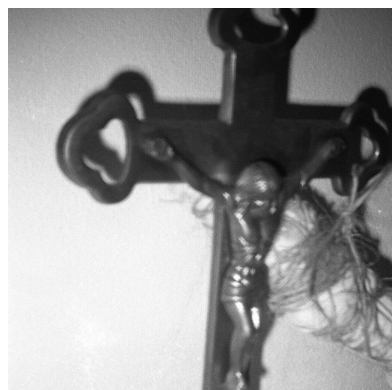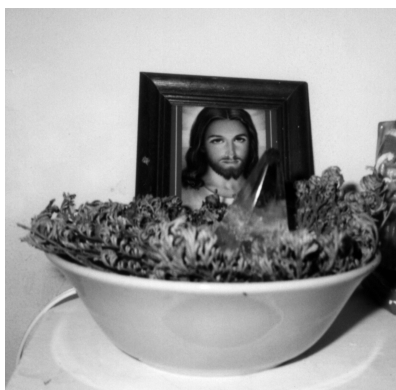Raquel Romberg

RITUAL PIRACY
OR CREOLIZATION WITH AN ATTITUDE

> It is a view that implicitly understands that folding of the under-
> world of the conquering society into the culture of the conquered
> not as an organic synthesis or "syncretism" of the three great
> streams of New World history – African, Christian, and Indian
> – but as a chamber of mirrors reflecting each stream's perception
> of the other ... This chamber of mirrors was, from the colonizer's
> point of view, a chamber conflating sorcery with sedition, if not
> in reality at least as a metaphor. (Taussig 1987:218)

Most of the scholarship in anthropology, linguistics, and literary criticism
concurs in drawing on creolization as one of the signifiers to speak broadly
of cultural transformation.[1] But the nature of this transformation, its agents,
motives, and products are by no means agreed upon. What historians, socio-
cultural anthropologists, linguists, and folklorists have circumscribed as the
study of creole societies and creolization processes has resulted in far from a
monolithic view of the past – the heated debates around *An Anthropological
Approach to the Afro-American Past* (Mintz & Price 1976) being just one
instance.

In the altar-room of a Puerto Rican self-defined *bruja* (witch-healer) I see a profusion of Catholic saints, Afro-Caribbean deities, a Buddha, and Amerindian spirits standing in front of the chromolithograph of a blond Jesus. Also, hanging from a large bronze cross, there is a small packet, a magic work that has been left there to be empowered by it. Could the same cross that once persecuted *brujos* be now empowering their magic works?

Note: Unless specified otherwise, all ethnographic references to Puerto Rican *brujos* are based on my eighteenth-month fieldwork in 1995-96, which appeared first in my dissertation (Romberg 1998), and then in Romberg (2003c). Conscious that the negative stereotypes of *brujería* (witchcraft, here translated as witch-healing) stem from a long history of persecution (paralleling that of European witchcraft), *brujos* today deliberately call themselves, among insiders, "*brujos*" and what they do "*brujería*" to index not only their ability to heal and solve spiritual problems, but also their pride – even arrogance – in their trade, a far cry from the dread and shame of the past.
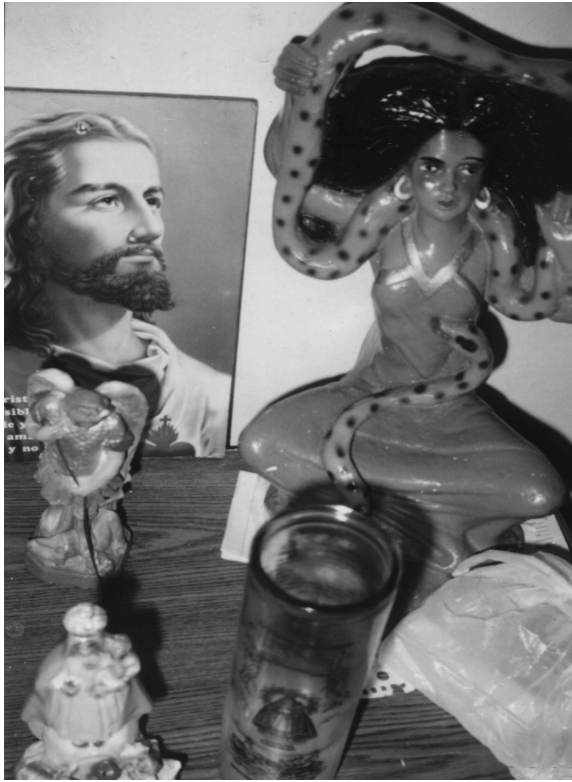
Whether creolization was the result of New World "inter-African syncretism" – characterized as a process of "discovery" by the Saramaka Maroons studied by Richard Price (2001, forthcoming); of the continuity of African traditions in the New World by ethnically differentiated homogeneous enslaved African groups; or the pragmatic adaptation of heterogeneous groups of enslaved and freed African-born and creole groups in confronting European colonialism and exploitation, its study is very much entangled in controversial portrayals of the past. Following Price (2001, forthcoming), this entanglement appears to be often the result of the repositioning of historical-specific analysis within comparative cross-cultural projects (some of which respond to programmatic quests for a politically engaged scholarship that follows a particular local politics of race); or, more broadly, the conclusion that "that" event is inseparable from "this" memory of that event (Scott 1991). In sum, to unknot creolization as process, as ideology, and as theory, is a challenging task.

Not only in academic circles, but also within native contexts, "creole," things creole, and "creolization" are contested terrains that reflect the conflicting sociopolitical, local meanings they have gathered throughout their

trajectories in Caribbean history.[2] Over the span of almost four centuries, "creolization" has been engaged – from colonization to nation-building and lately in postcolonial discourse – in myriad conflicting social projects. In this trajectory it has been deployed alternatively (in social, political, literary, and entrepreneurial discursive and non-discursive practices) to serve racist, developmental, modernist, and conciliatory politics. Originally an emic term that had indexed racial and linguistic differences during colonization, "creole" was later transmuted in postindependence societies into the essence of their national ideology, also acquiring an aesthetic and moral value – within the postcolonial *creolité* artistic movement, for example – that was to transcend the Caribbean (Bernabé *et al.* 1989), which reminds us that cultural traditions "are not only authored; they are authorized. They not only make intelligible; they make legitimate" (Scott 1991:279).

But one thing unites scholarly and native discourses of creolization: whether "creole" is used as a modifier of language, ethnicity, nation, or culture, it essentially implies some form of "mixture" (Szwed 2003). Mixture, however, even in its most sophisticated rendition, reflects only the materialization (or the iconic end product) of a convoluted and painful process, involving unequally situated groups interacting in specific geopolitical contexts. Rather than being the essence of creolization, mixture is its problematic referent, as evidenced in ongoing controversies about the timing, components, and outcomes of these mixtures with regard to whether one is referring to early or later nineteenth-century forms of creolization under English, Dutch, French, or Spanish colonial enterprises, whether their loci were plantation or urban slave societies. I thus limit my discussion to mostly late-nineteenth-century creolization processes centered on urban slave and highland-peasant-Maroon societies under Spanish colonial rule – societies that were overall intensely linked to European settlers and their mores. Initial (first- and second-generation) creolization processes, of the kind described by the Prices in Suriname and Trouillot in Haiti, for example, took place in socioeconomic and cultural circumstances very different from those I describe here, with much less input from Europeans and their cultures. Thus, the kind of "creolization with an attitude" I pursue here is limited to the historically specific circumstances of nineteenth-century Hispanic and Luso-tropic societies.

Indeed, this particular set of historical circumstances, more than earlier ones elsewhere within the Caribbean, shows a persistent double bind resulting from the high value placed on the "purity" of metropolitan cultures and the actual "mixing" of uprooted people and cultures that were relocated in the colonies. Thus, this examination of creolization asks for an in-depth (and possibly retrospective) phenomenological examination of the micropoetics

2. For recent sources that review the etymological origins of *criollo*/creole, see Chaudenson (2001) and Allen (2002).

and politics of cultural difference, as it was informed by the terror/fascination it produced (Taussig 1987, Young 1995) – not of mixtures. In other words, "mixture" – or "dialogue among difference" in its various versions, the more recent trope within globalization theories (Hannerz 1987, 1990, 1996) – implies an equity among social groups and their religious practices that does not seem to have ever existed in the colonial context. That is, in reconstructing the situated perceptions and the materializations that the terror/fascination with difference elicited at individual and institutional levels in the past, one would produce a more intimate sense of the manner in which this difference had been regimented and played out in everyday life. How else can we begin to make sense of the sleight of hand that transformed "polluting" mixtures into "desired" ones? How else explain the shift of status of some groups from being polluting Others to being the archetypes of the creole nation? How otherwise explain the drastic shift of attitude that transformed "dangerous superstitions" into tourist attractions?

More specifically to my take on creolization within the realm of magic and religion, the short vignette on page 176 of this essay speaks more of illicit appropriations, ritual tactics, and the perceived symbolic hegemony of powerful others on a pragmatic level than of creole "mixtures" or "dialogues." The Catholic cross in the midst of African and Asian deities, I argue elsewhere (Romberg 2003c), is the tangible manifestation of past challenges to the exclusivity of the Catholic Church, as well as the illicit personal takeover of its most cherished symbols and gestures. Healing and magic rituals performed by *brujos* and other folk healers in altar-rooms such as this are proof of the successful takeover of the roles of priests and their gestures, as well as their repositioning to fit African- and Asian-based beliefs and rituals.[3] Building on previous scholarship of African-based creole religions in the Americas[4] and on my own research on *brujería* (Romberg 2003c), I suggest "ritual piracy" as a way to assess the complex process that entails these forms of religio-symbolic takeover. In this process a dialectic of two moments – the challenge to the exclusivity of the Catholic colonial order, and the recognition of its symbolic power – results in the unplanned rechanneling of hegemonic religious symbols to purposes other than those intended by the Church.[5]

3.   Puerto Rican *brujería* encompasses religious, healing, and magical practices linked to popular medieval Catholicism, popular Kardecean Spiritism (which includes, in addition to belief in the ability of humans to communicate with spirits, East Asian beliefs in reincarnation), and African-based creole religions such as Santeria (see Quintero Rivera 1998, Duany 1998, Romberg 1998, 2003c, Román 2000).
4.   Cabrera 1975, Bastide 1978, Desmangles 1992, Brandon 1993.
5.   I limit my discussion here to Catholic hegemonic symbols, but elsewhere (Romberg 2001, 2003a) I discuss how *brujos* took over other spiritual and bureaucratic symbols of power pertaining to nation- and state-building periods in Puerto Rican history and added them in their healing and magic rituals.

Far from being a safe, mild metaphor for conceptualizing creolization as mixture, "ritual piracy" resonates with Stefano Harney's (1996:114-15) "predatory creolization."[6] Turning the traditional conceptualization of creolization on its head, he argues that, far from being the victim of cultural imperialism, creole nations such as Trinidad "*devour* and transform cultures local and alien" (my emphasis). Although "piracy" (and "predatory") might add a negative tinge to my revisionist project of creolization (as a colleague otherwise supportive of my thesis suggested), it encapsulates the kind of cultural moves that need to be recovered in discussing creolization processes: cultural plundering in the context of scarcity and monopoly – not mixture; and recognition of powerful others and tactical imitation of hegemonic culture – not dialogue.[7]

When translated to broader cultural processes, this predatory dimension of creolization (thus circumscribed) suggests a culture-making process that includes its negation, best characterized as "culture with an attitude" (Fabian 2001), or "in-your-face culture."[8] As I suggested in the vignette, an inherent "rupture of signification" (Taussig 1987:5) is evident when *brujos*, historically persecuted as heretics, redirect in their favor the same symbols that had persecuted them. Might this rupture of signification transmute into ritual excess that rechannels the illicit "copying" of Catholic gestures into magic potency? Could this be one of the wicked sides of creolization?

MAPPING "THE CREOLIZATION CONUNDRUM"[9]

Before I continue with my argument, I wish to map a wide range of academic models that have been formative in one way or another not only in my own conceptualization of creolization, but in shaping the cultural politics of creole societies. I begin with those related to creole religions (specifically related to my research) and to cultural mixtures in general. I then discuss those frameworks that have addressed the locus, social carriers, scope, and effects of creolization processes, some of which have also been translated to

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6.   I thank Aisha Khan for suggesting this connection.
7.   A parallel interpretation of creole economics as oppositional and subversive is developed by Katherine Browne (2004). I thank Richard Price for drawing my attention to her work.
8.   As Abrahams said during a panel discussion at a meeting of the American Folklore Society in 2002.
9.   I wish to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for suggesting this apt label for characterizing the kind of theoretical mapping I engage in here, which, in the reviewer's words, "indicates an acknowledgment that academic models and cultural politics are of mutual influence."

emic meanings of these processes, thereby entering a local cultural politics. A discussion of the temporal dimension of this politics, which will historicize its native uses and its fictions, will follow this section.

Creole religions in the Americas – considered broadly the cradle of the creole concept – have mostly been discussed in terms of concepts such as "syncretism" (Herskovits 1937, Droogers 1989, Gort *et al.* 1989) and "acculturation" (Herskovits 1958), which were later enhanced as "symbiosis" (Desmangles 1992), "parallelism" (López Valdés 1995), "interpenetration" (Bastide 1978), "inter-system" (Drummond 1980), and "transculturation" (Ortiz 1995). Adding to this far from exhaustive list, a current reflexive scholarly energy within folklore, anthropology, religious studies, and literary criticism has been invested in assessing old and new concepts of creolization and the relative import these concepts have for describing and theorizing intense change across cultures.[10] Some of these works directly add to my phenomenological revisionist project. For example, reviewing the *etic* meanings of creolization, Robert Baron (2003) and John Szwed (2003) conclude that "mixture" and "creative mixture" are key metaphors of creolization. Baron's (2003) wide-ranging list of evidence includes Ian Hancock's "compound"; Dell Hymes' "convergence"; Herskovits' "intertwining," "merging," "blending," "coalescing," "telescoping," and "interpenetrating"; and Hannerz's "continuous spectrum." He also cogently traces some of these metaphors to the symbolic worlds of chemistry, mechanics, physics and biology, and in some cases to poetic/social models – for example, E. K. Brathwaite's "blood flow," "fluctuation," and "prismatic"; Daniel Crowley's "oscillation," and "inconsistency"; and Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant's "complexity" – that imply creativity and intermittent energy.

This is by no means a complete list, but it illustrates the rich scholarly attention given to conceptualizing situations of incommensurable contact via various metaphors of mixture. In the areas of religion, music, dance, and food, the study of "cultural creolization" (Spitzer 2003:58) has focused on the end result of creolization processes, leaving these processes mostly assumed a priori and unproblematized. According to O. Nigel Bolland (1992:64), one of the problems of considering creolization as a broad signifier for cultural processes of change is that it tends to assume a dualistic view of society – of oppressors/oppressed or European/African, for instance – that leads "to the portrayal of creolization as a 'blending' process, a mixing of cultures that occurs without reference to structural conditions and social conflicts." Rather, a dialectical approach to creolization implies, according to Bolland (1992:53), "a reconceptualization of the nature of colonialism and colonial

10. See, for example, the volume of *Plantation Society* (1998) edited by James Arnold, the special double issue of *Caribbean Quarterly* (1998) edited by Rex Nettleford and dedicated to Edward Kamau Brathwaite, and the *Journal of American Folklore* (2003) volume edited by Robert Baron and Ana Cara.

societies, as social forces and social systems that are characterized by conflicts and contradictions, and that consequently give rise to their own transformation." Indeed, often taken out of specific historical contexts, as Aisha Khan (2001:272) poignantly notes, creolization has been used naively and redundantly as a metaphor for the creativity, agency, and empowerment of subordinate people. By focusing on the end result, a harmonious outcome has often been implied in such terms as "co-production" and "interconnectedness" (Khan 2001:273) – romantic, ideological views that stand in stark contrast to the ethnographic exclusionary power of "creolization" that she has encountered in Trinidad vis-à-vis Indo-Trinidadians. Khan (2001:272) therefore questions the descriptive and theoretical power of "creolization" for ethnography, and challenges its epistemological value "in terms of the referents that it both engages and creates, and the premises, often implicit, upon which it rests." Moreover, I would add, the epistemological boundaries between *emic* and *etic* uses of creolization have often been confounded in Caribbean histories when *emic*, native meanings of creolization (or their perception by scholars) have been invoked to inform social theory, the latter being deployed back into native practices, blurring, unless they are situated historically, the descriptive, ideological, and theoretical significance of "creolization."

But situating creolization processes historically and spatially has also been a thorny issue. Any retroactive explanation of creolization processes is complicated by the ideological investments in these processes after emancipation by nation-building agendas. Some situate creolization processes within the plantation (Trouillot 1998); others within the "plural" society – defined as multiracial, multilingual, and multicultural (Smith 1965); others within heroic, "grand" marronage societies (Price 1973, Mintz & Price 1976). Still others, inspired by Kamau Brathwaite's (1971) creole society model, anchor creolization processes solely among intermediate groups (mulattos or such groups that emerged as a result of miscegenation). Because diasporic communities (descendants of non-African groups, such as Indo-Trinidadians) did not fit within the creole society model, they were excluded politically, culturally and conceptually from the imagined nation, even though they had historically always been functionally integrated into Caribbean political economies (Nettleford 1970, Khan 2001, Hintzen 2002:98).

In addition to this biased conceptualization of the creole society, the centrality and nature of creolization processes within nation-building projects have also been debated. Those that stressed the creative, integrative aspects of creolization in folk cultures envisioned it as a two-way process, defining it as "intercultural creolization" (Bolland 1992:58-59). Some have further portrayed this as a "synthetic" process that characterized the whole society, a vision that perfectly suited nationalist ideologies based on the integrative aspects of the creole community (Bolland 1992:64, Khan 2001:281). It is this view of creole ethnicity and nationalism that has promoted a highly hege-

monic and exclusionary discourse of Caribbean identity (Khan 2001, Hintzen 2002). Others more sensitive to class differences have defined creolization, drawing on Orlando Patterson's schema of Caribbean societies, as a rather "segmentary" process that had differentially affected distinct segments of society. Following this schema, Richard Burton (1997:5-6) distinguished a continuum of overlapping and competing cultural forms, all of them creole or creolized, which he labeled "Euro-Creole," "Afro-Creole," and "'Meso-Creole' ('middle culture,' corresponding to the mesolect of 'middle language' of the free colored classes and certain sections of the slave elite)." Taking this lead, George Brandon (1993) pointed to the urban context, specifically to the *cabildos* or Church-sponsored fraternities, not the plantation, as fertile environments where urban slaves and freed people of color were able to develop a new creole religion, such as Cuban Santeria.[11]

Focusing on the social conditions behind creole processes, some anthropologists have recognized the kinds of microlevel creative forces that were needed to adapt to harsh conditions of existence, especially given the many sorts of structurally constraining social systems imposed in the Caribbean from colonization onward.[12] Whether as forms of resistance, adaptation, retention, or survival, Sidney Mintz (1974), Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1982, 1998), and Roger Abrahams and John Szwed (1983) focused, each in their own particular way, on "interstitial" groups (Mintz 1974:146), historical and ecological "crevices" (Mintz 1985:131), and "systemic fissures" (Trouillot 1998:23). Among these groups and in these spaces, at the boundaries of rigid colonial systems such as the plantation, there were many systemic opportunities for the development of creole practices. It was in these places and spaces – such as in provisional plots of landless peasants surrounding plantations, during slave markets, and in the context of *petit maronnage* (when slaves used to run away to visit relatives, to take part in certain rituals, or sometimes to make a symbolic gesture of protest, Trouillot 1998:23) – that creole practices of both resistance and adaptation had emerged. "There was resistance, to be sure, and in a variety of forms," writes Mintz (1974:75-76), "But there was also accommodation, submission, degradation, and self-hatred. Moreover, it is clear that some of the most effective forms

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11. In a similar vein Cuban anthropologist López Valdés (1985) traced the African-based ethnic components of nineteenth-century Cuban *cabildos* in explaining the creation of the religious creole practices of Santeria and Palo Monte. In addition, David Brown (2003) and Lorand Matory (mentioned in Price, forthcoming) trace the emergence of Cuban Santería and Brazilian Candomblé, respectively, to developments of religious creolization during the second half of the nineteenth century in mainly urban contexts.

12. Trouillot (1982:351) argues that "the motion in the system" (that is, change in world-system terms) was carried out by the *gens de couleur*, an intermediary group in Saint-Domingue, whose "evolution happened to intersect with the development of coffee production" and who, "conscious of their marginality, turned this very marginality into an asset."

of *resistance* were built upon prior *adaptation*, involving the slaves in processes of culture change and retention of a complicated kind." Suggesting we look at the cultural predicaments of this complex production in the interstices of slavery without assuming the total erasure of preslavery cultures, Abrahams and Szwed (1983) found similarities in the performance of African-style expressive culture. Especially in the areas of work (agriculture and husbandry), play, and religion, they note, "there were shared perspectives and a common conceptual and affective system of which the slave could not be stripped, and shared practices and beliefs and behavioral patterns which not only survived but were enlarged upon in the New World setting" (Abrahams & Szwed 1983:10). Tracing the beginning of creolization processes back to Africa, Paul Lovejoy and David Trotman (2002) further refine the sources of influence by identifying critical differences among the various African populations that were brought to the Americas, contending (similarly to Robert Farris-Thompson) with the typical homogenization of "the African" component in studies of creolization. They note the differences among the enslaved Africans (with respect to their age, gender, status, and ethnicity, as well as the historical period in which they were enslaved and the stories they heard about whites) as to how they perceived their own enslavement in the Americas – perceptions that existed *before* the experiences they shared on slave ships and the eventual creation of creole cultures in the New World (Lovejoy & Trotman 2002:69, 78).

CREOLIZATION AS A NATIVE CONCEPT: FROM ABOMINATION TO CELEBRATION

Historicizing its native uses and its fictions within the Caribbean can shed light on the complex social trajectories of creolization and the often contradictory referents it has gathered over time. The inspirational teachings of Nietzsche and Foucault on the historical, institutional, and power-based constitution of cultural value have provided me with the conceptual umbrella for this combined spatio-temporal approach to creolization, seen here – following William Roseberry's (1989:28) critique of Geertz's textual model of culture – not just as a product but as a production, "not simply as socially constituted but also as socially constituting." This approach implies a tracing of the power moves – both institutional (epistemic-based) and historical (genealogical) – that have been exerted in labeling things and people as creole, as well as a focus on the agents and agendas behind such native labels and fictions. Some have rightly warned against turning creolization into a master symbol of the Caribbean, for it could act as a gate-keeping concept that obscures real sociohistorical conditions (Trouillot 1992), or a particular fiction that "invents the region" (Khan 2001:272). Indeed, I argue that historicizing "creolization" would involve the inclusion of its fictions. The recent

example of creolization being confounded with social theory and made into a symbol of Antillean identity has been produced mainly by Francophone, nationalist-minded intellectuals and artists who have reversed the early meanings of creolization – when Creole languages were vilified (as much as were the "mixed-bloods") for trespassing the godly taxonomies of the natural order (Dayan 1995:225, 228-29, 237-42, Abrahams 2003, 2002a)[13] – into a desirable worldwide aesthetic program.

Recovering the various social class- and gender-based local meanings of "creole" requires revisiting both the institutional contexts of the bitter history they have emerged from and the symbolic wars of entitlement, as well the ridicule and persecution they have legitimized. Otherwise, as Abrahams (2003:79) notes, "the process of creolization becomes just one more name for the modernist or cosmopolitan project, one that encourages the coming together and the superimposition of peoples from many different parts of the world in a modern metropolitan polity." To recover this agonizing history, then, one has to consider, for instance, that the French Black Code of 1685 was "a document of limits" (Dayan 1995:203), setting the tone for planter/slave excesses elsewhere in the Caribbean and the establishment of black/white/creole racial taxonomies. Aimed at codifying the relations between planters and slaves, its sixty articles constituted blacks and slaves "not as persons but as a special kind of property: a 'thing,' according to Roman Law, juridically deprived of all rights. Legally, their being was 'a being-for-others,' and their civil status, that of things" (Dayan 1995:203).

Once creole societies entered the process of nation-building, the tribulations of creolization that resulted from such laws were silenced and smoothened to fit new nationalist agendas, a space that was not devoid of its own political economy, as will be shown below. The dubious inception of creolization during colonization did not prevent the subsequent revamping of Creoles and things creole, after their previous degrading connotations were strategically forgotten, as tokens of the new postemancipation nation in forging creolization as a symbol of the essence of the new national community. This ideology of the creole nation was established on the assumption that the social unity of the new nation was built upon a creole community (Bolland 1992:51) that was assumed to be the result of social and cultural creolization, or the blending of racially and ethnically diverse groups. This populist and culturalist ideology was forged, Bolland (1992:53) notes, in the last quarter of the twentieth century by "a middle-class intelligentsia that [sought] the

13. "Uncontrollable concubinage and licentiousness," Dayan (1995:238) notes in reference to the writings of white nature-scientists of the eighteenth century on racial degeneration – were considered by some as producing "unholy mixtures" or in the words of a colonial administrator in 1722, "a criminal conjunction of men and women of a different species," giving birth to "a fruit that is a monster of nature."

leading role in an integrated, newly independent society." Turned now into a state ideology, creolization was to signify the idea of creative, not polluting, mixtures. Yet this nationalist ideology of creolization has been questioned for its assumed "harmony." Rex Nettleford (1970:173-211), for example, draws metaphorically on the semantic opposition between melody and rhythm to claim that Jamaican society has created a harmony in which the melody takes precedence over the rhythm; or, in sociological terms, "the mixture has produced a Creole culture in which European and African elements persist and predominate in fairly standard combinations and relationships with things European gaining ascriptive status while things African were correspondingly devalued" (Nettleford 1970:174).

Notwithstanding this and other critiques, the nationalist ideology of creolization was articulated and transformed into an aesthetic trope within the Francophone literary field of *creolité*. Created as a native, elite cultural manifesto, *In Praise of Creoleness* (Bernabé *et al.* 1989) transformed the nationalist ideology of creolization into an all-encompassing, quasi-universalistic ideology aimed at celebrating the creativity and heterogeneity of creole culturemaking processes as an alternative to the previous attempts of the *négritude* and *indigénisme* artistic movements to seek a Caribbean identity. They write,

> We cannot reach Caribbeanness without interior vision. An interior vision is nothing without the unconditional acceptance of our Creoleness. We declare ourselves Creoles. We declare that Creoleness is the cement of our culture and that it ought to rule the foundations of our Caribbeanness. Creoleness is the *interactional or transactional aggregate* to Caribbean, European, African, Asian, and Levantine cultural elements, united on the same soil by the yoke of history. (Bernabé *et al*. 1989:87)

This manifesto fitted well into the nationalist ideologies of the authors and their artistic claims; but when it became uncritically transvalued as social theory, for instance within globalization theories of culture, hybridity, and creativity, its consequences proved detrimental for the study of the sociohistorical aspects of creolization processes.[14]

Since these artistic and theoretical trajectories of creolization are also parts of the history of creolization, they refract back, producing their own contradictions in scholarly, literary, and tourist projects. For example, the manifesto writers of the *creolité* movement (Bernabé *et al*. 1989:97) acknowledged the paradox of exclusion and commodification when the state and commercial entrepreneurs sponsored creole folk expressions.

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14. For critiques of *In Praise of Creoleness,* see Condé & Cottenet-Hage 1995, Condé 1999, and Price & Price 1997.

> There were some insignificant reproducers of misunderstood gestures, some modest collectors of useless memories; there were some obscure directors of commercialized culture for tourists more curious about us than we were; there were some dull epigones of a hackneyed speech, some naive promoters of a trite carnival, some industrious profiteers of a strident, loud *zouk*. They rarely escaped the assertion – shouted or whispered – of doudouism and folklorism. But in the final analysis they were the indispensable links that contributed to save Creoleness from the glorious yet definitive fate of Atlantis.

Indeed, the transformation of "polluting" others into commodified postcard icons of island harmony, creativity, and exoticism is in itself a mystery, sociologically speaking, requiring more than a dialectical frame of analysis that includes its critique; it requires also the insights of poetry and magic. The life and memories of Médard (a Martiniquean artist/convict/legend), exquisitely articulated by Price (1998:157), illustrate this mystery of seduction, fear, and magic, a mystery portrayed by Michael Taussig (1993) as a chamber of distorting mirrors, of magic and mimesis, resistance and adaptation. This mystery, and the sense that probably the silences of history may be imagined but never totally recovered, becomes evident when Price places side by side recovered bits and pieces of the life of Médard and the memories recounted about him. We learn that Médard "stole" from the masters to give to the poor, made exact "photos" or carvings of colonial symbols of power (such as ships, people, and musical instruments), and was imprisoned and exiled. The relationship between madness and colonialism becomes evident in these bits and pieces of his life history. In the context of nation-building, this madness is signified in a "theater of marginality" that commemorates the memory, not the life, of Médard. This marginality is further selectively remembered and exploited for tourist consumption, while the colonial life of Médard is carefully forgotten. As Price (1998:173) succinctly and evocatively notes,

> What we are witnessing ... might be called "the folklorization of colonialism," or the "postcarding of the past." Indeed, during 1987, influenced by state efforts to recuperate the *patrimoine culturel* (the official heritage of this corner of France), as well as to promote tourism, a local youth group sponsored by the municipality of Diamant renovated Médard's house, cleaning up the graffiti slapped on by some Rasta visitors, repairing the carpentry, creating a picturesque rock-inlaid walk leading to the front door, repainting the wood in approximations of the original colors and, *voilá*, every tourist shop in the capital of Martinique began selling postcards labeled "Diamond Rock and its legendary 'House of the Convict.'"

It is striking to see how initial native meanings of creolization – related to broader notions of contagion, deviancy, and abomination – were transformed within the new ideology of nation-building, following emancipation, in ways that indexed a wholesome homogeneity of heterogeneous multilingual, multiethnic, and multiracial societies, epitomizing what modernity was assumed to

consist of (Brathwaite 1971, Bolland 1992). Furthermore, the reinsertion of *creolité* aesthetics by Caribbean Francophone writers as a trope with revolutionary potentials in postcolonial (gender and class-blind) cultural politics[15] points to the relevance of revisiting the historical conditions under which native notions of creolization were constituted.[16]

But who recorded and who compiled creole practices? In his reflections on the structural silences of the past, Trouillot (1995:2) muses over the fact that "human beings participate in history both as actors and narrators." Obviously, some creole practices were either not documented or, if so, not archived; others were either misrecognized or only selectively narrativized; and still others were only embodied much later in fiction, monuments, and commemorations. Due to the systemic silencing of certain events and groups, the "miracle" of creolization processes (Trouillot 1998), their contentious, experiential, and sensorial meanings will probably escape analysis altogether.

With this obstacle in mind, however, I am aware that situating the elusive, often oppositional transformative processes around creolization processes requires, following Trouillot's (1998) call, echoed also by Price (2001, forthcoming), a refined look at their historical particulars. In this case they entail the examination of systemic fissures, colonial scarcity, entitlement wars, double-bind rules, as well as their unintended consequences. This goal informs my examination of the microtechnologies of magic and ritual piracy from a combined ethnohistorical and ethnographic perspective. I am also aware that this project partly requires a phenomenology that is historical, and a complex project of historical/sociological reconstruction and imagination, which, due to the lack of firsthand accounts, might verge on the fictional. Or perhaps this past, with its lost voices, might be recovered, following Paul Stoller (1997), bit by bit in discursive and embodied practices, and sensorial memories, in the present. For Pierre Bourdieu (1990:56), these forms of embodied history would constitute the habitus, "internalized as a second nature, and so forgotten as history" and as such would be "the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product."

In spite of a rich scholarship on creolization, and the general contextual assertion held by many that "questions of *power*, as well as issues of *entanglement*" (Hall 2003a:31) prefigure creolization processes, the microsociocultural and existential production of creolization, as it is historically

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15. Price & Price 1997, Condé 1999, Schwartz & Ray 2000, Yelvington 2001, Enwezor *et al.* 2003.

16. Condé (1999:97) for example launches a critique of the *creolité* literary movement based on what she sees as the "Carnivalization" of French Caribbean literature and the basic divorce of its intellectuals from the real experiences of Caribbean Creoles, suggesting that intellectuals have failed their self-appointed revolutionary mission, leaving only "the pyrotechnics of the text."

and geographically situated here, is still shrouded in a black box of magic and mystery, like the magician's top hat.

What are the sensorial mechanisms that have been involved in these uncanny productions? To grasp their entangled micro-sociopoetic technologies, I propose peeking, following the above analogy, into the magician's hat immediately *after* he has tossed European, African, and indigenous practices into it and pronounced the famous abracadabra, and just *before* he pulls out creolization. Assuming the contentiously constitutive nature of creolization processes, in contrast to "dialogue," "eclecticism," and "cross-cultural hybridity," I ask, "How do seduction and fear, domination and impertinence, as well as scarcity and artifice, fashion what happens in the top hat?" Considering the technologies of magic both in descriptive and heuristic terms, the mystery behind the creole sociocultural transformations that occur inside the "top hat" can be imagined (as I hope to show below) as a form of magic, no less than the technologies of magic can be regarded as forms of creolization.

Entitlement, Ridicule, and Fascination

Ethnohistorical records tell us that colonial encounters were more complex than the scenario of one group dominating or extracting the labor of others by sheer force; and that there were moments mediated by sheer fascination and fear of the unknown as well as opportunities for experimentation (Abrahams & Szwed 1983). Complex local and metropolitan race relations, economic exploitation, and political domination, as well as cultural entitlements and laws that protected them, mediated the multifaceted perceptions that competing groups held of each other. Joan Dayan (1995:224-25) keenly illustrates this point, showing the intricate feelings of intimidation and alliance felt by competing social groups in colonial Saint-Domingue:

> White women envied women of color; petits blancs despised the free coloreds, whose sobriety and talent made them tough competitors; the established sugar planters were threatened by the extraordinary boom in coffee plantations, mostly owned by enterprising mulattoes; and the metropole kept trying to restrict emancipation, since the mulatto's links with enslaved maternal relatives could erode white racial hegemony and thus threaten slavery itself. Little did the king's lawmakers suspect that some of their fiercest allies and most devoted followers of the style and taste of the Old Regime would be mulattoes.

Its precarious stability always threatened by disruption and annihilation, the colonial order was not only marked by economic exploitation and political domination, but also mediated and sustained by the spontaneous performance of cultural displays of power, which, once adopted by the lower ranks of society, became the objects of strict policing and legal prohibitions.

Political and economic colonial rule was legitimized, among other things, by a very intimate, personalized form of cultural imperialism that assumed the uncivilized nature of the oppressed. A savage and primitive nature that could be "elevated," the story went, only by the strict civilizing power and guidance of Europeans. Trouillot (1995:75-76) reminds us that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,

> the more European merchants and mercenaries bought and conquered other men and women, the more European philosophers wrote and talked about Man ... [W]ith its extraordinary increase in both philosophical musings and concrete attention to colonial practice, the century of the Enlightenment was also a century of confusion. There is no single view of blacks – or of any non-white group, for that matter – even within discrete European populations. Rather, non-European groups were forced to enter into various philosophical, ideological, and practical schemes ... that recognized various degrees of humanity ... [and assumed that] some humans were more so than others ... On reflection, and only for a timid minority, Man could also be westernized man, the complacent colonized. The benefit of doubt did not extend very far: westernized (or more properly, "westernizable") humans, natives of Africa or of the Americas, were at the lowest level of this nomenclature.

In the Spanish Caribbean, Catholicism served as one of the major tools for effecting this expected transformation or westernization, which served implicitly to sustain and legitimate the civil and politico-economic domination of Spanish rule. It was therefore crucial that ruling classes secure total control, domination, and subjection (in Foucault's terms) of the colonized not only politically and economically but also culturally and in religious matters. Dominion over markers of group affiliation, status, and rank (such as religious worship, language, clothing, and gestures) were central to maintaining the colonial order and its status quo. Numerous documents attest to the increasing prohibitions and control over vernacular worship, funerary rituals, religious festivities, leisure activities, and dress that expanded the official definitions of the nature of these practices and the social groups that were entitled to them. These prohibitions, however, "responded to practice" (Dayan 1995:248); they were not reflections of an a priori philosophy of domination but a reaction to emergent though often subtle forms of social blurring of colonial categories and entitlements. They were established only after these vernacular appropriations of official mores seemed threatening, and were imposed as a result of the fear of the colonizers that their precarious social order would collapse, signaling imminent internal upheavals and large-scale revolts. They became even more draconian after the Haitian Revolution. What the civil and religious authorities (especially those on plantations) feared most were the kinds of "licentious behaviors" that under the pretext of religious worship could lead to a bloody end of the slave system, as

well as of the colonial order itself. Fear of "licentious behaviors" also threatened future postemancipation societies and in fact resulted in the concerted hounding of festive and religious vernacular practices (current versions of which are now celebrated and offered for global tourist consumption).

But the totalizing social order that colonial institutions and laws had aimed at forging and maintaining from the very beginning of colonization proved, retrospectively, to be failed projects. Vernacular practices developed in reference and opposition to political, economic, religious, and cultural colonial orders, and managed to exist both alongside and in symbiosis with them. These vernacular practices and, more broadly, creolization processes developed within these structural conditions in ecological, historical, and sociocultural spaces, best characterized as systemic interstitial zones (Mintz 1974, 1985).

Examining these systemic interstitial zones through a phenomenological lens suggests that they have shaped creolization processes not just because of the obvious need of both colonizers and colonized to adapt to new, harsh conditions in the New World, but also because they provided spaces in which both colonizers and colonized were able to measure each other's creole behaviors. In their desire to reproduce, with whatever means available, the worlds they had left behind, the alternative worlds they actually managed to recreate as a result of the forced contact they had to endure ended up failing, as if always falling short of the worlds each group had imagined having lost. The unease that these failings caused to arise among representatives of colonial power is well documented in historical records, according to Karen Fog Olwig (1993), attesting to an inherent "cultural struggle" between colonizers and colonized. Reporting, for instance, on slaves' Sunday markets, "tea meetings," or "Christmas sports," these documents address the more or less "uneasy recognition of the Englishness of these institutions or traditions," while showing that European observers also critically acknowledged that "these cultural forms were *no longer* English but had undergone a *transformation* as they had become appropriated by the Afro-Caribbean people" (Fog Olwig 1993:203, my emphasis).

Rather than accepting unproblematically the fusing of the worlds left behind as creative "mixtures" (or "dialogue among cultures"), as proposed by nationalist ideologies of the creole nation and some globalization scholars, these "mixed" alternative worlds elicited conflicting reactions of fear and desire of mixtures (Livingston 1992, Young 1995). Self-deprecation and fascination with others, and replication and fear of illicit imitations, all bounced off the perceptions of colonizers and colonized alike, both having been dislocated from "pure" civilizations, with the obvious difference that only the former had the power to police the outcome of these perceptions.

In the process of settlement, metropolitan immigrants – marginal to their own societies – tried to reproduce the metropolis in the New World, imitating the Old World's architecture, religion, fashion, way of life, and etiquette.

Resulting in imperfect copies, these outrageous attempts, in an age in which purity and civility were being celebrated, were depicted by travelers, military envoys, and religious missionaries as forms of "Creole contagion," pollution, and "depravity" (Abrahams 2003). The desire and then failure to reproduce "pure" civilizations informs the colonizers' obsession with "'Criolian degeneracy,' [which was] 'a theme of transatlantic discourse' almost from the moment of settlement" (Kupperman, quoted in Abrahams 2003:81).

Creole cultures were regarded by metropolitan observers as degrading and contaminating, according to Abrahams (2003:76), since these outposts of empire were said to be composed of "congeries of people brought together for the production of surplus crops [who] were considered corrupt simply because they were such a hodge-podge of vagrant peoples" whose mode of expression was not deemed a "real language" but a "nonsystem of expression made up of bad, broken, and incomprehensible sounds." Further, "these people, whether slave or master, were too distant from metropolitan power. Social order and practice of 'civilized' people were constantly being eroded." Like slaves, outcasts of mixed blood were perceived – within the prevalent Enlightenment's racial theory of purity and hybridity – as "lazy" and driven by "lust," which "led them into the worst excesses of the savage state" (Abrahams 2003:76). Extending racial pollution to economic practices, colonial marketers were "enormously troubling to the elite social structure of those in European cosmopolitan centers. No one knew what to make of these raw, rich, and economically volatile colonials," who were getting extremely rich by adding to the "sins of skullduggery and lying, endemic to market traders," the deceitful "complications of double bookkeeping" (Abrahams 2003:77).

The transgression of established European taxonomies – say, of the difference between races, upon which exploitation in the colonies was made morally possible – is for Dayan (1995) a major explanation for metropolitan and elite colonial perceptions of pollution in colonial Saint-Domingue. Some of these transgressions were perceived as "misalliances," resulting from creole blood-mixings (of whites and people of color, for example) and inappropriate relocations (people of color behaving like, or inhabiting spaces reserved for, whites). Further threatening the whole colonial order, in particular slavery, "the European model of beauty, once exported to the colonies, began to seem as misplaced as outmoded Parisian goods in a Creole market. The imported ideal ran up against the fact of 'misalliances' that debunked the myth of the repugnant black: the physical deformity so necessary to the invention of the servile soul" (Dayan 1995:222).

Interestingly, not only did white Creoles despise and debase blacks imitating them, but also metropolitan whites bitterly ridiculed Creole elites on the islands for imperfectly imitating metropolitan society. "What is allowed, admired, or unquestioned in Europe becomes ludicrous in the colonies," Dayan (1995:172) remarks. "The glories and refinements of the Old Regime,

when practiced by those who did not inherit the right to do so, can be nothing but the worst kind of imitation, degraded and degrading. When does luxury become cheap? When does love become debauch? Some answered, "When Paris comes to Saint-Domingue." Illustrating the perceived colonial degradation at the linguistic level, and the need of the upper classes to preserve the highly vulnerable hierarchical order they had created in the colonies, it is worthwhile to examine the impressions recorded in 1839 by Lady Nugent, which were marked "simultaneously by the ludicrous racism of a nineteenth-century New Jersey belle married to a Jamaican governor, and by endless assertions of her own humanitarianism" (Mintz & Price 1976:17). Speaking of breeches in linguistic propriety among the elite, she notes,

> the Creole language is not confined to the negroes. Many of the ladies, who have not been educated in England, speak a sort of broken English, with an indolent drawling out of their words, that is very tiresome, if not disgusting, I stood next to a lady one night, near a window, and, by way of saying something, remarked that the air was much cooler than usual; to which she answered, "Yes, ma'am, him rail-ly too fra-ish."[17]

Fear of contagion also explains the contempt expressed by colonizers for the speech of the colonized, which might have been intelligible but never close enough to their own speech. Mervyn Alleyne (1985:160) argues that creole languages developed by Africans and their descendants were evaluated by Europeans as "pathological" versions of European originals, as "'deficiencies,' 'corruptions,' and 'mutilations.'" In his landmark study of expressive creole speech, Abrahams (1983) shows that not only words but also European "speech events" were especially valued and imitated by underclass groups, who identified the plantocrat's power with his European tongue. From the Europeans' perspective, and due to a basic ethnocentric misunderstanding, these performances were seen as "a corruption of the European practice" (Alleyne 1985:26).[18] Further, the appropriation of European genres, say of ornamental

17. A similar disjuncture among white metropolitans and white Creoles around the metropolitan fear of colonial contagion, madness, and depravity was in evidence in the film *Wide Sargasso Sea* (based on the novel of the same name by Jean Rhys 1996). In the film, this disjuncture appears in a series of finely staged gestures and looks that index iconically the inappropriate behavior of a Creole woman at a party pretending to be somebody she is not; that is, for adopting the pose of an English woman, yet lacking real English upbringing.

18. Prohibitions and exclusionary practices also forge their own transgressions and play with transgressions, as evidenced by various forms of tactical contestation, which many characterize as creole in nature. For instance, folklorist Ana Cara (2003) looks at the Argentinean *hablar en criollo* (creole talk), exemplified in the turns and tricks of creole speech practice during the card game *Truco*, played by the Argentinean people and superbly fictionalized by Jorge Luis Borges. Creole talk, she writes, "is the art of 'telling

speechmaking in weddings, by Afro-Americans seemed ludicrous and absurd for European observers, since it seemed to emerge out of a childish will to copy and pretend, and an intellectual inability to do it well, not realizing that it was a code substitute for African traditions of eloquence (Abrahams 1983).[19]

The ridicule it raised among the upper classes cannot be overlooked as another form of repression, subtle as it might be. Indeed, in any discussion of creole processes, such as delimited here, one should keep in mind that things creole have been de-authorized, ridiculed, and sanctioned under the civilizing ideology and practice of colonization as contaminating, disorderly, and regressive (its people, as lazy, childish, and wild) (Abrahams 2003). Fear of these transgressions among the underclass created not only a "comedy" – as in the upper classes – but also a "tragedy" of color and race among the subaltern classes.

Placing this tragedy on the misuse of luxury items by free people of color, Moreau de Saint-Méry records the words of a traveler to Le Cap, who overheard an upper-class white lady exclaim, when she saw three *mulâtresses* in muslin skirts, garnished with lace: "Look at these rotten pieces of meat! They deserve to have their lace cut flush with their buttocks and to be sold on the fish table at the Clugny Market" [the Negro Market]! (quoted in Dayan 1995:222). The closer these transgressions were to white society the harsher the visceral reactions. "The promise of same rights, privileges, and immunities" to be given to freed slaves as to those born free, expressed in the Black Code had been perverted, according to Dayan (1995:223), as a way to protect "white supremacy." Economically successful "people of color" were the target of much repression. Trouillot (1982) suggests that vexations and new restrictions on the civil rights of freedmen after 1760, such as the "dubious interpretation" of "disrespect" as defined in the Black Code, were triggered by the economic success of some entrepreneurial *gens de couleur* who profited largely from producing coffee in areas vacated by white planters in ways that allowed them to use their scarce resources in optimal ways.[20] This harsher treatment of economically flourishing people of color, then, and the imposed restrictions on wearing European-style clothes or displaying any signs of sta-

it like it is' ... is to say the conventionally 'unsayable' by twisting language around (e.g., through humor, understatement, double entendres) or using words in such a manner that a truth (normally not part of the dominant ethos) is confirmed or revealed" (Cara 2002:40). For creole poetics, see also Haring (2003).

19. A telling pamphlet, "A Black Lecture on Phrenology," accompanied by a visual representation of the ridicule that the eloquence of free slaves produced among white elites is reproduced in Hall (1997:246).

20. Furthermore, Bastide (1978) refers to restrictions of dress and gesture among the high-status professional mulattoes in Brazil, who were forbidden to wear European-style shoes, for example, or to go to the opera.

tus (such as lace, silk, jewelry, sabers, and even on naming practices) were the direct result of an inherent racially motivated threat of creole forms of economic success to the hegemony of the European order in the colonies.[21]

On the other hand – in light of the rupture and break from home cultures and ways of life – imitating the culture and religion of powerful others was not only a way of survival for the many underprivileged groups that were brought by force or cunning to the New World (as many have suggested) but also the source of a less disempowering form of adaptation. On the one had, their survival depended on their ability to appear to have been westernized, yet they were ridiculed and often disciplined and punished for doing so. In this contradictory cultural space, those who managed to live in these two worlds were often perceived as madmen or sorcerers. As Price (1998:161-62) reminds us, "the dozens of memorable 'madmen' of Caribbean fiction are not just literary tropes" but real-life models who have to live "in a world where the circumstances of life are deeply contradictory ... Many of 'the mad' are not just finding a personal way out – they are carving out a solution, however unreasonable, for a society-wide, existentially absurd situation. Their retreat or riposte, whatever their iconoclastic form, often makes social sense."

Although copying or imitating was not only expected by the colonial civilizing project but also seen as a reasonable way of adaptation, it created a sense of danger or taboo, in Mary Douglas's (1966) terms, in regard to the in-between social spaces it created. Such spaces can be best characterized as emerging out of the "partial presence" of the original, which results when the boundaries that had been established by means of particular forms of speech, demeanor, dress, leisure, exchange, etc. in order to distinguish one group from another are blurred by the imperfect copy or reproduction of these symbols and gestures. It is in the context of the colonial quest of reproducing or copying as faithfully as possible legitimate white homogeneous culture (not that such pure homogeneity ever existed) that the threat and fear of mélange (racially speaking) and heresy or unauthorized copies and resemblance (culturally and religiously speaking), acquire disturbing proportions, inspiring the creation of draconian laws and edicts that were meant to restrict the opportunities for such "abominations" to occur in interstitial colonial spaces.

The power and magic ascribed to people located in cultural interstitial zones, at borders, or at social crossroads is well documented in anthropological literature (Douglas 1966). Both revered and feared for their transhuman powers, dominated groups located in ecological and cultural margins can become the object of accusations of magic by those inhabiting orderly centers of power. In the colonial context, indeed, these marginal groups were

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21. For a detailed account of the restrictions established on naming practices, and on the display of luxury items among those light-skinned mulattoes – those "suspects" trying to pass as whites – see Dayan (1995:226-27).

both feared and respected for their ability – real or imagined – to heal as well as to poison (Taussig 1987).[22]

The growth of these marginal groups began early on in Puerto Rican colonial history within "internal frontier" areas (Mintz 1971:486), where some settlers, realizing the economic opportunities offered by illegal trade, opted for moving outside the walled capital, instead of following the mandates of the metropolitan orders. These groups, composed of native Indian and Creole peoples, subsistence farmers (characterized as squatter-type peasantries by Mintz [1971:486]), former convicts, shipwreck survivors, pirates, freed people or *libertos*, and runaway slaves from the island and neighboring islands, which Angel Quintero Rivera[23] identified as forming a *sociedad cimarrona* (Maroon society), were left almost completely on their own not so much by choice as by necessity: a direct consequence of the geographic and colonially imposed economic marginality of the island of Puerto Rico.[24] By and large this *sociedad cimarrona* included what Mintz (1971, 1974) characterized as squatters, runaway peasantries, and *agregados* (sharecroppers, who in 1775 exceeded the number of slaves). The first were composed of "peasantries of mixed cultural and physical origins [which] seem to have come into being as a mode of escape from official power" (Mintz 1974:147); the second were Maroon communities formed "in defiance of slavery and the plantation system" (Mintz 1974:152); and the third, considered of European descent, contributed a certain portion of labor (to plantation owners) as a form of rent (Mintz 1974:92-93). Such forms of *petit marronage* were further maintained as a result of their demographic isolation and the debilitating scarcity of both funds and people typical of this Spanish colony.

This forced isolation promoted typical forms of social and cultural marronage in the interstices of colonial society, which in the second half of the nineteenth century evolved, in relation to coffee *haciendas*, into a particular form of highland creole peasant culture, characterized by Jorge Duany (1985:112) as "semifeudal" and infused by relations of "deference and paternalism," later known and romanticized as the ways of the *jíbaro* (a poor, supposedly white peasant). Besides creating local structures of feeling and behavior, they were largely responsible for reshaping indigenous beliefs and medieval Catholic

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22. Among these groups, mulatto women stand out for the vast documentation on their conflicting personal and natural characteristics. In colonial Cuba, for instance, they were imagined and indeed represented in scientific reports, literature, theater, and popular culture as endowed with pathological characteristics that made them the most beautiful and mischievous seducers, the most knowledgeable healers, and the most dangerous sorceresses (Kutzinski 1993, Dayan 1995, Moore 1997).

23. Personal communication, 1995.

24. This state of affairs was modified at least at the economic level, when poor landless Creoles of various racial and ethnic background were recruited as forced labor and required to carry the infamous *libretas*, or workbooks, following the police and government regulations of 1837 and 1848 (Mintz 1974:91-92).

practices into a local form of vernacular Catholicism, characterized by highly individualized anticlerical forms of Catholic worship. This form of creole folk Catholicism was sustained in the countryside mainly as a form of anticlerical worship that took over the major functions of the Church. Some analysts, such as Jaime Vidal (1994), argue that because of its perpetual underfunding, the Spanish Church never succeeded in controlling the faith and rituals of Puerto Ricans. Ramón Grosfoguel, Frances Negrón-Muntaner, and Chloe Georas (1997:30-31) aptly use the folk term *jaibería* (astuteness) to denote a wide range of popular practices of resistance to, and negotiation with, colonialism, "of taking dominant discourse literally in order to subvert it for one's purpose, of doing whatever one sees fit not as a head-on collision ... but a bit under the table" (see Browne 2004). The history of Puerto Rico shows that this *jaibería* has shaped demographic and ideational local responses to globalizing forces, hindering the formation of a homogeneous Catholic society and a passive, acculturated slave and "free-labor peasantry" (Mintz 1974).

In view of the establishment of populations on the mountains outside colonial centers, far away from churches and chapels, the religious hierarchies authorized and promoted Catholic worship in provisional spaces such as *ermitas* (small country chapels). Further, due to the endemic lack of priests on the island, services were conducted in these small countryside places of worship by devotees (*rezadoras*) who had proved in some way their devotion and/or spiritual qualities (Vidal 1994:21; 213 n. 36). The Church also promoted *cofradías* (lay fraternities). But who could really control what was going on in these services?

Indeed, after centuries of being persecuted by the Church, Puerto Rican *brujos* pursue an essentially anti-ecclesiastical attitude toward religiosity. Even today they appropriate the Church's symbols (still recognized for their power, following the colonial experience of imposed religion and civility), smuggling their own agendas into them. Summoning the powers of the Catholic Church, *brujos* incorporate them in the making of their *trabajos* or magic works. Mimetically, *brujos* are able to conjure and redirect the transcendental powers embodied in Catholic gestures and signs (that had hitherto persecuted them) transmuting these powers into their own *trabajos*. Today we can see that *brujos* are not only versed in Catholic worship but that they also take over the role of priests, praying the *novenas* for their deceased clients, and performing special "baptisms" as a form of cleansing and "spiritual" weddings as a way to restore the bond between married couples (Romberg 2003c). Like the bush priests of Haitian Vodou and the priests of Brazilian Candomblé, Puerto Rican *brujos* invoke the power of God when asserting their spiritual gifts, spiritual mission, and healing abilities.[25] Following the

25. The integration of Catholic and African forms of worship found in creole vernacular Afro-Latin religions such as Haitian Vodou and Brazilian Candomblé offer comparable examples of the deterritorialization of the sacred. Recognizing the exclusive power

Catholic genre of miraculous apparitions, *brujos* recount their miraculous beginnings in reference to an uncanny encounter they had with God or the saints. They also portray and frame their "godly gifts" and "mission" as healers following the teachings of Jesus and his parables. Haydée, the *bruja* with whom I worked as an apprentice in Puerto Rico, always asserted this idea in the various situations of her spiritual work; before opening her *altar* for consultations, for instance, she would say, "God gave me the blessings and the abilities [*dones*] to heal, and in abundance! ... Without God, I don't do anything. God is the one [who heals]" (Romberg 2003c:111).

The same crucifix that was once the persecutors' spiritual shield against *brujos* has turned into the protective shield of those who had been persecuted. Not only Catholicism's narrative genres but its gestures and prayers have become part of cleansing rituals against evil spirits, and been invoked as protective shields against evildoers, and performed to empower magic works. The appeal of Catholic signs, gestures, visions, and miracles to *brujos*, considered "heretics" since colonial times by the Church, will be further elucidated once the technologies of magic and the power of negativity have been considered in tandem. This is where the power of negativity (Fabian 2001) transmutes into processes of creolization, camouflaging the hidden ends of mimesis; this is what I mean by "creolization with an attitude."

SCARCITY AND RITUAL PIRACY

If creolization processes emerged out of responses to the fascination and terror of mixtures, they also involved the transmutation of the cultures of the original groups into new ones, which in the words of Trouillot (1998:8) is still "a miracle begging for analysis." The conditions under which such a miracle was produced were those of economic and (in some ways) cultural scarcity (Abrahams 2002b).[26] It could be a major difference with other parts of the world noted for their creolization processes, such as India, where at the time of colonization an already complex society, shaped by mercantilist global trade routes, had existed for centuries. Comparatively, the Caribbean

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invested in the colonial Catholic state to constitute the idea of civility, the relocation of Catholic worship into Candomblé *terreiros* (temples) might have been intentional. It could also have been indicative of the symbolic translocation of Catholic legitimacy to the *terreiro,* and not just, as usually portrayed, of the unreflexive mixing of African and Catholic beliefs. Similarly, some elements of the experience of Catholic worship have migrated to empower the space of the Haitian *ounfo* (temple) through the prayers of the *prèt savann* (a ritual specialist versed in Catholic prayers).

26. I thank Roger Abrahams for drawing my attention to the issue of scarcity.

from its very inception had been marked by economic scarcity, and following the destruction of its indigenous populations in the first decades after its conquest, by sociocultural scarcity as well. Assuming this particular context, various writers have imagined the world of creolization as characterized by "chaos" and the productivity of the unknown (Benítez Rojo 1992, Glissant 1997). Capitalizing on the potential of Glissant's theory of creative disorder or chaos for articulating experiences of global flux and fragmentation, some postcolonial globalization theorists have suggested a parallel between the creative, contestatory logic of *that* plantation experience of chaos and today's urban, postcolonial, postmodern experiences.[27] Plantation societies were not the only hubs of creolization processes, as noted above; urban colonial centers, marked as they were by existential conditions of scarcity, gave rise to the development of intricate informal markets operating on their margins, becoming fertile grounds for religious and cultural creolization processes (Abrahams 2002a, 2002b, 2003).[28] But, of course, scarcity was played out and had different outcomes for Europeans, Creoles, and Africans of distinct social positions. Various interstitial groups – pirates, buccaneers, and Maroon societies (especially Catholic folk healers among the latter) – structured their tactics of survival on the margins yet, at the same time, in close if adaptive parasitic relations to local and metropolitan centers of power.

The metaphor of ritual piracy I am suggesting here for creole religions has been inspired by these kinds of Caribbean histories, which show the intricate dependency of the margins on centers of power, on their demands, desires, and symbols. The creation of Maroon societies and Maroon cultures, and the pirating and privateering that persisted in the New World, attest to the paradox arising from the simultaneous acceptance and rejection of metropolitan powers on the fringes of the social order. Initially, a local Caribbean response to monopoly mercantilism that subsequently often transformed into clandestine support of Creole uprisings, "piracy" encapsulates a typically Caribbean pioneering force. For instance, once approved and even sponsored by seventeenth-century metropolitan powers (French, Dutch, and English), privateering turned illegitimate and was prosecuted as piracy when European interests had shifted from mercantilism to a capitalist plantation economy. A few pirates actually became the governors of some Spanish islands after the captains of the "Western Design" snatched those islands. Undoubtedly these were not the sole examples of "artful" forms of partnership between centers

27. Chambers 1994, Balutansky & Sourieau 1998, Enwezor *et al*. 2003, Hall 2003b.
28. For example, the same marginalized people and "madmen" who spent the whole year in the forest were brought down to the village and recruited to perform at festive events (Abrahams 2002b). Similarly, Catholic devotees who were recruited by the Church to help conduct services were later responsible for creating their own versions of the liturgy in their altar-rooms at home.

of hegemonic power and their margins. For mutual dependency and cunning have inspired other parasitic relationships in the Caribbean since colonization, such as those between piracy and imperial commerce; privateering and metropolitan interventions in Latin American independence wars; Maroon economies and plantation systems; and, currently, between informal economies and global markets. These tactics resonate with native trickster modes of economic as well as cultural survival such as *jaibería*, mentioned earlier (see Grosfoguel *et al.* 1997:30-31).

Although vernacular religions operate at the margins of society, their practices are paradoxically dependent upon and opposed to power centers (whether religious, political, or economic) (Williams 1980, Cantwell 1993). This paradox is best illustrated in Puerto Rico by the consequences of the establishment of *ermitas*, *rezadoras*, and *cofradías*. These Church-sponsored practices in time become a threat to the very hegemonic intentions that inspired them. They remain alive among the people even when the official reasons for their creation cease to be relevant; the legitimacy for their creation does not survive, but vernacular religions keep them alive on the margins of hegemonic culture. "[When] some experiences, meanings and values, which cannot be verified or cannot be expressed in terms of the dominant culture, are nevertheless lived and practiced on the basis of the residue – cultural as well as social – of some previous social formation," they tend to linger on as forms of "residual" culture (Williams 1980:40). Similarly, Stuart Hall (2003a:31-32) characterizes creole societies as

> translation societies – subject to the "logic" of cultural translation. Translation always bears the traces of the original, but in such a way that the original is impossible to restore. Translation is an important way of thinking about creolization, because it always retains the trace of those elements which resist translation, which remain left-over, so to speak, in lack or excess, and which constantly then return to trouble any effort to achieve total cultural closure. No translation achieves total equivalence, without trace or reminder.[29]

That is, even when they suddenly become unauthorized and persecuted, residual cultures or translation societies that had been once part of hegemonic systems tend to persist on the margins as "noise" or "excesses" (often misread by intellectuals as "baroque" [Cara 2002]). Perhaps this is one of the ways, though unexpected and clashing, in which historical circumstances like that of colonialism or nation-state building can hitch marginalized local cultures and communities to the increasingly global forces that have meant to encompass them.

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29. This resonates with what Cara (2002) defines as "creole noise" or the opacity of creole folk poetics.

THE MAGIC AND RITUAL POWER OF TRANSVALUATION

Residual in nature, vernacular creole religions have transformed the meaning and form of dominant religious symbols and gestures in a process best characterized by the concept of "remodeling" developed by linguist Douglas Taylor: "forms are not only reinterpreted, but also gradually changed and transformed to resemble their cultural environment – African words come to seem Portuguese, Portuguese to seem English, English to seem Dutch, and so on" (quoted in Szwed 2003:11). In the Caribbean this has yielded several innovative ways of political, economic, and cultural subsistence predicated on parody and irony, which resonate with the idea of "culture with an attitude." Drawing again from linguistics, Karl Reisman adds the idea of "transvaluation" (quoted in Szwed 2003:11) to the dynamics of "remodeling" and "reinterpretation."[30] This transvaluation of genres explains, for example, the creole "sweet talk" (the use of pretentious English) displayed in "tea meetings" in the West Indies (Abrahams 1983). It characterizes a way of speaking that originally signaled the supremacy of English culture, and by contrast marked the overall disempowerment of creole speakers. It is in this context that "sweet talk" acquired its social power. Creoles having further mastered it, "sweet talk" was transvalued into an alternative yet dependent system of meanings, which now related to their life experiences of empowerment, rather than to the exclusionary intentions of the colonial ruling elites.

This kind of ambiguity, one that subverts from within the imposition of one culture on another, noted by Homi Bhabha (1994), is one of the reasons creolization processes can be seen (following Michel de Certeau's distinction) as a tactic, not a strategy, of subversion. De Certeau (1984:xix) differentiates between strategies and tactics of contestation, arguing that the latter does not imply a plan for a total social change, but rather points to taking advantage of occasional opportunities seized for momentary maneuvers of empowerment: It's "knowing how to get away with things."[31] When Catholic symbols were used illicitly by *brujos* outside the confines of the Church, they were seized on opportunistically, without changing, or claiming to change the existing power relations of the colony. This was possible by means of the "remodeling" of legitimate Catholic worship, gestures, and symbols, and a

30. Szwed (2003:11) notes that the concept of transvaluation is useful in addressing "the duality of cultural identities, a theme elaborated by Black writers in the Caribbean and the United States (the theme of *masking* and *doubleness* in W.E.B. DuBois, Ralph Ellison, and George Lamming) as well as by folklorists (Roger D. Abrahams [1983], on tea meetings in the Anglophonic West Indies; and John Szwed and Morton Marks [1988], on set dances)."

31. Parallel maneuvers in discursive terms are brilliantly illustrated in Cara's (2003) work on the intricacies and poetics of Argentinean *criollo* talk.

"transvaluation" of their meanings, marking a "rupture and revenge of signi-fication" (Taussig 1987:5).

When I see *brujos* taking over the roles of priests and their gestures in their Spiritist and African-based healing and magic rituals – during healing and magic "baptisms," "weddings," and "wakes," or even when baptismal water taken from a church is poured over magic works – I wonder about the powers that had been seized from Catholic worship since colonial times and made to work with other local spirits and entities. The challenge to the very spatial exclusivity and religious hegemony of the Church is double: not only do *brujos* seize its most central symbols outside its control (as occurs with many other popular Catholic practices), they also combine them and make them speak to Spiritist and African-based spiritual traditions, which were fought against by the Church. Think about the innumerable occasions in which hegemonic Catholic gestures were performed by *brujos*, drawing their ritual power and then re-channeling them to fit their "heretic" magic purposes – the potency of the original official gestures "stolen with a ven-geance," if you will.

If cultural contact and transmission have occurred in the Americas in not-so-neighborly contexts (Mintz 1971, Mintz & Price 1976) within "contact zones" marked by "conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict ... [and] the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographical and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect" (Pratt 1992:6-7), then creolization should be characterized in ways that reflect that basic contention. The more neutral, and in my view misleading, notions of "mixture," "borrowing," or "conversation" among cultures (Hannerz 1987, 1990, 1996) misrepresent the phenomenology of that formative contention. Following its emic inception indexing pollution and contagion – creole and creolization suggest fear of mixtures, fascination with the assumed magic power of exotic others, nightmares of cannibaliza-tion, and real and symbolic piracy, plunder, and poaching (Romberg 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2003b). With such characterization of contact zones, what kinds of cultural alchemy are involved in creolization processes? How can illicit copying transmute into magic potency or ritual piracy?

Scholars, writers, and poets have critically discussed mimicry in rela-tion to the production of alterity and cultural change in colonial situations.[32] But, as many critics have noted in the context of nation-building ideolo-gies, mimicry as a form of cultural production at the base of creole societies becomes highly problematic when indexing a heroic solution to colonialism, for mimicry suggests passivity and submissive reliance on colonial culture and language. There still remains the question of the ways in which mimicry in the colonial context has been articulated by some postcolonial writers.

32. Memmi 1965, Fanon 1967, Naipaul 1967, Taussig 1993, Bhabha 1994.

The inherent internal ambiguity recognized by W.E.B. du Bois concerning the "double consciousness" of African Americans under conditions of modernity can be applied also to earlier colonial displays of mimicry and aping, and their social costs. Resonating with du Bois's notion of double consciousness, Alleyne and others suggest that beyond the devaluation of the language of the colonized, the internalization of the colonizers' values created a colonial syndrome that made them see themselves though the eyes of the colonizers, and thereby self-deprecate, and negatively evaluate themselves and their behavior. In line with this defeatist notion, mimicry signals for a number of postcolonial Caribbean intellectuals (such as V.S. Naipaul) the impossibility of colonial subjects ever engaging in a real transformative action from a place that has not already been colonized. For example, in Naipaul's *Mimic Men* (1967), the main character, Ralph Singh, expresses an inappropriate fascination with traits that he always finds in English women, such as an innate imperial predatory greed that actually scares him and makes him feel inadequate and ashamed (Galloway 1996).[33] Acknowledging this, Ralph reflects, "it seemed to me that to attach myself to her was to acquire that protection which she offered, to share some of her quality of being marked, a quality which once was mine but which I had lost" (Naipaul 1967:47).[34]

Left at the moment of fascination and terror with the culture of oppressors, mimicry or rather imperfect copies appear as tragic outcomes of colonization, forever entangling any possible authentic expression of identity and real transformation. Always falling short for producing inevitably imperfect copies, the colonized "can never succeed in becoming identified with the colonizer, nor even in copying his role correctly" (Memmi 1965:124). But this ambiguity and impossibility acquire a different meaning within magic, where this imper-

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33. Shirley Galloway, 1996, *The Mimic Men: A World without a Center,* http://www. cyberpat.com/shirlsite/essays/naipaul.html.

34. A similarly inappropriate, demeaning fascination with symbols and gestures of power is vividly expressed in the completely different world of Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird* (1965:119) by the young protagonist, a Jewish boy who looks like a Gypsy and manages to escape the Holocaust by hiding in farms. Encountering a German SS officer dressed in full military grab, the boy describes his fascination:

> he seemed an example of neat perfection that could not be sullied: the smooth polished skin of his face, the bright golden hair showing under his peaked cap, his pure metal eyes. Every movement of his body seemed propelled by some tremendous internal force. The granite sound of his language was ideally suited to order the death of inferior, forlorn creatures. I was stung by a twinge of envy I had never experienced before, and I admired the glittering death's-head and crossbones that embellished his tall cap. I thought how good it would be to have such a gleaming and hairless skull instead of my Gypsy face which was feared and disliked by decent people.

fection is constitutive of its technologies and excesses. I take this to be one of the "wicked" sides of the mimicry and magic of imperfect copies.

Within the production of creole religions, mimicry and the production of similes are in fact constitutive of ritual change, and they can be reframed more broadly within processes I characterize as "ritual piracy." One need only follow some of the colonial accounts that trace the elaborate religious/state rituals that were performed every time a plantation was inaugurated, a city founded, or a chapel consecrated, where the priest together with colonial officials publicly asserted the colonial social order through the power of religious symbols, or the symbols of religious and state power. Essential to the dynamics of ritual change under colonialism, the creation of vernacular forms of religious practice depended on the de facto imposed recognition of powerful others and the appropriation of their symbols (Taussig 1987, 1993, 1997; Stoller 1995, 1997). The Catholicism found in Vodou, Candomblé, and Santeria was not just an ecumenical screen meant to hide the worship of African deities from official persecution, as some syncretism scholars have suggested. Rather, it was the religion of the colonizers: revised, transformed, and appropriated by the oppressed folk to harness its power within their universes of discourse. In this way, argues Andrew Apter (1991:254), slaves took possession of Catholicism, thereby repossessing themselves as active spiritual subjects.

Jean and John Comaroff (1993) remind us that the signs and techniques that are incorporated in ritual often come to be potent precisely because of the historical circumstances in which they acquire their meanings. During Catholic rule, Catholic symbols were forced upon the colonies and called on to legitimize the colonial order as a whole. Yet only certain symbols and gestures were adopted as potent transcendental forces within vernacular religious practices, and only these were emulated, though not without severe opposition and punishment from ecclesiastical agents, attempting to protect their exclusive ownership. For example, miraculous appearances, first institutionalized by the Church and forming the basis for the creation of colonial chapels and towns, were soon freed from its dominion, mushrooming in the countryside and popular imagination and worship. Religious images, originally meant to be worshiped within chapels, were adopted, changed, and worshipped in private altars (and later brought together with Spiritist entities and African deities) away from the centers of religious power (Romberg 2003c). In a similar vein, Roger Bastide (1978:278) interprets the effect of popular Catholicism on slaves, who were exposed to

> the *ex votos* testifying to miracles performed by the Virgin or the saints in response to desperate prayers and promises, making them recognize that the whites were masters of benign or formidable powers. Some connection may have formed in [their] unconscious mind[s] between the stronger *mana*

of the Catholic religion and the whites' higher place on the social ladder. This explains why [they] grafted the Catholic tradition onto [their] own"[35]

Indeed, at different conjunctures in Puerto Rican history vernacular healers who assimilated the prevailing religious symbols of the state or the ruling elites were persecuted as heretics during the first three centuries of Catholic colonial rule and as charlatans during the state-building process of the first half of the twentieth century – a situation that would change drastically after the 1980s (Romberg 1998, 2003a, 2003c). But more importantly, following de Certeau (1984:xiii), vernacular religious practitioners often subverted oppressive religious laws and representations of the Catholic Church "not by rejecting or altering them, but by using them with respect to ends and references foreign to the system they had no choice but to accept." Indeed, Bolland (1997:20) finds that infiltrating metropolitan cultures with creole innovations is what best characterizes the idea of creolization. Indeed, *brujos* have been doing just that: smuggling their own agendas into metropolitan culture.

Even today at the Brazilian Church of Bomfim in Bahia, followers of the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé still celebrate their orisha Oshalá (Oxala), Bastide (1978:276) notes, at the yearly "washing of the steps" festival.[36] This ritual commemorates the promise a Portuguese soldier made to Jesus before he went off to war during colonial times. He pledged that if he came back unhurt he would wash the atrium of the church. For Candomblé practitioners it is "a doublet of the ritual for purifying the divine stones" representing the orishas (deities) with "the water of Oxalá" (Oxalá being the Candomblé counterpart of Jesus), a yearly ritual that is meant to renew their *ashé* or power.[37]

As these examples show, more than elucidating cultural transmission under situations of displacement and de-territorialization, creolization suggests the unplanned and unfriendly symbolic takeover of hegemonic symbols of powerful others in situations of physical invasion and conquest. Appalling as slavery and many other dreadful situations of involuntarily human "contact" have been, the mimetic and homeopathic faculties of magic have pro-

35. I purposely omitted the end of this quote where Bastide reiterates the sociological categorical differentiation he makes throughout this work between (Catholic) *religion* and (African) *magic* (my emphasis) not because it is meaningless but because such a discussion exceeds the purpose of this essay.
36. For an excellent, updated version of the ritual of the washing of the steps at the Church of Bomfim that traces its recent commodification and politicization, see Silverstein (1995).
37. Another form of "reinterpretation" mentioned by Bastide refers to the ritual use of the small bell used during Catholic Mass at the moment of the consecration of the Host. Practitioners of Candomblé in Recife use it instead of the African *adjá* bell to call the attention of the congregation "to the praising of Orixálá, the greatest of the *orixás*" and thereby summon the other *orixás* as well (Bastide 1978: 276). A commercial bell is also used in Puerto Rican *espiritismo* and *brujería* practices to mark and announce the presence of spirits (Romberg 2003c).

vided a complex source of realistic empowerment, which I propose in revisiting the idea of creolization.

Magic, James Frazer (1960) noted more than a century ago, is about producing copies or for taking significant parts to stand for the whole, according to the sympathetic (similarity) and homeopathic (contact or contagion) principles, respectively. Following the law of similarity, the copy, in magic practice, affects the original to such a degree that the representation shares or acquires the properties of the represented (Taussig 1997:48-49). Here I link the mimetic faculty of magic to symbolic piracy; that is, the strategic, unauthorized appropriation of symbols of power, religious or civil, which become empowering *against* their initial purpose. Magical mimesis on the colonial frontier (Taussig 1993:59) points to a basic empowering effect of the imitation function, either through the production of similes by mimicry or by contiguity and contact, by which a copy partakes of the power of the original.[38] The technologies of magic illustrate that copies, even if imperfect, enable a transmutation of meanings; similes draw on the power of the original and transmute it to the copy.[39]

Imagine the praying of Hail Marys and Our Fathers in litany by *brujos* and their clients during the performance of a "black" magic work (the result of an assembly of various African-based creole practices) meant to symbolically kill (i.e., neutralize) wrongdoers, and the subsequent offerings of *novenas* for their proper departure from this world, or the exorcising of an evil spirit "lodging" in the body of an unfortunate victim, then helping raise the thus-exorcised spirit to a higher level of existence. Haydée defined herself as an *espiritista bruja* (Spiritist witch-healer) and was extremely well versed in Catholic and Protestant worship[40] as well as in African-based healing and magic (Romberg 2003c). On one occasion, Haydée fashioned, out of a cardboard box emptied of its bar of soap, a "coffin" (complete with cottonballs padding its interior) in which to "bury" her client's enemy (a small lizard serving as the surrogate corpse, in this case) – who, divination revealed, had caused the client all kinds of serious misfortunes, ending in a stroke that had left her half-paralyzed. This was the imperfect copy of a "real" wake (performed in the presence of an imperfect copy of a funerary coffin) which

38. Grey Gundaker (1998) identifies the imitation of signs of African divination systems as an alternative mode of literacy in the African diaspora.
39. The magical power of mimesis had been essential in European medieval popular forms of Catholicism. The idea that spiritual power can be attained by mimesis, or imitation, of God follows a long tradition initiated in the Gospels and codified in *De Imitatione Christi* (The Imitation of Christ), the set of fifteenth-century Christian devotional books attributed to Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471). Influential ever since, it proposes the emulation of the life of Christ as a way to achieve a personal, direct spiritual unity with Christ.
40. Born into a Catholic family, her father was an *espiritista*; her mother converted to Protestantism after the American invasion, as did many Puerto Ricans.

was intended, just as in an actual wake, to help the soul of the wicked enemy depart peacefully to the "celestial mansions" by means of the power invested in Hail Marys and Our Fathers. Isn't this an uncanny use of such prayers?[41]

MIMICRY, POLLUTION, AND THE THREAT OF IMPERFECT COPIES

More than likely, it was this recurrent and uncontrollable creation of copies, of Catholic worship, speech, dress, leisure, and exchange, that opened the cultural Pandora's box of gate-keeping nightmares and irreverent usurpations at different periods of Puerto Rican history. The numerous regulations that were created in Caribbean colonial and postemancipation societies to prevent such unauthorized acts of mirroring happening have been shown to have been the response to essential if often subtle wars of entitlements over gestures, dress, and language (Burton 1997, Brereton & Yelvington 1999). As Bhabha (1994:88) says in regard to colonial mimicry, the menace of mimicry is its "double vision," which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority. Authoritative discourses need to be singular and hegemonic; by their "very nature incapable of being double-voiced, [they] cannot enter into hybrid constructions" (Bakhtin 1981:344). Taking the symbols of Catholicism away from the cathedrals and making them speak in *ermitas* was indeed a threat to the exclusivity imposed by the colonial religious and civil authorities (Romberg 2003c:29-53). Even when unwilling slaves and peasants were made to follow Catholic rituals by force, their attempt to comply with this imposition could only be regarded within the colonial context as inappropriate, not ever quite the right gesture, only the result of submissive, ignorant aping.

But there is an added component to the "game of mirroring" (Bhabha 1994:85-92). What may have looked from the outside as successive acts of submission or incompetent mimicry may well have been tropes of cannibalization or consumption through the imitation of symbols, or the substitution

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41. The early colonists, most of whom came from Andalusia and later the Canary Islands, were from the lower and marginalized classes. These colonists settled in isolated areas and engaged in subsistence agriculture and trading in contraband with nearby islands and passing pirate vessels (see Caro Costas 1983). They practiced a popular form of medieval Mediterranean Catholicism common to various sixteenth-century European societies. In Puerto Rico, however, this form of popular Catholicism continued to flourish with little control by the official Church (Vidal 1994:13). Some aspects of the history of Puerto Rican popular devotions in the eighteenth century are well documented in López Cantos (1992) and Vidal (1986). For a current representation of these popular devotions, see the catalogue of the exhibition on popular religion in Puerto Rico curated by Alegría-Pons (1988), and the volume edited by Quintero Rivera (1998).

of parts that stand for powerful others, not at all foreign to the technologies of magic, as noted earlier. Maybe it was against the fear of being cannibalized (at least symbolically) that the colonial ruling elites reacted so defensively by ridiculing those free colored Creoles who they saw "aping" them (see Bastide 1978, for Brazil and Dayan 1995, for Saint-Domingue). This menace of mirroring is evident also in Price's (1998:171-72) report on the folklore surrounding the imprisonment of Médard:

> that enigmatic, silent sculptor who died a decade ago, was sent to the French Guiana prison camps for having made a perfect "*photo*" (a sculpture in wood) of Colonel de Coppens ... [Absolutely everyone] knows that Médard once saw Coppens, that he fashioned his image in wood with every detail, from facial expression to military medals, exactly in place, and that he was condemned to the prison camps for this act of gross impertinence.

Those who persecuted witches in colonial times "knew" that magic worked through copies, even imperfect ones. Catholic worship was all about the spiritual power emanating from the transmutation of the physical into the spiritual realm. Thus it was imperative for the Church to keep the transcendental realm in official hands as a matter of survival for the whole colonial order. Several edicts in Puerto Rico prohibited the invocation of Catholic saints, and any material embellishments added to them, outside the church. Throughout roughly three centuries, the Inquisition and numerous ecclesiastical and government decrees sought to restrict the practices of individuals ("heretics") who had "illegally" mimicked the gestures of the Church and thus been accused of appropriating the management of "the sacred" outside the Church. The Church allowed only priests to perform and supervise healing procedures (leading to spiritual cures) which were then carefully circumscribed in a series of laws. Specific techniques and rituals that involved the invocation of supernatural powers were described in Constitution CXV (1645), in accordance with the Council of Trent (1545-63). Constitution CXV prohibited the exhibition of "*nóminas*" (amulets listing the names of saints), the use of "*ensalmos*" (magic spells), and the use of objects of superstition (e.g., "unknown characters," "divination systems") unless first seen and approved by the Church (Huerga 1989:132). Since Church officials performed *ensalmos* and *nóminas* as part their regular practices, Constitution CLVII gave full authority to local Church officials to police the performance of these among nonecclesiastical practitioners, asking the authorities to determine ad hoc which instances were to be punished as superstition, sorcery, bewitchment, divination, or spell-induced enchantment (Murga & Huerga 1989:480).

Ironically, by virtue of the very system of imitation that had been in place in accordance with the Church's own devotional teachings, the gates to the realm of miraculous occurrences had been opened wide to an eagerly devout

public ever since the earliest days of colonization. Indeed, the possibilities of vernacular reworkings of the ideology of sacred mimesis, which promoted the imitation of the life of Jesus, had become unlimited. Many of the faithful, following the official stories heard in their churches, claimed to have had miraculous experiences, some in the form of apparitions, others in the form of wondrous encounters with sacred artifacts, which then often became the objects of popular devotion, outside the confines and control of the Church. With the aim to restrict the creation and propagation of unauthorized religious images and artifacts, Constitution CIX reserved to the Church alone the right to certify miracles and to incorporate into its liturgy new holy relics (Murga & Huerga 1989:437).

Despite the prohibitions of the Church, individuals who believed strongly in the stories of the Church persisted in claiming to have experienced their own private miracles, wrought by prayer before the statue or picture of a saint, which then would eventually become the subject of public veneration. Such was the case of Francisca Lares, a woman from the village of Moca. On July 4, 1865, she was accused by the parish priest of claiming that her carved-stone image of Nuestra Señora del Rosario had "grown and developed miraculously" through time. Amazingly, her case instigated a huge revolt, fueling the exchange of official letters (through the rest of July and August of that year) between the mayor, the parish priest of La Moca, the bishop, and the civil governor of the island, at the end of which her miraculous image was confiscated (no more details were recorded) by the parish priest.[42]

CREOLIZATION WITH AN ATTITUDE

Imitating the symbols and gestures of powerful others "with an attitude" is probably the closest characterization of the phenomenology of creolization, as specified here. It certainly does not exude heroism. In my research on Puerto Rican *brujería* I have found that at different historical circumstances *brujos* have appropriated religious, intellectual, bureaucratic, and commercial symbols of power. It was in light of colonial religious and cultural hegemonic gate-keeping practices that the "irreverent" appropriation of Catholic signs and gestures by Creole *brujos* acquired their transcendental empowerment. These techniques of adaptation and relative empowerment – which characterize the tactics or "the art of the weak" (de Certeau 1984:37) – ethereal as they might seem, draw their particular sociological significance from the

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42. San Juan, Puerto Rico, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1865, Fondo Gobernadores Españoles, Box 283. Documents about a woman in Moca. Letters exchanged between the Bishop, parish priest, and governor about a miraculous figure followed by prosecution of owner.

specific configurations of power that gave rise to them in the first place. In this sense, they provide a "diagnostic of power" rather than a romantic view of resistance (Abu-Lughod 1990:42).[43] In fact, ritual piracy was undoubtedly not the sole example of "wicked" forms of partnership between centers of hegemonic power and their margins. Mutual dependency and ambiguity have inspired other parasitic relationships in the Caribbean since colonization, which, in the context of an inherent phenomenology of scarcity, made the recognition of powerful others and the imitation of their symbols essential to the dynamics of ritual change under colonialism (see Lionnet 1992; Taussig 1993, 1997; Stoller 1995, 1997). After all, "the space of a tactic is the space of the other" (de Certeau 1984:37).

Especially intriguing is the social price paid by white and colored Creoles alike for being like "but not quite" (Bhabha 1994:86). In colonial situations of cultural contact under conditions of scarcity, this social price needed to be kept as a public secret. What kinds of power might be derived, and released, from this form of "defacement" (Taussig 1999)? From the parody and tragedy that result when open discussion of a "public secret" is precluded? The power released from refracting mirrors, in which the object of desire gets further blurred as it is reflected back through a host of images in a chamber of mirrors, is presented here as an alternative to various metaphors of mixture suggested for creolization, such as dialogue, negotiation, and hybridity. Broadly, ritual piracy, far from being a "relatively safe counterhegemonic revision of the way we understand culture, power, and culture change" (Khan 2001:272), suggests the plundering of cultures as *itself* a form of cultural production. And yet this cultural pirating has been offered as an unquestionably nonheroic but nonetheless empowering form of tactically "wicked" partnership between centers of hegemonic power and their margins, the goal of which can be characterized more as "partaking of" rather than "resistance to" dominant culture. Pragmatically drawing upon the advantages of its coterminous networks of power, "ritual piracy" paradoxically begets, if unintentionally, its incorporation into the margins rather than its erasure.

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43. I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for pressing me to redress the kind of power that is implied by "ritual piracy" in light of Abu-Lughod (1990).

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AN ALL TOO PRESENT ABSENCE: FERNANDO ORTIZ'S WORK ON ABAKUÁ IN ITS SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXT

"Regla 1836-1996. To the Africans who founded the secret society Abacuá in this town in 1836. Buro Abacuá 5. 1. 97." Thus reads a bronze plaque near the old *embarcadero* of the town of Regla, an incorporated *municipio* of Ciudad de la Habana situated on the eastern shores of the bay of Havana. Once a small fishing village, by 1836 Regla had begun to turn into an important warehouse district, a part of the capital city's rapidly developing industrial harbor complex. It was also a site where newly landed African slaves awaited transport to the plantation regions of Havana and Matanzas provinces and received treatment for injury, disease, and dehydration at hospitals built for protecting slaveowners' investments.[1] According to both oral history and documentary evidence, it was there and then that members of the *cabildo de la nación carabalí bricamó ápapa efí*, a voluntary association of Africans organized along "ethnic" lines,[2] sold a body of esoteric knowledge to a group of young creole slaves from Havana. We do not know the details of the transaction, but the institution it engendered – the first chapter of a male initiatory sodality known as abakuá – would soon begin to play an important role within the complex social world that had emerged at the points where Havana's internal economy intersected the global market.

Gaining a foothold first in Havana's largely black working-class neighborhoods near the harbor, and capitalizing on the fluctuations in the demand for labor in various local industries, abakuá titleholders soon began to maneuver themselves into powerful positions as labor contractors, controlling access to employment at city wharves, foundries, tobacco factories, marketplaces, and slaughterhouses. Combining mystically sanctioned ritual authority with the power to grant access to, or withhold, steady labor, they built up tightly organized political structures among the members of their *potencias* or *tierras*

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1. On the history of Regla see Duque (1925) and Gomez Luaces (n.d.).
2. On the institution of the *cabildos de nación* see Ortiz (1921), Palmié (1993), and Childs (2003).

(as individual abakuá chapters are known). These cult associations became visible to the uninitiated not only in lavishly exotic public ceremonies that recalled the discovery in a mythical Africa of the secret of a mystical voice belonging to a being or force known as *ecue*[3] and celebrated an ideal of agonistic manhood, virile elegance, and fraternal solidarity. Their presence also became palpable in the form of relations of patronage and clientelism at the various worksites abakuá had come to control. As a saying popular in the first half of the twentieth century went, at least at the dockside of Havana's extensive harbor, abakuá initiates decided "who would eat and who would not" (Martínez Bordon 1971:38). When the colonial government outlawed the association as seditious and criminal in 1876, perhaps as many as fifty individual chapters of abakuá were operating in Havana, Regla, and Guanabacoa, where they repeatedly clashed with the police in violent confrontations over the control of neighborhoods and sources of employment.

By then, however, the terms *abakuá* or *los ñáñigos*[4] no longer merely designated a type of secret society of African origin that had somehow established itself on Cuban soil. In the Cuban public sphere, these terms had also grown synonymous with violence, delinquency, transgression, and primitivity. What emerged around the concrete social fact of abakuá during the last third of the nineteenth century was a richly overdetermined, and densely intertextual discursive formation connoting not just exoticism, oppositional modes of organization, and atavistic criminality, but a material threat to the health of the colony and, later, that of the fledgling nation. Early publicists, persecutors, and prosecutors of abakuá were captivated by it not simply as a novel instance of an African institution thriving on Caribbean soil. Much of their hand-wringing and fierce rhetoric calling for abakuá's suppression was occasioned by the presence of whites in abakuá *potencias* – a fact that, for many of them, raised the alarming prospect of the "Africanization" of Cuba that José Antonio Saco had warned against as early as the 1840s in his famous plea against the slave trade. The deliberate adoption of African forms of identification and cultural practice by those socially classified as "white" deeply troubled Cuban scholars and social reformers, who were already concerned that Cuba had not just a racially diverse population, but a racially mixed one, whose members seemed to carry within their persons the biological incarnation of disparate histories and locations. These bodies served as synecdoches for cultural forms of African origin that were regarded as inimical to civilized modernity, and

3. Produced by an eponymous friction drum in the inner sanctum of abakuá meeting houses (see Ortiz 1952-55:203-59).
4. Particularly in nineteenth-century sources the association is typically referred to as *los ñáñigos*. Contemporary members of abakuá nowadays regard the term as derogatory and offensive, and prefer to call themselves and each other *ocobios* (i.e. "brothers") or *ecoria ñene abakuá* ("men born over the drum skin," i.e. into abakuá).

whose erasure – at least in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – appeared to be the only guarantee of national progress. How disturbing then, was the realization that patent indices of "Africanity" had become detached from their black "source populations," and diffused through the larger citizenry of the Cuban republic in a seemingly uncontrollable fashion!

Right from the start, the published accounts of abakuá that began to proliferate in the last third of the nineteenth century, thus, served far more than merely descriptive purposes, and it is perhaps fair to say that this literature tells us less about abakuá itself than about the preoccupations and concerns of colonial social reformers and peripheral nationalist thinkers who constructed and instrumentalized images of abakuá as "proof" for what they felt was Cuba's lagging modernization and civilizational progress. Although police records on the activities of rapidly multiplying abakuá chapters in Havana's *barrios* near the harbor appear as early as 1839,[5] it was not until the 1880s that an official account of their origin, as well as visual images of their masked dancers (which soon came to typify the association in the mind of the Cuban elite) appeared in print format.[6] Among these were a report filed by the then Spanish governor, Alejandro Rodríguez Arías,[7] and almost immediately reissued in brochure format (Anonymous 1882), as well as a memoir of the criminological achievements of Havana's chief of police, José Trujillo y Monagas, prepared by his adjutant Carlos Urrútia y Blanco (1882). No less importantly, in 1881, the Basque artist and long-time Cuban resident, Victor Patricio Landaluze, published his album of genre depictions of Cuban *tipos y costumbres* which featured a lithograph of one of his many depictions of *íremes*, together with an article on "El ñáñigo" by *costumbrista* writer Enrique Fernández Carillo (Landaluze 1881).[8] Other efforts include Manuel Perez Beato's (1893) publication of the internal rules of the famous nineteenth-century Havana *potencia* Akanarán Efó (also known as Ocobio Efó Mukarará), the first abakuá chapter composed of socially white members; the Spanish penologist Rafael Salillas's (1901) documentation of the existence of an abakuá chapter formed by Cubans deported to the Spanish *presidio* of Ceuta, North Africa during the second Cuban war of independence; the bizarre racist monograph *La brujería y el ñáñiguismo en Cuba desde el punto de vista*

5. See Deschamps Chapeaux (1964) for a summary of the crucial document (Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Havana, Comisión Militar, legajo 23 expediente 1). The nineteenth-century documentary record on abakuá's activities still awaits extensive scrutiny.

6. The following is by no means meant as a bibliography. It merely aims to illustrate the discursive context within which Ortiz's work on abakuá took shape.

7. Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 76 expediente 56.

8. This image has been reproduced countless times ever since. See Brown (2003) for a sophisticated treatment of the history and iconography of representations of abakuá circulating in the Cuban public sphere.

médico-legal by the forensic scientist Israel Castellanos (1916); a long chapter on the subject in the police commissioner Rafael Roche Monteagudo's (1925) monumental but highly idiosyncratic compendium of Cuban crime, *La policia y sus mistérios*; and a no less peculiar book-length treatment of Afro-Cuban religion by the journalist Juan Luis Martin (1930). Common to all of these volumes were speculations on the origins of abakuá, discussions of its internal organization, and (in however garbled a form) its mythology, ritual practices, esoteric language, and pictographic writing system.

While the historical and ethnographic value of several of the texts mentioned above is dubious (at best), and can often only be established by reading them against the grain, it nevertheless is important to emphasize here just simply how much of what we, today, know about the history of abakuá, we owe to the Cuban police, whose raids of lodges and arrests of initiates produced not only ample documentation, but many artifacts. Seized from lodges during such raids to be used as incriminating evidence, and subsequently placed in Havana's Museum of Legal Medicine and other institutions or private collections, these decontextualized objects initially served as little more than forensic signifiers of the intractable presence of abakuá, or testaments to Cuba's moral and civilizational "backwardness" (see Palmié 2002, Bronfman 2004). And yet it may well have been precisely such artefacts that initially helped inspire the young lawyer Fernando Ortiz's project of a "criminal anthropology," conceived in the spirit of Cesare Lombroso's positivistic forensic science, of the urban underworld characteristic of, and specific to, Cuba.[9] For during his student days in Madrid, Ortiz had seen costumes of abakuá's masked dancers (*íreme*), drums, and ceremonial staffs of office (*itones*) that had been confiscated by the colonial Cuban police and shipped off to Spain, where they were on exhibit in the library of Madrid's Museo de Ultramár.[10]

As Ortiz would later recall, at the beginning of the twentieth century, and despite the nominal inclusion of Afro-Cubans (many of whom had fought in the wars of independence against Spain) in the Cuban national project, willful neglect of their cultural and historical contributions was the order of the day (Ortiz 1939, 1944). Initially, Ortiz, too, was committed to producing scholarship on Afro-Cuban religious formations in order to help eradicate them. Yet his early attempts to isolate African "racial atavisms" so as to subject them to

9.   As Ortiz himself put it in 1917, given that the newly founded Cuban republic rested on social foundations formed in the course of nearly four hundred years of colonial domination and embraced a population of racially heterogeneous origin, the study of abakuá might well be expected to enhance the scope of "contemporary criminal anthropology and sociology, based as they still almost exclusively are on observations concerning white delinquents" (Ortiz 1973:21).

10. See Ortiz (1939:86). On the object exhibited in Madrid, see Roche Monteagudo (1925:63).

concerted efforts at legal and social "reform" had an unanticipated and deeply ironic outcome: they unwittingly led to precisely those ethnographic investigations that eventually brought him to repudiate the idea of a "racial criminology" (Bremer 1993), motivated him to write a searing critique of the very concept of race (Ortiz 1946), and certainly paved the way for his famous formulation of a theory of the historical dialectics of cultural change and dynamism that in 1940 he subsumed under the neologism of *transculturación*. Along with other Latin American and Caribbean thinkers of his time (such as the Brazilian Gilberto Freyre or the Mexican José de Vasconcelos), Ortiz came to appreciate, and aimed to conceptualize, a novel vision not only of New World nationhood, but also of cultural being and becoming. Far from marking an indelible historical stain and lasting hindrance to civilizational progress, heterogeneity – and hybridity – would come to typify what Ortiz would call the "cauldron" of Cuba; and far from being perceived as incongruous with the idea of "modernity," African "tradition," for him was to play an essential part in the process out of which future versions of the *ajiaco cubano* – the ever-transforming cultural "stew" that was Cuba – would emerge (Ortiz 1940a,b, see Palmié 1998).

Although nineteenth-century Cuban observers generally agreed on abakuá's African origin, it was not until the 1920s that Ortiz (1986:14) first suggested that abakuá represented a New World version of the so-called leopard societies, well known by then under names such as *ekpe* or *ngbe* in the British missionary and colonial literature on Old Calabar, a major entrepot of the slave (and later palm oil) trade in the Cross River region on the border between what today is southeastern Nigeria and Cameroon (see Nair 1972, Latham 1973, and Northrup 1978). Different from some of his contemporaries (such as, for example Herskovits 1941), for Ortiz, such attributions of origins and the tracing of a genealogy of abakuá were not merely of academic interest, nor were they designed to vindicate the cultural "past" of a socially excluded and politically disenfranchised minority. They also served in assessing its promise as cultural patrimony for all Cubans. And it is not surprising that Ortiz's writings were to inspire artists like Alejo Carpentier, Ernesto Lecuona, and Wifredo Lam who, by the 1930s, had begun to incorporate abakuá-related themes and images into their oeuvre, thus generating an entirely new set of representations of abakuá – ones that (in line with contemporary European romantic primitivism) now celebrated the virtues of its African authenticity as an antidote to the alienating cultural productions emerging under the auspices of U.S. capital, under whose neocolonial rule many of these artists and intellectuals keenly smarted.[11] None of this meant that police persecution of aba-

11. See Kutzinski (1993), Matibag (1996), Moore (1997), and Brown (2003). As Moore (1997:203) writes, by 1923 composer Amadeo Roldán, along with Carpentier, had started attending abakuá ceremonies as well as those of the Afro-Cuban religious formation *regla de ocha*, "where he hand-transcribed melodic and rhythmic fragments later used in com-

kuá (or Afro-Cuban religions in general) ceased. It did not. But Ortiz's efforts at representing their practices as cultural productions forming an integral part of a uniquely Cuban national cultural project have had a lasting, though at times ironic, impact. By the early 1960s, the newly founded revolutionary Conjunto Folklorico Nacional thus began to incorporate theatrical imitations of aspects of abakuá ritual into its repertoire (Hagedorn 2001, Brown 2003), and cheaply manufactured images of *íremes* now count among the tourist kitsch on sale in the departure lounge of Havana's José Martí international airport. Most importantly, however, the Buro Provincial de Abacuá – a kind of directorium of confederated *potencias* – has been allowed to inscribe its own memory at the dockside of Regla, the place where the association likely originated more than 170 years ago.

As María del Rosario Díaz recounts in the essay to which we are appending this note of contextualization, by 1950 Ortiz himself returned to the topic of abakuá (which had likely sparked his first interest in matters Afro-Cuban), and began to publish on his – by then – more than thirty years of active, but intermittent, ethnographic fieldwork on abakuá. He therefore used such materials as illustrations or case studies in his musicological monographs, but also penned a series of essays (in the classic sense of the word) on aspects of abakuá, such as for example his comparison of abakuá ritual to the Eleusinian mystery (Ortiz 1950a, b, 1951). As the reader will have seen, it is at this point that the archival documents uncovered by Díaz begin to speak to a different, far more prosaic, yet no less intriguing mystery: the absence of a completed manuscript. Sadly, Ortiz's failing health may have prevented the culmination of what had been a lifelong pursuit: to make good on his repeated promises to turn the thirty-five thick folders of notes he had accumulated on the subject over the course of his long scholarly career into a book.[12] But perhaps it did not. Would a man of his stature have answered the American Caribbeanist Vera Rubin's query about the manuscript of a book on abakuá as affirmatively as he did had such a manuscript not, in fact, existed? Chances are we will never know. By the time María del Rosario Díaz, the archivist responsible for cataloguing don Fernando's personal papers in Havana's Instituto de Literatura y Lingüística, last revisited the Collection Fernando Ortiz in search for the manuscript in the spring of 1999, it was not to be found. Looking over her shoulder as she opened box after box of folders, one of the authors of this article could not help but marvel at the mystery of an all too present absence.

positions." Contemporary visual artists who have incorporated abakuá themes and ritual imagery include the late Ana Mendieta (1948-85), Belkis Ayón (1967-99), and Juan Boza (1941-91).

12. The corpus of materials on *ñáñigos* (Instituto de Literatura y Lingüística José Antonio Portuondo, Havana, Fernando Ortiz Collection, carpetas 351-86), in fact, is larger than those on any other subject in Ortiz's truly vast personal archive.

In 1958 Ortiz's sister-in-law, Lydia Cabrera, published what for a quarter-century would remain the single monograph on abakuá untainted by the racism of her early twentieth-century precursors (Cabrera 1958). Cabrera conducted her fieldwork in a fashion very different from Ortiz, and her goals were, as she herself repeatedly made clear, worlds apart from the analytical rigor and scholarly detachment of don Fernando. In 1966 the young Cuban ethnographer Rafaél López Valdés, then part of the short-lived Instituto de Etnología y Folklore, published what, to this day, remains a milestone essay which finally clarified the manner in which abakuá had long exerted crucial economic functions in monopolizing access to the labor market at Havana's dockside (López Valdés 1966). Yet it was not until 1982 that the historian Enrique Sosa Rodríguez published his Casa de las Américas prize winning monograph *Los ñáñigos* (Sosa 1982) in which he admitted having used Fernando Ortiz's personal archives, but gave no reference that would allow us to trace any materials he may have culled from them. Don Fernando had died in 1969, and his library, archive, and personal papers soon after embarked on a remarkable and complicated journey that would, by the early 1980s, end in their being divided between the Instituto de Literatura y Lingüística (which received his scholarly papers) and the Biblioteca Nacional José Martí (where the bulk of his correspondence is stored nowadays). Since Sosa died a few years ago, it is now no longer possible to speak to the last person who may have seen the manuscript to whose existence Ortiz's correspondence with Rubin is such eloquent testimony. As Jorge Luis Borges (2004:161), one of Ortiz's contemporaries, wrote, "In the course of time there was one day that closed the last eyes that had looked on Christ." Perhaps it is only befitting the spirit of abakuá that what remains of don Fernándo's lifelong endeavors to uncover it ethnographically is now a mystery, too.

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María del Rosario Díaz

THE TRAGEDY OF THE *ÑÁÑIGOS*:
GENESIS OF AN UNPUBLISHED BOOK

Although the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz was born in Havana in 1881, during the first fifteen years of his life, he lived and went to school in the town of Ciutadella de Menorca, in the Balearic Islands.[1] He hailed from a cultured family that had grown prosperous from its business ventures, including the establishment of the shoe industry on the island. His childhood home was one receptive to the new scientific ideas that were making their way across Spain and, little by little, across the old Menorcan island. Ortiz thus received an education in line with the ideas of German Krausism, a school of thought, influential in Spain at the time, that proposed a pedagogy in accord with the modernity of the scientific revolution and the technological advances of the second half of the nineteenth century.[2] Joan Benejam, Ortiz's teacher in primary school, was an outstanding pedagogue, a supporter of Krausism, and a proponent of innovative educational methods, from which Ortiz undoubtedly benefited (Ortiz 1906a).

Between 1898 and 1902, while Ortiz was earning his bachelor's degree and a doctorate in law in Spain, he was introduced to the main currents of progressive thought of the time, and he immersed himself in the study of new disciplines, such as sociology and criminology, that complemented his training as a lawyer. He took a vivid interest in the theories of Cesare Lombroso and the Italian criminological school regarding the phenomenon of the *mala vida*, and he decided to investigate, upon his return to Cuba, the "margins" of Havana society where beggars, prostitutes, "wizards," thieves, and criminals swarmed.[3] This he intended to undertake in collaboration with two friends

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1. This article has been translated by Elizabeth Pérez and Stephan Palmié.
2. From Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781-1831), whose Romantic thought profoundly shaped Spanish liberalism.
3. In Spanish, *la mala vida* connotes not only a life badly lived – the literal translation – but an entire "urban underworld": a class of subalterns that the state in the early twentieth century increasingly sought to control. The immediate inspiration for the project clearly was de Quiros and Llanas Aguilaniedo (1901). See p. 231.

and fellow-professionals: the physician Miguel de Carrión and the journalist Mario Muñoz Bustamante, who together with Ortiz in his capacity as a criminal lawyer, were called upon to add their respective professional abilities and experiences to the project. Although that project could not be completed in its entirety, three publications resulting from it can be counted as lasting contributions to Cuban intellectual culture: Fernando Ortiz's book *Los negros brujos* (1906b), and two novels in the psychological-social style, *Las honradas* (1917) and *Las impuras* (1919) by Miguel de Carrión, whose application of medical thought to the creation of the so-called "Cuban naturalist novel" makes him one of the most important Cuban novelists of the first half of the twentieth century.

From his positivist beginnings, which evolved with time into a conscious historicism, Fernando Ortiz studied and investigated Cuban national identity in its historical, cultural, economic, and social aspects. On the foundation of previous knowledge, he rediscovered, re-elaborated, and applied concepts that brought about new scientific results, like transculturation, *mulatez* and *lo afrocubano*.[4] In this, his work as a researcher was complemented by his

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4. Transculturation is a term coined by Ortiz; *mulatez*, a term promoted by Ortiz; and *lo afrocubano*, one that was rehabilitated by Ortiz. Raised in the Old World yet committed to the essential newness of Cuban forms of sociality and culture, Ortiz believed that their description required the judicious use of neologisms. Transculturation was an attempt to amend the North American concept of acculturation, and to transcend its mechanistic and ultimately Eurocentric implications of unidirectional change in cultural contact situations. Instead, Ortiz sought to reveal the intricate processes of mutual influence and fusion from which emerged essentially novel cultural syntheses that subsume their antecedents, but cannot be understood as mere additive "mixtures" of heterogeneous elements. Similarly, in an unfinished manuscript entitled *La epifanía de la mulatez* (Instituto de Literatura y Lingüística José Antonio Portuondo, Havana, Fernando Ortiz Collection, folders 274-75), Ortiz insists that racial mixture provides an inadequate analogy to the cultual productions that emerged from the contact of Europeans and Africans in the Americas: "It is said that *mulatez* is the [result] of the ethnic mixture of whites and blacks." But, so he asks, "what can we understand, ethnographically, as white, and what as black?" For these are categories and identities that are themselves the product of complicated historical processes, rather than "natural" (or otherwise "given") kinds. Instead, 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. The same holds true for *lo afrocubano* a term Ortiz claimed had been used before by Antonio de Veitía in 1847, but which he re-introduced to "express with exactitude the originary duality of the social phenomena with which I was concerned" (Ortiz 1943). Different from, for example, the black North American sociologist W.E.B. DuBois (1997:38), for whom the painful irreconcilability of "blackness" and "Americanness" in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century appeared to result in a paradoxical sense of "double consciousness," by the 1930s, for Ortiz, *lo afrocubano* had come to designate an organic form of social being inseparable from the Cuban national project he was advocating.

activities as the promoter and founder of institutions, societies, and publications of a scientific, cultural, and patriotic character. To an extent rivaled by few contemporary intellectuals, he, along with his young disciples engaged in, and actively shaped, the political and social events in Cuba occurring mainly during the decades between 1920 and 1950.[5]

Although the original plan to investigate *la mala vida* and *el hampa afrocubana* (the Afro-Cuban underworld, was never to be realized in its entirety, Fernando Ortiz would, over the course of decades, accumulate ample information that he molded into prospective books, which he kept "fortifying" for years and years, and occasionally was to leave unfinished. Such was to be the case with "Los negros horros," "Los negros ñáñigos" and "Los negros curros," the latter of which was published posthumously in 1986, thanks to the Cuban researcher Diana Iznaga, who followed Ortiz's original notes and plan for the manuscript in establishing the final text. But it is important to note here that the idea of writing a study of *los ñáñigos*[6] – as Ortiz himself repeatedly acknowledged – did not just remain a continuing concern for him, but had actually stood at the very beginning of his lifelong explorations of matters Afro-Cuban. As he recalled in 1939, when he received his doctorate in Madrid in 1901, he was asked to comment on the monograph *La mala vida en Madrid: Estudio psicosociológico* (1901) by the Spanish criminologists Constancio Bernaldo de Quirós and José María Llanes Aguilaniedo, and to specify in what way Havana's urban underworld differed from that of Cuba's former metropole. "I felt considerable pressure because I knew very little about this difficult subject," he wrote with forty years of hindsight,

> but I came away with flying colors, talking about something as exotic as the ñáñigos, of whom I then knew nothing else than what Trujillo y Monagas had published in his work *Los criminales de Cuba*, and what I had seen in Madrid's Museo de Ultramar where there are some costumes of diablitos, [musical instruments], and other accessories of this association which had enjoyed such theatrical fame during the colonial period. But in reality, I knew nothing of the ñáñigos, and from then onward I set myself the task of studying them. (Ortiz 1939:86)

It was to become a lifelong pursuit. When, in 1917, Ortiz published the second, revised edition of *Los negros brujos*, he wrote in the preface

> The fervor of him who dedicates himself to the study of the Afro-Cuban underworld ("Hampa Afro-Cubana") has not abated. I have just finished a book: *Los*

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5.   Among these counted the historian Julio le Riverend Brusone (1911-98), the musicologist Argeliers León (1918-91), the literary scholar and critic José Antonio Portuondo Valdor (1912-96), and the writers and revolutionary leaders Pablo de la Torriente Brau (1901-36), Rubén Martínez Villena (1899-1934), and Juan Marinello Vidaurreta (1898-1977).
6.   That is, the secret male society Abakuá (See Palmié & Perez, pp. 219-27 of this issue).

Negros Esclavos,[7] and within a short time I will conclude another: *Los Negros Horros,*[8] and beyond these, three more will have to be completed: *Los Negros Curros,*[9] *Los Negros Brujos,*[10] and *Los Negros Ñáñigos.* (Ortiz 1917:7)

In the same year, he wrote his résumé[11] in applying for a professorial chair in criminal law at the Universidad de La Habana. There he proposed that his collection of works "on the Hampa Afrocubana will be reconsolidated ... as a necessary introduction to a full anthropo-sociological understanding of black criminality in Cuba" and added that the results of this "will include ... a book ... about *Los Negros Ñáñigos* [currently] in preparation (1000 pages)."

In a letter written to the Cuban essayist José María Chacón y Calvo in 1927, Ortiz assured him

> Rafael Salillas, the eminent Spanish anthropologist and criminalist, published—it must have been some 30 years [ago]—an article about los ñáñigos in a Spanish journal. By letter he told me that this work was a study, already completed, though unedited, that he planned to publish. He didn't. And that study remained unpublished. I am going to work this year on finishing a very extensive book, *Los Ñáñigos*, and it occurs to me that you, such a fortunate forager among old documents, might procure, among the papers that that old sage left when he died, some unedited sheets of paper or drawings, etc. Might we be so lucky? If we manage to ascertain the whereabouts of his relatives, it might be easy; or maybe the old prison employees, or [Salilla's] editors (V. Suárez, among others), could give you information. I am interested in mastering this subject in order to be able to cover the theme of ñañiguismo as fully as possible. It is something really original, which must be of interest to anthropologists and sociologists."[12]

And yet, the book on what Ortiz (1943) called "the most characteristic of the colored element in Cuba, that is the mystery of the secret societies of African origin which still survive in our land" – a subject that had fascinated him since his student days in Madrid – remained a work in progress. Reminiscing about the beginnings of his career as an investigator of Afro-Cuban culture in front of a largely black audience at the Club Atenas in 1942, he recalled how at the beginning of the twentieth century

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7. Published in 1916.
8. "The Free Blacks" – a book project that apparently never reached the stage where Ortiz began to gather materials in clearly marked files (see Díaz 1998)
9. Posthumously edited from a series of articles Ortiz published in *Archivos del folklore cubano* (Ortiz 1926-28), and his files by Diana Iznaga (Ortiz 1986).
10. Apparently he was planning a new edition even at the time he had just published a revised version of the first!
11. Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, Havana, Fernando Ortiz Collection.
12. Letter from Ortiz to Chacón, March 10, 1927 (in Gutiérrez Vega 1982:68).

> Everyone talked about [the *ñáñigos*], but no one really knew the truth. It seemed to be a shady business, about which there were many macabre fables and bloody tales, all of which served to spur my own interest. I even offered to a Publisher, a friend of mine, a book I was to write within a year. Forty years have elapsed and the book is not yet written, notwithstanding the wealth of facts and observations I have accumulated. (Ortiz 1943)

Though references to the *ñáñigos* appeared in some works written by *el sabio* during the 1930s and 1940s, it was not until the 1950s that he would write *La africanía de la música folklórica de Cuba* (Ortiz 1950a), *Los bailes y el teatro de los negros en el folklore de Cuba* (Ortiz 1951), and *Los instrumentos de la música afrocubana* (Ortiz 1952-55), in which he summarized noteworthy aspects of abakuá ceremonies, including their sacred music and dances.[13] However, the most extended treatments of this theme are to be found in a series of articles relating to the *ñáñigos* that appeared in published form in issues of the magazines *Bohemia* and *Cuadernos Americanos* and contain abundant information that was the fruit of his great patience in gathering data over the course of many years.

These articles were "La tragedia de los ñáñigos" (Ortiz 1950b), "Los espíritus o diablitos de los ñáñigos" (Ortiz 1950c), "¿Dónde hay ñáñigos?" (Ortiz 1950d), and "El origen de la tragedia y los ñáñigos" (Ortiz 1950e),[14] and they unmistakably demonstrate that he had again taken up the theme and was trying then to turn into text the hundreds of files and notes contained in his archives. As on other occasions, Ortiz was obviously in the process of building up and "fortifying" the book on the *ñáñigos* that he had repeatedly announced as part of his long-term research agenda.

When in 1954 Columbia University, as part of the commemoration of the bicentennial of its founding, decided to award him the title of Doctor Honoris Causa, Ortiz had the chance to return to New York to see old friends and colleagues, as well as to meet prominent anthropologists like Vera Rubin, who was to occupy the position of director of research in Columbia's Department of Anthropology in 1956. In the course of a visit that she made to Ortiz's home in Havana during January of that year, she had the opportunity to gain access to manuscripts concerning the *ñáñigos*. According to her own words, she came away amazed.

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13. Apart from *el sabio* "the sage," Ortiz acquired a long list of epithets in Cuba, including *el pensador* "the thinker," and *el tercer descubridor de Cuba* "the third discoverer of Cuba" (after Columbus and von Humboldt, that is).

14. "The Tragedy of the *Ñáñigos*," "The Spirits or the Little Devils of the *Ñáñigos*," "Where are [the] *Ñáñigos*?," and "The Origin of Tragedy and the *Ñáñigos*."

In a letter to Rubin dated March 23 of the same year, Ortiz says,

> Concerning the project of writing and publishing a volume on "The Secret Society of the Black Ñáñigos of Cuba," I think that it would be of great interest because that all-male secret society constitutes a social phenomenon, unique in the Americas, of a secret society, of West African origin that has established itself for almost a century and a half in Cuba and maintains its own organization, mythology, language, rites, and some of the social functions deriving from Africa. To write that book I have all the necessary materials, gathered laboriously throughout my fifty years of research about the life of Afro-Cubans. The aforementioned study would comprise the origin of the Society of the Ñáñigos in Africa and in Cuba, its history, its activities, its organization, its important figures, its rites, its music, its songs, its dances, its spread in Cuba, its current functioning, and its future.[15] I think that the work of writing [it up] could be done in one year. The translation would not be difficult, since it would not be dealing with a work in a literary style ... Whatever is decided on this subject, it should be as soon as possible, in order for me to allocate my time properly. Now, going on 75 years of age, I do not have any spare time left.[16]

Between both researchers there began an interesting exchange of letters discussing the project of publishing the book in an English translation that would improve its circulation within the North American academic field, and more generally within the Anglophone world, the main recipient of research produced on black ethnology and anthropology.[17] Rubin urged Ortiz to conclude the book, showing him how indispensable the publication of such an important essay would be for the social sciences. But Ortiz explained the difficulties involved for him in undertaking the enormous task of organizing the materials contained in thirty-one folders and editing the definitive text, now at seventy-five years of age and having lost his vision in one eye. In one letter dated October 11 of the same year, she wrote to him on the matter:

> You had told me of the vast accumulation of documents which you have been collecting over the years on cultural and historical materials relating to Cuba and Spain, in addition to your data on the Ñáñigo. You felt at the time

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15. It is unclear whether Ortiz is using the word *funciones* in a functionalist sense to mean "social functions" or whether he means ritual performances.

16. Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, Letter from Fernando Ortiz to Vera Rubin, Havana, March 23, 1956, folder 174, Correspondencia Q-R, Fernando Ortiz Collection. I did a check of the compilation of the letters in order to file/introduce the difficulties he was having with writing, something common with Ortiz at that time due to the problems he had with his eyesight.

17. Unfortunately, I have not found the complete correspondence between them, so that on some occasions one must extrapolate the exact content of the lost letters, although under these circumstances this has not turned out to be an obstacle to tracing the events that are narrated therein.

that they could devote himself [*sic*] to classifying and analyzing the data for social science use. I reported this conversation to my colleagues on my return, and since we are concerned with the preservation and publication of scholarly materials pertaining to Caribbean culture, we have been casting about to find a suitable research assistant for this purpose. We believe that we have now located a person who may serve you in this capacity, if you are still interested in making your materials available to the scientific world.[18]

The assistant chosen on the North American side was Dr. Segundo Eleazar Bernal, a Columbian, known in the scholarly world through this relationship with Columbia University, as a Guggenheim Foundation fellow, and it was supposed that, given his situation as a Latin American and a Spanish speaker, this would promote a cordial relationship between both researchers. Ortiz's response, dated November 28, was the following:

The proposal that you have made does me great honor and I am extremely thankful for it ... But for now I do not feel I have the strength to organize [this] work in a manner where I could fully take advantage of Mr. Eleazar's cooperation. I understand that it would please him to work on a study concerning survivals of African religions in Cuba, about which a systematic study with a scientific grounding is needed. If he were to pass through Havana on his return flight to Colombia, it would be a pleasure to speak with him about these matters.[19]

In spite of the interest shown by the scientific community of the time in the moment at which *Los negros ñáñigos* or *La Sociedad secreta de los negros ñáñigos de Cuba* would materialize, its publication could not be achieved. Still, Ortiz *did* finish writing the text, although perhaps without the polish of a stylistic revision and editing. In the "depths" of his personal archives there is an impressive number of folders replete with files and other invaluable documentary collections that represent but one part of the important results of the acumen and investigatory perseverance of Fernando Ortiz. But unfortunately, and in spite of the overwhelming testimony of people close to Ortiz who knew and read the manuscript of the book during his life, along with others who saw it among his papers at a later date, when the work of describing Ortiz's archive began in 1985, his book on the *ñáñigos* was not to be found.

Nowadays diverse works on the *ñáñigo* theme have been published, even with information collected directly from *el sabio* himself. Even so, the first such book conceived in the twentieth century now is no longer in the archive

18. Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, folder 174, Correspondencia Q-R, Fernando Ortiz Collection, Letter from Rubin to Ortiz, New York, October 11, 1956.

19. Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, folder 174, Correspondencia Q-R, Fernando Ortiz Collection, Letter from Ortiz to Rubin, Havana, November 28, 1956.

of Fernando Ortiz. The richness of its contents fully exceeds, perhaps in spite of the most modern judgments, those written later. God willing, one day the book "that is yet to be written" can be published, found once again, in order to render just tribute to him, the one who developed and edited his papers throughout his intellectual life (see Palmié and Pérez, this issue).

Appendix

Folders corresponding to the header "Ñáñigos" in Instituto de Literatura y Lingüística Dr. José Antonio Portuondo, the Fernando Ortiz Collection.

1 Ñáñigos
2 Ñáñigos III – Notas Varias
3 Ñáñigos
4 Ñáñigos
5 Ñáñigos – Legislación
6 Ñáñigos – Barrios Habana
7 Ñáñigos
8 Ñáñigos – Vocablos
9 Ñáñigos – Fotos - Dibujos
10 Ñáñigos – Historia
11 Ñáñigos – Libretas
12 Ñáñigos – Ritos
13 Ñáñigos – Fotos - Abakuá
14 Ñáñigos
15 Ñáñigos – Funeral - Lloro
16 Ñáñigos – Írime
17 Ñáñigos – Funciones
18 Ñáñigos – Psicología - Edad - Oficios
19 Ñáñigos – Profilaxis
20 Ñáñigos – Organización
21 Ñáñigos – Sociedades Secretas
22 Ñáñigos – General
23 Ñáñigos – Tatuajes - Sellos - Firmas
24 Ñáñigos – Ritos - Ekue
25 Ñáñigos – Varios
26 Ñáñigos – 1930 - 1933
27 Ñáñigos – 1903 - 1939
28 Ñáñigos
29 Ñáñigos – Etnias
30 Ñáñigos
31 Ñáñigos

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THE POSITION AND RESIDENTIAL PATTERNS OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN PARAMARIBO'S DEVELOPMENT IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Suriname is a prime example of a multicultural Caribbean society. Suriname's capital, Paramaribo, has more different ethnic and cultural groups than any other Caribbean city. Whereas in a town like Kingston there is primarily a distinction between black and white, and in Georgetown and Port of Spain between black and Indian, Paramaribo's population is made up of three main ethnic groups: Creoles, Hindustanis, and Javanese; and at least seven smaller ones: Amerindians, Europeans, Maroons, Chinese, Lebanese, and Brazilians. Moreover, over time an ethnically mixed group formed that originally consisted of people of mixed European and African heritage (known then as mulattoes), though it now also includes descendants of other mixed ethnic relations. In this group of mixed ethnicities, not one is numerically predominant, and they come from all over the world: Western Europe, Western Africa, Bihar and West Bengal, Java, different parts of China, Lebanon, and more recently Brazil. One could say globalization took place in Suriname during its very founding as a plantation society (see also Hoefte & Meel 2001).

The present-day population of Paramaribo largely descends from forced and semi-forced immigrants who came to the country mainly during the plantation era, though in sequence. Their move into the capital was also sequential. After the abolition of slavery in 1863 and the immigration of Asian laborers to the plantations, Paramaribo became a "Creole" city dominating the "Asian" rural areas. As, at the beginning of the twentieth century, more Hindustanis and Javanese entered the city in search of new economic opportunities and a better education for their children, the ethnic composition of the capital gradually changed. The city became even more ethnically diverse, and its population differentiated when ethnic groups from the interior of the country, the Amerindians and the Maroons, came to live in it. Paramaribo still receives new migrants today, from Brazil and from China.

With so many ethnic groups living together in a confined geographic setting and united in the still weakly developed specifically Surinamese national

culture, one can expect that ethnic identity and ethnic boundaries are impor-
tant in shaping urban society. People are explicit about their ethnic identity and
culture, and they are given shape in a way that asserts one's place in society.
Ethnicity in Suriname has clear cultural, political, and economic dimensions,
and it is often through ethnic networks that people have access to resources.
Moreover, ethnicity can be assumed to have a distinct spatial dimension, too,
given the strong orientation people have toward their own ethnic group.

   An analysis of the historical development of Paramaribo reveals that soon
after their arrival in the city, ethnic groups, either by force or voluntarily, took
up and maintained distinct socioeconomic and spatial positions, resulting in
ethnic labor specialization, economic stratification, and spatial concentration
and segregation, though not in a strict sense. Have socioeconomic and spa-
tial differentiation continued over time, or have ethnic groups tended toward
increasing integration? To answer this question we analyzed different histori-
cal eras, namely the period of slavery, the arrival of former East Indian and
Javanese plantation laborers in the city, and, in particular, the recent past.
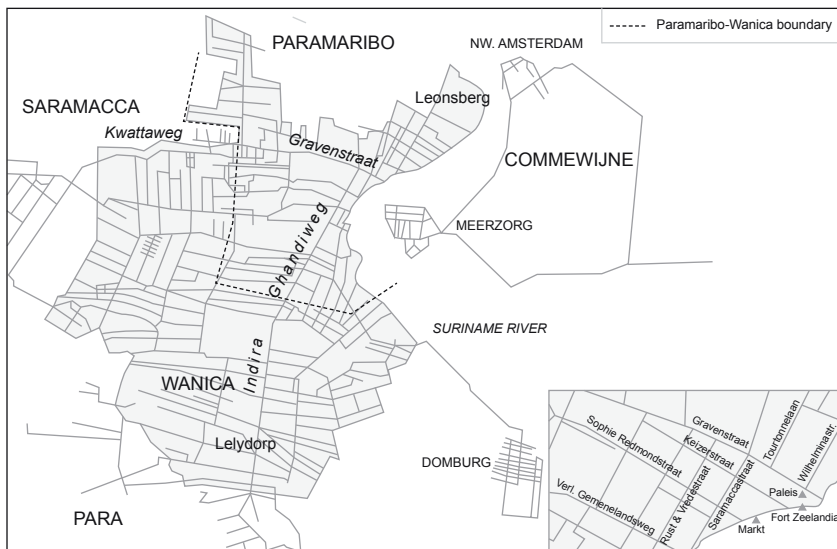
Map 1. Greater Paramaribo

It would be logical to assume that initially, in the decades after slavery and
indentured labor, with new migrant groups entering the receiving society
and a strong sense of ethnic identity and ethnic boundaries, the city's ethnic
groups would be quite segregated. Likewise, one would expect ethnic segre-
gation to have diminished in the modern period, for the largest ethnic groups
have been living together in the city for many decades and they have had

many decades in which they had the chance to take part in socialization and acculturation processes; they have increased access to political, educational, and economic resources; interethnic contact occurs on a daily basis, at least in the workplace; and ties to the country of origin have lessened. One would even expect to see that ethnic residential segregation would in part or even entirely have changed into a spatial differentiation on the basis of income, that is, purchasing power on the land and housing market.

In this article we have therefore primarily attempted a historical analysis of ethnic residential patterns in Paramaribo, and their correlation to the changing socioeconomic positions of the various ethnic groups. This is not an analysis of the political positions of the different ethnic groups; the political dimension of ethnicity is mainly touched upon as a factor determining spatial concentration and segregation where, for instance, the government distributed public housing. Historical and current material available in publications, censuses[1] and household surveys[2] forms the empirical basis for our attempt to sketch a quantitative portrait of the socioeconomic and residential positions of ethnic groups in Paramaribo.

ETHNIC IDENTITY AND ETHNIC BOUNDARIES

An individual's membership of an ethnic, religious, or geographic community greatly influences one's identity and actions. Individuals, communities, and groups express and reinforce their identity and culture through language, religion, endogamy and cultural traditions, among others. Marrying within one's ethnic group, for example, is an important way of maintaining ethnic boundaries and identities. Ethnic groups may inhabit shared territories, in which case boundaries, both ethnic and territorial, define them, more so than ethnic culture does (Sanders 2002:328).

As ethnic groups join new societies, ethnic identity and ethnic boundaries are key variables in determining their position in those new societies, more so for the first generation than the second, which has taken part in the acculturation, and perhaps eventually assimilation, processes. How an ethnic group is received in a new society varies between receiving societies as well as between ethnic groups. During the first stage of participation in the new society, the incoming ethnic group has to compete with it for resources, which can cause ethnic conflicts. One of the incoming ethnic group's most

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1. Only few relevant data from the most recent census (2004) in Paramaribo were available at the time of writing. The most recent usable census dates from 1980.
2. The method used to collect and analyze data is described in more detail in the appendix.

important means for economic survival in the first period in the new society is a social network. A network of people of the same ethnicity can give access to scarce resources, such as jobs, informal training, and loans, in short, economic opportunities that migrants need so dearly because of their disadvantaged position owing to their command of the new language, their lack of formal training within the educational system of their new country, their incomplete understanding of the new value system, and the possible discrimination by the dominant group or groups. In societies where ethnic networks are an important means of gaining access to scarce resources, ethnic identity is normally stronger, as are ethnic boundaries.

Through ethnic networks, minority groups can come to monopolize particular economic opportunities within limited sections of the labor market. An ethnic group will demand specific goods and services that are best understood by members of the group itself, giving rise to "ethnic" entrepreneurship and a labor market segmented along ethnic lines. Segmentation of this sort can be seen as a kind of ethnic boundary; resources generated within the group can be protected by closed ethnic boundaries. These "enclave economies" not only generate an income and a measure of affluence for its participants, but they also lead to stratification within the group.

The livelihood strategies of migrant ethnic groups may be differential, that is, they combine activities to make a living and limit their vulnerability. The ethnic groups need access to assets and to mobilize them. In an urban context, labor and housing are two of the most important assets for households, especially poor ones. When a household income declines, the urban poor most commonly mobilize additional labor, usually women, but also children (Moser 1998). In addition, the home can be used to diversify the income through home-based financial activities (Verrest, forthcoming), as well as through letting rooms, where the home is owned by its inhabitants. Human capital, especially in the form of education, but also of household relations, is another asset. Household relations mean that members of one household can pool their income and share their consumption, but whether the relations within a household are an asset is dependant upon its life cycle, size, and structure. Poor households are more likely to be headed by a female, and they more often have extended families. Remittances from household and family members abroad can be another, and sometimes important, source of income.

Residential Patterns and Segregation

The distribution of a population over the urban space cannot be characterized by randomness, nor is it even. Where people reside and how they live are expressions of the social position they occupy, a position based on income, household characteristics, ethnic background, and migration history; in the

past, people's legal position (whether or not one was a slave) was also an important factor for social stratification in plantation societies such as those in the Caribbean. Thus, there is a certain measure of spatial segregation between people, households, and groups with different social positions within urban societies. People of a certain background or class, or from a certain group, live together or create a distance between themselves and others on the basis of the quality and location of the house and their sociocultural relations and preferences.

We analyzed residential patterns in Paramaribo in terms of spatial segregation (the residential separation of groups within a broader population) and concentration (the much higher occurrence of members of a group in a certain area, as compared to their proportion in the city as a whole).[3]

The concentration of an ethnic group within a specific territory, such as a neighborhood, helps to maintain ethnic boundaries and ethnic identity. Policy-makers often see the concentration of ethnic groups in a specific area as problematic, for they see it as reflecting an absence of choice and preventing the particular ethnic group taking part in wider society. Moreover, ethnic concentration leads to a spatial concentration of problems (Musterd, Ostendorf & Breebart 1998).

The economic position of households is another sorting mechanism, and one of the most important ones, underlying urban residential patterns. Those households with the most money have the greatest choice in locations. Residential segregation is therefore related to competition for scarce space.

The demographic characteristics, and more specifically the phase in the family life cycle, of a household influence what location in a city it prefers. A household has different needs for space depending on its age structure, size, and composition. Both in Western cities and cities in developing countries there is a tendency for one- and two-person households to be concentrated in the city center, close to work and urban facilities, whereas households with children require more space and prefer to live outside the city center, or even outside the city.

Finally, the state, on the national or local level, can influence residential patterns. The government is largely able to regulate the housing market and access to it, and does so either directly by providing land or housing to specific groups, or indirectly with general economic policies, laws, and services.

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3. We computed these measures statistically using the index of dissimilarity that is given in the appendix.

THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF SOCIOECONOMIC AND RESIDENTIAL POSITIONS IN PARAMARIBO

At its founding in the seventeenth century, Paramaribo was the colony's political and economic center. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Paramaribo was a small city of around 16,000 people in which free people and slaves lived together. In 1830 the majority of the urban population was still enslaved. However, in 1850, 57 percent of the population lived and moved freely; this percentage increased significantly in the years before 1863, the year in which slavery was abolished (Hoogbergen & Ten Hove 2001). In those years the population was divided into slaves and non-slaves on the one hand, and whites (mainly Dutch and Jews), mulattoes, and blacks on the other. Where did these groups live? Did they live in segregated wards, isolated from each other, or were they blended with other groups?

The key political and economic locations, from which the rulers, plantation owners, and traders dominated the colony, were in the center of Paramaribo. The governor's mansion and offices were in the heart of the city. Export and import trade, around which the colony was structured, were conducted from the center of the city near the harbor. As in all pre-industrial towns, the elite of the city, plantation owners and managers, as well as the merchants, lived in townhouses in the city center.

The center of town did not, however, have only high-grade properties, nor was there a "*cordon sanitaire*" around it as was the norm for African colonial cities. Slaves were forced to live behind the houses of the wealthy, often in one-room sheds built in a row. Residential patterns in the center of the city were thus based on legal distinctions between owners and slaves, with the owner's main house and his slave's sheds being in the same yard. The residential pattern also had an economic basis, for the yard slaves had to work for their masters as house slaves, as handicraft workers, or as hawkers; even plantation slaves who were brought to the city temporarily were housed in these yards. Furthermore, the residential patterns in the city were ethnically determined, with the white inhabitants of the main house living separately from the colored inhabitants of the yard houses. We have not found evidence that there were any legal or social barriers preventing white and mixed people living alongside, or even together with, each other. In fact, there were colored people in many so-called white households.

Free people who worked at lower-level jobs and often did not have slaves also populated the city center. They lived in low-grade houses in the smaller streets. The further outside the city a house was, the poorer its quality. In nineteenth-century documents buildings near the city center were described as houses, and not shacks, whereas the edge of the city, said a report from those years, was made up of the miserable huts of the poor.

After the abolition of slavery in 1863, most ex-slaves left the plantations and some became smallholders in the rural areas while others went directly to the city. Once plant diseases diminished the quality and quantity of their produce, most smallholders eventually abandoned agriculture to try their luck in the city. The migration of Creoles from rural to urban areas was slow but steady at the end of the nineteenth century, its tempo being determined by the relative difference in the economic circumstances in the country and city. However, at the beginning of the twentieth century it picked up speed.

In the city Creoles took up lower-level government positions, particularly in the police service, and they became active in small-scale industry and services where no formal education was required: carpentry, shoemaking, smithcraft, and porterage. These were trades almost exclusively practiced by Creoles. The Dutch and Jews, as well as the group of mulattoes who had been born and raised in the city, held most higher and mid-level government jobs, and positions in education.

The economic position of the Creoles determined their residential location more than their ethnic background did. Although mulattoes and other lighter-skinned Creoles tended to live in the city center, and darker Creoles on the outskirts of the city, it was in fact as a result of differences in socioeconomic status between the two groups. More than other ethnic groups, residential areas occupied by Creoles were heterogeneous, with relatively low levels of concentration and segregation. Nonetheless, the residential patterns reflected differences in affluence, and the residential patterns of Creoles showed more heterogeneity than homogeneity. We can therefore only explain nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Paramaribo residential patterns indirectly, for ethnic background was not an independent variable.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, the political and economic situation of Paramaribo did not change significantly. In 1921 the city had 44,000 inhabitants, which was 40 percent of the national population. Slavery had, however, been abolished, and the population's ethnic composition was changing. Europeans still held the political and economic power, though they formed a minority (2.2 percent). In 1921, 81 percent of the city's population was Creole (black or mulatto), and Hindustanis (7.7 percent), Chinese (2.2 percent), and Javanese (1.2 percent) now also formed part of the townscape.

Distinctions between the various groups' opportunities and preferences for employment and residential locations were such that the labor market became segmented. The labor market mirrored colonially stratified Surinamese society. Income data from 1930 indicate that the Dutch, Jews, and mulattoes still formed the elite. Large segments of the Creole population, and particularly the new Asian immigrants, possessed and earned significantly less.

Hindustanis began migrating to Paramaribo around the beginning of the twentieth century, about fifty years after the urban migration of Creoles. By 1921, Hindustanis were the second-largest ethnic group in the city. After

finishing their period of indentured labor on plantations, most Hindustanis left the estates and started off as smallholders in the coastal area and around Paramaribo, where they successfully developed rice production.

The Hindustanis who first came to Paramaribo were a select group, that is, many of them were born in Calcutta, i.e. an urban area, and they probably tried to take up their old trades and occupations in hopes of progressing financially after they finished their term of indentured labor. Whatever might have been their reasons, they took up work that did not require a specific formal Surinamese education, such as in the trade and transport sector, where they were self-employed. Some Hindustani children living in the countryside were sent to the capital for higher education by their parents, sometimes stimulated by the Catholic and Protestant missions that ran children's homes for Hindustani children in Paramaribo. The first Hindustani intellectuals emerged from this group, and some of these later turned to politics, where they contributed to the emancipation process of their ethnic group.

Map 2. Average income of taxpayers in Paramaribo, 1930 (in Surinamese guilders of that year). Source: Income tax register of 1930 (De Bruijne 1976)

The Javanese were the last of the three major ethnic groups to arrive in Suriname: their migration to the colony continued until the 1930s. They were also the last of these groups to migrate to the city, their urban migration only becoming significant around the 1960s. Even in 1992, half the Javanese heads of household in Paramaribo were born in the rural areas of Suriname and the Dutch East Indies. Upon their arrival in the city, the Javanese, charac-

terized by a very low level of formal education – much lower even than the Hindustanis at that time – did mainly low-level work such as peddling, or they became servants or drivers, and most particularly, gardeners: as late as 1964, 50 percent of the gardeners in the city were Javanese. The Javanese were noticeably absent among higher- and mid-level jobs.

During the first half of the twentieth century, the Hindustanis and Javanese, each with their own language and religion, lived in the city, largely isolated in a social and cultural sense. According to the census of 1921, only a few of them joined the then dominant religion in the city, Christianity.[4] Only 4 percent of Hindustani males, in 1921, had a non-Hindustani partner, though their children were drawn into the dominant Western-oriented culture through formal education, the official language for which was Dutch.

Until World War II, the elite still mainly occupied the center of the city (see Map 2). High-income households were located in the center of the city and, to some extent, along the river in a northerly direction. Poor people lived on the fringe of the city. Whereas in the center at least 22 percent of households paid income tax, in the outer circle it was only 7 percent, and the average income was only one-quarter that of the city center. In the city center, in yards directly behind town houses, offices and warehouses, there were still yard houses inhabited by poor people, often migrants from the rural districts who were mainly Creole. Renting out small yard houses had become a commercial undertaking.

Most Hindustanis lived in the periphery of the city, and their smallholdings were gradually incorporated into the city, though they continued to engage in agricultural activities. Some Hindustani migrants settled in the city center, around the main trading streets and shops. Other concentrations of Hindustanis could be found in the north, where they were able to buy large but cheap lots suitable for combining living and financial activities, such as stalling carts and keeping animals used for transport. Hindustanis were also living in the south, along the main road leading to the rural areas. Places where Hindustanis were already living were attractive for other Hindustanis settling in the city because that is where they would most easily find their ethnic networks, which were essential to financial survival in a situation of strong ethnic labor segmentation.[5] The historic location of Hindustanis can therefore be attributed mainly to their economic activities, as well as ethnic preferences and economic position. Taking into account their strongly differing cultural backgrounds and religious traditions, it is not surprising that Hindustanis showed much stronger patterns of residential concentration and segregation than did the Creoles.

4.   There were also Christians among the Hindustani immigrants.
5.   The great difference between the theoretical chance of a Hindustani having a Hindustani neighbor in Paramaribo, and the actual data (De Bruijne 1976:221) indicates the desire for ethnic proximity among Hindustanis.

Map 3. The share of property owned by Hindustanis in Paramaribo in 1925

Table 1. Index of dissimilarity, centrality, and concentration in Paramaribo in 1918

Ethnic group	Dissimilarity					Relative centrality	Concentration
	1	2	3	4	5		
1. Creoles	x	42	57	41	35	101	101
2. Europeans		x	54	56	51	68	131
3. Javanese			x	31	60	104	136
4. Hindustanis				x	56	113	125
5. Chinese					x	85	121

See the appendix for an explanation of the terms used.

Source: De Bruijne 1976:215.

Of the three major ethnic groups, Javanese showed the highest residential concentration and a great deal of dissimilarity with other urban ethnic groups, especially the elite – Europeans as well as Chinese. Particularly the latter group, mostly shopkeepers, settled in the center of the city and occupied corner buildings everywhere. In contrast, very few Javanese lived in the city center; most were concentrated in specific semirural areas – Javanese villages around the city which gradually became part of the urban fabric.

The relative dissimilarity and spatial segregation of each ethnic group is summarized in Table 1, which shows Creoles being distributed fairly evenly across the city. Europeans and Chinese were more concentrated in the city center, while Hindustanis and Javanese lived mainly in the periphery.

We can conclude that for the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, residential patterns were not primarily based on ethnic distinctions, that is, an explicit preference for spatial segregation from other ethnic groups. We could not determine specific differentiations (such as the place of birth) within the different ethnic groups. The population was distributed within the city according to differences in the wealth (and occupation) of the different groups, and only to some extent by a preference for ethnic proximity.

PARAMARIBO TODAY

Since the time of the plantations, Paramaribo, being the only city of importance in Suriname, has dictated the development of its hinterland. Although extractive industries based in the countryside – rubber, bauxite, oil, timber, gold – came to Suriname in the twentieth century the importance of the capital did not diminish.

Paramaribo owes its dominance primarily to the financial relations between the city and rural areas. Almost all sizeable companies and agencies, including those from the extractive industry, have their offices in the capital and have a significant effect on employment. Many of their field employees also live in the city. Today Paramaribo is still the node for the import of goods from abroad and distribution to the hinterland, as well as for the export of its primary goods.

All major government agencies are located in the capital, and all important administrative decisions about planning, budgets, and implementation are made in the city. The large government apparatus exacerbates the capital's sphere of influence; almost half the urban labor force is employed by the government. In the absence of a sizeable industrial sector (because of Suriname's small internal market, its unfavorable competitive position, and lack of consistent industrial policies) trade and services are the foundation of the urban labor market. Since the 1960s, the state's institutions have been a means of providing social security and preventing social unrest. Because investments, decision making, and employment are all concentrated in Paramaribo, rural residents are even more aware that the city offers more economic and social opportunities than the country, with resultant rural-urban migration.

Thus there is an ever greater share of the Surinamese population living in greater Paramaribo. Between 1980 and 2004 the population of Suriname as a whole increased by 35.4 percent, with the population of the urban districts of Paramaribo and Wanica, which more or less constitute greater Paramaribo, increasing by 43.3 percent and 40.7 percent, respectively. According to the preliminary census results, in August of 2004 Suriname had 487,246 inhabitants, of whom an estimated 340,000, or two-thirds of the population, live in and around the capital.

Table 2. Ethnic composition of the population of Greater Paramaribo in 1992
(in percentages)[6]

Ethnic groups	1992
Creoles	35.2
Ethnically mixed	9.5
Hindustanis	32.6
Javanese	14.0
Maroons	5.2
Chinese	1.1[i]
Amerindians	0.9
Europeans	0.8
Others	0.7[ii]
Total	100

i.   The size of the Chinese group was most likely underestimated and has increased con-
siderably since.
ii. The migration of Brazilians to Paramaribo dates from the 1990s.
Source: Schalkwijk & De Bruijne 1999:34.

The proportions of the ethnic groups in the urban population of Paramaribo
has changed considerably since 1921. After World War II Paramaribo had
become a multiethnic city, though Creoles still formed a small majority. In
1964, 59 percent of the population of greater Paramaribo – 142,000 peo-
ple – was classified as Creole, 26 percent as Hindustani, and 6.5 percent as
Javanese. Whereas the group of Creoles was born mostly in the city, many of
the Hindustanis and Javanese were born in rural areas. In the following years,
many Hindustanis and Javanese urbanized, not because they migrated to the
city, but because their communities on the outskirts of the city were incor-
porated into the urban landscape. In 1992, the Creole group made up 38.8
percent of the urban population, whereas 10.7 percent of the urban residents
considered themselves to be ethnically mixed.[7] Hindustanis and Javanese
accounted for 28.6 percent and 13.0 percent, respectively. There were con-
siderably more Maroons in the city as they fled the war in the interior in the
1980s. An ethnic group that has recently made its way to the city is that of the
Brazilians, who are linked to the large group of gold seekers exploiting the
interior of the Surinamese jungle. In recent years, the Chinese community
has also grown very significantly because of migration from China.[8]

6.   All tables in this article have been taken from a survey of 4,000 households (heads of
households) unless indicated otherwise; see Schalkwijk & De Bruijne 1999.
7.   According to our own urban survey, in the absence of other data.
8.   Recent Chinese migrants come from other parts of China than the earlier Hakka-
speaking Chinese.

PRESENT-DAY SOCIOCULTURAL AND ECONOMIC STANDING OF THE ETHNIC GROUPS

Ethnicity plays a primary role in the private sphere: in the home, in daily intercourse, in the way in which or with whom one lives, in the design of the home and its decoration. It affects one's choice of partner, the language one uses, the religion one professes, the political party one prefers, and to some degree the occupation one chooses. In microlevel Paramaribo, ethnic segregation as a social behavior is not publicly propagated among the ethnic groups, but life outside school and the workplace is clearly strongly influenced by ethnicity. Ethnic preference is perhaps most visible in situations where people can choose in whose company they want to be: private celebrations, be it a traditional Hindustani wedding or a large Creole birthday celebration, almost all the guests, who may include family, friends, and colleagues, visibly belong to the same ethnic group. Particularly the lower classes tend to socialize in such ethnically uniform groups.

Table 3. Relations between heads of households and partners for different ethnic groups in Paramaribo in 1992 (in percentages)

			Ethnic group of partner				
Ethnic group head of hh.	Creole	Hindust.	Javanese	Mixed	Maroon	Other	Total
Creoles	**82**	2	3	9	1	3	100
Hindustanis	2	**92**	2	3	0	1	100
Javanese	2	1	**92**	4	0	1	100
Mixed	23	9	13	**50**	0	5	100
Maroons	4	0	0	0	**95**	1	100

Source: Schalkwijk & De Bruijne 1999.

In Suriname, endogamy, or taking a partner from one's own ethnic group, is common, whether it is by free choice or because of pressure from the social group. Among Creoles in Paramaribo, 82 percent choose a Creole partner, and among Javanese and Hindustanis, choosing an ethnically similar partner is even more common, at 92 percent for both. Ethnically mixed persons tend mainly to marry ethnically mixed partners or Creoles. Choosing a partner of the same ethnicity is common not only among older generations, but also among the young. We observed no differences among the various age groups, though endogamy is less common among those with a higher education (on average 73 percent) than among those with a lower or no education (more than 95 percent), regardless of ethnic group. The data for 1992 and 2001 are

almost identical, indicating that there has been little change in this type of ethnically motivated behavior.

Language is, of course, an obvious indicator of ethnic identity. In Suriname Dutch is the official language, and it is widely spoken in the work-place, at public functions, and in the media. Sranan is the lingua franca, used in a more informal setting, such as the home. Therefore, most ethnic groups in the country speak two or three languages. Members of the different ethnic groups use their "own" language more at home than outside the home. Of the largest ethnic groups, Hindustanis used their own language much more frequently than the others: 61 percent spoke Sarnami at home, whereas 43 percent of Javanese spoke Javanese with other members of the household, and only 21 percent of Creoles said they spoke Sranan at home.

The use of one's "own" language at home seems to be decreasing, and these languages are gradually being replaced by Dutch. This change can be attributed to the higher level of formal schooling that at least urban Surinamese receive. In 1992, 55 percent of households in Paramaribo indicated that Dutch was their main language. Among Creoles, far more use Dutch at home (77 percent; many lower-class families also use Dutch at home) than among Javanese (40 percent) and Hindustanis (28 percent).[9] Education and ethnic background, as well as affluence and age, determine whether people use Dutch.

Ethnic groups in Suriname are also clearly demarcated along religious lines. Almost all Creoles are at least nominally Christian and distributed between Catholicism and Protestantism, though many maintain ties with their African past through Winti practices. Most Hindustanis practice Hinduism in its more liberal or orthodox forms, while a great minority professes Islam, and an even smaller group Christianity. The Javanese group has an Islamic background.[10]

The Catholic and Protestant churches contributed to the early eman-cipation of the Creole group through their educational institutions. These churches brought forth political leaders with ties to them. Through their boarding schools in Paramaribo they also provided rural Hindustani and Javanese children with opportunities. Moreover, the different Hindu and Muslim groups have formed special interest associations that participate in national activities and actively promote the interests of their members. The groups consult with each other in an interreligious council.[11]

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9. However, particularly Creoles may overstate how much Dutch is used at home for reasons of status.

10. Although nowadays a number of Javanese are linked to Christian churches, or they delve into pre-Islamic notions known locally as "Javanism."

11. A recent example of religious tolerance is the coordination between Christians and Hindus when Good Friday and Holi Phagwa fell on the same day.

Ethnocultural background is of importance in Surinamese politics as well. The traditional political parties have a clear ethnic basis, and even new parties formed after the "revolution of the 1980s" take care to maintain an ethnic balance in their choice of candidates. Ethnicity within politics translates into ethnically determined policy options, so that priority is assigned to certain economic sectors such as agriculture, mining, or trade because doing so favors particular ethnic groups. The ethnic color of a minister and his party has an effect on the policy choices that are made and the networks he maintains. Therefore politics has an important influence on the socioeconomic mobility of the different ethnic groups in the country.

Surinamese politics have often been called a "politics of ethnic fraternization," that is, of ethnic power-sharing, with ideology being a secondary matter. It was hoped that sharing in political power would promote the peaceful coexistence of the major ethnic groups (Breeveld 2000). Moreover, power-sharing would create and maintain political stability between the groups, guaranteeing through multiethnic coalitions that at least the main ethnic groups would partake in political power, thus preventing the group in power having access to all the scarce resources while the opposition had none. Despite the drawbacks of shared political power, such slow or difficult decision-making, and the priority given to ethnic concerns over those serving the general interest, this special brand of ethnic politics has helped avoid ethnic conflict and ethnic violence. The general elections in May of 2005 are a good example of this.

Political parties in Suriname have traditionally used the public sector as a means of gaining access to the state's resources on behalf of either their popular or ethnic base. In the past, government ministries and other public offices were distributed among coalition partners to ensure "equal access," between different political parties and thus their ethnic base, to public resources, such as civil service jobs, housing, land, loans, and permits.

The ties ethnic groups have with their countries of origin can enforce ethnic identity and ethnic boundaries. Because much migration took place more than a hundred years ago, ethnic groups in Suriname no longer maintain strong ties with India, Indonesia, or West Africa through family contact and visits. However, the embassies of these countries actively promote cultural, and sometimes economic, ties. For most Surinamese, ties with their countries of origin have been replaced with ties with the Netherlands,[12] where most now have close relatives with whom they have intensive contacts.

Ethnic identity and ethnic boundaries have thus not been eliminated by the cultural and political context, but are sometimes exacerbated by them, though members of the ethnic groups apply them in a flexible rather than a rigid way.

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12. And to a lesser extent the United States.

To assess whether ethnic groups in Paramaribo access to resources differently and use these resources differently, that is, have different livelihood strategies, we took a closer look at a few indicators. The formal education one has is an asset, and it also determines how other assets are used, such as labor. Historically, Hindustanis and Javanese have had a distinctly lower level of formal education because of their rural backgrounds. Significantly, they have however largely caught up in this respect with the Creoles, though in 1992 there were relatively more Hindustani and Javanese heads of households who had attended no higher than primary school. In the last decade, there was a notable increase in the number of Hindustani and Javanese students at institutions of higher education, among them more women than men (see also De Bruijne 2001).

Table 4. Level of formal education for different ethnic groups in Paramaribo in 1992 (in percentages)

Ethnic group	None	Primary	Secondary	Higher	Other	Total
Creoles	2	33	57	8	1	100
Hindustanis	8	41	46	4	1	100
Javanese	15	32	48	4	0	100
Ethn. mixed	2	16	66	16	0	100
Maroons	36	39	22	2	1	100
Amerindians	23	26	51	0	0	100
Chinese	2	6	69	8	8	100
Europeans	0	9	27	64	0	100
Average	7	33	51	7	1	100

Source: Schalkwijk & De Bruijne 1999.

Ethnic background is to some extent, though much less so than in the past, reflected in occupational choice. There are some financial activities and professions in which, though not exclusively, specific ethnic groups predominate, not only among the larger groups, but even more so for the small ethnic minority groups.

Traditionally Creoles have been oriented toward and predominant in the public sector. Historically mulattoes, who had distinct advantages because of their skin color, education, and culture, occupied higher functions within the civil service. Later they shared their positions with the upcoming group of Creoles, who, later yet, took over most of their positions. In the 1990s those with a Creole background occupied the most important public positions in the civil sector. The Creole-dominated governments in the 1960s and 1970s strongly increased the public sector and distributed jobs among their political

base.[13] As Hindustani and Javanese parties came onto the political scene and participated in multiethnic coalitions, they too provided their ethnic backing with jobs in government. These ethnicities have also increased considerably among civil servants. Though Creoles are still slightly overrepresented in the civil service when they are compared to Hindustanis and Javanese, the differences are not significant when the proportion of each group in the total urban population is taken into account. Nevertheless, Hindustanis and Javanese are more frequently employed in the private sector, or are active as small independents, than are Creoles.

To assess whether the labor market was still ethnically specialized and segmented, which was so characteristic of the colonial period, we analyzed thirty-two types of occupations together representing 95 percent of all occupations in our 1992 sample. Twenty-one of them could be qualified as jobs with a more or less even ethnic distribution, among them, significantly, all higher-ranking professions, including entrepreneurs, executives, and higher administrative and technical cadres – but also most blue-collar jobs. In five occupations, mainly the semigovernmental sector, Creoles (including people of mixed ethnicity and Maroons) were clearly overrepresented: teaching, nursing, and the military, as well as some unskilled labor such as cleaners and household personnel. Four occupations found mainly in the commercial services sector could be typified as "Asian," with a strong predominance of Hindustanis, Javanese, and sometimes Chinese: shopkeeper, trader, driver, and peddler. Two rurally oriented unskilled jobs were mainly held by Hindustanis: gardener and agricultural laborer. Javanese did not predominate in any one job, but they were relatively overrepresented in some blue-collar jobs. Ethnically mixed persons and Europeans were mainly upper-level professionals, whereas most Maroons, and to a lesser degree Amerindians, worked in blue-collar and unskilled labor.

Table 5 shows that the labor market in Paramaribo has become less ethnically specialized and segregated over time, though it is not entirely unmarked by ethnicity, and in some instances, specializations have been passed from one group to another.

Interesting differences between the major ethnic groups can be discerned in the participation in the labor process, which is in part influenced by the composition of the household. Whereas most Hindustani households are either of the nuclear (56 percent) or extended type (22 percent), Creole households are far more diverse, with only a minority (39 percent) living together as a nuclear family. The array of Creole households includes extended and

13. The dominance of the Creole group in public administration is most visible among women in Paramaribo. Of all employed Creole women – and their rate of labor participation is much higher than that of the other ethnic groups – 70 percent worked for the government, compared to 52 percent and 40 percent for Hindustanis and Javanese, respectively.

Table 5. Ethnic specialization in various professions in Paramaribo in different years (in percentages)

Occupation	1930[ii]		1964			1992		
	Cr.[iii]	Hi.	Cr.	Hi.	Jav.	Cr.	Hi.	Jav.
Civil servants	58	3	–[iv]	–	–	58	28	11
Teachers	84	6	–	–	–	70	20	7
Nurses	–	–	79	9	..[v]	69	19	8
Police	86	3	–	–	–	47	36	7
Merchants/shopkeepers	12	7	15	34	..	26	43	13
Welders	–	–	87	..	7	61	10	29
Tailors	66	21	14	77	8	50	39	6
Drivers	–	–	45	42	10	35	47	17
Peddlers	24	57	21	61	16	36	45	14
Gardeners	–	–	18	31	50	3	78	11
Total[i]	81	8	59	26	7	51	31	14

i.   Share of total urban population
ii. Only for income tax payers; no specific data for Javanese
iii. Creoles include mixed and Maroons
iv. – = no data
v.   .. = less than 5 percent
Source: 1930: De Bruijne 1976; 1964: *Derde algemene volkstelling*[14]; 1992: Schalkwijk & De Bruijne 1999.

single-parent families, childless partners, or singles. Javanese households take a more intermediate position, conforming more to the Hindustani pattern.

As for heads of households, we observed that Creoles are far more frequently economically inactive (29 percent) compared to Hindustanis and Javanese (both 15 percent). This difference in economic activity can be attributed to age: 1 in 4 Creole heads of households is sixty years or older, whereas 1 in 10 Hindustanis is.[15] The number of working adults (or even children) in a household depends partly on the composition of the household. Creole households have a female head of household without a male partner far more frequently (1 in 4) than do others, so that they have fewer adults able to engage in paid labor.[16] Among the households where the head had a partner,

14. *Derde algemene volkstelling van Suriname 1964: Suriname in cijfers*, Paramaribo: A.B.S., 1965.
15. The differences we observed in the ages of heads of households may partly be a result of the different definition the groups attribute to "head of household."
16. Although there are sometimes males living outside the household who make financial contributions to it, thereby compensating for the numerical disadvantage.

75 percent of these partners did not engage in paid labor, almost all of them being housewives. In contrast, in similarly structured Creole households, the partners did work (52 percent). Most Hindustanis (61 percent) had only one working person in the household, or none at all, compared to 48 percent of Creoles and 46 percent of Javanese. Clearly, there are differences in how the larger ethnic groups use labor as an asset in their livelihood strategies.

It is striking that, compared to other Caribbean countries, most urban residents in Paramaribo (two-thirds) owned their own house, which contributes to a relatively high level of residential, financial, and legal security, and offers additional opportunities for income diversification. Only one-quarter of the households in Paramaribo rent our their houses commercially. More than 70 percent of Hindustani households in the city own their house. It is easier for them to do so because many of them live in the semirural district of Wanica where there family has held property (rural plots) for decades. In addition, many Hindustani households – probably more so than Creoles – have agricultural plots on the outskirts of the city. Creoles, who live mainly in the Paramaribo district, and many of them in the inner city, have had to rely more often on rental housing. Nevertheless, because urban land is not as scarce as in other cities in developing countries, a majority of Creoles (62 percent) owned their house and plot in the 1990s, a figure that had risen from 50 percent in 1980. The number of homeowners among Creoles may have risen partly as a result of the government policy of selling public housing units to the occupiers, a policy from which this group has benefited disproportionately. A majority of Javanese too (65 percent) own their own house. Among these three larger ethnic groups, there are no great differences in access to this asset. However, only a minority of Maroons and Amerindians are homeowners.

Compared to the colonial period, differences in access to and use of assets appear to have leveled off significantly between the major ethnic groups. We could not discern any clear differences in livelihood strategies regarding the key variables – education, participation in the civil service, and home ownership, with perhaps an exception in household labor, owing to differences in household composition.

Affluence and Poverty among Ethnic Groups

Compared to earlier periods, 1992 income data show that wealth and poverty in Suriname are distributed fairly evenly among Creoles, Hindustanis, and Javanese. The small European and Chinese groups are strongly overrepresented in the highest income group, whereas the group of ethnically mixed takes up an intermediate position. Maroons and Amerindians are conspicuously absent in the highest income groups.

Table 6. Distribution of ethnic groups in Paramaribo among income categories in 1992 (in percentages)

Ethnic group	No income	Lowest income	Middle income	Highest income	Total
Creoles	5.6	29.5	58.2	6.7	100
Hindustanis	6.1	28.5	58.2	7.1	100
Javanese	6.0	31.6	57.6	4.8	100
Ethn. mixed	6.5	20.6	56.0	19.2	100
Maroons	7.7	38.7	52.1	1.5	100
Amerindians	15.0	22.5	62.5	0.0	100
Chinese	4.1	2.0	57.1	37.7	100
Europeans	6.5	3.2	35.5	54.8	100
Other	0.0	23.8	47.6	28.6	100
Total	5.8	28.4	57.4	8.5	100

Source: Schalkwijk & De Bruijne 1999.

Because a variety of reasons (see Appendix 1) cause income not to be a very reliable indicator for measuring wealth and poverty, we constructed an index based on the possession of a number of durable consumer goods. We were able to construct this index for three different years, which enabled us to analyze the development of wealth and poverty during the last twenty years.

Table 7. Index of affluence and population groups in Paramaribo in 1980, 1992, and 2001

Ethnic group	1980	1992	2001
Creoles (general)	4.2	4.2	5.1
Creoles	..	4.1	4.7
Mixed	..	5.4	6.4
Maroons	..	2.1	3.6
Hindustanis	2.8	3.9	5.1
Javanese	3.5	4.1	4.8
Amerindians	3.3	3.1	3.7
Chinese	6.3	7.3	8.4
Europeans	8.0	8.2	8.8
Others	6.5	4.7	..
Average	3.8	4.2	5.1

The index has a lowest possible value of 0 and a highest possible value of 12. See appendix 1 for a more detailed explanation of the index.

Source: 1980: Census data; 1992: Survey of 4,000 households (Schalkwijk & De Bruijne 1999); 2001: Survey of 500 households (De Bruijne, Schalkwijk & Verrest 2002).

We determined that all ethnic groups, without exception, have been able to acquire more durable goods over time, reflecting a general improvement in their financial positions. Hindustanis have accumulated goods more rapidly than Creoles, whereas Javanese fall between these two groups. The financial positions of the major groups do not, however, differ considerably on this index, and, on the contrary, the index indicates that they have comparable financial positions. We could even postulate that urban Hindustanis and Javanese have caught up financially to the Creoles, though they have not overtaken them. Europeans and Chinese clearly have far more possessions, though we must once more stress that they form only very small minorities. The elite group, that is the group with a high score, is made up mainly of Creoles, ethnically mixed persons, and Hindustanis. Together these three groups make up nearly 80 percent of the most affluent households. On the other end of the scale are the Maroons and Amerindians, who have consistently low scores on all socioeconomic indicators. It is not a coincidence that these are the most recent groups to have arrived in the city.

More important seems to be the difference within the groups rather than between them, that is, the difference between rich and poor Creoles or rich and poor Hindustanis is greater than between the average Creole and the average Hindustani. In fact, the rich and poor within the Hindustani group differ more than the wealthy and poor within the Creole and Javanese group.[17]

In sum, the data lead to the conclusion that the socioeconomic positions of the three major ethnic groups, the Creoles, Hindustanis, and Javanese, which used to differ significantly in the colonial past, have now become more or less similar. The relatively backward position of the Hindustanis and Javanese (both of whom came to the city later than the Creoles) as far as education, access to civil service jobs, and income went, has disappeared. These two Asian groups, have not, however, overtaken the Creoles, thereby eliminating the basis for the fear of some that Creoles have been "left behind" financially. Nevertheless, there is a concern, especially among Christian churches, that a particular segment of young, lower-class male Creoles is being left behind financially and is therefore vulnerable.

We would suggest that the greater similarity between socioeconomic positions – the leveling off of these – is attributable to two interrelated factors. First, the data clearly show that the level of education has risen significantly for all three groups, though relatively more so for Hindustanis and Javanese, who, in the past, had a distinctly lower educational level compared with Creoles. Their arrival and subsequent residence in the city has caused Hindustanis and Javanese to have much better access to formal education. Their increased level of education has in turn allowed them to take advantage of better economic opportunities so that they can participate in a broader

17. This difference is based on measurements of standard deviation for each group.

range of economic activities. Second, access to government jobs has been
very important. All major ethnic groups, including the Maroons, have gained
access to the prized civil service, and their presence in this sector more or
less mirrors their relative numerical share in the urban population, though
Creoles are still slightly overrepresented in the civil service. Improved access
to civil service jobs for all of the ethnic groups, resulting in part from rising
educational levels, appears mainly to be a consequence of the way political
parties have consistently used their administrative apparatus as a means to
further the emancipation of their ethnic basis.

THE SPATIAL DIMENSION OF ETHNIC IDENTITY AND BOUNDARIES

We assumed, basing ourselves on theory, that nowadays ethnic spatial seg-
regation would have diminished. A cursory understanding of fundamental
changes in the spatial layout of Paramaribo after World War II is necessary to
understand the present-day residential patterns.

The pace of urbanization picked up after 1950, leading to a doubling
of Paramaribo's population in the 1950s and 1960s. At the same time, the
national economy started growing more quickly. Economic growth and
development, which were then still centrally planned, caused the govern-
ment apparatus to expand and the private sector to grow. Both sectors needed
physical space to accommodate their increased administrative and economic
activities, particularly their offices. Consequently, there was significantly
more demand for space in the city center from both the government and the
private sector. Many homes disappeared from the center. Front homes were
turned into offices and shops, whereas backyard houses were torn down and
frequently replaced by storage space. At the same time, there was a higher
demand for residential space, especially for better and comfortable space,
from upper and middle classes, which were growing because people were
able to take advantage of increased economic activities, the expansion of
the planning apparatus, and higher education. In fact, a new elite and middle
class were developing, and they were taking over the role of the old colonial
elite of Dutch, Jews, and mulattoes who had largely left the colony. The new
group of affluent urbanites had new views on residential comfort that were
influenced by developments in the United States and Europe, where detached
bungalows with gardens in quiet residential suburban areas, far away from
the crowded city center, became the norm for the well-to-do. Gradually the
new spatial norms trickled down to the less affluent, so that the Paramaribo
standard of 300m^2 for a public housing plot may seem spacious compared to
other cities in the Caribbean.

The prevalence of space devoted to economic activities over that for resi-
dential purposes, the growth of the urban population and elite, and the chang-

ing norms for residential comfort all led to a change in the spatial development of Paramaribo, for the elite moved from the center to new residential suburbs after 1950. New developments in transport and technology facilitated the suburbanization of the elite; the introduction and more common use of personal cars, public transport, and telephones.

It was the government that initiated the development of new suburban residential zones with residential lots, roads, public transport, and new schools. The private sector soon took over the government's initiative and began suburbanizing privately and on a large scale, offering residential lots and a basic residential infrastructure.

The new spatial organization of Paramaribo had an important influence on residential patterns. People were differentiated in the new suburban zones exclusively on the basis of financial status, income, and purchasing power. Economically homogeneous residential areas (elite/middle class/lower class) came into being. Ethnicity, that is, the effects of segregated economic activities or of a preference for ethnic proximity, did not make themselves felt in these new neighborhoods. Ethnic residential mixing was furthered by the gradual ascendance of Hindustanis and, to a lesser extent, Javanese, to the new economic middle class and elite.

The new residential areas, which were subdivisions of former agricultural land and wasteland around the city, have been the most important reasons for urban land development for Paramaribo since 1950, though even more so in the 1960s. In this period, private developers added 800 hectares, or some 12,000 new building lots, to the city's housing market. In general, agricultural land north of Paramaribo was owned by agricultural companies in possession of the former plantations, and they divided these up into relatively large residential lots that were attractive for the elite and middle class. Agricultural land used for animal husbandry to the west of Paramaribo was chiefly owned by "Boeroes," Dutch colonists who converted these tracts into prime residential areas or sold them to developers. To the south, agricultural lands were owned mainly by Hindustanis. The poorly drained holdings were not suitable for quality large-scale lots, and they were subdivided into cheaper lots for the less affluent population. The physical extension of Paramaribo has therefore especially been the work of the private sector.

Since the national government of Suriname does not have any decentralized form of administration for policy implementation, judicial competencies, or financial resources, its role in the physical development of the capital has always been quite limited. The legal framework for urban planning is very weak; the city has no legal administrative authority responsible for its planning and development, nor does it have a legalized urban development plan. Thus, authorities are left with few tools for planning and guiding the physical expansion or restructuring of the city.
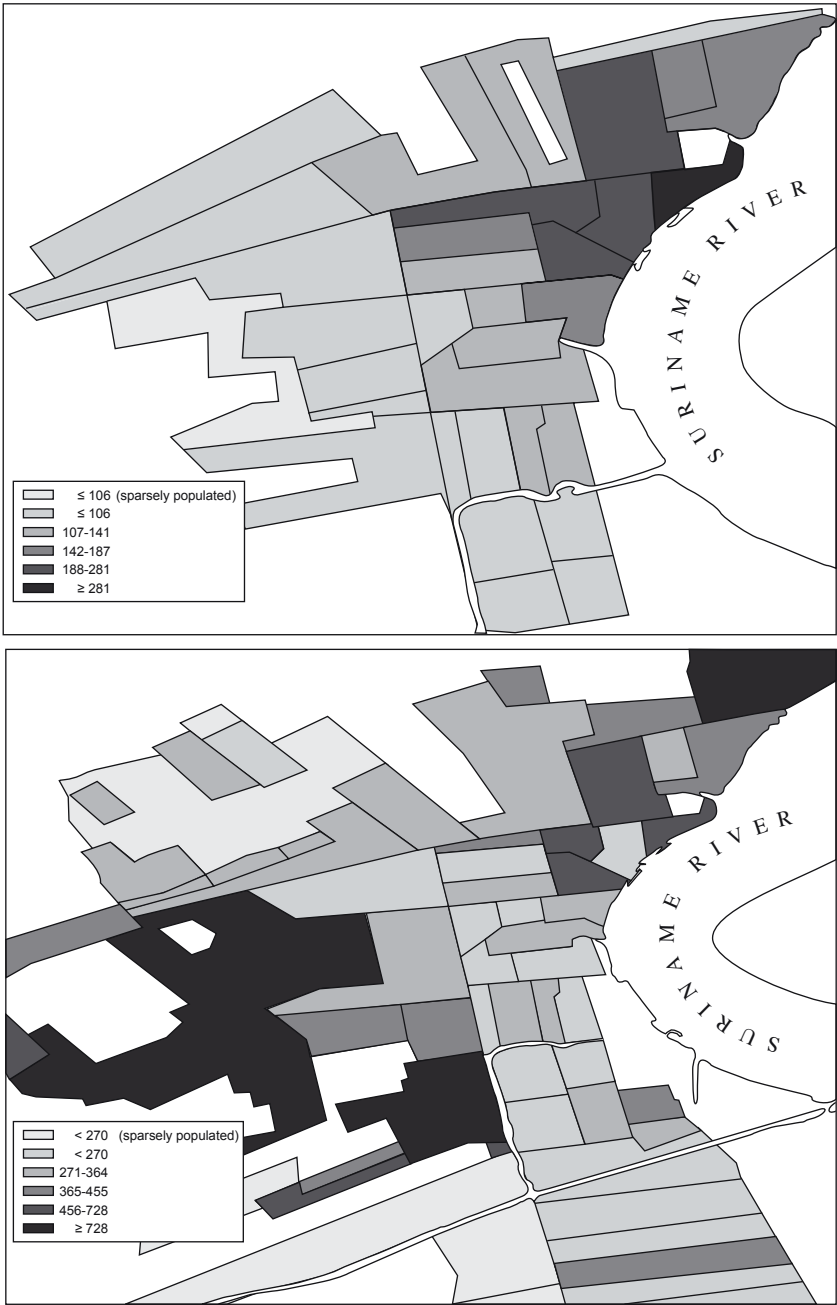
Map 4. Average tax value in Surinamese guilders of houses in Paramaribo in 1950 and 1966.
Source: Property value registers in Paramaribo 1964 and 1966 (De Bruijne 1976)

After the 1950s, however, with the growth of the urban population and the increase in housing opportunities for the elite and middle class, the government felt it was necessary to provide housing for lower-income groups who were not able to afford privately owned subdivisions. The government thus embarked upon a program of low-income housing, and from 1950 to 1974, completed fifteen housing projects resulting in a total of 3,000 housing units. The high building standards (detached concrete houses built on lots of 300m^2) meant high construction costs, for which huge sums of external funding was needed – and given – almost exclusively from Dutch development aid. The low rents charged to the tenants, coupled with the lack of discipline in collecting these rents, as well as the intervention of politicians who asked for financial arrangements for their clients if they ran up debts, made cost recovery and revolving financing impossible. Their high quality and low rents made the houses very attractive to lower-class and middle-class income groups. In practice, most houses were awarded to civil servants who had the best political connections.

CURRENT ETHNIC RESIDENTIAL PATTERNS

The inner city of Paramaribo is populated mainly by Creoles. They have dominated this area, residentially, for centuries, and together with the mixed groups and the Maroons, they make up three-quarters of the inner-city population. Hindustanis, Javanese, and other groups form small minorities in the center of Paramaribo, but the inner city's residential function is gradually losing ground to its economic function.

The district of Wanica constitutes the semirural periphery of the capital. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, it has traditionally been the residential area of Hindustanis, who make up 56 percent of its population. Javanese are relatively strongly represented here as well, and they form almost one-quarter of the population at the edge of the city, though they are concentrated mostly in a few areas that were formerly villages. In the city's semirural periphery Creoles form a small minority of some 15 percent, whereas other ethnic groups are almost absent.

The older center and the semirural periphery are linked by a broad and more diffuse concentric intermediate zone that houses most of the urban population. It is continually increasing in size as a result of ongoing commercial subdivisions. This is the area of private housing development lots and a few government housing estates that have been developed since the 1950s as part of a process of rapid urban transformation. No one specific ethnic group dominates this zone, but Creoles are relatively overrepresented in the western and southern sections, Hindustanis in the northwest, Javanese in the north, and Maroons in the south.

There are marked differences between the ethnic groups with regard to the type of neighborhood, based on how the neighborhood originated. Quite clearly, public housing schemes are overwhelmingly inhabited by Creoles, and the Hindustanis still form a large majority in the semirural urban fringe. Javanese are distributed most equitably. The group of ethnically mixed persons is quite strongly represented in the more elite private subdivisions, which corresponds with their high economic status. Maroons, on the other hand, are found in the lower-class private developments. More than half of all Maroons reside in such areas.

Table 8. Distribution of ethnic groups by type of neighborhood in 1992 (in percentages)

Type of neighborhood	Creoles	Hindustanis	Javanese	Ethn. mixed	Maroons
Old inner city area	51	15	10	13	7
Public housing scheme	71	8	4	9	4
Lower middle-class private development	30	35	17	8	10
Upper- and middle-class private development	35	24	10	20	1
Peri-urban area	13	65	16	2	2
Total share in population	39	29	12	11	5

Source: Schalkwijk & De Bruijne 1999:111.

We have distinguished four types of neighborhoods in Paramaribo on the basis of ethnic characteristics: Creole, Hindustani, Javanese, and ethnically mixed. One of the ethnically mixed neighborhoods is dominated by the Maroons.

We have typified a neighborhood as "Creole" or "Hindustani" if that particular group is overrepresented, that is, if the share of this ethnic group is much greater than one would expect on the basis of their presence in the city as a whole. We have measured overrepresentation according to two criteria: the relative share of the ethnic group is at least one-and-a-half times the average share of this group in the city as a whole, and more than 50 percent of the population of the neighborhood belongs to the ethnic group. Because Creoles make up 39 percent of the population of the city, and Javanese only 13 percent, statistically, Creole neighborhoods will be prevalent.

Ethnically mixed neighborhoods dominate: in almost half the neighborhoods (37 out of 79) no one ethnic group dominates, especially in the north and northwestern parts of Paramaribo. One-quarter of the neighborhoods can be qualified as "Creole," and these can be found in the old inner city and west and south of the city. Almost all housing estates built by the government have a predominantly Creole population.

Neighborhoods populated mainly by Hindustanis – one-fifth of all neighborhoods – may be found along the Kwatta highway leading out of the northwestern part of the city (see Map 1) and in the semirural periphery in the Wanica district. These neighborhoods are large but have very low population densities. The highest concentration of Hindustanis measured in one neighborhood was 88 percent. There are three neighborhoods where Javanese predominate in the north of the city, and one in the south, a former village, now a suburb of Paramaribo. Creole neighborhoods have a more homogeneous composition than the Hindustani and Javanese neighborhoods.

The ethnically heterogeneous neighborhoods are found in the north of the city and in a concentric layer around the inner city. It is interesting that these neighborhoods consist not only of households of different ethnic groups, but also a relatively large number of ethnically mixed persons.
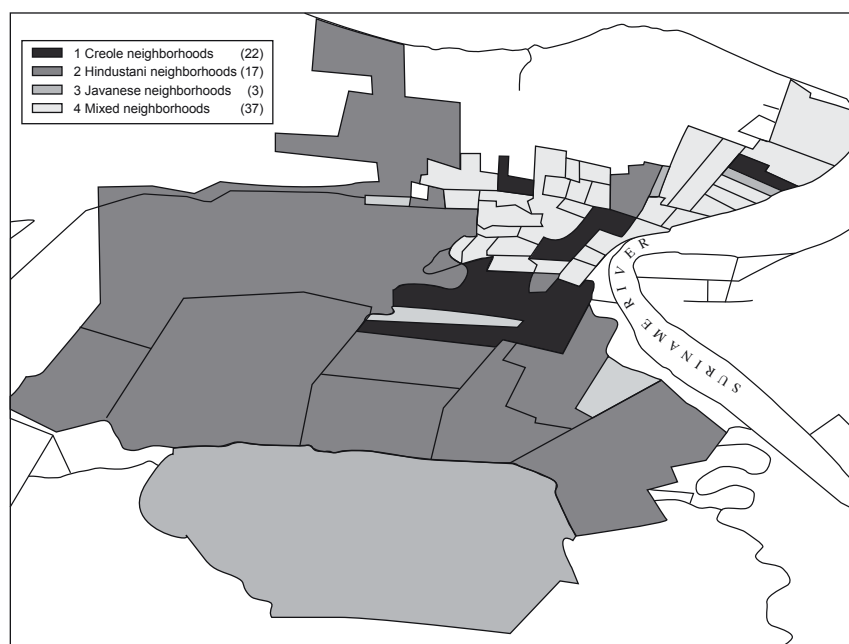
Map 5. Ethnically homogeneous and heterogeneous neighborhoods in Paramaribo, 1992

To determine statistically what factors help explain the residential pattern in Paramaribo, we carried out a factor analysis, using thirty-eight variables of households grouped into four "dimensions" or broader categories: socioeconomic status, demographic characteristics, ethnicity, and housing quality. With the help of this statistical method, we were able to determine what cor-

related underlying factors contributed to the differences between the seventy-nine neighborhoods in Paramaribo.

We also determined which factors had the most weight in explaining the residential patterns we observed. From ordering these factors we determined that affluence and poverty are the most important ones for classifying and typifying neighborhoods, and thus residential patterns, in Paramaribo. Our analysis revealed that 30 percent of the variance[18] is a result of a factor that can best be labeled as "poor, large households" with a high positive score on variables such as "low education," "low income," and "popular class." This factor thus has a clear socioeconomic signature.[19]

The second factor, which explains 18 percent of the variance, is clearly related to demographics, showing a strong positive correlation with variables such as "older," "non-working," and "female" heads of households. The ethnocultural dimension is but the third in line with a variance of 11 percent. It has high positive scores on the variables "Creole," "Maroon," and "Sranan-speaking," and a high negative score on "Hindustani." These results are largely consistent with earlier findings for the period of the 1960s (De Bruijne 1976).

CONCLUSION

In a city as ethnically diverse as Paramaribo, ethnic identities and ethnic boundaries inevitably help its residents define their place in urban society. The data show that belonging to an ethnic group is considered important in Paramaribo. Particularly in the private spheres of culture, social gatherings, religion, and the choice of a partner, people express a strong preference for their own ethnic group, not only older generations, but the younger ones as well, indicating that certain aspects of ethnic identity will remain important in the near future.

However, the data also show patterns of increasing communality between ethnic groups over time, whereby we can infer a gradual but limited process of assimilation and integration. Several indicators point in this direction: the use of a common language, Dutch, is increasing, not only in school and at the workplace, but also in the home. More members of all ethnic groups are participating in formal education, and the three major ethnic groups now have more or less equal access to education. In the labor market, the sharp ethnic division or segmentation so characteristic of the colonial period appears to be disappearing gradually. Importantly, all ethnic groups are now relatively well represented in the civil service. With increasing educational levels, both

18. See the appendix for an explanation of this concept and our methods.
19. It must be added that in Paramaribo differences in wealth are not as rigid as in other Caribbean cities. Often personal linkages, which may be based on family ties, between households in rich and poor neighborhoods do exist and function.

ethnic networks and labor specialization seem to become less important. We can therefore postulate that lasting exposure to shared national facts and institutions, such as history, education, language, the judicial system, and even politics, appears, as we expected, to strengthen processes of unification and acculturation. The three major ethnic groups, at least, have a more or less similar socioeconomic position, and certainly more so than in the colonial past.

Spatially, we discerned similar processes of increasing geographical convergence and proximity between ethnic groups. Colonial history, and specifically the sequential migration to the city, produced a basic residential pattern of general and relative locational differentiation, with Creoles in the city center, and Hindustanis and Javanese in the urban periphery, without there being, however, strong ethnic segregation. Since the 1960s, with the private sector providing the bulk of the land and development for the housing market, economic position and income have become the distinctive sorting mechanisms, causing – indirectly – obvious ethnic blending, with the residential composition of private subdivisions reflecting the relative presence of the ethnic groups in the city. Residential ethnic mixing can in fact be expected to increase in the future, and the mixed intermediate zone of Paramaribo will likely broaden both toward the periphery and the center as commercial forces gain more momentum and government intervention is further limited. Government intervention produced "anomalous" ethnically segregated neighborhoods in the past, but market forces contribute to ethnic blending.

It is relevant to note that Suriname has not witnessed any periods or even incidents of ethnic conflicts – with the exception of the "war of the interior" of the 1980s. Nor has it experienced ethnic tension during its recent history as other plural societies, such as nearby Guyana and Trinidad, have. In a world where ethnic and religious identity and cultural awareness are becoming more explicit, the different ethnic groups of Suriname – at least those in its capital – seem to have found a modus vivendi, living together in relative harmony in a confined geographical setting. Long-lasting exposure to each other and to each other's culture, with Creoles, Hindustanis, and Javanese living together as neighbors and maintaining daily interaction, seems to have contributed to this harmony.

APPENDIX: DATA AND METHOD

Data

The data in the historical section of this article and elaborated in De Bruijne's publication of 1976 are based on original and official published sources. For 1850, we used original neighborhood registers, as well as property value registers, consulted in 1965 in the National Archives of Suriname. For 1921

we used the First General Population Census, now kept in the Dutch National Archives in The Hague. We also used the Register of Income Tax of 1930 and the property value register of 1925, both available in 1965 at the National Archives in Paramaribo. For 1950 and 1964 we used the published results of the Second and Third General Population Censuses. They were combined with a sample of 3,000 households on which data were collected in 1966 and a study of the original property value registers of 1946 and 1966.

We were allowed to use original census material for 1980. The original records have now probably been lost.

Because there was no census conducted in the 1990s, we decided to hold a large household survey using a basic questionnaire. Including households from all geographic areas of Greater Paramaribo and the urbanized parts of the district of Wanica, was given great importance, as this would give us a valid sample of the total urban population. Because no official administrative areas exist other than numbered district areas used for censuses, we divided Greater Paramaribo into smaller residential areas, or neighborhoods differentiated by internal historical-morphological unity, that is, private subdivisions or housing estates, and boundaries with adjoining areas. In total we identified seventy-nine neighborhoods, which included all the streets of Paramaribo.

Next we selected a sample of fifty households from each of these neighborhoods, with a simple correction for the size of the sample in larger residential areas and with the stipulation that houses from every street of the area had to be included in the sample. This gave us a total of just over 4,000 households. An adjustment in the size of the sample was made for larger neighborhoods.

A census had been held in 2003. Unfortunately the original material was destroyed by fire, and only a few basis data could be published. In 2004 there was a new census conducted, but while we were composing this study, only a few data could be used. To validate the data from the 1992 survey and check for the continuation of trends identified in our 1999 publication, we carried out a limited survey in ten neighborhoods in 2001, again using a sample of fifty households from each neighborhood. The neighborhoods were selected on the basis of their origin so that two of each type of neighborhood identified in 1992 (i.e. housing estates, private subdivisions, older inner city areas, etc.) were included.

Calculation of Index of Affluence and Poverty

To be able to differentiate realistically between rich and poor in Paramaribo, we could not use income as an exact indicator for economic position, owing to the multiple and often hidden sources of income that many households have (including remittances, secondary jobs, and illegal activities such as smug-

gling and dealing drugs[20]) that do not surface in censuses and surveys. In most of the 1980s and 1990s extreme inflation hit the country, rendering data on income useless. Instead, we constructed our own index of affluence and poverty, which is based on the possession of a number of durable consumer goods, and which in Suriname are considered as "naturally belonging" to a certain economic class. In the surveys of 1992 and 2001, respondents were asked if they possessed the following consumer goods: a television, refrigerator, washing machine, car (and the age of the car), and air conditioner.[21] These variables were weighed against each other on the basis of their relative exclusivity: a TV, 1 point; a fridge, 1 point; a washing machine, 2 points; a car, 1-4 points (depending on its age); and an air conditioner 4 points. Table 9 shows how households scored in terms of consumer goods possession.

Table 9. Possession of durable consumer goods in 1992 (in percentages)

Durable consumer goods	Present	Absent
Refrigerator	86	14
TV	85	15
Washing machine	64	36
Car	41	59
Air conditioner	6	94

Households could receive a minimum score of 0 points if they did not possess any of the relevant goods, and a maximum of 12 points if they owned all the above. Those scoring 8-12 points were considered to be the "elite," 5-7 the "middle class," 2-4 the "popular class," and 0-1 the "underclass."

Index of Dissimilarity, Relative Centrality, and Concentration

The index of dissimilarity is a measure of segregation between two or more groups, such as ethnic groups, calculated according to the following formula:

$$D = 0.5 \times \Sigma \left[\frac{bi}{B} - \frac{wi}{W} \right]$$

in which bi and wi are population counts in areal unit 1, and B and W are the total population counts of the two groups in the whole study area.

The index of relative centrality is a measure of the relative distance of a group from the city center. The lower the score, the shorter the distance from the center.

20. Suriname has a flourishing drug trade.
21. Computers and mobile phones could be used as indicators nowadays, but in 1992, these goods were not yet commonly available in Suriname.

The concentration index measures how concentrated a group is in a certain area relative to its share in the total population of the larger area (in our case, Paramaribo).

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis allows us to order and reduce a large amount of data to core data. The objective is to indicate the cohesion between a large number of variables that characterize a subject (residential neighborhoods) and reduce these variables to a number of core variables or factors. By doing a factor analysis with the help of the statistical program SPSS, one tries to identify the underlying factors that can, in essence, be considered a combination of the original variables.

With the 1992 survey we collected basic data on 4,000 households in seventy-nine neighborhoods. The data on the households were sorted according to neighborhood, giving us a picture of the population composition of the neighborhoods. Thirty-seven basic characteristics were chosen and grouped around four dimensions or broader categories of variables: residential, demographic, ethnocultural, and socioeconomic. We produced a correlation matrix that indicated whether there were relationships between the variables. Theoretically one would expect a high frequency of mutual relationships between variables within one dimension, and we did actually find this. For example, the variables "higher education" and "higher income" within the socioeconomic dimension showed a positive correlation (r) of 0.87. Then we did a factor analysis by choosing the Principal Component Analysis method, which indicates independent factors or components.

The number of new factors that emerged was limited to the five main ones explaining 70 percent of the variance. Variance is the part of the original variables represented by the new factors. After studying the matrix of loadings we chose the so-called Varimax rotation, which enabled us to assign a high score one just one factor and low scores on other factors to clusters of variables.

The analysis of the matrix of loadings indicated that factors were found that clearly differ from each other. The first factor showed high loadings on the variables of the socioeconomic dimension, whereas the second factor in importance had a demographic dimension. The third factor incorporated ethnic-cultural variables, whereas the fourth factor show a relationship with residential quality. The fifth factor showed no clear pattern.

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Jorge Duany

COLONIAL MIGRANTS:
RECENT WORK ON PUERTO RICANS
ON AND OFF THE ISLAND

Colonial Subjects: Puerto Ricans in a Global Perspective. Ramón
Grosfoguel. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. xi + 268 pp.
(Paper US$ 21.95)

*Boricuas in Gotham: Puerto Ricans in the Making of Modern New York
City.* Gabriel Haslip-Viera, Angelo Falcón & Félix Matos Rodríguez
(eds.). Princeton NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2004. viii + 240 pp. (Paper
US$ 24.95)

Recent studies of Puerto Ricans have revisited their colonial status, national
identity, and transnational migration from various standpoints, including
postcolonial, transnational, postmodern, queer, and cultural studies.[1] Most
scholars in the social sciences and the humanities no longer question whether
Puerto Rico is a colony of the United States. What is often discussed, some-
times angrily, is the exact nature of U.S. colonialism, the extent to which
the Island has acquired certain "postcolonial" traits such as linguistic and
cultural autonomy, and the possibility of waging an effective decoloniza-
tion process. The issue of national identity in Puerto Rico is still contested
as intensely as ever. What is new about current scholarly discussions is that
many intellectuals, especially those who align themselves with postmod-
ernism, are highly critical of nationalist discourses. Other debates focus on
the appropriate approach to population movements between the Island and
the U.S. mainland. For example, some outside observers insist that, techni-
cally speaking, the Puerto Rican exodus should be considered an internal,
not international, migration, while others, including myself, refer to such
a massive dispersal of people as transnational or diasporic. Much of this

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1. Duany 2002; Pabón 2002; Martínez-San Miguel 2003; Ramos-Zayas 2003; Rivera
2003; Negrón-Muntaner 2004; Pérez 2004.

controversy centers on whether the geopolitical "border" between the Island and the mainland is equivalent to a national "frontier" in the experiences of Puerto Rican migrants.

In *Colonial Subjects*, Puerto Rican sociologist Ramón Grosfoguel proposes "an alternative reading of Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans within the 'modern world-system'" (p. 1), as well as "a new interpretation of the global process that conditioned Caribbean migration to the United States" (pp. 39-40) and Western Europe. On the one hand, Grosfoguel surveys Puerto Rico's colonial history, economy, and politics, especially during the second half of the twentieth century. On the other hand, he compares the Puerto Rican diaspora with those from other Caribbean territories, both independent and dependent. Both intellectual moves are rare in Puerto Rican and Caribbean studies, which still tend to adopt an insular and short-term approach. In contrast, *Colonial Subjects* offers a valuable historical and contemporary overview of Puerto Rico's place within the capitalist world economy.

Grosfoguel's theoretical framework derives primarily from Immanuel Wallerstein's approach to the modern world-system as "a single multidimensional system with multiple and entangled structuring logics such as capitalist accumulation, state military security, symbolic strategies of prestige and honor, struggles of antisystemic social movements, and racial, gender, and sexual hierarchies" (p. 49). Despite Puerto Rico's persistent colonial status, Grosfoguel classifies the Island as "semiperipheral" because it concentrates certain management and control functions for high-tech manufacturing industries, particularly banking (Chapter 2). Moreover, Puerto Rico has become a "modern colony" akin to other Caribbean islands such as Martinique and Curaçao through shared citizenship with the metropolis, extensive civil rights, relatively high wages, modern working conditions, mass consumption, welfare transfers, and sponsored migration. According to Grosfoguel, the metropolises granted such economic and political reforms after World War II "to preclude the success of any potential anticolonial struggle" (p. 67) and to "offset the inequalities produced by core-periphery exploitation" (p. 11). Compared to the independent nations of the Caribbean, modern colonies enjoy higher standards of living, more democratic regimes, and unlimited freedom of movement to their metropolises.

Colonial Subjects relies heavily on the notion of "coloniality of power," elaborated by the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano. Grosfoguel defines the term concisely as "the continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of colonial administrations" (p. 4), including racial, ethnic, class, gender, and sexual forms of exploitation. He contends that the modern world-system is organized along a male/female axis, as well as a heterosexual/homosexual-lesbian axis, in addition to the European/non-European and capital/labor divides. As he argues, "power structures are still colonial in that 'white' European/Euro-American males continue to control the most impor-

tant positions in the world economy" (p. 31). This insistence on subsuming all forms of subordination as "colonial" (even though some migrant groups such as Dominicans in the United States were not "colonized" by their host societies) is both provocative and problematic.

Grosfoguel gives few details (such as sampling, instruments, or procedures) about his fieldwork in Puerto Rico, the United States, or Europe. I could find references only to interviewing one Puerto Rican on the Island (pp. 68-69), several casual Cuban informants in Miami (pp. 89-90), a Puerto Rican in Paris (p. 158), and a Dominican in New York City (p. 167). Most of Grosfoguel's sources of information are secondary, especially published census data and surveys conducted by others. Consequently, many of the book's generalizations and interpretations could be better documented. Although I agree with Grosfoguel's claim that Puerto Ricans have a strong sense of national identity (p. 9), for example, I found no supporting evidence for it in the book. More difficult to prove are hypotheses such as these: that Puerto Ricans imagine themselves simultaneously as a nation and as an ethnic group (p. 77); that the movement in defense of the Spanish language excludes working-class people in Puerto Rico (p. 62); and that Caribbean people prefer to live in a modern colony rather than in a nation-state (p. 68).

Nonetheless, *Colonial Subjects* makes an original and substantial contribution to Puerto Rican, Caribbean, and Latino studies. One of the book's major findings is that "the emigration processes of colonial people [from the Caribbean] ... have more in common than when compared to ... Caribbean nation-states" (p. 183). In two lucid chapters (3 and 6), Grosfoguel spells out several striking parallels among Caribbean immigrants in the metropolises: (1) their long colonial histories, (2) incorporation as racialized subjects, (3) subordinate location in the local labor market, (4) legal status as metropolitan citizens, and (5) lower-class origins, as well as (6) the organized character of much of their migration, and (7) their concentration in world cities, such as New York, Paris, and Amsterdam. In Chapters 5 and 7, Grosfoguel argues that most Puerto Rican (and Dominican) immigrants have been racialized as black or colored Others, and hence are exposed to "racist stereotypes such as laziness, criminality, stupidity, and uncivilized behavior" (p. 149), similar to French Antilleans in Paris, Dutch Antilleans in Amsterdam, or West Indians in London. Finally, Grosfoguel shows that comparing Puerto Ricans with other Hispanics in the United States, such as Mexicans, Cubans, or Dominicans, may be inappropriate because these last groups originate in postcolonial states. Here he makes a convincing case that the sending country's geopolitical position within the modern world-system shapes the migrants' economic and political incorporation into the host country (p. 181).

In sum, Grosfoguel's work advances our understanding of Puerto Rico's role within the capitalist world economy, U.S. imperialist strategies, and postwar decolonization and recolonization processes in the Caribbean. His

book raises intriguing issues about lingering colonial discourses and prac-
tices, national and postnational identities, transnational migration, and racial
and ethnic discrimination, as well as the utopian project of a "radical democ-
racy" on the Island and in the U.S. mainland. *Colonial Subjects* situates the
Puerto Rican case in a broad regional and global perspective that illuminates
its particular and general implications.

    In contrast to the sweeping approach of *Colonial Subjects*, *Boricuas in
Gotham* focuses on a specific locality and time period. It is the product of a
conference held at the City University of New York in 2000, inspired by the
Puerto Rican activist-scholar Antonia Pantoja. The participants in that meeting
reviewed the history of the Puerto Rican community in New York City since
World War II, especially its settlement patterns, community organization,
economic development, and political institutions. The publication contains
four substantive chapters, five extended commentaries, the editors' introduc-
tion, and an appendix. The contributors include three historians (Virginia
Sánchez-Korrol, Félix Matos-Rodríguez, and Gabriel Haslip-Viera), two
political scientists (Angelo Falcón and José Cruz), an anthropologist (Ana
Celia Zentella), a sociologist (Clara Rodríguez), an economist (Francisco
Rivera-Batiz), and two community leaders (Pantoja and Fernando Ferrer).

    The editors' main purpose was "to update and reassess the evolution and
status of New York's Puerto Rican community" (p. xvii), largely "in response
or reaction to earlier publications by social scientists, journalists, and other
writers, especially Anglo Americans" (p. xviii). Several chapters rebuke the
claims made by the journalist Mireya Navarro in 2000, in a *New York Times*
article entitled "Puerto Rican Presence Wanes in New York." For instance,
both Falcón and Rodríguez take exception to the article because it suggested
that the Puerto Rican population was declining, not only in numbers, but also
in economic and social capital. As Rodríguez further notes in her commen-
tary, much of Puerto Rican scholarship in the United States has been devoted
to combating pejorative portrayals of the Puerto Rican community, such as
the infamous culture of poverty thesis by Oscar Lewis or its more recent
incarnation in the urban underclass literature inspired by William Julius
Wilson. As colonial subjects, to use Grosfoguel's apt phrase, Puerto Ricans
have been continually exposed to prejudice and discrimination, within both
academic circles and the mass media.

    Most of the chapters in this volume lack an explicit theoretical frame-
work, concentrating instead on describing the socioeconomic experiences
of Puerto Rican migrants in New York between the 1940s and the 1990s.
Implicitly, the authors question the applicability to the Puerto Rican case of
traditional models of assimilation that were developed to understand earlier
European immigrants in the United States. For instance, bilingualism and
biculturalism continue to characterize a large part of the Puerto Rican com-
munity in New York City, as Zentella eloquently documents in her memoirs

of growing up in El Barrio (Spanish Harlem). In general, the book adopts a chronological narrative approach that shies away from examining Puerto Ricans from a global perspective, as Grosfoguel would have it. By and large, the authors remain close to the immediate historical events and social actors they depict.

Perhaps, as Falcón argues in one of his two essays for this collection, "most of the current research and analysis on Puerto Rican migration is ... much too general or theoretical" (p. 165). He later laments that "a once confident and deadly serious Marxism has given way to often flaky and fun-filled postmodern meditations" (p. 172). Perhaps, as Haslip-Viera suggests in his commentary, Puerto Rican studies have experienced a paradigmatic shift over the past decade. In his view, current research exaggerates the importance of "identity and other issues connected to 'postmodernism' and 'cultural studies'" (p. 139). Instead, this collection centers on "economic and social issues of critical importance to New York's Puerto Rican community during the 1990s," what Haslip-Viera calls "the real day-to-day lives of people in our communities" (p. 138). Unfortunately, the book does not articulate an integrated analysis of the processes of migration, resettlement, incorporation, or exclusion of Puerto Ricans in New York City. Nor does it illuminate ongoing discussions about whether Puerto Rican migrants can be considered transnational or diasporic in a broad comparative sense.

Most of the essays are based on recent census and archival data – especially journalistic articles – on Puerto Ricans in New York. A lively discussion emerges from Cruz's reliance on one major source of information, the *New York Times*, harshly criticized by Falcón. No such critical reflection appears on the widespread use of census data in Falcón's own work or in Francisco Rivera-Batiz's analyses. In addition to these sources, some authors – notably Sánchez-Korrol, Zentella, and Pantoja – recur to personal narratives and documents that may help to undermine standard treatments of the Puerto Rican experience in New York City. Still, the volume as a whole does not identify new data sets or advocate alternative approaches to the Puerto Rican diaspora, from either a quantitative or qualitative viewpoint. One must look elsewhere for more creative and persuasive counternarratives based on historical, literary, artistic, photographic, and other primary documents. The archival materials housed at the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños at Hunter College are still a largely untapped mine of information. From an anthropological perspective, ethnographic fieldwork in local settings such as New York's Spanish Harlem or Chicago's Near Northwest Side still has no adequate substitute.[2]

Unlike Haslip-Viera, I feel that some of the most exciting and innovative research in contemporary Puerto Rican studies is taking place precisely along

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2. Ramos-Zayas 2003; Rivera 2003; Dávila 2004; Pérez 2004.

the lines of cultural, postcolonial, subaltern, and transnational studies. What impressed me the most about this collection were not the relatively familiar numbers in the tables, but rather the vivid testimonials by several contributors, especially what Zentella dubs "a Nuyorican's View of Our History and Language." The most significant finding of this book may be the sheer tenacity of Puerto Rican identity in the United States against all odds: xenophobia, racism, stigmatization, poverty, unemployment, economic restructuring, deindustrialization, displacement, dispersion, diminished migration, and even rejection by Puerto Ricans on the Island. Another central finding is that despite their "waning presence," Puerto Ricans remain the largest ethnic group in New York City, which has by far the largest concentration of Puerto Ricans in the diaspora. Moreover, New York Puerto Ricans have recently increased their electoral representation. Culturally, they continue to leave their mark in the city's popular music, language, religion, arts, food, education, and media. This waxing presence must be thoroughly documented, analyzed, and interpreted.

Overall, *Boricuas in Gotham* provides a commendable account of some of the leading "bread-and-butter" issues in the study of New York's Puerto Rican community. The volume brings together a wealth of statistical data on the economic and political situation of Puerto Ricans in the city. The chapters by Cruz, Falcón, and Rivera-Batiz, in particular, are packed with useful information on poverty, unemployment, income, education, occupation, industry, and other important variables for understanding the socioeconomic well-being of New York Puerto Ricans. However, the field of Puerto Rican studies is not advanced by branding all recent scholarship on "race, identity, popular culture, and related topics" (p. 138) as "abstract and detached," "romantic" (p. 166), "much too theoretical" (p. 165), and "often flaky" (p. 172). It would be much more productive to engage in a respectful dialogue between various theoretical and methodological positions, such as Marxism, postmodernism, feminism, positivism, and constructivism, as well as across disciplines, such as the "hard" social sciences as opposed to the "soft" humanities. As Falcón notes in his closing remarks, many topics await further study, and much of this research will be conducted by a post-Marxist, post-positivist, post-Civil Rights generation of scholars. This younger generation should be encouraged to explore new issues, epistemologies, and methodologies, wherever they may lead them.

Together, the two books under review document some of the intense contemporary debates surrounding colonialism and migration in Puerto Rico. Given that the Island remains a colony of the United States, a crucial theoretical and political question becomes whether colonialism has impregnated all forms of social inequality, such as those based on gender, sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity. Furthermore, does the concept of "coloniality of power" adequately explain the current situation of Puerto Ricans on the Island and in the United States? Assuming that Puerto Ricans are colonial migrants similar to other Caribbean diasporas in their respective metropolises, it is important

to pursue a comparative research agenda on Puerto Ricans in New York City, Martinicans in Paris, Dutch Antilleans in Amsterdam, and so on. Both theoretically informed and methodologically sophisticated treatments of Puerto Rican colonialism and migration are urgently needed. Without abandoning legitimate concerns for economic development, political empowerment, and community organization, there is still much room for fine-grained analyses of cultural identities, practices, and discourses. Such studies would do well to move beyond artificial dichotomies such as those between global and local, macro and micro, structural and cultural forces, placing the experiences of ordinary Puerto Ricans on and off the Island within their broader socioeconomic contexts. After all, the best social science usually dwells on the multiple intersections between collective biographies and historical trajectories.

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SANTERÍA GRAND SLAM:
AFRO-CUBAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND THE STUDY
OF AFRO-CUBAN RELIGION

Living Santería: Rituals and Experiences in an Afro-Cuban Religion.
MICHAEL ATWOOD MASON. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press,
2002. ix + 165 pp. (Paper US$ 16.95)

Divine Utterances: The Performance of Afro-Cuban Santería. KATHERINE J.
HAGEDORN. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001. xvi + 296
pp. (Cloth US$ 40.00)

The Light Inside: Abakuá Society Arts and Cuban Cultural History. DAVID
H. BROWN. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2003. xix + 286
pp. (Cloth US$ 44.23)

Santería Enthroned: Art, Ritual, and Innovation in an Afro-Cuban Religion.
DAVID H. BROWN. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003. xx + 413
pp. (Paper US$ 38.00)

Ethnographic objects behave in curious ways. Although they clearly are "our
constructions," field sites and even topically circumscribed (rather than spa-
tially delimited) ethnographic problems lead double lives: places and prob-
lems change not merely because they factually undergo historical changes,
but because researchers come to them from historically no less changeable
epistemic vantage points. One can imagine generational cohorts of ethnogra-
phers marching across the same geographically or thematically defined terrain
and seeing different things – not just because of substantial changes that have
factually occurred, but because they have come to ask different questions.
The process obviously has its dialectical moments. The figures we inscribe
in writing from fleeting observations (based on changing theoretical concep-
tions) are no less subject to history than the empirical grounds from which

our discursive efforts call them forth. The result is a curious imbrication of partially autonomous, but also partly overlapping, historicities of lives and texts which, at times, are more difficult to keep apart than it would seem at first glance. At least in the study of Afro-Cuban religious culture, the two practical and discursive fields – one circumscribed by the practical, but perhaps misleading label "Afro-Cuban religion,"[1] and the other designated by whatever term one might like to affix to the study of it – cannot be easily separated: much as in the Brazilian case (Braga 1995, Capone 1999, Matory 1999, 2001), practitioners of Afro-Cuban religions and their ethnographers have engaged each other in a dialogue since at least the second decade of the twentieth century. That it took us so long to understand this fact has much to do with the way both "Afro-Cuban religion" and "Afro-Cuban ethnography" originally (and lastingly) became discursively objectified: the former largely under the sign of a search for "authentically African" elements in New World cultural practices, the second as an instrument for "verifying" (and thereby authorizing) such "Africanisms" (Scott 1991).

When the authors of the books under review (as well as myself) began their research on Afro-Cuban religions in the mid to late 1980s, the search for, and authentication of "Africa in the Americas" was still one of the reigning agendas in the anthropology of Caribbean and African American societies (generally not exactly a hotbed of methodological reflexivity or theoretical sophistication at the time). Neither was revolutionary Cuba a particularly well-worked field of research. Though a sizable prerevolutionary literature did exist, ethnographic research on the island was languishing after an initial burst of important publications in the 1960s, and foreign (especially U.S.-based) researchers had not been granted research visas for projects concerning popular religious culture since (and perhaps because) Oscar Lewis and his group had been asked to leave the island in 1970. Thus while the Cuban Editorial Ciencias Sociales mainly kept republishing Fernando Ortiz's oeuvre throughout the so-called period of scientific atheism, until the end of the 1980s, virtually all the genuinely fieldwork-based Anglophone monographs on the subject dealt with Afro-Cuban religious practices among Cuban exiles – in New York and New Jersey[2] or Miami.[3] In other words, all of us began

1. It might be well worth asking what exactly is "Afro," "Cuban," or "religious" about forms of knowledge and practice that, since the second half of the nineteenth century, have been claimed as "theirs" not just by descendants of African slaves, but also by socially white Cubans; that have nowadays spread across the Western Hemisphere as well as Europe; and for which the label "religion" (even though it is used by practitioners themselves) may provide a rather limiting analytical gloss.
2. As with the dissertations by Murphy 1980, Friedman 1982, Brandon 1983, Gregory 1986, and Brown 1989.
3. As in the case of Castellanos 1976 and Palmié 1991.

our fieldwork in Cuba at a very specific historical conjuncture: the point at which Cuba's economic and political relations with the Soviet Union soured, and the latter's falling apart in 1991, not only plunged the island into the unexpected and unprecedented crisis of the *período especial*, but fundamentally changed the rules of ethnographic engagement there. If, during the 1970s, ethnographic work on governmentally unsanctioned topics was made nearly impossible by the laws regulating Cuban citizens' contacts with foreigners (to a point where unauthorized conversations with foreigners could be interpreted as a potentially "precriminal" act of ideological diversionism), by the early 1990s, not only could ethnographers submerge themselves in the waves of foreign tourists streaming to Cuba in ever larger numbers, but the Cuban state's own recognition that the nation's African heritage represented a "country factor advantage" worked in our favor as well (to a point where, by now, publications by foreigners have completely overtaken the native Cuban output).

By then, of course, what we were seeing in Cuba had not only changed since Melville Herskovits sent his student William Bascom to Cuba to gauge the strength of local "African retentions" and relative superficiality of Catholic "syncretism" (Bascom 1950, 1951, 1953). We were also looking at it through very different spectacles largely because we had developed our perspectives on our subject in accordance with the "reflexive" and "historical" turns in the social sciences (as the glib phrases go). We had also read Sidney Mintz and Richard Price's influential 1976 essay (Mintz & Price 1992) that urged a rigorous historicization of the processes out of which contemporary African American cultures had emerged. And we had become skeptical of the dubious methodological moves by which decontextualized data from both sides of the Atlantic tended to be short-circuited in order to derive African origins for contemporary New World cultural forms. Finally, in our North American fieldwork we had become dissatisfied with the neofunctionalist interpretations that reduced Santería to a surrogate mental health care system (e.g., Sandoval 1979) resorted to by immigrants riddled with acculturation-induced psychological problems,[4] and we had plainly gotten bored with the descriptive lists of deities and their attributes ("Chango's color is red, his sacrificial animal is the ram, owns the drums, manifests himself in thunder and lightning," and so forth) characteristic of much of the recent literature at the time.[5]

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4.   It became clear to me that this was not so – or, at least not predominantly – soon after I stepped off the plane in Miami in the spring of 1985. Not only was Miami, by then, dominated by Cubans, both economically and culturally, but, as one of my informants, a cowrie shell diviner, put it to me later that year, "none of my clients are any crazier than you and me." I still think he was right.

5.   This genre is, of course, far from dead; see Barnet 2001:44-69.

Also, but not of less importance, however, was the fact that all three authors under review here were then in the process of becoming practitioners of Afro-Cuban religion themselves. Following in the footsteps of French scholars of Brazil (such as Roger Bastide or Pierre Verger), but going against much of traditional Anglophone academic praxis,[6] Mason, Hagedorn, and Brown all underwent initiation into *regla de ocha* (better known as Santería), and therefore write about religious forms and traditions that they do not regard merely as ethnographic givens "out there," but which, to varying degrees, and certainly with different rhetorical emphasis, these authors claim as parts of their own lives and biographies. If, as I have argued elsewhere (Palmié 1995, 2001), *santeros* have been writing in rebuttal of academic treatments of their religion for quite some time, the line between "them" and "us" has now become blurred: the dialogues of the future, it would seem, may well be conducted between *santeros* who have turned themselves into scholars of their religion, and scholars who have turned themselves into practitioners thereof, with an occasional secular student of such matters (such as myself) chiming in from the margins.

Starting at the most self-conscious end, Michael Mason's *Living Santería* reads, in part, like a road map into *regla de ocha*. In four brief chapters, Mason tracks what he calls "experiences that are common to most practitioners as they enter the tradition" (p. 11). His goal is to elucidate "the lived experience of various human subjects at different levels of involvement" in *regla de ocha* (p. 11), and the transformation their "subjectivity" undergoes as their relationships and interaction with other practitioners, spirits, and divine entities develop and intensify. Framed by an introduction, a more analytical fifth chapter, and a conclusion, the course runs from an initial divinatory consultation undertaken by a female client for essentially secular reasons, through the rites of bestowal of the *guerreros* (the warrior deities Eleguá, Ochosi, and Ogún) and its attendant establishment of moral relationships with a human initiator and a set of deities, on to a chapter about the vicissitudes of managing religious and secular projections of identity among practicing *santeros* as they traverse North American social terrain, and culminates in a step-by-step description of the initiatory process itself. What Mason is after, it appears, is the gradual socialization into, and individual habituation of, conditions of agency and experience opened up by, defined by, and validated through what, in effect, constitutes a process of religious conversion. That is largely what

6.   Recall the famous ending of Evans-Pritchard's *Nuer Religion* (1956:322): "Though prayer and sacrifice are exterior actions, Nuer religion is ultimately an interior state. This state is externalized in rites which we can observe, but their meaning depends finally on an awareness of God and that men are dependent on him and must be resigned to his will. At this point the theologian takes over from the anthropologist."

he is talking about, or so it seems to me, when he posits transformations of "subjectivity" through increasingly embodied knowledge that generates new feelings of both control and submission, as well as new arenas for engagement of similarly structured "subjectivities," both human and divine.[7] If so, however, it is not clear why Mason cuts himself off from the increasingly sophisticated literature on conversion,[8] which has long left behind the lingering Weberian teleological emphasis on properly rationalized world religions, and might have opened up perspectives that Mason's narrowly phenomenological approach cannot address. What Mason tells us is that the gradual process of becoming a *santero* or *santera* does something for one's sense of self as a moral (and cosmological) agent. But were it not for the ideology of a necessary sudden conversion experience – where Saul falls from his horse, and stands up as Paul to thank his savior – the same could be said about evangelical Protestantism. Few people convert to even such zealous gods as Yahwe all at once, and Mason's account of being "hailed by the oricha," and gradually learning to answer their call (and, one imagines, learning to want to answer it, too) might have been a useful addition to a literature that aims at removing what Robin Horton (1984) once called the "Judeo-Christian spectacles" still riding on the noses of far too many sociologists of religion.

As it stands, however, *Living Santeria* does not fully live up to the "interstitial" qualities that Mason sees as constitutive of all ethnographic endeavors (not that there are too many people around, these days, who think of ethnography as productive of morally unencumbered, purely objective knowledge!). Nor does its episodic structure, focusing on representative events in the life of *santeros* in a state of becoming, deliver the kind of sociological and historical depth that would allow other scholars to fruitfully generalize from it. Mason is at his most effective when he deliberately dons both hats at once, and speaks about how for him, for example, dreaming of the deities he worships – and studies – comes to inform a unified vision of an epistemic project in which anthropological knowledge affects his religious quest, and divinely revealed truths must, for the practitioner-scholar, inform any auto-ethno-

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7.   Consider the following passage (p. 114): "Ritual is thought to change situations in the 'real world,' and as an initiatory religion, the Regla de Ocha transforms human subjectivity by placing it into increasingly intimate relations with the subjectivity of the supernaturals. Through the instrumentality of ritual, practitioners evoke different social positions that culturally imply differing capacities, competencies, and authority. Participating as the intended beneficiary of a ritual transforms an individual's subjectivity in important ways, at the same time that performing a ritual reinforces a priestess's subjectivity and her role as an 'instrument of the orichas.'"

8.   For example, Comaroff & Comaroff (1991, 1997), Hefner (1993, 1998), Keane (1997), Landau (1999), Meyer (1999), Peel (1990, 2000), Price (1990), Rafael (1988), or the contributions to Van der Veer (1996) to mention just a few.

graphic endeavor. Having clarified the conditions of possibility for such a hybrid epistemological stance (if only for himself) is a contribution in itself.[9] Despite their lack of educational credentials comparable to ours, the intellectual virtuosi (to use a Weberian term) among Mason's *santero* peers have done no less for at least the past century – poring over our textual productions, and engaging us in debate, they have been rationalizing our modes of knowledge production just as much as we have rationalized theirs.

This much quickly becomes evident in the second book under consideration, ethnomusicologist Katherine Hagedorn's *Divine Utterances*, a work that also aims to straddle the insider-outsider gap in the literature on Afro-Cuban religion. Much like Mason, Hagedorn tells her readers straight away that "it has been through the lens of folkloric performances that I have framed *lo religioso*, the religious, and now it is through religious performance that I frame *lo folklórico*, the folkloric" (p. 6).[10] She, too, steers her readers toward understanding her book as a sort of conversion narrative in which her spiritual persona as a future daughter of the deity Ochún repeatedly generates mythologically prefigured experiences of dramatic conflict with her divine guardian's sexual antagonist, Ogún. Yet *Divine Utterances* has a very different agenda from Mason's *Living Santería*. For while Mason aims to close the distance between life and text, foregrounding "lived experience" at the expense of analytical depth, Hagedorn seems far more comfortable with maintaining or even generating an ironic tension between them. In fact, she is arguably at her best when she foregrounds the paradoxical and contradictory, for example, when she monitors the deliberate, but hardly successful attempts on the part of Cuban cultural engineers (both before and during the Revolution) to incorporate Afro-Cuban cultural forms into – changing – national projects by eviscerating them of their religious content. Likewise, Hagedorn is astute and incisive when she confronts the institutional history of the project of creating a "National Folklore" in step with revolutionary consciousness with the deeply conflicted memories of state agents whose well-meaning and deeply felt need to insure "authenticity" resulted in the growth of religiously defined networks of power and patronage within the Conjunto Folklorico Nacional – an ostensibly secular instrument of revolutionary cultural production; or when she exposes the covert racism at the heart of a supposedly emancipatory project (namely, to liberate the cultural expressions of black workers from prerevolutionary bourgeois denigration) that nevertheless harked back to a

9.   For a highly idiosyncratic (to say the least), but methodologically more consequent precursor to such epistemological hybridization, see Meyer and Bede-Fagbamila's jointly authored "Divination of Ethnography" (1991).

10. Happy are the Hispanophones, who can coin such indeterminate nominalizations without having to speak of religions and folklores!

conception of both Africanity and religion as impediments to social progress and modernization.[11]

Such contextualization lends an ironic distance to Hagedorn's more personal reflections, such as those on her apprenticeship as a female *batá* drummer (an oxymoronic concept) to Alberto Villareal, one of the Conjunto's current leading performers and practicing *olú añás* (consecrated drummer). But it never results in an authorial stance that betrays anything less than her commitment to the eminently masculine musical tradition she is trying to formally master, and the religious precepts that underlie it. Her stance becomes even more evident in what is (at least in my idea) the most fascinating chapter of her book, aptly entitled "Blurring the Boundaries: Merging Sacred and Profane." What happens, conceptually, Hagedorn asks here, when a secularly conceived folkloric performance of programmatically modified sacred rhythms and chants in front of an audience composed of tourists, secular aficionados, hustlers, and practicing *santeros* does not merely involve choreographed simulacra of possession behavior on stage, but accidentally triggers a divine possession among the audience? And how would we know the difference? Is a rhythmic performance conceived of as sacred audibly any different from the same set of drumbeats intended as a profane utterance? Hagedorn's answer is yes – and no: "precisely because the performances sound the same," (p. 111) she writes about the depiction of divine possession in Gloria Rolando's 1992 film, *Oggún*,

> because the space between the sacred and the secular is inaudible, understanding the terms of where and how the sound gets produced might be more important than what is heard. The intent of the possession performance gains primacy over the performance itself, but because of a shared corpus of body memories of possession, some aspect of the sacred is recalled. Clearly, in the case of the feigned possession, the intent is not to bring down the deity – that is, the intent is *not* to get possessed, but rather to mimic possession so expertly that the experience *seems* real on film. But the success of the staged possession performance relies almost completely on those bodies who have been possessed, so the boundaries between "source" and "derivation" become blurred or even irrelevant.

Quite clearly, Hagedorn puts her finger on a core contradiction at the heart of the *anatomía del proceso folklorico* (part of the title of Hagedorn's origi-

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11. In no small part, the dilemma inherent in the revolutionary Cuban project of creating a "National Folklore" was that it supposed a collaboration between scholars an practitioners of religions whose existence as religions was to be extinguished by the force of a future socialist epiphany. As David Brown tersely summarizes Hagedorn's account, it is probably also true that "at least some of the intellectuals [involved], consciously or unconsciously believed that you could take the informant out of the *mala vida cubana* [Cuban low-life, a term popularized by Fernando Ortiz], but you could not take the *mala vida cubana* out of the informant" (*The Light Inside*, p. 206).

nal dissertation): neither we, nor the designers of the folkloric spectacles that "real *santeros*" produce under the auspices of a "real existing socialism" can *really* know. To what extent the sacred is prone to intrude into secular performance (or vice versa: to what extent such performances act upon the liturgical context within which their choreography works) is a contextual issue and one that cannot be blanketed by statements about the phenomenology of "lived experience" (for isn't faking possession, even in a sacred context, a "lived experience," too?). This is precisely because there simply is no empirical difference between the two kinds of realities, sacred and secular. For all practical purposes, they look and sound the same. Who could tell what really is in the body of someone enacting the part of a divine persona? Is it someone wanting to show off his or her skills at performing the gestural repertoire of divine histrionics for a variety of personal motives? Is it a state-employed *santero* trained to perform "as if," and drawing a line between different values produced through gainful employment and sacred "work"? Or is it a genuine divine presence with its own "wholly other" reasoning and rhyme?

At moments such as these, Hagedorn makes a powerful and really rather understated contribution to a much larger set of issues and conversations (e.g., Boddy 1994, Das 1998). Rather than pursue such lines of inquiry beyond one truly dazzling chapter, however, she goes onto other subjects, chronicling the problems of life in Cuba during the special period and presenting descriptive data on ritual music and its ambiguous "folkloric" transformations (nicely accompanied by a CD), a somewhat disjointed account of the criminalization of Afro-Cuban religion, some rather impressionistic remarks on contemporary Cuban forms of racism and their articulation with the exploding tourist industry, and further explorations of her own relationships to the deities she studies and serves. Yet despite its disorganized character, Hagedorn's book does represent a critical achievement, precisely because she manages to successfully call into question the boundaries between the supposedly "authentic" and its "fabricated" doubles, exposing the difficulties of delimiting "real experiences" from their supposed "empirical symptoms" (which are visually and audibly indistinguishable from good fakes) and illuminating the range of contradictions the Cuban state courted in half-heartedly embracing its nation's popular traditions.

If Hagedorn is at her most incisive when she switches from a romantic rhetorical mode to an ironic one, David Brown's *The Light Inside* can likewise be read as a brilliant, tongue-in-cheek epistemological meditation on method (and its madness) in Afro-Cuban, and Afro-Atlantic studies more generally – and it is instructive to consult it first before going on to read his long-awaited magnum opus, *Santería Enthroned*. On the surface, *The Light Inside* is a book about a single set of unusual looking objects assembled on, or next to, a table covered with a black velvet drape brightly embroidered with silk: plumed staffs, small cylindrical or goblet-shaped drums, a cru-

cifix, something that looks like a monstrance, and a red suit with a conical headpiece. Yet like all other things that humans tinker with or produce, this curious assemblage has not just a material, but also a discursive presence. As Brown argues in taking cues from Appadurai (1986) and Kopytoff (1986), the objects in question look back on a complicated social life and biography, one that is constituted through the accumulation of narratives around them: how they came to be assembled in the way Brown was able to photograph in 1992, what highly differentiated meanings they hold for their makers and users, and how these and similar "sacra" pertaining to the secret brotherhood, abakuá, became the referents of a polyphonous swirl of public representations that have come to envelop them since the middle of the nineteenth century – all that is a matter that not only defies typologizing maneuvers ("this is an example of an abakuá altar"), but asks for what Brown calls a historical "contextualization of the archive" (p. 241) that nowadays enables the beholders of these objects to place them under coherent descriptions, be they of sacred or secular nature.

As Brown himself repeatedly acknowledges, his is ultimately just another such narrative. Yet precisely because he eschews a rhetorical stance outside the stream of discourses washing over the objects on the altar of the abakuá lodge he chose to call *Eforí Eñongo*, Brown manages to first tell the story of these objects in a manner that largely coincides with the views of both contemporary Cuban *obonecues* (members of abakuá) and their scholarly analysts, and then to read that story itself as a historically dense palimpsest of past accretions: an "archive," the structure of which can be deciphered by careful historical contextualization. Accordingly, Brown initially situates the deeply personal meanings the altar objects of Eforí Eñongo hold for the man he calls Jesús Nasako (who renovated them in 1979) within larger narratives internal to the association itself that concern abakuá's mythical origins and historical career. At the same time, however, he shows that at another level, parts of such stories also became canonical within very different discursive traditions: those produced by the Cuban state and its legal apparatus in its colonial, republican, and revolutionary incarnations; others generated by a variety of observers (ranging from police inspectors to artists and local color writers, as well as ethnographers and art historians); and yet others originating with anthropologists and historians, for whom the "case" of Cuban abakuá appears to speak to a range of issues pertaining to the cultural history of the African diaspora.

The results of Brown's exegesis of these partly autonomous, but mutually articulated discourses should give us all pause. Take, for example, his characterization of the scholarly end of things: for too long, Brown argues, we have represented "art makers, objects, and ritual actions" as "'transparent' to a set of timeless cultural values or 'core principles'," supposedly characteristic of ethnographically delimitable groups in Africa and the New World (p. 4). Once such "transparency" has become discursively established, it is a short

step to representing African American objects "as the essential descendants of their African source cultures" by imaginatively stripping away incongruent "additions" so as to render them "traceable, like isotopes, to a set of African morphological prototypes within a relatively uniform and transatlantic semantic field" (p. 5). Yet for Brown, even approaches based on models of interchange between heterogeneous cultural systems, and often associated with terms such as "syncretism" or "creolization," ultimately generate stories whose analytical "signifying potential" ought to be confronted with the remarkable account of Brown's key informant Jesús Nasako. "No one besides me would be able to explain to you the meaning of these things," the man told Brown (p. 5), "because they come from my personal experience and family history" – and, one would like to add, the history of Cuba itself. Never mind that when he renovated Eforí Eñongo's titleholders' sacred staffs of office, Jesús Nasako did work according to a template that arguably has African origins, and that is seen as originating in Africa by contemporary *obonecues* and scholars alike: the fact that the staff of the incumbent to the Abasonga title bears a mass-produced brass medal depicting St. Christopher may be taken as evidence of a syncretistic process that analogizes the transitional role of the sainted ferryman in Catholicism with that of Abasonga, who, as a figure in abakuá's founding myth, is instrumental in transacting the mystery from one side of an African river of the Cuban imagination to the other. Jesús Nasakó affixing this medal to Abasonga's staff, however, has nothing to do with what Herskovits (1937) called a mechanically evolving "confusion of theological concept," but rather with the fact that Jesús Nasako received it as a gift from his baptismal godfather in 1958. The decision was entirely deliberate, and although informed by a specific "ethnoaesthetic" (as Brown might call it), ultimately cannot be reduced to it. The same holds for his 1979 decision to crown Mokongo's staff with a chromed nude female figure with outstretched arms. Again, and for aesthetic, theological, and biographical reasons very much his own, Jesús Nasakó saw a semblance of Sikan (the female mythological character who originally discovered the secret and was put to death for it) in a hood ornament of a Ford Edsel, which he stole well before the Cuban Revolution put an end to the importation of American cars, and eventually inserted into a very different regime of value, thus Africanizing and sacralizing a North American commodity fetish (*The Light Inside*, pp. 84-93).[12] Who, indeed, but Jesús Nasako, could have told that story? And what an allegory of transatlantic knowledge production it is!

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12. Knowing him myself, I wouldn't find it surprising if Jesús Nasakó initially incorporated it in the virtual warehouse of components of future "sacra" that he, a handyman if there ever was one, and a highly self-conscious one at that, keeps in a shed by his house in El Cerro.

But of course, ritual art makers such as Jesús Nasako never operated in a vacuum. Hence the story of how their productions graduated (in Brown's terms) from public indexes of African atavism or criminal evidence to folkloric specimens and expressions of Cuba's national cultural heritage is one that, Brown rightly insists, cannot be told separately from the story of the growth of African derived traditions in Cuba, or even apart from Jesús Nasako's own biography as a maker of objects over which semantic and political contests have raged for well over a century now. And just as Brown's fieldwork allows him to pinpoint inconsistencies in the stories that members of abakuá tell each other (and their ethnographers), for example, about the historical transmission of the *sese* drum's shape and secrets (*The Light Inside,* pp. 98-111), so does his reading of the "archive" unearth a welter of contradictions. For Brown, "comparative ethnography and art history engage not simply in the contrast and comparison of *practices*, but in the contrast and comparison of representations of practices" (*The Light Inside,* p. 133, emphasis in the original). Hence the task he sets himself in the second part of *The Light Inside* is not to ask "whether Abakuá society objects are or are not 'art and philosophy.'"[13] What Brown wants to know is "what historically situated truth claims were made about and around [such] objects in order to constitute their particular status at a given moment [and] how individuals, groups, and institutions have appropriated things Abakuá ... in order to make cultural meaning and further local, national, and international agendas" (*The Light Inside,* p. 133).

This he proceeds to show in such stunning detail that a single example of his treatment of abakuá masking traditions and their iconography must suffice to render the flavor of his interpretations. Brown's discussion of the long-term Cuban resident Basque artist Victor Patricio Landaluze's depictions (published in 1881) of *íreme* (spirit-embodying dancers wearing a complexly patterned cloth body mask) thus makes no bones about the African derivation of the "saco de *íreme*." On one level of interpretation, Landaluze might well be said to have provided a visual record of a body mask of the Cross River type in Cuba more than thirty years before P. Amaury Talbot published a photograph of its "supposed" ancestor in southeastern Nigeria. But this is precisely the kind of reasoning Brown wants to circumvent and complicate, for the transformation of Landaluze's imagery into an icon of changing public meanings attached to abakuá (from menace to Cuban civilizational progress to valued African heritage, from symptom of criminal atavism to evidence of "African art and philosophy" in the Americas) took off from what was already, in almost every way, a deeply hybridized image. As a trained art historian, Brown has no trouble reading Landaluze's work as a visual transposition of European postural principles (ranging from classi-

13. An ironic echo of the subtitle of a book by Brown's mentor Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit* (1983).

cally Greek to Renaissance and Baroque themes) onto an Afro-Cuban subject matter (*The Light Inside,* pp. 133-44). What is "African" or "European" in the resulting image is hard to tell, and indeed perhaps beside the point. For given that Landaluze's "El Ñáñigo" lithograph is nowadays held to represent an original stage of "African" authenticity in Cuba, not just by scholars but by members of abakuá as well, would we even want to speak of syncretism here? And who would be its agent?

For Brown, it seems, the question itself is misguided. Rather than proceeding from postulated cultural source entities that supposedly come in contact with each other, and then generate mixtures, syncretisms, or more general states of hybridity and epistemic murk (as Homi Bhabha or Michael Taussig might put the matter in their own, more flamboyant ways), Brown sees his task as tracking the movements of single objects between and across fields of signification (whoever's culture they may be thought to constitute). And this is precisely his agenda in *Santería Enthroned*,[14] a magnificent and truly interdisciplinary book, in fact, perhaps several books in one. *Santería Enthroned* can be read as the first genuine social history, worthy of the name, of Afro-Cuban religion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a superb ethnography of forms of historical consciousness based on more than a decade of intermittent fieldwork in Cuba, a richly illustrated art-historical monograph, an eloquent testimony to the complexity of Caribbean cultures, and a searing challenge to methodology and theory in Afro-Atlantic studies. Organized around a central multivocal image of divine royalty, *Santería Enthroned* delineates a good century of changes in institutional structure, ritual practice, and iconographic form, carrying the reader through a series of minutely detailed episodes crucial to the formation of what we, today, know as *regla de ocha*.

In the process, Brown sweeps away a whole range of time-hallowed conceptions about the kind of organic processes that supposedly led to the implantation of originally African cultural forms in New World settings, and their gradual erosion (or, alternatively, retention) among the descendants of enslaved "bearers" of such African cultural forms. What emerges instead is nothing short of a radical revision of Afro-Cuban cultural history; for Brown, *regla de ocha* does not represent a diasporic specimen or variant of "Yoruba religion" (something that cannot be said to have existed in Africa even as late as the nineteenth century) that was imported whole-cloth by the thousands of enslaved Yoruba-speakers who reached Cuba in the first half of the nineteenth century. Rather, *regla de ocha* (and specifically the cult of Ifá) was literally cooked up, no earlier than in the last two decades of the nineteenth

14. The book is partly based on Brown's 1989 dissertation which even then was treated as a genuine contribution to theory in African American cultural history (e.g., Mintz & Price 1992:x), but to everyone's dismay remained under lock and key in the Yale library.

century, by fewer than a dozen Africans and their creole descendants living in or near the third *barrio* of the town of Regla, and it continued to undergo dramatic and contentious transformations throughout the first half of the twentieth century as it spread through western Cuba's provinces of Havana and Matanzas. What is more, while many of the founding figures are remembered today as reformers or rectifiers of traditions that had been incompletely transmitted, or become corrupted over time, when systematically correlated, such contemporary discourses, in fact, reveal exactly the opposite: most of the ancestral figures recalled in invocatory prayers (*moyuba*) today were crafty innovators who, in selectively drawing on heterogeneous cultural sources (some of which undoubtedly *were* of Yoruba provenance), did not just systematize and theologically rationalize a "religion" that had not existed as such before (whether in Africa or Cuba). Rather, they also strategically situated themselves in positions of authority and control over the dissemination of the knowledge and practices they had helped to institutionalize.

However, as Brown makes clear right from the start, reducing the case to a simple matter of the "invention of tradition" would equally miss the point: "though I may use the term 'innovation' in generally describing the accomplishments of particular historical actors," he writes in one of the few passages in the book where he seems to speak as both scholar and practitioner, "I apply the term 'reform' in specific cases to practitioners' historical consciousness and their modes of explanation," for in their view, "baseless and unauthorized changes disrespect the priestly deceased, the *egun*, who delivered tradition, upon whose shoulders we stand, and to whom we must answer" (*Santería Enthroned*, p. 11). And it is in following practitioners' own narrative constructions that Brown supersedes the sterile objectivism of the "invention of tradition" conceit. Obviously, discourses about origins and traditions, continuity or discontinuity, authenticity and illegitimacy inevitably express political positions and maneuver. However, the historical vision of contemporary practitioners acknowledges no less, revolving as it does around two ambivalently juxtaposed, and strategically activated, narrative constructions. As Brown puts it, one is

> a story of linear continuity with an authentic origin or primordial spiritual ground: the *tierra* (homeland) of the Yoruba of West Africa or an ancestral personage (*egun*), for example, or a Lucumí or creole who founded a *rama* (branch) of the Lucumí religion in Cuba. The other is a story about agency, struggle, discontinuity and heroic achievement. (*Santería Enthroned*, p. 77)

As far as the second storyline is concerned, Brown's oral historical research leaves no doubt that right from the beginning, struggles over the authorization of what could count as traditional were part of the very process out of which the tradition itself grew – and are remembered as such to this day. Perhaps as

early as the last decades of the nineteenth century, but certainly by the second decade of the twentieth, now famous priestly figures were forced to undergo reconsecration rituals in order to accommodate rival initiatory traditions that had begun to coalesce locally in Matanzas and Havana. By the mid-twentieth century, the emergence of a new priestly commission, that of the *obá oriaté*, had not only led to the emergence of what Brown calls two partly overlapping "ritual fields" (one centered on the orichas and another on the oracular deity Ifá/Orúnmila), but split practitioners along the lines of groups dominated by *babalawos* and others rejecting their claims to ultimate ritual and theological authority. At the same time, by the 1950s *babalawos* themselves began to engage in fierce struggles over the authority to control the crucial reproductive resource of the Olofin – a sacrum indispensable to the initiation of new *babalawos*, and therefore a key to the strategic building of hierarchical religious descent-lines (*ramas*) under the control of single senior priests.

Since Brown's research into the initiatory genealogies of Cuba's *babalawos* represents one of his most important contributions to a historical anthropology of Afro-Cuban religion, it is worth briefly expanding on the strange career of the Olofin. What Brown's findings indicate is that virtually all *babalawos* active in Cuba today trace their initiatory descent to five African *fundamentos* (founding figures)[15] active in the town of Regla in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Now according to the narrative tradition emphasizing continuity over disjunctures, some African-born *babalawos* carried their Olofin secrets to Cuba in the holds of slave ships (a topos repeated in stories about how enslaved *babalawos* tied their divining chains around their waists, or swallowed the consecrated palm nuts used in Ifá divination before embarking on the Middle Passage). In contradistinction, what Brown calls the "discontinuity/transformation cycle of diasporic narratives" posits the deliberate return of some *babalawos* to Africa and details their epic quest for this holy grail of Cuban *babalawos* (which, to my knowledge, lacks documentation in Africa so far), in order to create the conditions of possibility for the reproduction of the cult of Ifá in Cuba.[16] Yet however the Cuban Olofin tradition may have originated, its initial pace of dissemination was slow and linked to a mechanism of inheritance (by either biological offspring or ritual descendants of the original owner). By the first two decades of the twentieth century, a first and second generation of creole *babalawos* inaugu-

15. In contemporary parlance, the term *fundamento* can refer both to a human "founder" and to a ritual object that is "foundational" to religious practice.
16. Note here the ironic congruence of these two narratives with the ways in which twentieth-century scholars have modeled the cultural history of the African diaspora, for while the "former narrative coincides with the Herskovits diffusion school ...; the latter narrative resonates with the Mintz and Price school ... and the recent Black Atlantic work of Paul Gilroy" (*Santería Enthroned*, 80).

rated a pattern whereby strategic lending out of Olofin objects by the heads of emerging religious lineages (*ramas*) to junior *babalawos* aspiring to build up groups of religious dependents on their own became a political tool for senior Olofistas to control the members of their ritual descent groups. But it also quickened the pace of initiations. By the 1950s, however, the enterprising and (according to Brown's sources) ruthless third-generation *babalawo,* Miguel Febles y Padrón (1910-86), was to introduce dramatic changes into the pattern. Although new Olofíns had been "born" (as *babalawos* would put it) in Cuba before, Febles now began to mass manufacture and sell these objects. He also threatened and intimidated rivals who would dare to impugn the authenticity of his Olofin objects, or try to impede his monopolistic project of turning himself into the founding figure for literally hundreds if not thousands of *babalawos* active, by then, not only in Cuba, but in exile in the United States, Venezuela, Panama, and Mexico.

As a result, "the operative location of Olofin's 'authentic origin' shifted over time," as Brown sums up the bearing of these "stories" on any conception of Afro-Cuban religious history:

> In the beginning, as it were, Africans in Cuba saw Olofin's ultimate source as "West Africa," from which nineteenth century *babalawos* had embarked, and to which their agents are believed to have returned to reclaim Olofin's secrets. Then a small Havana collective of Lucumí founders and later, a short roster of early creoles, became the *proximate* or local "origin" of this jealously guarded *fundamento* ... After the 1950s, the "origin" of Olofin, for all intents and purposes, became sited in the *fundamento* of Miguel Febles. (*Santería Enthroned*, p. 90)

Yet this transatlantically shifting pattern of allocations of "origin" did not end here. For in 1975, in a move deliberately designed to thwart Febles's project of installing himself as the future *fons et origo* of Ifá in the New World, a group of disgruntled Miami *babalawos* headed by José Miguel Gómez Barberas flew to Nigeria, acquired what was represented to them as the equivalent of the Olofin, and later invited their Nigerian benefactor Ifá Yemí Eleguibon to officiate over the now autonomous initiation of new *babalawos* in Miami. Clearly, and much as in the case of the North American black Yoruba Reversionist Movement,[17] the shrewd maneuver by Gómez and his group to re-activate "Africa" as a viable chronotope of primordial authenticity and legitimacy constituted a major break with tradition, both in the sense

17. This movement emerged in the 1960s (after its founder had been initiated into *regla de ocha* in Cuba in 1958) and, around the same time, began to resort to similar strategies of turning southwestern Nigeria into a "source" they could tap into to sever the lines of ritual authority and deference that still bound them to their Cuban "elders" (*Santería Enthroned,* pp. 276-86; see also Palmié 1995).

of established practice, and with regard to the way that practitioners imagine a seamless flow of knowledge and practices through the conduit of the genealogical construct of the *ramas* of initiatory descent. However, as Brown is able to show, they did not, and perhaps could not, dispense with elements of the trope of linear continuity: constructing an arguably postmodern, but nonetheless highly traditional transatlantic spiritual genealogy, Gomez claimed that his Nigerian benefactor Yemí Eleguibon was the grandson of one of the four enslaved Africans who, in his view, installed the cult of Ifá in Cuba in the first place! Thus closing a circle of the diasporic imagination, these Miami *babalawos* not only emancipated themselves from their Cuban sources, but – in conflating suburban South Florida with a "Yorubaland" which they had been reading about since at least the 1930s – generated a continuity narrative harking back to those very enslaved African *fundamentos* in Cuba whose legitimatory capacity, to this day, cannot be called into question.

As this example shows, all representations of the past and becoming in contemporary Afro-Cuban religion are highly overdetermined composites – "marvelous hybrids" (*Santería Enthroned*, p. 288), to use Brown's phrase – whose internal tensions and productive potential are ill-captured by our attempts to sort out its constituent elements according to criteria which ultimately fail to do justice to the historicity of even our own constructions of Africa and Europe (e.g., Mudimbe 1988, Appiah 1992)! This, arguably, is the gist of the second half of Brown's book which he devotes to a painstaking analysis of the ritual iconography of contemporary *regla de ocha*. For the ideal of divine radiance that contemporary practitioners aim to achieve in the assemblages composing the thrones on which recent initiates display the splendor of the "palace of the obá Lucumí" is no less than such a marvelous hybrid – the result of long and complicated histories of strategic (or even just opportunistic) appropriation of heterogeneous symbols of prestige and grandeur into an ethno-esthetic that cannot be said to have preceded such processes of hybridization, but emerged from them, and presents their momentarily visible result. How else to reconcile a contemporary New Jersey thronemaker's predilection for the style of Louis XV ("in fact, all the Luises") with the fact that what he is creating is an iconic landscape explicitly gesturing toward both "Africa" and "Cuba" as points of reference? Or how to explain the long history during which an originally "Yoruba" model of containers of the sacred was transposed upon the ceramic forms provided by mass produced "French style" British soup tureens "trickling down" in their function as prestige goods from nineteenth-century grand bourgeois Cuban households to the *casas de santo* (cult groups of modern *regla de ocha*) forming at just about the same time? Indeed, "the possibility that priests could 'choose,' through purchase, the way their Ocha houses and ceremonies looked by selecting from an array of African and European trade goods, as well as from the mundane houseware shelves at the corner *bodega*, renders quite uninteresting any

essentialist argument for African origin as a determinant of any given dia-
sporic cultural arrangement." For ultimately, "the place of 'origin' of Cuban
Lucumí iconography belongs to the specific historical conjunctures, spaces,
and cultural and countercultural imaginations of the 'modern' Atlantic world"
(*Santería Enthroned*, p. 273) – a conceptual location, that is, which opens up
the possibility of tracking the historical *as well as* discursive movements of
"putatively stable and legitimating origins" as they shift between different
temporal and spatial registers (*Santería Enthroned,* p. 17).

In his discussions of all this – and more! – Brown goes so far beyond
the bounds of the theoretical literature on creolization or syncretism avail-
able today that one wonders if such conceptual abstractions really can deliver
the cargo we have long expected from them. At least in the Cuban case,
we now know that this is not so. We need a more differentiated database, a
more reflexive methodology, and a sharper focus on what exactly the people
whose agency we have become accustomed to subsume under such facile
labels intended to achieve, what, historically speaking, such agency amounted
to, and how its effects are retrospectively interpreted. Arguably, Brown has
advanced this goal in the context of a thoroughly documented case study far-
ther than anyone since the publication of Roger Bastide's *Les Religions Afro-
Brésiliennes* in 1960. And I don't think I could do any better than to cite his
own conclusions about the state of the field of inquiry I share with him and
the other authors of the books reviewed in this essay:

> Clearly, the study of Afro-Cuban religions deserves greater dialogue with
> the full range of Black Atlantic historiography, including studies that con-
> textualize black cultures in relation to national and Atlantic histories ...
> At the same time, I would not wish to see detailed local ethnographic,
> closely focused art historical and ethnohistorical inquiry fall by the way-
> side in such historical investigations. As scholars, we continue to labor
> under an extremely undeveloped ethnographic and chronological picture
> of the Afro-Cuban religious systems and their local variations. We have
> few biographies or close historical studies of Black Atlantic or African
> Diaspora religious or artistic practitioners ... No intensive ethnohistori-
> cal studies exist on the differences in practice among religious houses in
> Havana and Matanzas, within and among northeastern Brazilian cities in
> the Candomblé, or between Haitian regions in Vodou, let alone between
> practices in New York, Miami, and California. A growing number of self-
> reflexive ethnographic studies of Santería, Vodou, and Candomblé, which
> revolve around their authors' experiences in relation to these religions, are
> welcome, but do not always paint the kind of detailed historical picture
> most needed. (*Santería Enthroned*, p. 296)

Instead, Brown finds "much to be said for straightforward antiquarian stud-
ies of local religion" (p. 296) – and if *Santería Enthroned* were to repre-
sent such antiquarianism, I at least, would heartily concur. Brown's *Santería
Enthroned* has set a standard that will be hard for any of us to match – and

whether we regard our endeavors as "religious ethnographies" or "ethnographies of religion" may not matter much in this respect. More importantly, however, its ethnographic richness, conceptual power, theoretical subtlety, and sheer brilliance ought to earn it recognition well beyond the field of Afro-Atlantic studies.

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