

Liberty, equality, fraternity . . . scientifically absurd: determinism denies liberty, biology denies equality, and the principle of survival of the fittest, according to which all living beings exist, denies fraternity.

[Liberté, égalité, fraternité . . . scientifiquement absurde: Le déterminisme nie la liberté, la biologie nie l'égalité, et le principe de la lutte pour la vie, auquel sont soumis tous les êtres vivants, nie la fraternité.]

JOSÉ INGENIEROS

*La legislación du travail dans
la république argentine (1906)*

2

Social Science and the Negro Brujo

On November 14, 1904, *El Mundo*, Havana's conservative daily, reported the "mysterious disappearance of Zoila," a four-year-old white girl, from her home in El Gabriel, a small town outside of Havana.¹ Over the course of a year the newspaper devoted a great deal of space to the story. Eduardo Varela Zequeira, who reported the story and who would eventually build a career based on his coverage of racial issues, surmised that the child had been a victim of brujería. El Gabriel's increasingly alarmed and vocal residents demonstrated before the courthouse and police station, demanding a search of every household in the vicinity until the brujos were apprehended.

Suspicion settled on Pablo and Juana Tabares, a black couple living together, and on Domingo Bocourt, a former slave known for his participation in African-derived healing and religious practices. They were

detained briefly but released after questioning for lack of evidence. The same month a parallel case involving the death of Celia, another young girl, and the arrest of a man of African descent named Tin-Tan also occupied the front pages of the newspapers. About two weeks after Zoila's disappearance, the police found a body. A gruesome description of its alleged condition communicated in graphic detail the barbaric nature of the crime. A large portion of the torso and extremities were missing skin and flesh. Yet the feet were intact and still covered by shoes and socks. The heart had been extracted, according to forensic doctors, with a sharp instrument. After a lengthy investigation in which the number of accused grew to a dozen, the following story began to emerge. Bocourt was said to be the leader of a group of brujos who gathered regularly to enact rituals and healings. Juana Tabares, whose children suffered from ill health, had sought Bocourt's help, and because his remedy required the blood of a white child, he was said to have demanded that someone in the group kill one and bring him the corpse. At this point investigators had failed to pin down the actual murderer, although they suspected Victor Molina and another man of African descent, but they had confirmed (or so they claimed) the instigating role of brujería.

By January 1905 Bocourt and Victor Molina had received the death penalty for murder. They were executed amid a great deal of attention from the press in 1906. After the execution, their brains were sent to Professor Luis Montané at the University of Havana to be put on display at the Museo Antropológico Montané (renamed after him in 1903). There, they took their places alongside ñáñigo suits, ritual objects, and archaeological findings, adding to the collection of "criminal brains" examined by students of anthropology for morphological evidence of violent tendencies.

The Zoila case was the first of a series of sensational brujería scares that shook early republican Cuba. As this example suggests, the unfolding of events reverberated, beyond the families and towns most immediately affected, into courts of law and elite intellectual spheres. In the courts, both prosecutors and defendants exploited the contradictions arising from a changing legal system. Long investigations and trials tested the elusive boundaries among brujería, illicit association, and delinquency against changing notions of legal responsibility and new codifications of rights to freedom of religion and association. Social scientists drawing from anthropology, criminology, and sociology (disciplines also characterized by elusive boundaries at the time) took it upon themselves to understand and

explain the presence of what they perceived as aberrant practices among Cubans mostly of African descent. As such, these recurrent events and their repercussions reveal much about changing racial discourses in the first two decades of the Cuban republic.

The time and place in which the scares occurred bewildered observers. Brujería and its codified counterpart ñáñiguismo emerged as inherent but inexplicable features of a recently inaugurated inclusionary republic. As *El Día* noted: "Until after the triumph of the revolution blacks raised white children without eating or abusing them. The war has ended. . . . Cuba has been liberated from Spanish tutelage, legal equality and rights of all citizens have been recognized, and those people have begun to drink the blood of white girls, and even to martyrize their own daughters, under the impression that they are the tainted members of the family. Where is progress, then, where is civilization?"²

Mingling irony with incredulity, the author of this commentary pointed to the accusations against Cubans of color as curious manifestations of Cuba's experience of modernity and formal political democratization. The coexistence of a vibrant religious and social life of former slaves and their descendants along with an expanding political base created a context different from any in Europe or the Americas.³ At stake was proving to the rest of the world (and themselves) Cuban capacity for self-understanding and self-rule. Would the nascent republic survive independence from Spain and its adoption of universal manhood suffrage with the United States looking over its shoulder, ready to invoke the Platt Amendment at the first sign of "instability"? Cuban uncertainties about new political contours may have lent the campaigns against brujería an added urgency.

During the first two decades of the republic, Cubans of color continued to claim their place, not without conflict, as citizens. As Alejandro de la Fuente has shown, elections, both local and national, became intense contests over black and mulatto constituencies. Cubans of color themselves were elected as representatives of both parties, and although skeptics expressed doubts about the extent to which they represented "genuine black interests," their inclusion in public life marked a significant change. In addition to formal political participation, blacks and mulattoes benefited from educational campaigns and voiced their views in a number of arenas, including the proliferating press, both in mainstream and exclusively black newspapers. Neither contemporaries nor historians argue that Cubans of color achieved complete inclusion and equality, but an



"Until after the triumph of the revolution blacks raised white children without eating or abusing them." (*El Día*, September 6, 1918; 1900 photo courtesy of Cuban Heritage Collection, University of Miami Libraries, Coral Gables, Florida)

egalitarian nationalist ideology gave them a powerful tool with which to fight ongoing battles about desegregating public spaces and obtaining increased access to civil service positions.⁴

In light of these changes the presence of *brujería* and *ñañiguismo* seemed particularly vexing, especially since *brujería* had never before

been associated with murder and cannibalism.⁵ Many Cubans perceived these practices, which were cast as a manifestation of the "problem of race," as obstacles to the kind of republic they envisioned. As such, they inspired intense scrutiny and thought on the causes and remedies of the perceived civilizational malaise, taking on a significance that magnified their actual prevalence.

Rather than seeing these incidents as reflective of Cuban society as a whole (a somewhat misleading approach), this chapter instead focuses more precisely on racial discourses in three different contexts: the press, the courts, and social scientific arenas. Although these settings remain, for the purposes of clarity, distinct, I suggest that the process of constructing the *brujo* involved considerable seepage and overlap among them. The chapter thus seeks to elucidate the ways in which a series of mysterious crimes served as a catalyst for the *brujo* to be rendered an object of social scientific scrutiny, both boldly constructed and undermined in the press and contested through appeals to the law. Indeed, as Stephan Palmié has observed, the *brujo* and scientific knowledge constituted one another in the burst of discursive productivity that characterized the early republic.⁶ Narratives emphasizing the primitive or criminal nature of Cubans of African descent received sustenance from the changing conditions of an increasingly inclusive polity.

Reading the Brujo

The discussions that formed around the problem of black criminality easily slid into ongoing debates about Cuba's viability as a democracy, often expressed in racialized terms. Politicians and intellectuals on different sides of the ideological divide frequently conceived of problems and solutions based on the hereditary characteristics of the nation's inhabitants. Both Francisco Figueras, a politician whose writings, according to Aline Helg, "made a deep impression on Creole intellectuals and literate audiences and became a reference for other writers,"⁷ and Francisco Carrera y Justiz, whose course on municipal government became one of the most enduring at the University of Havana, published essays using race as the primary interpretive tool to diagnose the "social problem." Figueras's two most influential works, *Cuba y su evolución colonial* (*Cuba's Colonial Evolution*) (1907) and *La intervención y su política* (*The Politics of the Intervention*) (1906), argued that Cubans were racially incapable of forming an independent republic. From Spaniards they had inherited a propensity

for "education based on feelings" and an attachment to slavery. Africans had contributed lasciviousness and lack of foresight to the national character. In *La intervención y su política*, Figueras asserted that this backward and corrupt connection had fostered the 1906 rebellion—as much a racial revolt as a political one. The subsequent necessity for a U.S. occupation to establish peace and stability proved that Cubans were not ready for self-rule, that universal suffrage had been a mistake, that racial and cultural heterogeneity was a drawback, and that the solution was "pacific penetration" by American culture.⁸

Carrera y Justiz also envisioned a racial conflict as the root of Cuba's problems, but he translated the global and historical battle between the Anglo-Saxon and Latin races to the Cuban context. More optimistically than Figueras, he tracked the gradual but inevitable takeover of the Anglo-Saxon races with their superior rationality and state-building abilities. Yet, somewhat contradictorily, he argued that the Latin race could be fortified to struggle more effectively. This fortification was to take place at the level of municipal government, where a measure of autonomy allowed for the acquisition and honing of governing skills. In any case, whether due to total domination by Anglos or successful Latin resistance, his predictions posited enhanced racial vitality.⁹

The notion of race as the source of social ills shaped the ideas of an observer whose analysis diverged sharply from those of Figueras and Carrera y Justiz. For black commentator Dr. Emilio Céspedes Casado, addressing Havana's Booker T. Washington Society in 1906, Cuba's social problems derived from "unhealthy fomentation" between the races. The solution lay in education and social sanitation. Relying on the increasingly persuasive alignment of race and civilization, while at the same time inverting diagnoses that sought a North American cure, he blamed the U.S. intervention for Cuba's degenerating condition: "The odious Intervention introduced, along with its civilization, its barbarism and its narcissism."¹⁰ A wide array of visions of Cuba's future shared an assumption that racial vitality provided the key to the preservation of autonomy and self-government.

The intense journalistic attention to a series of violent crimes poured amorphous anxieties about race defined as Latin, African, or Anglo-Saxon, pure or mixed, degenerating or regenerating, into the figure of the black criminal. Reinaldo Román's research on this subject has uncovered well over three dozen cases reported in the press between 1904 and 1943. If Céspedes tried to convince his listeners that barbarism had been im-

ported from the United States, the press campaigns that brought *brujería* and *fiafiquismo* to a larger reading public construed them as a national problem.¹¹

As the first, the Zoila case set the tone for many that followed. The reporting was endlessly thorough, detailed, and repetitive. Long daily articles, always on the front page, summarized facts and speculations previously recounted and offered new evidence regardless of its relevance. Interviews with the family and acquaintances of the little girl filled columns when fresh information was unavailable. The stories also provided visual "evidence," including photographs of the family, of the discovered shoes, of the accused and their companions. When the trial began, its proceedings were diligently reported. By the time of the execution, readers were completely familiar with each stage of the case. As Román has argued, out of the interactions between journalistic and popular discourses about witchcraft emerged a genre of *brujería* stories and a new social type, the *brujo*. Regardless of the variations, the stories generally involved one or more black men, in some way associated with African-derived religious practices, attacking and/or murdering white children, usually girls, in order to collect their blood for ritual purposes. The accused *brujo*, depicted in stock fashion as a remorseless murderer driven by savage instincts, was proof of Varela Zequeira's observation that "amidst full liberty and democracy, these barbaric citizens are initiating cannibalistic practices."¹²

The gendering of the *brujo* as male marks a departure from earlier European and North American witchcraft scares, of which women were nearly always the target. Yet in the context of recently granted citizenship and universal male suffrage to black men, it is not so surprising that men of African descent drew upon themselves the attention and anxieties of those seeking to prove Cuban aptitude for democracy. Undoubtedly overdetermined, and encompassing other factors such as the importance of male sugar workers in Cuba's economy, the image of the black *brujo* desexualized the African male, thus denying any evidence of miscegenation, and made him instead an instrument of violence, in which nationalists found, according to Stephan Palmié, further evidence of the sins of the colonial fathers.¹³

One possible approach to the question of how widely these journalistic narratives were disseminated (always a thorny issue in examinations of print culture) involves looking at the role of literacy and printed materials in Cuban life. Some evidence suggests an attentive readership, a grow-

ing literacy rate, and an increasing volume of newsprint produced in the early years of the republic. Newspapers had been part of public life since the early eighteenth century, with the first printing press established in 1720. In the nineteenth century newspapers had proliferated despite (or perhaps because of) ongoing battles with Spanish censors. Many sectors, such as workers, black associations, and mutual aid societies, published their own newspapers and periodicals. During the wars for independence newspapers had proved a crucial way for exiles and supporters of the movement to communicate with one another.

In the early republic, the availability and appeal of newspapers grew as a result of changing material conditions. A tariff agreement resulted in the increased importation of paper for periodicals. Developments in technology made it easier to print photographs, perhaps rendering newspapers more attractive to readers. Between 1899 and 1907 the literacy rate rose by 13.4 percent.¹⁴ Moreover, since relatively few books were published at the time, the choices of reading material were limited.¹⁵ At least two major Havana newspapers, *El Mundo* and *Diario de la Marina*, reported the brujería scares.

Varela Zequeira must have assumed that he had captured a readership hungry not only for details but for analysis as well, for along with his diligent reporting of the facts, he explained the source of the problem.¹⁶ The murder was not an isolated instance of racial antagonism but rather a symptom of a deeply rooted historical and sociological malady, deriving from slavery, the original sin tainting Cuba's colonial past. Although he vacillated in his assessment of brujos' authenticity as religious leaders, claiming at times that they were nothing more than perverse and manipulative con men, he believed that an ignorant multitude, which was willing to believe in and practice brujería, was at the heart of the problem. "Slavery was a great sin," he wrote. "It left us our ignorant, nearly savage masses. The murder of Zoila was not meant as a punishment for whites, but it is one of the fruits borne by the tree so fatally sown by our predecessors. I refuse to see, nor do I want anyone to see, in the assassination of Zoila a proof of racial hatreds."¹⁷

Although Cuba had managed to eradicate many signs of its slaveholding, colonial past, Zequeira argued, this vestige lingered and was growing more threatening by the fact of its continuation into the present and its dissemination to masses recently included as citizens: "Brujería, with its sinister practices has unsettled the entire republic, and what was per-

ceived before as a ridiculous or absurd religion is now perceived as a terrible threat against our peace of mind. Brujería has reached alarming proportions. The rites and practices of brujos signal, at the very least, a threat to hygiene and a threat to morality."¹⁸ More than a singular event, Zoila signified corruption and pointed to the fragility of the republic.

The day of Bocourt and Molina's execution, Fernando Ortiz, a young man who would soon rise in intellectual circles, published his response to Zequeira's interpretation. In an article in *El Mundo*, Ortiz gave his view of the causes of the crime. Cubans looking for a clear condemnation of Bocourt and a commendation of the way the Cuban justice system had handled the crime would be disappointed. Ortiz situated himself above politics, with science; he sought scientific truth rather than moral judgment. It was a shame, he declared, that the brujo was going to be executed, because he would have been a valuable scientific specimen. Not only had he committed one of the most ferocious crimes known to Cubans, but also his African origins and his prominent role as a priest in the "barbaric cult, with a well-defined theology and an extensive, indisputable, if not fully solidified organizational structure," were significant characteristics that would have yielded much empirical evidence for the understudied phenomenon of brujería.¹⁹

Nonetheless, Ortiz offered a few criminological insights: first of all, since Bocourt was a fervent believer of his religion, his had been a crime motivated by altruism and goodwill. "When he convinced the others to assassinate Zoila," he wrote, "he did so believing that his act, although recognized as a crime, was perfectly moral and even altruistic, according to the ethical criteria he had brought from Africa and had clung to, due to an arrested moral development, something which is quite common amongst the inferior levels of our society." In marked contrast to Zequeira's imputation of inexplicable savagery, Ortiz claimed to uncover the logic and ethics of Bocourt's actions. If he had ordered the murder, knowing that he risked punishment by the authorities, he had done so because the intensity of his belief left him no choice. "If Bocú insisted on the necessity of the white child's blood, it was because his primitive sorcery and the tradition of his ancestors dictated it, and due to his own conviction in his beliefs and a sense of honor, he couldn't escape the primitive and antisocial aspects of his fanaticism."²⁰

Religious relativism informed Ortiz's account of the events: it was a matter of understanding a different but potentially valid set of religious

beliefs. He outlined briefly the mythological and theological bases for beliefs that had required, in the end, the shedding of a white child's blood. But his relativism did not extend to entire civilizations. It was precisely the possibility of civilizational evolution that was the source of the problem. Because Cuba was more advanced civilizationally than Africa, African religions were untenable in the Cuban context. A brujo was simply out of place in Cuba: "a respected person in Africa, who perhaps led his tribe according to the moral criteria compatible with their level of civilization, and a delinquent in Cuba for his inability to submit to the ethical norms that this society has established under the influence of its own social and ethnic components over the course of time." It was, ultimately, a problem of translation: "It would be more appropriate to say that in the course of being taken from Africa to Cuba, it was society itself that jumped forward, leaving him and his compatriots in the deepest savagery, in the first stages of psychic evolution . . . they are savages brought to a civilized country."²¹

Ortiz relied on established European and Latin American anthropologists and criminologists, including Armand Corre, Nina Rodrigues, Girard de Rialle, and E. B. Tylor, to validate his theory of the altruistic brujo. The ideas of Italian criminologist Césaire Lombroso, with whom Ortiz had studied in Italy, figured prominently in the Cuban's evaluation of the kind of crime disturbing the new republic. Ortiz believed that two of Lombroso's explanations of crime and criminal typologies were applicable to Cuba. Lombroso held, on the one hand, that criminals were atavistic throwbacks to a primitive state, and as such they had underdeveloped or underevolved moral sentiments. They committed crimes because their sense of morality simply did not fit that of the more civilized society around them. On the other hand, entire races that were less evolved could be prone to crime and delinquency. This was true, for example, of the gypsies, which he deemed a race. Ortiz drew from both claims and combined the theory of atavism with the notion of delinquent races. It was not that these individuals had been thrust backward by an accident of birth, but rather that they had been transferred to an environment pushed forward by the accident of progress.²²

In contrast to Zequeira, Ortiz was more optimistic about the state of Cuban civilization. Although brujería still posed a very real threat, he maintained, it had only become a problem because of its dissonance with Cuba's generally civilized condition. The emphasis, for Ortiz, was on the

disorientation of criminals rather than on the fragility of the republic. His rendition of the problem erased the contradiction between claims about Cuba's modernity and the brujos' presence as a manifestation of backwardness. They were not opposing forces but rather proofs of one another's existence. It was only because Cuba had made so much progress that brujería seemed so out of place. Only the tools of modern science could provide a clear view of the problem.²³

Yet the brujos' presence required investigation and self-scrutiny: How was it that these savages still existed in such a civilized society? What must Cubans do to ensure that this kind of parasitism did not continue to reproduce itself? First, they must study the problem objectively and scientifically, and then they must respond, following the recommendations of Enrico Ferri, another Italian criminologist, not with repressive measures but through prevention. "Let us not be so primitive," he wrote, "as to be satisfied with the meaningless death of Bocú, but rather let us consider the criminal brujería that is corrupting our society with objective observation and cold serenity, and let us understand that repressive measures will not do enough to eliminate such a complex phenomenon, and that we ought to adopt wide-ranging, methodical and long-term preventive measures, of the type that Ferri called 'penal substitutes.'"²⁴

The press, having constructed the notion of the demonic brujo, provided the space in which Ortiz could reinterpret the problem. He had transformed the worrisome proliferation of ritual murder and cannibalism into evidence of Cuban progress. In addition, his work contributed to European science. At the end of his article, Ortiz announced that Bocourt was such an ideal specimen of what his mentor called a "criminal nato," or born criminal, that the Italian criminologist had requested a photograph for his renowned Archivio di Psichiatria (Archives of Psychiatry) in Turin. In a neatly self-promoting move, Ortiz had created a long-lasting mandate for himself and anyone who cared to join him in the pursuit of "objective observation," as well as a market for his soon-to-be-published study of what he called "criminal ethnology."

Los negros brujos

In 1906 Fernando Ortiz was a relatively unknown lawyer. He had studied at the University of Havana between 1896 and 1898 and traveled to Spain afterward, returning to Cuba in 1902. In 1903 he had received a de-

gree in civil law; his thesis was entitled "On the Reorganization of the Police as Necessary to the Administration of Criminal Justice."²⁵ By 1904 he was in Genoa, Italy, serving as Cuban consul. He had published a few brief articles introducing the field of criminology to Cuban readers in *Azul y Rojo*, a journal directed by the well-known intellectual Raimundo Cabrera, who later became his father-in-law.²⁶ Although Ortiz was out of the country when the Zoila case obsessed the press and the public, he seems to have followed it from afar. Not long after the story broke, he had apparently begun the research on which he would base *La hampa afro-cubana: Los negros brujos (apuntes para un estudio de etnología criminal)* (1906) (hereafter cited as *Los negros brujos*), the book that became the canonical disquisition of the Cuban *hampa*, or underworld.²⁷

The book is an expanded version of the article Ortiz published the day of Bocourt and Molina's execution, formulating as its principal task the scientific study of the causes and manifestations of the Cuban nexus between race, religion, and crime. Yet, beyond the argument, the book's significance lies in its novelty of form and genre. In between Europe and Cuba, criminology and ethnology, textual and empirical bases of knowledge, *Los negros brujos* was a new kind of book for Cuban readers, turning a sensational series of events into the raw materials of a learned, original, and (in the author's eyes) redemptive social analysis that placed Cuba on the map of modern nations plagued by similar ills. At the same time it launched Ortiz's remarkable career as a translator of people, practices, ideas, and texts.

In a book crammed with footnotes citing European intellectual heavyweights such as E. B. Tylor, A. B. Ellis, James Frazer, Emile Durkheim, and the recently published Marcel Mauss on magic, as well as references to Spanish criminologist Rafael Salillas on lowlife ("la mala vida") in Madrid and Napoli, Ortiz marshaled evidence both to draw parallels to the European phenomenon of *brujería* and to make a case for Cuban exceptionalism. As social scientists were beginning to discover, flourishing lowlife was a phenomenon that disrupted many European capitals. Because of the country's ethnic makeup, however, Cuba's lowlife was unique. Europeans did not need to account for the effects of importing African slaves into the mix.

Even while the book is based on the effect of race on criminality and delinquency, it rests on several different and potentially contradictory notions of race. The first chapter, which examines the emergence of Cuba's underworld, concludes with a fluid conception of race and its

effect on cultural change: "Ethnicity is the fundamental factor," Ortiz theorized,

and it not only produced delinquent milieus particular to each race, in addition, by contributing their specific vices to 'low life' in general, a common criminal milieu was created out of the fusion of diverse psychologies, a layer which constituted and constitutes the nucleus of our delinquent strata . . . due to the mutual influence each race exercised upon the other, the black race acquired an impulse toward progress, which continues to develop . . . and the white race has Africanized its criminal class.²⁸

But the descriptions and analyses that occupy most of the book drop this fluid notion for a catalog of inherited traditional practices and psychological characteristics not responsive to external influences. In some ways the conflict between these different notions of race stems from the problem of time and where to place Africans within it. Were they to be viewed through a historical lens as participants in the stream of change, beginning with their presence in Cuba in the sixteenth century, or were they to be placed, after the fashion of much early-twentieth-century ethnography, in a timeless vacuum, existing in the present but perpetually primitive?²⁹

A mixed methodology produced a number of different conclusions. Although Lombroso and his hereditary, morphological criminal anthropology is the proclaimed godfather of the book, Ortiz filled his chapters, not with the expected physiognomic descriptions and comparisons but with detailed descriptions of *brujos*' belief system, of their rituals, of clothing and objects used, of their social organization, of their place in society, and of their language, including specific words, incantations, names and nicknames.

Ortiz did invoke Lombroso and his theory of the criminal as a "throwback" to a primitive state to explain recent and particularly violent manifestations of *brujería* as the acts of a few aberrant criminals not at all representative of a cultural milieu. Thus he wrote in one section that the Zoila case was an exception in the history of Cuban *brujería*: "Recently all of Cuban society was upset by a horrible crime: by the assassination of a white girl, committed by *brujos* . . . because in reality, a similar case had not occurred, or at least had not been heard of, since the time of slavery."³⁰ Elsewhere, his reliance on more "cultural" explanations led to a view of *brujería* as a long-standing, widespread problem: "The crime

has surprised us, more because it has exposed the cancerous fanaticism that corrupts ignorant masses of our nation than for the criminality revealed by its individual authors."³¹

Once he had introduced this array of interpretations, Ortiz altered his voice from synthesizer of ethnological and sociological material to reporter of contemporary, local phenomenon. An entire chapter lists excerpts from newspaper clippings that report incidents of *brujería* between 1902 and 1906. Notably, given the overwhelming dominance of stories on child murders after 1906, these pages ascribe a wide range of behaviors to *brujería*. The excerpts detail healing and ritual practices, describe many gatherings from which telling objects were seized, and in one case recount the extraction of a black cat from a woman's belly. Only one of these accounts involved the abduction of a child (apart from Zoila's, some of which is reproduced in the chapter), and it was one of the least persuasively reported. This suggests that the later obsession with child murders did indeed emerge in the twentieth century and that the case of Zoila was perhaps the template for many others.

Several themes unify the book. A critique of Spain underlies the discussion of religion. Throughout, Ortiz insists on parallels and interrelationships between the animist religious system he attributes to the *brujos* and the superstitious practices of Spanish Catholics. Not only are the differences between Catholicism and animistic religions a matter of degree rather than type, but also the history of slavery in Cuba entailed an interaction between African and Catholic religions. Thus the emergent practices and their tendency toward criminality ought to be seen as a syncretic mix.³²

His proposals for the elimination of *brujería*, imbued with faith in science and modernization, are also tinged with a critique of Spanish backwardness (as well as the more obvious African primitiveness). First, following the precepts of positivist criminology, the *brujo* must be studied as a type. Merely focusing on the crime—the approach of classical criminology—would deliver only a partial solution. Yet what precisely Ortiz's solution entails is never clear. The book closes with a deep ambiguity. Powerful rhetoric obfuscates poorly developed proposals for “the defensive battle” ahead:

The first step in the defensive battle against *brujería* must be to eliminate the *brujos*, isolate them from their followers, like those stricken with yellow fever, because *brujería* is essentially contagious.

... Once those charlatans have disappeared, once their celebrations, dances and savage rites are gone, their temples destroyed, their impotent gods confiscated, all the tentacles of *brujería* that tie its believers to the barbaric underbelly of our society severed, then those believers will be able to begin to relieve their not-yet-de-Africanized minds from the weight of chaotic superstition and rise to more elevated levels of culture.³³

Los negros brujos was a transatlantic endeavor, materially as well as substantively. The production of knowledge in this instance involved the literal transportation of sources and ideas. Since Ortiz was in Italy when the Zoila case broke and while he wrote the book, he relied on informants and correspondents for information. Along with the newspaper clippings sent to him in Europe as the case unfolded, his files contain correspondence, received just as he was drafting *Los negros brujos*, with detailed reports of *brujería*. Written by Emiliano Gato, police chief of the small Cuban town of Palos, and Miguel Talleda, police officer from the town of Abreus, these letters provide descriptions of rituals, translations of words and phrases, and accounts of local incidents.³⁴ Ortiz thus relied on the police, who, continuing the tradition begun by the Havana Detective Bureau in 1900,³⁵ of close observation and description, translated practice into text for an emerging social scientific view of “the problem of race.” The police reports would become an important source not just for social science, but for legal decisions as well.³⁶ Ortiz molded his informants' reports with theoretical tools acquired in Europe and produced a newly packaged vision of Cuban lowlife. His thorough and reassuringly scientific text, first published in Madrid, traveled back to Cuba, where it was consumed and digested by an eager public.

From July to November, reviews of *Los negros brujos* appeared in major Havana newspapers across political and ideological spectrums. Though their assessments varied, most authors insisted that their criticisms should not detract from the importance of the contribution Ortiz had made. They shared an acceptance of his premises that combined despair with optimism as to Cuba's place in the world. They also charted and contributed to Ortiz's rise to prominence in public life.

In *El Mundo*, M. Muñoz-Bustamante dubbed Ortiz “The Main *Brujo* of the Republic,” noting with admiration his linguistic skills, his qualifications as lawyer and sociologist, the amount of work involved in producing so well grounded a book, and the attention the book and author had

ceived from Lombroso. All these elements had been brought together for Cuba's benefit: "A psychologist like Dr. Ortiz put his finger on the sore and quickly found the source of superstition and criminality. It is true that we did not have extraordinary delinquents, but we did have in brujos and ñaños two centers of abominable machinations, two sites of conspiracy against progress. From this Dr. Ortiz derived his subject for this book."³⁷

A review by Ruy Díaz in *El Comercio* began with praise but used a considerable amount of space to criticize Ortiz, taking issue mostly with his research methods: in reference to Ortiz's use of "street rumors" and articles taken from *La Discusión*, Díaz complained that "many of his observations are based on data compiled with unforgivable superficiality." Even so, these were quibbles among professionals and should not "subtract a bit of glory from the learned youngster."³⁸ An anonymous reviewer for *Diario de la Familia* admitted that he had not read the book but nonetheless commended the author, whose stature as an intellectual, he asserted, so exceeded the average that usual words of praise would not suffice: "We must find new adjectives for men of Dr. Ortiz's moral and intellectual stature."³⁹ In *La Discusión*, Jesús Castellanos expressed ambivalence about Ortiz's findings, even as he insisted on their importance as "a central contribution to modern anthropology" and on Ortiz's role as a public intellectual.⁴⁰

A final review in *La Unión Española*, by José Aguirre, took issue on partisan and consequently pro-Spanish grounds. Challenging Ortiz's critique of Spanish religious and slaveholding practices, Aguirre argued that the colonial administration was better able to control ñañiguismo and brujería, and that brujería had reemerged so pervasively because of the new regime's inability to control the populace. This position renders more understandable the insistence of Ortiz and other Liberals that the Cuban republic was a modern, progressive polity. On the other hand, Aguirre maintained that Ortiz "has already contributed and will continue to contribute incalculable services to our society, exposing those repulsive social wounds, so that they can be cauterized according to the prescriptions of modern science."⁴¹ The growing hegemony of science as the anodyne to social ills is evident here, especially in light of Aguirre's and Ortiz's disagreement on the sources of those maladies.

News of the book's publication traveled back to Europe, where Lombroso, who had already contributed a laudatory preface, and Max Nordau, the author of *Degeneration*, reviewed it favorably. Sociologist and

criminologist Alfredo Nicéforo, a professor at the University of Brussels, cited evidence from the book in his article on human sacrifice appearing in a Trieste daily, *Il Piccolo della Sera*. Soon afterward, *Avanti*, a criminology journal directed by Enrico Ferri, published his review of *Los negros brujos* entitled "Triumph of a Cuban." Translated in *El Mundo* in October 1906, it emphasized to Cuban readers Ortiz's growing status abroad and the importance of his contribution to the European study of "superstitious masses."⁴²

Of Rights and Rituals

Despite its endurance in the press and its influence in the social sciences, brujería did not fare so well in the courts. Between 1904 and 1923, according to Ernesto Chávez Alvarez, eight cases of men of African descent accused of murdering white children (including Zoila) were prosecuted, each of them reported sensationally in the press. In three of the cases, "el niño Onelio" (1915), "el niño Marcelino" (1919), and "la niña Cuca" (1922), the suspects were released upon discovery of plots to frame them. In three more, the charges were dropped for lack of evidence. The accused in the seventh case, "la niña Cecilia" (1919), were killed by the military amid a lynching attempt. Zoila's, then, was the only case in which the accused were found guilty and executed.⁴³

Since there was no law against brujería, attempts at conviction were thwarted by claims about rights or simply the requirements of evidence, indicating a measure of autonomy of the legal sphere despite the pervasiveness of social scientific discourses.⁴⁴ The example of three other cases in which the defendants were accused of brujería (under the rubric of illicit association) suggests an inconsistency in the power of ritual objects as irrefutable grounds for conviction. In 1906 a woman was accused of "rendering another's faculties useless" after police received an anonymous letter accusing her of practicing brujería. In 1915 Paulina Alsina and eleven others were apprehended with their objects (*piezas de convicción*) and accused of illicit association. In 1916 twenty-four individuals from Regla were taken into custody on similar charges. All were dismissed for lack of evidence.⁴⁵

Constitutional rights were central in the 1919 trial of Narcisa Allones Montalvo, Belén González, and Vicenta de la Paz for illicit association. In this case the prestige of science was challenged by the logic of the constitution. Both Fernando Ortiz and Luis Montané appeared as expert

witnesses for the prosecution "to provide information as to the purpose the confiscated objects serve in rituals of *brujería*." Invoking the freedoms of "religion and cults," defense lawyer Angel Larrinaga rejected the claim that possession of the objects in itself was a crime. As the trial records end before the final hearing, the outcome remains unknown.⁴⁶

A rare instance in which the records are complete through inquiry and appeals affords a glimpse at the ways the social sciences and the legal system interacted. A case against Quirino Montalvo Marty, Diego Ozeguera Rodríguez, Faustino Pino, and Manuel Rente González (all "black" according to the court records) for illicit association in 1913 reveals continuing battles over the legal definition of *ñáñiguismo* and the theoretical relationships between race and crime. It also clearly demonstrates the perceived importance and role of ethnographic knowledge gathered by law enforcement officials.⁴⁷ In what by that time must have been routine procedure, the police gathered objects when they seized the four men. The objects included "a bell named *Encárnica*, four wooden and two metal candlesticks, four complete *diablito* suits of different colors, three hats for those suits stamped with the symbol of said association, a pair of shoes, a large drum, named Bongo, another named *Ecué*, another of the order, another bearing the name of *Eribo*, and two more whose names are unknown." Despite the suspects' not-guilty pleas, these items were enough evidence for the judge conducting the preliminary hearing to determine that the accused ought to be detained and tried.⁴⁸

But the judge wanted to know the relationship of the objects to each other and to the accused. He ordered the secret police to conduct an investigation to ascertain whether the accused were indeed *ñáñigos*, to what association they belonged, and whether its practices and rituals, especially those "not considered scientific," included healing.⁴⁹

The initial findings of detectives Amador Prío Rivas and Juan González, assistants to Lieutenant Inchaustegui, must have disappointed the judge, for they underscored the absence of real grounds for conviction. Prío Rivas stated that although it was a known fact that there were at least fifteen *ñáñigo* organizations in Havana, their vows of secrecy made it almost impossible to gather any information about them. He could only state that he had discovered that one of the accused, Diego Ozeguera, did indeed live at the address he had given and that the other suspects had met there on several occasions. He noted that when one of their members had been killed, *ñáñigos* customarily gathered at the house of the deceased and conducted "barbaric ceremonies" that concluded with vows

of vengeance and silence. These ongoing feuds were rampant in Havana, he claimed, especially recently when *ñáñiguismo* had been reorganized by "those people addicted to its institutions." It was precisely due to their vows of secrecy that the police were constantly frustrated. With this Rivas created a nonfalsifiable proposition that denied the accused the possibility of self-defense and afforded the police a slippery but potentially powerful tool.⁵⁰

For detective Juan González, it seemed enough to point out that all members of the association were "black," doing so twice, as he denied that they engaged in healing practices and could only state with assurance that they played dominoes at the gatherings, undoubtedly, in his eyes, a pretext for other activities.⁵¹ In his summary of the case thus far, Judge Ponce declared that the men had been arrested as a result of an investigation ordered by the chief of the National Police, that they were accused of "various crimes" for the moment unnamed because of the *ñáñigo* vow of silence, and that they would remain in custody and await trial for illicit association: "Several crimes have gone unpunished, or rather, uninvestigated, for it is the duty of a member of a group of *ñáñigos* to withhold information about any crime . . . that these events reveal the criminal qualities of illicit association suggests good reason to deem those accused responsible for the acts."⁵²

The question of what the offenders had actually done became the principal issue for both defense and prosecution. Pedro Herrera Soto-longo, a lawyer defending Quirino Montalvo y Martí, claimed his client's innocence on the grounds that "the presumption of guilt is not punishable." He insisted that the law against illicit association was an outdated relic of colonial times: "The crimes attributed to secret societies in the colonial era were real political crimes which had to be attributed to someone."⁵³

In Prío Rivas's report, he admitted that he had failed to "investigate the issues as laid out in said order" as they had been defined. Refusing to give up simply because he could not specify what the accused had done, he used the opportunity to submit a report about "practices, beliefs, ceremonies and aims" of the *ñáñigos*, foreshadowing the Ortiz of a decade later who would seek to describe the very same things. He characterized his subject as "wrapped in the most impenetrable mystery" until recently, when it was forced into the public eye as a result of "the tolerance of said groups due to political issues." The credibility and authenticity of his material, he asserted, as if to stave off accusations of its fabrication, derived from interviews with "persons intimately related to said associa-

tion." Placing the origins of *ñañiguismo* in the regime of Tacón, a notoriously repressive Capitán General who ruled Cuba from 1834 to 1838, the policeman traced the history of early associations, linking the most intense conflicts between different groups of *ñañigos* with changes in the racial makeup of the associations. All of the original groups had been of African descent, and it was when the first white groups organized that they began the homicidal feuding for which *ñañigos* were most infamous in contemporary times. Prío Rivas rendered a detailed account of the initiation ceremony and burial rites, including the phrases used during these rituals, some of which are translated (although the original language is never provided), followed by a reiteration of his nonfalsifiable theory of the vow of silence, this time buttressed by concrete information on how these vows were made and under what circumstances. He closed with a critique of the constitutional freedoms that had allowed *ñañiguismo* to flourish after being nearly wiped out under the final Spanish administration, as well as of José Miguel Gómez's permissive liberal regime that also failed to condemn *ñañiguismo*, if not encouraging it outright. Thus he managed to mingle a historical, ethnographic, and political account of the practice, even as he underscored the secrecy that surrounded it, constructing himself as an irrefutable authority at the court's disposal.⁵⁴

The case records also include a report submitted by Luis Sánchez, sub-inspector of the secret police, that deals more directly with the relationship between race and crime. It begins, unlike Prío Rivas's, by naming the members of the association under investigation and providing as many facts about them as possible. Foremost is their identification as "black," followed by the observation that many were *stevedores*. But for Sánchez their racial identification was ultimately the most incriminating piece of evidence: "Most of these individuals are or have been *stevedores* and are friendly amongst themselves, so that they are joined by ties of race, of *ñañiguismo*, in short, by all that is illicit."⁵⁵

The accumulated information in these reports proved incriminating enough to send the case to the Audiencia (*sala tercera de lo criminal*) for an oral hearing with a recommendation of imprisonment for one year, eight months, and twenty-one days. An apparently skillful defense—Juan Lata-pier (who had represented Domingo Bocourt and was Cuba's first non-white lawyer) represented Manuel Rente González, Herrera Sotolongo represented Quirino Montalvo Marty and Diego Ozeguera Rodríguez, and Antonio García Hernández represented Faustino Pino—resulted in a reduced sentence. The four defendants were convicted of illicit asso-

ciation as stated in articles 186 and 187 of the penal code. But since the investigation had failed to reveal the names of the directors and founders of the association, the court could only convict them for participating as members of their association, thus reducing the sentence to four months.

Perhaps the success (however limited) of the defense impelled Herrera Sotolongo to attempt an appeal. Herrera framed his motion with an eye to exploiting the conflicts between a Spanish penal code adopted in the colonial era and a Cuban constitution granting individual rights. He argued that the 1901 constitution's provisions guaranteeing freedom of association and freedom of religion ought to override two of the laws used to convict: Article 849 ("article regulating criteria for conviction") and the decree issued by the governor general in 1876. Although his appeal was technically procedural, the language with which he stated his case reveals that he was aiming at the moral implications of the law against association:

From this may be deduced two things: either that the association is illicit for pursuing ends contrary to public morals, or it is illicit because they gather in order to commit crimes. We argue that neither of these reasons holds . . . *ñañigos*, though they may dress in diablo garb and dance to the sound of their drums, are not bad people . . . it is true, these *ñañigos* gather for their dances and their religious ceremonies. There is no crime in their activities. There is no clear description, in the sentence, of the ways in which they offend public morals and society at large. With regards to the most grave offense, that they gather in order to DEFEND THEMSELVES, and to seek vengeance for the offenses committed against them, this is not only a puerile accusation, it is in effect not a crime, because defending oneself against aggression is not considered criminal behavior.⁵⁶

The appeal was denied on the grounds that the conviction had been based solely on the law against illicit association in the penal code, not article 849 or the governor's decree, as Herrera had suggested. Although the appeal failed, the lawyer was able to use the questions raised by the adoption of the 1901 constitution to make his plea heard, not only for the primacy of rights, but also for the unfairness and bias of the definition of illicit association. That the judge settled the case while ignoring the question of the rights to freedom of religion and association indicates that changing legal definitions of permissible religious and associational practices opened significant ambiguities potentially exploitable by both

sides. Years before, in defense of Domingo Bocourt, Juan Latapier had also appealed to the Supreme Court. Latapier's appeals had been based on claims that brujos were not in possession of their faculties and therefore should not be held responsible for their crimes. The use of that argument suggests the rapidity with which Latapier integrated recent criminological debates over free will and responsibility into the Cuban context. But the introduction of a new theory of criminal responsibility backfired, perhaps, for Latapier's clients received harsher penalties as a result of the appeals.⁵⁷

Intellectuals Energized

The troubles of *brujería's* prosecutors in the courts did not dampen social scientific enthusiasm for investigating its implications. The problem of delinquency seems in fact to have encouraged Cuban intellectuals to take broad steps to resolve the dilemmas of modernity. Ortiz's success at collecting ideas and materials from different parts of the world in order to shed light on a problem perceived as uniquely Cuban preceded, and probably provided the impetus for, a burst of intellectual activity focused on what was referred to as "the social question." His engagement with a number of social scientific currents of thought from Europe and Latin America (while defying Spanish intellectual dominance) and his intimations of hope for the future of the Cuban republic must have appealed to Cuban men of science and letters, already poised for their ascent to prominence. Both as members of academe and as contributors and editors of a number of new journals, these men pursued the questions Ortiz had raised about race, science, and social reform. Within this context a strong belief in the application of positivist and scientific approaches to social problems took hold.

The University of Havana provided one home for the emerging field of criminal anthropology. After the Department of Anthropology was established in 1900, Luis Montané taught two versions of a course on anthropology. Revealing the fluidity and expansiveness characteristic of the "science of man" at the time, as well as his own cosmopolitan approach to learning, Montané drew from a number of traditions in constructing his course syllabi.

His first course on criminal anthropology for the law school focused on the application of anthropology to penal law. The prominence of measurement and analysis of the skull and brain in the course descrip-

tion points to the influence of what Stephen J. Gould has called "the allure of numbers."⁵⁸ Leading his students through the complexities of "craneology: notions of craneo-cerebral topography; craneometry: cranial capacity measured over time by way of different contemporary races; craneography: pathological and ethnic deformities," he impressed on them the importance of measurable manifestations of criminality. He also included a section on anthropometric exercises, taking advantage of the instruments for skull and bone measurement donated by the Americans when they established the department. Assigned texts were exclusively in French, in accordance with his training. Students initially read French anthropologists Paul Broca, Paul Topinard, and Armand Quatrefages, although by the second year they had begun to study the work of Italian criminologist Césaire Lombroso as well. The program for students in the School of the Sciences and Pedagogy had a more evolutionary focus. Montané covered the "evolution of civilizations," the prehistories of the Americas in general and Cuba in particular, and the "formation and classification of human races, with an examination of ethnic characteristics."⁵⁹

By 1906 a university reform formalized the distinction between anthropology for law students and for students of the arts and sciences, creating a professorship of juridical anthropology and one of general anthropology.⁶⁰ The changes in juridical anthropology favored a more positivist approach, with new sections on anthropometric and dactiloscopic identification and the application of those methods to the law. Subsections on "civil status from the medico-legal point of view" reveal a striking mix of medical, psychiatric, ethnographic, and legal categories: "Birth: evolution of the human family. Pregnancy. Sex. Monstrous births. Marriage. Puberty. Divorce. Consanguinity. Dementia. Impotence. On Death: evolution of the cult of the dead. Questions related to cremation." Law students also took field trips to Havana's prison and mental asylum so they might better understand Lombrosian doctrine, as well as study the individual characteristics of delinquents.⁶¹

Montané, recently returned from the 1906 Congress on Criminal Anthropology in Turin, Italy, exposed students to debates in the literature. By adding the works of Gabriel de Tardé, Juan Vucetich, Alexandre Lacasagne, Lombroso, and Ferri to the reading list, he presented the discussion of criminal responsibility preoccupying the French school, represented among others by Lacasagne, who challenged Lombroso's notion of the "born criminal" with his emphasis on the sociological origins of

crime.⁶² These debates received a good deal of attention in Europe and would come to play a role in the Cuban judicial system. At stake was the extent to which criminals could be held responsible for their actions, gauged by contrasting characterizations of humans responding to free will or bound by determinism. In the Cuban context, this was a question often posed of accused brujos and ñañigos.

The content of this course remained the same until at least 1940. For the duration of Montané's tenure, until he retired in 1919, the only differences were additions in the techniques of policing, from hands-on skills like dealing with cadavers to lectures on the psychology of criminals. When Aristides Mestre took over the professorship after Montané's departure, he retained most of the curriculum. Mestre did alter it slightly, however, adding a section on "brujería, ñañiguismo y criminalidad" and thereby institutionalizing the tropes that had been circulating in the press and various publications since 1906. In an address to the Sixth Latin American Medical Congress in 1923, later published in the University of Havana's *Revista de Facultad de Letras y Ciencias*, Mestre laid out his thoughts on the persistence of what he called "Afro-Cuban criminality." He reiterated most of Ortiz's ideas, insisting on the continuing relevance of his analysis. A child murder reported only the previous year demonstrated the persistence of the problem originally brought to light with the death of Zoila. Although Mestre described Afro-Cuban religiosity with more sophistication than Varela Zequeira, his conclusions were similar: "What I have described of the Afro-Cuban brujo, who with good reason has been considered one of the most repugnant and harmful social types in Cuba, illustrates the criminological problem to which his superstitions gave rise."⁶³

Outside of the university, prominent Liberal intellectuals including Ortiz, Diego Tamayo, Raimundo Cabrera, Enrique Garrido, and Orestes Ferrara sponsored and contributed to several new journals, founded mostly between 1906 and 1909. Together, *Reforma Social*, *Derecho y Sociología*, *Vida Nueva*, *Azul y Rojo*, *Cuba y América*, and *Revista Bimestre Cubana* created forums in which the social sciences were called upon to diagnose and heal social problems. The ambition with which they conceived of their task is evident in the subtitle of *Derecho y Sociología* (Law and Sociology): it stated that the journal would include articles on "jurisprudence, anthropology, biology, history, philosophy, ethics, political economy, and sociology." Indeed, all of the journals did address such a wide range of topics that they defy categorization. Yet an examination of their contents

reveals a recurrent set of broader themes: delinquency, public health, the role of the state in reform, and the modernity of Cuba compared with Europe, the United States, and Latin America. They also indicate a concern for keeping abreast of intellectual activity in those places, including articles by Argentine sociologist José Ingenieros, Mexican educator José Vasconcelos, and Uruguayan essayist Enrique Rodó, and reporting the proceedings of various international scientific congresses.

The editors of these journals worked principally in the fields of law and medicine, though, as evident in *Derecho y Sociología's* subtitle, they delved into other social sciences as deemed necessary. The history of book publication in this period also suggests a burgeoning interest and growing readership in law and medicine. Between 1917 and 1924, from a total of 731 books published, although 197 were works of poetry, 139 volumes were on law, 132 on medicine, and 110 on Cuban history.⁶⁴ Lawyers and doctors, some of them already political leaders, formed part of the intellectual elite as well. This group seemed to monopolize the task of interpreting Cuba's social and demographic changes. In 1914, during Conservative Mario Menocal's regime, Orestes Ferrara, Ortiz, and Dr. Jorge Le Roy y Cassá were called upon to compile statistics for an unofficial census to be published between the censuses of 1909 and 1917.⁶⁵

These intellectuals shared similar concerns with reformist progressives ascendant in the United States and Europe. As Daniel Rodgers has argued, the concept of progressivism itself has been notoriously capacious and therefore elusive. He does provide some guideposts, however, signaling the concepts of "antimonopolism," "social bonds," and "social efficiency" as key components linking a wide variety of reformist projects. The early twentieth century witnessed intellectuals addressing problems created by democratization and industrialization in these terms, both in the United States and in Europe. In the United States, as Gary Gerstle has contended, political liberals believed that greater democratic participation could be achieved through a cultural politics of assimilation and education. In Europe, Daniel Pick has demonstrated that Lombroso himself operated within a liberal reformist paradigm, and that his theories were invoked during the period of Italian unification in order to find a way to shape and orient new citizens.⁶⁶ Latin American intellectuals faced with similar problems began dialogues on the notions of social reform and scientific rationalization of society.⁶⁷

The languages of social bonds and social efficiency resonated with the concerns of these intellectuals. Often steeped in medical terminology as

well, their writings in journals conveyed a sense of responsibility for healing the body social. In the midst of electoral and economic crises, Diego Tamayo, physician and editor of Havana's *Vida Nueva* (*Journal of Hygiene and Social Science*), wrote in 1921 that "many of the syndromes that disturb our country could be addressed from within our profession, and therefore, we feel obligated to study them, so as to understand the pathologies and propose those remedies we determine to be most effective."⁶⁸ Tamayo and his colleagues founded medical clinics for the poor, worried about prostitution and venereal disease, and sponsored eugenics and homiculture projects.

The fascination with race and crime continued to be a notable feature of many journals. The work of Israel Castellanos, frequently published in *Vida Nueva*, which he eventually edited, indicates one of the directions in which they pointed. One of the most prolific criminologists writing on race, as well as one of the most difficult to categorize, Castellanos sustained a dialogue with Lombrosian positivism and hereditarian criminal anthropology long after Ortiz turned away from them. His book, *Brujería y ñañiguismo desde su punto de vista médico-legal* (*Brujería and Ñañiguismo from a Medico-Legal Perspective*), published in 1916, demonstrates, like Mestre's speech, the tenacity with which anxieties about African-derived religious and cultural practices invaded the Cuban social sciences.

Castellanos aimed to strengthen the hereditary link between race and crime. The young student, a year away from receiving his bachelor of arts degree at the University of Havana when his book was published, gave new life to Lombrosian theories even as their power was fading in legal contexts and in some intellectual circles. Castellanos was an autodidact, reading Lombroso, Ferri, and Garofalo on his own before being taken under the wing of Spanish criminologist Dr. Salvador Velázquez de Castro, director of Granada's *Gaceta Médica del Sur*, and Diego Tamayo. Castellanos's early publications in both the *Gaceta* and *Vida Nueva* had clearly made a favorable impression on the members of Havana's Academy of Sciences (*Academia de Ciencias Médicas, Físicas y Naturales*), for his 1916 book won a prize as the best publication of the year. In the same year he was commissioned by the secretary of health to carry out anthropological studies in the reformatory for men in Guanajuay as well as in the Reformatory of Aldeceá.⁶⁹

Castellanos complicated the relationships among race, crime, and evolution that Ortiz had mapped out fairly simply. If the main impetus of Ortiz's book was to show that brujos committed crimes out of a mis-

understanding of their moral context stemming from their displacement from Africa to Cuba, Castellanos drew moral and social distinctions between two forms of what he understood as black delinquency. If the notion of intentional malice was stripped from the definition of brujos, whom he accepted as altruistic misfits, it was brought in through the back door to describe ñañigos, in his view "born criminals." The major difference from which everything else derived was that a brujo "is characterized by his religiosity," whereas a ñañigo "lacks that quality." Whereas the actions of brujos were well intentioned even if driven by superstition and misguided religious beliefs, the actions of ñañigos were purely criminal, driven only by their thirst for homicidal revenge, the organizing principle of their societies.⁷⁰

Even though their categorization principally as members of social groups rather than races might have made it difficult for Castellanos to map out their physical characteristics, he did not find that to be the case. In a far more Lombrosian vein than Ortiz, he insisted that ñañigos, whatever race, shared the sloping forehead, protruding jaw, and jumpy, elusive gaze characteristic of the "born criminal."⁷¹ His book dropped the ethnographic paradigm for a more statistical approach. The Cuban data supporting his claims were the product of scientific studies conducted in controlled environments by scientists trained in criminological methodologies. Gone were informants with firsthand reports. When he referred to current events, he presented brujos as specimens, rather than historical actors, accompanied by photographs and measurements.

Yet even Castellanos could not quite keep his data within the biological framework of the theoretical paradigms on which he drew. To begin with, he complained that the information simply did not exist to test many Lombrosian theories. He was forced to admit that although he was convinced that studies would reveal atavistic stigmata of criminals marking the skulls and bodies of ñañigos, he could not provide examples because the data were so scarce. Despite his apparent mistrust for anything but statistical data, at times his analysis veered off into the "cultural." For instance, his book contains a discussion of tattoos, as a sign, both physical and moral, of the ñañigo psyche.⁷²

Castellanos's career in government was long and influential. In 1921 he became director of the National Bureau of Identification. In 1928 he created and became director of the Laboratorio de Antropología Penitenciaria (Laboratory of Penitentiary Anthropology), dedicated to keeping anthropometric records of inmates. Among his publications were *La talla*

de los delinquentes en Cuba (*The Height of Cuban Delinquents*) (1926), *El peso corporal de los delinquentes en Cuba* (*The Weight of Cuban Delinquents*) (1928), and *El pelo en los Cubanos* (*Cuban Hair*) (1933), all of which received prizes from the Academy of Sciences. Also in 1929 his *La delincuencia femenina en Cuba* (*Female Delinquency in Cuba*) was awarded the Lombroso prize from the Archivo di antropología criminale, psichiatria e medicina legale (Archive of Criminal Anthropology, Psychiatry, and Legal Medicine) in Turin. As ensuing chapters show, his publications and work in these institutions created the energy and amassed the resources for the continued application of criminal anthropology to law enforcement strategies, sustaining and legitimizing a link between race and crime in one sphere of public life well into the fourth decade of the twentieth century.

Conclusion

The deaths of Zoila and Bocourt in a moment of Republican fragility precipitated the creation of enduring links between the *science of race* and the *science of crime* in early-twentieth-century Cuba. By looking at the ways these ideas circulated in the press, in printed material for lay and scientific readers, and in legal contexts, I have tried to render concretely some of the dynamics at play in the making of race. Neither solely imported from elsewhere nor crafted in hermetic elite circles, race was constituted and contested by numerous sectors of society. Because these racial discourses were elaborated within the context of increasing political inclusion and democratization, they were at once powerfully persuasive and fundamentally ambiguous. Their appeal to intellectuals and social scientists eager to contribute to European and North American debates about modernity and social ills spurred an intense interest in the application of positivist truths to the Cuban case.

Narratives of brujería and fiañiguismo initially presented most vociferously in the press came to occupy privileged positions in public debates and social science as the most distinctive manifestations of the Cuban "racial problem." At the same time, the adoption of formal legal equality and a bill of rights that defended freedoms of religion and association mitigated, in courts of law, the hegemony of racial discourses premised on the primitivism and inherent criminality of people of African descent. The social scientific discourse on brujería thus failed to construct as impervious an intellectual edifice as its authors might have desired. Compet-

ing visions of republican progress worked to simultaneously support and undermine links among race, crime, and unorthodox religious practices.

That the observed phenomena took place in Cuba rather than in a distant land raises a further question. How did Cubans of color respond to and participate in these constructions and speculations? How did their own notions of citizenship and republican modernity engage the figure of the brujo and the implications it carried of epidemic barbarity? As demonstrated in the next chapter, for many black and mulatto activists, politicians, and intellectuals, issues of the science of blackness were deeply entangled with issues of the politics of blackness.

And so, with great effort, re-examining everything, attaining the cooperation of all, from the semicolonial Cuba that we started with, a new Cuba emerged, very modern and utterly unknown.

[Y así con tesonero esfuerzo, revisándolo todo, buscando la cooperación de todos, de la Cuba semicolonial que recibimos se fue haciendo surgir una Cuba modernísima, nueva, y desconocida.]

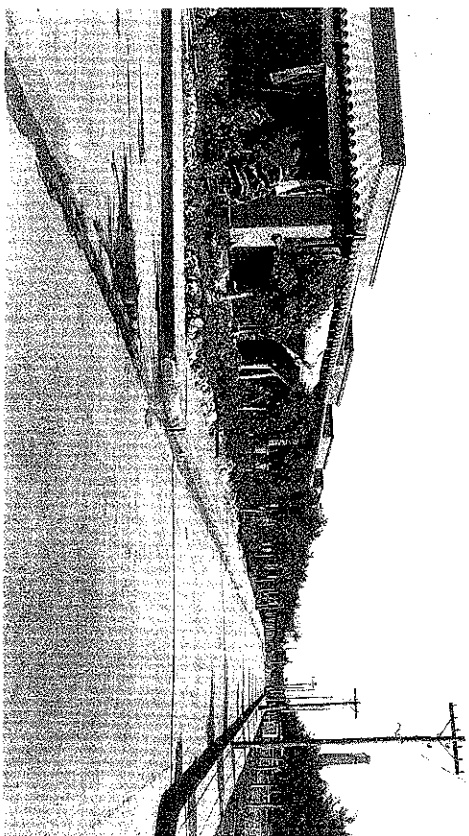
GERARDO MACHADO Y MORALES
Ocho años de lucha (1982)

5

Social Science, State-Making, and the Politics of Time

Gerardo Machado's Liberal Party platform in 1922 obtained substantial support from disenchanted sectors, which were increasingly vocal in their protests against the perceived vulnerability of Cuban sovereignty. When he claimed to be committed to a "revision of the Permanent Treaty, eliminating the appendix to the Constitution, and winning Cuba an independent place in the world," Machado's agenda resonated with highly mobilized groups, organized around the goal of "national regeneration," that had ushered him into office.¹

Machado's program of domestic reform dovetailed with his nationalist, reformist goals. He supported the Customs-Tariff Law, eventually passed in 1927, which granted protection to national industries. He initiated an extensive public works program intended to remedy economic



Machado's modernizing vision reordered Havana streets and residences. (Secretaría de Obras Públicas, 1929; photo courtesy of Cuban Heritage Collection, University of Miami Libraries, Coral Gables, Florida)

distress by offering jobs to unemployed Cubans. The program's tangible results included a replica of the U.S. capitol in downtown Havana as well as the 700-mile central highway that runs across the entire island.² As Jorge Domínguez has observed, the Machado administration initiated a period in which the president, cabinet, and Congress together expanded the powers of government, resulting in a much greater presence of the state in everyday life.³ But if an expanded state presence meant access to jobs and resources for some Cubans, it meant increased repression for others. Machado swiftly reacted to the creation of the Cuban Communist Party (PCC), the Confederación Nacional Obrera de Cuba (National Confederation of Cuban Workers) (CNOC), and other labor organizations with violence and intimidation. The use of armed forces against strikers and the assassination of labor leaders became standard procedure under Machado. In response to the intensification of mass participatory politics by organized labor, students, veterans, and intellectuals, Machado maneuvered between repression and incorporation.⁴

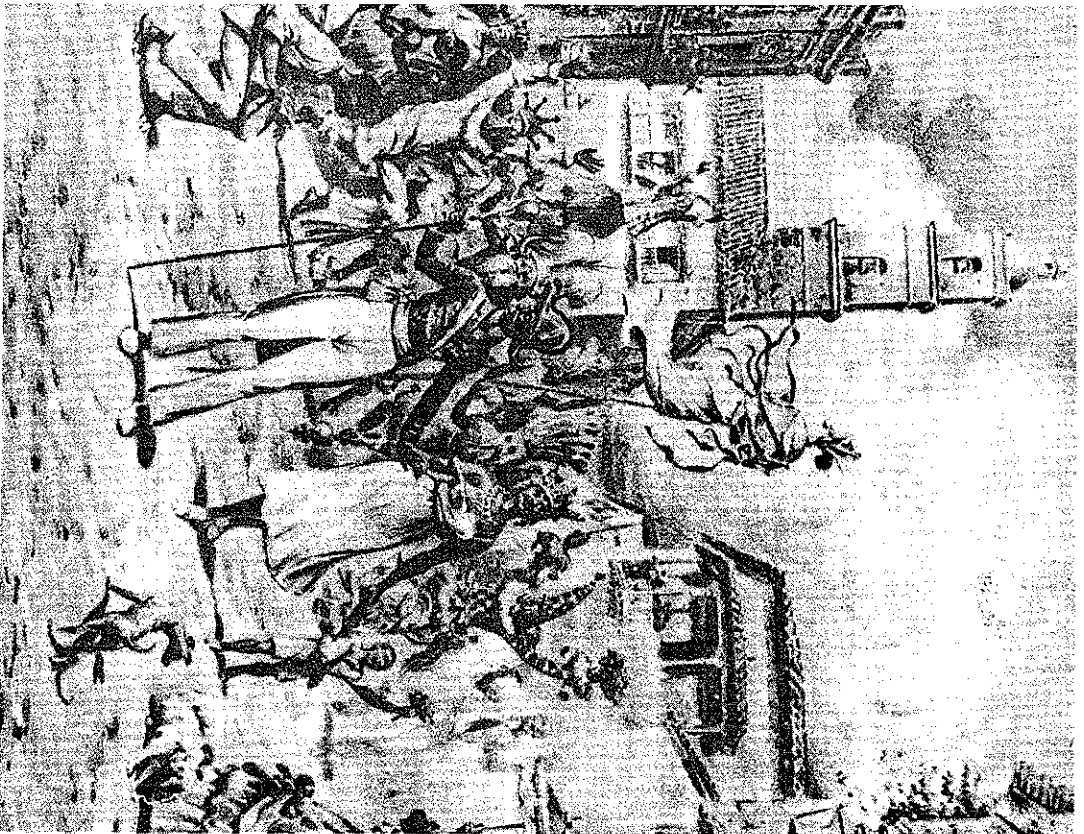
Reconstructions of the Cuban past accompanied heightened mobilization and dramatic political change. In 1924 Fernando Ortiz published an

essay entitled "La fiesta afrocubana del Día de Reyes" (The Afro-Cuban Festival of the Day of Kings). Its descriptions of the colonial practice that allowed slaves and free people of color one day a year (January 6) to engage in ritualistic street dances and celebrations invoked an ordered, well-regulated Cuba. It was a time, he suggested, when slaves and masters existed, if not in complete harmony, then in a negotiated world in which slaves understood and respected the offer of a single day of freedom and reciprocated with obedience. The purpose of the essay was to equate the African origins of these celebrations with European carnival and in so doing to make relativistic claims about the legitimacy of African-derived practices. Drawing almost entirely from nineteenth-century *costumbrista* texts for his description of the festivals, Ortiz reproduced their romantic emphasis on sartorial detail, respect for tradition, and lack of conflict. Like the nineteenth-century painting that served to illustrate it, the article, though it explicitly aspired to "scientific ethnography," offered a still life of a world that was lost.⁵

This version of the romantic turn in ethnography, though increasingly fashionable in anthropological works in Europe and the United States, seems a peculiarly conservative contribution to the demands for reform and national regeneration in which Ortiz himself participated. Yet if "La fiesta afrocubana" rendered colonialism and slavery in a positive light, it also fit African-derived customs into a series of traditions in which the nation was rooted. As many have observed, romanticism's excavation of autochthonous cultural artifacts has often served nationalist enterprises. The extent to which it might aid Cuban state-building as it was constituted in the 1920s, however, was not a foregone conclusion.⁶

Ortiz's work in historical ethnography reflected a broader trend of increased activity in all the social sciences. Machado supported and encouraged scientific activity as part of his program to buttress nationalist sentiment and publicize Cuban contributions to Latin American intellectual endeavors. In a speech delineating his ambitions for Cuba, the production of knowledge was not forgotten: "We must stimulate literary and scientific production . . . since we have received so much knowledge from the rest of the world, we must participate and reciprocate with our own contributions."⁷

What follows is an examination of the heightening of social scientific activity in three arenas: ethnography, which in this period focused on the study of folklore, eugenics, as it underwent a transformation in outlook and purpose; and the growing institutionalization of criminology.



This romanticist painting, by De A. Galindo, 1837, was used to illustrate Fernando Ortiz's 1924 text, "La fiesta afrocubana del Día de Reyes."

I argue that social science was revitalized during Machado's regime, and that, more important, its strategies shifted from reform to depoliticization. Anthropology and criminology in the early years of the republic intended to contribute to a modernist project by demonstrating how their objects of study could be induced to become more like modern political subjects. Though apparently contradictory, one of the primary aims of

social scientists had been to find a way to integrate most Cubans of African descent as citizens. By the 1920s, however, the social sciences seemed to lose interest in fostering citizenship and developed new methods for understanding and controlling social order and disorder. At the same time, these methods belied the notion of a race-transcendent Cuba. Instead, social scientists found the concept of race increasingly useful, even if they invested it with distinct and inconsistent meanings.

As ethnography, eugenics, and criminology became institutionally distinct and responded to crises of legitimacy and national identity, their approaches came to be informed by specific deployments of the notion of time. As Johannes Fabian has contended, the use of time is a central strategy operative in any discourse that posits "others" as its object of study. In its inception the discipline of anthropology created distance between the observer and the observed and thus an aura of objectivity, by placing its objects in distant time as well as distant space. Cuban social scientists, with little if any physical distance separating them from their objects of study, arrived at distinctive uses of the concept of time. On the one hand, liberal intellectuals like Ortiz became very interested in folklore and ethnology, evincing a more profound concern with the past than in previous works. Cuban eugenicists, whose fortunes had been in flux in the early days of the republic, distinguished themselves from most other Latin American colleagues as they engaged currents emanating from the United States to create utopian visions of the future. Criminology, however, remained firmly planted in the present, looking to existing criminal bodies for answers to its questions. Although they held disparate ideas about how to proceed, each branch of social science aspired to reign in a highly mobilized society. This chapter explores the utility of these reformulated social scientific endeavors to a state interested in both creating social order and harnessing growing political mobilization.⁵

Rewriting Old Rituals: The Allegory of Salvage

Having authored, during the political crisis of the early 1920s, a critique of contemporary society under the rubric of "renovation," Ortiz sought new national foundations to replace corrupt ones.⁶ In 1923 he founded the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano and its journal, *Archivos del Folklore Cubano*, deeming the study of folklore essential to this enterprise. Echoing the recommendations of José María Chacón, one of the earliest promoters of the study of folklore, Ortiz believed that recuperation

of forgotten folklore would be crucial in reconstructing a sense of national identity.¹⁰ With a romanticist sensibility he proposed looking at the indigenous, Spanish, and African origins of Cuban culture. The myths, social habits, and linguistic practices of each of these cultures, as he conceived them, would serve as more solid foundations for national identity than the current fascination with all things North American. Suddenly modernity seemed less crucial than the lost riches of the past: "Great treasures remain hidden beneath the layers of modern culture, waiting for studious Cubans to discover, interpret, and classify them for our national civilization."¹¹

The works published in *Arbivos del Folklore Cubano* rely on the use of the past to describe ethnographic objects, but they shed normative evolutionary explanations and reformist aims. Ortiz and other authors published in *Arbivos* ceased to study their objects in order to change them. Instead, they were interested in a more romantic project that James Clifford has called the "allegory of salvage," aiming, with ethnographic descriptions, to capture endangered worlds for their own sake. The concern was no longer to modernize their subjects, or to seek to extinguish the most irredeemable ones, but to study them as part of a search for authenticity and origins.

This turn to a recuperative project was most evident in a long series of texts written by Ortiz on *Los negros curros*. Having already investigated the current-day manifestations of black criminality in *Los negros brujos*, he believed that it was necessary to research the *curro*, an earlier criminal type that had been significant in its day but had subsequently disappeared. The *curro* was "a perfectly differentiated category of delinquent, which deeply interested our people until the second third of the last century, when he disappeared due to no apparent reason." In contrast to contemporary criminals, *curros* did not suffer the same prejudices or stigmas attached to *brujos*.¹² They were all of African descent, but all had been free and *criollo*, or born in Cuba. Although they were assassins and criminals, they never exhibited any signs of remorse. They shared a problematic social status as the "bastards of Don Juan Tenorio with his black slave," the product of illicit sexual relations in the era of slavery.¹³ Whereas Ortiz only hinted at the trope of the *mestizo* as criminal or tainted, eugenicists and criminologists would draw on it frequently. As he had stated the Sociedad's intentions to study the folkloric origins of Spanish, African, and Indian cultures as separate strands, his observations about misce-

generation fit uncomfortably within a text more interested in glamorizing its subjects than in identifying sexual exploitation.

Negros curros had been urban, part of their distinction came from their flashy attire, and they had been mostly male (Ortiz promised to describe the female version, but he never did.) Three characteristics formed the essence of the *curro*: "a highly developed sense of vanity, an exhibitionist jargon, and professional delinquency." Somewhat nostalgically, Ortiz re-created the scenes in which these figures operated. Meeting in cafés, exhibitionist sparring and feuding with other social groups, loitering, and engaging in petty theft comprised their principal activities. But perhaps because these were intelligible activities, not tainted with a hint of religious mystery or opaque "primitivism," Ortiz rendered them more as peculiar specimens than as threatening aberrations. Indeed, he suggested that they were Cuba's version of the picaresque, participants in a well-known tradition of male behavior, which, if not condoned, was certainly tolerated and to some extent canonized in literature: "He is the final and forgotten character in the Spanish picaresque, which the Hispanist Mateo Alemán might have immortalized had he painted them in the third section of his *Guzmán de Alfarache*."¹⁴

With his avowals that *curros* had disappeared by the end of the nineteenth century, Ortiz suggested that black criminality in the colonial era was more comprehensible, less menacing, more easily controlled. The transition from criminologist to folklorist was mediated by the use of time. If as criminologist he had relied on newspaper clippings and living informants, as folklorist he worked primarily in the past. His romantic sensibility came at the expense of social utility. In the interest of tackling the problem of an unevenly constituted modernity rife with unacceptable political subjects, the *brujo* had been depicted in a harsher light. The *curro*—exotic, colorful, portrayed almost with an erotic edge—took his place in a gallery of historical tradition, requiring memorialization precisely because he had no connection to the present. Since the *curro*'s political status as a colonial subject rendered citizenship more or less moot, Ortiz depoliticized the issue of black criminality by avoiding it altogether.

Led by Ortiz, the folklore society and its *Arbivos* participated in what historians have identified as a shift in the representation of African-derived cultural practices in early-twentieth-century Cuba.¹⁵ The articles included in the journal followed Ortiz's lead in creating a romantic, nos-

talgiic memory of African cultural practices in Cuba to stand alongside the criminalizing but reformist vision of earlier work. But far from being immediately welcomed as a necessary revision, the folklorist approach suffered both neglect and criticism from a number of venues.

The society and the journal existed for seven years (1923-30). The contributors to *Archivos* included the most illustrious members of the Cuban intelligentsia, among them Enrique José Varona; Isis Ortiz, Fernando's daughter; Lydia Cabrera, the daughter of Raimundo Cabrera; Antonio Coscolluela, a respected archaeologist; as well as Juan Marinello, Rubén Martínez Villena, Emilio Roig de Leuschenring, and Carlos de la Torre.

Despite the pedigree of its membership and its stated nationalist intentions, the Sociedad del Folklore Cubano encountered difficulties in obtaining funding for its work. This gradually became apparent, as meetings with government officials and optimistic predictions fizzled into the realization that financial support would have to come from within the group. Initially, the study of folklore had been explicitly approved and supported by the Ministry of Education, which had commissioned José María Chacón to found societies dedicated to researching folklore in cities all over Cuba. He had done so and reported enthusiastic receptions in places such as Pinar del Río, Manzanillo, Bayamo, and Santiago de Cuba. The secretary of education and fine arts, Francisco Zayas y Alfonso, had been so supportive of the project that he had been named honorary president of the society. This was in January 1923, when Alfredo Zayas was president. Optimistically, members of the newly formed society scheduled a visit with Zayas y Alfonso in order to request funding to publish their journal. On February 9, they reported that the meeting had gone well and that the secretary had promised to assist them within the means available to him. Only one week later, however, they stated that the promise had been an empty one: Zayas y Alfonso had sent word in a more definitive manner that the ministry would be unable to offer any assistance at that time.¹⁶

Government funding was not forthcoming from the Machado administration, either. When the society met to discuss its budget in mid-1927, it was noted that without state support most of the money had come from subscriptions and advertising. The rest came from Ortiz's private funds. But this was to end: as Ortiz stated at the meeting, he could no longer afford to fund the journal. After a lengthy discussion the members reached a solution. The society would cede ownership of the journal to Ortiz himself, who would then contract with a publishing house that had

already expressed interest, stipulating that it would publish the journal only if Ortiz was designated sole editor. Evidently, if the appeal of folklore was not wide enough to guarantee a steady readership, Ortiz's name would provide a firmer guarantee. By 1929 the Sociedad was looking to international connections for the affirmation missing at home. The visit of folklorist Aurelio Espinosa from Stanford University seems to have buoyed the members' spirits, as he reminded them of the Sociedad's stature as one of a few formally convened folklore societies in the world and remarked on the extensive demand for their journal abroad. The journal did not last much longer than that, and its pages remained silent regarding the society's internal workings. In 1930 the final volume was released. The study of folklore conceived as a nationalist project did not seem to hold much interest for official circles. Given this lack of government support, the economic crisis of 1929 probably proved fatal to the journal's fortunes.¹⁷

But the pages of *Archivos* themselves reveal contradictions that may have diminished the Sociedad's appeal. The publication of Nicolás Guillén's poems "Motivos de Son" in the final issue, marking a departure from the usual practice, highlighted growing uncertainty about the nature of recovering folklore. Contradictions appear in Ortiz's introduction to the poems: if the poetry was not strictly folkloric because of its recent composition and because it was produced by a known author rather than an anonymous one, Ortiz argued, the poems fit the category insofar as they "translated perfectly the spirit, the rhythms, the picaresque and the sensuality of anonymous works." Furthermore, imagining a somewhat unimaginable future for one of Cuba's most successful poets, he suggested that "soon these poems will become part of a popular repertory, and their author will be forgotten." He optimistically predicted—indeed, hoped for—their future anonymity so that they might be incorporated into a body of folklore. At the same time, he insisted on the importance of a creative present, expressing disdain for those struck in a "dead past." Ortiz had placed himself in an untenable position, calling for appreciation of a creative present even as he failed to recognize the awkward fit between a folkloric project based on anonymity and the unique voice before him.¹⁸

In the same issue *Archivos* also published a series of exchanges about the significance and merit of Guillén's innovative approach, which structured poems around the *son*, the rhythmic song structure of "popular music." These exchanges had taken place in newspapers and in the Club Arenas. At issue was Guillén's use of the vernacular and invocation of

lower-class, black lives within the text of the verse. In response to criticism from Ramón Vasconcelos, a black journalist, that his poetry was too easy, vulgar, and not reflective of his considerable talent, Guillén insisted that this, though it had been a difficult and complex task, was precisely his purpose: to create something "truly simple, truly easy, truly popular." Guillén asserted that elite Cubans of color should not denigrate the *son*, but rather recognize it as one of the most elemental aspects of black and mulatto cultural life.¹⁹

Others had joined this debate, which Ortiz faithfully reproduced in *Archivos*. One of the more prominent voices was that of Gustavo Urrutia, a black journalist who had begun to present himself as a spokesperson for Cubans of color through a weekly column "Ideales de una Raza," published in *Diario de la Marina*. Urrutia used the opportunity to comment on the debates among Cubans of color over the value of the vernacular as it had been invoked by Guillén. Urrutia criticized those who deemed the *son* too uncivilized and unworthy of respect. But he also criticized whites whose appropriation of this music was in most cases a misunderstanding of it: "We have here one of the few cases in which educated blacks do not want to imitate whites and maintain their social taboo against these delicious dances, arguing that whites are the sole consumers of this merchandise which produces and consumes 'blacks.'" He defended Guillén's position, maintaining that those who denied the ubiquity of the vernacular were not deaf but unwilling to discover, "amidst all this sound and fury, the vitality of our collective consciousness."²⁰

Urrutia's position revealed much about the politics of "blackness" at this time. It demonstrated that the critique of white consumption of a "black folk" had been made by intellectuals of color. Whether Urrutia's critique was directed specifically at Ortiz is unclear, but Ortiz would certainly fall within the category of those who produced a folkloric image of blackness. More important, this debate took place in other venues, to which Ortiz only enjoyed secondhand access. Urrutia's article, published in *Diario de la Marina*, was a response to a presentation given by Guillén at the Club Atenas, at which Ortiz had not been present. As we shall see in the next chapter, Urrutia was one of several participants in the contentious debates among Cubans of color over representation and political and cultural identity that intensified during the 1930s. But their concerns and goals were increasingly distinct from those of the journal of folklore, which became largely irrelevant before it disappeared altogether. The Sociedad del Folklore Cubano had not proved immediately useful

to the state, and it came to follow rather than dictate discussions on the political implications of the excavation and revival of folklore. The relatively new fields of folklore and ethnography entered the 1930s on the margins of political and intellectual Cuban life.

Palaces in the Air

Ethnography and folklore were not the only social scientific endeavors in search of sponsors during this period. Since Machado had explicitly noted the importance of science to his vision of modernity, other disciplines vied for attention and recognition. One of the most active groups of scientists to seek support for their projects worked on eugenics. The theory and practice of eugenics was undergoing a transition just as interest in social scientific inquiry heightened. Eugenicists had been working in Cuba since the inception of the republic, but 1921 marked the waning of "positive" eugenics, oriented toward environmental and reformist projects, and the rise of "negative" eugenics, with its focus on Mendelian genetics, racial purity, and prevention of reproduction for the genetically unfit. Eugenicists now turned their attention away from immediate and possibly remediable issues in contemporary society and began to imagine a racially pure future, to be achieved through exclusion or eradication of undesirables. A brief examination of early eugenics will bring the later emphasis on racial purity into greater relief.

Eusebio Hernández, a physician better known perhaps for his participation in the wars for independence than for his role in Cuban science, initiated the early practice of eugenics on the island. Hernández emerged from the anticolonial struggle with a distinguished military background and one of the more radically egalitarian brands of Cuban liberalism, as well as social and professional connections with the Maceo family. Born in Colón in the province of Matanzas in 1853, he was involved in both the Guerra Chiquita (1879–80) and the final war for independence (1895–98), joining forces with Quintín Bandera, Flor Crombet, José Maceo, and Calixto García. Before the Guerra Chiquita and in the hiatus between the wars he pursued medical studies in Madrid, Paris, and Berlin. During the republic he divided his time between teaching at the University of Havana, where he was professor of gynecology and obstetrics, and participation in party politics, running as vice presidential candidate with Bartolome Masó in 1901 and supporting José Miguel Gómez's presidential candidacy in 1907. In 1923 he supported radical students such as Julio

Antonio Mella, founder of Cuba's Communist Party. His views reflected a belief in the power of social reform: though he often expressed doubts about the current capacity of Cubans for political participation, he also believed in the merits of political inclusion and looked optimistically to the potential of social science and science to craft politically virtuous citizens.²¹

The underlying principles of Hernández's work in eugenics derived from the studies of Adolphe Pinard, a French obstetrician who had popularized the term "puericulture" (based on the Latin word meaning "child-rearing") in the late nineteenth century. Through Pinard's mentoring, Hernández became a proponent of positive eugenics. Pinard held that it was possible to enhance the vigor and robustness of a population by focusing on infant care. Although he gave a nod to hereditarianism regarding the role of parents' fitness in determining the quality of their offspring, his work focused mainly on ensuring that babies were reared in proper environments.²²

Hernández coined the term "homiculture," which linked human fitness to a nation's capacity for peace, order, and prosperity. He argued that the propensity for corruption and personalism damaged the potential of the Cuban people. It would not be impossible to regenerate Cuban society, but it would require legislative measures to improve the physiological, hygienic, and therefore productive and moral capacity of all Cubans. Homiculture would take its cue from puericulture and work to "cultivate" fit men: "It is crucial to create healthy, useful men, able to work and conscious of their social obligations, strong enough to engage in collective battles and vigorous enough to face all the burdens imposed on individuals today by our complex social structure."²³

Over the next two decades Hernández dedicated a large portion of his time to attaining this goal. He initiated the process in 1909, when he and his student Domingo Ramos began to present their ideas to public officials in the hope of obtaining funding and support. They had concretized their objectives with plans for a new building in which to shape more vigorous humans. They explained these plans in a series of proposals, first to the secretary of hygiene and welfare, then to the Second National Medical Congress in Cuba, and finally to President José Miguel Gómez.²⁴ As they conceived it, the enterprise of homiculture was divided into six stages, corresponding to the different stages of the life and maternal cycles: *progonocultura* (care of the gonads), *patrimatriticultura* (culture of the parents), *matrifeticultura* (care of the pregnant mother and the fetus

together), *matrimatriticultura* (care of the mother and baby together), *puericultura* (care of the baby), and *post-gentioocultura* (care of the individual after birth).²⁵ These stages were to be housed, literally, in their proposed Palacio de Homicultura. The Palacio, to be named "Pinard-Hernández" after the Cuban's French mentor (and himself), would embody human life as they conceived it, with separate rooms dedicated to each of the six stages, arranged chronologically so that one could proceed through an entire reproductive cycle by walking through the building.²⁶ In each of the rooms patients would receive treatment and advice appropriate for the reproductive stage they were in at that moment.

When M. Varona Suárez, the secretary of hygiene and welfare, presented this proposal to President Gómez, he hoped that both the executive and legislative branches would understand the significance of the request. Homiculture was "a subject of such transcendence for the future of our nation, which sees to the physical and mental vigor of present and future generations and the development of citizens who can help themselves and contribute to the nation."²⁷ The proposals were apparently compelling enough to support the creation of a new department of homiculture within the Ministry of Hygiene and Welfare, decreed in the *Gaceta Oficial* on September 22, 1910.²⁸

The idea of homiculture began to take hold in scientific circles, but in a halting, incomplete manner. The government offered occasional gestures of support but withheld consistent institutional backing. In 1913 Hernández and Ramos founded the Liga Nacional de Homicultura, whose members included leading intellectuals like Francisco Carrera y Justiz, María Luisa Dolz, Juan Santos Fernández, and Carlos Velasco.²⁹ *Vida Nueva*, the journal run by prominent Liberal doctor Diego Tamayo, began to publish articles by Hernández, Ramos, and others on various aspects of homiculture and puericulture.³⁰ Homiculturists tried to ensure that their ideas were disseminated beyond the scientific community. Hernández taught a course in homiculture and preventive sexual care at the Universidad Popular Obrera José Martí. In 1915 the Ministry of Hygiene and Welfare inaugurated its beautiful baby contests. The winners were chosen first at the municipal-level Motherhood Competitions, then competed in the National Motherhood, Homiculture, and Eugenic Reproduction Competitions. Held until 1933, the contests were widely advertised and sponsored by various commercial companies.³¹ All of these exhortations and popularizations shared a Lamarckian approach, with an emphasis on enhancing environmental conditions to bring about racial "progress."

Despite the initial surge of enthusiasm for the new science, its most ambitious projects never came to fruition. Four years after the initial proposals, doctors and supporters continued to call for the construction of the Palacio de Homicultura Pinard-Hernández, still, apparently, a utopian dream.³²

Another variant of eugenic thought arose toward the end of the 1910s. Domingo Ramos, along with Octavio Mañalich and Artístides Mestre, began to devote more attention to Mendelian theories of eugenics. This strand of eugenics held that race was biologically determined and that racial mixing did not result in the amelioration of "inferior traits," but rather in their preservation in "inharmónious" beings. Since miscegenation would therefore only lead to the creation of inferior types, it was important to keep all races separate and prevent interbreeding. As with the emerging interest in folklore, the project of assisting an unprepared citizenry's entry into political life receded. In the case of eugenics, emphasis on stringent control over bodies replaced earlier visions of creating the conditions under which morals, minds, and bodies might flourish.³³

Ramos quickly took the lead in espousing this new vision, though initially he attempted to integrate it into the environmentalist views held by his mentors Pinard and Hernández. In a presentation to the Second International Congress of Eugenics held in New York City in 1921, his closing words revealed a (vague) synthesis of modes of human engineering: "This is what should be done for the scientific betterment of man, making the human species of the future the outcome of a scientific artificial selection and providing the environment in which it is going to live, artificially modified by the efforts of science which will have overcome existing conditions that would have made its struggle for life extremely hard."³⁴

Soon after this conference Ramos turned away more definitively from his mentors and initiated a correspondence with Charles Davenport, director of New York's Cold Spring Harbor Eugenics Office and chief proponent of Mendelian eugenics in the United States. In his letters to Davenport the Cuban demonstrated his increasing adherence to Cold Spring Harbor's emphasis on racial purity. Moreover, he wanted to disseminate the theory and familiarize Cuban physicians with Davenport's views, suggesting that some of them travel to Cold Spring Harbor for training. For his part, Davenport was eager to incorporate Latin America into what Nancy Stepan has described as the "eugenic sphere of influence." He was particularly interested in promoting the racial purification

of Cuba, whose mixed population had migrated in significant numbers to Florida.³⁵

Ramos was at the center of the institution-building that ensued. He led the founding of the Pan American Eugenics Committee at the Latin American Medical Congress in Havana in 1922. He must have achieved some influence with other Latin American physicians, for a year later delegates at the Pan American meetings in Santiago, Chile, elected him head of the new Pan American Office of Eugenics to be based in Havana. In this capacity he laid the plans for the First Pan American Conference of Eugenics and Homiculture in Havana.³⁶

Ramos's energy, his interest in Mendelian genetics, and Machado's concern with promoting science converged to give Cuban negative eugenics a high national and international profile. The Havana conference took place in December 1927. In it the networking aims of both Latin American and U.S. eugenicists coincided with the nationalist intentions of the Machado administration and produced concrete results. An official decree in 1924 had announced the creation of a Commission of National and International Conferences on Hygiene whose task it would be to control future meetings, all to be held in Havana. These included the First Pan American Conference on Eugenics and Homiculture, the Sixth Pan American Conference on Hygiene, and the Fourth International Conference on Eugenics.³⁷

Charles Davenport's ideas permeated Ramos's opening speech at the First Pan American Conference of Eugenics and Homiculture. "For real altruism," Ramos asserted, those who promoted and directed the development of eugenics in Cuba should "defend, care for and utilize inferior beings, and segregate or sterilize unacceptable or harmful beings, in an act of cooperation that will lead to the engineering of a perfect human."³⁸ Arguing against the benefits of *mestizaje* (as miscegenation), he advocated instead working toward the improvement of each race as a separate entity. This process of natural selection and evolution, which linked certain characteristics to certain races, had already begun: "In the same manner that we work with the white race, we should also work to improve the black and Indian races . . . whites . . . Indians and blacks, preserving and improving the unique characteristics of each of the three races, for they are all necessary to the task, and each race should take advantage of the opportunities afforded us by peace and liberty."³⁹

Also addressing the conference participants, Rafael Martínez Ortiz, secretary of state under Machado, used Ramos's scientific principles as

the foundation of a national scheme. The emerging science and its accompanying prescriptions for the creation of a racially healthy population would propel Cuba toward a modernity already enjoyed by other nations, only attainable if inhabited by "collectivities that are more developed, to surpass those that are deficiently constituted."⁴⁰ Like Ramos, Martínez Ortiz envisioned a genetically purified future for Cuba, one in which the races were distinctly perceptible. He argued strongly against racial mixing, suggesting that those with faith in the value of *mestizaje* were sure to see the failure of an unviable illusion, existing, as they did, "in the illusory clouds of a fantastic optimism."⁴¹

This rejection of *mestizaje* as the redemptive solution to Latin America's race problem ran counter to the assertions of many delegates at the conference. Nancy Stepan has pointed to the growing appreciation of *mestizaje* as both a practical and face-saving solution for Latin American scientists and social scientists resentful of European and North American claims to racial superiority. Thus whereas in Mexico José Vasconcelos designed a "Cosmic Race" and in Brazil of the early 1920s the notion of attaining racial health through sanitation prevailed, Cuban eugenicists, especially Ramos, fell under the influence of Davenport's hereditarian antimiscegenationist views.⁴²

The discussion that took place at the Havana conference reveals the distance between Ramos as the main proponent of U.S.-influenced eugenics and other Latin American delegates. As Stepan observed, the Code of Eugenics and Homiculture that Ramos had written with Davenport's assistance included some measures that most other delegates considered unacceptable because of their insistence on the importance of racial purity conceived in biological terms. The code called for individuals to be classified as genetically "good," "doubtful," or "bad," and for states to take measures to ensure that "bad" individuals did not reproduce. Another provision allowed for each nation to control immigration and deny entry to undesirable races. Ramos also envisioned the monitoring of marriages: if either spouse was determined unfit to reproduce, a marriage could be annulled or the individuals sterilized.⁴³

The code's drafters faced strident criticism from Mexican delegate Rafael Santamarina and Peruvian delegate Carlos Enrique Paz Soldán, both of whom eloquently challenged the code's premises and looked ahead to the potentially dangerous consequences of its adoption. The version agreed upon at the conference's closing session was transformed into a much more tentative document. Provisions that had begun as mandates

were changed to nonbinding recommendations. The call for the sterilization of the unfit was eliminated altogether. With regard to immigration, the code allowed each country to determine its own guidelines rather than following a scheme controlled by the Pan-American Office of Eugenics, which is what Ramos had originally envisioned. As Stepan noted, from Ramos and Davenport's point of view, the conference and the attempt to convince all the Latin American delegates to adhere to their Code of Eugenics and Homiculture "must be accounted a failure."⁴⁴

As it turned out, the pinnacle of visibility of Cuba's negative eugenics was also the beginning of its demise. Despite the fanfare that surrounded the conference in 1927, none of the provisions Ramos most desired were ever implemented. He did succeed in convincing the legislature to pass a law requiring marriage certificates, but this proved to be a purely formal measure. Other provisions, such as those for sterilization, suffered a worse fate, receiving debilitating criticism either before they were proposed as law or in Congress. Ramos, originally the most vociferous proponent of negative eugenics, eventually entered the Batista administration and left the field of science.⁴⁵

Ultimately Ramos's vision of a genetically purified future, with its refusal to take into account the heterogeneous and racially mixed present, may have proved too impractical to a state interested in social reform and palpable results. The advocacy of whiteness became part of state policy only when it was politically expedient. The issue of immigration had been tied to the issue of race from the earliest years of the republic, when both the legal establishment and sugar manufacturers had favored admitting Spaniards over the other main sources of labor, Jamaicans and Haitians. Between 1913 and 1920, however, importers of labor had relaxed these preferences in view of the economic prosperity (and greater demand for sugar workers) during the "Danza de Milliones" ("Dance of the Millions") ushered in by World War I. West Indian workers became a major source of labor, especially in the sugar-producing sections of Oriente. Beginning in the early 1920s, however, plummeting sugar prices and ballooning unemployment greatly reduced the tolerance for West Indian immigrants. In a series of conferences and decrees it became increasingly clear that support for the restriction of West Indian immigration was emerging from a variety of sectors. In 1931 Francisco María Fernández, president of the Cuban Academy of Sciences and member of the House of Representatives, proposed to cut off any immigration for the next two years. At the Third International Congress of Eugenics in 1932, Ramos

again called for the restriction of "undesirable" immigration and emphasized the dangers of racial mixing. Some labor organizations, perceiving Haitians and Jamaicans as competitors in a tight labor market, also demanded restrictions. By 1933 the eugenicists' anti-immigration stance found resonance with state policy. In 1933 the "50 percent law" to nationalize workers, also called the Ley de Nacionalización del Trabajo, decreed that native Cubans must comprise at least 50 percent of any workforce. Unemployed foreigners without proof of means of subsistence were to be forcibly repatriated.⁴⁶ This law greatly affected Haitian and Jamaican sugar workers, the majority of whom had been sent back to their countries of origin by the late 1930s. Repatriation may have achieved a certain measure of "whitening," but it fell far short of the more radical policies including sterilization and marriage certificates that Cuba's Mendelian eugenicists had proposed.

Penitentiary Anthropology and the Science of Race

Of the social sciences, criminology enjoyed the most support from Machado's administration. Certainly part of the reason for this interest was the discipline's utility in controlling and repressing political opponents. But criminology also met Machado's ambitions to propel Cuba into the community of modern nations. Criminology was one of the social sciences most engaged in developing new technologies and updating its theoretical foundations. The restoration of the Model Prison, built on the Isle of Pines and modeled after the Benthamite plan famously interpreted by Michel Foucault, evinced the president's aims in both arenas.⁴⁷ If Machado had not seemed overly impressed with Fernando Ortiz's folkloric enterprise, he apparently respected him enough to commission him, in 1926, to draft a proposal to replace the penal code, in use since the colonial era, with one that incorporated the latest scientific theories.

An overlooked moment of coinciding purpose between Machado and Ortiz, the project of the Código Criminal Cubano (Cuban Penal Code) brought together Machado's ambitions and Ortiz's criminological leanings. When Ortiz presented his plan to the Legal Commission, he prefaced his remarks with an acknowledgment of the mutual endeavor, noting that the new code would be a product of "the effort of all, following General Machado's reformist impulse, interested as he is in legislative renewal."⁴⁸

Ortiz's new definition of the delinquent proved the most important innovation in his proposal. In this definition he dispensed with the requirement that a person must commit a crime to be deemed delinquent. All that was necessary, he argued, was a propensity toward criminal behavior. Those who "demonstrate, through their inability to adapt to decent norms or the laws of public security, a state of extraordinary mental, moral or legal inadaptability, which endows them with a propensity for delinquency" ought to be labeled "dangerous persons."⁴⁹ In developing his theory, Ortiz disaggregated delinquents into different types. Depending on the nature of their responsibility for the crime committed, they would be classified into the following subcategories: "recidivists, mentally ill, psychopaths, drug addicts, vagrants, political criminals, minors, and members of gangs."⁵⁰ A notable array of different "orders of things" constitutes the list. The inclusion of biological, psychological, social, and political factors perhaps reflects early-twentieth-century criminology's confidence in its ability to encompass and address the problem of crime in its multifaceted entirety. It also suggests a broad ambition to demobilize many sectors of society.

This focus on the criminal rather than the crime indicates a shift from classical to positivist criminological theory. Initiated principally by the Italian school of criminology, it rejected the notion of the free will of the criminal and replaced it with the view that the criminal was both constrained and impelled by environmental, biological, and psychological factors. One of the chief proponents of this theory was Enrico Ferri, whose lecture on "The Positivist School of Criminology" in 1885 represented a landmark for historians of criminology.⁵¹ In the succinct analysis of one philosopher: "The person who commits a crime, says Ferri, is a criminal . . . it is no use looking for the motive of his act: the reason for his crime is precisely, his criminality. In a sense these few peremptory words mark the registering of a new object of penal science and practice: *homo criminalis*."⁵²

The role of anthropologically derived knowledge was key. Ortiz's new code included methods by which data on inmates were to be gathered: "In each center of detention there will be a Daily Register, managed according to the rules and procedures laid out by the criminal ordinances, which will record the conduct, morality, punishments, rewards, labor, instruction, hygiene, health and rank of each inmate. All inmates will undergo an anthropological examination under the conditions established by the

Criminal Ordinances."⁵³ It was only by thorough study and analysis of individuals and their criminal tendencies, Ortiz argued, whether they stemmed from biological or environmental factors, that the repression of crime could become a properly rational, scientific endeavor. He recommended the development of university courses, as well as the training of a body of penitentiary personnel and of medical anthropologists.⁵⁴ In a formal proposal drafted later he called for the institutionalization of instruction at the University of Havana with the creation of three new professorships in the Law School "for training in Criminology and Penology," "for training in Criminal Anthropology and Policiology" (Ortiz coined the latter term *policiología*), and "for training in Criminal Justice and Penal Law," as well as offering a doctorate in criminology.⁵⁵ Once inculcated with knowledge of the most recent technologies and theories, these experts would run the new institutions that Ortiz proposed.

All of this new energy devoted to criminology would be channeled by a National Council of Prevention and Repression of Delinquency. Analogous to the National Council of Hygiene and Welfare, it would serve as "the first line of defense in the war against criminality," assembling government officials and experts in pursuit of greater control over the penological landscape.⁵⁶ This council would direct and oversee all operations involved not just in the repression of crime but also in the acquisition of knowledge. Ortiz envisioned that the council would be composed of a member of the judiciary, preferably a high-level judge, and a number of academics, including those named to the professorships of criminology and penology; criminal anthropology and policiology; and criminal justice and penal law. Seats on the council would also be allocated to those involved in more practical matters: the inspector of all penal establishments, the director of the National Bureau of Identification (Gabinete Nacional de Identificación), and the chiefs of corrections personnel. A significant aspect of Ortiz's proposal concerned the collection and systematization of data, including statistics, measurements, and "psychological data."⁵⁷

The proposal generated a wide range of responses that expressed various degrees of enthusiasm. Ortiz's colleague and friend Israel Castellanos, director of the National Bureau of Identification at the time, entered the forum with a proposal of his own to expand the role of state institutions and the experts who would run them. Castellanos wrote from the perspective of a participant within this evolving apparatus, outlining a plan that would fit the needs of the Cuban penal system and national-

ists' modernizing ambitions. He praised Ortiz's plan as a step toward the positivist overhaul of the penal system while pointing out that some practices within the penitentiary system had already begun to change in that direction, slightly ahead of the theoretical enterprise. Castellanos and others had already initiated a series of anthropological studies of inmates. Ortiz's plan would support and legitimize his own program for a Laboratory of Penitentiary Anthropology. Through it he would obtain, in as much detail as its techniques allowed, the moral diagnosis and rehabilitative prognosis of each inmate. Once the diagnosis was obtained, criminal anthropologists would formulate a plan by which the inmate would be redeemed socially to the extent possible: "Only on the dual basis of the moral diagnosis and the rehabilitative prognosis will it be possible to establish a rehabilitative plan or moral therapy, a specific scientific treatment of physical and moral reform, for the reintegration of the social life of an inmate."⁵⁸ Castellanos accepted the premises of Ortiz's proposal and encouraged their extension beyond the confines of formal law, to the bodies and psychologies of inmates.

The proposed penal code marked a transitional moment in Ortiz's intellectual trajectory. His views (as expressed in earlier works) linking race to crime through atavism were diffused in the text: although a theory of atavism seems to have informed his call for anthropological studies of delinquents, he refrained from making explicit statements about race. By 1928 his actions suggested ambivalence about his criminological roots: he sent copies of *Los negros bryjas* to friends even while describing himself as a "former Lombrosian."⁵⁹ By 1944 he claimed to be even further removed from his previous endeavors. His letter thanking Rafael Portuondo at the Audiencia de Oriente in Santiago de Cuba for mentioning the new penal code in his own text suggests a disavowal if not an intellectual transformation: "I feel so distant from those studies that when people speak to me of penal issues it feels like they are reminding me of another life."⁶⁰

As Ortiz's career moved on, and fairly bulged with the proliferation of other interests and new points of view, Castellanos took up the thread of positivist criminology and ensured its longevity in the Cuban penal system. In 1930 Ortiz published the "Basis for an Effective Cuban Solution," a manifesto critical of Machado's government. Soon afterward he began a voluntary exile in the United States, during which he joined the Junta Revolucionaria Cubana, an anti-Machado organization in New York.⁶¹ In Cuba Castellanos apparently obtained the support required for the expansion of his nascent project. The plan for a Laboratory of Penitentiary

Anthropology received official backing and was installed in the Model Prison.

For the purposes of the state, ethnography and folklore had seemed too arcane while eugenics proved impractical and too utopian. Castellanos's brand of penitentiary anthropology, however, became a fixture of the Cuban state until at least 1959. His positivist view of race as a measurable phenomenon and insistence on strong ties between race and criminality updated the image of the brujío or *hábito*. Of Cuban social scientific endeavors, his was the most effective response to heightened mobilization. Rather than excavating distant cultural origins or looking to genes to solve social ills, penitentiary anthropology promised to promote social peace by identifying, analyzing, and incarcerating "delinquents," effectively removing them from contexts in which they might threaten political order.

The Scientific Reality of Mestizaje

Out of Castellanos's interest in criminal anthropology grew a fascination with the use of technology to thoroughly render and represent human bodies. The organizing principle of his long and varied career was an ambition, through statistics, measurements, fingerprints, and blood analyses, to map the Cuban body. For Castellanos, any part of a body could be plumbed for the truths it might reveal.

Both the Laboratory of Penitentiary Anthropology and the Bureau of Identification, which he had directed since 1912, operated efficiently enough to provide the data that would serve a dual purpose: allow assessment of each individual and his or her potential for reform, and provide the raw material from which Castellanos could assemble a series of anthropological guides to Cuba's criminals. Drawing from 100,000 "national files" created between 1909 and 1927, Castellanos's numerous monographs, such as *La delincuencia femenina en Cuba* (1929) and *El pelo en los cubanos* (1933), made public the morphological facts that lay within the walls of the Model Prison and other penal institutions.⁶²

Castellanos insisted on the truth and significance of mestizaje in Cuba's racial history. And, like other degeneration theorists at the time, he borrowed freely from and combined seemingly inimical environmental and hereditary notions of change.⁶³ In contrast to eugenicists, Castellanos was more interested in cataloging racial mixture than in preventing its occurrence. He deplored both the Spanish and U.S. neglect of mestizaje in

their censuses, coming down especially hard on the North Americans. Even the benefit of the most recent scholarship engaging "racial factors of delinquency," he chided, had not affected their reluctance to account for mestizaje:

Disgracefully enough, the North American tables only use the categories "white" and "black," with all data on mulattoes folded into the category of black. In other words, the American ethnic puritanism stubbornly refuses to recognize the anthropological reality of the mestizo. As if obscuring the statistics eliminated the scientific reality of mestizaje, which occurs in North America as in Central and South America. Even in the most recent publication (*Census of Prisoners*, 1923) they maintain their bi-color categorization: black and white.⁶⁴

The problem Castellanos (and, according to him, all conscientious scientists) faced was how to overcome a long history of ambiguous usage, indeterminate criteria, and unscientific principles in order to fix racial categories. Mestizaje, the meaning of which was most elusive, merited special attention. To begin with, the very act of collecting statistical data, so important to his vision of an efficient penal system, had not been practiced systematically. Information was gathered only intermittently: the *Memoria de Estadística Judicial* (1915) (corrections statistics) and the *Informe al Presidente de la República* (Report to the President of the Republic) (1921) were the only publications that approached the thorough fact-finding ethos that Castellanos sought to encourage.

But even the initiation of regular anthropological studies under the auspices of his National Bureau of Identification had not produced the consistent categories that Castellanos considered necessary. Castellanos had invented the *ficha-modelo*, a bureaucratic document in which to record the details of each inmate's body. The form included questions on race, complexion, hair, eyes, nose (tip and base), lips, mouth, ears, and tattoos.⁶⁵ Despite this regularization and the training of prison staff in the proper meaning of categories, there was a distressing lack of consistency, especially with recidivists. Often, if a woman was classified as white in court documents from an initial incident, she might be labeled "mestiza" the next time around. Similarly, a woman classified as "negra" might return as "mestiza." The root of the problem lay, for Castellanos, in the misguided practice of using class to determine race: "He who, remaining within the cult of chromaticism, puts those men of better families in the 'white' category and those of lower social status in 'black,' dishonors

science and is not her disciple." Only "physical, anthropological characteristics," obtained in thorough empirical examinations with complete disregard for social class, could reveal the offender's "real" race.⁶⁶

Castellanos demanded that criminologists recognize the scientific truth of mestizaje because, in his view, miscegenation bred delinquency. The statistics he had processed for female delinquents demonstrated that once foreign blacks were factored out, Cuban mestizas, more than either black or white women, were most prone to criminality. Physical miscegenation, he insisted, was the most important factor in the creation of the contemporary underworld. Cuba's underworld was essentially mestizo, and any study that did not take racial heterogeneity and commingling into account would not, in his opinion, do justice to the phenomenon.

As he noted in *La delinuencia femenina*, Castellanos had tried to impose consistency and scientific criteria on the determination of race, so that whites, mestizas (or *mullatas*—he used these terms interchangeably), and blacks would be clearly differentiated from one another. Yet the challenge of mestizaje had apparently left him with lingering doubts as to the potency of the tools he had developed thus far. A book he published only four years later aimed at further refinement of the technique of reading racial classification from physical signs. Mestizaje posed a theoretical problem for the study of race that could be solved most efficiently, Castellanos contended, through an intensified biological analysis. The uncertainty of mestizos' origins in this case directed criminal anthropologists to biological definitions rather than away from them. If skin color was not to be trusted, the answer was to look more closely at other physical characteristics, assuming that hair or bones would hold truths that trumped potentially misleading skin tones.

Based on an award-winning study he had published in 1928, *El pelo en los cubanos* (1933) looked, as the title suggests, to hair as the key to the racial puzzle Cubans posed. It announced the capacity of new technologies of microscopic observation to discern with a great deal of precision the characteristics of hair: its shape in cross section, tendency to curl, angle of the root, color and thickness. Castellanos believed that in a miscegenated populace, studies of hair would produce a level of certainty not provided by the study of superficial characteristics: "We will obtain a powerful instrument which, in the majority of cases and under normal conditions, will deliver a racial diagnosis."⁶⁷ Combined with the observation of other anthropological features, he would be able to pin down those

people whose racial vagueness had plagued statisticians. "In the countries of Hispanic America, where mestizaje exhibits a tremendous range, it is necessary to study racial characteristics as specifically as possible, so that together with other details they may orient us and resolve the problems for statistical and anthropological analysis posed by the 'advanced mestizo' and 'backward white.'"⁶⁸

His faith in science and microscopic analysis permeate nearly all 254 pages of *El pelo*. The twenty-five chapters contain numerous illustrations, cross sections, and photographs of different kinds of hair. He claimed to supersede European anthropological authorities with his own contribution centered on racial complexity, or what he called Cuba's "ethnic mosaic." Much like Ortiz, who understood his focus on heterogeneity to be his principal contribution to European social science, Castellanos asserted that knowledge derived from Cuba's particular ethnic makeup would advance criminological studies of hair and race, until then conducted exclusively on homogeneous European races. In the penological arm of the state, mestizaje was a dangerous, precisely identifiable phenomenon.

After completing the study on hair, Castellanos expressed new optimism about progress toward his vision of a completely measured population: "We have measured the height of Cubans according to the laws of anthropology, as well as body weight, both anatomical characteristics which have allowed us to get a more precise idea of the height and weight of all the natives of this country."⁶⁹ Fingerprints would also provide vital information. As director of the National Bureau of Identification, Castellanos had been responsible for the implementation of fingerprinting for police and judicial purposes. Scurled by belief in the value of fingerprints as anthropological clues, he had made several attempts to gather larger quantities and engage in further studies. In the early 1930s he had collected the fingerprints of Cubans of color and compared them to those of Haitian and Jamaican immigrants.⁷⁰ Later, in an action that satisfied his thirst for data and the requirements of maintaining order, he had ordered that all driver licenses be fingerprinted.

His vision of a thoroughly documented citizenry became the target of popular contention. In 1934, on arriving home from a prolonged research trip in the United States, he learned that his office had been ransacked. Writing to his friend August Vollmer, police captain of Berkeley, California, he expressed his dismay and disbelief:

While I still hold my position, I was surprised and pained to find on my return, that during my absence, my office was broken open and sacked. Everything was taken from the desks, books, observations, scientific material etc. Though I never was a politician, the revolutionists of the former regime stole and destroyed in a moment all the data collected over a period of fifteen years of incessant labor. At the present time, I am enjoying a leave of absence, requested on account of ill health—I have not had sufficient strength to even go see what is left of my office. Perhaps I shall never go there again.⁷¹

Yet he did return, only to weather another outburst of discontent in 1936. He seemed to understand that his methods had been implicated in protests against an intrusive and unjust regime. "The 'good citizens,'" he wrote, again to Vollmer, "that pretend I am 'violating the Constitutional rights by having honest citizens fingerprinted in our Bureau mixing their fingerprints with those of criminals' started a movement with the purpose of getting rid of me."⁷²

Troubles came as well from another quarter: his estranged wife had enlisted the aid of numerous politicians eager to oust him, because "many politicians have been sentenced to prison and they never forget that I am an obstacle."⁷³ Despite his support from professors of medicine at the University of Havana, the pressure was so intense that he tendered his resignation. Yet by January 1937, after "recent changes operated in our Cabinet," which he hoped would "settle or at least lessen difficulties," he had returned to his post as head of the National Bureau of Identification. Evidently Castellanos had been swept up in a growing conflict between civil and military government, more specifically between the regime of Miguel Mariano Gómez and the backstage manipulations of Fulgencio Batista. Gómez, who had been elected (fairly by all accounts) in early 1936, had clashed with Batista over the growing power of the military, which had favored a bill reinstating the death penalty and begun to arrest politicians it deemed to be dangerous radicals. Alarmed by the arrest of one of its members, the House of Representatives called for an investigation of police repression. It is likely that Castellanos resigned in the face of attacks on his policing practices. By December 1937, however, Gómez had been impeached and ousted from office, replaced by Laredo Brú, who was more acquiescent to Batista's encroachments. This reshuffling may have been the "recent change in cabinet" that Castellanos credited with enabling his return.⁷⁴ In 1954, although quite ill following

repeated surgery, he was still acting head of the National Bureau of Identification. Castellanos worked in Batista's regime until it was overthrown. He left his country and his position in 1959 after forty-seven years of service.⁷⁵

The insistent search for the biological manifestations of mestizaje persisted through Castellanos's institutions as a troubling counterpoint to the proliferation of "mulatto poetries." As the state relied increasingly on science and criminology for more efficient means of criminal identification and repression, Castellanos's views about the biological, atavistic nature of race prevailed. Interestingly, in the census, only judicial and penitentiary records used the category of mestizo. In other statistics, such as those accounting for regional population, education, or marital status, census takers used only "blanco" and "de color" (with footnotes explaining that "mixed" and "yellow" were folded into "de color"). Effectively, mestizos did not merit their own separate category except when related to crime—as reflected in judicial and penitentiary statistics.⁷⁶

Castellanos's influence extended beyond the institutions he directly controlled. The secret police, or *Policia Secreta Nacional* (PSN), sought guidance on issues of identification and analysis of the etiology of crime in Castellanos's work. Through the PSN's Homicide Bureau, which fell under the jurisdiction of Castellanos's Bureau of Identification, members of the secret police were tutored in his criminological theories.⁷⁷ The close relationship between Castellanos and the PSN emerges through an examination of articles published in the PSN's journal, *Policia Secreta Nacional*.⁷⁸ An article written by Castellanos himself on the technological advances in *policiología* emphasized the use of scientific, physical evidence as opposed to testimonial and therefore fallible evidence.⁷⁹ Other articles praised the Lombrosian school of criminology, especially its more subtle version that had evolved in response to criticism. This version stressed the importance of the ongoing study of delinquents and worked from the premise that atavism and degeneration were the sources of criminality. As such, the Lombrosian school was still useful, according to criminologists, for a number of reasons: "For a long time Lombrosian anthropology has determined all the fundamental principles of efficient crime prevention and rehabilitation, from eugenics to moral and mental hygiene, from the struggle against juvenile delinquency to scientific policing, from penal laws to the penitentiary system."⁸⁰ Much more evidence of concrete police and penological practices is necessary to draw conclusions about the direct implementation of these ideas. But the tenacious

hold of notions of degeneration and the criminal manifestations of Cuba's "ethnic mosaic" within powerful state institutions is undeniable.

Conclusion

Although folklore, eugenics, and criminology enjoyed differential support from the Machado administration, the development of these disciplines reflected a rising interest in theories of racial difference. In their search for cultural authenticity, folklorists and ethnographers drew on racial categories conceived in national terms (African, Spanish, Indian). Eugenicians rejected prevailing "environmentalist" approaches and replaced them with strategies for genetic purification. Criminologists acknowledged racial mixture only as the source of dangerous criminal tendencies. Informed by different uses of time and distinct disciplinary innovations, social scientists worked to depoliticize or demobilize the objects of their studies. From the point of view of folklorists, ethnographers, eugenicians, and criminologists, the transcendence or elimination of racial categories seemed an unfruitful path to pursue. As they designed ways to understand, denigrate, celebrate, mobilize, punish, or purify Cuban bodies, social scientists asserted their continuing interest in race.