz relied for his etymologies and definitions on the most up-to-date bibliography that he was able to consult at the time.

Another no less important and momentous research project carried out by Ortiz and published in serial form in the journal *Archivos del Folklore Cubano*, was “Los negros curros: Sus características; El lenguaje” (The Black Curros: Their characteristics; The language) (1927–1928), a deep and serious sociolinguistic and ethnohistoric analysis of the jargon of a group very characteristic of Havana’s Afro-Cuban underworld of the early twentieth century, whose background goes back to the liberated Black people from Andalusia introduced to the country in the nineteenth century. The Black Andalusian Curros spoke like the ancient settlers from western Andalusia, with their Gypsyisms and words of Spanish slang, thereby trying to assert social superiority over the Black bozales and Creoles with whom they lived, who even tried to imitate them both in their clothing and in their language. With this research we can appreciate how this type of ethnographic work came to become basically an analysis of the jargon so peculiar of this social sector, which allowed Ortiz to better frame the Curros within Havana’s nineteenth-century society sociolinguistically, rather than from a purely ethnographic point of view. In addition, in this study Ortiz performed a critical analysis

field: *Cafú*, *Cafunga*, *chévere*, *quindembo*, etc. About the *Cafunga* character he published a brief piece, Ortiz 1928a: 281–82..

36. The Kikongo origin of the word is undoubted, as it appears in Laman 1936: 529, in the form of mbí, “evil, villain.”

regarding the use of the terms *argot*, *lengua geral*, *special language*, *jargon*, *crypto-jargon* and *pseudo-jargon*, which were very common in the international scientific works of the time. Due to their significance, this set of articles was published in book form by the Editorial Ciencias Sociales in 1978, a text revised by Diana Iznaga with both a prologue and enriching explanatory notes.

Between 1928 and 1946, Ortiz made other brief forays into the analysis of Cuban Spanish with the articles “El ‘ajá’ de las habaneras” (1928b), then one of the most common interjections in speech in the capital city; “Algunos afronegrismos en la toponimia de Cuba” (Some Afronegrismos in the toponymy of Cuba), an article that must be considered, since at that time studies on the rich toponymy of Cuba were extremely scarce; and “Cañales’ dijo Martí” (1928c). In the latter, Ortiz was the first to highlight the need for philological research on the extensive work of this outstanding Cuban writer and nineteenth-century patriot. In addition, it is because of Ortiz that we consider Martí a linguist. In fact, Martí was not only one of the most prominent figures in Spanish-American literature of the late nineteenth century, but he was also a great cultivator and renovator of the Spanish language, a scholar of the language, a true linguist (see Valdés Bernal 1995).

Up to his death in 1969, Ortiz would never again publish any study dedicated to the Cuban modality of American Spanish. As we have already pointed out, he only undertook a critical review of the *Catauro*, which was published in 1974 under the title *Nuevo catauro de cubanismos*. However, it should be remembered that he did not abandon his work as a lexicologist entirely, because in all his works on the most diverse aspects of Cuban culture we will find compilations of words and a healthy attempt to explain their meaning and etymology. We refer to the aforementioned *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y del azúcar* (1940a) and to the books *Las cuatro culturas indias de Cuba* (1943), *El huracán* (1947), *La africanía de la música folklórica en Cuba* (1959), the impressive five volumes of *Los instrumentos de la música afrocubana* (1952—1955), as well as articles on various aspects of Cuban culture: “El instrumento que los indocubanos llamaban ‘tabaco’; corrección de un error” (1946), “El güiro de moyubá o jobá” (1963), “Las músicas africanas en Cuba” (1967), “La zambomba, su carácter social y etimología” (1956b), “Las ‘malas palabras’ en los sacriloquios afrocubanos” (1958), “Del vocablo cañal y de otros del lenguaje azucarero” (1979), among others.

Fernando Ortiz Fernández was a multifaceted figure of Cuban culture, as evidenced by his written work, his professorship and legal

practice, his efforts as a promoter of scientific institutions³⁷ and important cultural publications.³⁸ Almost at the end of his life, he wrote the following:

I traveled through Cuban life to its caverns.... I lived, read, wrote, published, always hurried and without calmness because the Cuban foliage was very thick and almost unexplored, and I with my little strength could only open some gap or try to indicate a path, and so it has been all my life. (Ortiz 1991: 10)

In effect, Fernando Ortiz devoted his entire life to clearing the thicket that concealed the until then almost unknown Cuban culture, and fundamentally that of the most popular social strata. And an aspect as important as language did not escape his attention. Undoubtedly, although lexicographically oriented studies were of collateral rather than primary interest to him, he could not ignore the fact that language is the idiomatic support of a people's culture and identity, so his ethnographic and anthropological studies could not overlook the language of those he studied. In fact, Cuban linguistics owes much to Ortiz's research, not only because he laid the foundations for the most comprehensive mapping of the sub-Saharan contribution to our national language but because

37. Throughout his life he led several important Cuban institutions, such as the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País from 1923. Together with the Cuban scholar José María Chacón y Calvo (1892–1969), in 1924 he founded the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano and participated in the founding of the Academia Cubana de la Lengua in 1926, and in 1928 participated in the adoption of the agreement that led to the establishment of the Instituto Panamericano de Geografía. Later he was a member and even president of the Academia de Historia de Cuba. He also founded and directed the Institución Hispanoamericana de Cultura in 1936, the Sociedad de Estudios Afrocubanos in 1937 and the Instituto Cubano-Soviético in 1945.

38. No less important was his work to resume the publication of the *Revista Bimestre Cubana* starting in 1910, of which he was director until 1959, in addition to acting as editor of the *Revista de Administración Teórica y Práctica del Estado*, and of the *Boletín de Legislación*. In 1924 he founded and directed for five years the *Revista de Archivos del Folklore Cubano*; between 1930 and 1931 he directed the *Revista Surco*; and between 1936 and 1947 the *Revista Ultra*. Many of his articles saw the light in these, and in other national and foreign periodicals.

he addressed other aspects related to various nuances of the Spanish language and its Cuban modality, as evidenced by a series of reviews and articles, of which I mention only the following: “Las crónicas inéditas de Cervantes” (1913), “Del lenguaje vernáculo cubano” (1926), “Lenguaje de la campanas: Cuestionario folklórico” (1925).

As I was told by those who were lucky enough to meet Fernando Ortiz personally, the years he spent in Menorca as a youth marked his way of speaking with a peculiar accent. Not by chance his first works are *Colecció d'els malnoms de Ciutadella* (published in 2000), and *Principii y prostes: Folleto de artículos de costumbres en dialecto menorquín* (1895), written in the local language and with themes close to that beautiful island. But much more important was that Menorca sowed in the mind of the young Ortiz a whole series of intellectual concerns that would mark his entire life and that he would pour into his studies on Cuban reality as a dextrous Balearic slingshot fighter who always hits the mark.

In short, Cubans wholeheartedly thank beautiful Menorca for having sown in young Ortiz's mind the fabulous seed that he brought with him to Cuba and which offered such important fruits: the interest in knowing and describing the wonderful world that surrounded him. His vast work, in spite of the time that has passed, continues to be an unquestionable incentive to continue widening the gaps and research paths that he himself opened up in the leafy and mestizo Cuban culture.

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The legacy of Ortiz's Yorubization of Lucumí

Translation as transculturation

Amanda Villepastour

This chapter investigates the enduring influence of the Cuban ethnographer Fernando Ortiz (1881-1969) on popular and scholarly understandings of the sacred utterances of the Afro-Cuban spiritual tradition Regla de Ocha (popularly known as Santería). The primary lexicon of Regla de Ocha, Lucumí, which was identified as deriving from Yoruba by Ortiz over a hundred years ago, is employed in oral and written divination texts and prayers and is performed in devotional songs. The latter provided the core focus of research undertaken in Cuba in 2018 in a collaboration with Yoruba priestess Doyin Faniyi from Osogbo, Nigeria, whose presence provided the opportunity to explore the methods and social dynamics of contemporary Lucumí translation in situ. By conducting ethnography in ceremonies, close observation of the processes and strategies Doyin and the Cubans employed to translate Lucumí, and through retrospective analysis of their translation outcomes, this research problematizes the Lucumí translation methods and conclusions that devotees and scholars have inherited from Ortiz's writings.

The influence of Ortiz on Afro-Cuban studies, a field that he established in the early twentieth century, was profound both during his lifetime and posthumously through his substantial interdisciplinary publications. Beyond his extensive ethnographic and historical output, Ortiz's theory of transculturation is his foremost theoretical contribution and remains especially important across the humanities in Latin American

studies. A revision of Herskovits's application of acculturation, which describes the one-way assimilation process of subaltern groups into the more powerful host society, Ortiz's transculturation theory acknowledges the multidirectional cultural exchanges between subaltern and prevailing groups "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" ([1940] 1995: 98).

Ortiz related transculturation directly to music, and may have first named his new theory in a public presentation of Santería music in 1937, which provided much of the content for his revised paper "La música religiosa de los yorubas entre los negros cubanos" (1945-1946):

Today I discuss three moments in the transculturation of Yoruba or Lucumí music in Cuba. The first is its pure period, that of its orthodox religion and liturgy. The second is still associated with black music, but of a mixed sort involving heterodox religious practices and syncretic ritual. The third period, that of the present, involves secularization and cultural fusion. Three periods: African Lucumí, Cuban Lucumí, and mulatto Lucumí.¹

The tripartite translation encounter I analyze in this chapter processes repertoire within Ortiz's first category, although a good deal of "cultural fusion" had already taken place in the formation of this repertoire. This chapter is most concerned with transculturation as applied to language and music as the two media are inextricably linked. As I illustrate, transculturation continues to be a useful theoretical framework for cross-cultural encounters between musicians, who engage unselfconsciously in democratic processes of exchange within a "dynamic flow of cultural interchange," and "mutual alteration," to borrow Bill Ashcroft's words to define transculturation (2001: 24, 122). The overarching narrative of this chapter sheds light on how Ortiz's written output continues to shape the discourse about Afro-Cuban religions, music, and language, as well as the contemporary (re)translation and circulation of transcribed Lucumí songs among devotees and scholars in Cuba and beyond.

Contemporary attempts to translate Lucumí inadvertently reproduce Ortiz's earliest linguistic methods, which began with his handwritten offering as a fourteen-year-old, *Culecció d'els mals noms de Ciutadella* (1895).

1. Translation by Moore (Ortiz and Moore 2018:189–90).

This fledgling linguistic research project was likely inspired by his teacher in Menorca, Joan Benejam, who published *Vocabulario menorquín-castellano* in 1895. Where Ortiz's first compiled vocabulary documented a living dialect in Menorca, Menorquin, in which he was fluent, his early Lucumí translations were prepared with secondary sources and without ethnography among the Cuban community he identified as Yoruba.

Lucumí's Yoruba legacy from Ortiz's writings

As I have detailed elsewhere (Villepastour 2019), by the 1940s at latest, a former language called Lucumí had passed through attrition, where descendants of first-language Lucumí speakers had “preserved increasingly fragmented and unintelligible texts passed on by enslaved forebearers . . . Cuban Lucumí, thus, may appear vestigial—carefully preserved but a relic, nonetheless” (Wirtz 2007: 111). By linguistic definitions, this “relic” is a lexicon (i.e., a relatively static corpus of memorized words and phrases with little or no syntax or capacity for generative communication) whose semantic meaning is largely interpretive and dependent on written sources. By contrast, a language (such as Yoruba) must, by definition, draw from a comprehensive grammatical system for generative communication. With the exception of secular folkloric performance, Lucumí is rarely uttered outside of ritual contexts. It is generally performed as heightened speech (such as chanted divination texts and prayers) or is sung. The majority of *babalaṣos* (divining priests in the Ifá cult) and *santeros* (Santería initiates) who regularly use Lucumí have partial and ambiguous semantic comprehension and use the lexicon to communicate with the orishas (deities) through incantations, prayers, and songs.² It is rarely used to communicate with other people as its generative possibilities are so limited, yet Lucumí is routinely described by scholars as a form or dialect of Yoruba (a language of contemporary southwest Nigeria and southern Benin) spoken in Cuba (e.g., Otero 2010: 167; K. Abimbola 2006: 30; Ayorinde 2004: 179; Ramos 2011: 328). By 1948 when anthropologist William Bascom undertook his research in Cuba, his fieldnotes reveal that he had difficulty finding anyone who could use Lucumí for generative speech (Villepastour 2019).

2. Cubans use the term *oricha*, derived from Yoruba *òrìṣà* but I use the English spelling of this and other Lucumí words for ease of reading.

Although Lucumí has been of interest to scholars across the humanities, it has had little interrogation by linguists. At a time when relatively little was known about the utterances of Cuba's freed slaves and slave descendants, Ortiz harnessed the research of Raymundo Nina Rodríguez (1862–1906) in Salvador, Brazil, where 40 percent of slaves spoke proto-Yoruba dialects (Eltis 2004: 32–33).³ Ortiz used secondary sources to analyze the available linguistic data of African vernaculars at the time in Cuba, and in *Hampa afro-cubana: Los negros brujos* (1906) he boldly asserted the correspondence between Lucumí in Cuba and Yoruba in southwest Nigeria. There may have been previous efforts to translate Lucumí into Spanish, but it was Ortiz's early text that shaped his own research, that of others who followed his linguistic model (particularly Lydia Cabrera), and, eventually, orisha devotees around the world. But Ortiz's declaration that "the Lucumís abound in Cuba" (2011: 29) and his high estimation of Lucumí linguistic correspondence to Yoruba do not align neatly with the increasingly detailed data emerging about the ethnic composition of slave populations in nineteenth-century Cuba. According to Eltis (2004: 32–33),

Cuba in particular ... drew significant numbers of Africans from all parts of sub-Saharan Africa except Senegambia and the northeast coast. Yoruba speakers cannot have accounted for more than 12 percent of Cuban arrivals In Cuba, in any given year in the nineteenth century, the Yoruba had no choice but to mingle on the plantations of western Cuba with large numbers of Susu from Sierra Leone/Guinea-Conakry, with Igbo from throughout what is now southeast Nigeria, Yao from southeast Africa, and Lunda from the Kasai Valley in Angola, with no single group numerically dominant. The island, in fact, received the greatest mix of African peoples of any large region in the Americas.

In view of the relatively small proportion of Yoruba speakers at any one time in Cuba alongside what is known about the formation of creoles

3. The development of the Yoruba koiné, also known as literary, standard, or common Yoruba, was self-consciously initiated by freed slave and missionary Samuel Crowther (1809–1891). Comprising various dialects in Yorubaland, Hausa, Arabic, and the lexical influence of English, modern Yoruba did not fully emerge until the late nineteenth century (Fagborun 1994).

and pidgins in multilinguistic environments, it would be surprising if a form of Yoruba was a dominant African lingua franca on the island at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although Yoruba may have been an important trading language in Havana among *emancipados* and Yoruba networks moving between Havana and Lagos in the mid-nineteenth century (Otero 2010),⁴ several factors likely made it unsustainable in Cuba. Given the heterogeneous composition of Lucumí ethnicity, the vernacular that evolved had wider influences than Yoruba.

As Palmié (1993: 346) explains, discrete African language communities were more likely to congregate voluntarily in *cabildos de nación* in urban settings than within controlled plantation environments. Nevertheless, towards the end of the nineteenth century, entry into the orisha cults housed in cabildos was not only facilitated by consanguineous affiliations, but one could “become’ Lucumí through initiation into the ‘Lucumí religion’” (Brown 2003: 28) as was the case in Africa (Barber 1981). Accordingly, Yoruba would not have been a mother tongue for all congregants in Lucumí-identified cabildos de nación. Given the linguistically heterogeneous “neo-African ethnic denomination” of cabildos, members communicated in Spanish, the Afro-Cuban *bozal* creole, and a range of African vernaculars (Brown 2003: 27).⁵ Further, Palmié points out that following abolition in 1886, language-identified groups were cut off from their cultural sources in Africa, which would have created the conditions for the attrition of various vernaculars. Despite this sudden discontinuity, Otero (2010: 77) points out that culture-building was political as well as spiritual, as “in the late nineteenth century in Cuba ... ‘Yoruba’ cabildos sought to reconstruct a religious and nationalist discourse centered on the construction of Lucumí identity.”

4. Otero (2010: 34) reported, “In the census of 1861, a total of 232,493 individuals were counted as free people of color on the island. Of this number, some 37,768 free people of color were listed as living in Havana.”

5. Ortiz ([1916] 1987) included several distinct language groups as Lucumí, including several Yoruba dialect groups as well as peoples outside of Yorubaland, including Arará (said to be descended from Aja-Ewe languages from Ghana to Benin) and Tacuá (from Tapa, the Yoruba word for the Nupe people northeast of Yorubaland). In a more recent study, López Valdés (1990) named one hundred and thirty Lucumí subgroups, including the Bariba (northwest of the Yoruba), the Igbo in eastern Nigeria, the Hausa (“Aguza”) in northern Nigeria, and the Asante (“Chante”) in Ghana.

Part of the success of Lucumí identity in Cuba stems from Ortiz's assertion of the superiority of Yoruba "superstitions" in comparison to those of adjacent Cuban slave groups (Ortiz [1906] 2011: 4), later declaring "lucumí or yoruba negroes, together with the Dahomeans, are the most civilized in West Africa Yoruba religion is also the most complex in terms of its liturgy, musical forms, instruments, chants, and sacred dances" (Ortiz 1945-1946). Such statements looped back into Afro-Cuban religious discourse and no doubt buttressed Lucumí identification with the Yoruba as well as incentivized the revision of linguistic and religious practices through exploiting contemporary Yoruba ones, which continues to this day.⁶

Ortiz's first venture into correlating Lucumí deities with Yoruba orishas in Nigeria, ([1906] 2011: 124-53) draws heavily on publications by the African-born missionary Samuel Crowther (1843), the American Baptist missionary Thomas Jefferson Bowen (1858), the French Catholic missionary Pierre Bouche (1880), and especially British Colonel Alfred Burdon Ellis (1894). Ortiz also triangulates African spiritual and linguistic information with lateral religious equivalents in Brazil through the writings of Raymundo Nina Rodrigues (1900). Ortiz largely follows the hierarchical scheme of Yoruba orishas reported by Bowen as well as Ellis's scheme of "Chief Gods" and "Minor Gods" ([1894] 1964: 34-84), along with their kin and conjugal relationships, although several deities are named which are little-known or unknown in Cuba (at least until the 1990s, at which time the international trade of orishas opened up).⁷ Most of the nineteenth-century authors researching in West Africa that Ortiz referenced (many of whom were European) had researched a wide geographic range of proto-Yoruba dialects, and to my knowledge, none of them had formal linguistic training. Hence, it is not surprising that Ortiz used a range of spellings and orthographies in his 1906 text, long before formulas for Yoruba-Lucumí transliteration began to develop.

6. I give examples in this essay of how ritual language can be revised according to contemporary Yoruba practices in quite a direct manner, but Palmié (1993: 343) conceptually frames past African identity-building in Cuba as follows: "I would thus argue for a view of African source societies not as doubtful exporters of the personnel of New World 'nations,' but as providers of models for corporate aggregation."

7. By "trade," I refer to payments for ceremonies in which initiates receive vessels containing orishas in material form.

Decades before “confirmation bias” was coined, it was Lydia Cabrera who picked up the Yoruba mantle and pioneered the compilation of Lucumí word lists from the late 1920s, yet little focus was given to seeking the derivation of words where no Yoruba equivalent could be found in a dictionary. There is indeed an obvious connection between the vocabularies and ritual practices of the Lucumí in Cuba and the Yoruba in Nigeria, but it is difficult to estimate the initial and ongoing impact of Ortiz's early publications on the knowledge formation of what is now commonly called Yoruba religion, language, and music in Cuba.⁸ Although a linguistic study by Olmsted (1953) concluded that the Yoruba-Lucumí equivalence asserted by William Bascom (1950: 67; 1951: 17; 1952: 164) was significantly overestimated, this inconvenient evidence is usually ignored by those pushing a Yoruba-centric agenda. A corpus of literature has uncritically reinforced the notion that Lucumí is some kind of variety of Yoruba.⁹ A century of research initiated by Ortiz's descriptions of the language and religious constitution of the Lucumí people became both a process of (re)Yorubization and a developmental source for worshippers (Palmié 2013).¹⁰

In Ortiz's first published presentation of his transculturation theory several decades after his first publications, he acknowledged “the loss or uprooting of a preceding culture, which could be defined as partial deculturation” ([1940] 2001: 260) in the transculturation process. He did not, however, discuss language change or loss here or elsewhere as a part of that deculturation. In later texts, Ortiz ([1950] 1965) attributed the “incomprehensible and untranslatable ... unintelligible,” (191) and “cryptic” (196) words in Cuba's ritual lexicons to their poetic form and content, whose “set of mystical properties” (189) and “mysterious transcendence” (190) can be sought through “secret formulas possessed only by the favored” (214). Although the concept of untranslatability is debated within linguistics, the discourse tends not to revolve around what

8. See Palmié (2013) for a book-length study of this problem.

9. Most influential among these texts are (in chronological order) Angarica (2010), Cabrera (1957), Castellanos and Castellanos (1990), Mason (1992), W. Abimbola (1997), and Linguistic Data Consortium (2008).

10. See also Matory (1999), which challenges “agentless, collective memory that is usual in the representation of African culture in the Americas and at home” through research of historical literary exchanges between Nigeria and Brazil, where “written texts have become major and transformative vehicles of such cultural transmission and identity-formation” (97).

is and is not translatable, but rather what underlies the assertion that words and texts cannot be translated.

With a new wave of Yorubization during and since the *período especial* in the 1990s, African revisions of Lucumí religion and its lexicon have become increasingly creative, particularly with the upsurge of tourism (which includes some Yoruba speakers), and increased internet access enabling direct communications with Nigerians as well as online language sources and tools.¹¹ Rather than investigating the most visible African revisionism taking place in Cuba's *Ifá nigeriano* religious houses and cultural institutions,¹² this chapter brings Ortiz's translation model and its legacy of Yorubization into the home of a *santero* (orisha priest) in dialogue with a Yoruba priestess, whose spiritual authority in Cuba is built on a timeless past and is largely hinged on her linguistic knowledge of Yoruba (although not Spanish or Lucumí).

Translation as transculturation

Language translation—in its scholarly and informal configurations—is one component within a complex of transculturation processes. If the power imbalances in Ortiz's time revolved around race and class inequities in Cuba, religious power struggles on the island since the 1990s have arisen from a split in religious identification. On one side, the majority of devotees continue to identify with their Cuban ritual lineages and

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11. The internet has also opened up new business possibilities for orisha devotees. Large amounts of money changes hands for commodities, information, and “technorituals” (Beliso-De Jesús 2015a: 61-65). Cyberspace has also created opportunities for unscrupulous practices. See also Brandon (2008) and Murphy (2008) for research into the impact of the internet on orisha devotion.
 12. In post-1990s Cuba a Yoruba revisionist movement has developed and is mostly concentrated among *Ifá* divining priests known as *babalaṣos*. The most radical houses are replacing Lucumí songs, divination texts, prayers, and ritual practices with Yoruba ones and are importing copious accoutrements imported from Nigeria, such as cloth, sacred beadwork, drums, divining paraphernalia, and organic materials used in ritual. Perhaps the most radical import is the ancestral full-body mask for Egúngún. See Meadows (2017) for more detail about how Yoruba Egúngún rituals have proliferated throughout Cuba.

consanguineal ancestors while their African ancestors are frozen in the long-distant past. On the other side of the conflict are the priests (predominantly babalawos) who look to living Yoruba priests to bring the distant past into the present by providing the source material for their contemporary Yorubization projects.

If Ortiz's initiation of Yorubization was inadvertent in 1906, the post-1990s movement is politically explicit and encompasses revisionist religious lineages around the country and the "Nigerian-rooted institutions" (Meadows 2017) they have influenced, endorsed, or created. Yoruba language knowledge resides at the heart of this revisionist drive, so the Cuban priests leading it are dependent on the input and educational resources of Anglophone Yoruba speakers and their mobile religious godchildren (mostly from affluent countries). In the process, the Cuban priests outwardly surrender their religious authority to all-knowing Nigerian Yoruba speakers (often regardless of whether or not the latter are orisha devotees or linguistically adept) while inwardly garnering power from their linguistic and ritual knowledge. What may not be well known to the revisionist priests, however, is that Nigerian Yoruba-speakers with whom they communicate over the internet, or who may land on the island for a visit, have varying registers of knowledge of their own language. As Nigerians are schooled in English, many educated fluent Yoruba speakers cannot write Yoruba accurately, while others who are fully literate in Yoruba may have very little knowledge of orisha religion. Additionally, many of the most knowledgeable orisha elders in Nigeria are illiterate.

After more than a century of cultural shift around Santería and Ifá, what was once transculturation between Lucumí-speaking slaves and their colonial masters has become a transatlantic transculturation between Spanish-speaking devotees adept in Lucumí utterances and Yoruba-speaking authorities. Alongside the contemporary Yoruba revision enterprise, however, there is a resistance from the more 'traditional' (i.e. inward-looking) devotees to the authority granted to Nigerians and their ritual and linguistic editing. What is and is not traditional, however, has an added complexity in the current religious environment in Cuba, whereby the African revisionists regard themselves to be the true traditionalists practicing "Traditional Yoruba Religion" while the majority claim to be following the traditional path of their ancestors.¹³ The

13. J. D. Y. Peel (2015) further complicates the notion of "Traditional Yoruba Religion" by questioning whether nineteenth-century orisha worship should be considered a religion as very few deities were worshipped

zealous interventions of a growing number of Yoruba priests visiting Cuba can be met by resistance, as illustrated by some of the unfriendly experiences Doyin and I endured in Havana.

If one contemplates Cuba's changing linguistic environment during Ortiz's lifetime, there is a tension between his theory of transculturation, which recognizes the agency of subaltern groups in stimulating cultural change, and language translation, where "the translator involves the foreign text in an asymmetrical act of communication, weighted ideologically towards the translating culture" (Venuti 2000: 484-85). This statement can be applied to Ortiz's translations from the early twentieth century, at which time the asymmetry between the colonial ethnographer and his African "subjects" was much wider than it is now. But if one applies the theory of transculturation to the countless Nigerian speakers attempting to translate Lucumí texts uttered in an environment where Cubans have no tools to assess the expertise of their interpreters, are the Cuban priests still the subaltern group, and do they have any more power to inscribe the semantic meaning of their ritual lexicon than they did during Ortiz's lifetime (1881–1969)?

Several scholars have interrogated the methods used to back-translate Lucumí into Yoruba (e.g., Dianteill and Swearingen 2003 and Wirtz 2007), yet there has been little research about the Nigerian-Cuban social encounter. My primary objective of bringing Doyin to Cuba as a collaborative partner was to conduct a close ethnography of her social encounters in the language and religious sphere. I also engaged her in translating Lucumí song texts in the field, where I could observe her process as a transatlantic priestess searching for meaning. Michaela Wolf (1995: 123–24) reminds us:

When "translating between cultures" there is a lot of overlap between ethnography and translation, ethnography being understood as a part of cultural anthropology, and therein mainly as an act of representation or rather textualization of something observed Ethnography, as textualization of oral discourse, is a social act.

As a musician trained in ethnomusicology—an inherently interdisciplinary field that evolved out of musicology, linguistics, and

beyond specific regions and/or dialect groups. Further, he coherently argues that "Yoruba Religion" comprises Christianity and Islam, given the historical and statistical realities of the Yoruba people.

anthropology—my understanding of “music” incorporates sound, language, and movement (from gesture to dance) and the social processes that generate and result from them.¹⁴ My research in Cuba with Doyin builds on my orisha song studies in Cuba and Nigeria since 1999. Where my previous publications presented analysis of songs collected during fieldwork and from secondary sources (e.g., Villepastour 2014, 2019), the material in this paper draws from ethnography of the actual encounters of Doyin in Cuba in a range of settings. Conversations took place during street encounters where Doyin was regularly approached by santeros and babalawos, a variety of *bembés* (drumming celebrations) in Havana and Regla, concerts, and in people's homes. Doyin was regularly engaged in conversations by Cubans about orisha worship in Nigeria and the Yoruba language in all of these contexts. As well as observing Doyin in this range of social and religious encounters, I watched carefully while she was also actively involved in the translation of Lucumí song texts.

My core role as ethnographer was often obscured as I was frequently tasked as a translator during Doyin's daily encounters with Cubans, as she speaks no Spanish. I do not, however, consider myself to be a translator in the formal sense, as the job's baseline requires mastery of all languages involved, in this case Spanish, Yoruba, English, and the Lucumí lexicon. Where I can only claim mastery of my first language, Doyin is fully bilingual in Yoruba and English, yet cannot understand Spanish and has only a limited linguistic, historical, and most significantly, aural knowledge of Lucumí, whose written form is more similar to Yoruba than its pronunciation. Despite my limitations in conversational Yoruba (which I studied at graduate level) and Spanish, my working knowledge and technical grasp of Lucumí, Yoruba, and Spanish gave me the linguistic overview to assess the level of multidirectional communication (including nonverbal strategies), allowing me to identify the many assumptions and misinterpretations between Doyin and the Cubans.

14. Although beyond the scope of this chapter, music analysis adds an important dimension to linguistic analysis through revealing the relative pitch (especially relevant to tone languages such as Yoruba), stress (as expressed in rhythm and phrasing), and the periodicity of natural speech (experienced in musical meter).

Transculturation in and between Osogbo and Havana

In the scholarship addressing the recent upsurge of Nigerian religious influence in Afro-Cuban religion in Cuba and the United States (e.g., Brown 2003; Palmié 2013; Meadows 2017), little has been explored about actual encounters and power relations inside the ceremonial space. In February 2018 Doyin flew from her hometown of Osogbo into the “contact zone” of Havana. Initially coined by Mary Louise Pratt to frame her thoughts about writing, literacy, and transculturation, contact zones were described by her as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (Pratt 1991: 34).

Both Nigerians and Cubans live in the aftermaths of colonialism and slavery, but the nature of the historical oppression of orisha devotees differs in Nigeria and Cuba. The power asymmetry for orisha devotees in Nigeria is in relationship to the national Muslim/Christian hegemony in an environment where orisha devotees are estimated to constitute around 5 percent of the Yoruba people, who are less than a quarter of Nigeria’s population. Orisha devotees in Cuba share this history of religious oppression, initially by the Christian majority and since the revolution the atheist state; however, Cuban orisha devotees are a significantly larger portion of the population than orisha devotees in Nigeria. Further, the visibility and presence of santeros and babalawos in public life have significantly grown since a 1992 constitutional amendment increased religious freedom, allowing all Christian and Afro-Cuban believers to be members of the Communist Party. For the first time since the revolution, this enabled santeros to practice openly, take up official positions in government, and wield more influence in public and political life.

The intercultural “contact zone”—in its widest context—is not only familiar to Doyin, but her life has been shaped by it. Her father, known simply as Olosun, was the Chief Priest in Osogbo during his lifetime and died in 1977 when Doyin was a child. In London in 2002, I showed Doyin a Pierre Verger photograph of an Oshun priest, which I suspected was her father. After gazing at the image during a protracted silence, she confirmed that it was indeed her father, and that she had never seen a photograph of him and would like a copy. I was surprised when this document—now tatty from almost twenty years of wear and tear—emerged from Doyin’s handbag on more than one occasion during our 2018 Cuban trip. When just a small child, Doyin’s father took

her to his friend, Susanne Wenger (1915–2009), an Austrian artist who had moved to Nigeria in 1949 with her then husband, Ulli Beier. They lived in several locations in Yorubaland and settled in Osogbo in 1958 on the eve of Nigerian independence (1960). Probst (2011: 137) summarizes their timing: “By the late 1950s and early ’60s, when the Osogbo art movement started, colonial modernity had led to a steady decline in traditional Yoruba art and religion, leaving behind a spiritual and artistic vacuum into which Ulli Beier and Susanne Wenger, the two expatriates who initiated the movement, introduced new forms and injected a new artistic spirit.”

Wenger underwent several initiations in the years following her arrival in the region and, after two marriages, she adopted several African-born children, several of whom became internationally known artists and priests.¹⁵ She had a particularly close relationship with her adopted daughter Doyin, whom she raised in her house where “most of the children were home-schooled through rituals” (Wenger, quoted by Guicheney 2000). In 1970 Wenger took over the house in Ibokun Road, which by then had become an international hub for intellectuals, several of whom were moving between Nigeria and Cuba, including Beier, Pierre Verger, who also lived on Ibokun Road for a time, and Wande Abimbola.

Doyin married into an internationally known Ifá family (from where she takes the name Faniyi). Her husband's father initiated Chief Yemi Elebuibon, whose activities in Cuba and the United States are well documented (Brown 2003; Palmié 2013), while her brother-in-law, Ifakayode Faniyi, has religious godchildren (people he has initiated) around the world and is a frequent visitor to the United States and Brazil. Unlike most of her siblings, Doyin progressed to formal education, earning a Certificate in Oral Literature (Obafemi Awolowo University, 1988), a BA in the Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages (University of Ilorin, 2001), and an MA in African Studies (University of Ibadan, 2005). She undertook several years of PhD research at University of Ibadan but was unable to complete it due to her responsibilities as a Chief Priestess in Osogbo and as a mother of three and parent to numerous adopted children. Since Wenger's death in 2009, Doyin's

15. The best known are Sangodare Gbadegesin Ajala, who has initiated numerous people in Brazil, Olayiwola Adigun, who is based in Germany where he leads an active religious house, and artist Yinka Nike Davies-Okundaye, who has galleries in New York, Lagos, and Osogbo.

international travels and profile have grown exponentially. “Like Adunni [Wenger], but in reverse motion, Doyin is between two cultures. She’s her heir” (Guicheney 2000).

From the late colonial period and immediately after independence, this growing group of internationally mobile ethnographers, priests, and artists associated with Osogbo were able to establish a cultural center. Wenger and Beier made their views on diasporic orisha practice explicit during their conversations with me in the early 2000s. For example, Wenger declared, “The Cuban religion is like the younger brother knitting. The younger brother copies his older brother, but the jumper comes out looking different” (pers. comm., Osogbo, April 2002),¹⁶ while Beier stated that Ifá divination is not possible without Yoruba fluency (pers. comm., Sydney, April 12, 2003). Both comments situate African orisha practice at the heart of the tradition in the historical homeland, while Beier centralized language as the nonnegotiable requirement for religious authority. Further, he shared that anthropologist Melville Herskovits had berated him and Pierre Verger for “destroying laboratory conditions” through their embedded research in Africa and the diaspora.¹⁷

Given that Verger and Beier lived and worked in colonial Nigeria during its early independence era, I would argue that it was the colonial encounter with its multiple contact zones that *was* the ideal laboratory for any study of orisha religion in Nigeria and Cuba. Not only has African orisha practice changed and developed under the colonial gaze and intervention (Peel 2003), but twentieth-century Santería and Ifá practice in Cuba has been shaped by “informant voices from the Western and neo-colonial archive” (García 2014: 5). Although Ortiz did not travel to Africa, he mined this archive and the works of mobile scholars such as Herskovits and Bascom. Given the ongoing insertion of Yoruba language and ritual practice into Lucumí ceremonies by way of academic interlocutors and written outputs, it is arguable that the transculturation that shaped what Lucumí religion has become was never a binary

16. This conversation was shortly after the World Orisha Congress in Ile Ife (August 5–12, 2001).

17. In a discussion of negative views of “the foreign elements” in contemporary Yoruba art, Beier takes a swipe at Herskovits in a publication without naming him: “This attitude is typical of the more desiccated school of anthropology that does not study human societies as living and changing organisms, but believes that in order to study a ‘primitive’ culture successfully one must try to ‘preserve laboratory conditions’” (Beier 1968: 139).

of Cuban slave descendants and Spanish colonizers. Nigerian Yorubas have been abstractly present in Cuban orisha religion throughout the twentieth century and have been increasingly involved in person and in cyberspace since the 1990s.

Although Doyin has never been formally aligned with or active within the various Nigerian organizations that promote orisha worship in Nigeria and abroad, such as The International Congress of Orisa Tradition and Culture and The International Council for Ifá Religion, she has been enculturated into their philosophy and homeland-diaspora positionality both by way of her unique upbringing and through her ongoing proximity to leaders of the movement, such as Wande Abimbola and Yemi Elebuibon. Her tertiary education has also given her entry into academic circles, where she has been an invited speaker in various institutions, including musée du quai Branly in Paris, Duke and Harvard Universities in the United States, and Conferência Internacional de Intelectuais da África e da Diáspora in Brazil. Doyin's social and religious background, education, and international travels almost always situate her in a pedagogical role in her encounters with foreign orisha devotees. As I had anticipated, this was both embraced and shunned in Cuba.

Priestly encounters

A week after Doyin's arrival in Havana, *akpon* (ritual singer) Javier Piña invited us to a *bembé* (drumming celebration) in Old Havana where there was to be a *presentación de la iyawó*, a ceremony that presents a new priest(ess) (at least three months after their initiation) to the sacred *batá* drums in a semi-public setting.¹⁸ This was the first presentation ceremony Doyin had witnessed and was one of several *bembés* we attended in Cuba. Beyond her high religious status in her home country and in North America, Europe, and Brazil, Doyin has a powerfully charismatic presence and dignified poise. Raised in a family of artists and an artist

18. The sacred energy of the Yoruba god of drumming, *Añá* (*Àyàn* in Nigeria), is ritually installed inside the three *batá* drums in a one-week consecration, and the drummers who play the consecrated drums are expected to have undergone an initiation ceremony to this drum-bound spirit. Similarly, anyone "saluting" the drums by bowing and touching the forehead on each drum shell during a *bembé* should have already undergone the presentation ceremony.

herself, she invariably creates a visual spectacle both at home and abroad by way of her inventive attire, which is always an elegant assemblage of sacred symbols that identify specific deities through their coded shapes, materials, and colors. Today, Doyin is wearing an outfit she designed in exquisite white cloth, and in one hand she is carrying a blood-red ostrich-skin handbag and emerging from the other hand is a human-like torso at the top of a brass bell (*ajá*), which is routinely used to call the orisha of sexuality and motherhood, Oshun (Ọṣun in Nigeria, Ochún in Cuba). Her striking face is marked by several long scars that convey her royal lineage. Adding to the drama of Doyin's entrance, she wears a large, flamboyant Yoruba head tie (*gele*), which she removes as we enter the house to reveal a striking sculptural hair design she originated several years ago as a postmodern twist on Yoruba ritual coiffure now seen crowning numerous Osogbo priestesses. Stiff, interlocking braids are wrapped in multicolored cotton threads and adorned with small brass fans crafted by contemporary Osogbo artists and red parrot feathers (*ìkóóde*) used in orisha initiations.

As many orisha symbols and accoutrements are loosely cognate in Nigeria and Cuba, santeros in the room will have immediately identified Doyin as a priestess of Oshun by way of her ritual bell, decorative fans, and heavy wrist bracelets, all made from Oshun's sacred metal, and the yellow beads cascading from her neck. The thick green and maroon beads on her left wrist communicate her status as a fully initiated Ifá diviner. We had walked into the *oro cantado*, a section of the ceremony comprising a liturgy of songs during which the orishas can take possession of their devotees' bodies. Doyin and I quietly moved a few feet into the room on the opposite side from the musicians.

Old Havana, February 17, 2018

Javier acknowledges us across the room. After standing for a few minutes, Doyin becomes uncomfortable that no one has welcomed us when we arrived.

"The first thing we do in Nigeria is bring people a chair when they arrive." I spot two low stools a few feet away and move one towards Doyin. As I return to get the second, a young woman brashly declares,

"*Esta ocupado*," as she drops her handbag onto the stool. Eventually a friendly face approaches us. In fluent English, Natalia tells us that she lives over the road and works as a tour guide. Some people around us start to move into gentle trances and as one person appears

to be moving towards full possession, Natalia leans over to us and explains,

“In this house, we don't pay people to get possessed. The orishas come if they want to, but if they don't, it doesn't matter.” A woman in the adjoining room is moving into a more dramatic trance, her head and torso convulsing back and forth as several people restrain her from entering the room with the drums. Javier sees people looking into the neighboring room and moves towards the entrance and looks around the corner, but he seems disinterested and returns to the drummers. When they play a rhythm for Oshun, Doyin and I move forward and place money in the gourd by the drummers' feet and gently retreat. Javier moves into a liturgy of songs for Oshun and as his praises become increasingly insistent, forcefully inviting Doyin's orisha into the room, she slowly shuffles towards the drummers. She dances elegantly and gracefully, and with authority. As Doyin moves closer to the drums and her energy begins to fill the room, I notice the excitement on the drummers' faces as they smile and look to one another. The man leading the musicians with the largest instrument, the *iyá*, probably in his mid to late sixties, suddenly unleashes more volume and the rhythmic conversations between the drummers become slightly faster and denser. As Doyin begins to rotate, several people gravitate to her with upheld mobile phones but they are intercepted by a young man, who gestures them to stop. Doyin catches my eye and summons me. Short of breath and croaky, she says,

“I need water.” I rush deeper into the house and quickly return with a full plastic cup. She gulps a mouthful then tips the rest over the crown of her head and a joyous smile lights up her face as she spins in accelerating rotations with her other hand extended upward and sounding her brass bell. Unable to rely on the stylized gestures of Cuban santeros, the musicians study her face and bodily gestures and respond with building volume, tempo, and emotion. As people standing on the footpath outside and further inside the house hear the growing intensity of the music, an inpouring of bodies through both doors quickly fills the room until it is densely packed and hot. Javier chooses well-known songs with short calls that are easy to copy, and for the first time the congregants make a big sound as they join the chorus with eyes on Doyin. I scan room to see how people are responding to the spectacle; some look excited and intensify their singing, gesturing, and dancing, while others look quietly curious and reserved. I spot an old woman by the inner doorway wearing a traditional gingham skirt and holding a mop. She doesn't look pleased

and passes the mop to a young woman, who moves towards us, first drying the floor around Doyin then poking the mop between her dancing feet in a surreal sacred choreography. I look across the room and note the old woman's displeasure as she watches Doyin with pursed lips and shakes her head. In my peripheral vision I see Doyin's body changing, apparently oblivious to the dancing mop. Seeing that trance is approaching, Javier calls in Chachalokefun, a batá rhythm that often tips the devotee over the edge into spirit possession. I start to feel concerned as I see Doyin moving deeper into trance, knowing that she can be possessed for hours or even days. Will anyone here know what to do? I touch Javier's arm and gesture to cool things with a downward movement of my open palm. He brushes his fingers across his throat indicating, "Kill it?" and I nod. Javier stops the drummers with a downward hand gesture.

I guide Doyin to the back and we sit on two low stools, vacated by onlookers. As she starts to recover, a little girl, perhaps two or three, approaches Doyin and stares intensely into her eyes, level with her own. They stay locked in this gaze for a couple of minutes until the girl walks away. Doyin says to me, "She saw *Ọṣun*. Children can see things more directly than adults."

Regarding it taboo to speak negatively about people, Doyin later shared that she experienced people at the bembé as "closed." The next day, she attended her second bembé, which was held in a tiny front room in Central Havana. Doyin and I arrived at the house with another group of musicians, and following a similarly aloof reception to the previous day from the few congregants, the drummers began to play the *oro seco*, the first drummed sequence without vocals in a bembé. Once again, Doyin found it difficult to understand why we were not offered chairs, particularly given that the three low stools in the room were occupied by young men. She spotted an inflated car tyre leaning against a wall and asked me to roll it towards her. As we sank into the rubber together, she said, "We sit on these in Nigeria." I didn't notice any response to our pragmatism, but as soon as the musical sequence was over and Doyin and I moved outside to chat to the musicians, I saw a young man rolling our round chair out the front door and into a neighbor's house. I told Doyin that we should leave, which she strongly resisted as she said it would be rude to do so. After convincing her that I felt we were not welcome, we quietly slipped away and walked for an hour to our accommodation as the musician

who invited us to the ceremony had extorted our last cash with a taxi scam on our arrival.

If Cuban and Nigerian orisha devotees share a religious, linguistic, and cultural inheritance, as asserted by Ortiz and contemporary African revisionists in Cuba, what explains the evident social fissure between Doyin and other devotees in these two ordinary ceremonial settings? As we were not acquainted with anyone prior to these fleeting encounters, I had no opportunity to clarify the uncomfortable nonverbal responses to Doyin at both bembés. I am, however, able to speculate after two decades of ethnographic and ceremonial experience in Cuba, where friends and trusted research respondents have felt comfortable enough to articulate difficult feelings about the increasing influence and presence of Yoruba priests in Cuba.

While some Cubans declare Nigerian Yoruba practice to be “the root” of Santería or even the same religion, others deem it an entirely different spiritual system. Perhaps the most cutting words I have heard in resistance to the growing Yoruba revisionism in Cuba came from Matanzas-based santero and musician Luis Bran: “We feel like we’re being colonized again” (pers. comm., Matanzas, March 10, 2013).¹⁹ The overarching limitation I observed between Doyin and the Cubans was

19. The issues surrounding African interventions in Cuban orisha traditions have many parallels in Brazil. Argentinian anthropologist Juana Elbein dos Santos, who is known for Yorubizing Candomblé, published a scathing critique of religious interlocutors: “A large part of the black populations of Bahia ... makes Africa and Africans idealized paradigms of knowledge and extraordinary powers ... any student from Nigeria, Benin or any other region will be transformed into a revered idol, a source of values and knowledge, which will enable positions within the community to be enhanced. The Brazilians open their houses of worship and their wallets—usually in dollars—for these ‘connoisseurs,’ thus casting doubt upon their own heritage and their own knowledge, handed down from generation to generation It will not be these ‘new connoisseurs,’ who arrived during the last decade on our beaches, themselves the product of another historical colonial experience ..., who can interfere with our tradition, pointing out, correcting, publishing profane books, performing spectacular divining practices and inventing traditions. Our tradition was created and continually recreates itself from inaugural principles, but with its own dynamic, participating dialectically in the Brazilian social reality” (Santos 1991-92: 2, as quoted by Capone 2010: 244).

the language barrier, where Doyin spoke no Spanish and few Cubans speak English. Despite the fact that Lucumí is said to be a dialect of Yoruba, Cubans cannot use it to converse with Yoruba speakers. This explicit linguistic gap reinforced the cultural and interpretive chasm, which emerged in numerous ways.

It is possible that the muted responses aroused by Doyin's powerful presence signaled innocuous feelings such as curiosity and awe along with more circumspect reactions fueled by suspicion, threat, or even hostility. Letting her stand did not necessarily signal that she was unwelcome as the social practice of offering mature guests a chair on entry where the ceremony is taking place is not a convention in Cuba unless the person is elderly or incapacitated. The space is usually populated by standing or dancing bodies, while those needing to sit would move to an adjacent room. Sitting down, however, may have been interpreted as a disregard for Cuban religious conventions. Aspects of her attire may also have provoked uneasiness, such as the beaded bracelet that identified her as a female Ifá diviner, known as *iyanifá* (from the Yoruba *iyánifá*). The first initiations of women into the Cuban divining cult began in the early 2000s and remain contentious among the majority of babalawos and santeros, and so remain at the heart of the controversy of Nigerian interventions in Cuba.²⁰ Additionally, Doyin's hair adornment of red parrot feathers may also have caused apprehension. In Cuba they are used in ritual crowns or directly on the shaved head in closed initiation ceremonies, but may also signal an "explicit connection to the problems of witchcraft and its corresponding antidotes" (Brown 2003: 180). Although the feathers also have associations with witchcraft in Nigeria (Apter 1992: 113), for Oshun priestesses in Osogbo, the feathers' meaning is benign; it is yet another symbol of their goddess, whose cosmic house is decorated with ikóóde.

Beyond the orisha's visual symbols that were mutually recognizable, the Cuban ceremonies we attended together were markedly different from anything Doyin routinely experiences at home. The presentation ceremony has no equivalent in Nigeria, and the common practice of hiring a spirit medium to enact a stylized and theatrical trance performance in a ceremony, as is common in Cuba, would be unthinkable in Nigeria. I have yet to witness or hear of feigned trance in Nigerian ceremonies, whereas Cuban devotees readily complain about its ubiquity.

20. See Beliso-De Jesús (2015b) for a study of the history, dynamics and disputes concerning the initiation of *iyanifás* in Cuba.

Just as post-revolutionary choreographed stage performances in Cuba frequently dramatize the gestures of spirit possession, the stylized choreography of staged possession has now looped back into domestic ceremonies (Hagedorn 2001). Cuban drummers are among the most critical of fake possession, particularly as enacted by the hired spirit mediums referenced by Natalia, hence the excitement of the musicians in Old Havana when Doyin began to move into trance.

The challenging experiences of our first two bembés were offset by extremely warm and positive experiences in a religious house in Regla, led by santero and *oriaté* Francisco Ung Villanueva (b.1949).²¹ From our first visit to Francisco's house in Regla, Doyin was treated as a highly honored guest. This dynamic was explicit from our first visit.

Regla, February 14, 2018

Doyin and I are greeted by a smiling middle-aged woman, one of Francisco's *abijados* [religious godchildren] as she unlocks the iron gate. She beckons us to enter but Doyin asks her to bring some water to sprinkle on the sidewalk and the path between the gate and Francisco's doorstep, explaining that this should be done when an Oshun priest is visiting. As the *abijada* recedes to follow Doyin's instructions, I see Francisco disappearing up the steps with his dog, not anticipating that Doyin is also a dog lover. As we enter the salon Francisco reappears and prostrates at Doyin's feet. She seems surprised, as he is older than she, but she bends and beckons him to rise and embraces him. When we sit, Francisco declares,

"I'm nervous!"

"Oh, don't be nervous. I've been longing to come to Cuba for many years since hearing the music." Francisco explains to Doyin that he has Yoruba lineages from the Iyebú [Ìjẹ̀bu] and Egwado [Ègbádò] dialect groups and that his *yubona* [second godparent] was born from a Yoruba-speaking mother and was initiated in 1912.

"When I was a child, I was told that there was no time for language. I want to improve my dialect."

Doyin fully obliged Francisco's language aspirations, having assumed a pedagogical orientation even before entering the front gate. After this initial meeting, we were very fortunate to be invited to participate in the initiation of a new priest (known as *kariocha*). During this one-week

21. An *oriaté* is a master cowrie shell diviner and ritual specialist who leads orisha initiations.

ceremony, drumming celebrations, and other time spent in the house, Doyin's assumed identity as spiritual teacher and language consultant, however, did not arise from arrogance, as may easily be assumed by Cubans who feel hostile to Nigerian involvement in Santería and Ifá. As people in Europe, North America, and Brazil visit Ibokun Road in Osogbo, Nigeria as well as fly Doyin around the globe to teach, lecture, and consult, she is accustomed to people deferring to her so it felt natural and logical for her to assume an instructional role.



Figure 5: Doyin Faniyi and Francisco Ung, Regla, February 23, 2018. Photograph by author.

To use a metaphor of bodies of water, the Òşun river flows through the center of Osogbo's sacred groves and winds down to Lagos Lagoon, where it meets other tributaries and flows out into the Atlantic Ocean, which carried people, spirits, and ideas to what became the Yoruba diaspora. This unidirectional geographical flow and historical logic not only shaped the thinking of Fernando Ortiz and his intellectual partners and secondary sources from Brazil, Europe, and Africa, but it has enculturated generations of orisha devotees in Nigeria and Cuba into assuming a one-way knowledge flow from the un- or little-changing homeland and ever-changing diaspora (Matory 2011). This perspective has been reinforced by intergenerational foreign intellectuals and orisha worshippers converging at the house on Ibokun Road for research and religious knowledge, initiations, and training. This sacred domestic site (and similar ones like it in Nigeria led by well-connected priests) may be better understood as a metaphorical confluence of many rivers rather than a source. In terms of translation as transculturation, these domestic hubs are transculturation contact zones. Like Doyin, Francisco has an international reputation as a knowledgeable priest and artisan and is known far and wide for his exquisite spiritual beadwork. He regularly receives local and foreign devotees and researchers into his own transculturation contact zone and, like Doyin, has religious godchildren around the world.

The decomplexified Yoruba origin narrative was enacted through many hours of questions from Francisco and other members of his religious family towards Doyin. She was occasionally asked about comparative ritual practices, but most of her time was taken up with translating Lucumí words, phrases, song lyrics, and enquiries about their ritually received names, yet Doyin asked few questions about Lucumí utterances and ritual practices. Nonetheless, despite his keen interest in the Yoruba language and transatlantic practices, Francisco's religious house does not fall into the category of *casa nigeriana*, where the default position would be to insert Yoruba linguistic content into songs, divination texts, and prayers in part or in full, and to modify or replace Lucumí ritual practices with cognate contemporary Yoruba ones, or even introduce rites never previously practiced in Cuba, such as the full-body masks of the ancestors, Egungun.²² Rather, Francisco's main interest is to fully maintain the traditions he has inherited while endeavoring to

22. Meadows (2017) has done considerable research throughout Cuba on the introduction of Nigerian Egungun rites.

shed light on the various African lexicons uttered in his house, which include Arará and Luango along with the different dialect lexicons of Lucumí.²³

Translating the ancestors

Before arriving in Cuba with Doyin in 2018, I devised a two-tiered song translation method to explore the processes Nigerian and Cuban priests call upon in the search for semantic meaning in Lucumí sacred texts. The linguistic outcome of the two stages, however, is not in any way intended to assess or comment on Doyin's translation competence. Rather, the method was designed to reveal common assumptions by individuals from the source and target language groups regarding the translatability of Lucumí and the expected reliability of literal (word-for-word) translation. My close observation of the various translation steps and behaviors also laid bare the social dynamic and the ensuing balance of social and religious power. My object was not to produce authoritative Spanish translations of Lucumí song texts, although given Francisco's linguistic aspirations and his high respect for Doyin, I knew that might be an unavoidable biproduct of the research.

After Doyin's first visit to Regla, I asked her to transcribe and translate several Lucumí songs I had recorded a week before in a ceremony for the ancestors led by the *akpon* (ritual singer) Rayner Leyva in Francisco's house. I expected that Doyin would have some difficulties with finding Yoruba cognates to the Lucumí utterances, as one is a true-tone language (where relative pitch determines meaning) and the other a lexicon which has lost its tonal system and has superimposed stress from Spanish.²⁴ The intonation of Lucumí words or groups of words is arbitrary when spoken, yet there are some religious

23. The Arará spiritual tradition and lexicon is said to derive from Aja-Ewe language groups from Ghana to Benin, while Loango was a central-west African state spanning what is now western Republic of the Congo, southern Gabon, and Cabinda.

24. Where Spanish usually stresses the penultimate syllable (unless an acute accent designates a stress on a different syllable), Lucumí more frequently stresses the final syllable. Stressed syllables in Lucumí, however, only have a random relationship to the high tones of Yoruba, which use the identical diacritic.

songs performed on both sides of the Atlantic where the Lucumí song melodies follow the contours of their Yoruba equivalents and so reveal Lucumí's lost speech tones (as explained in Villepastour 2019).²⁵ For this chapter, I have chosen a different kind of song, where the Lucumí melodic setting displays no vestiges of the tonal structures of Yoruba.

This song is performed in a ceremony for the *egun* (ancestral spirits, from the Yoruba word *Eégún*). To my knowledge it has no Nigerian equivalent and uses a scale and melodic structure one does not expect to hear in Yoruba songs. The musicological technicalities of this are beyond the scope of this chapter, but in layman's terms, Yoruba song melodies generally use a five-note scale to help disambiguate the language's three speech tones, whereas the Cuban song in my example uses six pitches and a melodic structure atypical of Yoruba song style. Further, the example is strophic, meaning that different segments of text use the same melody (as in, for example, different verses of a pop song with different lyrics set to an identical or very similar melody). As Yoruba melodies must not deviate too far from the relative speech tones of ordinary speech in order to remain intelligible, the melodies cannot be strophic as this would jumble the speech tones and therefore the text's meaning. Each stanza of the Cuban song has an AABA structure where the bold text of B varies in each strophe:

A: *Bobo wa niche*

A: *Bobo wa niche*

B: ***Ala iki Olodumare***

A: *Bobo wa niche*

The varying words of line B correspond to the presentation of pre-prepared plates of food that are presented to the ancestral altar as part of the ritual action. (See Table 1, where only the varying text is presented from Row 3 on). These varying words in Line B are also performed to the same melody in each strophe (some with slight rhythmic variations to

25. Villepastour (2014) explains how Yoruba natural speech is set to melody, while Villepastour (2019) presents the technicalities of how many Cuban orisha songs use scales, phrasing, and melodic structures that resemble Yoruba musical features. In many cases, Lucumí song melodies have even retained the relative speech tone structure of the Yoruba language despite language loss in Cuba.

accommodate the differing number of syllables), which again would not be the case in a Yoruba melody as the pitch contour would be molded around the relative speech tones of ordinary speech. Unlike many other Lucumí songs, where the melodic style resembles Yoruba musical conventions, this egun melody is probably not derived from a Yoruba song but may have had Lucumí words superimposed onto a melody from a different cultural musical system. The song is in a call-response AABA form, where the akpon leads, then the *coro* (chorus) of congregants repeats the same words and melody. As accompaniment, the akpon pounds the floor with a *bacucú*, an egun staff about the size of a walking cane wrapped with cloth in at least nine small bells (*charwerós*) attached.

	FIRST TRANSLATION			SECOND TRANSLATION			
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Sung Lucumí (RL/FU)	Lucumí ↓ Yorùbá (DF)	Yorùbá ↓ English (DF)	Lucumí ↓ Spanish (FU/RL)	Spanish ↓ English (AV)	English ↓ Yorùbá (DF/AV)	Yorùbá ↓ English (DF/AV)
1	<i>Bobo wa niche</i> (x 2)	<i>Ggbogbo wa ri je</i>	All of us get to eat	<i>Todo lo que te cocinado</i>	Everything was cooked for you	<i>Ggbogbo wa ni sèé</i>	Everything we cooked
2	<i>ala iki</i> (RL) <i>ala iquí</i> (FU) <i>Olodumare</i>	<i>àsiki Olódumare</i>	blessings from Olodumare [God]	<i>flores Olodumare</i>	flowers Olodumare	<i>òdòdó Olódumare</i>	flowers Olódumare
3	<i>eya se le</i>	<i>eja sèlé</i>	torn fish	<i>pescado cocinado</i>	cooked fish	<i>eja sèlé</i>	cooked fish
4	<i>ochinchin</i> (RL) <i>ochin chin</i> (FU)	<i>òsìnshìn</i>	melon seed soup	<i>huevos, hierbas, cebolla, tomate</i>	eggs, herbs, onion, tomato	TRANSLIT.	SIMILAR GLOSS
5	<i>akara [bibo]</i>	<i>àkàrà</i>	fried bean cakes	<i>pan</i>	bread	<i>bùrèdì</i> [English loan word]	bread
6	<i>kukunduku</i>	<i>kúkùndúkú</i>	sweet potato	<i>boniato</i>	sweet potato	TRANSLIT.	SAME GLOSS
7	<i>ichu</i>	<i>ìshu</i>	boiled yam	<i>ñame o malanga hervida</i>	boiled taro root or yam	TRANSLIT.	SIMILAR GLOSS
8	<i>amala</i>	<i>àmàlà</i>	yam flour porridge	<i>harina de maíz</i>	cornmeal [porridge]	TRANSLIT.	SIMILAR GLOSS
9	<i>ewa pupua</i> (RL) <i>ewá pupua</i> (FU)	<i>èwà pupa</i>	red beans	<i>frijoles colorado</i>	red beans	TRANSLIT.	SAME GLOSS
10	<i>ewa ere</i> (RL) <i>ewá ere</i> (FU)	<i>èwà èrèé</i>	mashed beans	<i>frijoles caritas</i>	black-eyed beans	TRANSLIT.	SIMILAR GLOSS.
11	<i>ewo funfun</i> (RL) <i>ewó fun fun</i> (FU)	<i>èwà funfun</i>	white beans	<i>bolletas de arroz, bolas o torres de arroz</i>	rice buns, rice balls, or rice towers	<i>èwó funfun</i>	roasted yam
12	<i>ila</i>	<i>ilá</i>	okra	<i>quinbombó</i>	okra	TRANSLIT.	SAME GLOSS
13	<i>eñi adie</i>	<i>oyin</i>	honey	<i>huevos de gallina</i>	chicken eggs	<i>eyin adie</i>	chicken eggs

Table 1: Translation of *egun* song.

The legacy of Ortiz's Yorubization of Lucumí

	FIRST TRANSLATION			SECOND TRANSLATION			
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Sung Lucumí ↓ (RL/FU)	Lucumí ↓ Yorùbá (DF)	Yorùbá ↓ English (DF)	Lucumí ↓ Spanish (FU/RL)	Spanish ↓ English (AV)	English ↓ Yorùbá (DF/AV)	Yorùbá ↓ English (DF/AV)
14	<i>ado</i>	<i>ata</i>	chili pepper	<i>gofio</i> [maíz tostado]	roasted corn	<i>àgbadò</i>	corn
15	<i>uñeng</i> (RL) <i>uyen</i> (FU)	<i>iyán</i>	pounded yam	<i>comida/</i> <i>comer</i>	food/ to eat	<i>òúnjẹ</i>	food
16	<i>eko</i> (RL) <i>ekó</i> (FU)	<i>èkọ</i>	corn porridge in banana leaf	<i>maíz</i> <i>fermentadas en</i> <i>hoja de plátano</i>	fermented maize in a banana leaf	TRANSLIT.	SAME GLOSS
17	<i>omi tutu</i> (RL) <i>omi tutu</i> (FU)	<i>omi tútù</i>	cool water	<i>agua fria</i>	cold water	TRANSLIT.	SAME GLOSS
18	<i>sará</i>	<i>sàràà</i>	charitable gift of food	<i>refresco con</i> <i>azúcar oscuro</i> <i>y cordial</i>	drink made with dark sugar and cordial	<i>sará</i>	drink made from maize
19	<i>awara</i>	<i>àwa nàà</i>	us too	<i>leche</i>	milk	<i>wàrà</i>	milk or cheese
20	<i>omi ereke</i>	<i>omi ìrèké</i>	sugarcane juice	<i>agua con azúcar</i>	water with sugar	TRANSLIT.	SIMILAR GLOSS
21	<i>obi</i>	<i>obì</i>	kola nut	<i>coco</i>	coconut [used for divination]	TRANSLIT.	SIMILAR GLOSS
22	<i>otí sé</i>	<i>obì sé</i>	split kola nut	<i>vino seco</i>	dry wine	<i>otí sá</i>	alcoholic drink dried in the sun
23	<i>omi bona</i>	<i>omi gbóná</i>	hot water	<i>agua caliente</i>	hot water	TRANSLIT.	SAME GLOSS
24	<i>achá</i>	<i>ata</i>	chili pepper	<i>tabaco</i>	tobacco	<i>tábà</i> [English loan word]	tobacco
25	<i>atana</i>	<i>ànàmọ</i>	sweet potato	<i>vela</i>	candle	<i>atáná</i> <i>ìṣáná</i> <i>àtanpa</i>	firelight match lamp
26	<i>okon kan</i> (RL) <i>okokan</i> (FU)	<i>òkòòkan</i>	one-by-one	<i>un corazón</i>	one heart	<i>okàn kan</i>	one heart

Table 1: Translation of *egun* song (continued).

Since Doyin had no ceremonial experience in Cuba and does not speak Spanish, so was unfamiliar with the Hispanicized transliterations of Yoruba to Lucumí, she was responding to the disembodied sounds on the recording, stripped of the visual cues that later helped her deduce the religious and social context of the vocabulary. Additionally, she was disadvantaged as the melody gave no clues about the Yoruba speech tones, as explained above. Nevertheless, she quickly back-translated most of the Lucumí words (Column A of Table 1) into Yoruba (B) and English (C). While it was relatively easy for her to identify many of the Lucumí nouns for ritual food, numerous Yoruba words and phrases she suggested did not semantically correspond with the Lucumí or the ritual symbolism and context of the Cuban ceremony.

After collecting Doyin's Yoruba back-translations and English glosses (Columns B and C), I then took the song lyrics through a second translation process. First, I collected the written Lucumí (Column A) and Spanish glosses (D) from Francisco (FU) and Rayner (RL) and translated them into English (E).²⁶ The differences in their spelling, word divisions, and translations exemplify the variations typical of Lucumí, which has no standard orthography. In the rows where Doyin's initial English translations of the Yoruba (Column C) were substantially different from my English translations (E) of Francisco and Rayner's Spanish glosses (D), Doyin and I reviewed the Yoruba (F) and the English translations (G). Shaded boxes in the second translations in Columns D to G indicate significant differences from the first translations in Columns B and C. The translations that correspond are left in white, including glosses that indicate a similar understanding of a word, even if the Nigerian culinary ingredients are substituted with Cuban ones, such as in the case with *ochinchin/ochin chin* (Row 4).

While many of the Lucumí words were easily recognizable for Doyin, others posed transliteration, semantic, and contextual problems. For example, she back-translated *oti sé* (Row 22) to *obì šé*. Yoruba /b/ is not usually transliterated to /t/ in Lucumí, but the akpon, Rayner (RL), later told us that *sé* is not a Yoruba word but is Spanish syllable of *seco* (dry). Similarly, Doyin back-translated *achá* (tobacco) as *ata* (chili pepper) (Row 24), but Lucumí /ch/ would normally be a transliteration of Yoruba /s/ (as in *ship*). Doyin possibly made these linguistic leaps as chili is used in Yoruba offerings but not in Cuban ones, while conversely, tobacco is a common Cuban offering but is unheard-of in Nigerian orisha rituals. While Doyin back-translated tobacco with the English loan word *tábà* in her second round, at the time neither of us knew the Yoruba word for tobacco/snuff, *aáşarà* or its contraction *aáşàà* (as spelled by Abraham 1970: 70), which predictably transliterates to Lucumí as *achá*.²⁷

26. I collected the written Lucumí from Rayner and the Spanish glosses from Francisco and Rayner while in Cuba. Some months later, I emailed Francisco a Spanish draft of this essay, which he returned with numerous corrections, including different written versions of some Lucumí words (Column A) and in some cases Spanish glosses (D).

27. I am grateful to one of the anonymous reviewers for alerting me to the Yoruba word *aáşà* in J.B.O. Losi's *Ìtàn Èkó (History of Lagos)* (1913), who reports that tobacco was introduced to the city in the mid-eighteenth century.

This is particularly relevant to my discussion of translation as transculturation, since Ortiz had rolled tobacco into his first-published exposition of his transculturation theory, *Cuban counterpoint: Tobacco and sugar* ([1940] 1947). Chapter 7 describes the leaf's "universal transculturation" (294) across class, racial, linguistic and geographical lines from the Antilles to European nations and through their trade routes and colonies around the world. Attempting to track *achá* back to its Yoruba root also illustrates the frequently nonlinear connections between Yoruba and Lucumí vocabulary.

Crowther (1843) may have been the first to list the Yoruba word and English loanword for tobacco or snuff as *aashar* (75) and *tabba* (84). In a later, coauthored edition (Crowther and Vidal 1852), the spellings *ašara* (46) and *tabbà* (269) reflect developments in Yoruba orthography, while a new entry for "rock-salt" explains, "*Kanhun li ọmmọ Hausa, ašara li ọmmọ Oyibo ...* Rock salt is the produce of Hausa; tobacco is the produce of the men beyond the sea" (177). The etymology of *aášarà* is uncertain but would have originally been a neologism in response to the introduction of tobacco by foreigners.²⁸

If *aášarà*, *aášaà*, or its transliteration *achá* were in common use at some point in Cuba, their absence from printed sources is curious given the ubiquitous use of cigars and cigarettes as sacrificial offerings and the use of tobacco smoke in cleansing rituals. Given the timelines of tobacco's history in Nigeria and Cuba, it is possible that *achá* entered the Lucumí lexicon in the twentieth century. It is notable that the word is entirely missing from Ortiz's 1940 history of tobacco in Cuba, which describes the rapid transfer of its consumption and ritual use from Cuba's indigenous peoples to African slaves. Lucumí terms for tobacco are also absent from most dictionaries and word lists, one exception being the appearance of *asará* in Cabrera (1957: 61). There is no mention, however, of tobacco in her gloss, which possibly indicates semantic broadening of a Yoruba word: "*sustituye al sacrificio cuando el sacerdote no puede ofrecerles aves o animals*" (substitute sacrifice when the priest cannot offer them [the orishas] birds or animals). There is also an entry for *achá* "tabaco" (25) followed by several word combinations and formations that incorporate *achá*. For example, *achadúdu*, "cigarrillo" (cigarette) obviously derives from the Yoruba words *aášaà* (tobacco) and *dúdu* (black/dark), whereas

28. Linguist Tundé Adégbólá (pers. comm., December 30, 2020) suggests that *aášarà* and its contraction *aášaà* mimic the sneezing that follows consuming snuff.

Yoruba speakers use the English loan word *sigá* (a false cognate of cigar) for cigarette and *tábà* for cigar. The first cigarette factory appeared in Havana in 1853, well before the introduction of cigarettes into Nigeria in the 1890s and Nigeria's first cigarette factory in Doyin's hometown of Osogbo in 1933. *Achadúdu* may well be a Cuban word formation that has no Yoruba precedent or equivalent, suggesting either Lucumí's former generative capacity or even Cabrera's scholarly intervention.

Doyin also interpreted *ado* (Row 14) as *ata* (chili), which could be a viable transliteration. She could not, however, offer a Yoruba cognate after hearing the Cubans' gloss, but I suggest that *àgbadó* (corn/maize) has been shortened to *ado*. Candles (*atana*, Row 25) are not used as offerings in Nigerian practice as in Cuba, so resulted in the unrelated word *ànàmó* (sweet potato). In her second translation, Doyin offered three suggestions but could not find a neat cognate. She also found several near homophones, such as *sará/sàràà* (Row 18) and *okon kan/òkòòkan* (26), neither of which semantically correspond to the Spanish (Column D). *Sàràà* is a particularly interesting example as it is an Arabic loan word for a Muslim practice. In other instances, Doyin assumed similar-sounding words in her first translations, such as *ewo/èwà* (Row 11), *eñi adie/oyin* (13), *uñeng/iyán* (15), and *awara/àwa náà* (19) but her English translations had distinct meanings from the Spanish.

I was particularly interested in Line 2 of the song, *ala iki/iqui Olodumare*, where there were too many words in the Spanish translation to make sense of the Lucumí. Doyin's Yoruba translation, *àsìkí*, seemed far-removed from the Lucumí phonemes and context, but when I asked Rayner about the meaning of this line, he and others in the house were insistent that it referred to presenting flowers to Olodumare (God). While flowers are a common offering in Cuba, they do not feature in Nigerian orisha practice. The Cubans did not know the Yoruba word or a Lucumí equivalent for flowers, *òdòdó*,²⁹ and as homophonic conflict resulting in lexical change is common in Lucumí, I suggested that there may be some linguistic slippage from *òdòdó* to *Olódùmarè*. As Rayner started weeping, Francisco turned to me and declared, "The work you're doing is so important," and then he also burst into tears. I swung around to look for Doyin, and saw her standing with her back to us, her shoulders convulsing as she wept to the wall.

29. Francisco later offered that the Lucumí word *odódó* refers to the color pink. This may be a corruption of *òdùndún*, the *Kalanchoe* (Crassulaceae) shrub with pink flowers (Abraham 1970: 505).

While this collective expression of intense emotion revealed the deep personal investment this linguistic encounter had for the three priests, I feared that they may have interpreted my linguistic suggestion as the uncovering of a monumental transatlantic truth. However, the translation process I have described and the data presented in Table 1 cautions that Lucumí translation is too speculative a venture to assume truth. Of the twenty-six song lines Doyin attempted to translate from the recording, she determined twelve Yoruba lines with a similar or the same gloss (approximately 46 percent) and fourteen semantically unrelated Yoruba lines resulting in differing Spanish and English glosses (approximately 54 percent). These disparities can only partly be explained by divergences in ritual materials (as in Lines 2, 18, 22, 24, and 25). To use a principle from second-language learning, Doyin's listening was weighted towards top-down processing, where she depended on the background knowledge and concepts of her own ritual practice rather than bottom-up processing, where the listener relies on auditory input and sound recognition. Had Doyin been more familiar with Lucumí pronunciation and the common transliterations in written form, it would have been easier for her to aurally identify the links between spoken Yoruba and Lucumí. If the two translations are considered word-by-word, out of the thirty-eight words in Column A (with the repeated words eliminated), twenty-one (approximately 53 percent) of the Yoruba words in Column B semantically correspond. This small sample would not be taken seriously by linguists, who demand significant numbers to be able to elicit scientific conclusions. Nevertheless, while my study of this and many other songs is qualitative and ethnographic rather than quantitative, it could be harnessed as a method for a larger-scale study.

It was an uncomfortable moment for me as I witnessed these very knowledgeable priests responding with such intense emotion, believing I had reached into the forgotten past. Not wanting to be responsible for inventing the future, the next day I implored Rayner to think very carefully before changing the way he performs the songs Doyin and I had analyzed, as our Yoruba propositions would not only be different from the way his ancestors performed the songs, but what if our speculative back-translations and glosses are wrong? Despite expressing my reservations to Francisco and Rayner, my two-tiered method appeared not to have influenced anybody. Francisco continued to sing songs to Doyin over the following days and appeared to accept her translations as authoritative. When I returned to Regla in September 2018, I tripped over my ethnographic footprint once again when Francisco

enthusiastically shared that he had integrated a song that Doyin had performed during the initiation we had attended earlier in the year. Doyin sang as the initiate was being ritually bathed in the river at the beginning of the ceremony to consecrate a new priest, one of the most sacred moments in the one-week ceremony. After we have all joined the ancestors, perhaps a future transatlantic researcher will discover this song in Regla as evidence of the Yoruba collective memory.

Conclusion

Since Ortiz declared Lucumí to be Yoruba in 1906, Lucumí song texts have been in a permanent state of revision. As I have illustrated, Cuban devotees, their Nigerian translation partners, and many scholars proceed from the understanding that Lucumí derives entirely from Yoruba and so can be fully understood through juxtaposing their contemporary vocabularies. While linguists have long established the dynamic character and fast-changing nature of language, the ongoing modification of Lucumí is of a different order. Ortiz's presumed Yoruba default more than a century ago became the blueprint for the scholars that followed (such as Lydia Cabrera) and the devotees and aficionados who employ the same translation model. With the upsurge of educated devotees both inside and outside of Cuba in the second half of the twentieth century, there has been a proliferation of crude Lucumí glossaries compiled by non-Yoruba scholars, devotees, and enthusiastic musicians using Yoruba dictionaries. As non-Yoruba speakers continue to align written Lucumí words with Yoruba ones regardless of their uttered sounds (as was the case with Ortiz), this literal translation approach (which rarely progresses from word to sentence level) has collectively resulted in a nonstandardized array of Yorubized words and interpretations which have served to reinforce speculative Lucumí-Yoruba cognates. With the emerging power and influence of post-1990s *casas nigerianas* and the growing influence of the individuals who lead them and institutions aligned with them (such as The Yoruba Association), efforts to replace Lucumí texts with Yoruba ones will continue with full force regardless of my research.

The primary problem with translating Lucumí into Yoruba or even comparing the two, however, is that one is an apple (lexicon) and the other an orange (language). Wolf (1995: 131) proposes:

As far as the specific question of asymmetric power relations in translating between cultures is concerned, a new concept of translation is necessary which needs to create a new awareness of the relationship between “strong” and “weak” languages. Discourses in different cultures are not autarchic but develop within social fields of power and privilege.

Yoruba is unambiguously the “strong” language, with around thirty million speakers and a large corpus of literature and linguistic research to support it. Lucumí is linguistically “weak” in terms of the fact it is no longer spoken and has never had a standardized orthography, due to the lack of focused linguistic research. If language is at the core of culture and transculturation, Lucumí worshippers are the subaltern group in relationship to Yoruba speakers. The speculative products of back-translated Lucumí song texts often result in “copying that originates” (Geertz 1986: 380), where new meanings are created. But regardless of their semantic (in)accuracy, Yoruba translations of Lucumí songs have the potential to grant legitimacy and convey authenticity, which relies on freezing fluid performance practices.

All of the musicians with whom I have interacted in Cuba over two decades understand the importance of Ortiz's work, but few are familiar with the content of his writings. I have seen tatty documents passed around that have plagiarized blocks of Ortiz text with names of contemporary personalities woven into the original historiography. Such documents have been presented to me as recorded oral histories, known as *tratados*. As Ortiz's influence on contemporary religious musicians is so monumental—whether or not they know it—the nonacademic contingent tends not to view his output critically, which adds to its enduring power.

The powerful communicative possibilities of music are now well documented; cross-disciplinary research proves that music can communicate certain kinds of messages in real time without the need for intermediaries in ways that language cannot (see, for example, Cross 2014). Music's linguistic component, however, eclipses the fluid and egalitarian potential of musical encounters. Translation has historically been a way that colonizers would “force their menu of culture onto the dominated showing very little interest in what the dominated power itself produces” (Danyté 2012: 4). It has also served as one of the most important tools of religious conversion, as continued by the Christian missionary linguists in SIL (the Summer Institute of Linguistics). Where

nineteenth-century Yoruba-speaking missionaries translated the bible into Yoruba to convert orisha worshippers to Christianity, many twentieth-century Yoruba-speaking orisha missionaries-cum-colonizers are now translating Lucumí (along with Brazil's *orixa* lexicon) into modern Yoruba with the aim of integrating "the younger brother's knitting" into a Nigerian-led World Religion. Just as linguistic knowledge can socially elevate visiting Nigerians, their Cuban partners aspire to the very same sociolinguistic power. In doing so, Cubans forgo their own agency and submit to an asymmetrical process of linguistic assimilation, which is better described by acculturation than Ortiz's theory of transculturation.

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Reheating the *ajiaco*

Fernando Ortiz's theorization of sacred cuisine

Elizabeth Pérez

In the Yorùbá-derived divination systems of Ifá and dilogún, as practiced in the context of Afro-Cuban-style orisha worship, a handful of oracular signs forbids the consumption of leftovers and reheated food. The admonitions associated with these signs combine with warnings about *ogú*, a type of witchcraft most often ingested in foods or beverages, to characterize the alimentary tract as an exceptionally vulnerable anatomical zone. Documented in handwritten religious notebooks and published compilations of divination verses, such cautionary advice reflects a concern with poisoning and botulism more generally, possibly stemming from faulty refrigeration technologies prior to the mid-twentieth century. Whatever the reason for prohibiting reheated food, the client for whom one of these signs appear must avoid eating it or risk entering into a state of *osogbo*, misfortune leading to physical affliction and typically requiring a sacrificial offering to restore their corporeal and spiritual equilibrium.

Since Fernando Ortiz debuted his metaphor of (and for) Cuba as an *ajiaco* — a hearty stew — more than eight decades ago, it has been warmed over countless times. It seems hard to believe that anything further might be said to shed light on this potentially hazardous trope, at least without placing oneself in intellectual jeopardy. On the other hand, there is still some merit in returning to Ortiz's original works, not with the intention of microwaving the metaphors (as it were) but to approach

the foods he recorded as components of living, breathing traditions.¹ Ortiz's scholarship on sacred cuisine has tended to be obscured by his considerable theoretical contributions. In his earliest writings, however, Ortiz's reactionary political agenda was matched by his encyclopedic ambition to catalogue Afro-Cuban traditions in minute detail. Even into the 1950s, Ortiz was intent on chronicling the variety of foods presented to the gods, or *orishas*, of Lucumí. The most consistent documentation of them since that time has occurred mostly outside of academic studies, in religious cookbooks, how-to guides, and "Santería manuals" compiled by and intended for practitioners. While these sources may have been informed by their authors' readings of Ortiz, they point to a wide gap between scholarly interpretations of the *ajiaco* and practitioners' experiences of it, as shaped by oral tradition, divination verses, and regular ceremonial preparation of the stew.

This body of literature, together with contemporary ethnographic studies, testify to the racialized and gendered afterlives of the *ajiaco*. To insist on their materiality and specificity is to redirect attention to religious communities that are both imagined and embodied, rather than generic or ideal-typical. Their sacred foods reveal transnational relationships between practitioners from diverse racial and ethnic locations that have been passed over in historical accounts and marginalized in the "ideologization of the *ajiaco*" (Fleites-Lear 2012: 248). As Stephan Palmié (2013: 99) contends, Ortiz's *ajiaco* "is an epistemological project, encompassing a distinct vision of temporal and spatial variables in the analysis of (Cuban) culture." To examine practitioners' everyday engagement with the *ajiaco*, we must uncouple it as a dish from the *ajiación* of Cuban nationalist and Latinx cultural discourses, in which local formulations of identity have been interpreted (and at times misconstrued) according to Ortiz's nearly inescapable conceit of the nation as a melting pot-like *ajiaco*. By approaching *ajiaco* as a real thing — an artifact of religious labor — we may be better able to understand the significance of foodways in the transmission of Black Atlantic traditions, and to recognize the influence of cuisine on other aspects of their material cultures.

To this end, this chapter examines Ortiz's theorization of sacred cuisine in light of contemporary ethnographic research and texts produced by religious practitioners themselves. I focus on their continued engagement with the *ajiaco* and other religious foods to counteract the denaturing effects of almost a century of abstraction. Ortiz never acknowledged

1. For the importance of breath in orisha worship, see Oludare (2020).

the preparation of *ajiaco* for ritual purposes, and I devote the beginning of this chapter to solving the mystery of its curious absence from his lexicographic studies of *la cocina afrocubana* (Afro-Cuban cuisine). My review of this scholarship indicates that Ortiz was politically invested in the non-*mulato* purity and authenticity of Lucumí as a particular type of “religio-racial” movement, in which “race was a religious system and religion inextricable from race,” and this investment persisted even beyond his theorization of transculturation and abandonment of anti-Black biologism (Weisenfeld 2020: 442). I then turn my attention to *ajiaco*’s role in Lucumí, the *reglas de congo*, and Espiritismo. I touch on the offering of *ajiaco* to spirit guides, ancestors, and the orisha Oyá, first in the context of Cuban-normative practice and then among Black American practitioners intent on re-Africanizing orisha worship. I show that when African Americans have metaphorized the *ajiaco*, they have done so in a rejection of racial/ethnic and religious mixture that, ironically, echoes Ortiz’s own efforts to “Yorubize” Lucumí (Meadows 2017).

The mystery of the missing *ajiaco*

Ortiz published his first sustained description of sacred food in 1906, in *Hampa afro-cubana: Los negros brujos (Apuntes para un estudio de etnología criminal)*, perhaps best translated as “The Afro-Cuban underworld: The black witches (Notes for a study in criminal ethnology).” He placed it between one section on witchcraft (*la brujería*) that deals with ritual vestments and accessories and another section that surveys the sacrificial practices of brujos. Segueing from *vestiduras* to *sacrificios*, Ortiz (1906: 125–126) states, “the cult of the witches consists principally in consecrating various offerings to the divinity, with the objective of earning their protection and assistance and to appease their malevolent impulses. Foodstuffs [*manjares*] are the most agreeable offerings to the gods, and their priests see to it that they are never missing on altars.”²

Manjares can also mean delicacies, adding an ironic flavor to Ortiz’s assertions, given the account to follow of dishes that would have been unappetizing to his readers. Among them there is no mention of *ajiaco*, as Ortiz is concerned primarily with connecting the cuisine of brujos with West African precedents, the better to emphasize their primitivity. In so doing, Ortiz leans heavily on Catholic missionary Pierre Bertrand

2. All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.

Bouche's *Sept ans en Afrique Occidentale; La Côte des Esclaves et le Dahomey* (Bouche 1885). He uses it as key to decipher entries in Estéban Pichardo y Tapia's *Diccionario provincial casi razonado de voces y frases cubanas*, first published in 1836 (Pichardo y Tapia 1875).³ He also consults *Grammar and Dictionary of the Yoruba Language* by Southern Baptist missionary T. J. Bowen (1858) and *Vocabulary of the Yoruba Language* by African Anglican missionary Samuel Ajayi Crowther (1848).

As edible offerings, Ortiz lists a number of fruits, vegetables, and legumes in addition to cooked dishes including *akará*, *calalú*, and *fufú*. In a footnote, he admits that *chichi* is "one of many dishes of African cuisine [*cocina Africana*] whose composition I do not know" (Ortiz 1906: 126n11). This is his first use of "African cuisine" in print, and his goal in this section is to trace foods to their ethnic roots: "It is worth noting that the gods are not offered other foods than those belonging to the meager African culinary art. This fact, like so many analogous ones, can be explained by the resistance that [the witches] demonstrate against innovations and reforms of religious rituals, always fearful of losing the prestige that formulas consecrated by time have for uneducated minds [*conciencias incultas*]. It seemed, to the witches, that to offer their gods the same foods as those of the whites who mocked them would have been to seriously offend them" (Ortiz 1906: 127). Thus does Ortiz stereo-type brujos on the basis of their attitudes towards the cuisine that they jealously preserved.

Ortiz's criticism of "the witches" for their irrational fixation on continuity projects onto them his own preoccupation with religious purity, which lasted well into the 1940s. Ortiz displaces onto brujos his own distaste for religious "modernity" and high(er) estimation of Yorùbá "formulas consecrated by time." Ortiz's early use of the term *brujería* was consonant with his estimation of brujos' practices as a hybrid — and therefore especially venomous — form of witchery in which Spanish and *Gitano* (Romani) shams and superstitions had mingled with uncivilized yet authentic African customs (Pavez Ojeda, this volume). Ortiz frequently evokes the discourse on "fetishism" and cites French anthropologist Abel Hovelacque to support his reliance on the fetish's locus classicus, Calvinist Willem Bosman's *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea, Divided into the Gold, the Slave, and the Ivory Coasts* (published in the original Dutch in 1704) (Ortiz 1906: 160). Despite

3. Ortiz omits the title of this work, citing only *La Côte des Esclaves et le Dahomey* elsewhere (Ortiz 1906: 192), perhaps having confused the two.

Ortiz's evaluation of Roman Catholicism as "moral" — an assessment that Bosman would not have shared — Ortiz absorbed from Bosman ([1704] 1705: 154) the equation of Catholics with African fetishists, "because they already agree in several particulars, especially in their ridiculous Ceremonies." Decrying the superstitious nature of Spanish immigrants, Ortiz laments the similarities between Spaniards and Africans, which had simply served to plunge both of them deeper into atavism.

Los negros brujos appeared on bookshelves in 1906, the same year that Ortiz added his voice to the debate over Cuban immigration with an article in *Derecho y Sociología* called "Immigration from the criminological point of view." He advocated the immigration of northern Europeans, assuring his readers that their presence "would 'sow among us the germs of energy, progress, [and] life'," whereas Mediterranean and other migrants threatened to increase rates of criminality (Ortiz, cited in Helg 1995: 104). Massive European immigration would address not one but two dangers: that of the Afro-Cuban population becoming a majority, and the danger of agricultural labor shortages in post-emancipation years (De la Fuente 1997: 35). Like many other white Cubans in the early years of the Republic, Ortiz was appalled by the idea of miscegenation and "whitening" the population thereby. Not unrelatedly, in the 1910s, Ortiz became a Cuban government employee, establishing himself as an expert and "witness for the prosecution of Afro-Cuban religious leaders" (Moore 1997: 34). Ortiz had initially advocated the eradication of *brujería*, and only gradually did his disdain yield to fervent advocacy for Afro-Cuban cultural forms as Cuban patrimony.

Indicating that the 1920s were a transitional period ideologically for Ortiz, his definition of "brujo" as a noun in his *Glosario de Afronegrismos* (Glossary of Afronegroisms) is somewhat defensive: "We have been able to observe among the faithful of that primitive religion, the most lively and energetic reluctance to accept that epithet" (Ortiz 1924b: 68). Four times longer is his entry for "brujo, ja" as an adjective, published in both *Un catauro de cubanismos: Apuntes lexicográficos* ("An all-purpose box" of Cubanisms: Lexicographical notes) (Ortiz 1923b: 268–260; see also Pérez Firmat 1985: 191) and in *Una ambueta de cubanismos* (A double-handful of Cubanisms) (Ortiz 1923c: 310–11). It unexpectedly revolves around food, as Ortiz tries to justify the continued use of the term *brujo* due to the persistence of such terms as *delito brujo*, *santo brujo*, *baile brujo*, and *boniato brujo* and the style of beef jerky called *tasajo brujo*, given this moniker "because of the belief that [the jerky] is enlarged by cooking it, to distinguish it from the others" (Ortiz 1923b: 268–69; 1923c: 310–11;

1924b: 69). Ortiz allows that this jerky could also be *brujo* because it is of low quality, adding that “it is known that *tasajo brujo* was the basis of the slave’s diet in Cuba” (Ortiz 1924b: 70).⁴ Bearing in mind Ortiz’s continued disparagement of Black “witches,” it is not uncharitable to imagine that he was suggesting a link between what enslaved people were forced to eat and the criminal tendencies they would later exhibit.⁵

Ortiz’s valuation of ethnic and racial purity — and by extension, moral virtue — animated his approach to sacred cuisine. This concern can be seen on full display in *Glosario de Afronegrismos*, published in 1924, the same year he founded the journal *Archivos del Folklore Cubano*. For example, Ortiz (1924b: 209) defines *fufú*, mashed yam or plantain, as “a dish of African cuisine” (*Plato de la cocina africana*), offering several passages on its use in West and Central Africa, but without mentioning its connection to Lucumí (which he must have realized was quite attenuated). By contrast, Ortiz (1924b: 93) calls *calalú*, a stew of leafy green vegetables, “a dish of Afro-Cuban cuisine” (*Plato de la cocina afrocubana*). After a brief description that builds on *Los negros brujos*, Ortiz adds: “Calalú is the food of the Afro-Cuban *saints* or gods; and it is known that lucumí idols eat only the stews and condiments of *their land*, this being one of the most respected ritual requirements. This would be enough to end any doubt that the calalú is African” (Ortiz 1924b: 94, emphasis in original). Of *ilá*, okra soup, Ortiz (1924b: 253) says: “It is used in witchcraft, as the favorite food of Shangó, fierce divinity of thunder and war, and the word runs among the people of the Afro-Cuban underworld [*gente hampesca afrocubana*].” Ortiz (1924b: 195) labels *ecrú*, a dumpling made with skinned black-eyed peas, a *plato de la cocina afrocubana*, saying that “it is a little-used food; but it is kept going [*se mantiene*] by the African cult, lucumí, as it is used for the food of the saint called Obatalá.” *Olelé*, a *plato de la cocina afrocubana* identical to *ecrú* except for its seasonings and salt, “remains in the rite of the Lucumí religion, so widespread in Cuba. It is the food of all the saints, except for Obatalá” (Ortiz 1924b: 386).

4. Ismael Sarmiento Ramírez (2009) expands on Ortiz’s insights regarding the diets of enslaved people. Several nineteenth-century sources mention *tasajo brujo* as a common food in the countryside, for rural *guajiros* (country bumpkin or peasants) as well as enslaved people. See, for instance, José García de Arboleya (1852: 264, 266).

5. For example, in *Un catauro*, Ortiz (1923b: 181) defined *limpieza* (cleansing) as a “ritual act performed by the black witch to clean an individual of his bad luck ... and of his money.”

In some cases, Ortiz intimates that ethnographic fieldwork and interviews were informing his entries. In his *Glosario* (Ortiz 1924b: 384) and the second installment of “La cocina afrocubana” (Ortiz 1924a: 334), Ortiz says of *ocrá* (“a kind of tamal made with black-eyed pease” also spelled *akará*): “The word runs among people of color and of poor condition with different meanings; but this is the safest and most accepted by several babalawos or witch priests [*sacerdotes brujos*] that we have consulted.” In the first version of “La cocina afrocubana” and in the *Glosario*, Ortiz says of the “white hominy ‘cake’” called *ecó/ekó* that “you can still find a Black woman [*morena*] who makes it [here and there], for the ‘saints’ of the witches’ mythology [*mitologa bruja*]” (Ortiz 1923a: 418, 1924b: 195).⁶ But Ortiz’s definition of *ajiaco* is resolutely secular. Of *agiaco* spelled with *g*, Ortiz (1923a: 408) cautions: “We believe that the semantemes ‘affair’ or ‘business’ do not correspond exactly to the popular Cuban meaning of *agiaco*, but rather ‘entanglement,’ ‘mess,’ ‘troubled issue,’ ‘scandal,’ ‘tumult,’ etc., as this reflects the composition of the culinary *ajiaco*.” *Ajiaco* spelled with *j* “is characterized ... depending on the country, by the specialty of the components, the vegetables typical of each soil. The *ajiaco* was a dish of the Indians; but it was also of the Africans and, in general, of all primitive peoples” (Ortiz 1923a: 408–9).

Much had changed by the time Ortiz condensed and revised “La cocina afrocubana” for publication in the 1956 anthology *¿Gusta, usted? ¿Cómo cocinan los cubanos? Lo mejor y lo clásico de la cocina cubana* (Would you like some? How do Cubans cook? The best and classic[s] of Cuban cuisine) (Ortiz 1956a). Ortiz’s “Los factores humanos de la cubanidad” (The human factors of Cubanity) had appeared in 1940 (Ortiz [1940] 2014), the same year as *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* (Cuban counterpoint: Tobacco and sugar). Christine Folch calls *¿Gusta, usted?* “the culmination of the high-society cookbook genre,” and in it “La cocina afrocubana” was sandwiched between two fish recipes in the section called “Man in the Kitchen.” Sacred cuisine was now given pride of place in Ortiz’s account. The Black woman vanished from the essay, along with the adjective *bruja*. The sentence about *ecó* in which they had appeared was replaced by the more anodyne statement that “it is made often for the ‘saints’ of lucumí mythology” (Ortiz 1956a: 675). In “Los

6. The first installment of “La cocina afrocubana” was published in 1923 with entries from A to G (Ortiz 1923a); the second in 1924 with entries from M to P (Ortiz 1924a); and the last in 1925 with the remaining entries (Ortiz 1925).

cabildos afro-cubanos” (Ortiz 1921: 19) he had already deemed *brujo* an “inappropriate title,” but he continued to use it as a synonym for an Afro-Cuban religious practitioner.⁷ Perhaps he gauged that *brujo* was out of place in a text that exuded bourgeois respectability, despite (or because of) its racial caricatures and “folklorizing” of nonwhite subjects (Folch 2008: 218, 219).

In the *¿Gusta, usted?* version of “La cocina afrocubana” (which carried over into two later republications), Ortiz intensified and refined his characterization of Lucumí practitioners as resistant to change in the extreme (Ortiz 1957, 1966). “Their religions preserve certain exotic dishes that would have already disappeared if they did not have deep ritual roots,” Ortiz (1956a: 673) maintains. Along with other foods imported from his *Glosario*, Ortiz adds *abeguidí*, *agguidí*, *amalá*, *babá*, *takutaku*, *eguá*, *asará*, *ebégguedé*, and more. While he professes to enjoy some dishes — calling *egusí/egunsé* “very tasty” (*muy sabrosos*) — he doubles down on the argument from *Los negros brujos* that the orishas “eat only ‘things of their land’” (Ortiz 1956a: 676). The “tasty” egg omelet *ochinchín* is suspect due to ingredients like pork: “We do not know if it was done this way in Africa, but the latter seems to be a creole and profane thing” (Ortiz 1956a: 676). It is *criollos* who are responsible for putting milk in the *asará* since “it is characteristic of African cuisine to not use milk.” Ortiz even makes the case that enslaved people did not wish to drink it or to eat eggs: “Milk and eggs were like excremental substances, not suitable for the human mouth. The ‘saints’ do not eat them. If eggs enter into any santería dish, it is because of creole transculturation that whitens [*blanquea*] the rituals. Nor is turkey eaten in santería, because it is not African. Neither does the Black [person] usually eat fish” (Ortiz (1956a: 677)).⁸ Touching on two of the absent *ajiaco*’s main ingredients, Ortiz (1956: 676) puzzles: “African Blacks are very fond of corn and cassava, *although* according to the prevailing opinion they are foods native to America” (emphasis added).

7. See, for example, Ortiz (1956b). Ortiz (1939) did refine his definitions somewhat, conceding the point, if belatedly, to his protégé Rómulo Lachatañeré (1939) who had called him out on the denigrating and damaging use of *brujería*.

8. This runs counter to the testimony of the formerly enslaved Esteban Montejo, Miguel Barnet’s interlocutor in *Biografía de un cimarrón* (1968) (Sarmiento Ramírez 2009: 148).

Ortiz had publicized *ajiaco* as a metaphor sixteen years earlier, in “Los factores humanos de la cubanidad,” so his essentialization of Afro-Cuban foodways may seem jarringly out of step with his model of Cuban transculturation as an ongoing, future-oriented project (Palmié 2013; Naranjo Orovio, this volume). By this point, Ortiz undoubtedly knew that Black people ate fish and that the *orishas* did, too. It is difficult to think that he would not have observed flan, syrupy sponge cakes, and other pastries offered to Ochún, or merengues and rice puddings for Obatalá, at the rituals he attended, leaning on his omnipresent walking stick (Ortiz Herrera 2000: 13). The late 1950s were well into Lucumí’s “Tropicana epoch,” when phenotypically white Cubans — especially gay men — employed in entertainment venues and steeped in the glamour of urban night life had begun to seek initiation in markedly larger numbers (Ramos 2019: 159). This influx accelerated changes to the aesthetics of Lucumí altars that had begun with the greater availability of imported fabrics, and probably opened the door to innovations in sacred cuisine. Ortiz’s interpretation of *la cocina afrocubana* cannot be chalked up to mere ignorance, or an unwillingness to revise his opinion when faced with updated facts. As Sergio O. Valdés Bernal (2021: 147) writes: “Ortiz’s corrections show that he remained constantly informed about the development of lexicographical studies of his time, and that when it was necessary to rectify an error, he recognized it.”

What leads Ortiz astray here, I would argue, is his determination to outline a set of rules for consumption and commensality along strict racialized lines that privilege African origins. Mary Douglas had yet to publish her 1966 classic *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, but what Ortiz attempts in his writing on food is similarly both taxonomical and polemical. His classificatory ambition went hand in hand with his desire to validate Lucumí in particular as “the genuine article” — a true reinstatement of an indigenous African religion in Cuba. Among the strategies implemented to gain legal recognition for Afro-Diasporic “cults” had been scholarly confirmation of their links to the African past, which Ortiz had succeeded in corroborating for Lucumí just as Nina Rodrigues and Édison Carneiro did with regard to Brazilian Candomblé (Capone 2010). But it was not enough for Ortiz to assert that Lucumí practitioners had retained African patterns of behavior that became “survivals,” in the Herskovitsian sense; Ortiz insisted on framing Lucumí as a culturally conservative “religio-racial” phenomenon in which fidelity to African precedents determined the authenticity of any given practice.

Judith Weisenfeld (2017) coined the term “religio-racial” to refer to early twentieth-century movements in which Black Americans’ racial histories and their religious identities were tightly intertwined. Ortiz’s writing on food indicates that he conceptualized Lucumí as such a movement, in which enslaved Afro-Cubans and their descendants “formulated selfhood, collective identity, and civic membership or resistance through both race and religion in concert with one another” (Weisenfeld 2020: 443). To be sure, Lucumí was “religio-racial” movement for the generation of practitioners upon whom Ortiz relied; among initiates today, “a rich religio-racial tapestry emerges through mundane practices that range from health, name change, hygiene, diet, attire, real estate ventures, home decoration to family codes” (Drake 2020: 338). But practitioners’ “religio-racial” consciousness has been characterized by respect for their lineage ancestors’ adaptive substitutions (for instance, of coconut pieces for kola nut lobes in *obi* divination) and innovations (as in the case of initiatory protocols, based on the procedures for ordaining priests to the orisha Ẓàngó in the precolonial period, but altered so that a novice receives at least four orishas in initiation in addition to their individual patron) (Brown 2003). Ortiz’s failure to appreciate the pragmatic and “revisionary” aspects of Lucumí prevented him from coming to grips with the tradition’s culinary ingenuity, including the incorporation of ajiaco into its repertoire of sacred dishes (Apter 1991).

To preserve Lucumí’s image as a legitimately African Afro-Cuban tradition — at least in his own eyes — Ortiz could never expose it to charges of having become mulatto. Ortiz used *mulato* to refer to phenomena of mixed racial constitution, not only bodies but also words and foods that are detached from their roots to create something novel, artificial, and inherently less authentic. Imitation, in addition to “mixture and falsehood,” are inextricably linked (see Sarró, this volume). In *Un catauro*, Ortiz (1923b: 81) writes of *constancia*: “The word seems to be born legitimately [*de buena ley*], better than many others, already adopted despite its bastardry.” Ortiz persistently combined the notion of the bastard as an adulterating “counterfeit” — a usage that has been documented in English as far back as the sixteenth century — with that of the mixed-race person (*mulato* in Spanish) as “spurious” and potentially treacherous (Langley 2018: 137). The classic passage from *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* is apposite here: “Tobacco does not change its color; it is born dark and dies the color of its race. Sugar changes its coloring; it is born brown and whitens itself; at first it is a syrupy

mulatto and, in this state, pleases the common taste; then it is bleached and refined until it can pass for white, travel all over the world, reach all mouths, and bring a better price, climbing to the top of the social ladder” (Ortiz [1940] 1995: 9). After Ortiz ([1940]1995: 23, 58) introduces his protagonists, *el moreno tabaco* (tobacco the Black) fated to wed *la blanconaza azúcar* (light-skinned Black/white-passing sugar), he argues that sugar, “miscegenation of flavors,” was actually “mulatto from the start.”⁹ Ten years later, in *La africana de la música folklórica de Cuba*, Ortiz proclaims that the tempo-marking technique called *rubato* “was a mulatto child, intruding on white music through a Black bastardry [*bastardía negra*]” (Ortiz 1950b: 320).

I advance these examples not as evidence that Ortiz’s disavowal of racism was disingenuous, or that his immersion in pseudoscientific and white supremacist studies at the beginning of his career spawned conceptual *supervivencias* that would go on to corrupt his deconstruction of race. Instead, I hypothesize that Ortiz’s literary style and performance of authorial wit (in the sense of *esprit*) was based on scenes of racialized and sexual transgression such as one would find in the illustrated sagas printed on cigar and cigarette wrappers (*marquillas*) and in Cirilo Villaverde’s monumental nineteenth-century Cuban novel, *Cecilia Valdés o la Loma del Ángel*, a story of incestuous, interracial desire and passing at the rotten core of slave society (Kutzinski 1993: 48). Ortiz’s affective attachment to erotic, nuptial, and procreative tropes of miscegenation outlasted his principled ideological opposition to their premises and racist opposition to the Cuban population’s *mulatez*. Stephan Palmié (2016) points out that Ortiz arrived at a processual model of the inherent *mestizaje* of all human groups in his 1946 *El engaño de las razas* (The deception of race). This led him to reject culinary metaphoricity as inadequate to capturing the complexity of human difference. Instead, he turned to music to convey the “open-ended contrapuntal dynamic” of “human heredity” (Palmié 2016: 11). Nevertheless, the *hijo mulato* dispatched in *El*

9. Ortiz ([1940] 1995: 22) goes on to compare cigars to mulattas’ complexions and the shades of different varieties of tobacco to the “intermediary and mixed pigmentations” of Cuban women (Kutzinski 1993: 48). But his gendered schema means that the burden of *mulatez* falls to sugar, following the linguistic convention noted elsewhere by Ortiz (1923b: 81) that the *creole* is weak and soft (feminine), as opposed to firm and hard (masculine).

engaño de las razas (Ortiz [1946] 1975: 220) will return in later work, as if claiming a stolen birthright.¹⁰

Ortiz never identified ajiaco as a *plato de la cocina afrocubana* for orishas or the ancestors. His writings about food for the dead concentrate on *maiz de finaos* [*finados*], or “corn of the dead.” In a *Revista Bimestre* article that was incorporated into *Un catauro*, he depicts an offering made by Cuban children on the Day of All Souls (November 2) and “undoubtedly brought from Spain.” As he does not indicate the race of those involved in this “survival of [an] ancient superstition, which goes back to the darkest and most primitive ages of human evolution,” we can assume that the youngsters are white.¹¹ Ortiz inserted *maiz de finaos* in the penultimate paragraph of the 1956 *¿Gusta, usted?* version of “La cocina afrocubana,” this time shifting his focus entirely to Afro-Cuban religious practitioners: “Although the Blacks use it for the dead (the *ñáñigos* for their *ñampes*, the *lucumíes* for their *ikú* y los *congós* for their *fuiri* or *mfumbi*), it seems to have originated in the old cultures of Europe. ... The Blacks of Cuba make [*maiz de finaos*] with peeled grains of corn and mixed [*revueltos*] with ashes and palm oil.”¹² Despite Ortiz’s previous

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10. At least from the late 1930s onward, Ortiz became increasingly enamored with the idea of *mulatez* (as in Ortiz 1937). María del Rosario Díaz (2005: 230n4) mentions “an unfinished manuscript entitled *La epifanía de la mulatez* (Instituto de Literatura y Lingüística José Antonio Portuondo, Havana, Fernando Ortiz Collection, folders 274–75)” in which “Ortiz insists that racial mixture provides an inadequate analogy to the cultural productions that emerged from the contact of Europeans and Africans in the Americas. ... Ortiz argues that *mulatez* or *lo mulato* ought to designate an equally novel form of being and acting — a condition that is *sui generis*, entirely ‘of the New World,’ and irreducible to its Old World antecedents.” I am indebted to Stephan Palmié for mentioning this work and its possible overlaps in content with *El engaño de las razas* (Ortiz [1946] 1975) (personal communication).
11. See the description in García de Arboleya (1852: 265–66), not cited by Ortiz.
12. As María de los Reyes Castillo Bueno told her daughter Daisy Rubiera Castillo, ajiacos were made for wakes in Santiago de Cuba in the early twentieth century, and “the most distant relatives of the deceased were the ones in charge of making the ajiaco” (De los Reyes Castillo Bueno and Rubiera Castillo 2000: 126). By contrast, *maiz de finaos* (or *finados*) is attested in only two nineteenth-century sources, one twentieth-century source apart from Ortiz (Reyes Gavilán y Moenck 1923: 353), and none

writing on Oyá and the ancestors (*egun*) — including his transcription of a song sung during the presentation of food to the *egun* (Ortiz 1951: 455) — the *ajiacó* is nowhere to be found.

Ajiaco in Afro-Cuban religion(s)

In the Cuban context, *ajiacó* was first cited (spelled *ajiacó*) as a soup “of so hot a taste, that tears bathe the cheeks” (Pinkerton 1807: 385). In the *New Manual of the Catalan and Cuban Cook* (1858), Juan Cabrisas listed *ajiacó* among the foods that set Cuban cuisine apart from Spanish cookery (Dawdy 2002: 56). But that does not mean that *ajiacó* has had a consistent presence on Cuban tables.¹³ In the 1880s, following the highly disruptive Ten Years’ War, one physician lamented: “The rise in price of *viandas* [staple vegetables] has reached the point that for many needy families the classic *ajiacó* dish is too expensive to prepare” (Pérez 2019: 54).¹⁴ Then in the Special Period of the 1990s, *ajiacó* again “was beyond the reach of most Cubans,” due to the unavailability of the ingredients (Pérez 2019: 180). Scarcity then, as in previous eras, led to the introduction of new items. In an interview, Karina L. Céspedes’s (2007) Cuban interlocutor, Alael Pérez, describes making *ajiacó* with the canned pork product Spam, an addition that had made its way into his Cardenese family’s recipe. Of such variations, Hanna Garth (2012: 105) writes:

outside of Ortiz that refers to Afro-Cuban religious practice or Black experience. The closest Ortiz might have come to describing a contemporary Lucumí preparation would be the corn roasted with red palm oil called *agbado*.

13. Nevertheless, ethnographic accounts (such as López Saavedra, Piedra Sarria, and Díaz Fuentes 2016) indicate the continued ritual preparation of *ajiacó* in present-day Cuba, along with other recipes named by Ortiz, like *ekó*, *olelé*, *ekrú aró*.
14. Dawdy (2002: 56–57) writes, “*Vianda* in its Cuban sense is used to refer to a large and diverse group of roots and tubers such as the *boniatos* (*Ipomoea spp.* [sweet potatoes] and *Dioscorea spp.* [yams]), manioc (also called *cassava* [yuca in Cuban], *Manihot esculenta*), the native *malanga* (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium*), and green plantains (numerous varieties of *Musa X paradisiaca*, a few of *Musa acuminata*), usually served boiled or fried with savory seasoning. ... [N]o contemporary Cuban meal is considered complete without a side dish of *viandas*.”

“Unlike in Ortiz’s ajiaco, the ingredients for these meals do [not] neatly match with the ancestral origins of Cubans; they come from all over the world and sometimes it is not even possible to pinpoint where they come from at all. But to the people that are eating these meals, the food is still ‘Cuban food.’ The ways in which they come together is what makes them Cuban.” That most ubiquitous of spoken gerunds in Cuba, *inventando*, is relevant here. What is invented is always different, but the capacity for endless invention is perceived to be a uniquely Cuban trait, particularly in the post-Soviet era.

The curative properties of a robust ajiaco have been vital to its appeal and mystique. Maricel Presilla (1988: 44) says that, growing up, “when I had a cold, my mother fed me ‘Cuban penicillin,’ ajiaco, a Creole version of the Arawak pepperpot, a thick soup guaranteed to revive the dead.” The *ajiaco levantamuertos* is sometimes said to “wake the dead” because it can be eaten for breakfast yet contains enough seasoning and roughage to act as a hangover cure. These turns of phrase are ironic given the explicit association of ajiaco with *muertos* in the context of religious practice. In her classic *El monte: igbo, finda, ewe orisha, vititi nfinda*, Lydia Cabrera ([1954] 1968: 474) writes of offerings taken to the cemetery: “For [the dead], a plate of ajiaco is cooked, with the legs, the ribs, and the tripe [*mondongo*] of pig, ram, or goat.” But the earliest reference to an ajiaco-like dish as an offering for the dead might be found in Rafael Roche y Monteagudo’s (1908: 79) *La policía y sus misterios en Cuba*: “Food for the dead consists of cooking black beans in a small lidded pot, a plantain boiled in salt water, a piece of fried beef [jerky], and two wheels of fried plantain, being careful that it has to be transported to the place, taken in the left hand, putting it, without breaking [it], in the same direction as the cemetery path.” While black beans have not been documented in traditional ajiacos, Roche y Monteagudo’s combination of beef jerky (*tasajo*) with both green and ripe plantains recalls the *ajiaco bayamés* immortalized in José E. Triay’s ([1903] 1914: 79) *Nuevo manual del cocinero criollo*.

Making ajiaco is one of the religious “micro-practices” that make the ancestors real to practitioners (Pérez 2016). In the Kongo-inspired tradition Palo Monte and other *reglas de congo*, ajiaco without salt has gone both to the ancestral dead of community members and to spirits of the dead that have been recruited (or compelled) to animate the main object of veneration, called a *prenda* or *nganga*. Todd Ramón Ochoa (2010: 43) notes: “Ajiaco is a stew ... which is adored by the dead.” Accordingly, Josean Rodas (2012: 126) casts the cooking of ajiaco as a demonstration

of care for spirits (*nfumbi*), sometimes treated as if they were enslaved by their masters rather than hired as a wage laborer to do a job: “Remember that they are not our slaves, this is a pact. As offerings you can blow rum, tobacco smoke, put candles to them, you can put fruits or vegetables to them, you can make an *ajiaco*, blow [the liquor called] *chamba* to them, etc.” Carmen Yusuf (2001: 319) compares a version of *ajiaco* made by practitioners of Palo Monte to the spicy Guyanese “Pepper Pot” served at weddings, writing that the *ajiaco congo* “carries provisions, such as sweet potatoes, cassava, corn, pieces of tocino (a kind of already treated pork fat), *tasajo* (a dried jerked beef) and peeled sugar cane; they added no seasoning, just ginger.” Other accounts reaffirm the presence of ginger and refer to the *ajiaco congo* as *mambabisi* (Bolívar Aróstegui and González 2013: 163).

At least in Matanzas, the ritual called “cajón al muerto” or “cajón pa’ muertos” has sometimes featured *ajiaco* for guests to consume at its conclusion and for their spirits to savor (Balbuena Gutiérrez, 2020). These spirits might be the *nfumbi* of the *reglas de congo* as well as spirit guides, the ethnically differentiated and socially stratified entities petitioned in different varieties of Espiritismo. The cooking of *ajiaco* for Spiritist rituals called *misas blancas* is rarer, but not unheard of (Espín 1996: 70). Lucumí practitioners have sometimes cooked *ajiaco* for visiting well-wishers on the last day of a new priest’s initiation, called the “market day.” But *ajiaco* is more closely associated with the ancestors, or *egun*, and with the orisha Oyá. Oyá personifies meteorological phenomena: the West African harmattan, the Caribbean hurricane, whirlwinds, tornados, and forked lightning. Ruler of the marketplace and founder of ancestor masquerades (*egungun*), Oyá guards the cemetery gates. She “owns” the number nine: praise-songs refer to her as “mother of nine” and say that she wears “nine pairs of trousers” due to her bravery in battle (Ramos 1996: 67). Oral narratives (*patakís*) recount her exploits as a warrior, hunter, and trader living as woman by day and buffalo by night.

Ajiaco is among Oyá’s favorite *addimú* (sacred food). It may be offered to her most often within the context of a *sarasa*, an “altar or shrine set up for specific Egun ceremonies in which offerings are presented for the ancestors” (Ramos 2012a: 79). A *sarasa* is arranged prior to the initiation of a practitioner to Oyá, but it can also be assembled for the *egun* ritual called *honras* (honors) (Ramos 2012a: 246). Practitioners make *ajiaco* for it in addition to Yorùbá-derived dishes (including some of those named by Ortiz), in multiples of nine to index Oyá’s relationship with the dead. The etymology of *sarasa* (also spelled *sarassa*, *zarasa*, or *zaraza*)

is uncertain, but it could derive from the term *sàràà*; according to J. D. Y. Peel (2001: 141), “perhaps the most common reference of *sàràà* in modern Yoruba, among Christians as well as Muslims, is to a thank-offering feast made for mercies received.”¹⁵ In a number of Black Atlantic traditions, *saraca/saraka* (or, less commonly, *sakara*) refers to meals offered in conjunction with rituals for the ancestors (Diouf 1999: 29). In Carriacou’s Big Drum tradition, a “tombstone feast” — the first anniversary of a burial — is accompanied by a *saraca* of smoked meats, cornmeal *cou-cou*, callaloo, peas, and rice. In Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago, Spiritual Baptists “celebrate a ‘saraca’ or ‘thanksgiving,’ commonly known as ‘feeding the children’ ... [with an] ‘old parents’ plate’ set with ‘all different quality of meats, chicken, pork, mutton, rice, vegetables, citrons,’ for ‘people who dead,’ for ‘everybody parents’” (Cartwright 2013: 44).

In manuals and treatises (*tratados*) written by Cuban Ifá and *dilogún* diviners, ajiaco is prescribed as a cleansing sacrifice (*ebó*) for several divination verses. When receiving the sign Ofun Ogbe (11–8), the client “must make an ajiaco with everything the mouth eats” (Valdés Jane 2010: 553). An ajiaco is also called for in the *dilogún* sign Ejiogbe Metanla (8–13) and the Ifá sign Otura Niko (13–8) (Orunmila’s Servant 2017: 441; Madan 2006: 39).¹⁶ As might be expected, ajiaco is mentioned most often in signs that incorporate Osa, the number nine. In Okana Osa (1–9), the client should “put ajiaco in a jicara [gourd] in your home — on the corner of the outside of the home — another to the back of the cemetery” (Omi 2009). Osa Odi (9–7) exhorts: “You have to make (ajiaco) sancocho for the dead and have a rogation [ritual cleansing and blessing] of the head” (Valdés Jane 2010: 553; Amalace 2020: 130). One treatise declares: “Always [with] Ogbe Sa [8–9] you must have a pot of ajiako [sic] to get something important” (Madan 1999: 136). According to this treatise, in Ogbe Sa (also called Ejiogbe Osa) the necessary sacrifices also involve three metals (gold, silver, and copper) and three chickens of different colors: black, white, and *jabada*. When applied to poultry, the term *jabada* means grayish, with scale-patterned feathers, but the person

15. See the gloss by Villepastour in this volume. The term *zaraza*, or “chintz,” derives from the Portuguese, and chintz fabric is sometimes included in altar displays for Oyá since similar textile patterns are associated with her.

16. I am sincerely grateful to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out that Niko is the “alias” for Ogbe (such that the sign is sometimes rendered Otura Ogbe).

who is *jabadol/jabada* is of mixed race and light-skinned.¹⁷ In Ogbe Sa, three dolls (*malguidi*) — “Black, white, and mestizo” — should also be dedicated to the three ancestors that accompany the client on the spiritual plane.¹⁸

Racialized symbolism also extends to an indispensable feature of the *ajiacó* for a *sarasa* (and other Afro-Cuban rituals): the pig’s head that sits on top of it. “Adimu at the foot of Oya to make her happy and so that she will work,” one diviner recommends. “On an *ajiacó* of well seasoned root vegetables with all kinds of greens, put the head of a pig that is well roasted, in a clay pot that is not too small” (Ecun 1988: 135). The pig’s head, or *lerí eledé*, has not occasioned much investigation, given the somewhat overdetermined association of Cuban cuisine with pork.¹⁹ Martin Tsang’s (2014: 139) analysis of its preparation among Cubans of Chinese descent is one notable exception:

The *ajiacó* itself can be read as a reference to the collective and transculturative nature of *olorisha* ethnicity and Cubanity that constitute the ancestors venerated at the shrine. ... Ángel explained:

“The pig’s head is an essential ingredient. The *ajiacó* is there because the dead eat everything that the living eats, except it does not contain salt. We also place different foods, ones we know that the ancestors liked to eat while they were alive. The *ajiacó* is made for all *egun*, and the pig’s head we are told is a Chinese custom and that is placed for everyone. It represents the reincarnation of the deceased in *orun* [heaven]. This is not an Afro-Cuban or Lukumi custom. [...] I am not sure when or how this custom came about however my elders taught me it was Chinese, and that was some forty years ago.”

17. As Umi Vaughn (2005) writes, *jabado* (or *jabao*) is a “kind of median, like the mulato, however stripped of the idyllic qualities of sensuality and beauty. *Jabaos* usually have fair skin with kinky hair and clear African facial features (wide noses, thick lips, etc.).”

18. The three metals, chickens, and dolls can be interpreted as alluding to the three races — Amerindian, African, and European — that Ortiz (1940) named as contributing to the Cuban *ajiacó* in “Los factores humanos de la cubanidad.”

19. *Caldero* is yet another *ajiacó*-like stew, but the pig’s head is cooked inside the *caldero* rather than roasted.

Tsang's interlocutor not only inserts his ancestors into the ajiaco but locates them in the position of greatest visual prominence.²⁰ It is a fitting vantage point for those traditionally excluded from narratives of Cuban national identity and marginalized even within formulations of *mestizaje* as an *ajiaco genético* (Castellanos 2002: 206).

Ajiako in the African American religious imagination

In the fall of 2017, I assisted in a Lucumí initiation in Brooklyn, New York. The nondescript brownstone that would host this rite of passage was decorated sparingly. The most salient accent piece in the front room was a colorful illustrated poster entitled "Los Orishas Comen" (The orishas eat). Matted in yellow and placed in a glossy frame, the poster listed recipes in crisp sans-serif font for nine orishas and "Eggun." In the center of the poster, the orishas manifested through their iconography: Shangó was represented by a double-headed axe, Yemayá by an anchor, and so on, with the Eggun personified by a Black doll with a dark brown face and rainbow-striped hat. The poster listed no fewer than five types of ajiaco for the Eggun: *Bayames*, *Puerto Principe*, *Cardenese*, *Del Monte*, and *Campestre*. The poster could be dated by the source of these recipes: Natalia Bolívar Aróstegui and Carmen González's *Mitos y leyendas de la comida afrocubana* (1993).²¹ The poster might have been sold at religious supply stores (*botánicas*) or printed for purchase at street fairs. Whatever its provenance, its pedagogical purpose and audience were clear. It was meant for Spanish-speaking Cuban or Puerto Rican practitioners, and not the members of the predominantly Black religious community, called Ilé Laroye, with whom I was working.

Or was it? Several of my African American interlocutors were fluent in Spanish, and they cooked ajiaco for their non-Caribbean ancestors. In keeping with the house's active ties to Cuban immigrants and Puerto Rican elders, their ajiaco was presented in a casserole dish topped with a roasted pig's head. The recipe at least once included corned beef hash, a foreign ingredient made welcome in the same spirit as Spam

20. Madan (2014: 57) asserts that the pig's head on the ajiaco "represents the Eegún [sic] masquerade," undoubtedly referring to Ēgungun, an opinion also espoused by others.

21. Bolívar Aróstegui and Gonzalez's (1993: 87–88) list of ajiacos in turn drew directly from Triay ([1903] 1914: 79, 80).

or a Cuban Jewish orisha devotee's kosher chicken.²² Black American ancestors sometimes communicated messages to their descendants during *misas blancas*, but they were propitiated separately in *honras* during which participants would stand and sing songs for their ancestors in Lucumí (entirely absent from *misas*). In *egun honors*, a male practitioner would bang the floor with a consecrated staff, not only to mark musical time but also to alert the ancestors entombed in the soil of the unfolding event. For these practitioners, the tubers and root vegetables in the *ajiaco* did not represent indigenous groups (as in Ortiz's paradigm) but their ancestors' dwelling in the earth. Participants offered the *ajiaco* alongside plated pork rinds, nine pieces of fruit, cake, yam balls (*ishú sisé*), *akará*, winter squash (*calabaza*), cigars, flowers, candles, and white rum.

In 2005, on one of Ilé Laroye's first websites, its leader posted a recipe for *ajiaco*.²³ She spelled it with a k — as Madan (1999: 136) did above — in an effort to underscore the Africanity of orisha worship, much as rendering *Lucumí* as *Lukumí* does. She would not have learned how to cook *ajiaco* from African American cookbooks. In Ntozake Shange's *If I Can Cook/You Know God Can*, she dubs *ajiaco*, "You Know What That New Wife Makes for Brother's Stew," explaining, "this stew [is] from the Caribbeans who married into or out of our family [that] has certainly found a home with us." For Shange, *ajiaco* represents kinship through marriage or affinity, but not of blood. For her part, Jessica B. Harris (2010: 33) says that due to the United States embargo, what most of her readers know of Cuban food derives only from the exile community: "Most of us, though, have never tasted *ajiaco*, the Cuban national dish, which is what happened when the Spanish Olla Podrida met up with the Arawak pepper pot. We haven't sampled Cuba's African-inspired dishes [either]." Listing a handful of these, Harris pivots away from the *ajiaco*, distancing it from Africa and Cuba's Black creole population.

Afro-Cuban religious cookbooks are a subgenre unto themselves, and in one of the two cookbooks written by Black Lucumí initiates, *ajiaco* is conspicuously absent. In the 1999 *Ìdáná Fún Òrìsà: Cooking for Selected Heads*, John Mason quotes from a 1988 interview that he conducted with Cuban elder Rodolfo Martin, initiated as a priest of Obatalá in 1944. Martin explained: "Iyako is made, without salt, for the *ēgún*, but it is a stew that was originally made by the Spanish planters" (Mason

22. Personal communication, February 5, 2005.

23. This name and that of the community are pseudonyms.

1999: 8).²⁴ In what was probably the first book of recipes for the African American orisha community, *Onje Fun Oriša = Food for the Gods*, Gary Edwards and John Mason (1981: 33) had written: “Iyaka [sic], a stew, is prepared especially for the *ēgún* shrine. It can be garnished with dump-lings made from peanut flour and water. Nine balls are made and placed in the stew when it is nearly done. On very special ancestral occasions, roasted pig’s head is placed on the altar. This last touch seems to be a uniquely Caribbean adaptation.” In this book, the authors provided a “ritual recipe’ for the initiation of Orisha priests in southwestern Nigeria, including the use of yams, salted beef, cassava (yucca), and sliced ears of corn” identified as “iyako” (McCann 2009: 173). Neither *iyako* or *iyaka* are attested elsewhere, however. These spellings — like *ajiako* — bespeak an effort to Africanize the stew and therefore justify its continued preparation.²⁵ Edwards and Mason compiled the recipes in their 1981 monograph for the benefit of Black American readers, with the intention of omitting the European accretions that had severed Santería’s bonds with the “authentic” Yorùbá past. In so doing, they were following in Ortiz’s footsteps and reinscribing the Yorubization that he initiated in Cuba over a century ago (see Villepastour, this volume).

In contemporary publications and online, Black practitioners of Afro-Diasporic religions are counseled to offer ancestors those foods that they would have relished during their lifetimes. Ajiaco is seldom mentioned. It would seem that, if ajiaco denotes “culinary *mestizaje*” for Cubans, then for African Americans it connotes *Latinidad* (Abarca 2015; Loichot 2013). And for those sympathetic to Yorùbá “reversionism” or “revivalism,” it signifies the blending of creole components into orisha worship that should have stayed out, like images of Roman Catholic saints and ritual vestments that resemble attire from the Spanish colonial period (Brown 2003).

Among practitioners initiated into Cuban lineages of orisha worship, the ajiaco itself may be welcome, but it has proven to be an undesirable

24. This terminology was also used in a humorous Facebook post captioned “Cuando hacemos un iyako para los egun” (When we make an iyako for the egun), indicating that it is to some degree in popular usage (@mayombe.jose, Facebook, September 7, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/mayombe.jose/photos/cuando-hacemos-un-iyako-para-los-egun/265132780660929/>).

25. A proponent of re-Africanizing orisha worship, Conrad Maugé (1993: 24) reproduced the spelling and description of *iyako* from *Onje Fun Oriša*.

object of comparison. Scholar-practitioner Eñi Achó Iyá (2020) observes that,

on social media, a lot of people in religious forums have a tendency to mix up the Lucumi religion (Regla de Ocha, Santería) with other practices, traditions, and religions that are not strictly connected to Orisha worship. While our religion does allow people to practice different kinds of spirituality and even embrace two or more different religions at the same time, there is usually an implicit understanding that our various paths are parallel to each other, not mixed up and turned into an ajiaco stew. ... While ajiaco is a delicious dish, it's not a good approach to Orisha worship. Before you start combining elements in a haphazard way, you need to understand each element.

Those who are perceived as “combining elements” of Afro-Cuban religions haphazardly are scorned as *sancocheros*, makers or purveyors of a chaotically assembled *sancocho*, a stew similar to ajiaco. On rare occasion, the religious ajiaco metaphor has been viewed more approvingly. For example, “Lydia Cabrera’s informants described the practice of Kimbisa that [Andrés Petit] founded in terms of the classic transculturation metaphor: an ‘*ajiaco, un revoltillo*’ (a stew, a scramble) that combines the most powerful elements of all the popular beliefs to *vencer* (conquer)” (Fernández Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert 2003: 98). But the application of ajiaco to Espiritismo, especially the variety called *cruzado/cruzao* due to its “crossing” of spirits and ceremonies from distinct ritual orthodoxies, has contributed to ajiaco’s connotation of religious unruliness. Ortiz (1950a) himself called Espiritismo “*el ajiaco completo*,’ by virtue of being Cuba’s most homegrown religious tradition” (Schmidt 2015: 264). Ironically, this judgment may have reinforced practitioners’ unwillingness to compare their traditions to an ajiaco, although the symbol — like the stew — can always be reappropriated.

Outro

One source mentioned that when Ortiz arrived to a *wemilere* (ritual drum feast) the drummers would greet him with a special beat, and he would pay his respects to *Añá* (consecrated *batá* drums) as would any *olorisha*.

Miguel W. Ramos, *Obí Agbón: Lukumí Divination with Coconut*

If Don Fernando (*Ibae*) were with us today, he might well be running a food blog as a sideline, preceding the recipe for his ajiaco with a diverting Proustian vignette about his first memorable taste of it.²⁶ Of course, Ortiz is now an ancestor, subject to veneration through any number of material and discursive offerings. In tracking Ortiz's data gathering and theory building, I attempted to account for his omission of ajiaco from his inventory of sacred cuisine. This exercise revealed the impossibility of divorcing ajiaco from metaphoricity altogether. It also demonstrated that Ortiz's legacy as a historian of *la cocina afrocubana* is not confined to treatments of it with that title but is copiously diffused throughout the Ortizian corpus. Taking full stock of it means returning to works that are nominally unconcerned with food, like *Los tambores batá de los yorubas*. In it, Ortiz noted: "Drums, above all, are entities that must be given food and treated 'as people' or as gods" (Ortiz (1951) 1994: 205). He then proceeded to give the first scholarly description in print of Lucumí post-sacrificial butchering and of the sacred viscera called *iñales*, meaning "the placement of the chosen things." Whether his Yorùbá etymology for *i-yañ-le* is correct, this passage could not be farther from his sensationalistic portrayal of brujos extracting the blood, heart, and other organs of *la niña* Zoila in 1906. To reckon with our mixed inheritance from Ortiz, we would do well to set aside the ajiaco that has borne such a heavy burden of representation. There are other recipes waiting to be tweaked and fresher delicacies to be chosen.

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26. *Ibae* is a Lucumí term of respect, salutation, and praise for the deceased, especially someone who has been initiated.

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ETHNOGRAPHIES OF TRANSCULTURATION

Clay and earth

Excavating partialities and relations

Olivia Maria Gomes da Cunha

In a video created by the visual artist Charl Landvreugd,¹ two young Maroons traverse a vast clearing, a bauxite pit. The excavated earth is dry, almost petrified, turned into a reddish-orange substance known industrially as red mud. The dense forest is separated from the circular area, making it look like the site of a meteorite strike or an extraterrestrial landing. This area, rich in ochre tones, contrasts with the green shades typical of the flooded forests of the Guiana coast. The two young men in the film advance, both dressed in a traditional Maroon skirt known as a *pangi* and wearing black helmets. The pangis² covering their black male bodies as they cross a damaged landscape announce a peculiar presence. They are Maroons, the people who conquered and occupied the forest in a violent past, who made it their refuge and home, and who endured against environmental violence to create possible futures. In an audiovisual collage made of disparate references, their bodies are blacker

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1. See Charl Landvreugd 2011, "The Making of Atlantic Transformez Mogeno." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rictWGGGfjg>. Accessed: September 30, 2020.
 2. Here I use Okanisi (also Ndyuka and Aucaner) rather than the equivalents in Sranantongo and Dutch when transcribing Ndyuka terms. These terms follow the grammar produced by Huttar and Huttar (1994), and dictionaries published by Shanks (1994), and Goury and Migge (2003).

still, covered with a dark sticky resin as they make their journey to the bauxite pit. A concert for violin by Chevalier de St. George (Joseph Boulogne) provides the soundtrack to their walk across an almost lunar landscape. These Maroon bodies dressed in pangis appear to reject the usual connections with the colonial gaze, such as they typically appear in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Euro-American iconographies. At one point the men move up close to the camera and their eyes fill the screen. Against the visual backdrop of destruction, the Maroons become the main subjects of the present and, in a way, “interrogate” the future of a strange ecology. They move through an uninhabitable setting and dialogue with the audience through a sequence of movements and displacements. The two Maroon men are no longer set in the past of their observers’ gaze.

For residents of Moengo, the scene is composed of numerous—though not always obvious—references. A bauxite town, Moengo is nestled in an extensive area of plateau and flooded forest, the latter scattered with Ndyuka Maroon and Galibi Amerindian populations living in villages along the Cottica, Coermotibo, and Wane rivers on Suriname’s east coast. One of the young Maroon men who appears in the video is Ras Tu, a Rastafarian actor, singer and intellectual. Along with his comrade, they are easily recognizable by Maroon people residing in nearby villages and in the small town of Moengo.³ But there are other inscriptions of which they may be unaware. The visual intervention in which these young Cottica Ndyuka are seen performing, part of a series entitled “Atlantic Transformez,” was filmed in connection with a more ambitious project in which Charl Landvreugd, a black Dutch artist, associates and connects his own experiences in “Afropea” to diverse times and spaces (Modest 2014; Landvreugd 2016).

3. Moengo (along with Albina) is a rural and urban area in the district of Marowijne, situated between the Commenwijne and Marowijne rivers, a natural frontier between Suriname and French Guiana. Outside these small urban enclaves, the region is occupied by flooded forests and savannahs, interspersed by devastated open spaces produced by the expansion of mining and logging projects undertaken by Surinamese, US, Canadian, and Chinese companies since the end of the nineteenth century. Uniformed technicians, workers and heavy machinery advance relentlessly into the forest and marshlands populated by Maroon and indigenous villages.

The scene directed by Landvreugd unfolds in one of the many areas occupied for bauxite extraction by SURALCO (Suriname Aluminum Company), the local subsidiary of ALCOA (Aluminum Company of America). During the period when the artist lived in Moengo in an “Arts in Residence Project,” coordinated by the Cottica Ndyuka visual artist Marcel Pinas and his organization, the Kibii Foundation, Landvreugd attempted to connect his own projects with Pinas’s own work. Many similar areas, abandoned after extraction of the bauxite layers, cover large swathes of the territory stretching between the Cottica, Coermotibo, and Wane rivers. Craters, transformed into small reservoirs when they fill up after intense rainfall in the region, serve as leisure spots for young Maroons on pleasure trips that sometimes end tragically in accidents and deaths. Areas abandoned by mining invariably result in artificial slopes. Carved out by heavy machinery and explosives, they destroy the soil and transform extensive areas of forest into savannah. When located near Maroon lands, these operations not only contaminate the soil and groundwater, they also cause nearby villages to sink. One of the most notorious cases, famous because of the environmental damage caused by SURALCO’s activities, is the century-old village of Ajuma (Ajuma Kondee). In this case, the crater disrupted much more than the surface, paths, trees, and sacred forests. Partial removal of the village was needed, in a few cases accompanied by some form of compensation, and involved both the rebuilding of alliances and the eruption of conflicts between matriclans (Price 2011).⁴

Artificial savannas leave a trail of wrecked and recomposed relations. The white clay exposed from under the layer of red earth, rich in bauxite, is also the source of other “local economies.” The trail of destruction caused by the bauxite industry and the departure of ALCOA/SURALCO from the region has allowed space for a growth in the clay industry (producing pure kaolin, bricks, and clay-based ceramics). Since the end of Suriname’s Civil War and the return of thousands of Maroon refugee families to Moengo, the marks of environmental devastation have also acted as signs that the heavily sought *pemba* clay can also be found in places other than the banks of particular rivers. The gradual destruction of the white clay deposits on these river banks has left the craters opened

4. For a journalistic report on Ajuma and other Maroon villages in the Cottica region and along the Suriname river which faced serious environmental problems produced by ALCOA/SURALCO and other mining companies, see Lord and Boselovic 2017.

by the mining industry more accessible as sources for the extraction of pemba or *pemba doti*—portions of white clay mixed with water and sold as hand-shaped balls for therapeutic and spiritual uses. The trail of “contamination” in the bauxite industry, following the reading proposed by Anna Tsing (2015), has facilitated the expansion of pemba production and consumption. Access to the craters and the transportation of white clay to the backyards and camps (*kampus*) of some Maroon vendors in Moengo and Paramaribo (Suriname), as well as Saint Laurent du Maroni (French Guiana), have stimulated new flows of producers, sellers, and consumers. The effects of the bauxite industry cycle in Cottica, which involved the attraction, involvement, and labor of Cottica Ndyuka people, certainly extends far beyond the extraction and making of pemba. At the same time, use of pemba predates the arrival of the mining industry and is also widespread among other groups and Afro-Surinamese. However, connections exist between the agencies produced by the extraction of red ore, its subsequent transformation into alumina and aluminum (Ballard and Banks 2003; Sheller 2014; Kirsch 2014) and the trail of destruction, which dynamizes and strengthens the market and consumption of the white balls of pemba doti.

The War of the Interior (*Binnenlandse Orloorg*, 1986-1992) affected the Cottica region intensively and forced thousands of Maroons from local villages to take refuge in camps opened by the French government to the north of Saint Laurent du Maroni. Bauxite production was interrupted and the concession abandoned. After the conflict was over, a process of deactivation of ALCOA/SURALCO’s facilities in Moengo also ensued. Moengo and villages along the Cottica saw the destruction of many buildings, while the region’s rivers and forests became the sites of memories of the killing of Maroon men, women, and children. The suspected association of all Maroons with the Maroon guerrilla group, then known as Jungle Commando, and the invasions of villages resulted in the flight of six thousand refugees to French Guiana, where they were concentrated and controlled in “refugee camps.” Following the ceasefire in 1992, and upon compensation by the French government, some families began to leave Charvein and other camps, heading back to Suriname. Javanese, Creole, and Hindustani workers for ALCOA/SURALCO, who had family ties with Moengo since the early twentieth century, migrated to Paramaribo or even as far as Holland, leaving behind abandoned houses. Moengo became a ghost town, haunted by the memories of Maroon bodies victimized by the Surinamese army. Although the Suriname government had agreed to shelter the returnees in

new dwellings, Cottica Ndyuka also began to occupy abandoned houses and a few of the company's derelict buildings. Maroons who had lived in the Cottica before the war moved to live in an abandoned industrial plant. Invaded houses were later transformed, directly or indirectly shaping the town landscape. A landscape of destruction that connected the traditional village territories with the memories of a violent war against the Maroon population, in particular the Cottica Ndyuka, began to inscribe Moengo in the Cottica Ndyuka vocabulary and imagination.

Among the dramatic effects of the conflict, marked by attacks on villages and plantations, the murder of civilians, chemical bombardments, and the contamination of rivers and forests, Maroons suffered in the form of flight and displacement. In the refugee camps, the war made interclan and intervillage affinities possible. It transformed the everyday lives of countless families, whose members began to live dispersed among villages, border areas and cities located in various national territories during and after the conflict. Memory of the violence and persecution of the war and of the life in refugee camps set in dialogue the slavery era and the modern period of extractivist capitalism. Mining and other industrial projects in the Cottica area became seen as part of the same history of contact with the *bakaa* (non-Maroons, whites or foreigners). Clay and bauxite craters in the middle of flooded forest and savannah, created by explosions and the large-scale use of chemical substances, are part of this postwar cartography.

Red mud and white pemba balls emerge as intertwined products of the occupation and reterritorialization of the Guianese flooded forests. This earth substance needs to "return" to the Maroon bodies through healing and spiritual practices. The bauxite industry brought temporary jobs and what Diane Vernon (1985) called "magic money"—the wealth produced through contact with the *bakaa*. But it also brought destruction, Christian gods, Western habits, and the disregard of taboo. Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, the area saw colonial troops and fugitive slaves succumb to rivers and traps: it was a sacred place where the ancestors buried *obias* that allowed Maroons to escape or make themselves invisible to the colonial troops.⁵ Around 1916, the bauxite industry formally settled on the banks of the Cottica river, close to a hill where a Ndyuka village was located, known as Mungo, filled

5. Ndyuka and other Guianese Maroons used to refer to the use of *obia* as "medicine" and the use of "supernatural powers" by specialists (Price 2008: 396n5).

with shrines and sacred places where the ancestors rested. The arrival of the company transformed the ways of existence of the region's villages and kampus: the earth was invaded, sacred places turned upside down. As Köbben (1967, 1968) discusses, the bauxite industry and its collateral effects altered the relations of the Ndyuka with the places (*peesí*), forces, and gods (*sani* and *gadu*, respectively) that guard them. But Landvreugd's cinematic intervention, described earlier, was no historical allegory: it sought to produce another type of extraction, displacing the creative force—temporally and historically situated in the territory of Maroon villages—to a mining waste setting. It is through this space that Ras Tu walks, wearing a pangi and a futuristic mask, a black body repainted black.

To explore the evocative potentialities of this short video, we can experiment with different ways of analyzing the traces of transformation it contains. By highlighting the complex relations between the red mud—the ore (as a lucrative substance that mobilizes capitalism in transnational bauxite chains)—and the white pemba balls (a source of cures, food, and powers of communication with nonhuman agencies), I emulate Fernando Ortiz's contrapuntal movement in his seminal *Contrapunteo del tabacco y el azúcar* ([1940] 1983), a book in which his analysis of the terms for the relations between substances, goods, and consumers involves an exercise of “perspectivation.” This is a text dedicated to building a narrative on Cuba's entry into modernity, made up of experiences of creation and destruction: a “modern world has entailed the clash and disarticulation of peoples and civilizations together with the production of images of integrated cultures, bounded identities, and inexorable progress” (Coronil 1995: xiii). The textual play that Ortiz establishes between the production of sugar and tobacco, the attention to the techniques used in the refining of sugar cane and in the preparation of cigars and cigarillos, the industrialization of both products associated with the extensive use of slave and immigrant labor, the analogies employed in the description of the substances—their different densities, colors, and modes of cultivation and transformation—and their different forms of consumption in Cuba and Europe, provide the evidence mobilized in his contrapuntal project. He offers a narrative on the complexity of modernity, gradually and partially revealed using analogies and metaphors. For Ortiz, the terms and, above all, the stories of the relations established between the two products needed to be known by readers so that the “place” occupied by both in a complex process of modernization in Cuba became perceptible. “Sugar” and “Tobacco” take shape and their

complex stories generate characters. The personification and thingness of sugar and tobacco not only function as narrative artifices: they create other ways of producing stories. “By treating tobacco and azúcar not as things but as social actors, Ortiz in effect brings them back to the social world which creates them” (Coronil 1995: xxviii).

The set of images anchored in documents is inspired by Spanish literature, yet *Contrapunteo*'s subtext also evokes a critique of reductive constructions of Cuba's colonial economy. He describes a “cultural” economy made up of the capture of bodies, tastes, and substances, along with documentary sources and partial evidence, and a political economy involving the production of hybrid commodities. However, an important role is also given to what we might simply call, following Marilyn Strathern's arguments (1991), “partiality.” Present in the book's narrative, the *contrapunteo* between *doña azúcar* and *don tabaco* becomes eclipsed by the emphasis on the potential of the concept created by Ortiz to “interpret” the movement between practices, genres and opposing senses. In the analyses of some of Ortiz's interpreters (Le Riverend 1983; Malinowski 1940; Ibarra 1990; Santí 2002; Rojas 2004), this notion of “transculturation” would appear to designate no more than interdependence and synthesis. Although “transcultured,” sugar and tobacco are preserved as opposing terms. Since they cannot be altered or substituted, Ortiz carefully emphasizes their singularity. They are created as subjects, personae. As a narrative and an artifact of knowledge, they stand as statements of a relationship that can be used only as an analogy for the creation of a modernist kind of “whole”—the idea of nation as “culture” (Rojas 2004, 2008).

Ortiz's ideas in *Contrapunteo*, his conceptual creation formulated to “sociologically” interpret the “contrasting parallelism” ([1940] 1983: 3) between “brown tobacco” and “white sugar”—transculturation—provides a source of inspiration for other possibilities of how analogical work can fuel diverse descriptive and analytical experiments. Here I re-deploy the counterpoint interplay that Ortiz establishes between economic forces—as well as his semiotic and political endeavor to produce a “transculturative landscape” and its hybridities in Cuba—as a device that allows us to see not interdependence but the interplay of multiple partialities. The stories that can be created about the relations between the making and circulation of the red bauxite and the white clay balls will engender counterpoints, not communalities. The exercise of perspectivation undertaken in the following analysis seeks to make visible, or at least known, a set of possible differentiations that allow the Cottica Ndyuka

to use pemba doti for spiritual healing purposes. They are aware not only that the clay that composes the pemba doti ball comes from the earth but, in the case of the Cottica area, that the substance in question is also still explored by the bauxite industry. What seems to contrast radically, however, is the kind of relationships that Maroon and non-Maroon people entertain with the earth and how these different relations alter the substance and its effect.

A lunar landscape: “The hill is formed almost entirely of bauxite”

The place where the two young Cottica Ndyuka men walk in front of the bakaa camera is just one more bauxite pit, left abandoned in the Cottica region after a hundred years of destruction of its forest and soils. One of the most recurrent and striking elements in the histories of the arrival of the bauxite industry in the area and the creation of Moengo, as told in official publications, is the idea of an empty landscape, of forests and swamps with scarcely any human presence. Before the arrival of American and British geologists and French adventurers in the early twentieth century, “Mungo” was described as an uninhabited hill close to the Cottica river. In other versions, the place appears as a locale where an “ancient abandoned Aucaner [Maroon Ndyuka] village” had once existed. In Oudschans Dentz’s depiction of the area, “the village of Moengo or Mongo, [was] a former Aucaner Bush Negro village, since abandoned due the difficulty of building houses in the hard ground. Moengo signifies hill. The Djoekas call it ‘Kondre Uman’ (country woman) in contrast to Paramaribo, which they call ‘Soeman Kondre’ (country man)” (1921: 485).⁶ In a description of a journey to Moengo made at the invitation of the recently founded company in 1919, an unidentified journalist from the daily newspaper *De West* offers an explanation for the abandonment of the area and the difficulties encountered. After a strong explosion produced by the first group of explorers and miners, the inhabitants of the Maroon settlement fled, leaving their humble buildings completely empty.

6. Dentz provides somewhat inaccurate translations of Okanisi expressions, transcribing them in Sranatongo. In Okanisi, the correct expressions are “Uma Konde” (women village) and “Sama Konde” (the someone’s village). On uses of the pronoun “Sama” in Okanisi, see Huttar and Huttar 1994: 465.

The need to bomb and mine Moengo arose from the discovery that the hill itself contained a valuable deposit of ore. The entire site occupied by the company was composed of bauxite and the timber used to erect the buildings was dragged through forest and across rivers by the hands of Maroon men. It demonstrated that although Cottica Ndyuka had abandoned their village *Mungo*, they continued to live in kampus and villages near to where Suriname's modern bauxite industry would be based. Not by chance, the first accounts of its appearance are marked by images contrasting "modernity" and "primitiveness" as interdependent perspectives. The Moengo industrial site appears as a modern urban space with street lightning and a sewage system, located in a "desolate" and "wild" area amid the marshes and the villages of the "Boschneger" (as the Maroons were called).

One gets the impression that at Moengo the world is close to its end. Mr. Engelhardt told us that the place looks like a swamp. The main part of the license of his company is composed of swamps. In this region, just here and there, are some Bush Negroes. When we reached the upper Cottica in the evening, we could already clearly hear these noisy folks. Fireworks also announce their presence. After a journey of more than twelve hours, we arrived in Moengo at half past eight. What a surprise to suddenly encounter in the desolate wilderness a place filled with lights.... It seems that Moengo was formerly occupied by Bush Negroes, who left the place because of the difficulty building their homes in the ground. This is no surprise, as the hill is formed almost entirely of bauxite.⁷

Walther E. Burside was employed as a bookkeeper at the company between 1917 and 1957. In 1929, he wrote a historical record called "Gegevens Betreffen de Geschiedenis der Surinaamsche Bauxite Maatschappij" ("Details of the History of the Suriname Bauxite Company"), containing information on prospecting initiatives and on the evidence of bauxite deposits in nearby areas. After the first mining operations were undertaken on the slope beside which the industrial plant was later built, Burside took part in an expedition to the Wane Kreek. In his memoir, Burside defined Moengo as a combined endeavor. Moengo is not portrayed as an area controlled by a company, but as an urban and human

7. Author unknown, "Naar Moengo." *De West: Nieuwsblad uit en voor Suriname* September 30, 1919.

experiment in which he includes himself. “One can really begin to speak of a Moengo population when a team of workers under the leadership of Tjon Akien and Burside from the Ajoema-Kondre expedition came to Moengo to establish themselves in August 1917” (Burside 1986).⁸

In the following years, the Surinamese press published official and colony reports describing Moengo as a spot completely transformed by the bauxite industry, inhabited by a large contingent of Creole and Javanese workers, as well as a few Maroon men engaged in logging and construction work.⁹ In 1921, by then already the fourth largest settlement in the Dutch Colony in terms of number of buildings and population, Moengo had the dwellings and services needed to accommodate the workers employed in the mining activities and in loading the bauxite onto ships navigating the deep waters of the Cottica river to the port of Paramaribo (Dentz 1921: 485). Public lands were formally granted to the Surinamese Bauxite Maatshapij (SBM)¹⁰ and a series of constructions soon followed, built according to a new spatial and topographical framework in compliance with legal regulations concerning the activities of workers, technicians, service providers, and private contractors. The arrival of the machines and men transformed what had been the sacred Maroon village of *Mungo* into the North American and Dutch *Moengo*, the “cradle” of what Mimi Sheller (2014) has called “light modernity,” the giant of the aluminum industry in South America.

The attention of various observers was captured by the descriptions of the first prospecting expeditions by adventurers and geologists in search of mineral resources, construction of the first buildings for use by the workers employed in clearing a large slope surrounded by rainforest and wetlands, and the bureaucratic and political clashes that delayed official implantation of SBM in the region. Moengo was not just a point on the map that helped dynamize the mining of bauxite and other minerals in areas close to the Cottica river, on which they could be shipped to

8. Burside’s notes were published in the commemorative edition of the company’s publication *Suralco Magazine* in 1986. On the importation of indentured workers from Indonesia and their presence in Moengo, see Hoefte 1998 and Koning 2011a, 2011b and 2014.

9. The first houses for the workers employed in prospecting and maintenance work were built in 1918. See Author unknown, “Naar Moengo II.” *De West: Nieuwsblad uit en voor Suriname*, October 3, 1919.

10. Founded on December 19, 1916, the Surinamese Bauxite Maatshapij (SBM) was renamed SURALCO in 1957.

the port of Paramaribo and there loaded onto cargo boats destined for the United States. It figures as a true monument to modernity installed over the rich aluminum deposits. On one of the most winding bends of the deep Cottica river, situated between the Commenwijne, Coer-motibo, and Marowijne rivers, a natural frontier between Suriname and French Guiana, a new urban design was born: Moengo was officially founded as a *bauxite town*. In 1920, around 251 workers who were hired in Java (Indonesia), along with Creoles from Paramaribo and Para, were attracted by the above average wages and living conditions in the Dutch colony. The architecture and urban layout of Moengo testify to different forms of occupation by the hired workers, their Dutch superiors, and a small contingent of US technicians. The division of the neighborhoods and the quality and style of the dwellings subsist as “layers” in different “memory landscapes” (Shaw 2002). Between the company’s arrival in 1916—when the colonial state authorized ore extraction in public lands—and the 1970s, when management of the concession was transferred entirely to Surinamese staff, the bauxite town was tightly controlled in terms of the use of its houses, circulation in its streets and neighborhoods, and membership of its clubs, churches, and schools. It was a “system” of control comparable to the kind that the South African mining corporation Billiton would implement in Paranam decades later. Access to the streets, neighborhoods, and SURALCO’s installations was tightly controlled, subject to criteria that classified workers according to their contractual relationship to the company (Hesselink 1974; Lamur 1983; Koning 2011a: 33, 230).

Until the 1960s, the extensive area of flooded forests, merging with the marshlands close to the rivers and their tributary streams, were occupied by plantations established in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These remained in relative isolation. But Moengo did not just experience significant demographic alterations. As a particular kind of space, marked by the control and limitation of people’s access, the plant changed both internally over time and in terms of its relationship with adjacent areas. Even the design for the original area of the plant was altered at various moments to allow mining of bauxite deposits located under the first buildings. The red soil scattered by the cars that today continually cruise the town’s planned streets is the clearest evidence of the presence of bauxite, known and cited by former workers and residents when discussing the slow deactivation of the concession’s control. All the adjacent areas—which include devastated forests and other more visible effects of mining operations, such as land sinkage and soil erosion

in sacred territories surrounding the affected Maroon villages—have already been mined (Burside [1929] 1986; Lamur 1983; Koning 2011a, 2011b; Heemskerk 2001; MacKay 2002; Hoogbergen and Kruijt 2004; Price 2011). Indeed, a former union leader and SURALCO employee believes that a lot of high-quality bauxite still exists beneath the town. All the descriptions of how the plant was created and how modern features were introduced into a setting of colonial inefficiency, surrounded by an impenetrable natural environment, emphasize the idea of a “natural vacuum” filled by US ingenuity. This account derives from the constant interplay of two elements: artifacts that reveal either the presence of the modern—its machines, lights and other forms of enchantment produced amid the vast green emptiness—or the “primitive bush men.”

In a short report, an envoy of the *Het Surinamer* compares the behavior of Maroons watching the boats go past to monkeys.¹¹ In the description of his trip to Moengo in 1941, the journalist and writer Johan van de Wallen observes the contrast between the plant and its primitive neighbors:

The bauxite ships sailed up the river, very carefully, along the inland Cottica. After an hour-long journey, they arrived at an old Bush Negro village where the bauxite was loaded. Once loaded, the ship turned into an artificial pond, very slowly, and took the journey back to the open sea. The sailors stared in amazement at the small Bosnegger villages along the river. Dark men and women in their big “canoes,” loaded to the waterline, are sometimes brought onto the ship. From the shore, naked young girls who say goodbye to the sailors, are obviously photographed. The snapshots were seized later in an American port by customs officials as contraventions of moral codes and maybe later will be examined by serious men, shaking their heads, while the Pentagon in the meantime looks for signs that might indicate enemy influences along the bauxite route. But the small, almost dirty flags planted here and there along the river to the gods in the villages have yet to attract anyone’s attention.... In Moengo people worked day and night. There was the small, well-kept village in the Suriname bauxite company, a subsidiary of the mighty U.S. aluminum

11. Author unknown, “Gibbons naar Moengo.” *De Surinamer: Nieuws en advertentieblad*. Paramaribo, October 10, 1920. In 1927, a weekly boat of passengers cruised the Cottica river, attracting the attention of people from the Ndyuka villages of Wanhatti, Lanti Wei, Tamarin, Bilo Langa Uku, Oposei Langa Uku, and Pikin Sant located along the river shore.

company. In the center, a guesthouse painted with aluminum paint, and around the center a settlement built for American, European and Surinamese employees. Incidentally it was also the living quarters of the miners. The village and the barracks seemed sunk into a lunar landscape in which human life was possible only artificially. (Walle 1975: 79)

Contrasts between cargo ships loaded with bauxite, aluminum paint, and barracks, and between dark men and women and American sailors, produce a bewildering set of images for foreign readers. The description of Mungo as a place “sunk into a lunar landscape” goes beyond an allegorical artifice. It precisely captures the effect of human work producing a trail of destruction. The old Maroon village, transformed into an industrial plant, had sunk into the ground. The perspective of the description supposes a distant observer looking at the location from above. The ground, the soil, and the topography are the main elements of a modern landscape that emerges from human endeavor and work. “Dark men,” foreign employees, and miners participate differently in this composition.¹² Crucially, the cited excerpt demonstrates that Ndyuka from various villages along the Cottica river were living close to Moengo.¹³ In other written records of their presence found in company sources, journalistic accounts of trips to the region made by colonial agents and, principally, Moravian and Catholic missionaries, the Maroon presence is generally conceived to be part of what European and North American visitors describe as “nature.” Trees, rivers, animals, rocks, their colors, shapes, and sounds compose, along with the few Amerindians and Maroons, part of the same pristine nature, a “primitive world.” By situating the Maroon presence as an element of “nature,” this kind of account also highlighted the powerful, even magical, presence of the ore. Although part of the earth,

12. For accounts of the history of Moengo’s occupation, see Oudschans Dentz 1921, Burside (1929) 1986, Hesselink 1974, Lamur 1983, and Koning 2011a, 2011b. As discussed elsewhere (Cunha 2018a, 2018b), Ndyuka families coming from refugee camps in French Guianese territory, who arrived in Moengo during the first half of the 1990s, reconfigured and transformed the landscape constructed by a postcolonial, modern, urban US factory-based bauxite extraction project at the start of the twentieth century.

13. See Author unknown, “Open Mijnen.” *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden* 68 (253), October 31, 1955.

the association between bauxite and one of its by-products, aluminum, suggests artificiality. In other words, its potentiality was anticipated, and its presence related to a fast, light, and practical future. Maroon bodies, in contrast, connect the landscape to an idyllic past. Curiously, ore and body also appear associated in another kind of account.

Let us retain two references made in the fragments cited above. The first is the information that the industrial plant and the small town were built on a site where Maroon people found it difficult to build houses: it was allegedly a hill “formed almost entirely of bauxite.” The second is an event related to a strong noise coming from the earth that supposedly frightened the old Maroon inhabitants and led them to abandon their village. What they have in common is a supposition. Both comments highlight a curious attachment to the earth. There is a strong link between the Maroons and the earth, they are part of the same landscape. Yet, in the same accounts, the earth is invariably described as made exclusively of bauxite, a rich and powerful soil whose economic importance was supposedly unknown to the Maroons. Their myths telling of the arrival of the first Ndyuka men and families coming from the Tapanahoni river to settle on the shores of Cottica, Wane, and Comoertibo rivers make these inferences concerning the Maroons’ motives appear counterintuitive. For the *sabiman*—elderly men who own the *fosi ten* histories (history of the first times, slavery and the time of flight)—it was precisely because the “old people” (*gaan sama*) knew that the earth has special powers that they feared the noise that came from the ground and the sky (Thoden van Velzen 1995). Thus, the noise and the explosion are not just historical and technological events related to the first bauxite mining experiments in the region. They stand as semiotic elements that differentiate Cottica Ndyuka historicity. Maroon life in the Cottica was affected by the transformation of *gadu peesi* (earth spirit territory) into sites for mining prospection. Due to their knowledge of the forest, Maroon people were hired on a day-to-day basis through informal agreements to dig holes and explore places for future mining sites.¹⁴

Before proceeding, it is worth making some very brief observations about the relations between the Maroon and the bakaa. As H.U.E.

14. “*Peesi* is a spatial category commonly associated with certain practices. This means that the idea of a *peesi* as a merely geographic or spatial register in the Western sense does not exist. Each and every *peesi* is occupied by agency, limited by rules and subject to serious sanctions” (Cunha 2018a: 188).

Thoden van Velzen and Wilhelmina van Wetering (1988), as well as Andre Köbben, have extensively discussed, among the Ndyuka, “all relations within the village—legal, political, economic and religious ones—are expressed in terms of kinship” (Köbben 1967: 12). Experiences and cosmologies are constituted through a primordial event, the flight from the plantation by the *loweman* (fugitives) and women (*afó*), which inaugurates the kinship and history of each person (*sama, okanisi*). Rights, obligations, social distance, spiritual links, and relations with divinities follow a person’s matrilineal bonds, often performed through rituals and bodily care practices, food, honor, and the offerings made to the gods, spirits, and specific ancestors (Price 1973; Thoden van Velzen 1995). These bonds and relations—often activated in cleansing and healing practices—are at the core of Ndyuka cosmology. Their cosmology defines the life and kinship rules inside the villages. As sacred sites “owned” by different matrilineages (*lo*) and matrisegments (*bee*), the villages are and will continue to be the main reference for a Maroon person. Every Maroon person who has migrated to the cities and other urban areas maintains spiritual connections with the earth, rivers, and the forest (*busi*), and with the nonhuman beings that inhabit these spaces. In this way, kinship is made, reinforced, and remembered through the spiritual bonds that connect each Ndyuka person to the houses and shrines that occupy the village territories and their surrounding areas.

This composite of relations with the earth and sky spirits and the matrilineal ancestors defines Maroon ontology. A Maroon person is a unit made of connections that form and differentiate each *bee*. For this reason, irrespective of how far she lives far from her village, distant from her kinfolk, these relationships to the *bee*, the earth, and the forest act as the vital force. This explains why the Cottica Ndyuka do not see themselves becoming white or non-Maroon—although unions with them and with persons from other Maroon groups are not uncommon—even when they occupy a position in a private company or a state institution, or when they have well-paid jobs, or even when they are living a comfortable life in Holland. They are aware that they still have an obligation to their kin and, above all, that these bonds need to be ritually reaffirmed in a calendar of funerary obligations. A Maroon person cannot become a non-Maroon because she never will be free of her links with her ancestors. The others, the non-Maroons, the *bakaas*, are other kinds of beings. They are different in part because they are not connected to the same *bee* and nonhuman entities, but also because their ancestors are linked in diverse ways to the planters, slave traders, and colonial staff who exchanged

Africans for money and goods. As Vernon analyzes (1985), the bakaa are the masters of strange creatures “bought” or otherwise acquired through sinister pacts; they have spirits known as *bakuus* at their service to perform “magic.” These beings work as the slaves of the bakaa. They can consume black bodies, drink their blood, and exploit their working, spiritual, and protective forces to produce white people’s wealth. If a Maroon person lives with bakaa, she can mesmerize their powers and “act as if” she were one, but she will never become one. Thus, the Ndyuka used to say that different types of bakaa exist, recognized through adjectives that foreground specific characteristics. There are *weti bakaa* (white non-Maroons), *bakaa nengue*, or *baaka bakaa* (people with dark skin, like the Creoles who live in the non-Maroon universe), and *bakaa sani* (things of non-Maroon foreigners).

These universes of relations also describe symmetric positions that differentiate between things, persons, beings, and ways of living “of the coast” or “of the city,” on the one hand, and those entities and relations “of the forest” (*busi*), on the other. Although it may be ontologically impossible for a Maroon person to transform into a bakaa, or the opposite, for a bakaa turn into a *businengue*, acts and behaviors associated with colonial authorities, with the circulation of money and wealth, with life on the coast, and with the demonstration of powers unfamiliar to the sphere of the villages and matriclans, lend bakaa qualities to persons and things. In the following section, I turn to ethnographic material that highlights the way in which Ndyuka appropriate the earth’s powers. It reveals not only a way of controlling traditional forms of connecting with earth spirits but a means of extracting its powers to heal and cleanse Maroon bodies.

Whitening the earth

In conversations with some of my Ndyuka interlocutors in Moengo, my attention has often been called to the diverse modes of domestic and rural work connected to kin. Every day, after tending and harvesting their agricultural plots (*goon*) in forest areas close to the villages, women’s agricultural produce is transported to Moengo by men. The women then prepare and sell the foodstuff in Moengo, Paramaribo, and Saint Laurent du Maroni (French Guiana). A substantial portion of the work of separating, washing, and packing the fruits and vegetables takes place in the small yards contiguous to the Moengo houses (*osu*). In some

cases, the yards are urban extensions of the goons (agricultural plots), where it is possible to farm herbs, calabash trees, *podosiri* trees, and other foodstuffs that are consumed daily. In Sa Mari's osu, I witnessed the arrival of heavy bags full of white clay. Each week, male kin or other male neighbors were hired to collect earth from areas abandoned by the mining operations, already transformed into savannahs, located between Moengo and Albina. This earth would be tipped into sacks and left at the entrance to Sa Mari's osu. There was thus a special connection between mining extractivism and the Moengo yards. The clay transformed and fertilized Maroon bodies from the vestiges of the destruction and signs of erosion of the soil nutrients. Although the use of pemba among Maroons was much older and pervasive, its unexpected connection to bauxite exploration in the Cottica invites us to explore other possible understandings of the ways in which the Cottica Ndyuka have produced difference amid the overwhelming and destructive presence of bakaas. Since historical accounts and sociological analyses have depicted the effects of the mining industry in the region and the growing migration of Maroons toward the Coast, what can be said about these and other effects on Maroon lives? What does the production and consumption of Moengo pemba tell us about the lives of the Cottica Ndyuka and the returning refugees? Was it a productive attempt to draw some "contrasting parallelism" as Ortiz ([1940] 1983: 3) explored? Between the red earth that unveils the bauxite and the white clay beneath lie many trails of transformation.

Both Sa Mari and Ba Dii, from Pinasi-loo, are originally from Ajuma Kondee, one of the oldest Ndyuka villages in the Cottica. Burside refers to the village as one of the first sites affected by the explosions and exploration of bauxite (Burside [1929] 1986). Nowadays, the village and its inhabitants continue to face the impact of the devastation of forests, the pollution of gardens, the excavation and abandonment of desert areas, and an advanced process of erosion that is making the entire town and its dwellings sink. Sa Mari and Ba Dii's relations to the earth and the effects of the bauxite industry in the region are, however, described for other reasons.

A seventy-year-old Cottica Ndyuka woman, Sa Mari spends her days working on the periphery of the old SURALCO site, her time filled with the task of pouring, grinding, and sculpting bits of the remains of the ore industry. The "Burside Road" (Bursideweg), named after Walther E. Burside, the author of the first official histories of the company, houses barracks built by Maroons who once sold agricultural produce to the

SURALCO employees living in Moengo (Hesselink 1974).¹⁵ On weekdays, Sa Mari's father would leave Ajuma Kondée to engage in heavy work, such as cutting down trees, clearing the fields and mining for the company. With SURALCO's permission, he established a barrack in the area in the 1950s, opening his *bee sama kampu*. Today Bursideweg is a neighborhood that integrates the cartography of Moengo with layers of histories of occupations. A few Chinese and Hindustani families who owned stores and gas stations built comfortable houses there. However, Bursideweg is known as a "rural area" where the Maroon live because of the presence of older residents, like Sa Mari and her kin, but also because of the newcomers, the returnee Ndyuka families who lived in French Guiana as war refugees and squatted on the land in the mid-1990s. The place became not only somewhere to live, but a peesi where crops could be planted, and petty services provided. The backyards are filled with trees, rusted bits of cars, bikes, strollers, all kind of pots, hoes, and other tools needed to plant, make repairs, and cook food for the family and the markets. Maroon dwellers are the producers of agricultural foodstuffs consumed in Moengo and in the markets of Paramaribo and Saint Laurent du Maroni (French Guiana).

Sa Mari dedicates her days to harvesting vegetables and preparing food for sale in Paramaribo and Saint Laurent du Maroni along with other women. But she has also successfully set up a network of helpers to bring raw material to her kampu, collected in limestone pits opened up for bauxite extraction. The dried earth is brought in small trucks by men, sometimes with children's help. They put the earth into large bags at the entrance to her land. Sa Mari then drags the bags to a small open barrack located at the side of her house and begins a long process of preparation. The earth is tipped out, mixed with water,

15. These contacts by the company considerably expanded the options available to Maroon men, who since the mid-nineteenth century had left the Ndyuka, Paamaca and Saamaka Maroon villages to find work on the coast. From the final two decades of the nineteenth century, the Cottica area was transformed into a trading post/town providing commercial river transportation and a venue for buying and selling timber and gold, activities controlled by the Maroons and thus a source of tense relations with the colonial State. In 1936, for example, the Paramaribo newspapers accompanied the conflicts resulting from the ban on Maroons staying and being buried in Moengo and Albina. See Author unknown, "Koloniale Staten." *Suriname: Kolonial nieuws en advertentieblad*, August 11, 1936.

and squeezed. Sa Mari spends the following weekdays working alone after her return from the markets. She shapes the squeezed earth into balls. After one or two days, these are placed in flat containers under sheltered but dry and open spaces. When the weather allows, the balls are put to dry under the sun. Once they are firm enough to be put into bags, Sa Mari waits for transportation to arrive early morning in front of the *kampu*: she pays someone to drive her and the bags to sell them in the markets. The balls are known as the highly sought-after “Moengo pemba,” the most popular product sold by Maroon vendors in the town’s markets.¹⁶

Ba Dii has lengthy experience as a contract worker for small companies involved in the mining industry and, later, as an employee of SURALCO. He worked as a skilled prospector, cutting down trees and opening clearings, examining the soil in search of new sites for ore explorations. In the 1960s, he received the right to dwell in a modest, two-room prefabricated brick house inside the concession with his family, where he lived until the War of the Interior broke out. According to Thoden van Velzen, during this period “wealthy Maroon loggers with huge concessions to exploit, were working in the immediate surroundings of Mungo. The palm oil factory was being built in the Patamacca area, to the south of Mungo, providing well-paid work for hundreds of Ndyukas as well as some other Maroons” (1990: 168). Also a *sabiman* and a specialist in spiritual practices, Ba Dii argues that it was precisely this skill that was more clearly recognized by his peers, the other, non-Maroon workers. He knew both the right of *goonmama* (tutelary earth spirit) to grant permission for mining and the healing and protective powers of *pemba*. He knew how to make the power of the latter nurture and return to the former.

Among the dozens of photographs from this era taken by him as a SURALCO employee before his retirement, a few illustrate what he has in mind when referring to his own unique knowledge. The powers of *goon gadu* and the ritual procedures performed by a *sabiman* were not only acknowledged and expected by the crew of workers before opening new holes, drilling into the surface, and blasting high areas, they became a requirement and a motive for pride among his company and

16. Pemba is not sold or used exclusively by Maroons. It is very popular among the urban Afro-Surinamese population who use it for vaginal baths and spiritual healing (Wooding 1981; Pijl 2003; Andel 2008, 2010), known also as *pemba doti*.

union peers.¹⁷ They feared that carrying out their work without spiritual protection could lead to accidents and death. Ba Dii would show some of these photos to foreign visitors who occasionally went to him as a Maroon authority on “Maroon culture.” In one of these images, dressed in his SURALCO uniform, he pours *sopi* (rum) and *pemba* on the ground near to the company machinery, asking for permission and protection from the gods before any invasive work in an unspoiled region. A representative of the Dutch colony who lived close to Ndyuka villages and controlled the circulation of Maroon men along the coast, W. F. van Lier observed the following about the “Ndyuka’s spiritual life”: “The Supreme Being and the other gods are white; that is why Nana made men out of clay.” *Pemba* is frequently used in ritual and important occasions, when “the *pemba* is dug up, washed, and then a priest says a prayer over it; only then is it active and the one who use it receives a certain healing power. A newborn baby is coated with *pemba* to attract the gods’ protective power. Oracle, and [other] objects are also coated with *pemba*” (1940: 68).

The work performed by the Ndyuka and the SURALCO employees seems to contradict any supposed separation between capitalist rationality and what the European travelers and company officers frequently labelled as “primitive culture.” Ba Dii fed the earth gods (*goon gadu*) and scattered white sacred clay over the red soil. His spiritual task was precisely to reconnect distinct modes of circulation of substances and “natural” energies, transforming the white sacred kaolin into food for the earth. However, as I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, kaolin reserves are no longer found in the region’s river banks. Instead, it became a by-product of the bauxite industry, as mentioned in current development projects for the region. These deposits are material evidence of the destruction, the “trail of contamination,” that creates new relations between humans and the forces that animate them. But we might also say that kaolin is another kind of earth. It mobilizes the forces of other markets.

Pemba is earth but of a different kind. Its whiteness evokes spiritual power when used for therapeutic and spiritual purposes. It can also be used in spiritual practices called *obia* when specific gods and spirits are summoned to speak through mediums and oracles. *Pemba* is mixed with water and used to bathe human bodies and artifacts. As Stuart

17. The gods of the earth, which may also encompass different classes of spirits, are called *goon mama* among Afro-Surinamese (van Lier 1940: 23).

Strange has observed, these rituals aim to infuse and release, controlling the flows of energy that come from the earth and plants, canceling out unexpected presences. Observing a cleansing ritual performed by two Maroon men using kaolin, plants, and other substances, Strange noted that:

First he offered the tutelary earth spirit (*goonmama*) a spherical lump of white kaolin clay (*pemba*), a bottle of locally produced anise flavored alcohol (*switi sopi*), and a “for no reason” egg (*koɔwɔwnu igi*). This was to persuade the place to “retain the thing [the *bakuu*] we have brought to live there.” By throwing a parrot’s tail feather (*papakai tei*) inserted in a cowry shell (*papa moni*) and another lump of kaolin into the water, Da Subun paid the resident river spirit (*wataa waɔwenu*) so that it would “retain the evil and not let it be carried from there by the river.” He then took a remaining kaolin lump, smashed it, and threw it into the forest so that the forest too would restrain the *bakuu* from escaping its confinement. (Strange 2016: 171).

As Strange observes, “after a spirit has come to fully occupy the medium, they also often apply arrestingly ethereal white *pemba* (kaolin) that imbues the characteristically dark skin of most Ndyuka with an uncanny aura” (2016: 151). This whiteness and “uncanny aura” are also associated with different kinds of nonhuman agencies. Particularly among the Cottica Ndyuka, the presence of the *komanti* spirits, who speak through the bodies of certain mediums and their ancestors, instantiate memories of clans and their deities occupying peesi and open villages, and of the War of the Interior (Thoden van Velzen 1990; Polimé and Thoden van Velzen 1988). Villages like Agiti Ondo and one of its famous authorities, Dandilo, became references of religious and ritual prestige due to the worship of important oracles and mastery of komanti spirits. At the beginning of the century, other komanti mediums gained prestige and provoked the concern of colonial officers and missionaries. The catechist and catholic missionary in Langa Uku village, Julius H. A. Halfhide, a Creole man, was ordered to report to the Governor on what he knew about the last days of Wensi, a Ndyuka, a medicine man, and a medium of the famed komanti spirit known as Amafu (or Amafoe). He witnessed what he describes as a true “confession.” Wensi told him how he became a Christian, and rarely connected with Amafu. He had abandoned the use of pemba and changed it for what the bakaa used: salt and laundry

whitening tablets (“blauwsel”).¹⁸ During the Civil War and the attacks on the villages, including the bombing of rivers and agricultural plots in the Cottica, komanti spirits were evoked to protect the members of Maroon guerrilla forces in secret rituals performed in the villages (Thoden van Velzen 1990; Polimé and Thoden van Velzen 1988). The “discovery” of an obia in the forest, observes Richard Price, “serve[s] to bind it together and distinguish it from other clans” (2008: 131). The eruption of the conflict, accompanied by the invasion of villages, the destruction, infestation, and contamination of plantation fields and rivers, foregrounded the debate on the right to the autonomy and preservation of traditional Maroon territories (Kampbel 2007). However, recent analyses of the effects of land right violations of various kinds seem to omit any closer exploration of how the Maroon people maintain their ties with these territories, even when they no longer live in the villages (Kampbel 2007; Kampbel and McKay 1999). They also fail to acknowledge important differences between the ways in which men and women were affected.

It is important to keep in mind that, like Sa Mari, the vast majority of Maroon sellers of plants and herbs in the urban markets are women. Maroon women are also known for their skills with papa spirits, which also used to incorporate themselves in bodies washed with pemba. Women may also be the most frequent consumers of pemba sold in the markets, not for its spiritual properties per se, but for the bodily protection it provides during pregnancy (Vernon 1992: 57 and 61; Wetering 1992: 119, 1996). When Sa Mari told me that pemba could also be eaten, I asked by whom and why. She responded: “Everyone likes it, it’s good for your health.” I had already heard the warnings from state health and sanitation authorities about geophagy and the dangers of contamination of both the mother and the fetus’s brain. These messages were targeted at Maroon communities, women from which presented high rates of anemia due to exposure to the aluminum found in pemba samples. “Pregnant women who are very fond of *pemba*,” the warnings said, “may eat large quantities of it, but this consumption is often denied or played down. The feelings of guilt associated with geophagy, which has been stigmatized since the times of slavery and subsequently by doctors, precluded recruitment based solely on declared *pemba* consumption” (Lambert et al. 2010: 1101). Of course, Sa Mari may have heard similar warnings from doctors and Surinamese authorities in Moengo.

18. Wensi still makes his presence felt through kinsfolk living in Paramaribo and in the Cottica.

But she was enormously proud of the money she earned from her Moengo pemba. She not only sold the balls, she was also respected and wise enough to teach pregnant and sick women how to prepare it properly. Sa Mari also knows that pemba is an important medicine used by many sexually active Maroon women. Pemba has cleansing effects that interrupt the transmission of bodily and spiritual impurities from menstrual blood. Every month, after a seclusion period, women wash their intimate parts with pemba dissolved in water. After childbirth, the mother must bathe herself with a substance made of water, pemba, herbs, and plants. Eight days after the delivery, a period that coincides with the *Puu Pikin a Doo* ritual (when the baby leaves the house for the first time and is introduced to neighbors and affines), the whole house is also washed with pemba to “lift the ban on men” in the baby’s mother’s osu (Fleury 1996: 179). Other uses, however, may have changed the ways in which Maroon women “taste” the power of Moengo pemba. This short citation from Diane Vernon, an anthropologist who worked for many years as an interpreter of Okanisi in French Guianese hospitals, suggests that the growing autonomy of young Maroon women has helped recreate the connections between earth and body:

Going and coming to Gaanman Gazon’s funeral I rode in a boat with Maroon women (Ndyuka and Paamaka) discussing it. They particularly praised Moengo *pemba* for its taste and admitted that, having consumed it during pregnancy, they had become addicted to it and ate it all the time now. I noticed they also consumed a lot of alcohol during the voyage. After the terrible incident with the *manengee bataa* [boat drivers] in Saint Laurent du Maroni in 2010 when 40 people were poisoned by drinking a beverage that was being sold on the street, the Préfecture forbid both the sale of *bataas* [bottles] and that of *pemba*. It is no longer on the market, though of course you can buy it under the table.¹⁹

Diverse kinds of relations between human and nonhuman entities that circulate in the cosmic domains of forest and village affect Maroon bodies. Body and land, in turn, appear imbricated in numerous ways over a Maroon person’s lifetime. It begins through the relations with a person’s

19. Diane Vernon, personal communication, June 13, 2017.

matrilineage—the bee.²⁰ Over generations, the bee reaffirms the ties among kin who live in the villages and their dead ancestors buried or ritually prepared there. In this way, living people and ancestors are connected and linked to the village land, but also participate in the individual (*sama*) and collective (*bee*) composition of other persons. Since every person possesses a spirit (called *bun gadu*)²¹ and a vital principle (*akaa*), these two agencies circulate in one body and through kin bodies (Vernon 1992). With death, however, the vital principle that animated the living person is transformed. It releases the body and “returns” to the earth. As for the *bun gadu*, a subjective quality possessed by every living person, this is “interiorized” and then circulated through ingested or shared substances. It can be inherited through a woman’s belly (also *bee*) and her matriclan. *Bun gadu* protects the living body against malevolent forces. Nonetheless, to differentiate the territories of the deceased from those of living persons, it is necessary to feed and honor both spirits and ancestors. Some spirits mediate the making of the body and the person, infusing spiritual protection against all kinds of disease. In general, skin and eyes are the “entrances” for the unexpected. Thus, the powers of protective spirits must be activated through the ingestion of herbs and specific foods, as well as bodily cleansing with baths, leaves, and *pemba*, specially during gestation. The consumption of earth is a bodily and spiritual practice; it affects the mother-child (*bee*-person) relation, but also protects the person with the powers that circulate in the earth.

Partial transculturations

The local effects of the ore industry in the Cottica region are implicated, in diverse ways, in the production and consumption of white clay. This statement works perfectly fine until we specify which ore and which white clay are involved. When we add bauxite in the former case and *pemba* in the latter, we must be clear that we are talking from a specific

20. Kinship among the Maroons is conceived as a system of relations based on matrilineal affiliations. The Ndyuka are divided into thirteen matriclans (*lo*), each of which is subdivided into different matrilineages (*bee*). Generally speaking each village belongs to a particular matriclan, making its members *goon pikin*, “owners” of the village (Thoden van Velzen and Wetering 2004).

21. “Tutelary earth spirit” (Strange 2016: 179).

perspective. In this text, I have tried to use a contrapuntal narrative. Differently from Fernando Ortiz's *Contrapunteo*, however, this text is intended neither as a literary work nor as a historical essay. Quite the opposite, I have examined a few select inscriptions that enable me to engage in this kind of exercise. Put otherwise, official accounts and ethnographic data have not been selected because of any assumed complementary quality.

Isolating bauxite and pemba and assuming that they are impossible to place side-by-side are much more common responses. My aim has been to make a certain kind of relation apparent, one in which the hybrid and shifting properties of the two substances appear in the practices of pemba producers and users. For this reason, I have left out historical accounts of the arrival of bauxite in the Cottica region and excluded other analyses of the chemical properties of the local bauxite and kaolin. In this scientific and industrial literature, both substances are interrelated, but what has interested me here was not to reveal such properties. Instead, in the first part of this essay, I looked at the way in which official accounts used contrastive images of the modern and the primitive to create a local and unique landscape in which the mining industry flourished. In the second part, I sought to highlight the impossibility of talking about the uses of pemba among Cottica Ndyuka men and women without connecting the transformative practices employing white clay to the effects of bauxite mining. In neither case did I intend to imply either subordination or interdependency. At stake, rather, is the knowledge that emerges when we make such contrasts.

In Ortiz's book, sugar and tobacco are different substances, plants, and products. Their fabrication and consumption are also spaces open to new food practices and tastes. They were also made through distinct agricultural and industrial processes. In the end, we might say that they were different "things" within the colonial and capitalist machines of circulation. These transformations, as I mentioned in the introduction, were personalized in two characters, female and male, with distinct qualities. This narrative artifice was used by Ortiz to deal with the distinct trajectories of sugar and tobacco—they could not stand as parallel and symmetrical histories. By focusing on the personal qualities of *doña azúcar* and *don tabaco*, Ortiz finds a solution to the discontinuity since his contrasts never encounter a counterpart (as Ortiz puts it, "antithetically"). The term of the opposition is provisional and also an effect of other relations: "their qualities are contradictory and multiple, carrying with them the marks of their shifting histories" (Coronil 1995: xxi). We might add,

paraphrasing Marilyn Strathern (1992), that the “parts” never entirely fit into one whole. The gathered pieces stand as one possible composition, a way of looking that is limited to a historical context; sugar and tobacco do not form bounded sets of substance and practices.

This observation can equally be applied to the concept created as the result of the ever partial exercise of contrasting: transculturation. Ortiz explained his choice of terminology in the second chapter of his book, including why he preferred to move away from the concept of acculturation. Instead, he looked at the “extremely complicated transmutations,” histories of “highly intricate transculturations,” in “transitional steps” (Ortiz 1940: 86, 90). Rejecting the idea of “culture” as a limited set of “practices and ideas,” he instead explores what is not yet stabilized and concluded. As Palmié (2013) aptly argues through an analogy with the Cuban dish *ajiaco*, the cultures that formed the nation—or, better, Cuban Culture—were in process. Transculturation, in this sense, can also be read as a partial framing, a provisional step in a method of transformation. Although Ortiz invested in the cultural history of the elements that composed the main forces of the modern Cuban economy, he did not anticipate where the “transculturation process” would end up.

Returning to our play between the images of red bauxite and white kaolin, we could highlight what a “transculturation process” reveals: other modalities of relations. For instance, the way in which the earth mobilizes, albeit in distinct form, relationships within the bakaa and the spirits. Or how pemba activates the spiritual protection of bodies, machines, and sacred lands. Or how the same pemba that contaminates women and their babies’ bodies with aluminum, provides them with a means to “return” to the powerful earth gods. Most strikingly, it seems that these substances and agencies produce a radical alteration. The “precarity” of Maroon lives that appears to inform these forms of consumption creates another kind of “contamination,” “turning them vulnerable to others” (Tsing 2015: 20), new auxiliary capitalist machines.

The white clay revealed by the extraction of bauxite enables the production of pemba, previously restricted to its existence on the banks of some rivers and available to spiritual specialists only. With the increased circulation of Cottica Ndyuka women in the markets, Moengo pemba has increased in scale and production. It now reaches the urban markets selling herbs and spiritual products in almost standardized balls, carefully targeted, and produces subtle and—more importantly—therapeutic effects. Of course, other connections exist

that I have been unable to explore in this text, such as the association of Moengo pemba with the gods and spirits worshipped by the most prominent matrilineages in the Cottica region. As the late Thoden van Velzen and Wetering pointed out apropos the lineage as a separate corporate group among the Maroons, each matrilineage is differentiated by its material and spiritual possessions. “Others are non-material,” they observe, “but no less important: knowledge of medicinal plants, herbs and leaves, and a claim to possession of some spirits” (1988: 20). The therapeutic value attributed to the pemba produced in Moengo certainly results from comparisons between other substances sold in urban markets, their source, and the “spiritual” pathways that connect them with the Cottica region’s earth. This sort of comparison not only involves a calculation of healing value and spiritual power. It is also an exercise of comparison in which the Cottica Ndyuka’s reputation among the bakaa and among their inland Maroon relatives plays a decisive role.²²

Simultaneously, the bakaa extract money from the same place from which Maroons extract health and spiritual protection. But another explanation is equally true: the bakaas stole from Maroon people knowledge of how to produce wealth from the earth. And, moreover, how to make the red mud transform into a shiny, light, and valuable object. Yet since the bakaas failed to respect the gods and spirits that guarded the sites that they profaned, the gods reacted to this violence, bringing destruction and desertification, and condemning the earth—making human and nonhuman life impossible. The production and consumption of pemba among Maroon people, especially pregnant women, seems to perform the opposite effect. Healing practices with pemba, used to whiten, cleanse, and purify bodies, made the obias and the gods powerful (the gadus in the shrines). The concept of obia can be taken to refer to the transformative potency of persons themselves and, thus, their bodies and relations with other beings, human and nonhuman alike. However, the concept also articulates the approximation of worlds in continual and mutual relation.

22. As Viveiros de Castro observes, the exercise of comparison is not a task exclusive to anthropologists: “Comparison is not just our primary analytic tool. It is also our raw material and our ultimate grounding, because what we compare are always and necessarily, in one form or other, comparisons” (2004: 4).

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Minhoto counterpoints

On metaphysical pluralism and social emergence

João Pina-Cabral

In his classic book *El contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y del azúcar* ([1940] 2002), Fernando Ortiz shows how two different plants and the products they yield can be at the base of two distinct forms of life. The fascinating revelation in his essay is how these two products (tobacco and sugar), which are central elements in the emergence of consumer society at the global level, give rise in their local mode of occurrence in Cuba to distinct social environments. He outlines the complex relation between the nature of the plants, the nature of the products, the nature of the social relations of production, and the control of the means of production. These, then, come to congeal over time into recognizable traditions of human experience.

So much we have read. Furthermore, we know how influential the essay was in a long and distinguished history of debates concerning globalization, and particularly globalization in the Caribbean and South America (Mintz 1996; Palmié 2006). But, beyond its empirical relevance, what methodological and analytical lessons can we take from it today? After all, it was written so very long ago and it corresponds to a *problématique* (that is to say, to a set of intellectual concerns) that is decidedly no longer our own. In short, in interpreting Ortiz's essay, we necessarily betray his intentions, since (a) we use a different empirical case, and (b) we resituate his argument in terms of theoretical positions he could not have dreamed of. We should have no sense of guilt concerning that,

however. In fact, we honor him in this way. We can only entertain the faint hope that, one day in the future, other people might do precisely the same thing to our own contemporary proposals.

Metaphysical pluralism

In this essay, I mean to resituate Ortiz's argument. Empirically, I resituate it in northwest Portugal in the late 1970s, when I carried out fieldwork for what was going to become in 1986 *Sons of Adam, daughters of Eve: The peasant worldview of the Alto Minho* (1986a). Analytically, I undertake to address anew what the Durkheimians used to call "collective representations." That is, I seek to understand how collective agreement emerges within spatiotemporally linked social settings giving rise to identifiable "forms of life" that correspond to shared forms of dwelling and care, shared concepts and artifacts, shared modes of personhood, and shared economic arrangements.

I see the value of this exercise largely in providing the tools for ethnography to move beyond the background assumptions concerning the nature of human thinking that are implicit in such standard statements as "the X believe ... this and that," or "for the X, a is b," or "Xs think ... this and that." Now, as it happens, in the early 1980s, when the final version of *Sons of Adam, daughters of Eve* was written, we were already grappling with the aporias emerging from the poststructuralist critique of social theory. Ardener's contorted critical essays (e.g., "Comprehending others," [1977] 2007) and Needham's Wittgensteinian writings (e.g., "Analogical classifications," [1978] 1980, or *Counterpoints*, 1987) were already troubling our minds. Somehow, however, we had not been able to see a way past the central forms of thinking that we had inherited from mid-century social theory—either in its Durkheimian collectivist mold or in its North American Parsonian individualist mold. In my book *World: An anthropological examination* (Pina-Cabral 2017), I address this same challenge by exploring possible means of going beyond the mere critique of representationism. Here, I want to further that experiment in the lines suggested by Ortiz's essay.

I start from the basic assumption that *metaphysical pluralism* is the abiding condition of human existence. Husserl noted that "for us who wakenly live in it, [the life-world] is always already there" as a kind of horizon (1970: 142). Yet "there is a difference between the way we are conscious of the world and the way we are conscious of things or

objects” (1970: 143). The latter “have actuality for us only in the constant movement of corrections and revisions of validities”—as a kind of “anticipation of an ideal unity” that is never fully accomplished (*ibid.*). By metaphysical pluralism, then, I mean that everywhere, persons who live awake to the world are open to engage with the world in a creative and dynamic manner, being prone to embrace a diversity of points of view (Pina-Cabral 2018a). As Lévy-Bruhl discovered, persons are not atoms, they emerge from within what he labeled “participation” with other persons (primarily, their early carers) (Pina-Cabral 2018b). As a result, they are prone to engage with a variety of points of view, never holding a single or unique framework of interpretation of the world—the unity of our life-world is never more than something to strive for. Vagueness, in a very general sense, therefore, is the default condition of all *persons*. The word “vague” here bears two essential implications: both that of *indeterminacy*—as in border permeability, ambiguity, ambivalence, and equivocation—and that of *underdetermination*—as in approximateness, fuzziness, stochasticism, gradualism, and scale-hopping (see Davidson 2001: 75–76; Pina-Cabral 2020).

By placing the focus on vagueness and metaphysical pluralism, I am setting up a contrast with the sort of structural-functionalism that was espoused by most members of Ortiz’s generation. Our present analytical condition leads us to diverge theoretically from the mid-twentieth-century generation in two fundamental ways: on the one hand, we reject the *atomistic perspective*—that is, we do not see persons or social groups as unitary, individual entities, but we see them as emergent within sociality and therefore as being ultimately partible and “dividual”; on the other hand, we reject the *mind/body polarization*—that is, we see that sociality is a broad feature of life, that organisms and objects interact in complex ways, and that perception itself is a social phenomenon that cannot be reduced to a representational account (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007; Gallagher 2009).

Notwithstanding, we still recognize that, in the field, ethnographers come to encounter emergent collective entities that require a holistic description in order to be satisfactorily accounted for. The sort of dynamic processes of structural constitution that Ortiz identifies continue to preoccupy us today as ethnographers. For example, he shows that, around tobacco and sugar, forms of life emerge in history that are systemic because they possess properties that are greater than the sum of their parts, and that, as such, can be identified by social scientists and described in their own terms. It does not seem possible to carry out ethnography

without implicitly proposing that the forms of life the ethnographer identifies are complex but are identifiable, that is, somehow characterized by emergent properties, possessing a level of systematicity. In other words, what makes up a “form of life” and how can an ethnographer identify it? That is a question that we pose today again but in a new form.

Twentieth-century social science has made us all too familiar with pluralized notions of “cultures” and “social groups,” as if these reifications were observable empirical facts corresponding to objectively occurring individual psychological processes of self-acknowledged “identity” as in: “the Xs have a culture which each X transports and by which he or she is identified.” Such attributions of psychological identity, however, turn out to be analytical dead ends, as our poststructuralist teachers were discovering during the late 1970s. In naturalizing “identity,” we are assuming, on the one hand, a natural existence to “individuals,” failing to see persons as emergent products of sociality, and, on the other hand, we are assuming a representationist account of cognition that turns out to be deeply unsatisfactory. Ortiz’s notion of “transculturation,” therefore, attempts to resolve a problem that can only be taken to exist to the extent that we stick to a sociocentric culturalist view of “society.”

In fact, that is probably the most fascinating lesson that we can draw today from Ortiz’s *Cuban counterpoints*. He is not telling us that there are different “cultures/societies” in Cuba. Rather, he is telling us that distinct Cuban modes of living can be identified that are patently diverse and that there are structural implications to this differentiation. Furthermore, he shows us that the affordances provided by the distinct plants, their distinct products, and their distinct processes of global circulation lead to different modes of production, and to different appropriations of the land. Most of all, however, he shows that these forms of life correspond to different modes of personal constitution. In short, he opens the door for an account of metaphysical pluralism in Cuba. Cuban subjects are not all of one mold; they correspond to traditions of personal constitution that differ, since they correspond to the emergent properties of these different forms of life.

Minhoto lives

Allow me now to carry out an exercise of retrospective projection. When I found myself in the late 1970s in the rural valleys of the Alto Minho (northwest Portugal), I observed a region and a people that were in the

throes of a major transformation—it was all too patent to anyone moving around (including the *minhoto* themselves) that consumer society was making big inroads into rural forms of domestic life and modes of personal and collective constitution that had been identifiably in existence since at least the middle of the eighteenth century, when a new configuration of rural economy dependent on maize production had become locally instituted (Pina-Cabral 1986a: 1-30). By dating it in this way, of course, I am already intervening, since it took me and my historian colleagues at the time quite a lot of effort to identify the historical parameters of the forms of agricultural and communitarian integration that made rural society so readily identifiable to anyone who became familiar with the region.

Yet, as an ethnographer at the time, if I were to be able to produce an ethnographic description, somehow, I had to identify (a) what different forms of life were in existence in the region—since it was patent that different forms of life were present—and (b) how these were responding to changes that were occurring not only in the region but in the whole of Portugal and, indeed, in the whole world. My initial project was to account for the forms of life of the rural population, but soon I realized that I faced problems in doing that. In fact, I came to see my very fascination with rurality as somehow suspect, to the extent that it reflected some of the central aporias of belonging that structured local society and that posed serious problems of description, as I will proceed to explain.

First, I had to account for the fact that rural society itself was pervaded by dynamics of class differentiation. There was an observable differentiation associated with landed property. For example, daughters of landless households found it almost impossible to get officially married and most frequently ended up as unmarried mothers. This, however, did not express itself openly in terms of forms of life—or, as anthropologists are prone to say, “in terms of culture.” Those who lived in rural areas gave strong evidence of a unitary sense of local community and shared an identifiable form of life in spite of widely different levels of access to land and comfort. Rural people emphatically denied that there were substantive differences between them. Moreover, there was a dynamic of globalization that meant that men were migrating to foreign lands where they were engaging in very different socioeconomic environments in order to gain the means to reproduce a local rural form of life that was visibly no longer fully self-sustainable.

Second, I found that, in order to describe the peasant form of life, it was necessary to postulate (even if only implicitly) its local alternative. In

other words, there seemed to exist *minhoto counterpoints*. At first, I was not aware of this. But, as I carried out my self-ascribed task of describing the form of life of the peasants that were engaged in a form of subsistence agriculture, I found that I could not help but contrast it to another form of life. It was only halfway through the research that, progressively, it became clear to me that describing the mode of life of the peasants in the hillside parishes implied inevitably accounting for its local alternative, the mode of life of the lower middle classes living in and around the market towns and urban centers.

In fact, one of the difficulties that I had to confront during the early processes of drafting my manuscript was a dearth of self-acknowledged descriptive terms for the regions, processes, groups, and forms of life that I had, willy-nilly, to identify. For a serious-minded young ethnographer like I was then, this turned out to be a source of anxiety and perplexity (see [1993] 2008). Not only were the terms to describe these emergent entities muted in local everyday interactions but, by making them explicit in my account, I was somehow breaking a veil of comfort. I learned soon enough how to ask about them and how to interpret the answers I received, but the people I spoke to did not think it really advisable to use clear descriptive terms about the different forms of life. For them, these seemed to breach comfortable social discourse. As time went on, I became aware that this kind of equivocation (this ambiguity of reference) was operating at different levels of belonging. Only now, retrospectively and with some hindsight, do I have enough distance to be able to see that this discomfort with identification occurred at least at three distinct levels and that they were interlinked.

The first level corresponded to the *casa* (the primary social unit, that is, the social entity where persons were cared for during infancy and where they received their main forms of personal identification). The same word, *casa* (lit. house), was used both for middle-class homes and for peasant homes, and yet the nature of the two entities differed radically, as I could daily observe. This difference was patent in terms of what and who composed the *casa*, how it reproduced itself across generations, how it was named, the role it played economically, how it was inhabited, how they differed architectonically, etc.. Different kinds of entities received a similar name. However, this equivoque also operated within each of the forms of life, where similarly named entities were being treated differently.

As I came to observe, among the peasant group, there seemed to be a further equivocation concerning how *casas* came together into *freguesias*

(communes, or better still parishes, as they cohered around a church and graveyard). Indeed, those who owned land were in possession of a *casa* in a very different sense from those who, although they did have a dwelling that they called *casa*, did not own land. While the members of the *casas* who owned land were treated as full members of the parish (as “neighbors,” *vizinhos*), the members of the units that did not own land were sometimes treated as neighbors and other times as not. When I asked if someone was someone else’s neighbor, the answer would be given in terms of proximity of residence and it would include people who did not own land. But, when I asked how many “neighbors” there was in a particular parish, the answer, now counted in terms of houses and not persons (and the corresponding name list used to account for participation in communal events), would routinely include only the *casas* that owned land. The *casas* of all of those who did not own land were being left out. In short, the very attribution of existence to the primary social unit and its integration into a base community were dependent on a set of values that both differed across the two forms of life *and* instituted a kind of primacy of belonging (a different *ontological weight*) to some over others.

Then, I became aware of a further level of equivocation related to this first one. There seemed to be a problem in actually categorizing and naming the patent difference that existed between the two forms of life. No one locally would be willing to describe him or herself personally either by the adjective “peasant” (*camponês*) or by the corresponding middle-class label (in local terms, *burguês*). While the difference between the two forms of life was more than clear to everyone around, being called one or the other would have been insulting. As time passed, I came to realize that this silence was related to the equivocation that characterized the different levels of institutional belonging (domestic/*casa*, communal/*freguesia*, national/*povo*). Somehow, whoever was a member of a peasant house that owned land was in some way more of a member of the general category of “people” (*povo*) than others (either the peasants who owned no land or the urban dwellers). National entitlement seemed to be informally accounted for by means of a word the meaning of which shifted in parallel with the equivocation concerning being a member of the parish. The same ambiguity seemed to be present at both scales, national and communal.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, general political culture in Portugal attributed the essential political primacy of national belonging to a category that is named in the singular as *o povo português* (*the Portuguese people*). But there was a clear disjunction between those

who had the right to claim to be a member of the povo and those who were supposed better to represent that same povo. This aporia was brilliantly exploited in one of Portugal's most famous songs—"Povo que lavas no rio," by Amália Rodrigues, based on a poem by Pedro Homem de Mello (1948). The poem's refrain famously declares that the poet shared the povo's condition, but its life (and, implicitly, the hardship of it) he would not suffer. This turned out to be the main question that I explored in my second book on Minho—*Aromas de urze e de lama*, an exercise in ethnopoetics, written at the end of the 1980s ([1993] 2008).

When I reached Alto Minho in 1977 only three years had passed since a major political revolution had taken place that had been carried out in the name of the povo. Yet, I discovered that those whom everyone thought of as the povo par excellence did not, in fact, feel that they were represented by the Revolution. The politically modernizing revolution turned out to have been carried out by urban people who did not feel fully identified by the category povo, in whose name the Revolution had been carried out. A good part of the Portuguese (those who lived in urban environments—certainly the politically most powerful) did not identify as part of the more embracing category of "the Portuguese people." By being urban they were somehow modern and cosmopolitan. In turn, that meant that their claim to autochthony was diminished. As my ethnography matured, I became increasingly conscious of the fact that this equivocation actually prolonged the duplicity of standards of belonging related to the parish and the casa that I described above. It turned out that I too (as a city boy) was part of my own ethnographic entanglement.

Finally, the third challenge of description that confronted me concerned how I would name the people whose ethnography I was about to write. This was a problem that I had not anticipated and that was derived as much from the equivocation concerning political belonging and rights of autochthony described above, as from the tradition of ethnographic primitivism into which I had inserted myself. I could have said that I was studying the rural dwellers of this or that parish (the pseudonyms I used at the time were Paço and Couto), but that was not enough, since there was nothing special or especially distinctive about these two parishes. They were essentially like all other riverside parishes in the region and, in fact, I had chosen them precisely because I felt that they were clearly characteristic of the whole region. Now the broader region was called Minho, but the upland valleys where I set up my observation post were a distinctive part of Minho—the Alto (or High) Minho. Yet, if I were

to claim that I was studying the Alto Minho, I would have to contemplate also the middle-class people who lived in the towns and city of the region. But there were two problems with doing that: first, I could not claim to study all forms of life with the same intensity; second, the middle class of the region did not feel at all as being characteristically part of that region. They claimed to be (and in fact were) engaged in a form of urban lifestyle that was, to them, characteristic of the whole of Portugal and, further still, of the whole of the globalized world.

So, how to write an ethnography of a people without a name? I ended up opting for calling the collective subjects of my study *minhotos* (Minho dwellers) but I had to warn the reader that I was, in this way, manipulating the meaning of the word by making it refer specifically to the rural forms of life that, using sociological theory, I identified as “peasant.” In local parlance, this form of life had no particular way of being named that was not offensive—for, of course, there were offensive names for rural dwellers, who were supposed to be less educated, less civilized, more primitive, more archaic, more savage than urban dwellers. But, imbued with a good amount of youthful earnestness, I loathed the idea of reproducing such middle-class stereotypes.

In short, much as in Cuba, my *minhoto counterpoints* were clearly identifiable but not easily named, as they corresponded to an emergence that related conflictually with the narratives of autochthony that structured the long term of the Portuguese nation and the Minho region in particular. In fact, in an essay that I wrote after publishing the book and that I used as the final chapter of the Portuguese translation (1986b), I explored this question of autochthony and the narratives of belonging to a land which, ultimately, was not even supposed to belong to the people who inhabited it. I had soon come to discover that the people among whom I lived in the hillside parishes of the Alto Minho did not consider themselves to be the first occupants of the land. Although Minho had never been part of the regions of the Iberian Peninsula where there had been Islamic occupation, minhotos talked of a group of first dwellers that they called “moors” (*mouros*, Islamic North Africans), who manifested features that were strange mirror-opposites of those they defined as their own. I was shown striking rock formations where these mouro people were supposed to have emerged from the ground and where they still manifested themselves in a kind of oneiric claim to the land.

What this meant, was that the ambiguity of belonging to the land that was manifested by the forms of equivocation concerning belonging that I described above seemed to be ultimately impossible to resolve. I

came to see this ambiguity of belonging as an essential feature of local sociality—a dynamic of creativity without which the national political system would implode, as it would otherwise have been too tightly closed in on itself. Much later in my career, I was to explore further this same sort of ambivalent openness in terms of the Portuguese imperial expansion to other regions of the globe. I encountered a dynamic sense of belonging in places where the Portuguese had settled in the past but were no longer dominant that I called “Lusotopy” (2014) and that constituted a series of space/times built upon divergent manifestations of forms of Portuguese pastness. These references to Portugal represented the same kind of essential chthonic ambiguity that operated as a door to creativity not unlike that which the moors played in the Alto Minho.

Metaphysical pluralism and ontological weight

The kind of essential ambiguity in national belonging that I have just described grants it a kind of dynamism. This facilitates the management of actual real positions in an ever-changing, historically evolving world. I consider this feature yet another manifestation of metaphysical pluralism, since it opens up the system foundationally. I now want to argue that, within a single form of life, there can be different modes of apportioning presence and that these have a structuring effect upon that form of life—they are features of its emergence. The process of entanglement that produces a form of life as an emergent entity does not depend on a closing of plurality, an individualization. To the contrary, as I suggested above, it relies both on vagueness (indeterminacy) and on scale change (underdetermination), the two aspects of metaphysical pluralism. I will rely here on an ethnographic vignette which I have used elsewhere already for different analytical purposes (Pina-Cabral 2017: 161–66).

As Bourdieu taught us, following in Mauss’s footsteps, a form of life is reproduced from generation to generation as a habitus—that is, as a set of dispositions that are manifested by particular persons ([1972] 1977). As this happens, certain entities and certain configurations acquire greater centrality within the economies of meaning that structure that form of life. These are aspects of the world that, for those who share that form of life, create a scaffold around which other aspects of the world can arrange themselves meaningfully; thus, the centrality of these entities is instituted over time by the very process of constitution of meaning.

In short, certain aspects of the person or aspects of the world come to “be” more than others; they assume greater *ontological weight*—that is, certain aspects of the world or hypostatizations of them play a greater integrative role in the emergence of a particular form of life. It is not a matter of the existence of other aspects being questioned or suspended, but rather a matter of greater confirmation. Certain aspects of person or world are less prone to being silenced; they are more present; there is a greater readiness to affirm their existence. This came to my attention for the first time when I was studying the way in which personhood is manifested in naming practices. I came to the conclusion that certain aspects of personhood were attributed greater ontological weight than others and that this was structurally significant in terms of the general configuration of the naming systems and their relation to the forms of life to which they corresponded (Pina-Cabral 2010). For the ethnographer, it is immensely important to identify these, since they constitute central landmarks in the configuration of each form of life and it is this that Ortiz does when he shows us how tobacco and sugar function as integrative aspects of their respective “counterpoints.”

I will exemplify this by recalling a moment of epiphany during my work in the Alto Minho. By the time it came to pass, the main period of fieldwork was over and the thesis had already been examined. As I was now living in Portugal, however, I could go back for shorter visits to see my friends in Paço. I was preparing the version of the ethnography that was eventually to be published (Pina-Cabral 1986a). My closest companion in Paço was a man everyone knew as Morgado who was a passionate supporter of the “old ways,” that is to say, the peasant modes of living that were by then becoming obsolete and which were the central theme of my work. This was a fascination we both shared and our sincere friendship was rooted in it. He was a relatively wealthy peasant who bossed over a large, traditional-style casa and who had never been tempted to migrate, unlike the majority of his coevals in Minho. Although he was politically agnostic (being prone towards distrusting human nature in general), he had been the parish president (the lowest level of elected official) for the last decades of the fascist regime. This meant that, by the time I met him, after the 1974 Democratic Revolution, he was in a sort of forced retirement from public life; his cousin’s husband had succeeded him as parish president. Still, he remained the undisputed authority on all that had to do with rural life.

Many of the people who had emigrated in the late 1950s and 1960s were now returning home and investing their hard-earned savings in

buying back the land that the wealthier townspeople had accumulated in the 1930s and 1940s, when conditions in rural regions in Portugal had been dire. The dream of the returned migrant was to become a landed peasant with a large and colorful house facing the road. That was their idea of the worthy life, even after all those decades living and working in Paris, Lille, Newark, or Toronto.

What they wanted to buy were not large tracts of land, but small plots to grow maize, beans, and wine (*vinho verde*) in what is a hilly, well irrigated region (Wateau 2002). Still, their parents had lost the land they had owned to the urban moneylenders or, alternatively, had had to endure hunger and misery in order not to sell it. This meant that their children, who went away to France or the United States, upon their return were desperate to show that they were not *cabaneiros* (literally, hut dwellers)—that is, people of no concern, who did not own land and, therefore, did not have a casa worthy of the name. The land, not the building, turned out to be the central defining factor in deciding whether one truly had a “house” and, thus, whether one was truly a member of the parish (the *freguesia*).

As a result, by the early 1980s, on the morning that I went out to the fields down by the river with Morgado, there were lots of people buying land and he was being regularly asked by the registry office in town to work as a land assessor. Throughout the whole district, he was officially and unofficially recognized as the person who could give the last word on such matters. We arrived at the designated plot—a reasonably good one, with a well-tended pergola all round it and a small stretch of forest with chestnut trees uphill from it. A canal that passed halfway through it irrigated the land. In this case, as I seem to remember, the plot was of disputed heritage.

This was not the first time I had gone out with him and I had quickly learned his basic moves. He would start by dividing the land in easily measurable right-angled triangles and thus, with three or four measures of a long knotted string, he would ascertain its size in square meters. Then came the part that constituted an epiphany to me. He would mentally reduce the land, whatever there was of it, to basic maize production and ascertain, from the quality of the soil and the nature of the irrigation, how many carts of maize such a piece of land might yield. (*Carros de milho*, the traditional land measure, refers to the old ox carts that were by then no longer in use, assuming that they were filled with sheathed maize cobs.) Then he would add some value for the likely wine crop; then he would subtract the value of things like bad walls or falling-down

pergolas; then he would subtract some for the part that was forested; then he would add more or less depending on the nature of the trees and whether they were above the main point of access to the plot or below it; then he would count in the fruit trees that might exist; then he would take into account the ease of reach from the main road; and so on.

What struck me was that the land was essentially valued by how much maize it might produce, whether it was best suited for that purpose or not. This seemed extraordinary, since in fact the likelihood was that this particular plot, when sold, would be used for building a house. But, at that point, he had been asked to ascertain “the value of the land” and there was no doubt for him or for anybody else around (much as they certainly had not thought about it like I am putting it here) that the essential value of the land was what it would produce in terms of the staple food, maize bread (*broa*).

At that point, I understood all of a sudden something that I felt I already knew but that I had not known how to say: maize had greater ontological weight than other foods, other aspects of the world, and most other entities in general. I now understood why the central marker of value for a peasant “house” was the visible granary standing out elegantly on its tall granite legs. Morgado’s own, proudly placed in the hillside in front of the door to his kitchen, had its woodwork painted in red, even though, these days, it no longer made any sense to store grain there, and it was mostly being used as a tool shed.

This illuminated much of what I had already written in the thesis. And, in fact, retrospectively, I understood why I had felt it necessary to go through the trouble of researching certain things: to unearth the history of maize in the region; the details of the ritual of bread-making and its implications for gender relations and household constitution; the central importance of female fertility in a region where marriage was essentially uxorilocal; the meaning of not having land, not eating one’s own bread, and therefore being morally suspicious; how people claimed (against all likelihood) that they could taste with certainty whether or not a portion of maize bread was made in their casa; why in all the years I was there, I never managed to get anyone to provide me regularly with *broa* for a weekly price; etc. (Pina-Cabral 1986a). I suddenly found a nexus between all of these things and many more.¹

1. The following four paragraphs are taken, for the most part, from my earlier description of this event in Pina-Cabral 2017: 162–66.

In rural Alto Minho, by the mid-twentieth century, maize, a crop that had arrived in the middle decades of the eighteenth century, had become the staple food and the mainstay of peasant living. Their world, as opposed to that of the people in the towns and cities, was dependent on the notion that the good life was one where one produced one's own food on one's own land—and that food was, *par excellence*, broa; all other foodstuffs were seen as additions to it. Thus broa became the central mode of distinguishing those who had value, and therefore had a right to be there, from those who did not, and were therefore mere passing residents. Their persons, their houses, their community existed more or less to the extent that they were capable of ensuring their own subsistence from their own land by means of broa.

I should note here that this did not mean that the region was ever demonetized. To the contrary, there has been money circulating in these hills since the Pax Romana brought the population down from the hill-tops to the riverside plots. Later, minhoto peasants were in the forefront of Portuguese empire-building at the onset of the modern era and, later still, in the nineteenth century, of economic migration to Brazil, Europe, or North America. Ever since the fifteenth century, therefore, there had been men (and also, to a lesser extent, women) returning to these houses from all sorts of very distant places around the world (India, China, Africa, Brazil, Australia, North America). Therefore, what was being celebrated with maize bread was not sustenance as such—for many of the returned migrants over the centuries had eaten many and very diverse foodstuffs throughout their travels or as sailors in the cod fisheries off Newfoundland.

What was being celebrated by attributing greater ontological weight to maize and maize bread was its centrality in a certain form of life; the role it played in configuring who each one of these persons was and desired to be. What surprised me, in a way, was how I suddenly was confronted with the presence of the past (the pastness) in a social situation where, indeed, the centrality of maize was no longer what it had been. I was surprised not by how things changed, but by how they survived.

For each one of those people, maize did not “represent” anything; rather, it tied up a nexus of meanings that, in being shared and in acquiring hegemonic implications over a long period of time, became more present, more visible, more likely to be retained by each person in his or her daily dealings. No wonder that, after each meal, Morgado's wife would carefully gather the breadcrumbs left on the table top and spread them around the house outside the walls. This way the souls of the dead

would eat them and be grateful, and thus leave the residents of the house alone, granting it prosperity.

The way in which *world* is scaffolded not only by the presence of entities but also by their relative ontological weight might equally well be exemplified by recourse to images such as the statues of the Virgin, the nativity scene, or the crucifixion that one encounters all over the Christian world. These icons (and the stories that are told about them) facilitate access to a set of meanings; they constitute paradigmatic scenes (Needham 1985: 67–69) to the extent that they are modes of apportioning ontological weight, of reminding people what entities and actions are more present in their world. Stephan Palmié wisely claims: “All human lifeworlds ... include agentive ‘nonhuman’ mediators that, in their own ways and to locally and historically varying degrees, not only generate affordances, but also make demands upon us” (2014: 155). To further his insight, one might claim that (a) the “nonhuman” quality of these mediators is bound to be ambivalent, since they are an integral part of the emergence of each one of us as a person (we participate in things too—see Pina-Cabral 2018b), and (b) we must be attentive not only to their intervening in our lifeworlds as affordances, but also to the varying intensity of their intervention.

If I now attempt to shift my gaze to the other minhoto counterpoint—the form of life of the urban middle classes—I can clearly see that maize was present in town, too, yet it played no significant role, apart from its use as a component in the fabrication of a locally cherished type of bread. The closest simile among the urban dwellers to the role played by maize in the peasant worldview is probably the role played by money and particularly money as what makes up a salary. Recently, much groundbreaking anthropological work has been undertaken that shows how money is labile as a social relation, constituting “an integral part of the hierarchies and networks of exchange through which it circulates” (Hart and Ortiz 2014: 466; see also Neiburg 2016). This discussion, however, need not occupy us at this point, since what I wanted to exemplify above by reference to maize can easily be generalized: forms of life are emergent features of the world of humans and part of the aspect of their emergence is the relative ontological weight attributed to different aspects of the world. This “distributed ontology,” as we might call it, is part of what I call metaphysical pluralism and it shows how emergence results from the entanglement of everyday life through the way in which certain aspects of the world come to interact with the form of life as a whole (see Hattiangadi 2005).

Conclusion

At this point, however, we are still left with a problem associated with the musical metaphor of “counterpoints” proposed by Ortiz. The dictionary definition of counterpoint is “the relationship between voices that are harmonically interdependent yet independent in rhythm and contour.” In other words, what he proposes is that each of the elements of the *contrapunteo* is “independent in rhythm and contour” but harmonically interdependent to the extent that both of them participate in each other mutually. Counterpoint implies scale, for it implies that the parts, as parts, relate with the whole, as whole. That is, the two components are mutual not only in the sense of affecting each other, but also in the sense of somehow sharing a common existence at a higher scale (Pina-Cabral 2013); they participate in each other while remaining separately structured.

Now, in the history of Cuba, Ortiz argues at length that the two forms of life that he identifies—surrounding tobacco and sugar—are independent in the way they structure themselves and in their internal dynamics, yet they both come to contribute towards and interact within what, at a higher level, is the national existence of Cuba. We are left with a strange doubt: is the oppositional (binarist) nature of the counterpunctuality part of what creates that relation of independent interdependence that gives rise to what he calls “transculturality”? Or is it merely that in Cuba there are two forms of life, when it would be perfectly possible for three to exist? This question is sneaky. It does not seem to bear a clear answer, but the trouble it causes (that is, the entanglement between observer measurement and emergence) is all the more problematic for it.

Much the same can be asked about the counterpunctuality of the peasant and urban modes of life that I observed in the Alto Minho. In fact, we were long ago reminded by the classic work of Robert Redfield that the two modes of life are historically interdependent, not only in southern Europe but also wherever a form of peasant life has come into existence around the globe (Redfield 1956). He speaks of the “little community” as being a “part-society,” to the extent that it is largely separate from state society in its internal constitution but deeply dependent on it. In Minho too, the role of the small towns and their urban elites as instruments of encompassment of peasant economy and peasant religious life cannot be played down. Nor is it in any way easy to decide chronologically when it was that all this started. Ever since Roman occupation (ca. 3rd century BC), when the populations of the hilltop hamlets (the

castros) were driven out of their eagle nests and made to work the fertile fields of the lower lands as serfs of Romanized landlords, a relation evolved of mutual interdependence based on relative separation.

As Portugal changed in the course of the 1980s, and particularly after it entered the European Economic Community in 1986, for the first time in over a millennium, this counterpunctual relation seems to have vanished. There are still manifestations of rural/urban differentiation, but the sense of diversification of a worldview, the sense of distinct traditions of personal identification that were carried by the peasant/urban counterpunctuality seems to have vanished. Most people in the countryside live today in what can be considered a form of periurbanity. This is not unique to Portugal, of course. It is, indeed, a broader feature of southern Europe—of those regions of our semi-continent where the industrial revolution did not manifest itself with great impact during the nineteenth century.

What does this mean for the way in which society is structured in southern Europe today? How will it come to affect the sense of national belonging, particularly by relation to the ultimate measure of political legitimacy—I mean autochthony? Might we consider that the role that immigration has been playing of late as a kind of phantasmagoria of national ideological life is a form of reinstitution of the sort of counterpunctually ambiguous imbalance of belonging that characterized the urban/rural polarity, as we saw it manifested in the indeterminacy of meaning of the word *povo*? Is there anywhere in the world where autochthony does not present itself as a dynamic aporia? If this aporic nature of autochthony is a general condition of sociality, then, metaphysical pluralism is a feature of all long-term processes of social constitution. The *contrapunteo*, then, would not be a Cuban idiosyncrasy, but a historical inevitability of all mature state formations.

What these observations suggest is that schismogenesis is an inevitable aspect of all ontogenesis. In other words, the persistence of entities in time (each person, each house, each nation) is mutually dependent on their relative differentiation in space (the contrast of different forms of life)—this would be the ultimate implication of the concept of metaphysical pluralism.² In taking that stand, we would be retracing the footsteps of Derrida, when he insists on the dual meaning of constitutive

2. I propose here that an ethnography of presence need not imply a collapse into ethnocentrism, a metaphysics of presence, in the sense Derrida gives to these expressions (1967).

“difference” (*différance*, 1982: 6-9): meaning at the same time both “to defer” in time and “to diverge” in space. These are questions that I leave here as challenges. But they do emerge directly from our reading of Ortiz’s work all these decades after it was written. They are proof of the creativity and acuteness of his initial vision.

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The intensive image

Transculturation, creativity and presence in the cult of María Lionza

Roger Canals

Becoming is that which literally evades, flees, and escapes mimesis.
—Eduardo Viveiros de Castro

The two images below (Figure 1) represent María Lionza, the main divinity of a widespread “Afro-Latin American” (Reid Andrews 2004) religious practice native to Venezuela called, by both “believers”¹ and researchers, “the cult of María Lionza.” The representation on the left shows a holy card (*estampa*) of María Lionza as a naked Indian woman astride a tapir, holding a pelvis in her hands. This representation of the goddess contrasts with the image on the right, showing her as a White queen.² These two images, popularly named as *La India* (The Indian) and

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1. “Believer” (*creyente*) is a contested term (Latour 2009). I employ it here as followers of María Lionza use it to refer to themselves.
 2. The “ethnic” or “racial” distinctions that I make when referring to the images are based on the discourse of practitioners, who clearly distinguish between the Indian, White, Mestizo and Black representations of María Lionza. The same applies to the attributions of phenotypic “European,” “indigenous,” and “African” traits.



Figure 6: Holy cards (*estampas*) of María Lionza.

La Reina (The Queen) respectively, constitute the two canonical representations of the goddess.

In addition to these two major iconic models, countless representations of María Lionza—and, to a lesser extent, of the spirits of her pantheon—circulate within this cult, as well as within the world of art, in the public space, and on the internet. The disparity of representations of the goddess can heuristically be grouped together, however, in what I have called a “triple multiplicity” (Canals 2017): a “racial” multiplicity (María Lionza is represented and defined as an “Indian,” “White,” “Mestizo,” and, although less common, “Black” woman); a “moral” multiplicity (at times she appears as a benevolent entity and at times as malevolent); and a multiplicity in terms of femininity (she assumes both a highly sexual character, thus becoming a kind of femme fatale, and that of an almost angelical figure with no erotic component). Among these features some associations are more frequent than others. Thus, when she is represented as an Indian, María Lionza often has a marked sexual nature and is characterized by an ambivalent morality, whereas when described as a White or Mestizo queen, she tends to appear as a mature

and benevolent woman, to such an extent that she is often partially or fully identified with the Virgin Mary.³

Yet the most relevant feature in relation to the visual depictions of María Lionza is not just the fact that there are many different representations of the goddess, but rather that new images of this figure—or, at least, new versions of the existing models—are constantly being produced. Thus, during rituals, followers do not limit themselves to using the images they possess (usually plaster statuettes of the representations of La India or La Reina): on the contrary, they put great effort into creatively transforming them by repainting them, dressing them, or adding new elements to them. The same occurs with the artists and craftspeople (*artesanos*) who, instead of simply replicating preexisting iconic models, strive to make original versions of the goddess or to subvert and alter the usual aesthetic canons. In recent decades, this ongoing process of visual creativity has acquired its maximum expression within the domain of the internet and particularly on social networks such as Facebook. There one can find the most extravagant and inventive images of the goddess and the spirits of her pantheon, and for the most varied purposes: followers regularly post “digital altars” (visual compositions of spirits in which María Lionza adopts new appearances) and show homemade films about “spiritual topics,” including visual effects (such as how to build a shrine in honor of the goddess). Many independent artists (most of whom are also followers of the cult) use the internet as their privileged platform to distribute their creations about the goddess. As Taussig aptly puts it (1997: 169), María Lionza does not exist “so much as a figure but as a permanent possibility for figuration.”

What is the meaning of the iconic creativity that characterizes the figure of María Lionza and, to a lesser extent, the other spirits of her cult? Why do believers and artists go to such efforts to reinvent and

3. Elsewhere (Canals 2017), I have discussed at length the logics underpinning the moral and racial characterizations of María Lionza. For instance, the erotic dimension of María Lionza as an Indian woman has its origin in a Mestizo imaginary that developed in Venezuela during the mid-twentieth century. In contrast, when depicted as a Mestizo woman—and described, for instance, as the daughter of an Indian man and a Black woman—she tends to acquire a political and subversive attitude that is absent in most of the White representations. This is partly due to the fact that in recent decades, the “Mestizo version” has been incorporated by social movements demanding Afro-descendant and indigenous recognition.

transform the images of the goddess and her spirits time and time again? These are the main questions I will address in this chapter, which is based on long-term fieldwork that I have been carrying out since 2003 in Venezuela, Barcelona, Puerto Rico, and on the internet about María Lionza and her images, and which has led to several publications (Canals 2011, 2017, 2018a, 2020a, 2020b), multimedia projects (Canals 2018b), ethnographic films,⁴ as well as to an exhibition inaugurated in December 2020 in the Barcelona Ethnology Museum (Figure 2).



Figure 7: Exhibit in the Barcelona Ethnology Museum.

The main argument I would like to develop in this chapter is that the image of María Lionza can only function as a medium—permitting contact between the believers and the goddess herself—insofar as it is constantly reinvented, that is, insofar as it is personalized and singularized through acts of visual creativity. The idea that creativity makes religious images effective may seem rather counterintuitive for us. Indeed, we might be inclined to think that a “sacred representation” gains legitimacy—and therefore, efficacy as a *dispositive of presence*—when it is a replica or an imitation of an alleged original. Yet, the image of María

4. See films by author in References.

Lionza prompts us to think in other terms. In this case, what makes the image “authentic,” and therefore apt to act as a medium in the ritual context, is not the fact that it is the “copy of an original,” but rather the fact that it is what we might call an “original copy.” The term “original” should be understood here in two different, although complementary, ways: as novel or unique and as origin or beginning. Indeed, it is through visual creativity that original images can reestablish time and again the contact with divinities, thus reproducing the foundational moment when, according to believers, María Lionza and other spirits made themselves visible and therefore accepted to be worshipped *as images*.

The idea that the image of María Lionza may only function as an image insofar as it is reinvented goes far beyond the strict realm of the cult: indeed, no artist (be they a believer or not) would represent the goddess just through the imitation of preexisting models. Nor would any publicist or designer use this image for their campaigns without reinterpreting it. The idea of “invention” lies at the heart of the very definition of the image of the goddess.

It is for these reasons that in this chapter I will propose defining the image of María Lionza as an *intensive image*. I use the term “intensity” in a similar sense to that put forth by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro in his book *Cannibal metaphysics* (2014). In that book, presented as a Deleuzian reading of the work of Lévi-Strauss, the author calls for the need to think about the social world in terms of desire, production, and becoming. From this logic, social relations are seen as a force governed by the principles of multiplicity and difference—and not by identity and similarity. In the words of Viveiros de Castro: “becoming is the process of desire, desire is the production of the real, becoming and multiplicity are one and the same thing” (2014: 161). Thus, “intensity” as a concept is closely linked to the notion of “potentiality.” Therefore, an intensive image is an image permanently open to a process of differentiation, of production of novelty. In other words, it is a *becoming-image*, an image projected towards the future—and consequently subject to a principle of uncertainty.

The intense nature of the image of María Lionza has historically unfolded giving birth to countless specific visual representations, mutually linked. I will analyze the “life” of some of these representations through the concept of “iconic path.” This concept does not describe a linear and individual process of genesis, formation, and (eventually) destruction of images: it rather points to a myriad of interwoven stories connecting heterogeneous images which are conceptualized differently depending

on each “social actor” and historical period. In other words, “iconic path” is a term that breaks with positivist historicism (Palmié and Stewart 2016). In the case of María Lionza, the concept of “iconic path” helps us to understand why and how the two canonical models that I described above (the Indian and the queen) became established, and why these images, instead of getting “fixed” in a universally accepted representation, entered an endless process of aesthetic and conceptual differentiation.

The iconic paths of the image of María Lionza can be better understood if we consider them as instances of “transculturation” in the sense offered by Fernando Ortiz (1881–1969). According to Ortiz (1940b), “transculturation” refers to a heterogeneous, nonlinear, and reflexive movement of cultural creativity. It is, to use Viveiros de Castro’s terms, an intensive category, which does not aim to describe what things are but rather how things become to be. “Transculturation” is not a property or an adjective; there are not “transcultural realities” or “objects” as opposed to “nontranscultural” ones. It is a way of becoming or of coming into existence.

As Ortiz repeatedly recalls, “social” or “cultural” realities are not objective and self-evident entities that exist “out there” ready to be studied, but rather problematic and vaguely defined artifacts. In this regard, it is important, before delving into the iconic paths of the images of María Lionza, to provide some information about the history of this cult and, more precisely, about the longstanding debate surrounding its “religious categorization.”

A Mestizo, Indian, or Afro-American cult?

One of the ideas that can be drawn from the works of Ortiz is that “social realities” cannot be separated from the regimes of discursivity and interpretation in which they are enmeshed and that, to a certain degree, “make them.” This includes, of course, the work of anthropologists and social scientists in general, whose presence in the field and subsequent dissemination of intellectual artifacts (books, films, conferences) may recursively contribute towards transforming the realities being examined.

In this vein, we must acknowledge that the history of the cult of María Lionza—at least since the mid-twentieth century, when it began to be named and objectified as such—is inseparable from the history of all *politics of definition* that both academics and practitioners have continuously put forth. Actually, as for the case of Cuban Santería studied

by Palmié (2013), in the cult of María Lionza the distinction between “scholars” and “followers” is often blurred: most of the researchers interested in the cult were initially (or ended up being) members of the cult (this is not my case, at least as far as I am aware⁵), and many “believers” define themselves as researchers (*investigadores*) into the cult. In this regard, a quick glimpse at the different approaches towards the history of the cult of María Lionza reveals that the disagreements have been, and continue to be, very strong.

A group of researchers, mostly of Venezuelan origin, has argued that this religious practice is, originally, a pre-Hispanic and aboriginal cult, that was later influenced by other traditions such as Catholicism or the rites brought by enslaved Africans during the Spanish conquest (see D. Barreto 1990 and especially 2020). This position is today vigorously upheld by numerous believers, and especially by those who declare themselves to belong to the so-called “indigenous movement.” These members identify enthusiastically with the representation of María Lionza as a naked Indian astride a tapir. Drawing inspiration from current movements like environmentalism and a certain interpretation of feminism (María Lionza is often presented as a symbol contesting the hegemony of the patriarchy), this trend seeks to “return” the cult to its allegedly “original” practice, removing it from the cities and bringing it back to the natural spots from where it allegedly emerged.

This position finds part of its “scientific foundations” in a set of historical and archaeological studies stating that the origins of the cult of María Lionza can be traced back to a group of sacred Indian practices from the pre-Hispanic era originating in the Yaracuy region, in the central eastern part of Venezuela, where the cult is still intensely practiced today. These rituals consisted of the adoration of female divinities associated with rivers, snakes, and rainbows through statuettes that have been found near lakes or inside caves. These figures played a role as divinities of fertility and the harvest. Since the beginning of Spanish colonization, these religious practices would have felt the influence of Catholicism. Over the years, they incorporated Catholic elements such as the adoration of saints, the Christian cross, the construction of religious altars, and the use of holy cards (Clarac de Briceño 1996). This set of rituals and

5. Most of the practitioners of the cult with whom I have been conducting fieldwork for the last fifteen years consider that I “believe” in María Lionza despite my conscious efforts to deny it. This questions the very definition of “belief” (Canals 2018b).

cosmologies spread across the entire Venezuelan territory, incorporating some elements of the cults of “African” or “Afro-American” origin (Acosta Saignes 1984). Furthermore, at the end of the nineteenth century, the cult was decisively influenced by Alan Kardec’s spiritism—something Ortiz was continuously interested in (Lago Vieito 2002)—which entered Venezuela through Brazil. During the 1950s, and coinciding with the oil boom, the cult of María Lionza, which had been essentially rural, migrated to large cities like Caracas. With this migration, it began to experience a new process of Africanization, due to the influence of Cuban Santería, Umbanda, and Palo Mayombe—a process which is still occurring today in Venezuela and beyond.

It is precisely this massive presence of “Afro-American” elements within the current practice of the cult, vigorously criticized by the “indigenist movement” mentioned above, that serves as evidentiary basis for an important trend within the cult that claims that this religious practice must be considered as part of the large family of “Afro-American religions,” alongside Cuban Santería, Palo Mayombe, and Haitian Vodou, among others. This position has also been upheld by some researchers (Azria and Hervieu-Léger 2010). Indeed, it is common in altars today to see images of María Lionza next to statuettes of Elegguá or the bones of deceased relatives. The use of drums to call the spirits or the sacrifice of animals and the subsequent use of their blood to protect initiates is also widespread. This is why in another text (Canals 2017), I have proposed defining the cult of María Lionza as an “Afro-Americanized cult.” Having said this, it is worth specifying that many of the practitioners who in their practices constantly “mingle” the cult of María Lionza with Santería or Palo Mayombe also state that a difference can be made between what they call *espiritismo* (that is, the cult of María Lionza) and “African religions” (Santería and Palo Mayombe). They admit that “originally” the cult of María Lionza was perhaps solely Indian. Nevertheless, they also maintain that spiritism and African religions are two “religions” that naturally “fit together”: two complementary expressions of one same cosmological system that, having reached this point in history, cannot be undone. They also criticize the indigenous movement and all those who separate the cult of María Lionza from the Afro-American religions, thereby again leaving aside the African contribution to the history of the nation.

The indigenous and Afro-American positions I have just mentioned are controversial standpoints which lead to great debate, and feature strongly in political agendas. They do not seek to define what the cult

is but rather what it should be. On the contrary, there has been greater consensus (even among representatives of the above-mentioned trends) about the idea that the cult of María Lionza—at least in its current practice—is, to a greater or lesser extent, an example of “*mestizaje*” or “syncretism.” These terms point to the idea that the cult is a historical product that emerged as a result of the encounter between different cultural legacies that “originally” did not belong to the same source. In this regard, followers and scholars have made remarkable efforts to establish the cultural source of the current traits of the cult of María Lionza. Indeed, the use of tobacco—a crucial aspect of the cult, used to purify and establish contact with spirits—has been labelled as an example of the indigenous world; the episodes of spirit possession as evidence of the rituals of African origin brought by enslaved people during the conquest; and the “belief” in the improvement of souls in the hereafter as an example of the decisive influence of Kardecism at the end of the nineteenth century. To this foundation of “Indian,” “European,” and “African” cultures, other influences were subsequently added, stemming from mass media (the pantheon includes, for instance, the spirit of Tarzan), “oriental religions” (the presence of Buddha or even Shiva in the shrines is widespread) and, most importantly, the Venezuelan state (the cult incorporates the spirits of ancient leaders and presidents such as Simón Bolívar, José Antonio Paéz, and even Hugo Chávez). Yet the term “*mestizaje*” is used differently depending on each social actor. While believers tend to employ it in a positive way, describing the capacity of the cult to welcome different cultures—in other words, as an example of “spiritual cosmopolitanism”—its use in academia and, especially, mass media has been mostly negative and it has served to describe an “extravagant” and “accidental” mixing of cultural expressions that do not go together.

What all these debates concerning the identity of the cult of María Lionza highlight is that this religious practice has always been seen as a historical product that is difficult to classify. Neither clearly Afro-American nor indigenous, it has been labelled as “*mestizo*,” a kind of *pas-se-par-tout* expression for nonidentified cultural objects with often pejorative connotations. At a theoretical level, there are essentially two limitations of the concepts “*mestizaje*” or “syncretism”: on the one hand, these terms assume the existence of a set of pure and homogeneous sources, be they indigenous, European, or Afro-American, that would have accidentally mingled giving rise to hybrid cultural expressions. In other words, “*mestizaje*” and “syncretism” carry an evident cultural essentialism. A second problem these concepts present is that they are inevitably linear. Indeed,

they suggest the idea of a concluded process divided into three phases: an initial encounter of heterogeneous sources, a confusing period of cultural overlapping, and a final moment of formation and establishment of composite, although more or less stable, cultural forms. Yet, as I will show in the next section, the historical formation of the cult of María Lionza and her images cannot be defined as such.

In this regard, I find that the concept of “transculturation” constitutes an alternative conceptual tool for addressing the analysis of the cult of María Lionza—and, more precisely, of its images—by sidestepping some of the theoretical gaps in the concept of “mestizaje,” and freeing us from having to specify whether it is Indian, Afro-American, Mestizo, or anything else.

An example of religious transculturation

In his work *El contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y del azúcar* (1940b), Ortiz introduces the concept of “transculturation” as an alternative to the notion of “acculturation.” The main interest of this concept lies in the fact that it does not assume the idea of an initial encounter of “pure cultural sources” leading to “hybrid” cultural forms (as the concept of “mestizaje” does), but rather of an ongoing and never-ending process of cultural contact between initially already composite manifestations that developed through a heterogeneous, nonlinear, and multidirectional movement with no beginning or end.

This approach suits the historical formation of the cult of María Lionza, which was not—and is still not—a homogeneous process. Expressions such as “Indian past,” “African influence,” or “European heritage” operate rather as “conceptual fictions” (Palmié 2013), yet they do not describe the inner complexity and heterogeneity of the actors and practices involved in the formation of a cult that developed over centuries in different manners depending on the region, and that did not start to be unified until the mid-twentieth century, coinciding with the popularization of the two canonical images of the goddess. For instance, the Afro-descendant practices that influenced the cult during the colonial period were not “just African” but were already mingled with forms of so-called “popular Catholicism,” among other influences. On top of this, the Africanization of the cult during the 1960s cannot be understood without taking into account the role of the global industry of Caribbean music, mostly coming from Cuba and Miami, where references to the

Orishas were frequent (Ascencio 2012; Wade 2010). The implementation of the cult within Venezuelan territory was not homogeneous either. Thus, whereas in rural areas of Venezuela it remained very associated with the adoration of natural elements like waterfalls, trees, and stones, in big cities like Caracas it mainly turned to the work with urban spirits like the *Malandros* (delinquents) whose dramatic inner biography, involving crime, fights and, in general, *mala vida* (a very Ortimean topic by the way), made them become the center of particularly violent spiritual possession séances which often involved episodes of self-harm (Fernández 2004).

This inner heterogeneity of the cult is particularly evident today, as the diasporic experience of the cult shows. Thus, in the city of Barcelona where I have carried out extensive fieldwork between 2012 and 2020, most of the followers introduce elements of Catalan culture—such as the Virgin of Montserrat, a Black Madonna who, since 1881, has been worshipped as the patron saint of Catalonia—and even use the Catalan language to make the rituals more effective in this new context. In terms of visual culture, many images of the goddess made in Barcelona cannot be found in Venezuela. The practice of the cult beyond the Venezuelan borders presents some original particularities that force us to think about the diasporic experience not only in terms of transposition but rather in terms of reinvention—that is, in terms of transculturation.

Secondly, one of the interesting features of the concept of transculturation is that it frees us from having to consider the evolution of the cult of María Lionza as a linear or teleological process, guided by a unidirectional and progressive purpose. Indeed, the cult of María Lionza is full of unexpected twists. In the mid-2000s, when I started doing fieldwork on this topic, many young Venezuelans, especially in big cities, thought of the cult of María Lionza as a matter for older generations and tended to opt for other more popular religions, such as Cuban Santería and Palo Mayombe. Everything seemed to point to the idea that the appearance of new technologies would reinforce this process. Actually, the contrary happened: new technologies gave the cult new strength. Now, most of these Venezuelans and their offspring (people aged thirty and younger) have reconnected with the cult due to its sheer adaptability to the new forms of communicating and the new aesthetic canons (animated digital cards, Instagram-style photographs, GIFs, and so forth) that characterize the internet. Many rituals are performed online, such as reading the shape of the ash when smoking tobacco to predict a patient's future. For this generation, digital creativity and communication has become

an alternative form of relating to the sacred. The internet has pushed the cult into a new modernity.

Lastly, Ortiz insisted on the idea that, unlike acculturation, transculturation did not mean simply replacing one cultural expression with another, but is rather a process of mutual change. Phenomena of this kind appear repeatedly in the history of the cult of María Lionza and her images. The most striking example is the relation between the cult and the Venezuelan state (but the case of the new technologies mentioned above would be a valid example, too). As has been fittingly argued by authors such as Michael Taussig (1997) and Fernando Coronil (1997), the cult and the state “made each other” in a dialectical relationship that may be interpreted as a kind of Orticean *contrapunteo*. Indeed, during the twentieth century the Venezuelan state persecuted the cult, deeming it an example of superstition and black magic. Yet, many presidents and authorities practiced it in secrecy. On top of this, the state incorporated some of the main figures of the cult—like María Lionza herself or *El Negro Felipe*—in its national pantheon. By doing so, the state aimed, on the one hand, to establish national symbols capable of unifying the “racial” and “cultural” diversity of the nation⁶ and, on the other hand, to appropriate a set of historical and mythical figures whose ritual use among the historically marginalized people (peasants, Indians, Afro-descendants, citizens living precariously in the outskirts of big metropolises like Caracas) could become subversive. In parallel, the Venezuelan state, blessed by what Coronil calls the “divine gift of oil,” was presented publicly as a “magical” one, capable of performing secular rituals aimed at purifying and saving the nation. For this to be possible, citizens needed to be “possessed” by the values of the state and the ideals of its mythical figures, namely Simón Bolívar. In short: the state became the sheer and official—yet perpetually denied—expression of the cult of María Lionza. Inversely, the cult of María Lionza developed by introducing some of the fundamental mechanisms of the state that oppressed it. Not only did it introduce the spirits of presidents and rulers into the pantheon—Bolívar, Paéz, Urdaneta and, more recently, Chávez—but, more generally, it

6. The racial and moral multiplicity of María Lionza as well as the intimate connection between the popularization of this goddess’s images and the emergence of the modern Venezuelan nation draw parallels with other cultural and geographical contexts. See, for instance, Ramaswamy (2010) for a more in-depth analysis and the pictorial representations of “Mother India” from the late nineteenth century to the present.

adopted a bureaucratic language to communicate with spirits, which is still very evident today and stems from the judiciary domain (Canals 2020). Actually, what Taussig and Coronil point out is that there is a relation of “mutuality” between the state and the cult: each one being the inverted extension of the other or, to put it in other words, its *negative force*.

In short, the cult of María Lionza can be seen as a clear instance of a process of transculturation along which different practices and discourses performed by a variety of agents constantly intertwine, giving rise to original “cultural expressions” that challenge the classical dichotomies between “original” and “copy,” “official” and “unofficial,” and “center” and “periphery.” In the next section, I will show how the concept of “transculturation” helps us to gain a better understanding of the iconic paths of the two main images of the goddess.

The formation of the Indian woman

Let us return to the analysis of images. Today, visual representations are a key aspect of the cult of María Lionza. Yet, the mass use of images within the rituals of the cult of María Lionza is a relatively recent phenomenon. At the beginning of the twentieth century, most rituals of the cult of María Lionza took place in natural areas—in front of trees or large stones or in the middle of rivers—and the presence of material images in these spaces was rare, being limited to some representations of María Lionza, Catholic saints, or emblematic figures such as *El Negro Felipe* or *José Gregorio Hernández* (D. Barreto 2020; Taussig 1997). This observation has been confirmed by elderly believers whom I interviewed during my latest fieldwork in Venezuela in 2014. In this regard, the oldest reference to the use of images that I have found relates to a nineteenth-century representation of María Lionza.

We can thus note that the current consolidation of the cult of María Lionza in the mid-twentieth century coincides with the time at which the two official images of María Lionza, as a naked Indian woman and as a White or Mestizo queen, became popular nationwide.⁷ This

7. It is also worth noting that these two canonical representations refer to the two main explanations regarding the origin of the name “María Lionza.” It is important to bear in mind that in Venezuelan Spanish the word “*onza*” has a double meaning: it means both the Amazonian tapir

historical convergence enables us to put forward the idea that the spread of the cult to cities and the subsequent adoption of its current form was related to a “pictorial turn” (Mitchell 1994): in other words, a turn to a process of the proliferation of images and the adoption of a new visual paradigm. The overwhelming presence of audiovisual culture within big cities (cinemas, television, posters, and murals in the public space), the popularization of photography among the middle class, along with the dissemination in magazines and newspapers of divinities of the cult (see D. Barreto 2020: 144–45) are some of the reasons that help to explain the intrinsic connection between the urbanization of the cult and the increasing importance of the visual domain in it. Indeed, this implosion of images within the cult opened the door to a new “representational economy” (Wirzt 2014: 99): images went from being a secondary or nonexistent element to becoming the key element around which the practice of the cult was structured. This new “semiotic regime” (Keane 2018), in which visual signs gained importance as mediums for relating to the sacred, can be observed not only in referring to the material images, but also corporeal images (spirit possession). From the 1960s onwards, the cult left behind a model of ritual technique that was close to shamanism—a form of sacred mediation based on the spiritual travel of the medium’s soul to the world of gods and ancestors in which the medium’s body remains relatively calm and controlled—and incorporated trance and spiritual possession as privileged techniques to relate to the divinities. In this new paradigm, spirits “began” to descend into the mediums’ bodies. Trances often became aggressive and even violent especially concerning spirits of “low light” (*poca luz*), like the spirits of malandros and Vikings.

The image of the Indian woman astride a tapir was initially created by the sculptor Alejandro Colina (1901–1976) on the orders of the dictator Pérez Jiménez, who ran the country between 1952 and 1958.

and a gold coin that was in circulation in Spain and Latin America during the colonial period. This semantic plurality has led to a double interpretation of the expression “María de la Onza” (and María Lionza): it denotes either “María of the tapir” or “María of money.” The first is associated with the Indian version of the figure whereas the second has led to a version that depicts her as a Spanish woman who came to possess great wealth. Furthermore, many researchers maintain that the name “María” is the result of the historical “syncretization” of the indigenous divinity with the mother of Christ (Martín 1983).

Pérez Jiménez was keen on creating symbols that could unite the ethnic and social diversity of the country, with a view to extolling national sentiment among the population. The figure of an idealized indigenous woman—close to what Ramos has called a “hyperreal Indian” (1994)—who evoked the values of autochthony, resistance, and the ancestral past of the nation perfectly suited a leader who sought to have the population in favor of his plan to revive the country, known as the *Nuevo Ideal Nacional*. It was a monumental statue designed specially to mark the third edition of the Bolivarian Games. The statue was placed on the campus of the Central University of Venezuela, where the stadiums were set up. When the Games ended, the academic and municipal authorities, aware of the influence of the cult of María Lionza, decided to remove the statue from the campus in case it led to the organization of rituals and devotion towards the goddess. The image was transferred to the middle of a motorway (*Autopista del Este*), where it can still be observed today.⁸ Believers continue to gather there to pay homage to the goddess.

Why did Alejandro Colina represent María Lionza in such a unique way? The artist, who was part of what was known as the *movimiento indigenista*,⁹ states that he was inspired by the legends and myths of the region of Yaracuy which he had compiled during his time spent with “Indians” from the center-west of Venezuela (Díaz 2014). According to the author, these myths spoke of a beautiful Indian woman of an ambivalent nature who rode astride a tapir at night. She was associated with blue butterflies, rainbows, and serpents, and was deemed a goddess of fertility. In his workshop, Colina created his sculpture with the assistance

8. The current statue placed in the Autopista del Este is actually a copy of the original one, which broke in 2004, sparking great despair among followers, who interpreted it as a bad omen from the goddess.

9. The *movimiento indigenista* was a Venezuelan cultural trend in the mid-twentieth century which demanded greater visibility of the nation’s indigenous past. The movement was led by nonindigenous city dwellers who, despite conducting empirical works about the Amerindian communities living in Venezuela, never distanced themselves from a certain idealized perspective characteristic of the idea of the noble savage. Gilberto Antolínez, the writer and folklorist who during the ’50s popularized the myth of María Lionza as an Indian woman, belonged to this movement, too (O. Barreto 2005).

of Beatriz Veit-Tané,¹⁰ a very popular model and actress in the 1940s who later became one of the most important priestesses of the cult.

After being placed in the Autopista del Este, the statue quickly became a cult object for many of the believers living in Caracas who, to the surprise of the government, began to risk their lives crossing the motorway to access the base of the pedestal and make offerings to the goddess. The statue's success was so great that craftspeople (*artesanos*) and workshops of esoteric material began to make miniature versions of it. Soon afterwards, these icons started to feature on many public and private altars. Similarly, artists, advertisers, comic illustrators, and all types of visual creators took inspiration from the representation of María Lionza as a naked Indian astride a tapir to reinvent the goddess time and time again, as continues to occur today, especially on the internet. The formation of this image appears as an explicit transcultural phenomenon that involves a plurality of agents: Indian communities, the *criollo* and urban world to which Colina and Veit-Tané belonged, the state, and a wide mixed population of artists and practitioners of the cult.

This version of the origin of the image provided by Colina is not, however, shared by the majority of “believers.” Many followers of María Lionza with whom I have conducted fieldwork consider that Colina made this image based on an apparition or dream about the goddess—in other words, based on a mental image—in which the latter *decided* to appear to him as a beautiful naked Indian woman and asked him to make a sculpture in her honor, in which the tapir would also appear. According to believers, when Colina one day saw Beatriz Veit-Tané on the streets of Caracas he had the impression that he was again seeing the goddess from his dream and he used her as a model to create his piece. Colina may have decided to hide the true origin of the image out of fear of being called a witch (*brujo*). This *alternative iconic path* breaks the historicity of the official version of this image and puts the intervention of María Lionza herself at the core of the genesis of the icon.

The believers' explanation in relation to the iconic path of Colina's image is of special interest here as it shows that, from the point of view of the practitioner, the images of the divinity considered as “true” (Beltz 2007) or authentic always have as an ultimate origin a direct meeting with María Lionza—usually as a dream or apparition—in which

10. In the summer of 2014, I had the opportunity to interview Beatriz Veit-Tané. A very elderly woman, she continued to identify with María Lionza and defined the cult as a universal religion of shamanic nature.

she decided to make herself visible with the aim of becoming an image. This initial *visual gift* from the divinity ensures the subsequent link between sign (image) and referent (goddess). Therefore, in genetic terms, the artist is not so much considered as the creator of the image but rather as the medium between the goddess and her material representation. In a nutshell, every “true” image of María Lionza is a sort of self-portrait of the divinity herself—and this argument is valid, to a greater or lesser extent, for any religious image, at least within the Christian tradition (Belting 1994). That moment of initial contact with the goddess which gives strength to her images must constantly be reactivated or *intensified* to make the images efficient. In the case of María Lionza, this process of intensification takes place mainly through acts of visual creativity.

Besides this, both explanations about the genesis of the image of María Lionza highlight the dynamic relationship established within the cult of María Lionza between material, corporeal, and mental images (Belting 2011). Whether in the “official” version or in that mostly held by believers, the material image of María Lionza (statue) would be a transposition, via a corporeal image (model), of a previous mental image (artistic imagination in one case, apparition or dream in the other). At a general level, the iconic paths prompt us to think about the intimate relation existing between “transculturation,” as a creative process of cultural change, and remediation, understood as the transfer of images (or texts) from one medium of transmission to another, thus recursively redefining the uses and significances of the medium itself.

The image of the queen

Now we will move away from the analysis of the representation of María Lionza as a naked Indian woman and move on to commentary on another canonical image of the goddess, which is that of the White or Mestizo queen donning a crown and holding a rose close to her chest. This representation became popular in the 1950s and circulated especially on holy cards. When she is represented as La Reina, María Lionza is often accompanied by *El Indio Guacaipuro* and *El Negro Felipe*. The image of these three divinities is commonly known as *Las Tres Potencias* (The Three Powers, see Figure 3) and has often been shown as a kind of visual evidence of the mestizo nature of the cult, open to all “races” and “cultures.”



Figure 8: *Las Tres Potencias* (The Three Powers): María Lionza with *El Indio Guacaipuro* and *El Negro Felipe*.

There are countless historical hypotheses about the origin of this representation. One of the most frequent is that offered by the Venezuelan folklorist Bruno Manara (1995–2018). He agrees with the anthropologist Angelina Pollak-Eltz ([1972] 2004: 36) and other authors in underscoring that this image:

is the result of an error or a falsification, since originally it was the portrait of Eugenia María de Montijo (1826–1920), wife of Napoleon III, renowned for her beauty and leadership skills. A copy of the popular portrait of the admired empress of the French people was found in the 1930s in the office of the general secretary of the legal committee of the State of Yaracuy, who was at that time the poet Manuel Felipe Rojas Since, besides being a poet, he also had the reputation of being a witch [*brujo*], some thought that the queen in the portrait that the poet had in his office was María Lionza, and it was stolen. A modest anonymous artist drew it again, painting a crown with six points, giving her longer hair, touching up her necklace and adding a hand holding a yellow flag, a symbol of the Indian Court, bearing the words: “Protector of Waters. Goddess of Harvests” [*Protectora de las aguas. Diosa de las cosechas*]. This is how the holy image of María Lionza began to circulate. (Manara 1995: 44)

This explanation of the iconic path of the portrait of María Lionza as a queen reveals that the history of this image is a long history of copies: copies of images referring to other images, of signs denoting previous signs. This example allows us to reassess the very status of the “copy,” which, as suggested by authors like Sarró (2018), should be understood not as a mere repetition of an original but rather a potentially subversive reappropriation of it resulting in a permanent process of differentiation and therefore of production of novelty.

It is worth mentioning that these two representations of María Lionza—as an Indian woman and as a queen—often mingle: it is not rare to see the Indian woman wearing the queen’s crown or La Reina astride a tapir. It is also important to note that these images are visible not only as material or mental images, but also as corporeal ones. This mainly occurs during possession rituals. When the spirit of María Lionza “descends” as an Indian woman, the medium or *materia* tends to reproduce, with her body, the characteristic position of Colina’s image, raising her arms to the sky and arching her legs, as if she were riding a tapir. The spiritual possession of María Lionza as a queen is also frequent. In this case, it is common to dress the possessed medium in a crown and a blue shawl. It is however impossible to establish general possession models because, as believers say, each medium “descends” María Lionza “in his or her own way”—and that is also valid for any other spirit from her pantheon. Corporeal images also undergo a permanent process of differentiation.

According to the followers of the cult, this disparity in patterns of spiritual possession can be explained, on the one hand, by the active role played by the medium—and more precisely by his or her *body*—during religious ceremonies and, on the other hand, by the changeability of the spirits themselves, who modify their behavior according to the specific historical and social context. Regarding the first point, it is important to bear in mind that the possession ritual cannot be understood as a mere spiritual replacement in which the medium’s body acts as a simple receptacle via which the spirits express themselves, since, within this cult, the moral, intellectual, and emotional attributes of the individual do not only reside in the “soul” (*alma*), but they also essentially pervade the body (Canals 2012). This means that although the medium expels their soul, something of their person remains in their body during the possession rituals. And this body must keep a certain *homology* with the spirit that momentarily dwells in it. It is for this reason that an uneducated medium cannot host the spirit of a doctor, in the same way that a fearful medium would find it hard to “incorporate” (*incorporar*) the spirit of an Indian.

This leads us to the second point: in the cult of *María Lionza*, spirits, as persons, have a social life (Blanes and Espírito Santo 2014) which makes them “descend differently” depending on each situation. For instance, my fieldwork in Barcelona has shown that outside of Venezuela, spirits of the cult of *María Lionza* tend to descend in a more quiet and discrete way. When they manifest themselves in a foreign country, they often admit that they find it more difficult to intervene in day-to-day life out of their homeland. Spirit possession, like material images, is the outcome of a contextual process of co-creation, which results in constant reinvention of the ritual form (Wagner 1975).

Creativity and presence

Thus far, I have described the historical formation of the cult of *María Lionza* and of the two main images underpinning it. I have suggested seeing this religious practice and the iconic paths of its images as examples of transculturation as set out by Fernando Ortiz, that is, as a long historical process of cultural change made up of a continuous enmeshing of heterogeneous “cultural sources.” Now it is time to focus on the present.

Before that, it is important to recall that the cult of *María Lionza* is not (and has never been) a unified practice. The historical efforts made to regulate the cult and establish a common ritual code have failed miserably. Of course, there are some traits that are shared by all religious groups (such as the recognition of *María Lionza* as the main spirit and the employment of ritual techniques to contact the world of spirits) but the differences among them may be enormous. The same heterogeneity can be observed in relation to the use of images. In general terms, we may argue that the lack of institutionalization of the cult disseminated its practice into a multiplicity of rather heterogeneous communities who practiced it in their own way, thus “forcing” them to invent the cult. Through this process, the very principle of visual creativity became one of the cornerstones sustaining the ritual practice.

Having said this, I would like to briefly comment on three examples which show some of the ways in which the image of this goddess and the spirits of her pantheon currently unfold.

A current example of the reinvention of the image of *María Lionza* is the increasing use of mannequins to make the statues of the goddess. These statues often strengthen the erotic component of *María Lionza*

(a curvy figure, voluptuous lips, pronounced breasts) and their use in religious ceremonies is relatively recent (since 2010 approximately). These icons adopt a baroque and highly realistic style. They occupy the main spot in altars and are often carried on the followers' shoulders, as in a Catholic pilgrimage. The use of these mannequins is a clear example of what I have called "remediation." The mannequin used in the altars of the fashion industry has now become a religious icon, thus expanding its uses and significances. This trend has led to the rise of a vast black market of these mannequins in the country and on the internet. Yet it recursively points to the sacredness of the fashion industry in Venezuela and beyond. It invites us to think that the mannequin was already an object of veneration, an idol belonging to the worldwide fetishization of fashion—see Johnson (2018) for an excellent analysis on the intersection between the fashion industry and religion in Afro-American contexts.

Another instance of the intensive nature of the image of María Lionza comes from the world of art and more precisely with an experimental short film made by a group of artists and activists from Yaracuy called *Las Tres Potencias*, named after the three main divinities of the cult. The objective of this film is to show the life of an altar using stop motion.¹¹ It presents the icons of the cult of María Lionza literally in movement, "walking around" Sorte Mountain (the center of pilgrimage for María Lionza's devotees), appearing on-screen and then fading out, and changing their appearance. A voice reciting different prayers uttered within the cult provides an audio background to the piece. The artists told me that they chose to make a film in this way for two main reasons. The first is that this technique gave them the possibility to show the images of the cult as "living icons." They wanted to make it evident that, during the rituals, images work *as persons*—a very anthropological approach that once again proves the existing continuity within the cult, also in conceptual terms, between researchers, artists, and followers. However, the second reason they provided is perhaps more interesting. According to them, experimental cinema¹² is important as it is *new*: no one had represented María Lionza like this before. This novelty was not just an artistic whim but it had a spiritual purpose: it was a kind of tribute, a way of worshipping her. This statement points to the main argument of this text which

11. See the film *A Goddess in Motion (María Lionza in Barcelona)* (Roger Canals 2016).

12. For an analysis on the intersections between anthropology and experimental cinema see Schneider and Pasqualino 2014.

is that visual creativity within this cult functions as a way of relating to the sacred, as the main strategy for updating the initial moment when the goddess made herself visible as an image (Morgan 2010).

The third kind of images I would like to discuss comes from the realm of the internet. It is the collages made within the cult to highlight the links of spiritual kinship that unite believers and spirits. These compositions, very popular among youth, operate as a kind of classificatory strategy, and are based on a relation of similitude or likeness. The follower is dressed according to the representation of the spirit, and often adopts its corporeal attitude. It is important to mention that these images are not only intended to show an existing link but rather to reinforce it through the very act of making them and through the circulation of the image online. Thus, the creative production of the image, and the intensive circulation of it, acquires a performative dimension. In other words, it becomes a way of relating with divinities and therefore of intervening in the course of events.

These three modes of images stemming from the domain of art, ritual, and the internet show the new iconic paths that the image of the goddess is adopting and may be seen as examples of a current process of transculturation, through which the images of María Lionza and the spirits of her pantheon acquire original forms and uses. They all involve exercises of visual creativity and should be considered as actions or events aimed at renegotiating the relation with spirits, and, more precisely, making them present *as* images.

Conclusion: An intensive image

Before concluding this chapter, I would like to make a reference to the well-known distinction made by Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914) between index, icon, and symbol, as well as to the debate surrounding the “presence” of divinities in religious images (Engelke 2007). As regards the first matter, Peirce differentiates between three types of signs: the index (which has a natural or continuous relationship with its referent), the icon (based on the relationship of similarity or likeness) and, lastly, the symbol (which establishes a purely conventional relationship with its referent). In terms of sign, the figurative religious image—that is, that which seeks to make the appearance of the represented divinity visible, as is the case for the images of María Lionza—is, at least in principle, an icon. However, as several authors have pointed out (Gell

1998; Goody 1997; Meyer 2009), this religious image can only act as such—that is, it can only function as a medium between the believer and the divinity represented in the image—if it maintains a relation of identification or consubstantiality with its referent, in other words, if it is capable of achieving the status of index. An index, in fact, involves presence, and without presence there is no effective relation through the image. Herein lies the inherent ambiguity of the religious image as a “spirited thing” (Johnson 2014), an ambiguity or contradiction already pointed out by pioneering studies like those of Tylor and Lévy-Bruhl. These authors reveal this essential idea concerning the nature and role of divine representations: these religious images are defined as singular objects which, from the believer’s point of view, have both a direct and indirect link with the hereafter. A direct link because the gods are present in their representations insofar as they merge into them—images thus acquire the status of person by a process of participation (Pina-Cabral 2020)—and an indirect link because, despite this intimate relationship between the images and their referent, they are not fully identified with the divinity they represent; that is, the gods always remain on a level of transcendence. This double regime of the religious image (Canals 2017) enables believers to interact with the gods through the image’s medium, while at the same time avoiding complete assimilation of the gods with a material object (Robbins 2017). Different scholars have highlighted how this tension between mimesis and otherness, or between presence and representation, is not exclusive to religious images, but also manifests in other types of religious objects—such as texts—or, more generally, in endless examples of material (Miller 2010) and corporeal culture (MacDougall 2005).

Nevertheless, what I have tried to highlight in this chapter is that presence is not a permanent property of religious images but rather something that may occur, and that has to be intensified. Thus, the presence of María Lionza in her images, which enables these to act as a medium, that is, to have a *relational value*, must be permanently activated through a series of strategies that act as “transduction processes” (Keane 2013). And here lies the crux of the matter: if visual creativity is today essential for the practice of the cult of María Lionza, it is because it is through acts of visual creativity that the relation with the spirits, and with other individuals through the spiritual world, is established, maintained, and updated. Therefore, visual creativity—understood as a transcultural process resulting in the production of new images and the reinvention of old ones—reveals itself to be one of the crucial strategies

of presence which makes the cult work and evolve. Creativity is a mode of relationality.

What is the meaning of the iconic creativity that characterizes the figure of *María Lionza*? Why do “believers” and “artists” go to such efforts to reinvent and transform the images of the goddess and her spirits time and time again? These are the questions I posed at the beginning of this chapter. What I have hopefully demonstrated is that, within the cult of *María Lionza*, the proliferation of versions, copies, and replicas of the goddess should not be understood as a series of unsuccessful attempts at reaching an inaccessible original. The believers do not aspire to reach the “original image” because access to the divinity occurs precisely through the infinite production of original copies. The more creative, the more authentic.

If we stop thinking about *María Lionza* and her images in terms of original and copy we can leave behind a hierarchical and transcendental ontology, replacing it with what De Landa has called a “flat ontology” (2013). The religious images no longer operate as material mediators in relation to an inaccessible other world where spirits live (a world “up there”), but they act as channels via which a horizontal circulation of beings takes place. The different images of the goddess are not situated on a hierarchical scale—nor are the spirits in relation to humans. What we observe is a multiplicity of infinite and unstable copies, ever-changing, through which the goddess and her spirits may become present.

Bearing this in mind, it comes as no surprise that the intensive nature of the image of *María Lionza* is best expressed precisely on the internet.¹³ The internet appears, in the words of Viveiros de Castro, as a “structure without structure,” as an off-center and dynamic field, constantly generated by the circulation of images, texts, and sounds among millions of interconnected subjects. Therefore, the digital image of *María Lionza* does not constitute a rupture in relation to the previous material and corporeal images of the goddess, but it is the clearest and most complete expression of its essence. We could say that the image of *María Lionza* has found its natural habitat on the internet. In a way, her image has always been “virtual”—in other words, pure potentiality.

All of this may seem quite removed from the concept of “transculturation” coined by Ortiz, but actually it is not, since the latter describes precisely the process through which “cultural realities” (like the image

13. For a more in-depth analysis of the image of *María Lionza* on the internet, see Canals 2017, chapter 6.

of María Lionza) are permanently updated by incorporating and giving new meaning to “foreign elements,” thus recursively affecting them. And this is precisely what the image of María Lionza does incessantly, borrowing, for instance, the technique of experimental cinema, the use of mannequins, and the visual possibilities of social networks.

Ortiz thought that the Caribbean was an area where one could grasp, in a particularly transparent way, some of the crucial factors of humanity—namely, the deception of races and the creative nature of culture (1940a). In this vein, I am convinced that the intensity of the image of María Lionza—that is, its inner possibility of differentiation—does not constitute an isolated case but is a rather paradigmatic example of an ontological property that all types of images possess regardless of their “initial” meaning, appearance, and purpose.

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**“I certainly didn’t expect the Spanish Inquisition!”
Politics of transculturation in a Spanish enclave
in North Africa**

Brian Campbell

Lord Ganesh’s flamenco

One summer evening in the Spanish enclave of Ceuta, a crowd of about 300 people gathered around what looked like a Holy Week procession. But the statue at the heart of the congregation did not represent a majestic Madonna or a dying Christ. Sitting cross-legged among the tall candles was Lord Ganesh, his distinctive elephantine trunk tumbling over a generous belly. Christian statues (*pasos*) would be carried by highly disciplined troupes of burly porters called *costaleros*. Ganesh, however, preferred the shoulders of a ragtag team of laughing Hindus. When the accompanying brass band kick-started the procession with a lively rendition of Paco de Lucía’s “Entre dos Aguas,” they made him dance wildly. Ganesh jumped up and down, rocked to and fro, and even break-danced dangerously when the handlers lost their grip on the statue.

Whirling and twirling through town, Ganesh eventually reached the church of the Lady of Africa. Juan José Mateos, the delegate of the bishop of Ceuta and Cadiz, greeted the jovial procession and invited them inside. The president of the Hindu community, a towering man called Ravi, urged his followers to “show respect, for we are entering the House of God.” Men removed their sunglasses; women wrapped scarves around their shoulders. Now silent, they shuffled into the gloomy church

and up to the golden niche of the Lady of Africa. Two boys scrambled up the baroque altarpiece and crowned the stern-looking Madonna with bright lotus flowers. Weeping with joy, Christians and Hindus embraced each other and lined up to take family photos with Ganesh and the Lady. Finally, placing a fine rosary in Ganesh's hands, Mateos turned to the crowd: "The Lady of Africa is mother to all Ceutans. The Sanctuary is home to you all. May you remember today as proof of the *convivencia* between our *culturas*."¹

The procession — now containing many Christians — became rowdy again once it left the church. It bounced its way to the beach, where the Hindus stripped their clothes and rushed, joyful and laughing, into the sea. Ganesh joined them, leaping merrily from one set of eager hands to another. Back on land, Ravi addressed the crowd one last time. "The Remover of Obstacles will now leave you," he cried, shivering in his towel. "He will take with him the troubles of all Ceutans, regardless of religion. Glory to Ganesh! Truly, we celebrate the glory of Ceuta itself!"

The following morning, Ceuta woke up to an unexpected press release by the bishop of Ceuta and Cadiz, Rafael Zornoza. By allowing "the pagan elephant ... into our church," he proclaimed, "Mateos has defiled one of Ceuta's holiest sites." He "apologized" to the Christian community "for sights that surely caused pain, confusion, and scandal." But Mateos defended himself, insisting that "he worships none other than the one true God!" He denied that "a shared ritual took place" and stated that what had happened was simply "Hindus paying their respects to the Lady." Nevertheless, he admitted that "letting the idol into the temple was a deplorable act" and handed in his resignation (Matés 2017; see also Cañas 2017).

Matters escalated quickly. By the end of the day the incident made national headlines, with articles garnering thousands of comments (see Cañas 2017). On social media, some Christians thanked the bishop

1. This chapter discusses two distinct meanings of the word *convivencia*. On the one hand, it is a Ceutan term that refers to local state-led policies to foster solidarity and exchange between members of the enclave's four ethno-religious minorities. When used to refer to this emic concept, the word is italicized (*convivencia*). On the other hand, it is also an academic concept that describes an observable process of cultural dialogue, tolerance, syncretism, and conflict between Christians and Muslims in Spain. When used in this analytical manner, it is rendered in Roman script (*convivencia*).

for having the “balls [*buevos*] to speak truths we all know but dare not utter.” However, these voices were drowned out by those who argued that the bishop, “who rarely sets foot in Ceuta,” knows “nothing about Ceuta’s reality and threatens to undermine our greatest achievement: the *convivencia* between our *culturas*” which, some of them felt, “makes us unique in the world!”

I was having breakfast with Aakil, the young, Anglophone spokesperson of the Hindu community, when the scandal broke. “I certainly didn’t expect the Spanish Inquisition!” he remarked in disbelief. A few hours later, he assembled the Hindu community’s emergency committee. Looking grim, the usually jovial Hindus warned journalists of “the gravity of rejecting an act of *convivencia*” and reminded the bishop “that many Hindus carry Christian icons in Holy Week” (Aznar 2017a). They threatened to take the incident to the Vatican if Mateos was not reinstated (Aznar 2017b).²

Above all, however, all parties involved wanted Ceuta’s mayor-president, Juan Vivas, to intervene. After all, was not *convivencia* his big project? was he not funding local entities to produce such rituals? After a few days of silence, Vivas — who regularly pronounces his devotion to the Holy Mother Church and probably also did not expect the Spanish Inquisition — decried the bishop’s attack. Pushed from all sides, the bishop reinstated Mateos, although he ignored the Hindus’ demand to visit Ceuta and apologize publicly for the distress caused (El Faro 2017). Since then, Ganesh has visited the Lady unperturbed.

Engaging transculturation

Is the Ganesh crisis a story of how Ceuta’s *culturas* (cultures) converged to create a unique sense of identity and place in the world, one that is misunderstood by outsiders and that sits uncomfortably alongside powerful orthodoxies? Mediterraneanists have long studied the dynamics of exchange across religious, ethnic, and political boundaries (Hess 1978; Gilmore 1982; Albera 2006, 2008; Bowman 2019; Albera and Couroucli 2012; Barkan and Barkey 2015). Many are puzzled by “the Janus-faced” (Driessen 2004: 41) aspects of Mediterranean societies, which so abruptly shift from being beacons of coexistence to paragons of intolerance,

2. In Ceuta, Pope Francis was widely seen as a beacon of interreligious tolerance.

from “bridges” to “walls” (Bromberger 2007), from *convivencia* to *mala-follá* (ill temper) (Rogozen-Soltar 2017). The more influential models explain this contradiction by suggesting that tolerance and sharing occur only when it is politically and economically “convenient” (Catlos 2006, 2014) or when equally sized groups have no option but to put up with each other (Hayden 2002, 2016). Though lauded as “sober” and “realist” by academic and lay reviewers (e.g., Vose 2004; Kilb 2021), this framework casts humans as “Machiavellian” (Dietzel 2014: 130) materialists. It also reifies cultural groups (Henig 2012) and assumes that difference implies conflict, effectively treating coexistence as frustrated violence (Albera 2008; Bowman 2012).

Ceutans do not wait helplessly for political, economic, and demographic changes to push their town into ethno-religious conflict. Rather, Ceutan political visionaries have attempted to take daily experiences of intercultural sharing and mixing — what they call *convivencia* — and recast them into a distinctive marker of local identity. These agents hope that if Ceuta is equipped with a strong sense of solidarity that draws strength from hybridity, it will be better able to navigate the many hazards of postcolonial border life. Whether *convivencia* can actually do such a thing is the enclave’s question of the century. It may well be that in five years Ceuta will become yet another example of the viability of utilitarian models of coexistence. Until then, one may point out that *convivencia* as *conveniencia* (convenience) does not account for the primacy of affective states (e.g., fear, hope) or the importance of cultural production and coauthorship in the making of Ceutan identity. Such models also underestimate the power of ritualized practice, language, and “symbolic action” (Lienhardt 1961: 284) in the (re)shaping of experience, the construction of shared worldviews (Bloch 1989), and the establishment of contractual obligations (Rappaport 1999). Accordingly, this chapter looks beyond Mediterraneanist debates for inspiration and suggests that the work of Fernando Ortiz better captures what Ceutan *convivencia* is hoping to achieve.

Ortiz is known for changing his mind about the role of African heritage in the making of Cuban nationalism (Palmié 2021). Narratives of Ortiz’s academic career begin with him worrying that newly independent Cuba would fail to become a modern nation because it contained cultural phenomena — such as witchcraft, which he attributed to the African influence — that blocked the development of scientific and rational thought (Mullen 1987; Ortiz 2005, 2019). Ortiz studied such phenomena ethnographically, initially to learn how to eradicate them. In

doing so, however, he came to see that his idea of a successful modern state based on ethnic, linguistic, and cultural unity is deeply colonial and misrecognizes the nature of Cuban sociality (Santí 2005: 169–218). Ortiz realized that the “Cubanisms” that made Cuba look like a hopeless project should be revisited as “a weapon to be wielded by postcolonial cultural nationalists” (Palmié 2021: 19): exchanges across the country’s disparate groups should become emblematic not of irreconcilable division but of new forms of identity.

Famously, Ortiz (2014) described Cuba as an *ajiaco*. As Palmié (1998) has pointed out, the *ajiaco* cannot be reduced to a mere metaphor; it rather encapsulates a sophisticated epistemology of cultural difference and change. The *ajiaco* is described as a many layered stew. As ingredients are added, they come to interact and blend with each other. This mixing is not unilateral, with dominant ingredients subsuming less prominent ones. Rather, it is a complex process where new flavors and textures emerge from disparate items. Ortiz thus abandoned the unhelpful concept of “acculturation” in favor of “transculturation,” which better conveys the uneven and ongoing process through which different groups dialogue with and accommodate each other, and coauthor new forms of sociocultural life (Santí 2004; Rojas 2008; Arroyo 2016).³ Some subtleties of the *ajiaco* model bear pointing out, for they help us evaluate Ceutan multiculturalism. First, Ortiz was among the first to conceive of cultural blending without biological mixing (i.e., *mestizaje*). Transculturation operates at the level of habitus and may well go unnoticed if it were not for the keen eye of the ethnographer. Second, mixing in the *ajiaco* is uneven: the topmost layers are thinner, as newer ingredients have not yet had time to amalgamate. Likewise, it is ludicrous to expect transculturation to produce consistently blended societies; different groups, practices, or discourses may well react differently and change at different speeds (Ortiz 2014). Third, there are no ingredients “native” to the *ajiaco*: its components have been uprooted — at some point in history — from elsewhere and (unwillingly) put together by greater forces

3. Ortiz felt that “acculturation,” aside from being analytically unable to capture the complex processes occurring in Cuba, reproduced some ethnocentric assumptions embedded in even the most conscientious of salvage anthropologists, namely that the modern west will end up dissolving non-western cultures, which in turn are exposed as inferior. In doing so, Ortiz was caught up in the crossfire between Herskovits and Malinowski, the latter hoping to expose the ethnocentrism of the former (Santí 2004).

(Palmié 1998). Lastly, the *ajiaco* is in a constant process of being cooked (through transculturation). Identity for Ortiz is never fixed and always in a state of becoming and possibility. Ortiz's radical reconsideration of Cuba's African heritage has been primarily inspiring to those seeking to get to grips with the *mestizaje* that characterizes postcolonial Latin American states (see Gonçalves 2014; Hay 1995; Duany 1988). In line with Ortiz's hopes that transculturation could be exported beyond its Cuban cradle to become a widely adopted model of cultural change, however, Ortiz has also been taken up by those seeking an antidote to xenophobic neo-nationalism in general (Stewart 2021). As Bowman (2021) has noted, in Europe, where nations imagine themselves as neatly bounded and ethnically homogenous groups rooted in land, Ortiz sounds both threatening and utopic.

Over the past twenty years, Ceuta has sought to build a sense of local identity based on *convivencia*, which strongly evokes Ortiz's transculturation. I suggest that studying politics of transculturation on European soil allows us to add extra nuance to those who see in Ortiz the key to happy postcolonial societies. First, *convivencia* does not exclude domination, and carries a colonial legacy. Second, those wanting to "uncook" (Palmié 2021) *convivencia* should not be simplistically seen as villains clinging on to antiquated pasts or unrealizable fantasies of national purity, but as concerned agents trying to navigate tremendous political uncertainty. Third, while Ceutan *convivencia* revels in blurring boundaries, it also tends to trivialize and banalize religious heritage. In doing so, *convivencia* ironically created the grounds for the very phenomena it sought to counter: militant ethno-religiosity.

The city of functionaries

Ceuta was captured by Portuguese forces in 1415. Plans to use the enclave as a staging point for further African conquest failed, and the once prosperous city became a poor prison-fort, constantly under attack by Muslim forces. In 1580, Ceuta became part of the Spanish crown, although this did little to change the enclave's fortunes.⁴ This changed late in the nineteenth century, when Spain, reeling from the loss of its

4. The Iberian Union of 1580 brought Portuguese and Spanish holdings under a single crown. During this time, Ceuta became heavily "castilianized" and sided with Spain during the Restoration War of 1640.

global empire, colonized northern Morocco. Overnight, Ceuta became Spain's busiest port, attracting laborers and soldiers from Morocco and Spain, and Hindu and Jewish traders from across the Mediterranean (Rezette 1976: 70–81).⁵ These trading families continued to operate after Morocco's independence in 1956, using their global connections to import goods unavailable in mainland Spain. Every day, thousands of visitors crowded the enclave's streets, fighting over the latest electronics and cheap luxury items. My informants remembered this period of trade-based prosperity between the 1960s and the 1980s — known colloquially as the “bazaar economy” — fondly and with great nostalgia. It represented, in their mind, a Ceuta that was not “the asshole of Spain,” as one informant remarked, but a place of wonder. Plays and novels are set in the period, and shops surviving from this time are officially considered to constitute cultural heritage. When Spain prepared to enter the European Union in 1992, it had to standardize its import duties, and goods unique to Ceuta now became available on the mainland. Trade with Morocco was restricted. Another crucial part of the Ceutan economy involved Spanish youths doing their compulsory military service (*la mili*). These troops had to be housed and entertained, and they often bought items to take back home to their families. The abolition of conscription in 1992 effectively halted this income. The final nail in the coffin was the fortification of Ceuta's border against sub-Saharan migration. This resulted in bloody tragedies that ruined the enclave's reputation and made it an unattractive destination for tourists or financial investment.

Fearing Ceuta's growing irrelevance and Morocco's persistent irredentism, local politicians sought a way to bind the enclave closer to Spain (Rontomé 2012: 48–56).⁶ In 1995, following a hard campaign, Ceuta became an “autonomous city.” It gained considerable self-governing

5. The Hindus who first settled in Ceuta at the end of the nineteenth century came not from South Asia but from established trading families in Gibraltar, and initially dedicated themselves to supplying the Spanish military. Throughout the twentieth century, these families have tended to import kin and wives from what they identify as “India” (actually Pakistan), with the largest wave of Hindu migrants arriving after the partition of India in 1947.

6. Morocco claims the enclave as its own. In the late 1980s, Spain seriously considered selling Ceuta and Melilla, another Spanish enclave about 240 miles to the east of Ceuta, to Morocco. Recent reports reveal that such ideas were also entertained by the Spanish royal family.

powers, under an elected mayor-president, although these were not as extensive as those enjoyed by regional governments on the mainland.⁷ In order to exercise this power, local ministries and public companies had to be set up, schools and hospitals built, and police and security forces expanded. By 2015, 50 percent of Ceuta's inhabitants were public employees (Observatorio de las Ocupaciones 2016). Civil servants in Ceuta enjoy generous wages and live comfortable lives.⁸

It soon became evident that this new "civil service economy" had two fatal flaws. While there was much money in Ceuta, it was unevenly distributed. Most white-collar positions went to the "Christians," a term that refers to Spanish peninsular origin, not faith. Christians constituted 56 percent of the enclave's population of 85,000. Many were not even Ceutan but moved in from mainland Spain to enjoy the high wages. Jews and Hindus constituted 1–2 percent of the population and were wealthy traders and landowners. Some made it to very high positions in the municipal government. Ceuta's Muslims, who typically descended from humble rural backgrounds, seemed unable to compete with other ethno-religious groups for lucrative civil service positions. They were also outpriced by Moroccans, who could sell their labor cheaply (and informally) in the enclave's domestic and construction sectors.⁹ They thus subsisted on welfare, established patronage ties in the hope of securing petty jobs, used Moroccan connections to supply small shops, joined the army, or dabbled in drug and human trafficking. Those few who have

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7. Ceuta's autonomous powers lies ambiguously — and unconstitutionally, some might add, since there is no provision for such a construct in Spain's constitution — between a municipal and a regional government. Matters such as land use, taxation, culture, and the environment lie under Ceutan jurisdiction. A delegate appointed directly by Madrid's central government manages matters pertaining to national interests, such external affairs, border regimes, highways, and education. Bad relations between the delegate and Ceuta's mayor-president can make the town ungovernable.
 8. Wages are 30 percent higher than the national average, and most income is untaxed. Jobs in the civil service are for life and locally seen as prestigious (kids often say they want to be civil servants when they grow up). The spending power of civil servants drives land and property prices.
 9. Ceutan laborers would not hire Spanish Muslims to work in intimate positions (e.g., as domestic servants). Aside from having to pay tax (and thus costing the employers more), these workers are protected by Spanish labor law and are thus not as easily disposable (or exploitable) (Campbell 2018).

managed to become doctors or lawyers claimed that their success was despite, not thanks to, the system. Most entered politics to quash what they described as “structural racism.” Stated otherwise, Ceuta was a place of brutal socioeconomic inequalities that dangerously flirted with ethno-religious boundaries.

The second problem was that Ceuta’s wealth now depended on one source: Madrid. This made Ceuta susceptible to strongmen with forceful solutions for diversification. In 1999, for example, Ceutans elected to power the Grupo Independiente Liberal (GIL). Its leader, the bombastic tycoon Jesus Gil, proposed turning Ceuta into a tourist haven to create jobs and prevent local youths from having to migrate.¹⁰ He also promised to “clean the streets” of (Muslim) beggars and gangsters. GIL’s rule was marked by ethno-religious tension and the selling of public assets to Gil’s companies. It was driven out in 2001 by a coalition of local parties (Rontomé 2014). Ceuta also became vulnerable to a second kind of strongman, one able to control the flow of wealth through patronage. Gil’s successor was a small, quiet figure called Juan Vivas. A charismatic negotiator, he reliably secured vital funds from Madrid even during the recession of the late 2000s. Moreover, he managed to build a network of clients spanning all of Ceuta’s ethno-religious groups. This network has enabled him — and his conservative Partido Popular — to govern Ceuta with comfortable majorities for over twenty years. Since *convivencia* is an integral part of his rule-by-patronage, it is to it that we now turn.

Convivencia

In official events, Juan Vivas routinely stresses that Ceuta is a town “founded on *convivencia*.” Effectively departing from historically entrenched mono-cultural models of Spanishness, Vivas urges his co-citizens to think of the city as a “melting pot” (*crisol*) whose “four cultures” (*culturas*) — and the “idiosyncrasies they produce” — are “integral ingredients of Ceuta’s unique identity” and “therefore all equally and viably Spanish” (Ramos Caravaca 2019). Furthermore, he reminds Ceutans to

10. Youths leaving Ceuta is widely considered as the ultimate local pathos. Their departure is immortalized in touching carnival couplets. Traditionally, youths go to Granada or Madrid to study and then stay there. Since the recession in the late 2000s, however, they have had to forage further afield for slimmer pickings.

be wary of politicians who, seeking personal glory, pit the *culturas* against each other.

Constructing such a utopia is one thing; convincing citizens to adopt it is another. In local parlance, the word *cultura* loosely refers to an ethno-religious group and its heritage. Accordingly, the municipal government encourages the formation of *comunidades* (communities), property-holding corporate groups with legal statutes defining their competences, structure, membership, and leadership. Communities were often reboots of existing entities. Christian communities are extensions of Holy Week fraternities and parishes. The Hindu and Jewish communities, which encapsulate all coreligionists, emerged from trade guilds formed during Franco's dictatorship (Tarres 2013a, 2013b). Muslims have around sixty communities, most centered on the management of mosques. I spent much time between 2011 and 2018 working with these communities, attending meetings, discussing plans, interviewing members, and maintaining their books.¹¹

Communities could approach the Ceutan government for funding to help maintain a sacred space or develop a cultural project. Money was often forthcoming on condition that the community made the funded heritage available to outsiders. This heritage also had to be recast in the language of *convivencia* and presented as something that enriches and belongs to all Ceutans. The final deal (*convenio*) took the form of a written contract, signed publicly between the community and the local *consejero* (minister) of culture.¹² Most deals amounted to around EUR 65,000 annually but could go much higher. In 2007, for example, the Hindu community received EUR 500,000 to build a magnificent temple in the city center. Ceuta also has many municipal entities that helped the communities promote their projects. The largest of these had an annual budget of EUR 300,000.

11. This meant that most of my informants were men between twenty and seventy. Women were active in most communities, but mainly behind the scenes. There were cases where women rose to prominence. One Christian "brotherhood" was led by a woman who allowed girls to carry statues (previously something restricted to men). Another Muslim community was famous for its female spokesperson, who designed many activities for girls, including a choir.

12. Since 2019, the minister of culture has been Dr Carlos Rontomé, a sociologist researching interethnic relations.

The main outcome of this funding were the many colorful spectacles that regularly and playfully disrupted Ceuta's quotidian urban rhythm. For example, in November 2015, Ceuta's main square was invaded by a troupe of girls in bright saris, swirling to Bollywood music. Ravi, the Hindu community's president, called on the crowd to join in the celebration of Diwali at the temple. Those who took up the call were greeted at the temple's gate by the dancing girls, who helped guests remove their shoes and ritually announced their presence to the gods. After Ceuta's mayor-president and representatives of the other major communities ceremoniously took their seats in the front row, Ravi related the Ramayana, adroitly noting how it carried a message of fraternity that all Ceutans should take to heart. The Hindu's esteemed guests were then invited to perform a *pūjā* in honor of the Goddess of Lakshmi who — as Ravi confidently stated — would now bring financial fortune to all Ceutas, irrespective of their creed. Hindus applauded, watching members of the other *culturas* perform their rites. The ritual concluded with all participants swearing to uphold *convivencia*, and guests were given offerings of blessed food and asked to “remember what we learned today” as they left the temple. For Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish community likewise invites outsiders for a tour of the synagogue. During Ramadan many Islamic communities welcome non-Muslims to join in the breaking of the fast. They compete with each other to host the mayor-president, who takes the opportunity to remind Ceutans that Eid-al-Fitr (which brings the city to a standstill) should be savored as a Ceutan idiosyncrasy. But events need not be religious. Culinary festivals celebrating local delicacies (notably chicken hearts, mullet, and other dishes inspired by the Moroccan cuisine), film festivals, music concerts, and fashion shows occur frequently and are well attended. Despite their propensity to precipitate riots (Campbell 2016), *carnivalistas* are also appreciated for their ability to reflect on idiosyncrasies that only Ceutans can understand, such as local mannerisms (Muslims infusing Spanish with Dariya),¹³ figures (confused northern European tourists, Russian sailors, or abandoned Moroccan minors), or situations (being trapped in Morocco when the border is shut, being unable to cross to/from mainland Spain during a storm, or being woken up at dawn by the call to

13. Dariya is the Arabic dialect spoken by local Ceutan Muslims. The Dariya spoken in Ceuta relies on heavy code-switching with Castilian, and many locals consider it to be sufficiently different from northern Moroccan dialects to be its own language.

prayer from the minarets). As Haugerud (2013) has noted, humorists are not that dissimilar to anthropologists in their capacity for social critique and their talent for exposing cultural facts that are intensely local and “culturally intimate” (Herzfeld 2004), sometimes to the point of concern and embarrassment.

Communities are strongly encouraged to invent new interreligious rituals. Here we see *convivencia* at its most ludic (and ludicrous). During Ramadan 2016, for example, Ceutans taking a stroll on the beach at sunset were treated to the curious sight of Hindu and Muslim women performing yoga together. After the session, they eat together (*iftar*) to break the day’s fast. The respective spokespersons described to onlookers that “we hope to be able to understand each other better through such spiritual activities, and thus strengthen the *convivencia* between us.” The Yoga-iftar session — now a regular feature on the Ceutan calendar — is hardly the largest joint event between the two communities. In 2012, the Hindu and Muslim new year fell in the same week.¹⁴ To commemorate this cosmological convergence, the Hindu community “twinned” with the Al-Idrisi community (of which we will hear more of soon). The event took place on a stormy night in Ceuta’s main theatre. Hindus, in crisp suits and elegant saris, occupied one side of the hall; Muslims in bright djellabas the other. In the front row sat the mayor-president, flanked by the imposing Ravi and a stern old sheikh, beard as white as his immaculate robe. A Hindu boy and a Muslim girl opened the evening, celebrating the fact that Ceuta is not just the city of four cultures but of four calendars. They remarked that it is a sign of *convivencia* that Ceutan children know so much about other religions.¹⁵ Aakil — with whom I ate breakfast in the opening vignette — then took the stage. Dressed in princely robes adorned with glittering gemstones, he sat majestically on an assortment of plush cushions. Harp in hand, he sang about Rama’s quest to rescue his bride, Sita. Some Muslim girls next to me found his high-pitched singing hilarious, but their mother quickly shut them up with a smack to the back of the head. Aakil was soon joined by the Al-Idrisi girls’ choir. Together, they performed a religious hymn (which Aakil had composed specifically for the occasion) elating the names of Krishna, Jesus, Mohamed, and God. The audience was

14. The year 2062 according to the calendar kept by Ceutan Hindus, and 1434 in Muslim reckoning.

15. It is common for children in Ceuta, regardless of their *cultura*, to know the basic tenets of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Hinduism, if not more.

quick to pick up the simple tune and lyrics and joined in enthusiastically. The “twinning” concluded with a ten-man band from Tangiers. They had to play without their bassist and drummer, who had been held up at the border, but they nevertheless managed to rouse the place with their religious songs. Hindu hips gyrated, Muslim women ululated, and the mayor-president smiled awkwardly as the previously grave sheik next to him was head-banging wildly, his age washed away by the music.

The municipal government also patronizes traditions that organically (that is, without institutional prodding) developed an interreligious character. The best example takes place at Easter when Ceuta’s Christians converge in El Principe. Christians abandoned this neighborhood long ago; it is now fully Muslim and associated with crime. They left behind, however, a precious statue known as “the Medinaceli” in a small church in the center of the neighborhood. Accompanied by the mayor-president and other cultural representatives, the Medinaceli is carried through El Principe, visiting mosques along the way. Ceutans of all *culturas* jostle with each other to take photos of these encounters. As they do so, they whisper: “Only in Ceuta do you see such things.”

Funding is also available for projects revitalizing or reinventing cultural heritage. In 2012, a group of Muslim children, holding exotic placards and chanting in Arabic, descended on Ceuta’s town center. The following day, the Al-Idrisi spokesperson announced that Ceuta had witnessed a *hutma*, a ritual where children thank God for allowing them to memorize parts of the Qur’an. The hutma looked strange, the spokesman argued, because it had not been done in thirty years and had faded from memory. Al-Idrisi was lauded for “recovering Ceuta’s intangible heritage” (Echarri 2012). The *hutma* was the first of Al-Idrisi’s many achievements. Since its founding in 2011, this community has offered Arabic classes, after-school tuition, and singing and dancing lessons. Most importantly, however, it began salvaging local Muslim traditions that it felt were being erased by the reformist Islam of the Union of Islamic Communities of Ceuta (UCIDCE), which controlled the majority of Ceuta’s Muslim community. Al-Idrisi employed researchers to conduct life-history interviews with elderly Muslims.¹⁶ They pulled together the data in books on Muslim “folklore” (e.g., witchcraft, rhymes, legends) and tradition (e.g., Mawlid and other Sufi-inspired rituals like the

16. For this, Al-Idrisi preferred local Muslims with training in the social sciences.

butma) (see Mohamed Mohamed and Avilés 2017).¹⁷ Al-Idrisi also exhibits Muslim material culture (such as old furniture, dress, and household appliances) and old photographs depicting Ceuta's Muslims. Al-Idrisi's leaders hope that such projects would expose Islam's long history in, and impact on, the Ceutan *ajiaco*.

My interlocutors described these kinds of activities as “rituals of *convivencia*,” for they sought to stress the compatibility of Ceuta's *culturas* and highlight the exciting processes of transculturation occurring in the enclave. I prefer to call them “rituals *for* *convivencia*.” By allowing Ceutans the opportunity to offer and accept hospitality and physically experience each other's traditions (sacred or otherwise), they explicitly tried to create a sense of solidarity that would hopefully endure challenges to come. Participants in rituals *for* *convivencia* were often required to swear to uphold the values of multiculturalism and the model of Ceutan-ness they implied. Pablo, who directs one of the municipal institutions that helps communities with their projects, once described his job to me as “a process of knowing what you can and cannot do.” Karim, who leads a small community allied to Al-Idrisi, wants to “help the ‘four *culturas*’ understand one another. He hoped that “Christians do not see Muslims as *moros*, and Muslims do not think of Christians as *gauris*.”¹⁸ Ravi of the Hindu community, in turn, said that *convivencia* was like “planting a seed. I hope that I will grow into a mighty tree with strong roots.”

The Ganesha crisis suggests that the tree thus planted could indeed weather the odd storm. But storms brew beyond Ceuta's shores and activate the enclave's time-honored skepticism of outsiders. The real problem is that the Ceutan model of *convivencia* suffers from many internal contradictions that threaten to rip it apart from within.

17. Mawlid celebrates the birth of the prophet Mohamed. Reformist Islam has tried to extinguish this tradition in Ceuta, but it is now being revived by Al-Idrisi as a deeply Ceutan phenomenon. Al-Idrisi claims that Mawlid was introduced to Ceuta by Abu al-Azafi in the twelfth century in direct imitation of, and to counteract, the Christian Christmas.

18. *Gauri* is a derogatory term for a Christian of peninsular origins. *Gauris* are seen to be rich, selfish, arrogant, materialistic, utterly spoilt, and unacquainted with real sacrifice or hardship. *Moro* is a derogatory term for Muslims. *Moros* are held to be backward, unable to shake off the burden of kin and religion. *Moros* are considered fiercely jealous of Spaniards, to use all their cunning to harm the latter's interests, and to live parasitically off their wealth.

Connivencia

In 2016, the satirical website WikiCeuta introduced a new (fictional) reporter: “Isaac Al-Idrisi de Meneses y Pawani, the most Ceutan of Ceutans.” Local readers would certainly recognize Isaac as a common Jewish name, the Pawanis as wealthy Hindus traders, Al-Idrisi as a medieval cartographer, and de Meneses as Ceuta’s first Portuguese governor. At school, they would have learned that not long after the Portuguese conquered the town, de Meneses, a minor knight, was playing hockey. When he heard that all great nobles had declined the position of governor for being both dangerous and unprofitable, de Meneses volunteered for the job. “And all I shall need to defend Christianity,” he claimed, “is this stick!” Ceutan mayor-presidents — who fashion themselves as de Meneses’s successors — still wield a hockey club.¹⁹ WikiCeuta’s mood then turns sour. “Isaac is so *caballa* [mackerel, slang for Ceutan] that he eats chicken hearts with curry for breakfast and sings carnival couplets in Dariya. As a full-time asker-of-favors, he wishes to become a journalist. This would be his fourth failed career” (WikiCeuta 2016).

WikiCeuta writes in jest and exaggerates for effect. Nevertheless, the figure of Isaac highlights issues inherent in Ceuta’s politics of transculturation. These are issues that Ceutans have long felt and have now started to articulate and act upon. Would *convivencia* produce dishes that were incongruously and disgustingly absurd? Were all *culturas* really freely compatible? Curried hearts were a local delicacy. Outsiders, however, found them repulsive, and even Ceutans acquired the taste slowly and with much effort. Was the future promised by *convivencia* ultimately dysfunctional? Having Muslims sing couplets in Dariya seemed an obvious step in the transculturation of carnival, a tradition from the Christian cultural sphere. But would this not make an institution so reliant on shared linguistic tricks, subtleties, and references utterly banal and pointless? Moreover, did not *convivencia* become particularly problematic when set against the town’s economic realities? And how to make sense of the fact that venerable cultural traditions with long historical pedigrees suddenly become undignified beggars scrambling for survival when they settle in the enclave?

19. In fact, the enclave nearly bankrupted Portugal, although de Meneses acquired a personal fortune ransoming prisoners. This is considered very Ceutan.

A few weeks after the WikiCeuta article, Arjun, the keeper of a Hindu temple, exclaimed, as he was finishing ritually purifying the sacred space: “Look, I know what we’re trying to do. But let’s face it. The people who came in for Diwali yesterday did not come to honor Lakshmi; they came to have fun.” Arjun’s complaints were hardly exceptional, and many of my interlocutors reported feeling uncomfortable with “others” (mis-) handling sacred objects and spaces (ironically bought with *convivencia* money). Neither did they find the many infelicities that occurred during these rituals — an Imam fumbling the *pūjā*, a Christian breaking the fast with the left hand, or a Hindu eating food intended for Muslims — particularly amusing.

Community leaders therefore had a tough time convincing their followers to continue participating in Ceuta’s project of *convivencia*. In meetings, they argued that their communities would be unable to maintain their cultural identities without this money.²⁰ *Convivencia* also offered them a way to publicly perform their Ceutan-ness and belonging. In some cases, the success of these arguments depended on whether the community had the ritual means to address issues of purity and pollution. Hindus had several expiatory and purification rites in their religious repertoire. They also performed rituals twice: once for outsiders, then again for coreligionists behind closed doors. Yet the feeling that *convivencia* trivialized religion was hard to shake off. Under pressure, the Ceutan priest involved in the Ganesh crisis felt he had no option but abandon his initial position and reject Ganesh’s visit as a shared rite. One imam refused to participate in the feast of Durga, claiming that it constituted *shirk* (idolatry). In a private conversation, he observed that “in these rites of *convivencia* we do not worship God; we worship Ceuta, we worship ourselves.” This discomfort could lead to violent social dramas. In 2004, the Medinaceli was stoned as he approached a mosque, creating panic and escalating into a stampede that hospitalized four. The statue now tours El Principe with an escort of 200 armed police officers.

That said, *convivencia*’s major problem lay in the incongruity between its discourse of transculturation and the enclave’s obvious socioeconomic disparity. I lost track how often interlocutors confessed that “we will always tell outsiders we have *convivencia*” but that I, as anthropologist, would have “surely noted” that “there are two Ceutas.” Echoing Smith’s (1960) dyspeptic “plural society” model, my informants often remarked

20. Language was the most visible of these issues, with smaller *culturas* rapidly forgetting their native tongues.

that “we [the *culturas*] do not live together, but alongside each other,” or that “there is no *convivencia*, only *coexistencia*.”²¹ On hindsight, I can see why *convivencia* in Ceuta took the form of public ritual: it sought to contest embodied experiences of inequality with equally authentic experiences of solidarity. To many of my informants, this did not sound like a viable answer. Rather, it smacked of conspiracy. Indeed, over the past decade more and more of my Muslim informants shifted their allegiance away from the mayor-president and toward the Dignity and Citizenship Movement (MDyC). This party, formed by young Muslim lawyers in 2013, maintains that Ceuta’s *convivencia* is really *connivencia* (connivance). It is a deliberate sham, using spectacle to distract Muslims from their economic predicament. They want *convivencia real*, a system that would allow Muslims to mix as equals in the economic sphere and not just in the cultural one. They also attack *convivencia* for trying to turn Islam into folkloristic heritage, rather than seeing it as a moral ideology that could — should — inform political debate. Most crucially, they feel that *convivencia* makes Muslim communities compete for patronage. The party divides Muslims into conflicting factions with different approaches to Islam. The most salient friction is between the Union of Islamic Communities of Ceuta (UCIDCE), which champions the austere, reformist Islam of the Tablighi Jamaat, a branch of the Deobandi Wahhabi movement, and the Federation of Spanish Islamic Entities (FEERI), which looks to Morocco for guidance (and to which Al-Idrisi is allied). These factions look to sabotage each other, and they clashed violently in Ceuta’s main mosque at the 2005 Eid-el Fitr.

The use of *convivencia* to divide and conquer Muslim subjects is not new. While Ortiz agonized over postcolonial Cuba, early

21. Local sociological research confirms this (Calvo Buezas 2011; Jiménez Gámez 2010; Rontomé 2003, 2012; Rontomé and Cantón 2008; Navas Cepero 2014). Meaningful contact between the *culturas* is limited to rites of *convivencia*, school, the army, and football. Beyond such instances, Ceutans lead lives largely contained within their ethno-religious boundaries. As Sadegh (2022) notes, mixed romantic relationships and marriages are rare. Such courtships are conducted in secret, and such marriages are the object of intense public scrutiny and suspicion. Even then, mixed marriages take place mainly between Spanish Christian men from the mainland and Muslim women from Morocco, not between local Ceutans. Ceutan mixed marriages are elevated into the public realm by the media and by community leaders and celebrated as proof that policies of *convivencia* are working (*Ceuta Actualidad* 2017).

twentieth-century Spanish scholars were similarly (pre)occupied with the “enigma” of Spain, once a great power, now barely Europe (Sánchez-Albornoz 1975). Analogous to Ortiz’s early work, traditional Spanish historiography felt that that Spain’s fall was the fault of the Islamic influence. The most prominent champion of this view was Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz (1976), who premised that a recognizable Spanish ethnos had crystallized in the classical period and was already fully formed when Islam invaded in 711. Since then, the fate of “Homo Hispanicus” was to ward off Islam, politically and culturally. The Reconquista pushed Islam out of Europe, and Spain used that momentum to extend itself globally. But Spain could not compete with France or Britain who, free of hostile neighbors, could grow in a calculated and measured way. Sánchez-Albornoz’s nemesis, Américo Castro, proposed a radically different model of Spanishness that evokes Ortiz’s later position. Castro (1971) famously suggested that Spanishness emerged under Islamic rule, the result of mixing (or *convivencia*) of Islamic, Jewish, and Visigoth cultures. This blending was driven by “acculturation.” While this may raise some eyebrows — Ortiz rebelled against the concept — Castro was notoriously lax with his terminology (Glick and Pi-Sunyer 1969) and saw acculturation as a multilateral and ongoing process of co-creation that primarily worked at the level of *morada vital* (vital life force) and could be glimpsed through values, language, and bodily dispositions. Although he never used culinary metaphors, he knew that mixing could be uneven and problematic. Indeed, Castro suggested that *convivencia* threatened Spain’s medieval Christian elites, which reacted by radicalizing themselves ideologically and militarily. Under the banner of Saint James, the Moor-Slayer — Castro wryly remarks that no healthy society would produce such a grisly icon (see Voss 2010) — Christianity expelled Islam and extended itself globally. In doing so, however, Spain became enthralled to conservative forces that blocked enlightenment reform. These forces would also seek to punish and expunge Islamic and Judaic influences on Christianity. For Castro, Islam’s influence on Spain, which included values of tolerance and self-scrutiny, had to be embraced; its eradication was practically self-harm.

Franco’s death in 1974 and Spain’s rapid economic and civic development within the European Union rendered such anxious debates redundant. Anthropologists like Thomas Glick and Oriol Pi-Sunyer (1969) took advantage of such changing historiographical conditions. Again, echoing Ortiz’s final hopes for his concept of transculturation (Palmié 2021), they transformed *convivencia* into the “socially disinterested”

study of cultural contact and diffusion. This field, which brought Arabists and Medievalists into close dialogue, has produced an ever-growing body of outstanding scholarly work. It also took upon itself to police the proper use of the Spanish past and “bullfight” (Leahy 2018) against those who either anachronistically deploy modern conceptions of multiculturalism to make sense of medieval Spain or who invoke premodern coexistence to legitimize contemporary policy. Chief offenders include Serafín Fanjul (2005) and Dario Fernández-Morera (2014) who depict the medieval kingdom of Al-Andalus as a place of religious discrimination and violence. These authors, indeed, are widely cited in tweets by Spain’s far-right, which assert that attempts to include Islam in western polities are fated to fail. Scholars also critique the left that describes Muslim Spain as a paradise of tolerance and proof that multiculturalism is not only possible, but desirable (e.g., Menocal 2003). Historians of *convivencia* warn that there are no easy lessons to be gained from the past. But as Manzano Moreno (2013) laments, this has not stopped all kinds of political agents from using all kinds of historical misinterpretations to buttress all kinds of political projects: apparently, the bull of anachronism does not tire or die easily. Accordingly, he describes how many have retreated from public debates on *convivencia*, erecting a *cordon sanitaire* around the past. The study of modern concepts and practices of *convivencia* is now left to anthropology, which is less concerned about/frustrated by the historical veracity of such myths (e.g., Moffete 2010; Kottman 2011; Rogozen-Soltar 2017).

Back to Ceuta. While Sánchez-Albornoz and Castro quarreled over the Spanish character, various national governments used the idea of *convivencia* — which suggested that centuries of interaction with Islam had created something deeply oriental about Spaniards — to legitimize to the international community their colonial designs on Morocco. If the Spanish are so akin to the Moors, then who better to rule them justly and fairly? The French? (Dieste 2003; Tofino-Quesada 2003; Velasco de Castro 2014) During the Spanish Civil War, discourses of Spanish-Moorish fraternity were used by the nationalist faction to justify the deployment of Moroccan auxiliaries: Franco’s troops, it was said, had more in common with the honorable, masculine, and pious Moor than they did with the godless, anarchic, and effete Republican (Sotomayor Blazquez 2005; Friedlander 1964; Martín Corrales 2002; Marín 2015). Again, acting for the sake of *convivencia*, the Spanish governors of Morocco saw it their moral and political duty to cultivate the power of sympathetic religious and tribal leaders (and thus smother uncooperative

ones). They gave them money to build mosques, cemeteries, and shins. They also attended and patronized their rituals, donating large numbers of animals for ritual slaughter (Moreras 2015; Madraiga 2015). There is no evidence of deliberate continuity between colonial and contemporary uses of *convivencia* in Ceuta. Nevertheless, the clear parallels between these cases tell us something about the ease with which discourses of *convivencia* can combine fraternity, flattery, reciprocity, patronage, intrusion, asphyxiation, and, above all, ritual into a powerful cocktail of domination. This beverage, already problematic when used on colonial subjects, is especially unpalatable when applied to co-citizens and easily makes them feel like second-class and problematic citizens who must be managed, integrated, and neutralized.

Silence of the lambs

“There are Spaniards who say we have to bend over and let the *moro* screw us. This is a sign of how sick Ceuta has become,” reads a Whats-App message by the leader of Ceuta’s far-right party Vox.²² One of his colleagues added with boyish bravado: “For now, we fight in parliament. But I wouldn’t be surprised if we end up fighting militarily. If that happens, they’ll regret it!” A third politician prophesized: “I’ll tell you what will happen. If we do not accept their Islamizing vision, they will label us as racist. Fuck the mayor-president and his Ceuta of the Four *Culturas*.”

This shocking conversation was leaked to the Ceutan media in 2020, right before the municipal elections (La Sexta 2020). It did not diminish Vox’s support. The party won enough seats to compromise the mayor-president’s long-standing hegemony, forcing him to seek their support if he wanted to remain in power. This disaster did not happen overnight. Indeed, since 2011 *convivencia* became increasingly unconvincing to Ceuta’s Christians (despite the fact that the status quo suited them nicely). Despite the mayor-president’s desperate attempt to urge Ceutans not to rally behind ethno-religious parties, Ceutans flirted in growing numbers first with Ceuta Insegura (CI), then with Vox. CI started out in 2013 as a Facebook page, where users could

22. The original “*tragar moros hasta los cojones*” does not translate well literally into English.

report instances of crime and anti-social behavior.²³ In 2016, CI organized two well-attended protests that demanded that the mayor-president expand and arm the police. In 2018, CI's administrators — a flamenco dancer and a DJ — were encouraged to contest the local elections. Feeling they lacked political acumen, they declined the offer. Vox stepped in to fill the vacuum and picked up the momentum created by CI. In September 2018, it announced its candidature in spectacular fashion, unfurling Spanish flags on Ceuta's medieval bastions (while a conference on *convivencia* was taking place not a stone's throw away).

Vox's political rhetoric depicts Ceuta as a town under siege, with enemies without and within its gates. Most of their efforts are spent demanding a stronger stance against sub-Saharan migration. Aside from further fortifying the border, this means the immediate handover of irregular migrants to Morocco. As Andersson notes (2014), black migrants were feared as savages capable of great violence. That said, sub-Saharans were not perceived as a threat to Ceuta's melting pot: they stayed in their camps, worked as silent servants, and had no inclination to effect change in the enclave, since their main desire was to leave. Hostility toward them stemmed from fears that they were pawns of a greater malignant force: Morocco. Unlike the sub-Saharan "Other," Moroccans were indeed thought to possess the all the malevolent and patient cunning required to conquer Ceuta economically, culturally, demographically, and, ultimately, politically. Such machinations ranged from spectacular sub-Saharan assaults on the border, which left hundreds wounded and Ceuta globally humiliated, to the support of *convivencia* itself, because this proposed to make Ceuta habitable for those of the Muslim *cultura* even though (or rather because) this had the potential of undermining its *españolidad* (Spanishness).

Unsurprisingly, therefore, Vox turned its attention to Ceuta's Muslims as "fifth columnists" and agents of the enemy. Regardless of what Vox's members think, Spanish Muslims cannot be removed from Ceuta without breaking human rights. Vox thus strives for the intensification of events it feels are traditionally Spanish: if bad ingredients cannot be

23. Typically, the reports involved cases of harassment and robbery by gangs of Moroccan youths. Although the police regularly reported that Ceuta's streets have never been safer, a number of dramatic cases — including two stabbings in Ceuta's city center in broad daylight — gave the impression that the enclave was becoming increasingly lawless.

removed, then more good ingredients must go in! These include participation in Holy Week and other Christian feasts, as well as the carnival, which has now become a platform for voicing xenophobic concerns about Islam. Vox also promotes rituals that make Muslims look like uncommitted Spaniards. Perhaps the most obvious — and most baffling to outside observers — is an event that takes place every three years called “The Kissing of the Flag.” Usually held in May, this rite sees Ceutans line up in their Sunday best in the main square. The army marches in, holding the Spanish gold-and-red flag. Under the gaze of the mayor-president, the delegate from Madrid, and the commander of the army, Ceutans march up — one by one — to the flag. They kiss it and take an oath to die for the motherland. Muslims rarely attend this ritual. As one Muslim teacher told me, “we do not understand have to keep proving our nationality”; “not kissing [the] fabric does not make us any less Spanish” and “citizenship is about having equal opportunities, not theatrics.” That said, their absence is noted and read as a sign of disloyalty.

Vox furthermore engineered incidents that made Muslims’ *convivencia real* look like treason. In 2009, after much toil, the mayor-president accepted a Muslim petition to make Eid el-Adha an official national holiday in Ceuta. This replaced a Christian feast and the decision thus led to much resentment. Needless to say, Vox did all it could to scuttle Eid Al-Adha, turning it from a matter of cultural heritage to one of public health and animal welfare. Vox got its breakthrough in 2020. As the COVID-19 pandemic surged, Vox urged the mayor-president to suspend the Al-Adha celebrations. No lambs could be brought into the enclave, and no public provisions would be made for their slaughter. The Muslim community was furious — Ceuta was the only city in Spain to cancel Al-Adha. Even Melilla found a way to enable the feast despite the COVID-19 restrictions. Local Muslim communities first petitioned the delegate, then went directly to Madrid. But both upheld the mayor-president’s decision. Things then took a turn for the desperate. Videos on YouTube accused the government of racism and took swipes at Christians (“they did not forbid Christians from mingling naked and drunk on the beach!”). Muslim leaders then made the fatal mistake of appealing to the Moroccan king, as the “Commander of the Faithful” and nominal religious head of all Ceutan Muslims, playing directly into Vox’s goal of exposing Muslims as traitors.

Fast-forward to July 2021: Al-Adha was again on the cards, but Vox’s alliance with the mayor-president was broken. Some months earlier,

Ceuta had suffered the greatest migration crisis in its history when 14,000 people entered its territory in just two days. Santiago Abascal, Vox's national leader, came to witness the drama firsthand, lauding the courage of the Spanish forces as they herded migrants and plucked children from the sea. In parliament, Vox argued that the other parties' inactivity (this included the refusal to label the crisis as an "invasion") was tantamount to treason. In response, Abascal was declared *persona non grata*, and the mayor-president formed an alliance with the Socialist Party. Thus free of Vox, the mayor-president no longer needed to alienate Muslims and flatly rejected Vox's motion to suspend Al-Adha once again in line with COVID-19 restrictions.

But Ceuta was not ready to organize the ceremony. There were not enough lambs, and violent scuffles broke out whenever a convoy arrived from across the strait. Some bought lambs from "an ovine mafia" that smuggled in animals from Morocco. Ceuta was also unable to set up sufficient abattoir capacity where Muslims could slay their lamb under veterinary supervision. Videos started circulating of illegal rituals taking place in Ceuta. One harrowing clip depicted a group of teenagers killing a cow in a parking lot. The slaughter was done unprofessionally, with the animal suffering visible distress and pain as the laughing youths stabbed at its neck with a kitchen knife.

Surprisingly, Vox did not use the video to cast Islam as a barbaric ideology. At an emergency sitting of Ceuta's municipal parliament, it turned the tables and argued that the mayor-president lacked the skill to manage *convivencia* properly. In letting Muslims play with urban spatiality and temporality, in letting them create "idiosyncrasy," the government's *laissez-faire* resulted in chaos that was distressing to all Ceutans and demeaning to Muslims in particular by forcing them to fight for lambs, engage in smuggling, and slaughtering in the streets. All Muslims wanted, the party declared, was to celebrate their feast in dignity. Thus, if Muslims wanted order and security, they should vote for Vox! As the right-wing politicians spoke, other parliamentarians accused Vox of using *convivencia* for partisan interests. The Vox representatives, in turn, accused their rivals as traitors who let Morocco impose its will in Ceuta, regardless of health concerns. The whirling of insults turned into physical violence and the session was suspended when the police had to intervene. This was the third time in three months that the enclave's municipal parliament had to terminate a sitting prematurely, the third time that Ceuta's *ajiaco* boiled out of control.

Conclusion

Over the past two decades, some Ceutan elites have tried to construct a local identity based on *convivencia*. This involves the recognition and promotion of local idiosyncrasies formed through what Ortiz would call “transculturation”: the uneven and multilateral dialogue and exchange between its main ethno-religious groups. *Convivencia* has shown some resilience in the face of external attack. However, it is riddled with contradictions that strengthen those who feel it is oppressive, transgressive, and catastrophic for the enclave’s prospects. As such, the Ceutan case adds some nuance to Ortiz’s model of transculturation and raises some questions for those who seek in Ortiz a counter-epistemology to neo-nationalism in Europe.

One of Ortiz’s greatest achievements was to decolonize Cuba’s idea of what a sovereign nation-state should look like. Ortiz saw that the uprooted heterogeneous population of Cuba, as well as the cultural phenomena they coauthored, were not obstacles to modernity but an invitation to chart a different course. While some (e.g., Bowman 2021) have questioned the applicability of such frameworks to Europe, the idea that a distinct hybrid Ceutan culture exists, and is only locally intelligible, *has* given the enclave new options with which to respond to the cultural, political, legal, economic, and demographic challenges produced by its status as an anomalous enclave on the borders of Europe. To varying degrees of success, the idea that Ceuta is special — where cultural contact is sometimes harmonious, sometimes incongruent, often surprising (“this is possible only in Ceuta!”), always public — has opened up avenues of belonging for those who find themselves in the enclave without fitting in traditional molds of Spanishness. It also enables Ceuta to secure funds in difficult times, maintain a remarkable degree of self-governance, and ward off unwanted interference by powerful outsiders. Above all, the imaginary of *convivencia* has given Ceutans a narrative that they can be proud of. Once upon a time, they lived in a wonderland of exotic goods. Now they live in a barren border-fort, known only for death and suffering. *Convivencia* makes them the center of something, the best at something, “unique in the world,” to quote the introductory vignette.

A second issue involves the triumphalism associated with both Ortiz and Spanish ideas of *convivencia*. Ortiz, of course, is widely celebrated as having transcended colonial frameworks in favor of the *ajiaco* epistemology. In Spain, *convivencia* is likewise seen as transcending the

conservative mono-culturalism of the dictatorship and as providing the possibility of including non-Castilian, non-Christian voices in the making of Spanish identity and polity (Aragoneses 2016). Ceuta leads us to contest this narrative. As we have seen, discourses of Spanish-Moorish *convivencia* were widely used throughout the twentieth century to pacify Muslims. Dismissing Ceutan *convivencia* as Colonialism 2.0 may admittedly be a step too far. Nevertheless, there are few doubts that current efforts — based on public ritual and patronage — to make *convivencia* a viable narrative among Ceutans has tended to break or alienate subaltern voices rather than empowering them to coauthor Ceutan-ness.

This leads us to a third issue. The Ceutan case shows that while transculturation produces new forms, these can be of a different type than their individual constituents, particularly when undercooked. In Ceuta, *convivencia* changes the way people think about ethno-religiosity. It is temptingly easy to imagine Ceutan politics as a spectrum, with the mayor-president valiantly defending the moderate ground between those who thought that *convivencia* was not enough and those who thought it was too much. Yet *convivencia* — at least the way the mayor-president imagined it — explicitly sought to transform religion from a moral ideology that politicized Ceutans along sectarian lines into a folkloristic curiosity that could (perhaps should) be playfully exhibited and fused with other folkloristic resources belonging to other groups. As the current minister of culture — a sociologist — once remarked, “*convivencia* did away with the emotive, personal, and uncompromising politics of Muslims versus Christians and brought instead the good politics of socialism versus neoliberalism, which are based on rationality.” When viewed this way, Vox and MDyC were not polar opposites but different faces of the same coin. As Rogozen-Soltar (2017) has noted in Granada, many felt Ceuta’s celebration of hybridity as inauthentic, staged, forced. Ceutan communities responded by either finding ways to practice their religiosity away from prying eyes or by intensifying them. The latter is particularly true to Muslims subscribing to reformist, political Islam and to “Christian rituals” like carnival and Holy Week, which seem to be going from strength to strength. I suppose that both Castro and Ortiz would have argued that such radicalized Islam/Christianity does not represent an attempt to abandon the *ajiaco* but should be seen as the direct — albeit ironic — result of cultural mixing.

The Ceutan case sheds light on a fourth issue. Political policies that seek to promote, speed up, or induce transculturation can only do so

through the gritty machinery of the state. The backstage of Ceuta's rituals and festivals of *convivencia* was a labyrinthine world of resource allocation, policy making, institutionalization of cultural groups, political acumen and charisma, patronage and negotiation, and clever marketing. In becoming so entangled in patronage and political alliance, *convivencia* ended up looking like class domination for many Muslims. Most CI and Vox supporters likewise saw in *convivencia* the mayor-president's desire to retain power at all costs — the ultimate cost here being the utter destruction and Moroccanization of the town they feel obliged to defend.

The municipal government, as mentioned, had no real solution to deal with these contradictions. It had nothing to say about socioeconomic inequality. It dismissed those who asked questions as political opportunists seeking to stir up ethno-religious resentments. However, dismissing these concerns did not make them go away. It rather gave groups such as MDyC or Vox the feeling that the truths they bore, the ideologies they represented, and the fears they harbored were real, valid, and dangerous. Why else would government suppress and silence them?

It seems that *convivencia*, the Ceutan politics of transculturation, may well be laying the groundwork for its undoing. Accordingly, future work on transculturation should pay heed to how different readings of heterogeneity compete with each other, gain prominence, deal with inconsistency, and assign value to different forms of experience. Lastly, studies of transculturation need to embrace the sheer uncertainty and anxiety that is palpable in a place of intense heterogeneity and mobility like Ceuta. *Convivencia* has indeed given Ceuta some victories. But where was the *ajiaco* taking them? What would Ceuta look like ten years from now? Would Madrid wake up one day and decide that this embarrassing, troublesome, expensive stew on its southern border should be given to someone else? Would Morocco be able to convince the international community that Ceuta no longer smells, tastes, or looks Spanish? Under such conditions of incredible uncertainty, *convivencia* as a radical attempt to steer the course of disaster can be appreciated. But so can the efforts of Muslim groups who fear to be condemned forever to second-class citizenship, or the struggles of neo-nationalist Christians who try to make their town confirm outsiders' imaginations of what being Spanish is. It is sardonic that, in doing so, they have resorted to a form of nationalistic expression that the outsider's palate finds revolting and certainly out-of-date.

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REPRINT

Talking culture thirty years on—Revisited

Verena Stolcke

We do not classify because there are things to classify but because when classifying we choose [or even invent – VS] elements for classification.

—J. Pouillon

These days I have done some more research about how we got to Cuba and when. I arrived in La Habana in October 1967 with Juan Martínez-Alier and our little daughter Nuria, one year old, now a tropical pediatrician and vaccine researcher in London. We went to Cuba thanks to an exchange agreement between the Cuban historian and economist Julio Le Riverend, at the time head of the Archivo Nacional, and member of the Universidad de la Habana which had arranged for the exchange with the Oxford historian Raymond Carr. The counterpart from Cuba, however, never came to Oxford.

Our arrival at Havana airport was staggering, those ancient US cars, the high-class hotel Habana Libre, totally empty, no places to eat.... It was also when Oscar Lewis tried to test his Mexican thesis on popular politics in low-class neighborhoods of Havana but was soon expelled from the island.

The University settled us in a flat in El Vedado. There was a *circulo infantil* next door but Nuria hated it. And to begin our respective researches we got into contact with the Cuban geographer Juan Pérez de la Riva (who wrote *El barracón: Esclavitud y capitalismo en Cuba*, 1978), who also

taught at the Universidad de la Havana. It was he who suggested that we travel with him and his students who had to do *trabajo voluntario* in Oriente, very suitable because Juan's project was to study the revolution's land reform (Martinez-Alier and Stolcke 1972). We never got to Santiago de Cuba and stayed instead in the village La Serafina, Ongolosongo, in the Sierra Maestra, in the hut of the local peasant association, though after two months we were called back to Havana by the University for reasons we never found out. That was the end of my thesis project on post-revolutionary transformations in the family in Cuba, very naive but certainly unlikely to be thought threatening politically in any way.

These were extraordinary times in Havana and Cuba. The government had organized the Congreso Cultural de la Habana for January 1968. For a week Havana became the epicenter of debate over the most revolutionary and radical ideas of the times. Around five hundred intellectuals, artists, and scientists of the most diverse political tendencies on the left from all over the world had come to Havana ("El Congreso Cultural de la Habana" 1967–1968). Fernando Ortiz took part as delegate of the Fundación Fernando Ortiz. Though we met a number of the European participants, I did not get acquainted with Fernando Ortiz. The theme was "El colonialismo y el neocolonialismo en el desarrollo cultural de los pueblos" (colonialism and neocolonialism in the cultural development of peoples). The aim was to debate the political role of intellectuals and solidarity with the processes of decolonization in the Third World. The assassination of Ernesto Che Guevarra only two months earlier in Bolivia dominated the Congress.

When we returned from the Sierra Maestra, Perez de la Riva took us to the Archivo Nacional. He thought that I could find some information on the family. We met Le Riverend who introduced me to the extraordinary and enormous collection of nineteenth-century documents (*legajos*) on the family, marriage, race, and sex in colonial Cuba. On account of the late decolonization of Cuba at the end of the nineteenth century, most of the colonial documentation had remained on the island. And a 1930s librarian had done the extraordinary labor of classifying about 70 percent of this collection by subject. This archive was an eye-opener for a first-generation German with a latent concern about the Holocaust. The Archivo Nacional thus became for me an unending source of inspiration as I began to discover the ideological logic of race, racism, and sexuality in a slave society (see various editions of my work in English, 1974, 1989, 2003, and later in Spanish, 1992, 2017).

As I read and analyzed a substantial part of these documents I learned the political and symbolic link that had prevailed in nineteenth-century Cuba between the *orden de la república*, the honor of the good families, the sexual honor of their daughters, endogamic marriage, but also elopement to overcome paternal opposition to a marriage for reasons of race. Phenotype understood as race and as the sign of moral and intellectual identity was the “natural” category of economic and political hierarchization of Cuban society.

The indignation over xenophobia [*Fremdenhass*], which suggests as an antidote a policy of open borders, is somehow false and dangerous. *For if history has taught us one thing, then it is this: in no society has a civil intercourse with foreigners been inbred. Much indicates that the reserve vis-à-vis the foreigners constitutes an anthropological constant of the species: modernity with its growing mobility has made this problem more general than before.* (Cohn-Bendit and Schmid 1991: 5)

Comparison is of the essence of anthropology. This volume is devoted to Fernando Ortiz, the Cuban intellectual famous especially for his challenging approach to cultural diversity in the Caribbean. This emphasis on culture prompted the editor to include an article I had written, which similarly focuses on cultural diversity, but in Europe today (Stolcke 1995, reprinted here).

When I wrote this article in the early nineties there was growing concern in Europe over the new challenge of growing Third World immigration. Discrimination and hostility was spreading against extra-European immigrants which produced much debate over whether this prejudice meant a resurgence of the old and terribly familiar demon of racism. I found, however, that there was a noticeable emphasis on the cultural difference of immigrants, instead, and their alleged lack of “our moral values.” It was this “cultural fundamentalism,” as I called it, that accounted for a propensity in the popular mood in Europe for discrimination against and rejection of the immigrants. However, it turned out, although this was not my intention, that, in my reasoning, it appeared not to be clear whether by assuming the boundedness of cultures and cultural difference I was nevertheless proposing a cultural explanation which was invariably essentialist, much like the notion of race.

Now how does this relate to Ortiz? He, like other early twentieth-century Latin American nationalists, did not fall back on the ideology of the linguistically, ethnically, and culturally homogeneous sovereign nation. Instead, Ortiz, like Vasconcelos, faced the reality of a notably heterogeneous postcolonial citizenry: racially, culturally, and in Mexico, linguistically as well. How could such populations ever be rendered into a nation?

Instead of addressing Ortiz's conceptual formulations of culture, my examination of "cultural fundamentalism" contrasts with his work in three ways. There is, first, his key concept of "transculturation" which describes the phenomenon of merging and converging cultures, designed to reject the United States' "acculturation" model inspired by the hierarchical racist notion according to which those who are now called African Americans gradually adopted the culture of the "white" American population. As has been pointed out, Ortiz was thus also a pioneer and one of the foremost theorists of the postcolonial debate in Latin America. Second, as I mentioned above, I carried out my first anthropological research in Cuba in the late 1960s on Cuban colonial society, and beside "race" also addressed the key issue in Cuba and the Hispanic-American Caribbean: "what has race to do with sex?" (Stolcke 2017), a question that Ortiz largely neglected. And, third, the geographical context of my analysis of identity, borders, migration, and national exclusions which inspired my idea of "cultural fundamentalism" has been the Mediterranean.

Last but not least, the essentialist notion of race in modernity played a crucial political role in nineteenth-century Cuba, both in Spanish metropolitan law and the island's social relations. But, as I pointed out, "cultural fundamentalism" is, by contrast, an anti-racist concept which was adopted in conscience and memory of the terrible twentieth century in Europe though it now paradoxically sustains the spreading populist and neonationalist right.

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Talking culture

New boundaries, new rhetorics of exclusion in Europe

Verena Stolcke

*Es gibt zwei Sorten von Ratten,
die hungrigen und die satten;
die Satten bleiben vergnügt zuhaus,
die Hungrigen wandern aus ...
Oh weh, sie sind schon in der Näh.*

—HEINRICH HEINE

Everywhere, and from now on as much in the society of origin as in the host society, [the immigrant] calls for a complete rethinking of the legitimate bases of citizenship and of the relationship between the state and the nation or nationality. An absent presence, he obliges us to question not only the reactions of rejection which, taking the state as an expression of the nation, are vindicated by claiming to base citizenship on commonality of language and culture (if not "race") but also the assimilationist "generosity" that, confident that the state, armed with education, will know how to reproduce the nation, would seek to conceal a universalist chauvinism.

—PIERRE BOURDIEU

The uniqueness of European culture, which emerges from the history of the diversity of regional and national cultures, constitutes the basic prerequisite for European union.

—COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

As anthropology gradually outgrows postmodernist selfscrutiny and cultural self-examination and moves back into the real world, neither the world nor the discipline is any longer the same. Anthropologists have learned to be more sensitive to the formidable difficulties involved in making sense of cultural diversity without losing sight of shared humanity. At the same time, the notions of culture and cultural difference, anthropology's classical stock-in-trade, have become ubiquitous in the popular and political language in which Western geopolitical conflicts and realignments are being phrased. Anthropologists in recent years have paid heightened critical attention to the many ways in which Western economic and cultural hegemony has invaded the rest of the world and to how "other" cultures have resisted and reworked these insidious influences. How these "others" are being politically and culturally rethought by the West, where the idea of cultural distinctness is being endowed with new divisive force, has, however, attracted surprisingly little interest among anthropologists. I want to address one major instance of contemporary culture-bounded political rhetoric.

Sidney Mintz has worked for many years toward uncovering the logic and power of racism in systems of domination and exclusion in the New World. It is surely appropriate to focus my lecture in his honor on the resurgence of essentialist ideologies in the Old World. On one of his trips to Paris he himself prophesied some of these developments more than 20 years ago, noting that, whereas issues of race were absent from French anthropology, in contrast with the North American variety, because of the different positions the discipline's subjects (internally or externally colonial) occupied in relation to the respective national communities, France was beginning to experience racism as ever-growing numbers of immigrants arrived from its ex-colonies (Mintz 1971). The alarming spread of hostility and violence in Europe against immigrants from the Third World has provoked much soul-searching in the past decade over the resurgence of the old demon of racism in a new guise. I want to propose, however, that a perceptible shift in the rhetoric of exclusion can now be detected. From what were once assertions of the differing endowment of human races there has risen since the seventies a rhetoric of inclusion and exclusion that emphasizes the distinctiveness of cultural identity, traditions, and heritage among groups and assumes the closure of culture by territory (Soysal 1993). I intend first to examine the nature of this shift in the way in which European anti-immigrant sentiment is phrased. Then I will trace the social and political roots and the implications of this new rhetoric. The formation

of liberal states and notions of belonging has, of course, been quite different from one Western European country to another. History may explain the origins of these different political traditions, but it is not the cause of their continuity; each period interprets history according to contemporary needs. Therefore, I will conclude by contrasting the ways in which the national political repertoires of Britain and France have shaped and been employed to legitimate mounting animosity against immigrants.

The building of Europe is a twofold process. As intra-European borders become progressively more permeable, external boundaries are ever more tightly closed. Stringent legal controls are put in place to exclude what have come to be known as extracommunitarian immigrants as parties of the right appeal for electoral support with the slogan "Foreigners Out!" There is a growing sense that Europeans need to develop a feeling of shared culture and identity of purpose in order to provide the ideological support for European economic and political union that will enable it to succeed. But the idea of a supranational culturally integrated Europe and how much space is to be accorded to national and regional cultures and identities are matters of intense dispute because of the challenge to national sovereignties they are variously felt to pose (Gallo 1989; Cassen 1993; Commission of the European Communities 1987, 1992). By contrast, immigrants, in particular those from the poor South (and, more recently, also from the East) who seek shelter in the wealthy North, have all over Western Europe come to be regarded as undesirable, threatening strangers, aliens. The extracommunitarian immigrants already "in our midst" are the targets of mounting hostility and violence as politicians of the right and conservative governments fuel popular fears with a rhetoric of exclusion that extols national identity predicated on cultural exclusiveness.

The social and political tensions that extracommunitarian immigration has provoked in a context of successive economic crises have been accompanied by a heightened concern over national cultural identities that has eroded the cosmopolitan hopes professed in the aftermath of the deadly horrors of the Nazi race policies of World War II. The demons of race and eugenics appeared to have been politically if not scientifically exorcised partly by the work done by UNESCO and other bodies in defense of human equality in cultural diversity in the Boasian tradition after 1945 (Nye 1993: 669; LéviStrauss 1978, 1985; Haraway 1988). Yet cultural identity and distinctiveness, ideas which until then seemed to be a peculiar obsession only of anthropologists, have now come to occupy a

central place in the way in which anti-immigration sentiments and policies are being rationalized.

There is a growing propensity in the popular mood in Europe to blame all the socioeconomic ills resulting from the recession and capitalist readjustments—unemployment, housing shortages, mounting delinquency, deficiencies in social services—on immigrants who lack “our” moral and cultural values, simply because they are there (see Taguieff 1991 for a detailed analysis and challenge of these imputations in the case of France.) The advocates of a halt to immigration and like-minded politicians have added to the popular animosity toward immigrants by artificially increasing the scale of the “problem.” Allusions to an “immigration flood” and an “emigration bomb” serve to intensify diffuse popular fears, thereby diverting spreading social discontent from the true causes of the economic recession. Opponents of immigration often add to this the conservative demographic argument which attributes declining socioeconomic opportunities and poverty and the consequent desire or need to emigrate to the “population bomb” ticking away in the Third World, which is blamed on immigrants’ own improvidence. They thereby mask the economic-political roots of modern poverty and instead justify aggressive population control programs whose targets are women in the poor South. Advocates of a halt to immigration talk of a “threshold of tolerance,” alluding to what ethologists have called the territorial imperative—the alleged fact that populations (note, among animals) tend to defend their territory against “intruders” when these exceed a certain proportion estimated variously at 12–25% because otherwise severe social tensions are bound to arise (Zungaro 1992; Erdheim 1992: 19). The media and politicians allude to the threat of cultural estrangement or alienation (Winkler 1992; Kallscheuer 1992). In other words, the “problem” is not “us” but “them.” “We” are the measure of the good life which “they” are threatening to undermine, and this is so because “they” are foreigners and culturally “different.” Although rising unemployment, the housing shortage, and deficient social services are obviously not the fault of immigrants, “they” are effectively made into the scapegoats for “our” socioeconomic problems. This line of argument is so persuasive because it appeals to the “national habitus,” an exclusivist notion of belonging and political and economic rights conveyed by the modern idea of the nation-state (Elias 1991) central to which is the assumption that foreigners, strangers from without, are not entitled to share in “national” resources and wealth, especially when these are apparently becoming scarce. It is conveniently forgotten, for example, that

immigrants often do the jobs that natives won't. Similarly overlooked are the otherwise much bemoaned consequences of the population implosion in the wealthy North, that is, the very low birth rates in an aging Europe, for the viability of industrial nations and the welfare state (Below-replacement fertility 1986; Berquó 1993). The question why, if there is shortage of work, intolerance and aggression are not directed against one's fellow citizens is never raised.

The meaning and nature of these rationalizations of animosity toward immigrants and the need to curb extracommunitarian immigration have been highly controversial. I will here analyze the rightist rhetoric of exclusion rather than examining the logic of popular anti-immigrant resentment. Popular reactions and sentiments cannot simply be extrapolated from the discourse of the political class.

Immigrants: A threat to the cultural integrity of the nation

In the early eighties Dummett identified a change in Britain in the idiom in which rejection of immigrants was being expressed when she drew attention to the tendency to attribute social tensions to the *presence* of immigrants with *alien cultures* rather than to racism (Dummett and Martin 1982: 101, my emphasis; see also Dummett 1973). As early as in the late sixties the right in Britain was exalting "British culture" and the "national community," distancing itself from racial categories and denying with insistence that its hostility toward immigrant communities and its call for a curb on immigration had anything to do with racism (see Asad 1990 on the idea of Britishness, constructed out of the values and sensibilities of the English dominant class; see also Dodd 1986). People "by nature" preferred to live among their "own kind" rather than in a multicultural society, this attitude being, "after all," a "natural," instinctive reaction to the presence of people with a different culture and origin. As Alfred Sherman, director of the rightwing Institute for Policy Studies and one of the main theoreticians of this doctrine, elaborated in 1978, "National consciousness is the sheet anchor for the unconditional loyalties and acceptance of duties and responsibilities, based on personal identification with the national community, which underlie civic duty and patriotism" (quoted in Barker 1981: 20; see also 1979). Immigrants in large numbers would destroy the "homogeneity of the nation." A multiracial (*sic*) society would inevitably endanger the "values" and "culture" of the white majority and unleash social conflict. These were nonrational,

instinctual fears built around feelings of loyalty and belonging (Barker and Beezer 1983: 125). As Enoch Powell had argued in 1969, “an instinct to preserve an identity and defend a territory is one of the deepest and strongest implanted in mankind ... and ... its beneficial effects are not exhausted” (quoted in Barker 1981: 22).

Until the late seventies such nationalist claims were put forward only by a few (though vociferous) ideologues of the right who went out of their way to distance themselves from the overt racism of the National Front, morally discredited by its association with Nazi ideology. By the eighties, with mounting economic difficulties and growing animosity against immigrants, in an effort to gain electoral support the Tory party had adopted a discourse of exclusion which was similarly infused by expressions of fear for the integrity of the national community, way of life, tradition, and loyalty under threat from immigrants (Barker 1979). One symptomatic example of this ideological alignment of the Tory party with its right is Margaret Thatcher’s much-quoted statement of 1978 that “people are really rather afraid that this country might be swamped by people with a different culture. And, you know, the British character has done so much for democracy, for law, and done so much throughout the world, that if there is a fear that it might be swamped, people are going to react and be hostile to those coming in” (quoted in Fitzpatrick 1987: 121). To protect “the nation” from the threat immigrants with alien cultures posed for social cohesion, their entry needed to be curbed.

A similar shift in the rhetoric of exclusion has also been identified within the French political right. Taguieff’s (1981) is probably the most detailed, though controversial, analysis of ideological developments among the various tendencies of the French right since the seventies. It is controversial because the author at once harshly criticizes antiracist organizations for invoking, in their defense of immigrants’ “right to difference,” what he regards as an equally essentialist conception of cultural difference (see also Duranton-Crabol 1988). The French right began orchestrating its anti-immigrant offensive by espousing what Taguieff has termed a “differential racism,” a doctrine which exalts the essential and irreducible cultural difference of non-European immigrant communities whose presence is condemned for threatening the “host” country’s original national identity. A core element of this doctrine of exclusion is the repudiation of “cultural miscegenation” for the sake of the unconditional preservation of one’s own original purportedly biocultural identity. By contrast with earlier “inegalitarian racism” (Taguieff’s term), rather than inferiorizing the “other” it exalts the absolute, irreducible *difference* of the

“self” and the incommensurability of different cultural identities. A key concept of this new rhetoric is the notion of *enracinement* (rootedness). To preserve both French identity and those of immigrants in their diversity, the latter ought to stay at home or return there. Collective identity is increasingly conceived in terms of ethnicity, culture, heritage, tradition, memory, and difference, with only occasional references to “blood” and “race.” As Taguieff has argued, “differential racism” constitutes a strategy designed by the French right to mask what has become a “clandestine racism” (pp. 330-37).

Notwithstanding the insistent emphasis on cultural identity and difference, scholars have tended to identify a “new style of racism” in the anti-immigrant rhetoric of the right (Barker 1981, 1979; Taguieff 1987; Solomos 1991; Wiewiorka 1993). Several related reasons have been adduced for this. Analysts in France no less than in Britain attribute this culturalist discourse of exclusion to a sort of political dialectic between antiracists’ condemnation of racism for its association with Nazi race theories and the right’s attempts to gain political respectability by masking the racist undertones of its anti-immigrant program. Besides, ordering humans hierarchically into races has become indefensible scientifically (Barker 1981; Taguieff 1987), and it is a mistake to suppose that racism developed historically only as a justification of relations of domination and inequality (Barker 1981). Lastly, even when this new “theory of xenophobia” (Barker 1981) does not employ racial categories, the demand to exclude immigrants by virtue of their being culturally different “aliens” is ratified through appeals to basic human instincts, that is, in terms of a pseudobiological theory. Even though the term “race” may, therefore, be absent from this rhetoric, it is racism nonetheless, a “racism without race” (Rex 1973: 191-92; Balibar 1991; Solomos 1991; Gilroy 1991: 186-87).

Cultural fundamentalism: A new construction of exclusion

The emergence of culture as “the key semantic terrain” (Benthall and Knight 1993: 2) of political discourse needs, however, to be more carefully explored. I want to argue that it is misleading to see in the contemporary anti-immigrant rhetoric of the right a new form of racism or a racism in disguise. This is, of course, no mere quibble over words. Not for a moment do I want to trivialize the sociopolitical import of this novel exaltation of cultural difference, but to combat the beast we need

to know what sort it is. To this end we need to do more than uncover the strategic motives for the right's disavowal of racism and analyze the conceptual structure of this new political discourse and the repertoire of ideas on which it draws.

A substantive conceptual shift that can be detected among political rightists and conservatives toward an anti-immigrant rhetoric predicated on cultural diversity and incommensurability is, in fact, informed by certain assumptions implicit in the modern notions of citizenship, national identity, and the nation-state. Even if this celebration of national-cultural integrity instead of appeals to racial purity is a political ploy, this does not explain why the right and conservatives, in their efforts to protect themselves from accusations of racism, *should have resorted to the invocation of national-cum-cultural identity and incommensurability to do this*. This culturalist rhetoric is distinct from racism in that it reifies culture conceived as a compact, bounded, localized, and historically rooted set of traditions and values transmitted through the generations by drawing on an ideological repertoire that dates back to the contradictory 19th-century conception of the nation-state.

Rather than asserting different endowments of human races, contemporary cultural fundamentalism (as I have chosen to designate the contemporary anti-immigrant rhetoric of the right) emphasizes differences of cultural heritage and their incommensurability. The term "fundamentalism" has conventionally been reserved for describing antimodern, neotraditionalist *religious* phenomena and movements interpreted as a reaction to socioeconomic and cultural modernization. As I will argue, however, the exaltation in the contemporary secular cultural fundamentalism of the right of primordial national identities and loyalties is not premodern, for the assumptions on which it is based form a contradictory part of modernity (Dubiel 1992; Klinger 1992). There is something genuinely distinct from traditional racism in the conceptual structure of this new doctrine, which has to do with the apparently anachronistic resurgence, in the modern, economically globalized world, of a heightened sense of primordial identity, cultural difference, and exclusiveness. What distinguishes conventional racism from this sort of cultural fundamentalism is the way in which those who allegedly threaten the social peace of the nation are perceived. The difference between these two doctrines resides, first, in the way in which those who are their respective targets are conceptualized—whether they are conceived as naturally inferior members or as strangers, aliens, to the polity, be it a state, an empire, or a commonwealth. Cultural fundamentalism legitimates the exclusion

of *foreigners, strangers*. Racism has usually provided a rationalization for class prerogatives by naturalizing the socioeconomic inferiority of the *underprivileged* (to disarm them politically) or claims of national supremacy (Blanckaert 1988). Second, whereas both doctrines constitute ideological themes which “naturalize” and thereby aim to neutralize specific sociopolitical cleavages whose real roots are economic-political, they do this in conceptually different ways. “Equality” and “difference” tend to be arrayed against each other in political discourse in both cases, but the “difference” which is invoked and the meaning with which it is endowed differ. There may be occasional references to “blood” or “race,” but there is more to this culturalist discourse than the idea of insurmountable essential cultural differences or a kind of biological culturalism (Lawrence 1982: 83), namely, the assumption that *relations* between different cultures are by “nature” hostile and mutually destructive because it is in human nature to be ethnocentric; different cultures ought, therefore, to be kept apart for their own good.

Homo xenophobicus

A further supposition regarding human nature can, in effect, be found in political as well as popular discourse on extracommunitarian immigration in the eighties. Newspaper headlines, politicians, and scholars invoke the term “xenophobia” along with racism to describe mounting anti-immigrant animosity. In 1984, for example, the European Parliament convened a committee of inquiry to report on the rise of fascism and racism in Europe in a first attempt to assess the extent and meaning of anti-immigrant hostility. In 1985 the committee concluded that “a new type of spectre now haunts European politics: xenophobophilia.” The report described xenophobia as “a latent resentment or ‘feeling,’ an attitude that goes before fascism or racism and can prepare the ground for them but, in itself, does not fall within the purview of the law and legal prevention (Evrengis 1985: 60). The components of this more or less diffuse feeling and of increasing tensions between the national and immigrant communities and their association with a general sense of social malaise, it was argued, were admittedly difficult to identify, but one element was “the time-honoured distrust of strangers, fear of the future combined with a self-defensive reflex” (p. 92). One outcome of the committee’s work was a Declaration against Racism and Xenophobia made public in 1986 (European Parliament 1986). In 1989 the Parliament set up yet another committee of inquiry, this time into racism and

xenophobia. Its task was to assess the efficacy of the declaration and to update the information on extra-European immigration in the light of the extension of freedom of movement within Europe to be introduced in 1992–93 (European Parliament 1990). The notion of xenophobia was thus incorporated, without any further attempt to dispel its ambiguities, into European Parliament parlance. The media and politicians have equally picked up the idea, and it has captured the European imagination in general. It was this terminological innovation which first made me wonder whether there was not something distinct to the rhetoric of exclusion whereby anti-immigrant sentiment in Western Europe is justified.

“Xenophobia” literally means “hostility toward strangers and all that is foreign” (*Le Petit Robert* 1967). Cashmore, in his 1984 *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations*, still dismissed the term as a “somewhat vague psychological concept describing a person’s disposition to fear (or abhor) other persons or groups perceived as outsiders” because of its uncertain meaning and hence its limited analytical value in that it presupposes underlying causes which it does not analyze; therefore, he thought (as it has turned out, wrongly), “it has fallen from the contemporary race and ethnic relations vocabulary” (p. 314). Either the root causes of this attitude are not specified or it is taken for granted that people have a “natural” propensity to fear and reject outsiders because they are different. The right’s explicit sympathy and the affinity of its argument with key postulates of human ethology and sociobiology have been noted repeatedly (Barker 1981: chap. 5; Durantón-Crabol 1988: 44, 71–81). The scientific weaknesses of notions of human nature based on biological principles such as the territorial imperative and the tribal instinct, according to which humans no less than animals have a natural tendency to form bounded social groups and for the sake of their own survival to differentiate themselves from and to be hostile to outsiders have been reiterated (see, e.g., Sahlins 1976; Rose, Lewontin, and Kamin 1984; Gould 1981). The point here is, however, to show why a belief in *Homo xenophobicus* has so much commonsense appeal.

Striking in that it suggests that this assumption is not restricted to the scientific or political right is, for example, Cohn-Bendit and Schmid’s (1991: 5, my translation) recent argument that “the indignation over xenophobia (*Fremdenhass*), which suggests as an antidote a policy of open borders, is somehow false and dangerous. *For if history has taught us one thing, then it is this: in no society has a civil intercourse with foreigners been inbred. Much indicates that the reserve vis-a-vis the foreigner*

constitutes an anthropological constant of the species: and modernity with its growing mobility has made this problem more general than it was before.” This claim is as politically dangerous as it is scientifically debatable, for history, by contrast, for example, with biology, is unable to prove human universals, at least as far as our contemporary understanding of the human experience goes. Besides, it is not difficult to come up with examples demonstrating the fallacy of the idea that xenophobia is part of the human condition. The war in Bosnia provides probably the most tragic contemporary instance. Until Serbian radical nationalism tore them apart, Muslims, Serbs, and Croats had lived together as neighbors in their acknowledged religious and other cultural differences.

Xenophobia, an attitude supposedly inherent in human nature, constitutes the ideological underpinning of cultural fundamentalism and accounts for people’s alleged tendency to value their own cultures to the exclusion of any other and therefore be incapable of living side by side. Contemporary cultural fundamentalism is based, then, on two conflated assumptions: that different cultures are incommensurable and that, because humans are inherently ethnocentric, relations between cultures are by “nature” hostile. Xenophobia is to cultural fundamentalism what the bio-moral concept of “race” is to racism, namely, the naturalist constant that endows with truth value and legitimates the respective ideologies.

Racism versus cultural fundamentalism

A systematic comparison of the conceptual structures of traditional racism and this cultural fundamentalism may render clearer the distinctness of what are alternative doctrines of exclusion. They have in common that they address the contradiction between the modern universalist notion that all humans are naturally equal and free and multiple forms of sociopolitical discrimination and exclusion, but they do so differently. Both doctrines derive their argumentative force from the same ideological subterfuge, namely, the presentation of what is the outcome of specific politico-economic relationships and conflicts of interest as natural and hence incontestable because it, as it were, “comes naturally.”

Modern Western racism rationalizes claims of national superiority or sociopolitical disqualification and economic exploitation of groups of individuals within a polity by attributing to them certain moral, intellectual, or social defects supposedly grounded in their “racial” endowment

which, by virtue of being innate, are inevitable. The markers invoked to identify a “race” may be phenotypical or constructed. Racism thus operates with a particularistic criterion of classification, namely, “race,” which challenges the claim to equal humanness by dividing humankind into inherently distinct groups ordered hierarchically, one group making a claim to exclusive superiority. In this sense racist doctrines are categorical, concealing the sociopolitical relationships which generate the hierarchy. “Race” is construed as the necessary and sufficient natural cause of the unfitness of “others” and hence of their inferiority. Sociopolitical inequality and domination are thereby attributed to the criterion of differentiation itself, namely, “their” lack of worth, which is in “their” race. As a doctrine of asymmetric classification racism provokes counterconcepts that demean the “other” as the “other” could not demean the “self.” Mutual recognition is denied precisely because the “racial” defect, being relative, is not shared by the “self.” And that is the point. By attributing unequal status and treatment to its victim’s own inherent shortcomings, this doctrine denies the ideological character of racism itself.

Of course, this raises the important question of the place of an idea of social status inscribed in nature, rather than resulting from contract, in modern society, otherwise conceived of as composed of self-determining individuals born equal and free. Modern racism constitutes an ideological sleight-of-hand for reconciling the irreconcilable—a liberal meritocratic ethos of equal opportunity for all in the marketplace and socioeconomic inequality—which, rather than being an anachronistic survival of past times of slavery and/or European colonial expansion and the ascriptive ordering of society, is part and parcel of liberal capitalism (Stolcke 1993; Fitzpatrick 1987).

At different moments in history systems of inequality and oppression have been rationalized in distinct ways. Racist doctrines are only one variation of the same theme, namely, the endeavour to reconcile an idea of shared humanity with existing forms of domination. Early modern colonial encounters with “primitives” intensely exercised European minds. Initially it was not their “racial” difference which haunted the European imagination but their religious-cum-moral diversity which was felt to challenge Christian hegemony. How, if God had created “man” in his image, could there be humans who were not Christians? Nineteenth-century scientific racism was a new way of justifying domination and inequality inspired by the search for natural laws that would account for the order in nature and society. Striking in the 19th-century debate over the place of humans in nature is the tension between man’s faith in

free will unencumbered by natural constraints, in his endeavour as a free agent to master nature, and the tendency to naturalize social man. Social Darwinism, eugenics, and criminology provided the pseudoscientific legitimation for consolidating class inequality. Their targets were the dangerous laboring classes at home (see, e.g., Chevalier 1984). If the self-determining individual, through persistent inferiority, seemed unable to make the most of the opportunities society purported to offer, it had to be because of some essential, inherent defect. The person or, better, his or her natural endowment—be it called racial, sexual, innate talent, or intelligence—rather than the prevailing socioeconomic or political order was to be blamed for this. This rationale functioned both as a powerful incentive for individual effort and to disarm social discontent. Physical anthropology at the same time lent support both to claims of national supremacy among European nations and to the colonial enterprise by establishing a hierarchy of bio-moral races (Blanckaert 1988; Brubaker 1992: 98-102).

Cultural fundamentalism, by contrast, assumes a set of symmetric counterconcepts, that of the foreigner, the stranger, the alien as opposed to the national, the citizen. Humans by their nature are bearers of culture. But humanity is composed of a multiplicity of distinct cultures which are incommensurable, the relations between their respective members being inherently conflictive because it is in human nature to be xenophobic. An alleged human universal—people's natural propensity to reject strangers—accounts for cultural particularism. The apparent contradiction, in the modern liberal democratic ethos, between the invocation of a shared humanity which involves an idea of generality so that no human being seems to be excluded and cultural particularism translated into national terms is overcome ideologically: a cultural "other," the immigrant as foreigner, alien, and as such a potential "enemy" who threatens "our" national-cum-cultural uniqueness and integrity, is constructed out of a trait which is shared by the "self." In yet another ideological twist, national identity and belonging interpreted as cultural singularity become an insurmountable barrier to doing what comes naturally to humans, in principle, namely, communicating.

Instead of ordering different cultures hierarchically, cultural fundamentalism segregates them spatially, each culture in its place. The fact that nation-states are by no means culturally uniform is ignored. Localized political communities are regarded by definition as culturally homogeneous. Presumed inherent xenophobic propensities—though they challenge the supposed territorial rooting of cultural communities,

since they are directed against strangers “in our midst”—reterritorialize cultures. Their targets are uprooted strangers who fail to assimilate culturally.

Being symmetrical, these categories are logically reversible—any national is a foreigner to any other nation in a world of nation-states, for to possess a nationality is in the nature of things. This formal conceptual polarity—nationals as against foreigners—is charged with political meaning. By manipulating the ambiguous link between national belonging and cultural identity, the notion of xenophobia infuses the relationship between the two categories with a specific and substantive political content. Because the propensity to dislike strangers is shared by foreigners, it also becomes legitimate to fear that the latter, by their disloyalty, might threaten the national community. When the “problem” posed by extracommunitarian immigration is conceptualized in terms of self-evident cultural difference and incommensurability, the root causes of immigration, namely, the deepening effects of North-South inequality, are explained away.

Cultural fundamentalism invokes a conception of culture contradictorily inspired both by the universalist Enlightenment tradition and by the German romanticism that marked much of the 19th-century nationalist debate. By building its case for the exclusion of immigrants on a trait shared by all humans alike rather than on an unfitness allegedly intrinsic to extracommunitarians, cultural fundamentalism, by contrast with racist theories, has a certain openness which leaves room for requiring immigrants, if they wish to live in our midst, to assimilate culturally. And because of the other important idea in modern Western political culture, namely, that all humans are equal and free, anti-immigrant rhetoric is polemical and open to challenge, which is why existing forms of exclusion, inequality, and oppression need to be rationalized ideologically.

At the core of this ideology of collective exclusion predicated on the idea of the “other” as a foreigner, a stranger, to the body politic is the assumption that formal political equality presupposes cultural identity and hence cultural sameness is the essential prerequisite for access to citizenship rights. One should not confuse the useful social function of immigrants as scapegoats for prevailing socioeconomic ills with the way in which immigrants as foreigners are conceptualized. Rather than being thematized directly, immigrants’ socioeconomic exclusion is a consequence of their political exclusion (*Le temps des exclusions* 1993). Opponents of immigration on the right may object to granting immigrants the social and political rights inherent in citizenship on economic grounds.

The “problem” of immigration is construed, however, as a *political* threat to national identity and integrity on account of immigrants’ cultural diversity because the nation-state is conceived as founded on a bounded and distinct community which mobilizes a shared sense of belonging and loyalty predicated on a common language, cultural traditions, and beliefs. In a context of economic recession and national retrenchment, appeals to primordial loyalties fall on fertile ground because of the ordinary taken-for-granted sense of national belonging that is the common idiom of contemporary political self-understanding (Weber 1976, cited by Brubaker 1992).

Immigrants are seen as threatening to bring about a “crisis of citizenship” (Leca 1992: 314) in both a juridical and a politico-ideological sense. In the modern world nationality as the precondition for citizenship is inherently bounded as an instrument and an object of social closure (Brubaker 1992). In this respect, nationality is not all that different from the kinship principles that operated in so-called primitive societies to define group membership. In the modern world of nation-states, nationality, citizenship, cultural community, and state are conflated ideologically (Beaud and Noiriel 1991: 276) and endow immigrants’ cultural distinctiveness with symbolic and political meaning.

It will, of course, be objected that not all immigrants or foreigners are treated with animosity. This is obviously true. But then, equality and difference are not absolute categories. The politico-ideological repertoire on which the modern nation-state is built provides the raw materials from which cultural fundamentalism is constructed. Specific power relationships with the countries from which extracommunitarian immigrants proceed and the exploitation they have undergone explain why “they” rather than, for example, North Americans are the targets in Europe of this rhetoric of exclusion. Hostility against extracommunitarian immigrants may have racist overtones, and metaphors can certainly be mixed. Yet, as somebody remarked to me recently, immigrants carry their foreignness in their faces. Phenotype tends now to be employed as a marker of immigrant origin rather than “race’s” being construed as the justification for anti-immigrant resentment.

French republican assimilation versus British ethnic integration

For the sake of clarity I have so far neglected major differences in dealing with the immigration “problem” among European countries which have

been pointed out repeatedly (Wieviorka 1993; Rouland 1993: 16-17; Lapeyronnie 1993). “It is an almost universal activity of the modern state to regulate the movement of the people across its national boundaries” (Evans 1983: 1), but this can be done in diverse ways. The Dutch and the British governments were the first to acknowledge the presence in their countries of so-called ethnic minorities. By the eighties all Western European states were curbing immigration and attempting to integrate immigrants already in their midst. Depending on their political cultures and histories, different countries designed their immigration policies differently. The French model, informed by the traditional Republican formula of assimilation and civic incorporation, contrasted sharply with the Anglo-Saxon one, which left room for cultural diversity, although by the eighties a confluence could be detected between the two countries’ anti-immigrant rhetoric and restrictive policies.

The entry and settlement of immigrants in Europe poses again the question of what constitutes the modern nation-state and what are conceived as the prerequisites for access to nationality as the precondition for citizenship. Three criteria—descent (*jus sanguinis*), birthplace (*jus soli*), and domicile combined with diverse procedures of “naturalization” (note the term)—have usually been wielded to determine entitlement to nationality in the modern nation-states. *Jus sanguinis* constitutes the most exclusive principle. The priority given historically to one or another criterion has depended not only, however, on demographic-economic and/or military circumstances and interests but also on conceptions of the national community and the substantial ties of nationhood. The classical opposition between the French *Staatsnation* and the German *Kulturnation* (Meinecke 1919; Guiomar 1990: 126-30) has often obscured the essentialist nationalism present also in 19th-century French thought and debate on nationhood and national identity and hence the part played by the Republican formula of assimilation in the French conception of the Republic. There has been almost from the start a tension between a democratic, voluntarist, and an organicist conception of belonging in the continental European model—by contrast with the British tradition—of the modern nation-state which, depending on historical circumstances, has been drawn on to formulate and rationalize a more or less exclusive idea of the nation and of citizenship. A comparison of French and British postwar experiences and treatments of the immigration “problem” will serve to make this point (see Lapeyronnie 1993 for a different interpretation).

The French debate over immigration since the seventies reveals the ambivalence underlying the Republican assimilationist conception of nationality and citizenship. The first genuine French nationality code was enacted in 1889, at a time when foreigners, predominantly of Belgian, Polish, Italian, and Portuguese origin, had a large presence in the country, by contrast with Germany, and drew a sharp line between nationals and foreigners. It consecrated the *jus sanguinis*, that is, descent from a French father (*sic*) and, in the case of an illegitimate child, from the mother, as the first criterion of access to French nationality, but simultaneously it reinforced the principle of *jus soli*, according to which children of foreigners born on French soil were automatically French (Brubaker 1992: 94-113, 138-42; see also Noiriel 1988: 81-84). The relative prominence given to *jus soli* in the code has been interpreted as a “liberal,” inclusive solution (Noiriel 1988: 83; Brubaker 1992). On closer inspection this combination of descent and birthplace rules can also be interpreted, however, as a clever compromise struck for military and ideological reasons (in the context of the confrontation over Alsace-Lorraine following the French defeat in the Franco-German War and the establishment of the German Empire) between an organicist and a voluntarist conception which, though contradictory, were intrinsic to the French conception of the nation-state.

The nationality code of 1889 did not apply to the French colonies until French citizenship was extended to all colonial territories after World War II (Werner 1935). As soon as Algeria gained its independence, however, Algerians became foreigners, while inhabitants of the French overseas departments and territories remained fully French, with right of entry into France. Those Algerians who were living in France at independence had to opt for French or Algerian citizenship. For obvious political reasons most of them rejected French nationality, though their French-born children continued to be defined as French at birth, as were the Frenchborn children of the large numbers of immigrants to France in the decade following the war of independence (Weil 1988). By the midseventies the regulation of French nationality and citizenship became inseparable from immigration policy. As opinion grew more hostile toward immigrants, especially from North Africa, the *jus soli* came under increasing attack from the right for turning foreigners into Frenchmen on paper without ensuring that they were “French at heart” (Brubaker 1992: 143). A controversial citizenship law reform submitted in 1983 and designed to abolish the automatic acquisition of French nationality by French-born children of immigrants, requiring an explicit declaration instead, was nevertheless defeated in 1986 because of strong opposition

to the traditional French assimilationist conception by pro-immigrant organizations and the left. In 1993 the new conservative government finally succeeded, however, in passing a reform to the same effect, which restricts the *jus soli* rule, thereby giving new prominence to *jus sanguinis*.

Until the mid-eighties the antiracist movement and pro-immigrant organizations in France had advocated a multiculturalist model of integration based on respect for immigrants' cultural diversity, responding thus to the right's cultural fundamentalism. The heated debate over immigrants' "right to difference" was typically French. Thereafter progressive opinion began to swing around, calling for "a return to the old republican theme of integration according to which membership in the nation is based not on an identity but on citizenship, which consists in individual adherence to certain minimal but precise *universal* values" (Dossier 1991: 47- 48). The "republican model of integration" which conditions citizenship on shared cultural values and demands cultural assimilation became the progressive political alternative to the right's cultural fundamentalism.

British immigration debate and experience developed quite differently. According to the traditional nationality law of England, later extended to Britain, every person born within the domain of its king was a British subject. Nineteenth-century French advocates of *jus sanguinis* had already rejected as inappropriate the British unconditional *jus soli* rule because for them citizenship reflected an enduring and substantial rather than merely accidental connection to France as well as the will to belong and because of its expansiveness and feudal roots (Brubaker 1992: 90). But the meaning and consequences of jural norms depend on their historical context. The traditional British concept of subjecthood based on birth on British soil, which established an individual vertical bond of allegiance to the crown and its parliament, unaltered until 1962, allowed immigrants from the colonies free entry into the country as British subjects regardless of their cultural and/or phenotypical difference. The Home Office (quoted by Segal 1991: 9) argued in the 1930s as follows:

it is a matter of fundamental importance both for the United Kingdom and for the Empire as a whole, if there is to be such an organization at all based in the last resort on a common sentiment of cohesion which exists, but cannot be created, that all British subjects should be treated on the same basis in the United Kingdom.... It is to the advantage of the United Kingdom that persons from all parts of the Empire are attracted to it.

Despite postwar concerns over free and unrestricted immigration's lowering the quality of the British people (Dummett and Nicol 1990:174), the British Nationality Bill of 1948 ruled that British subjecthood was acquired by virtue of being a citizen of a country of the Commonwealth. Yet, as large numbers of immigrants arrived and demands for control increased, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 introduced the first special immigration controls. It did not explicitly discriminate against nonwhite immigrants, but it left a large amount of discretion for immigration officers to select immigrants at a time when it went without saying that Commonwealth immigrants were not white (Dummett and Nicol 1990: 183-87; Segal 1991: 9). In 1981, finally, the Conservative government passed the British Nationality Act, which brought nationality law in line with immigration policy and limited the ancient unconditional *jus soli*, concluding the process of "alienation" of New Commonwealth immigrants by transforming them into aliens (Evans 1983: 46; Dummett and Nicol 1990:238-51). Those who had been hostilized earlier as "black subjects" are now excluded as "cultural aliens."

Britain's common law tradition and the absence of a code of citizenship rights had provided space for immigrant subjects' cultural values and needs. Tolerance for cultural diversity formed part of the history of Britain, acknowledged as a multicultural polity, until in the late seventies an English-centric reinvention of that history began to prevail (Kearney 1991; Clark 1991a, b). This does not mean that Britain's postwar immigration experience was not beset with social conflict. Anti-immigrant sentiment was alive and aggressions were frequent, but they were racist. Until the late seventies the controversy over immigration was predominantly phrased in racist terms. As Dummett and Nicol (1990: 213) have pointed out,

Just as the advocates of strict immigration control were exclusively concerned with non-white immigration, so the supporters of liberalisation attacked racial discrimination first and foremost and perceived immigration policy as the driving force behind this discrimination. It had become psychologically impossible for both sides to think of "immigration" in any sense, or any context, except as a verbal convention for referring to the race situation in Britain.

Legal provisions to combat discrimination typically aimed at ensuring subjects from the ex-colonies equal opportunities independent of their "race." As long as immigrants from the ex-colonies were British

subjects they were fellow citizens, albeit considered as of an inferior kind. Anti-immigrant prejudice and discrimination were rationalized in classical racist terms. Formal legal equality was not deemed incompatible with immigrants' different cultural traditions as long as these traditions did not infringe basic human rights. The right's demand for cultural assimilation constituted a minority opinion. Liberals defended integration with due respect for cultural diversity and the particular needs of "ethnic" minorities. A key instrument of liberal integration policy was multicultural education. As I have shown above, when the Tory government took up the banner of curbing immigration it began to rationalize it, invoking, by contrast with earlier racist arguments, national-cum-cultural unity and calling for the cultural assimilation of immigrant communities "in our midst" to safeguard the British "nation" with its shared values and lifestyle. Immigrant communities needed to be broken up so that their members, once isolated, would cease to pose a cultural and political threat to the British nation. Immigrant children were to receive standard English education, and uniform legal treatment was to be accorded them (Parekh 1991). Thus as Europe evolved into a supranational polity, a continental nation-state paradoxically emerged out of the ashes of the British multicultural though racist empire.

The nation within the state

As I indicated earlier, the debate over immigrants' "right to difference" unleashed singular passions in France. The character and reasons for this controversy transcend the polarized political climate over the immigration "problem." They express a historical tension inherent in the French universalist Republican conception of the modern nation-state. In a world of emerging nation states, the early cosmopolitan revolutionary spirit was soon eroded by a crucial dilemma, namely, how to build a nation-state endowed with a distinct and bounded citizenry. Ethnic group differences were, in principle, alien to the revolutionary democratic point of view. But, as Hobsbawm (1990:19; see also Cranston 1988: 101) has identified the problem,

The equation nation = state = people, and especially sovereign people, undoubtedly linked nation to territory, since structure and definition of states were now essentially territorial. It also implied a multiplicity of nation-states so constituted, and this was indeed a necessary

consequence of popular self determination.... But it said little about what constituted “the people.” In particular there was no logical connection between a body of citizens of a territorial state, on one hand, and the identification of a “nation” on ethnic, linguistic or other grounds or of other characteristics which allowed collective recognition of group membership.

The advocates of an idea of the “nation” based on a freely entered contract among sovereign citizens usually invoke Renan’s celebrated metaphor “The existence of a nation is a plebiscite of every day.” Renan’s “Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?” (1992 [1882]) is in fact often taken for the expression of a conception of the nation particularly well suited to modern democratic individualism. They tend to overlook, however, that Renan simultaneously uses another culturalist argument to resolve the difficulty of how to circumscribe the “population” or “people” entitled to partake in this plebiscite (1992 [1882]: 54, my translation):

A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things which in reality make up no more than one constitute that soul, that spiritual principle. One is in the past, the other in the present. One is the shared possession of a rich heritage of memories; the other is the present consent, the desire to live together, the will to continue to sustain the heritage one has received undivided.... The nation, the same as the individual, is the realization of an extended past of endeavors, of sacrifice and of devotion. The cult of the ancestors is among all the most legitimate; the ancestors have made us what we are....

Two contradictory criteria, one political (free consent) and one cultural (a shared past), are thus constitutive of the “nation” (Todorov 1989: 165-261; Noiriel 19: 27- 28; see also Gellner 1987: 6-28 for a different, functionalist interpretation and, for a witty take-off on French republican mythology, Gatty 1993). Renan’s difficulty in defining the “nation” in purely contractual, consensual terms is just one illustration of a fundamental dilemma that has beset continental European state building. The “principle of nationality,” which identified the state, the people, and the law with an ideal vision of society as culturally homogeneous and integrated, became the novel, though unstable, form of legitimation in 19th century struggles for state formation.

Contemporary cultural fundamentalism unequivocally roots nationality and citizenship in a shared cultural heritage. Though new with

regard to traditional racism, it is also old, for it draws for its argumentative force on this contradictory 19th-century conception of the modern nation-state. The assumption that the territorial state and its people are founded on a cultural heritage that is bounded, compact, and distinct is a constitutive part of this, but there is also, as I have argued, an important conceptual difference. Nineteenth-century nationalism received enormous reinforcement from the elaboration of one central concept of social theory, "race." With heightened enmity between nation-states, nationalism was often activated and ratified through claims to racial superiority of the national community. Because racist doctrines have become politically discredited in the postwar period, cultural fundamentalism as the contemporary rhetoric of exclusion thematizes, instead, relations between cultures by reifying cultural boundaries and difference.

Conclusion

To conclude, let me now return to the tasks and tribulations of anthropology. Social and cultural anthropology have had a privileged relationship with culture and cultural differences. The critical, self-reflexive turn in the past decade in anthropology has rightly called into question the political and theoretical implications of the taken-for-granted boundedness and isolation of cultures in classical ethnographic realism. There is no longer a generally accepted view of cultures as relatively fixed and integrated systems of shared values and meanings. Enhanced "post-modern" awareness of cultural complexities and cultural politics and of the situatedness of knowledge in poststructuralist anthropology entails, however, a paradox. Despite pronouncements to the contrary, "culture critique," no less than the cultural constructionist mode, by necessity presupposes the separateness of cultures and their boundedness (Kahn 1989). Only because there *are* "other" ways of making sense of the world can "we" pretend to relativize "our own" cultural self-understandings. Similarly, when a systematic knowledge of "others" as much as of "ourselves" is deemed impossible, this is so because "we" no less than "others" are culture-bound. Thus, the present culturalist mood in anthropology ends up by postulating a world of reified cultural differences (see Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Keesing 1994; Turner 1993). Parallels between this and cultural fundamentalism, as I have analyzed it above, should make us beware of the dangers, for furthering understanding between peoples, of a new sort of cultural relativism.

Not for a moment do I mean to deny different ways of organizing the business of life and different systems of meaning. Humans have, however, always been on the move, and cultures have proved fluid and flexible. The new global order, in which both old and new boundaries, far from being dissolved, are becoming more active and exclusive, poses formidable new questions also for anthropology. A crucial issue that should concern us is, then, the circumstances under which culture ceases to be something we need for being human to become something that impedes us from communicating as human beings. It is not cultural diversity per se that should interest anthropologists but the political meanings with which specific political contexts and relationships endow cultural difference. Peoples become culturally entrenched and exclusive in contexts where there is domination and conflict. It is the configuration of socio-political structures and relationships both within and between groups that activates differences and shapes possibilities and impossibilities of communicating. In order to make sense of contemporary cultural politics in this interconnected and unequal world, we need transcend our sometimes self-serving relativisms and methodological uncertainties and proceed to explore, in a creative dialogue with other disciplines, “the processes of *production* of difference” (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 13-14).

Genuine tolerance for cultural diversity can flourish without entailing disadvantages only where society and polity are democratic and egalitarian enough to enable people to resist discrimination (whether as immigrants, foreigners, women, blacks) and develop differences without jeopardizing themselves and solidarity among them. I wonder whether this is possible within the confines of the modern nation-state or, for that matter, of any state.

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AFTERWORD

Caribbean–Mediterranean counterpoint

Charles Stewart

The Caribbean and the Mediterranean are both “middle seas” separating continents and culture areas (Cahnman 1943: 209). Their histories have been tied together since a Genoese sailor funded by the Spanish crown landed on Hispaniola and Cuba in 1492. Columbus and those who followed in his wake brought with them the idea of *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood) recently tested in the purging of Jews and Muslims from Spanish society; notions that indigenous people in the Americas had inherited the stigma of the biblical curse of Ham; and the recent experience of casting non-Christian peoples outside the divinely ordained law of their Christian realm.¹ These Iberian explorations of hereditary inferiority, according to the historian Ivan Hannaford (1996: 101), anticipated the parameters of essentialist homogeneity and indelible inheritance found in the modern idea of race, which arose independently after the Enlightenment. In discovering the West Indies, Christian Europe found its enduring counter-concept, the “savage slot” (Trouillot 1991:

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1. On the eastern side of the Mediterranean, the Ottomans granted significant rights to Jewish and Christian subjects as fellow monotheists, although they did have to pay special taxes (Bowman, this volume; Braude 2014: 15). Prior to the fifteenth-century hardening of Christian boundaries in Spain, Muslims, Jews, and Christians did establish a mode of co-existence (*convivencia*), the positive and negative sides of which have been much debated (Szpiech 2013).

24), with its internal antinomy: heathen yet redeemable through conversion, alternately noble and brutish.

A little over four centuries later, Fernando Ortiz floated a quite different set of concepts back across the Atlantic. Chief among these was “transculturation,” a vision of a national body in open-ended flux, culturally changing as newcomers enter. He conceived this through the image of a simmering Cuban stew known as *ajiaco*. Although contributors to this collection have discussed this image, it is worth reproducing a central passage from Ortiz to appreciate his evocative narrative style:

And at every point our people has had, like the *ajiaco*, new and raw elements that have just entered the pot to be cooked; a heterogeneous conglomerate of diverse races and cultures, of many meats and crops, that stir up, mix with each other, and disintegrate into one single social bubbling. And there, on the bottom of the pot, is a new mass already settled out, produced by the elements that, when they disintegrated in the historical boil, were laying down as sediments their most tenacious essences in a rich and deliciously-garnished mixture. It already had its own character of creation. *Mestizaje* of kitchens, *mestizaje* of races, *mestizaje* of cultures. Dense broth of civilization that boils up on the Caribbean cookfire ... This is why the composition is changed and *cubanidad* has a different flavor and consistency depending on whether it is scooped up from the bottom, from the fat belly of the pot, or from its mouth, where vegetables are still raw and the clear broth bubbles.

It can be said that, strictly speaking, in every people something similar occurs. (Ortiz [1940] 2014: 462–63)

Take that Columbus! And Spain with your *limpieza*! And Europe with your bounded peoples protected by law watching others reduced to bare life and expelled, or worse (Stolcke, this volume)! Published at the outbreak of the Second World War, the message could not have been clearer.

Ortiz’s idea of transculturation emerged from the phenomenon of creolization and offered an analysis of that process. Early Spanish colonization largely wiped out the Taíno, Ciboney, and other indigenous peoples, leaving the Caribbean islands a zone where immigrants from Europe and Africa jostled together to forge a way of life suited to the environment and historical circumstances (Ortiz [1940] 1995: 100). People born in the New World came to be called “creoles,” acclimatized

and localized to become “hemispheric Americans of a new sort” (Mintz 1996: 302). The idea that creoles might descend solely from Old World parents, and thus be “pure” Africans or Europeans, soon gave way to the factor of birth on the western side of the Atlantic. The bonds between these deracinated people developed into a stronger mutual allegiance during independence movements which pitted upstart creoles — most of whom were, from a different perspective, also mestizos — against European motherlands.² The abolition of slavery, the arrival of Chinese laborers, and a raft of further European migrants completed the basic ingredients of the Cuban *ajiaco*. The Trinidadian callaloo, with its sizeable South Asian population, would be a parallel culinary image for the mingling together of peoples in the formation of Caribbean nations (Khan 2004).

Ortiz was born in Cuba in 1881 to a Cuban mother and a Spanish father. The following year his mother took him to Menorca to live in the house of a relative who had returned after running a successful soap manufacturing business in Cuba. Creole by virtue of his birth in Cuba, Ortiz spent the next thirteen years on this Balearic island where his first languages were Menorquín and Castilian. As Horta (this volume) tells us, locals referred to his repatriated relative as *indiano*, to refer to the imprint of having lived in the West Indies.³ It would be interesting to know if that term contained disdain for the deculturation or denaturing a Spaniard might be presumed to have undergone in the tropics, thereby continuing a trope from the age of exploration (Cañizares-Esguerra 1999). Perhaps during his childhood Ortiz doubted whether he would be returning to Cuba or if he was indeed Cuban himself. He was potentially decreolizing, and he spoke Spanish with a Menorcan accent to the end of his life (Valdés Bernal, this volume). He may not have had a

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2. See, for example, Simón Bolívar’s proclamation at Angostura in 1819: “We are not Europeans, we are not Indians; we are but a mixed species of aborigines and Spaniards. Americans by birth, and Europeans by law ... we are struggling to maintain ourselves in the country that gave us birth against the [Spanish] invaders” (cited in Palmié 2007: 70). And see the famous statement by Cuban national hero José Martí: “*Cubano es más que blanco, más que mulato, más que negro*” (Cuban is more than white, more than mulatto, more than black) (Palmié 2013: 97).
 3. According to Ortiz (2014: 472): “Each Spaniard who arrived in Cuba, by the simple fact of that arrival, was already different from what he had been; he was no longer a Spaniard from Spain but an Indian Spaniard.”

Cuban Spanish accent, but it should be noted that no Creole Spanish developed in Cuba.⁴ There are *criollos*, but no *Criollo*.

Ortiz's return to Cuba in 1895 for university studies answered the question of his commitment to Cuba, and his appointment as Cuban consul in Marseilles, Genoa, and La Coruña (1902–6) indicated a reciprocal commitment. He finally returned to reside permanently in Cuba at the age of twenty-five. This personal journey, moral and geographical, informed, in my view, the framing of his delicate distinction between *cubanidad* and *cubanía*. The former is the actually existing state of Cuban culture at any time, the *ajiaco*. *Cubanía*, on the other hand, is the relationship to *cubanidad*, the ethical commitment to it. *Cubanidad* is what is; *cubanía* is the identification with this reality — the very matters Ortiz worked through as a young person during his years outside Cuba. In his essay on “The Human Factors of Cubanidad,” written as he neared the age of sixty, he reconciled the vicissitudes of his life with the framework of Cuban ethnogenesis:

Is the Cuban the person born in Cuba? In a primary and strict sense, yes, but with great reservations. First, because not few are the people who, having been born in Cuba, soon spread themselves in other lands, gaining exotic customs and manners. Their only Cuban quality is the accident of having seen their first sun in Cuba; they do not so much as recognize their native land. Second, because not uncommonly found are the Cubans, citizens or no, who, born across the seas, have grown and formed their personalities here, among the Cuban people. They have integrated themselves into its mass and are indistinguishable from the natives. ... These foreign-born Cubans are the ones who, as folklore says, have gone native like plantains. (Ortiz [1940] 2014: 458–59)

Ortiz goes on to make a point about *cubanía* that holds for creolization generally. There was no going back home for most of those who fetched up on the island and became Cuban together. This held foremost for the African slave population, who, Ortiz ([1940] 2014: 478) speculates, felt the sentiment of *cubanía* before any others. *Cubanía* indicates that spirit of joining *cubanidad*, whether by jumping in with both feet, by gradual realization, or through spontaneous personal decision. The relative fervor

4. Spanish-based Creole languages are generally hard to find, a matter much discussed by linguists. See Díaz-Campos and Clements (2008).

of *cubanía* could be thought of as heat applied to the *olla* (ajiacó pot), speeding, or slowing, the fusion of flavors.

Simon Harrison (2004) has contended that the alluvial landscape of the Middle Sepik in Papua New Guinea conditions a historical forgetfulness. Rivers change course and wash the past away. The sedimentary geology of Britain, by contrast, holds the past in strata that make it possible to study gradual change along linear chronologies. This cumulative, stratigraphic European historical imagination (Koselleck 2018: 9) may be applied in a new comparison with Ortiz's image of the igneous and metamorphic process of Caribbean transculturation: a low-temperature baking of history in Europe as against a firing of it under the varying pressure of *cubanía* in the Caribbean. Ortiz captures these contrasting historical formations in the following reflection: "The whole gamut of culture run by Europe in a span of more than four millenniums took place in Cuba in less than four centuries. In Europe, the change was step by step; here it was by leaps and bounds" (Ortiz [1940] 1995: 99). Archaeologists and historians have studied and restored the monuments and laid out the sequence of Mediterranean history like an open book that contemporary societies may look on with a pride encouraged by the flattering (and economically beneficial) visits of tourists. In the Caribbean, historical records past a certain point in time are difficult to come by, and the all-consuming process of transculturation might dispose people to a lack of interest in their ethnic origins. For a Mediterraneanist, the question of how Caribbean peoples relate to their distant pasts, whether European, African, or Asian, is an intriguing one. Has the fusion of transculturation melted all the documentary evidence? Do commitments to local creole social formations like *cubanidad* leave room for real interest in one's forbears beyond the island?⁵

The essays in this book reveal Ortiz's contradictory positions on the question of retentions from Africa in the Cuban present. In a 1905 article he exhorted researchers to identify survivals of African practices in Cuba and to trace them back to their African origins (Naranjo Orovio, this volume). It is not clear how rigorous such early historical investigations were, but Naranjo Orovio points out that Ortiz's motivation was the presentist one of creating "an inclusive national imaginary" in which

5. The current "Yorubization" of Afro-Cuban practices will be considered further later. The neo-Taíno movement in Puerto Rico, where adherents are campaigning to get "tribal recognition" from the government of the United States, shows that indigenous ancestry may also become a focus.

culture could be understood as an integrated and harmonious whole. It sounds like an orientation compatible with Boas's idea of historically particular cultures formed through borrowing and diffusion, but Boas seems not to have been a guiding influence on Ortiz. In *Los negros brujos*, Ortiz (1906), who had just taken on the job of public prosecutor in Havana, took a negative view of African rituals as bound up with criminality (Sarró, this volume). His approach drew on Cesare Lombroso's theory that criminal behavior resulted from atavistic reversion to a less evolved stage of humanity that could be discerned in the physiognomy of offenders (Pick 1989: 122). Ortiz was working with an evolutionary idea of "culture" stemming from Tylor, who held that "survivals" were vestiges from earlier stages of development that needed to be extirpated in the current stage of civilization, which he and his readers inhabited. After court trials for *brujería* (witchcraft), the police transferred seized evidence to the local museum, thus advancing the effort of objectifying Africanisms and separating them from contemporary society's self-image. Ortiz's stance on these matters was completely out of character with his later idea of transculturation, and the tilt between these two extremes remains one of the fascinating anomalies of his life (Sarró, this volume; Palmié, this volume). In his 1906 view, transmission of *brujería* practices from African-born to creole practitioners entailed their distortion into antisocial instruments. A more negative view of survivals can hardly be imagined.

Prior to Ortiz's resort to the Victorian anthropological notion of "survivals," Mediterranean scholars such as the late nineteenth-century Greek folklorist Nikolaos Politis (Herzfeld [1982] 2020) had interpreted their value entirely differently. Granted that descent from illustrious predecessors such as the ancient Greeks conferred prestige, identifying survivals from them in contemporary life — even pagan holdovers such as gorgons and nereids within an Orthodox Christian society — placed present-day Greeks in a good light. Fifty years before Politis, a Neapolitan cleric and antiquarian, Andrea de Jorio, published *Gesture in Naples and Gesture in Classical Antiquity* (De Jorio [1832] 2000). He contended in this comprehensive, illustrated study that an understanding of contemporary gestures enabled better understanding of the ancient artworks then coming to light at Pompeii and Herculaneum. Later in his career Ortiz came to view Africanisms in Cuba more positively, and it would be interesting to know if, in addition to his focus on music, ritual, and language, he devoted attention to gesture. His contemporary, and competitor, Melville Herskovits, did document African American gestures,

such as turning the head and covering the mouth while laughing, as retentions from Africa in the New World. He classed this material under the category of “motor habits” (Herskovits [1941] 1990: 152).

The possibility of incorporating contemporary African cultural forms (language, music, dance, ritual) into Cuban practices such as Santería points to the limits of Ortiz’s *ajiaco* model. Amanda Villepastour’s 2018 visit to Cuba in the company of a Yoruba priestess stimulated occasional creole resistance to the authority of non-Cuban outsiders (Villepastour, this volume) — a negative answer to the question I posed earlier about interest in forbears beyond the island. Overall, however, there appears to have been a positive response to this question if one considers the general enthusiasm for Nigerian ideas in a Yorubization of Afro-Cuban religious practice ongoing since the 1990s. The Lucumí language, for example, possibly once a dialect of Yoruba, had, over time, been pared down to a ritual language without productive speakers. The possibility of learning Yoruba language, dance, and ritual techniques from Nigerian specialists offered the chance to reinvigorate Afro-Cuban religion on the basis of supposedly authentic knowledge. In restoring Lucumí and Santería to something putatively approaching their earlier form, the effect was to lift them off the bottom of the *olla* in a decreolizing action that positioned them nearer the surface as new additions to the *ajiaco*. Yet, as Villepastour points out, reconstituting these rituals according to Yoruba forms risks making them into something they never were because the Yoruba represented only 12 percent of African slaves brought to Cuba. Contemporary Santería has boiled down from many different African traditions.

Perhaps the effect of this “Yoruba reversion enterprise” is to lift Santería and Ifá divination out of the Cuban cooking process altogether and place them in a new transnational space of fusion between Cuba and Nigeria. Canals (this volume) offers a model of what that might look like in his study of the cult of María Lionza, a plural (white, mestizo, Indian, or black) goddess of Venezuelan origin. The classic depiction of her naked astride a tapir has provoked ever more creative depictions of her, verging into science fiction. These images, and the ritual practices that they orientate, have spread around the world via internet and social media. As Canals points out, the creators and followers of these proliferating images treat them as authentically powerful, not as pale copies. The iconography of María Lionza thus expands in unlimited transculturation. The noteworthy cult following in Spain presents the reverse of the Yorubization of Cuba. Here the Old World submits to the siren call of the former colony.

These last two cases have gone beyond Ortiz's model of a cooking process taking place in the Cuban *olla* — a modern conception premised on singularity and steady, if open-ended and always emergent, integration. Considering this Durkheimian emphasis on cohesion, perhaps Bronisław Malinowski's ([1940] 1995) characterization of Ortiz as a functionalist was not entirely self-serving. Kahn's consideration (this volume) of Haitians fleeing their island adds one more scenario to consider. In trying to make an inter-*olla* move from their island version of the ajiaco to the American melting pot, Haitians find themselves at sea hemmed in by the United States Coast Guard. They are effectively "kettled"⁶ in international waters by coast guard cutters, sometimes detained at Guantanamo, and generally left to stew in an *olla caribeña*. As this cat-and-mouse game has developed over time, the United States border control authorities have purchased ever more sophisticated surveillance equipment while the Haitians have invested in the help of spirits known as *djab* to make themselves invisible to detection. Pina-Cabral's (this volume) idea of "ontological weight" provides an illuminating ethnographic illustration of how realities can appear or disappear. Until recently, in the Alto Minho region of Portugal maize served as the metric of moral personhood, property measurement, and identity. Owning sufficient land to produce enough maize to make bread for one's family measured belonging in the commune. Mere ownership of a house did not qualify. This could not have been the case before maize was introduced a few hundred years ago.⁷ Nor will it be the case in the future. In the wake of return migration and membership of the European Union, salaried employment is taking its place in an example of what Ardener (2007: 150) termed "parameter collapse": a moment when the current world structure turns inside out and new realities become apparent, as when passing the twist in a Möbius strip. Minhoto village identity, like Haitian migrants at sea, can appear and disappear as one moves through perspectival positions.

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6. *Kettling* is a tactic developed by British police to deal with protestors. It involves containing them by cutting off all exits from where they are assembled and then permitting demonstrators to leave at a time of their choosing and arresting some of them.
 7. The Spanish first encountered maize on the island of Hispaniola. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word first appears in 1500 in Columbus's diary as *mahíz*, from Taíno *mahiz* (or *mahís*).

Ortiz's ajiaco has endured its own disappearances as a cultural object and as an analytic parameter. There have been periods in the 1880s and 1990s when ajiaco was off the menu in Cuba due to the cost of ingredients. Meanwhile, cookbooks for African American practitioners of Lucumí omit recipes for ajiaco, reflecting the view that it is not genuinely African, a move broadly consistent with Yorubization. Pérez (this volume) delves into Ortiz's career-long failure to recognize the ajiaco as a ritual food, which it manifestly is, in addition to being a secular, national dish. This scotomization may have derived from his idea that ritual dishes for African gods only included African foods, an assumption that did not hold up empirically, but which nonetheless occupied space in Ortiz's imagination. His metaphorical use of the ajiaco to describe the transculturation of the Cuban national body thus unnecessarily, yet compulsively, involved overlooking its ritual uses.

All of this serves as a reminder that Ortiz framed the ajiaco analytic from within it during its late-1930s stage of cooking. He was cooked in the very process that he was trying to capture, in an instance of what the hermeneutic philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer ([1960] 1994: 301) described as "historically effected consciousness" and which Palmié (2013) has examined in detail. In the first decade of the 1900s, when he saw mixture as pernicious, his personal process of being cooked in the ajiaco had barely begun. By the late 1940s, he dispensed with the ajiaco metaphor in favor of an analogy with music (Palmié 2016: 11). Ortiz apparently realized what Ulf Hannerz would later discover after his heuristic affair with "creolization" as a metaphor for globalization had run its course: "Whenever one takes an intellectual ride on a metaphor, it is essential that one knows where to get off" (Hannerz 1992: 264). The image of inexorable melding cannot capture the way in which people may decide, after a century or more of simmering, to reconstitute previous cultural identities, nor can it model the polarizing effects of exogenous ideas like Marxism or Afrocentrism.

In comparison to Cuba's centuries-old ajiaco, Ceuta (Campbell, this volume), a Spanish enclave on the Mediterranean coast of Morocco, is a hasty pudding confectioned from the principal ingredients of Christians and Muslims with a sprinkling of Jewish and Hindu traders. Over the last twenty years, these groups have been encouraged by a long-serving mayor to share and blend their communal religious rituals into local "idiosyncrasies." The mayor presented the debated historical *convivencia* of medieval Spain as the model to emulate. After little more than a decade, however, Orthodox Islamic factions and Spanish nationalists began to secede from

this program and challenge it politically. Opponents castigated the creative idiosyncrasies as pointless idiocies, and the platform of *convivencia* came in for mockery as a connivance. The Ceuta case shows that mixtures can be undone. People who have progressed along the path of transculturation may change their minds and de-transculturated. It must be borne in mind, however, that the Ceuta experiment is still running, and also that it is an enclave of the Spanish state and thus not self-contained but subject to currents of old-fashioned Mediterranean intolerance.

As mentioned at the outset, Ortiz's *ajiaco* offered a counterpoint to precisely those currents of thought that now animate right-wing nationalist exclusionism, such as that espoused by the Spanish Vox party, which seeks to undermine the *convivencia* in Ceuta. Writing in the 1990s, Stolcke (this volume) showed this sort of nationalism to be based on cultural fundamentalism rather than racism. Her analysis of the differences between these two options is persuasive; yet since the essay's original publication, the racialization of categories such as "ethnicity" and "migrant" has worked to convert cultural fundamentalism into a manifestly racist attitude. Her study illuminates the bifurcated situation of today where xenophobes can be fully convinced that they are not racists because they do not embrace scientific racism *per se*, but only seek to protect the integrity of national culture by securing borders. However, the version of national culture which they defend is typically White, and non-White immigrants are discriminatorily excluded from entering it. Racism masquerades as non-racism in a project that is the very opposite of Ortiz's transculturation.

This is the central counterpoint between the Mediterranean and the Caribbean that emerges from this collection. Mediterranean societies have long produced insulating boundaries — ghettos, walls, encystations — that keep people from mixing (Bowman, this volume). Yet the contributions also show that the Mediterranean cannot be kept out of the Caribbean and vice versa. Mediterranean images may be put to oppressive use, as in Ortiz's evocation of the Roman toga (Sarró, this volume) as the cloak of European reason recommended for protection against the seductions of Afro-Cuban magic. On the other hand, Ortiz's ideas of transculturation and the *ajiaco*, as this collection demonstrates, offer the glimpse of a future much different from the one afforded by ethnonationalism, and this has attracted European thinkers since Malinowski. Practices such as the forcing back of refugees into transit countries have been trialed and traded back and forth between the two regions. Like the pidgin languages which once took shape in the slave castles of Africa or on Caribbean plantations, new idioms are arising in Mediterranean

encounters between migrant ships and coastal authorities (Jacquemet 2020), and in detention camps on islands like Lesbos (Broomfield 2017). What is evident, in the wake of this collection, is that the Caribbean and the Mediterranean may be read contrapuntally, as a heuristic venture into the polyphonic nature of social worlds — not just in the Caribbean or the Mediterranean, but globally. Critically taking a page out of Ortiz’s book may be a step in that direction.

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