THE VIRGIN IN THE MIRROR:
Author(s): Elizabeth Perez
Source: *The Journal of African American History*, Vol. 95, No. 2 (Spring 2010), pp. 202-228
Published by: Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Inc.
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5323/jafriamerhist.95.2.0202
Accessed: 30/01/2011 06:51

# THE VIRGIN IN THE MIRROR: READING IMAGES OF A BLACK MADONNA THROUGH THE LENS OF AFRO-CUBAN WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES

**Elizabeth Perez**

> Some devout old women of color tell us that the Virgin of Regla, Yemayá, swims the length and breadth of her bay by night . . . and owing to this, some mornings her clothes are wet. . . .
>
> —Lydia Cabrera[1]

The Virgin of Regla, the patroness of the Cuban port town that bears her name, is located directly across the bay of Havana from the capital city. According to legend, the original sculpture of Regla was created in Africa and made its way to Chipiona, near Cádiz, Spain, the port of choice for ships sailing to the Americas.[2] In Cuba her iconography has remained consistent for almost three centuries, and the figure of Regla has proven ubiquitous in pictures on household altars; around throats and wrists, stamped into pendants; and on the pedestals carried by devotees during annual processions. The first reference to the Virgin of Regla in Cuban letters occurs in the 18th-century travel narrative of Bishop Pedro Augustín Morell de Santa Cruz, and it provides a necessary point of departure for any discussion of Regla's meanings and functions.[3] On a tour of the island in 1755, Morell visited her sanctuary—founded on the grounds of a sugar mill in 1692—and marveled at the number of miracles attributed to the ebony-hued icon.[4] According to Morell, "What distinguished this image as a prodigious effigy was that she had never accepted touch-ups with white color."[5] Although the author does not stress the detail, he anticipated a main ingredient of her appeal: her unambiguous identity as neither white nor "mulatta," or mixed-race, but *black*.

For practitioners of the Afro-Cuban religious formation called *regla ocha* or Lucumí, and more popularly Santería, the Virgin of Regla re-presents Yemayá, the spirit of maternity and domestic labor. As a visual image grasped at a glance, Regla renders visible the dynamic, interrelated subject matter of Yemayá's mythology: her power over the seas, defense of infants, and constant displays of solicitude for her followers.[6] During the colonial period, four Marian images from Spain became associated with West African, specifically Yorùbá, spirits in Cuba: the Virgins of Candelaria (Oyá), Mercedes (Obatalá), Caridad (Ochún), and Regla (Yemayá),

Elizabeth Perez is Assistant Professor of Religion at Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH.

the only one whose face and hands had appeared brown in Europe.[7] Affectionately called *La Negrita*, Regla is the only Marian image in Cuba considered to be black, and Yemayá is the only spirit, or *oricha*, explicitly described as such by devotees. Lucumí initiates also consistently portray Yemayá as the most abused of spirits; she not only figures in myth as a wet nurse and maid, but as a victim of incest, rape, and physical violence. In the eyes of her followers, the Virgin of Regla has remained miraculous not just by retaining her color in a literal sense, but also—through her alter ego, Yemayá—by bearing witness to the horrors visited on Afro-Cuban bodies, both enslaved and free.

Most scholarship on race and Marian imagery in Cuba has centered on the island's copper-colored patroness, la Virgen de la Caridad.[8] Depicted as a comely mulatta, Caridad has served as the preeminent symbol of religious and cultural hybridity for the nation, furnishing it with an origin myth that casts its mingling of races as voluntary and erotic, rather than violently coerced. Ironically, to judge by the proliferation of publications devoted to the figure of Caridad, she has emerged as something of a fetish for scholars as well. By contrast, no major study to date has considered popular devotion to the Virgin of Regla, deemed not only black, but "de piel negrísima," "negra como el azabache"; or delved into the widespread appeal of her iconography, as I intend to do in this essay.[9] Discussing the role played by chromolithographs of Regla within the object regime of Santería generally goes against the grain of the 20th-century historiography on *regla ocha*. While early commentators harbored misgivings about the display of Roman Catholic iconography by Afro-Cubans, diagnosing them with a fetishistic attachment to material objects; anthropologists, intent on locating African "survivals" in Santería, later hastened to brush such imagery under the proverbial rug.[10] However, recent studies of Lucumí aesthetics allow us to move beyond questions of "purity" and "authenticity" in order to reevaluate the use of heterogeneous artifacts and technologies in the formation of religious identities.[11]

Scholars have only begun to investigate the nexus of print and oral practices occasioned by the rise of chromolithography in the 19th century, and this analysis follows the pioneering studies of Christopher Pinney, Dana Rush, David Morgan, and Donald J. Cosentino in attempting to see chromolithography through the eyes of modern religious practitioners.[12] Despite the likewise pathbreaking scholarship on enslaved women's lives published within the last decade, the connection between images of Afro-Cuban women and their reception of them has yet to be explored. Rather than taking the Virgin of Regla for granted as a stable, officially-defined container of meaning, this essay accepts the challenge thrown down by Lucumí practitioners to envision her radically otherwise.[13] In what follows, I turn to Afro-Cuban religious history, aesthetic sensibilities, and modes of spectatorship in order to explain the correspondence between the Virgin of Regla and Yemayá. Building

on the transformation of the image from a tool of conversion to a sensuous interface for communication between the human and the divine, I argue that the power of the Regla figure, in this and other media, has resided in its "visual peculiarity," inviting Afro-Cubans to perceive her color (*negra*) as a sign of race (Negro), and to see her as one of themselves.[14] As we will see in the case of early 20th-century processions in Regla, devotees appropriated the Virgin's image as a means to give voice to not only Yemayá's history, but their own.

## IMAGES AS INSTRUMENTS

**"Nuestra Señora de Regla"**
**(from W. Gumppenberg, *Atlas Marianus*, 1653)**

Medieval legend places Regla's origins in the hands of the African-born church father, Augustine of Hippo. According to Roman Catholic sources, an angel commanded him to fashion an image of Mary, which he subsequently carved from a piece of local wood and displayed in his chapel.[15] In the history of Roman Catholic images, such far-fetched origin myths have, as art historian Hans Belting writes, "served to justify a preexisting image as document and relic," to lend objects of questionable attribution a worthy provenance, and to account for their highly differentiated forms.[16] In Regla's case, giving her a North African origin seemed to answer the question posed by her color. In Europe, Regla numbers among the hundreds of brown-faced Marian images called *Vierges noires*, or "Black Madonnas."[17] According to Leonard Moss's study of these vierges noires, they generally fit into three categories: first, images with physiognomy and pigmentation that match the indigenous community of believers; second, images that turned dark

as a consequence of chemical factors such as carbon-rich gas from the constant use of votive candles, or the accumulation of dust and dirt; and third, images whose color cannot be readily accounted for without appealing to notions of artistic license.

The missionaries sent to colonial Cuba in later centuries made liberal use of icons and other staples of popular religiosity.[18] Pursuing a closely supervised policy, they did not simply impose baptism on slaves; they also acquainted their enslaved catechumens with the intercessory powers and iconography of reputedly efficacious saints.[19] The priests sought to replace worthless, primitive objects with authentically valuable ones, trusting that the fetish put out of sight would soon be put out of mind. Enslaved and free African workers had little trouble identifying saints with spirits since both are distinguished by preferences in colors, emblems, and spheres of influence. For Lucumí practitioners, the brothers Cosmos and Damien came to stand for the divine twins called the Ìbejì. The raffia-clad, pox-scarred oricha of illness, Babalúaiyé, donned the burlap robes of Lazarus, the leprous beggar from the New Testament. Spirits lost some attributes and gained others in a process that theologian Joseph M. Murphy describes as "more complex, and more creative than mere deception. . . . It seems clear that the Lucumí were signifying several things at once by juxtaposing Catholic and African symbols. Something was hidden by the Catholic symbols, but also revealed."[20] The term *santería*, or saint worship, emerged to designate this apparent commitment to a "double-faced pantheon."[21]

Rather than assisting Roman Catholicism in the obliteration of African-derived religious forms, however, the Virgin of Regla and others helped to sustain their practice. From the beginning the figure of Regla was "not only the subject of its own history," as art historian Tom Cummins has written of other Marian images, but also "an agent that authorize[d] the miraculous capabilities of its many copies."[22] Chromolithographs such as those found on prayer cards attained the greatest degree of popularity among the objects sold in churches and from itinerant vendors. Chromolithographs (or chromos) have remained in high demand for almost two centuries, due to their ready availability, relatively low cost, variety, and attractive appearance. The German copying process called chemical printing had spread to the New World within thirty years of its invention in 1796, and by the 1840s South American manufacturers had improved on lithography by adding vibrant colors to prints. The accessibility of chromolithographs afforded Afro-Cubans an unprecedented opportunity to "poach" from the repertoire of European icons in order to assemble home altars with Roman Catholic and various African-derived visual images.[23] By framing, adorning, and performing rituals in front of paper images, initiates have striven to transform the beautiful into the efficacious.[24]

Conspicuous images of saints on altars have traditionally operated in concert with the maintenance of concealed, housebound objects called *fundamentos* or *otánes* (from the Yorùbá word for stone, *otán*), the *sine qua non* of Lucumí religious

identity.[25] According to initiates, visual contact with these stones depletes them of the vital energy called *ashé* and compromises the security of the immanent oricha. Since trying to "read" this illegible object is tantamount to polluting it, chromos and other Roman Catholic images have served to entertain the roving eyes of the uninitiated, some of whom have been motivated by more than innocent curiosity. Indeed, when the "war on Africanisms" actually became much more pronounced by the 1890s, the display of officially sanctioned religious paraphernalia began to function as a screen for stone-filled vessels, to draw away the gaze of the suspicious and throw them off the scent of outlawed practices.[26] During the first decades of the Cuban republic, the authorities arrested, prosecuted, and otherwise persecuted Afro-Cubans for "illegal association" after participating in rituals branded as *brujería*, or witchcraft.[27] Within a social order that mandated the policing of Afro-Cuban religious activity thought fetishistic, chromos managed to protect not only otanes, but also those who owned them.

Although initiates have had practical political reasons for using chromolithographs, historian Donald Constantino observed that one must not "dismiss the imported images as ruses used only to shield the true identity of a proscribed African god."[28] For many Santería initiates, the pictures of saints show spirits possessing devotees, dressed in the regal finery preferred by them.[29] This perception has rested largely on the conventional portrayal of facial features on chromos and in statuary. According to Yorùbá aesthetic codes, anthropomorphic images depict mediums in a state of trance, signified by the frozen expression and "wide-eyed stare" that announces the arrival of the oricha within the body.[30] "When a person comes under the influence of a spirit," practitioners believe, "his ordinary eyes swell to accommodate the inner eyes, the eyes of the god."[31] To bystanders, the eyes of the possessed seem "big and bright," as if lit from within by candles.[32] Confronted by Roman Catholic images with prominent eyes and unsmiling countenances, Lucumí followers chose to read the saints as fellow devotees surrounded by the preferred accoutrements of the deities in question.[33] The body of the saint stands for the ideal adept, whose mastery of trance indicates the profundity of her submission to the oricha.[34]

Of course, eyes were not the only feature of Roman Catholic images to attract the attention of their viewers. The brown face and hands of the Virgin of Regla led Lucumí to perceive her as being of African descent—the official narrative of her origins stated as much—and thus to pair her with the oricha Yemayá. The distinctive character of Yemayá's worship and oral tradition offers rare insight into the co-production of historico-mythological discourses and sociocultural processes.[35] For instance, in Yorùbáland, Yemayá was patroness of the river Ògun, but Lucumí reinterpreted her as owner of the ocean. More significantly perhaps, Regla's image, seen as an illustration of Yemayá's mythology, gave concrete form to singularly

problematic aspects of women's bondage. For Afro-Cubans, deemed representable only in caricature, the Virgin of Regla would encode both the productive and reproductive labor of women of color.

## LA NEGRITA IN LABOR

> You can't suffer more than [Yemayá] has: raped by her son, thrown herself off a cliff, and burst open to create the orisha. She had a lover, [but] had to cut his tongue out so he wouldn't tell her secrets. . . .
>
> —African American Lucumí priestess[36]

Who is "Yemayá"? This question is not easily addressed. Stories about the oricha circulate in a ritual and sociopolitical field where different versions of narratives, transmitted through ceremonial activities such as divination, frequently compete for authority, credibility, and mythic status.[37] Among Santería initiates, no two communities will agree entirely on the identity of a given oricha, perform rites in an identical manner, nor share precisely the same bodies of oral literature with members. Nonetheless, one may hazard a few generalizations about the worship of Yemayá in Cuba. In an allusion to the ocean, her abode and realm, most houses continue to present strings of alternating clear, white, and blue beads to those initiated in her name.[38] Along with her otánes, Yemayá's soup tureen contains nautical figurines cast in lead, the metal used for sounding depths at sea, including boats, life preservers, mermaids, propellers, and anchors. Individuals seized by Yemayá in spirit possession undulate to the beat of her signature drum rhythm, imitating the movements of waves. Literary scholar Julia Cuervo Hewitt declared that "the goddess of the sea is adored on every Afro-Cuban altar in a properly prepared vessel . . . or in brown dolls dressed in blue, innocently displayed in the living room or parlor, as a symbol not only of her omnipresence, but also of permission and entry."[39] Initiates pun on the Virgin of Regla's name to place emphasis on certain attributes of Yemayá: since in Spanish, *regla* means "rule" or "regulation," in Cuba one frequently finds straight-edged rulers and other instruments of measurement on altars dedicated to her. Regla also means "period" as a polite term for menstruation, encouraging the belief that Yemayá governs the cyclical flow of blood from women's bodies.[40]

Yemayá rules travel over salt water, and Lucumí credit her with delivering Yorùbá captives safely across the Atlantic during the Middle Passage, protecting them from fatal illnesses on voyages that frequently lasted many months.[41] In Cuba her association with the institution of slavery runs deep. For food offerings, Yemayá craves those closely associated with the plantation routine and the diet of enslaved workers such as crude molasses and unfiltered cane syrup. These gifts recall the strenuous labor performed by women inside sweltering sugar mills, as well as the

rations of sucrose by-products allotted to them by slave owners as a means of supplementing meager and monotonous provisions. Fried country plantains, sweet potatoes, cowpeas, burnt-coconut balls, salt-cured meat, and bacon-flavored grits number among the humble dishes most often prepared for her, involving culinary techniques little altered since the 19th century.[42] Judging by the visual image of Regla, Yemayá's taste in fashion also seems governed by the habitus of slave women.[43] The ruffles that frame Regla's face recall the cotton rags hastily fastened over so-called nappy hair on the way to the field or mill, then wrapped and tufted to imitate indigenous Yorùbá head coverings. In addition, both Regla's frills and tunic are white, the color worn to Mass by Afro-Cuban ladies' maids; the mistresses they accompanied to church often donned sable dresses and mantillas that resembled widows' weeds.[44]

Divinatory verses and praise-songs cast Yemayá as a maternal figure. A familiar feature of her altar remains the womb-shaped *iba,* a structure made up of four porcelain or earthenware plates, arranged vertically, inserted within a bowl, and covered with a fifth plate, laid horizontally. According to Lucumí mythology, Yemayá gave birth not only to the world's marine life, but also to the rest of the major orichas. The statues that decorate the Virgin of Regla's church in Regla, Cuba, may be viewed as portraits of Yemayá's divine issues: apart from the aforementioned Marian images, one finds St. Joseph the Carpenter (Osaín), St. Teresa of the Little Flower (Obbá), and St. Francis of Assisi (Orulá), among others. Yemayá also brings up some of her grandchildren, the progeny of other female orichas viewed as less motherly (usually either the standoffish Oyá or the vamp Ochún). For instance, Yemayá adopts Changó from Obatalá, and later rears the twins that Changó goes on to father with one of his three wives. The tradition of Yemayá's motherhood, physical and symbolic, points to the assumption articulated elsewhere in origin myths passed down by Lucumí: that the lacteal waters swelling at the dawn of time engendered the phenomena personified by the oricha such as nature, weather, disease, craft, agricultural labor, fertility, warfare, and death. By giving birth to each, thereby disseminating her own ashé, she earned her sacred epithets, Mother-of-Moist-Nipples and "the World's Wet Nurse."[45]

One might wonder how Yemayá became a mother if, as her mythology asserts, she had little desire for men or interest in attracting them. Her myths answer the question straightforwardly: Yemayá was raped. The subject of violation pervades the mythology of Santería related in divinatory verses and ritual utterance, but seems peculiarly pronounced in the case of Yemayá. Most documented Cuban accounts combine the taboos of rape and incest, perpetrated by one of her grown sons. In a popular version of the story, Yemayá's firstborn rapes her one day in his father's absence.[46] Afterwards, he swears her to secrecy and communicates his desire for an ongoing affair; she flees in disgust, but loses her footing, falls on her

stomach, and bursts open, bleeding water and releasing the orichas (as well as the oceans or the river Ògun).[47] According to another variant, her husband ridicules her massive breasts, leading to a vicious argument, and she trips while reeling from his assaults. In other myths, she intervenes to save Ochún from rape by another oricha, but in most cases it is Yemayá who falls victim to the unwelcome advances herself.[48] Anthropologist Carlos A. Echánove has bluntly observed that her myths seem to have sprung from a nightmare.[49] Although some of the narratives no doubt originated among the Yorùbá before the advent of chattel slavery in the Americas, their prevalence and longevity in Cuba cry out for analysis.

These stories bear a strong resemblance to those that, according to historian of religions Bruce Lincoln, are "widely attested throughout Europe and Asia, in which creation follows on the death of some primordial being, whose disarticulated body provides the material substance from which the cosmos is fashioned."[50] However, Afro-Cuban myths diverge in important respects from indigenous Yorùbá ones. The latter tend to linger on the imagery of Yemayá's body as a field of ripe calabashes (symbolizing female cultic authority), with breasts and womb splitting to release the orichas in a torrent of water; one cosmogony has Yemayá simply eating until she pops, yielding the universe.[51] By contrast, Lucumí narratives tend to stress Yemayá's violent penetration (and loss of bodily integrity), more than her subsequent pursuit, as a prerequisite for the orichas' emergence. In the New World scenario, her assailant has already possessed her once, and she runs to prevent further humiliation, preferring death to his embrace. Although the distinctions drawn between these sets of myths rely on published accounts of dynamic oral traditions (rather than statistical data), they are not negligible. In attempting to determine the reasons for the difference between them, one cannot ignore the major historical event separating the indigenous Yorùbá narrators and audiences from their distant cousins and fictive relations, the Cuban-born Lucumí: the transatlantic slave trade, entailing capture, rape, and forced labor (manual as well as maternal) on a massive scale.

A picture of the infant Jesus cradled in the Virgin of Regla's arms may not seem capable of conveying so sordid a story. But, as demonstrated above with regard to Regla's covered hair, frills, and tunic, chromos and other images invite "metonymic elaborations," prompting devotees to create narratives about the relationships depicted between the objects and subjects in a given print.[52] Shown St. Barbara, Lucumí not only paired her with Changó, but started to interpret the apples sitting at the saint's feet as one of this oricha's favorite foods. Similarly, according to Dorothy Wyrick, the castle looming behind Barbara is thought to index Changó's royalty and, by extension, "African encounters with European power (including slave trading fortresses erected along the West African Coast)."[53] In the case of the learned mystic St. Teresa of Ávila, initiates translate her tall *pileus quadratus*—the

square cap once conferred on doctors of theology—into a crown befitting the headstrong oricha Oyá, wife of Changó and queen of the cemetery.[54] As ethnographer Michel Leiris once advised, concerning "the chromo-hermeneutic process" throughout the African Diaspora, "plurality of attributes and of names for the same divinity or the same saint (between which a very extended and very complex play of corresponding elements of identification could be operative), extreme elasticity of possibilities of rapport . . . variability of representations attached to the same divinity, and variability in the interpretation of forms, forces one to . . . pay attention to everything."[55] Indeed, Afro-Cuban initiates gloss over few, if any, visual details as trivial. The gaze of the devotee demands that the personages and items depicted in prints and statues conform to the identity of the orichas represented elsewhere in the cultic community, and also address the material realities of devotees.

Passed by word of mouth, some of the stories that accompanied the image of Regla became embedded in the written literature published during the colonial period, not as recorded speech, but as "local color," throwaway lines, and moments of narrative rupture. Such snatches of oral tradition can offer a critical view of the Afro-Cuban subaltern past, and an "experience-near" account of the interpellative process—one that approaches the emic perspective, and illuminates history as lived by those "called" by Yemayá to serve her.[56] The most compelling portrait of a "Regla" comes from the monumental 19th-century Cuban novel *Cecilia Valdés o la Loma del Ángel* (1882).[57] Influenced by *costumbrismo*, a literary genre preoccupied with regional customs and manners, Cirilo Villaverde wrote *Cecilia Valdés* without trying to disguise his dependence on Lucumí mythology in the development of a central character, the wet nurse and Mammy-figure, María de Regla Santa Cruz.[58] A supporter of abolition, Villaverde drew on ideas of Yemayá current among Afro-Cuban ritual specialists over the four decades that saw the greatest number of Yorùbá captives transported to Cuba; and he published the first version of *Cecilia Valdés* in 1839, but did not complete his magnum opus until 1879. He connected María with not only travel by sea and an irresistible attraction to drum music, but also prodigious maternity. For a time, María lives on a sugar estate called "The Earthenware Jar," whose name alludes to the calabash-shaped pots that safeguard Yemayá's otánes, and as Lorna Williams notes, "reminds the reader that the Yorúbà sea goddess was often represented with two identical earthenware jars to emblematize her affiliation with twins."[59]

Lucumí oral tradition lauds Yemayá for her longevity, wisdom, witchcraft-medicine, and valor in defense of the vulnerable; one praise-song ascribes to her "the tradition of the foremost woman in the world."[60] Accordingly, Villaverde casts María as "the 'real' mother of all the children in the novel" and describes *only* María as performing the act of breastfeeding.[61] He casts María de Regla in the mold of

what literary critic Jacqueline Bryant calls a "foremother figure," a female elder whose moral rectitude, maintenance of African cultural forms, and sagacity inspire her peers and protégés.[62] She bears the scars of her servitude, but she also counsels verbally, heals physically, and preserves maligned traditions that foster a critical perspective and social conscience—the crucial factors missing from the racist stereotypes of the Mammy figure. In a famous monologue, María recapitulates her life story, protests her own abuse, and articulates grievances to her mistress on behalf of enslaved women.[63] She gives vent to the rage felt by those enslaved caught in a double bind: forced to wed an incompatible acquaintance or stranger, yet vilified for daring to honor her own desires.[64] She decries the abject insecurity of slave life as a form of violence in itself and insists on the value of familial bonds, especially between mothers and children. Throughout the novel, María assumes the role of advocate played by Yemayá in her mythology, defining the boundaries of morality and declaring her solidarity with those at the social margins.

## ON A PEDESTAL: REGLA IN SOCIAL AND RITUAL CONTEXT

The cult of the Virgin of Regla in Cuba began with a copy, if not a simulacrum: an oil painting, or *retrato*, of the "original" sculpture housed in Chipiona, Spain. In 1687 pilgrims started to venerate the canvas in the small chapel of a sugar mill in the town of Guaicanamar, Cuba.[65] The San Rafael Hurricane of 1692 destroyed the structure along with the image, but another was not long in coming. During the storm, furious winds and waves battered a vessel bound for Havana, and in a moment of panic (the sources say devotion), an Asturian passenger implored Regla to save him.[66] The boat was lost while the man lived to tell the tale, and he built a sanctuary on the ruins of her shrine in gratitude. Four years later, another indebted supplicant donated a hand-crafted Spanish statue of Regla to her church, and installed her with considerable fanfare on her feast day, 8 September 1696.[67] Annual festivities did not start in earnest until 1714, when Regla was proclaimed Patroness and Protectress of the bay of Havana. For eight consecutive days, residents made merry with pyrotechnical displays, bonfires, and dances; on the last morning, that of her feast, devotees removed Regla from her apse above the tabernacle and paraded her through the streets. The procession continued into the water, as Regla, escorted by clergymen and revelers, floated towards Havana atop a miniature altar on a raft garlanded with streamers and Chinese lanterns. Many fishermen and sailors settled in the town of Regla over the years, some from Europe, others from the Canary Islands. They erected private shrines for the Virgin and had shipwrights carve her image into figureheads, but her appeal was hardly limited to the seafaring. The town of Guaicanamar had become Regla, through metonymy rather than decree.

In 1598 one of Cuba's first colonists founded the sugar mill that later boasted the oil painting of Regla. The machinery was drawn by oxen, and the oxen driven by enslaved Africans.[68] Over the course of three hundred years, the port town saw innumerable slave ships bulging with captives from the Guinea Coast and eventually several slave hospitals were erected to treat the diseased and dehydrated, as well as enslaved inhabitants injured from local plantations.[69] Scholar, Lucumí priest, and diviner Miguel "Willie" Ramos describes the town of Regla as "Africa's heart in Cuba," the seat of not only Yorùbá, but also Bantu and Igbo/Efik-inspired religious formations. The first chapter of a Calabarí secret society on the island, the cabildo *Bricamo Apapa Efí*, was founded in 1836 in Regla.[70] During the early 1800s Egbado captives from western Yorùbáland apparently staged a masquerade on the Epiphany, playing Gèlèdé drums and offering sacrifices. Yet not until the mid-19th century did Regla become an important Yorùbá enclave and the "cradle" of regla ocha in Cuba.[71] Although the 1846 census does not state how many Yorùbá numbered among Regla's almost 1,600 Afro-Cuban residents, the impact of this rapidly growing community was soon to be felt.[72] In 1866 the *Cabildo Yemayá* was co-founded in Regla by enslaved Africans Adeshina (renamed Ño Remigio Herrera by his masters), Añabi (Ño Juan), and Atandá (Ño Filomeno García). Formerly family friends in Yorùbáland, Atandá and Añabi had renewed their acquaintance of three decades earlier while the latter was recuperating from a leg fracture at one of Regla's infirmaries. Together they constructed the first three sets of consecrated bàtá drums in Cuba, including an ensemble called *Voz de Oro* for the Lucumí initiates of Regla.[73]

The town of Regla remained predominantly white, yet it developed into a major hub for Afro-Cuban ritual specialists, including the virtuosi of the Ifá divination system, known as *babaláwo*, "fathers of secrets."[74] In the 1880s *cabildos de nación* throughout Cuba had started to die out a result of repressive legislation, while those in Regla only increased in vigor and number.[75] Cabildos aided in the transmission of Lucumí culture by furnishing room for rituals, pooling funds to pay for compatriots' funerals, and staging festivals for the spirits on saints' feast days. The leadership of cabildos poached from the Spanish and Cuban aristocratic iconography of the colonial period, acquiring imported porcelains, gilded adornments, and opulent floral fabrics to create sumptuous "thrones" for patron orichas.[76] Cabildos decorated both elected and hereditary officeholders with royal titles such as queen, prince, and courtier; initiated heads professed descent from legendary monarchs and cult members in Yorùbáland on whom the orichas had conferred authority. Cabildos prized "saltwater" members born in Africa, treasuring the "secrets" or ritual information they dispensed. This trend intensified at the turn of the century, after many cabildos and Lucumí communities gave way to house-temples and not only opened their doors to whites, but also began initiating them

into the highest echelons of the priesthood.[77] Secular reality was thus inverted in the religious field: individuals languishing on the lowest rung of the sociopolitical ladder, formerly enslaved people and their descendents, routinely reached the top in regla ocha.[78]

After decades of flagging interest, Lucumí cabildos resuscitated the town of Regla's processional tradition in the 20th century.[79] Prominent women had come to direct the two major religious communities of the day: Adeshina's Cabildo Yemayá and that of Susana Cantero.[80] The last "saltwater" babaláwo in Cuba, Adeshina had arrived in the early 19th century as an enslaved worker and performed manual labor for decades before co-founding Cabildo Yemayá.[81] In a photograph now cherished by descendents, he wears the magisterial air and Yorùbá facial scarifications of a diviner credited with establishing Ifá on the island, as well as a bow tie and smart suit testifying to his later accomplishments as a property owner and emancipated citizen.[82] Adeshina died in 1905, bequeathing Cabildo Yemayá to his daughter María Josefa Herrera, called "Pepa." Pepa was groomed for leadership and initiated and given the religious name of Eshú Bí in the late 19th century by the legendary *iyalorichas*, or priestesses, Ña Inés and Ma Monserrate González.[83] Relative newcomer Susana Cantero was born in Cienfuegos, Cuba, and moved to Regla in 1914.[84] She became one of the town's most honored ritual specialists, and set up her own "neotraditional" cabildo sometime before 1921, the year that public rites for Yemayá on Regla's feast day entered the historical record.[85] The two cabildos organized separate processions and marched every year from then on, apparently without interruption, for many years after Pepa's death in July 1947 and Susana's in August 1948.[86]

Accounts from the period combine to create a fairly coherent impression of the annual events.[87] Neither Susana nor Pepa used the icon of Regla enshrined in her sanctuary for the processions, but instead paraded with the same images that they maintained at home and brought them out only for Regla's feast day.[88] On the morning of 8 September, devotees met at the church and lined up Susana's statues in front of the altar; Pepa's followers remained at the door and did not enter.[89] A priest celebrated Mass, blessing the images and parishioners with holy water; in a once-a-year concession to his congregants, he also deigned to bless the bàtá drums. Meanwhile, in the doorway of the church, cabildo functionaries performed the *obi* coconut oracle in order to ascertain the orichas' approval of the proceedings. After Mass, cabildo members loaded handbarrows fitted with platforms for the saints, complete with plaster putti, onto the shoulders of designated carriers. Groups of women usually carried statues re-presenting female spirits, the Virgins of Charity (Oshún) and of Regla (Yemayá), while men bore those of male orichas, St. Barbara (Changó) and Our Lady of Mercy (Obatalá). Festooned with flowers and adorned with costly lace, hand-embroidered, and metallic panels, the elevated images wove

through the crowd towards the bay. Throngs of spectators followed them, clutching handfuls of "cleansing herbs" such as basil and bitter-broom, then throwing the bundles into the sea.[90] At water's edge, the cabildo directors consulted the obi once more and slid oblations for Yemayá into the ocean spray as the drums thundered, devotees intoned encomia, and individual participants became possessed.

**Procession with statues of the Virgins of Charity and of Regla, 1957**[91]

From the bay, bàtá drummers led the processions down narrow cobblestone streets. They stopped not only at the homes of important priests and priestesses, but also at the police station, the mayor's office, and other municipal headquarters. By crossing the threshold of government agencies, the cabildos symbolically gained possession of the town that, by 1921, had become the site of bigotry and frequent racist violence.[92] Since 1846, the date of the first reliable census, Afro-Cubans had become a progressively smaller minority in Regla; once over 31 percent of the population, in 1919 Afro-Cubans represented only 9 percent of its 14,489 residents, "the lowest proportion in all Cuban cities with 8,000 or more inhabitants."[93] Regla's authorities persecuted Afro-Cubans during the aforementioned "witch-hunting" hysteria of the early 1900s, reportedly confiscating the Cabildo Yemayá's *Voz de Oro* set of bàtá drums, which remain missing to this day.[94] On a more quotidian level, Afro-Cubans often fell victim to prejudicial housing and hiring practices in Regla. For instance, the town's fire department did not accept applicants of color, and a welter of unsubstantiated rumors in May 1910 implicated local members of

the first Afro-Cuban political party, the Partido Independiente de Color (PIC), in a scheme to vandalize the station house. In the second wave of arrests in as many months, the police scooped up alleged members of the PIC in Regla and neighboring Guanabacoa, with the intention of dissuading other Afro-Cubans from upsetting the status quo.[95]

Then came the so-called race war of 1912. An Afro-Cuban veteran of the latest war of independence (1895–1898), Evaristo Estenoz had founded the PIC in 1908 to boost the visibility of, and support for, Afro-Cuban issues. In a congressional decision that adversely affected activists in Regla, the party was outlawed two years later and declared unconstitutional for "discriminating" against whites; the PIC leadership was imprisoned, along with dozens of members, and their printing press was seized. In the summer of 1912, a desperate, overmatched PIC resorted to endorsing isolated acts of sabotage in order to bluff the government into accepting a compromise and granting amnesties.[96] Instead, the Cuban army crushed the insurgents with the help of the American Marines, couching reports of the slaughter in the language of self-defense and national sovereignty. Military personnel had reached a consensus to put down the rebellion by any means necessary, not stopping, in one case, at shooting down "peaceful [N]egroes, including women and children," as the contemporary U.S. Minister to Cuba, Arthur M. Beaupré, admitted in a communiqué to the secretary of state.[97] The bloodshed only came to an end with the death of the partido's leaders; on 27 June 1912, Estenoz was shot at close range along with fifty men.[98] According to one conservative estimate, over 3,000 people of color had been butchered in May and June 1912, mostly in the southeastern Oriente province.[99]

Throughout the island, news of the conflict turned indignant white civilians into vigilantes. At the end of May, whites assigned patrols for "[N]egro sympathizers" and tore through the streets of Regla armed with machetes, revolvers, and rifles.[100] After a cavalry officer tumbled from his horse one night, whites tormented Afro-Cuban pedestrians, blaming them for the mishap. On the waterfront, tensions escalated among longshoremen when whites violated a labor stoppage organized by the Havana Union of Stevedores, accusing it of favoring Afro-Cubans. A two-day riot ensued. One white mob almost lynched an Afro-Cuban stevedore, while an Afro-Cuban tramway passenger was shot and killed. In a Regla bar somebody allegedly called out an anti-white slogan and volunteer guards fired into the crowd, critically wounding three Afro-Cuban patrons. Over the course of the night, white militias laid siege to the homes of Regla's Afro-Cuban families; most crossed the bay and sought refuge in Havana City.[101] In the morning, patrols injured several more Afro-Cubans and murdered one. After the dust settled, a number of families stayed away for good. Others returned; but after 1912, Regla was the same town for no one. Some whites had sheltered neighbors, yet as a community they had

raised nary an eyebrow for the Afro-Cubans forced to flee—by fellow residents—on midnight ferries. As Regla historian Francisco M. Duque recalled with shame in 1925, "With tears in their eyes, they had to abandon the piece of Cuban land on which they had been born and that held the beloved remains of their ancestors."[102]

Among the refugees was an eminent personage: Pepa Herrera, director of the Cabildo Yemayá. Pepa escaped Regla with her family during the summer of 1912 and did not come home until the autumn of 1920, at the earliest. She never disclosed the motives for her return, but certain factors indubitably worked against a permanent relocation.[103] During Pepa's protracted absence, Susana Cantero had stepped in to fill the gap, launching her own cabildo and initiating appreciative "godchildren." Perhaps Pepa inferred that she was in danger of forfeiting her ritual constituency, and in effect squandering her father's hard-earned name and lineage. But if Pepa had resolved to reclaim her legacy, she was undoubtedly disheartened by another spate of racist violence in 1919. In early July, a white mob lynched a Jamaican man in Regla after he gave candy to a white girl. After accusing a man named either "Williams" or "Menem" of planning to abduct the girl and use her body in witchcraft, he was arrested, but was later removed from the jail by a mob, tied to the tail of a horse, and dragged through the streets until he died.[104] This harrowing incident fanned the flames of another "brujo craze" that also brought lynchings, groundless arrests, and harassment to Afro-Cubans in Havana and Matanzas. Evidently in protest, Regla elected liberal-populist mayor Antonio Bosch y Martínez in 1920. Bosch considered himself a patron—if not a member—of Regla's Calabarí secret societies, and Stephan Palmié believes that Bosch's tenure was instrumental in convincing Pepa she need fear for her safety no longer, for "his administrative reforms augmenting Regla's municipal autonomy may well have rendered the town a sanctuary for practitioners of Afro-Cuban religions."[105]

The processions commenced in 1921 after the balance of electoral power had tipped in the direction of the cabildos, but the traumatic memories had not faded from the minds of either white or Afro-Cuban citizens. Although a dearth of documentation complicates any attempt to gauge the sociopolitical impact of any given procession, history favors an analysis of the processions *en bloc* as annual "rituals of resistance."[106] In this instance a gesture of rebuke preceded the processions, with the cabildos refusing to carry the statue of Regla enthroned in her church, preferring instead to display the images belonging to the cabildos. By repudiating an institutional image, the cabildos delivered a blistering indictment of the establishment, both religious and secular, that had remained silent during the massacre and displacements of 1912. This act of defiance dramatized the rift between the town's embattled communities through a "factional refraction" of the Virgin of Regla herself in which the cabildos rejected the icon nestled snugly behind the altar as emblematic of "them," the white majority, while recognizing nearly

identical statues as belonging to "us," Afro-Cubans and Lucumí initiates.[107] Indeed, as the cabildos' images of Regla passed before spectators, they ventured cries of *¡Oh mío Yemayá!* ("Oh my Yemayá!"), thus claiming the Virgin for themselves and dignifying the oricha re-presented by her. For those accustomed to uttering the spirits' names in private, Regla's feast day occasioned a "symbolic affirmation of a specific historical and class form of collective unity" difficult to envisage outside a sanctioned gathering.[108] The public processions also offered families run out of town in 1912 a chance to retrace their steps and thumb the saints' noses at town bullies and others complicit in their displacement.

Every year, the cabildos stitched together an informal alliance of ritual constituencies, consolidating values and beliefs internal to Lucumí communities through the vehicle of the processions. In addition to recapitulating the mythology of Yemayá through music and narrative, the cabildos physically reenacted her origin myth. Both processions started from the bay, paying homage to the body of water that had, according to oral tradition, spawned the orichas. The teams entrusted with the statues of the saints brought them precariously close to the ocean, with Pepa's statues prudently enclosed in glass cases, before inching them towards town, so that the effigies of Yemayá's divine offspring bobbed aloft on a sea of bodies as if they had just emerged from her teeming womb. Yemayá was not the only spirit glorified during the processions, however, and apart from those re-presented by the cabildos' statues, the participants also propitiated the oricha Oyá, mistress of the graveyard and owner of "the sweeping winds of change."[109] The processions officially ended only after the cabildos had visited the town's two cemeteries and tossed copper coins over their rusty iron gates. Significantly, of the many hymns in the praise-singers' repertoires, they selected those replete with allusions to Oyá as hurricane and harmattan, the parching, dusty whirlwinds that blow through Yorùbáland every year.[110] "Oyá's twisting, turning, and rending causes havoc, the chorus chanted, yet she upends the earth in order to set it aright."[111] With these verses, initiates not only communicated the desire to bury the past and begin anew as individuals, but importuned Oyá to transform the town of Regla through the human tornado unleashed by the annual processions.

The cabildos marched to the town's burial grounds to render tribute to the ancestors with song at the cemetery gates.[112] With plots dating from 1741, the "old" cemetery contained the remains of formerly enslaved Africans born in Yorùbáland, and as such was considered an ineffably holy site.[113] The annual pilgrimage to this graveyard underscored a paramount theme of the processions, the importance of religious hierarchy and lineage. During the 19th century the smaller procession led by Cabildo Yemayá had serenaded Regla's African-born residents on 8 September, but by 1921 the mantle of authority had dropped onto the shoulders of Santería priests and priestesses. After convening at the bay, the processions jogged far

beyond the port to call on Lucumí elders such as Ramón "Mongo" Brito and Amalia Ruiz.[114] At the doors of respected house-temples, bàtá drummers beat out the rhythms of the occupants' patron orichas. The saints perched atop handbarrows bowed down to those presiding over the ceremony from niches in the open parlors. The processions retreated only when a senior cabildo member had consulted the spirits through the obi and the head of the household had thrown a pail of water into the street. As at the conclusion of a "hot" possession ritual, the host would spill water onto the nearest road in order to "cool" the premises. In symbolically cleansing obstacles from his or her guests' paths, the host would pray to purify them with the substance from which they and the orichas had come.

The cabildos also acclaimed secular heroes and public servants. The processions ambled through Regla's neighborhoods, marching down streets named after (mostly white) patriots from Cuban history: José Martí, Maximo Gómez, Calixto García, Nestor Aranguren, and others.[115] But after the cabildo directors had bid farewell to the bay, they chose to "head straight down Maceo Street," named after Antonio Maceo, the Afro-Cuban general and hero of both the 1868 and 1895 wars of independence.[116] The cabildos trooped forth dutifully from Maceo, then, before continuing on to the homes of Lucumí elders, descended on city hall. Pepa and Susana had reason to regard Bosch with gratitude; he apparently pulled strings in Havana, because the mandatory permits for the processions arrived automatically every year from the capital without anyone from the cabildos having to request them, thus obviating the need for contact with provincial bureaucrats.[117] Although Bosch only served until 1926, his deeds on behalf of the cabildos had repercussions felt for decades to come. By 1945 Regla's processions had begun to attract more than 100,000 pilgrims to a town with a resident population of just over 23,000.[118] Neither of the cabildos would have predicted the magnitude of the revival, yet both sensed that Bosch had done more for the people's material welfare than the police station and firehouse put together.

Individual ritual actors also had personal agendas that they pursued through the processions. To cite the most fascinating case, Susana and Pepa competed for almost three decades to see whose procession would draw the larger crowd.[119] Some regarded Susana as an opportunist and "outsider," but she fancied herself the legitimate heir to Regla's processional tradition, the local champion of Yemayá in 1912's aftermath. Susana sought to undermine Pepa by acquiring images three times as large as Cabildo Yemayá's, and dressed them in greater opulence than Pepa did hers.[120] Susana's image of Regla stood apart from Pepa's in another conspicuous respect: in the antique figurine paraded by Cabildo Yemayá, the infant Jesus is an integral feature, obscuring about half of Regla's torso, yet in Susana's version his entire body is about the size of one of Mary's brown hands.[121] It is possible that Susana diminished the figure in white in order to accentuate her commitment to

Regla's Afro-Cuban Lucumí community and to impugn Pepa's who left in 1912, when her late father's business and social ties to Regla's wealthy elites could not protect her.[122] Although Regla proved big enough for both Susana and Pepa, the episode is *bon à penser* because the bad blood between the parties was distilled into material objects that survived them, and with which they identified while alive: representations of Yemayá.[123] The annual contest between the two vividly illustrates the potentiality of religious images to construct reputations and identities; statues, in effect, became metonyms for their owners' stature.

This episode also spotlights the leadership roles played by other Afro-Cuban women, many actually employed as domestics in the homes of Regla's white population at the time.[124] Local "queens" were unafraid to assert individual tastes and vested interests in fashioning the religious culture of the town, and Regla's cabildos remained in their hands for generations. Pepa bequeathed Cabildo Yemayá to a goddaughter, Genoveva "Beba" Arredondo; and in her old age, Beba passed the cabildo on to a woman named Reyes. Susana willed her images to a close relative, Carmen Cantero, called La Negra, under whose direction the cabildo continued to parade until 1962.[125] Another priestess of Yemayá, "Panchita" Cárdenas, served in the capacity of *camarera* or "chambermaid" of Regla's sanctuary and led Cabildo Yemayá's procession in Pepa's declining years.[126] Each woman came from a long line of uncompromising priestesses, and refused to allow racial prejudice to interfere with religious practice, instead using public ritual as a resource to comment on the sociopolitical field. Through initiation, Afro-Cuban women had simultaneously become ritual specialists, diviners, and amateur historians, and they perpetuated the association of Yemayá with priestly female authority by narrating myths that cast her as a "foremother figure."[127] Elders created bonds with initiates that encouraged a view of them as embodiments of Yemayá's positive qualities and privileged conduits to her through spirit possession.

On the Virgin of Regla's feast day, the queens of the cabildos joined with the "Queen of Heaven" to move from the periphery of the town into its very center. The success of the processions required talented personnel, and was a monument not only to the vision of female organizers, but to their exertions. Nowhere was their labor more visible than in the glittery satin *paños*, or mantles, draped over the statues raised aloft in the processions. They were not store-bought commodities, but actually tailored and stitched together by the female royalty of the cabildos. "Panchita" and Marcelina Cárdenas embroidered floral and geometric motifs on Regla and other saints' regalia for Susana's cabildo, while the paños of Pepa's statues were made by Pepa herself.[128] Highly regarded as seamstresses, Teresa Muñoz and Calixta Morales could certainly have lent a hand, and the maids among them had experience creating trousseaus for new brides and mending clothes as well as cleaning up, caring for children, and preparing meals.[129] They normally

lived and worshipped in humble conditions; Adeshina's Cabildo Yemayá originally operated out of his own house in Regla's Third Barrio, a poor, Afro-Cuban neighborhood.[130] Just as the image of the Virgin of Regla had crystallized Afro-Cuban women's maternal and manual labor, cabildo statuary became vehicles for the exhibition, and very public recognition, of their dexterity and flair for executing designs of dazzling beauty.

If Afro-Cubans prior to and after emancipation regarded the Virgin of Regla through the lens of their own history, focusing on her color and form as discernible traces of themselves, then during the processions they too became nobility, sauntering proudly through neighborhoods that they had relinquished to racist violence in 1912. Women in leadership positions cooperated with the members of their courts to remap the spaces in which they lived and labored. They rededicated the waterfront as the scene of the orichas' hydrogeny in *illo tempore,* and the gateway of the neglected "old" cemetery became, to use another Eliadean term, an *axis mundi*.[131] But the cabildos did not circumambulate the town in order to repel the profane chaos or the "terror of history." On the contrary, they sought to write themselves into the cultural and historical consciousness of the people of Regla in response to an attempted "silencing" by its non-initiated whites. Once a year, for an audience of thousands, Lucumí practitioners announced the presence of a spirit named Yemayá alongside the Virgin, rendering indisputable the reality of an Afro-Cuban religious formation thriving in a materially constituted, dialectical relationship with Roman Catholicism. The spectacle of bàtá drums in a church sanctuary—inconceivable on any day but 8 September—bombarded white bystanders and spectators with "matter out of place," while Lucumí verbal and gestural iconography temporarily converted the church into an "in-between space."[132] For once, initiates set the terms of the encounter: there was no procession without bàtá drums, or a Virgin of Regla with a white face.

## CONCLUSION

> Iconography is popular historiography.
> —Michael Taussig[133]

In addition to achieving political objectives, every year the cabildos set their sights on attaining a religious goal: gratifying the desire of Yemayá herself to receive adoration through her alter ego, the Virgin of Regla. Since the advent of scholarship on Afro-Cuban traditions, the ability of figurines, pictures, and other images to stand for orichas in this fashion has garnered a great deal of attention, but little sustained analysis. Referring to Lucumí initiates' treatment of such objects, a young Fernando Ortiz declared in 1906, "African fetishism entered Cuba with the

first [N]egro," and this pronouncement would outlive his eventual repudiation of it.[134] During the early 17th century, the term "fetish" (or "fetisso") entered the vocabulary of European traders in West Africa to designate the bewildering array of material objects that "superstitious natives" refused to regard or peddle as commodities.[135] Accordingly, evangelical projects in the Americas proceeded from the assumption that enslaved Africans habitually misattributed agency, desires, and responsibility to inanimate objects or dead matter (such as mounds of earth tended in ancestral shrines).[136] Plantation owners stripped Africans of adornments fabricated from a number of heterogeneous components, but doled out holy pictures and three-dimensional objects, such as rosaries consecrated *en masse* at Mass, seeking to replace "primitive" fetishes with ecclesiastically sanctioned ones.

Orichas are believed to want processions, prostrations, and other activities as a means of converting representations of them into embodiments. Through the agency of her followers, the statues of the Virgin of Regla gradually came to "act" as the material surrogates for Yemayá over the course of her feast day.[137] As parishioners streamed from the shrine after Mass, the scene resembled that of any Roman Catholic procession, yet according to Ramos's informants, the cabildos "had transformed these statues into 'white' manifestations of the spirits through ritual consecrations."[138] In this account "white" refers not to race, but to the benign character of the magic used to manipulate the figurines; the cabildos inserted witchcraft-medicines and other substances, even sets of consecrated otánes inside of them so their circumambulation would effect a cleansing of the town, thus reducing the chances of future riots. Central to this ritual-within-a-ritual was the labor performed by designated carriers. Every year, men and women turned themselves into thrones on which the Queen of Heaven sat, transforming their handbarrows into miniature palanquins. As they strode through town, these cabildo members graphically embodied the relationship between ideal religious subjects and orichas by letting the saints "ride" them. In the vocabulary of Lucumí possession, the spirits "mount" initiates called (by virtue of their obedience to their masters) "horses."[139] By the end of the day, the statues of Regla had ridden their bearers to the point of collapse, leaving them in a state of enervation, similar to that felt when at last freed from possession by Yemayá.

While rejecting the notion of the Virgin of Regla as a fetish, or the erroneous valorization of something counterfeit, one should not ignore her status as a privileged locus for the "condensation of social powers onto an object in order to reconfigure them."[140] By concentrating over a century of forced labor into the form of a deified Mammy named Regla, Lucumí did translate the unforgettable, vastly traumatic condition of bondage and forced labor into a fetish, as defined by William Pietz: a geographically specific, collective historical object whose irreducible materiality has the potential both to support and undercut the value codes of the dominant

sociopolitical order.[141] A "silent encyclopedia of singular acts," Regla has represented Afro-Cubans to themselves, and facilitated the transmission of counternarratives disqualified from official histories of the nation; Yemayá's labor—in the sense of both toiling and giving birth—has been that of many Afro-Cuban women.[142] If, as historian of religion Paul C. Johnson suggests, "most of our everyday mnemonic objects only become fetishes in extraordinary circumstances"—and the transatlantic slave trade was undoubtedly one of these, and the race war of 1912 was arguably another—the processions in the town of Regla sought to commemorate and protest these historical events.[143] Perhaps the error of the early Ortiz and others lay in supposing that the fetishistic impulse is innate within, or proceeds from, a specific group, rather than from the social relations which brought that group into being as "other."

The arrival of the first Africans ushered in a second sort of fetishism as well, but of European provenance: commodity fetishism, in which products such as sugar and coffee appeared to bear within their very forms the value of "the labor-time *socially* necessary to produce them," not only as an autonomous characteristic, but as a natural property (as self-bonding is a property of carbon).[144] While commodities became personified and seemed to wield power over their producers, slaves' bodies were bought, sold, used, and exchanged as objects, their labor alienated and reduced to an abstraction.[145] In the context of this history, the Virgin of Regla did not obscure social relations; on the contrary, La Negrita can be seen as occupying a position analogous to that of the female spirits "fetishized" by Indonesian pearl divers and analyzed by anthropologist Patricia Spyer, for she "invite[d] comparison among distinct social orders, possibilities, and schemes and that, in so doing, also open[ed] up the potential for social criticism."[146] Simultaneously a Lucumí spirit, Marian image, and model "foremother," Regla hypostatized the crises in value-production and subject-formation precipitated by the slave trade and felt by Afro-Cubans long after the race war of 1912. The setting for Yemayá's rape and motherhood was decidedly not the mythic "once upon a time," but rather, the painful post-European here and now.[147] In annual processions the critical function of La Negrita came to the fore: her worshippers publicly declared—*¡Oh mío Yemayá!*—that her history was none other than their own. As the community materialized, and recognized itself, in her worship, they labored to create a future of a different color than the past.

Historian Hilary M. Beckles reminds us that "[visual] representations of 'women,' reproduced during the slavery period, say more about the origins and character of representation than about actual lives, experiences, and identity of women."[148] We are nevertheless fortunate to have some of the narratives that made the image of Regla relevant for Afro-Cubans. Paintings, chromos, and statuettes of the Virgin of Regla fall under the rubric of ephemera—things of short life or intended duration—but the stories that accompanied them persisted by dint of oral tradition and selective textual inscription. As a result, we may turn to the mythology

of Yemayá in order to apprehend the ideological function, or secret, of Regla's form: the de-commodification of the Afro-Cuban body. The uses of Regla at home and in public spectacle gesture towards how enslaved and free black women imagined themselves through a deified third party with brown face and hands. This imagination fired an interpretive community's commitment to a patroness imposed upon its enslaved ancestors, yet maintained in circulation for its own ideological purposes. Under the gaze of an ebony patroness, citizens of Regla gave new meaning to the old claim that the Virgin "never accepted touch-ups with white color," rallying to convey a local counter-memory of violence that ran contrary to the authoritative "whitewashed" story.[149] The analysis of such devotion presents formidable challenges for historians, but they are precisely the ones that we must rise to meet.

## NOTES

[1]Lydia Cabrera, *Yemayá y Ochún: Kariocha, Iyalorichas, y Olorichas* (Madrid, Spain, 1974), 16.

[2]For a fairly standard retelling of the legend, see Rubén Vargas Ugarte, *Historia del Culto de María en Iberoamérica y de sus Imagines y Santuarios más Celebrados* (Madrid, Spain,1956), 322–23.

[3]Pedro Augustín Morell de Santa Cruz y de Lora, *La Visita Eclesiástica: Selección e Introducción de César García del Pino* (Havana, Cuba, 1985), v.

[4]David H. Brown, "Garden in the Machine: Afro-Cuban Sacred Art and Performance in Urban New Jersey and New York," vol. II, Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1989, 339. Morell's phrase is "*vastantemente moreno*"; moreno was, by the late 18th century, the preferred racial term for a person with African ancestry on both sides, rather than a pardo (a person with white ancestry on one side).

[5]Quoted in María Elena Díaz, *The Virgin, the King, and the Royal Slaves of El Cobre: Negotiating Freedom in Colonial Cuba, 1670–1780* (Palo Alto, CA, 2000), 371 n. 41.

[6]David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago, IL, 1989), 114, fig. 44; Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago, IL, 1994), 485.

[7]For more on the identification of Oyá with *Candelaria* and St. Teresa of Ávila, see Judith Gleason, "Oyá in the Company of Saints," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 68 (June 2000): 265–92.

[8]The most provocative Anglophone treatments to date are Vera Kutzinski, *Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism* (Charlottesville, VA, 1993); and María Elena Díaz, "Rethinking Tradition and Identity: The Virgin of Charity of El Cobre," in *Cuba, the Elusive Nation: Interpretations of National Identity*, ed. Damián J. Fernández and Madeline Cámara Betancourt (Gainesville, FL, 2000), 43–59.

[9]Mercedes Cros Sandoval, *La Religion Afrocubana* (Madrid, Spain, 1975), 218; Miguel Barnet, *Cultos Afrocubanos: la Regla de Ocha, la Regla de Palo Monte* (Havana, Cuba, 1995), 55. "Azabache" not only signifies jet, a variety of lignite or "brown coal," but also the jet pieces worn as charms—typically on gold chains, along with crucifixes or Marian medals—to ward off witchcraft and protect against the "evil eye."

[10]See Stephan Palmié, "Against Syncretism: 'Africanizing' and 'Cubanizing' Discourses in North American Òrìsà Worship," in *Counterworks: Managing the Diversity of Knowledge*, ed. Richard Fardon (London, 1995), 74–107.

[11]David Scott, "That Event, This Memory: Notes on the Anthropology of African Diasporas in the New World," *Diasporas* 1 (Winter 1991): 261–84.

[12]See, for instance, Christopher Pinney, *"Photos of the Gods": The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India* (London, 2004); Dana Rush, "Eternal Potential: Chromolithographs in Vodunland," *African Arts* 32 (Winter 1999): 60–75, 94–96; David Morgan, *Visual Piety: A History and Theory of Popular Religious Images* (Berkeley, CA, 1998); and Donald J. Cosentino, "Repossession: Ògun in Folklore and Literature," in *Africa's Ògun: Old World and New*, ed. Sandra T. Barnes (Bloomington, IN, 1997), 290–314.

[13]Whites and Asians have also pursued initiation and reached the highest echelons of the priesthood.

[14]Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, 120.
[15]Eduardo Gómez Luaces, *Historia de Nuestra Señora de Regla. Sus Fiestas, los Cabildos, con Datos Ineditos y Juicios Criticos Sobre Regla* (Regla, Cuba, 1945), 1.
[16]Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 59.
[17]I prefer the term "Vierge noires" not only as an allusion to the 150 dark-skinned images that exist in France alone, but also because the phrase "Black Madonna" usually does not refer to race in this literature.
[18]Katherine J. Hagedorn, *Divine Utterances: The Performance of Afro-Cuban Santería* (Washington, DC, 2001), 115; *Recopilación de Leyes de los Reynos de las Indias*, I, 5, Libro I, Título I, Ley I-XVII (Madrid, Spain, 1774).
[19]George Brandon, *The Dead Sell Memories: Santería from Africa to the New World* (Bloomington, IN, 1993), 75.
[20]Joseph Murphy, "Yéyé Cachita: Ochún in a Cuban Mirror," in *Ösun across the Waters: A Yoruba Goddess in Africa and the Americas*, ed. Joseph Murphy and Mei-Mei Sanford (Bloomington, IN, 2001), 93.
[21]Paul C. Johnson, "Kicking, Stripping, and Re-dressing a Saint in Black: Visions of Public Space in Brazil's Recent Holy War," *History of Religions* 37 (November 1997): 125.
[22]Tom Cummins, "On the Colonial Formation of Comparison: The Virgin of Chiquinquirá, the Virgin of Guadalupe, and Cloth," *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 21, nos. 74 & 75 (1999): 63–64, 74–75.
[23]Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA, 1984), xii.
[24]Christopher Pinney writes, "[T]he progressive empowerment of images through daily worship involves a continual burdening of the surface with traces of this devotion." "The Indian Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Or, What Happens When Peasants 'Get Hold' of Images," in *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*, ed. Lila Abu-Lughod, Faye Ginsburg, and Brian Larkin (Berkeley, CA, 2002), 365.
[25]David H. Brown, *Santería Enthroned: Art, Ritual, and Innovation in an Afro-Cuban Religion* (Chicago, IL, 2003), 246.
[26]Robin D. Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness: Afrocubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920–1940* (Pittsburgh, PA, 1997), 31.
[27]Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886–1912* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1995), 131.
[28]Donald J. Cosentino, "It's All for You, Sen Jak!" in *Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou*, ed. Donald J. Cosentino (Los Angeles, CA, 1995), 253.
[29]Joseph Murphy, *Santería: African Spirits in America* (Boston, MA, 1992), 121.
[30]Robert Faris Thompson, *Black Gods and Kings: Yoruba Art at UCLA* (Los Angeles, CA, 1971), 151.
[31]Araba Ekó, quoted in Robert Faris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York, 1983), 9.
[32]Hagedorn, *Divine Utterances*, 80.
[33]Babatunde Lawal, "From Africa to the Americas: Art in Yoruba Religion," in *Santería Aesthetics in Contemporary Latin American Art*, ed. Arturo Lindsay (Washington, DC, 1996).
[34]Since female spirits often possess male initiates and vice versa, devotees had no problem discerning Changó and Obatalá, two male spirits, in the feminine figures of St. Barbara and Our Lady of Mercy, respectively. Eyes are quite prominent in both European and Yorùbá religious imagery, yet they convey radically different visions in the corresponding aesthetic codes. In Roman Catholic tradition, the eyes of the human saint gaze *towards* the holy vision in his or her midst. For the Yorùbá and Lucumí, the divinity gazes outward *from* the body.
[35]Bruce Lincoln, *Death, War, and Sacrifice: Studies in Ideology and Practice* (Chicago, IL, 1991), xvi.
[36]Personal communication, 25 January 2007.
[37]Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification* (New York, 1989), 24.
[38]Depending on the version of Yemayá, sometimes the strings contain red or coral beads. John Mason and Gary Edwards, *Black Gods*: *Òrìxà Studies in the New World* (Brooklyn, NY, 1985), 89.
[39]Julia Cuervo Hewitt, *Aché, Presencia Africana: Tradiciones Yorúbà-Lucumí en la Narrativa Cubana* (New York, 1988), 166. The translation is mine.
[40]Mary Ann Clark, "Asho Orisha (Clothing of the Orisha): Material Culture as Religious Expression in Santería," Ph.D. dissertation, Rice University, 1999, 293.
[41]Ibid., 85. See also Meri Lao, *Las Sirenas: Historia de un Simbolo* (Mexico City, 1995).
[42]John Mason, *Ìdáná Fún Òrìsà: Cooking for Selected Heads* (Brooklyn, NY, 1999), 126.
[43]See, Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Cambridge, MA, 1984).
[44]Luis Martínez-Fernández, "Life in a 'Male City': Native and Foreign Elite Women in Nineteenth-Century

Havana," *Cuban Studies* 25 (1995): 35.

[45]Pierre Verger, quoted in Henry John Drewal and Margaret Thompson Drewal, *Gclcdc: Art and Female Power among the Yorúbà* (Bloomington, IN, 1990), 215; Claudette Williams, *Charcoal and Cinnamon: The Politics of Color in Spanish Caribbean Literature* (Gainesville, FL, 2000), 169.

[46]Compare the accounts from Stephen S. Farrow, *Facts, Fancies and Fetich: Or, Yoruba Paganism* (New York, 1926 [1969]), 46, and Ulli Beier, *Yorúbà Myths* (Cambridge, MA, 1980), 45–46, with those of Judith Gleason, *Orisha: the Gods of Yorúbàland* (New York, 1971), 6–10; Julio Garcia Cortez, *The Osha: Secrets of the Yorúbà-Lucumi-Santeria Religion in the United States and the Americas* (Brooklyn, NY, 2000), 138; and John Mason, *Orin Òrìsà: Songs for Selected Heads* (Brooklyn, NY, 1992), 287.

[47]The river Ògun is not to be confused with the oricha Ogún. Mason, *Orin Òrìsà*, 287. For variants, see William Bascon, *Sixteen Cowries: Yorúbà Divination from Africa to the New World* (Bloomington, IN, 1980), 45–46; Robert Faris Thompson, *Face of the Gods: Art and Altars of Africa and the African Americas* (New York, 1993), 272; and Rómulo Lachatañeré, *El Sistema Religioso de los Afrocubanos* (Havana, Cuba, 1992), 306.

[48]Rosa María Lahaye Guerra and Rubén Zardoya Loureda, *Yemayá a Través de sus Mitos* (Havana, Cuba, 1996), 71.

[49]Carlos A. Echánove T., "La Santería Cubana," in *Estudios Afro-Cubanos: Tomo 2*, ed. Lázara Menéndez (Havana, Cuba, 1998), 242.

[50]Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago, IL, 1999), 161.

[51]Awo Fa'lokun Fatunmbi, *Yemoja/Olokun: Ifa and the Spirit of the Ocean* (New York, 1993), 5. For Nigerian Yorùbá creation myths, see Lloyd Weaver and Olurunmi Egbelade, *Maternal Divinity Yemonja: Tranquil Sea, Turbulent Tides* (New York, 1998).

[52]Cosentino, "It's All for You," 247.

[53]Miguel "Willie" Ramos, "The Empire Beats On: Oyo, Bàtá Drums, and Hegemony in Nineteenth-Century Cuba," M.A. Thesis, Florida International University, 2000, 215; Deborah Wyrick, "Divine Transpositions: Recent Scholarship on Vodou and Santería Religious Art," *Jouvert: A Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 3, no. 1 & 2 (1999): 10.

[54]Doctors of Divinity at Cambridge still receive the *pileus quadratus*, called the "Bishop Andrewes cap."

[55]Michel Leiris, quoted in Cosentino, "It's All for You," 255.

[56]Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York, 1971), 174–75. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ, 2000), 101; Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York, 1983), 57–58.

[57]William Luis, *Literary Bondage: Slavery in Cuban Narrative* (Austin, TX, 1990), 99.

[58]For a bravura reading, see Lorna Valerie Williams, *The Representation of Slavery in Cuban Fiction* (Columbia, MO, 1994).

[59]Williams, *The Representation of Slavery*, 169; Luis, *Literary Bondage*, 116.

[60]Mason, *Orin Òrìsà*, 315.

[61]Luis, *Literary Bondage*, 116.

[62]Jacqueline Bryant, *The Foremother Figure in Early Black Women's Literature: Clothed in My Right Mind* (New York, 1999), 28.

[63]Cirilo Villaverde, *Cecilia Valdés o La Loma del Angel: Novela de Costumbres Cubanas* (Havana, Cuba, 1964), 500–01.

[64]See Digna Castañeda, "The Female Slave in Cuba during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," in *Engendering History: Caribbean Women in Historical Perspective*, ed. Verene Shepherd, Bridget Brereton, and Barbara Bailey (New York, 1995), 141–54.

[65]Juan Martín de Conyedo had made a vow to bring a statue of Regla to Guaicanamar from Madrid on one of his voyages, and on the eighth of September the bust of the image was installed in the sanctuary.

[66]Felix Alejandro Cepeda, *America Mariana, o Sea, Historia Compendiada de las Imagines de la Santísima Virgen más Veneradas en el Nuevo Mundo* (Madrid, Spain, 1925), 341–42.

[67]Early sources such as Gómez Luaces, *Historia de Nuestra Señora de Regla*, 11; Cabrera *Yemayá y Ochún*, 17; and Vargas Ugarte, *Historia del Culto de María*, 322–23 give the date as 8 September, while later research—that of Brown, among others—insists on the procession date of 7 September. Each source is internally consistent.

[68]Francisco M. Duque, *Historia de Regla. Descripción Política, Económica y Social, Desde su Fundación Hasta el Día* (Havana, Cuba, 1925), 11.

[69]Ramos, "The Empire," 166.

[70]Stephan Palmié, "Ethnogenetic Processes and Cultural Transfer in Caribbean Slave Populations," in *Slavery in the Americas*, ed. Wolfgang Binder (Würzburg, Germany, 1993), 344. Ramos is a published author, professor, and *obá-oriaté*; this term means "king" and "head of the mat," referring to the mat used in solemn divination ceremonies and after Lucumí initiation. An obá-oriaté is an expert in the reading of the sixteen-cowries oracle, called dilogún, and "master of ceremonies" in initiation.

[71]Ramos, "The Empire," 144.

[72]The 1846 census stated that Regla had a total of 6,662 residents in that year: 5,071 whites, 644 "free browns," and 947 slaves. Verena Martinez-Alier, *Marriage, Class and Colour in Nineteenth-Century Cuba: A Study of Racial Attitudes and Sexual Values in a Slave Society* (Cambridge, MA, 1974), 62.

[73]Ramos, "The Empire," 150.

[74]Stephan Palmié, *Wizards and Scientists: Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition* (Durham, NC, 2002), 197–98.

[75]Ramos, "The Empire," 83.

[76]Brown, "Thrones of the *Orichas*," 44–59.

[77]Brandon, *The Dead Sell Memories*, 83–4.

[78]The political aspect of cabildo membership was not lost on either participants or government officials. Cabildos permitted slaves to taste liberty in small doses through unsupervised contact with freedmen, and occasionally the latter raised money to manumit enslaved associates. On a far grander scale, cabildos also had a hand in hatching the most sensational plots to overthrow the slaveholding colonial regime of the 19th century, the Aponte Conspiracy of 1812 and the 1844 Conspiracy of *La Escalera.*

[79]In 1871 clashes between members of different cabildos marred the festivities, spurring no less a figure than the Capitán General of Cuba to issue an edict the following September imposing a temporary curfew, with violations punishable by a minimum fine of twenty ducats. Quoted in Gómez Luaces, *Historia de Nuestra Señora de Regla*, 13; Duque, *Historia de Regla*, 113–14.

[80]Apart from cabildos, a number of other Afro-Cuban recreational clubs and mutual-aid societies sprung up in Regla at the close of the 19th century, including the *Archicofradía de la Santísima Virgen del Rosario* (founded in 1874), *El Progreso* (1879), and *La Unión* (1882).

[81]Ramos gives the approximate date of his arrival as "around 1820," and says that Adeshina "died in Regla on January 28, 1905," "The Empire," 153.

[82]In reproductions of this image, one can clearly see the three horizontal bars cut into both sides of Adeshina's face. Palmié, *Wizards and Scientists*, 343 n. 35.

[83]Ramos, "The Empire," chap. 5.

[84]Xiomara González and Roberto Rodríguez, *La Casa de Todos: los Muchachos de Regla* (Havana, Cuba, 1986), 65; Palmié, *Wizards and Scientists*, 343 n. 35.

[85]Ibid.

[86]Ibid. González and Rodríguez, *La Casa de Todos*, give the date of Susana's death as 1947 as well.

[87]González and Rodríguez, *La Casa de Todos*, give the impression that Pepa's cabildo attended an earlier Mass and set out in the morning, while Susana's had her statues blessed at a later service. Ramos's informants narrate events as if the two set out at the same time from the church.

[88]González and Rodríguez, *La Casa de Todos*, 63.

[89]In addition to Regla, devotees carried Our Lady of Mercy, and St. Barbara (Changó).

[90]González and Rodríguez, *La Casa de Todos*, 65.

[91]Unattributed photo published in Gregorio Ortega, "Los Cabildos y el Mendigo de la Parábola Bíblica," *Carteles*, 15 December 1957.

[92]Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 214.

[93]Ibid., 306 n. 120.

[94]Ramos, "The Empire," 150.

[95]Ibid., 172.

[96]Naïvely, Estenoz also hoped to goad the U.S. government into intervening on the PIC's behalf.

[97]Quoted in Thomas T. Orum, "The Politics of Color: The Racial Dimension of Cuban Politics during the Early Republican Years, 1900–1912," Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1975, 252.

[98]Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 224.

[99]Helg in *Our Rightful Share* hazards a rough estimate, while Orum in "The Politics of Color" gives the number as "approximately 4,000," 255.

[100]Ibid., 245.
[101]Duque, *Historia de Regla*, 214.
[102]Ibid., 127. Duque went so far as to identify as his book's *raison d'être* the necessity of cleaning up Regla's image as a hotbed of both Afro-Cuban criminality and white racism.
[103]Palmié, *Wizards and Scientists*, 343 n. 35; González and Rodríguez, in *La Casa de Todos*, mention the move from Regla in 1912 and date the return in 1920, but do not mention the reason for the departure, 64.
[104]Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, also notes another version of the story, in which the police had tortured and murdered the man, then given him over to the mob, which then proceeded to desecrate his corpse, 313 n. 27.
[105]Palmié, *Wizards and Scientists*, 343 n. 35.
[106]Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification* (New York, 1989).
[107]Michael Herzfeld, "The Significance of the Insignificant: Blasphemy as Ideology," *Man, New Series* 19, no. 4 (1984): 660.
[108]Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, NY, 1981), 291.
[109]Edwards and Mason, *Black Gods*, 92.
[110]Mason alone translates thirty-four songs of varying lengths. *Orin Òrìxà*, 321–36.
[111]The verses come from González and Rodríguez, *La Casa de Todos*, 66; the translation accompanies the same song (although differently transliterated) in Mason, *Orin Òrìxà*, 321.
[112]González and Rodríguez, *La Casa de todos*, give the amount, in 1958, as one dollar and five cents.
[113]Gómez Luaces, *Historia de Nuestra Señora de Regla*, 20; Duque, *Historia de Regla*, 90–1.
[114]González and Rodríguez, *La Casa de Todos*, and Gómez Luaces, *Historia de Nuestra Señora de Regla*, both mention Ramón Brito and Amalia Ruiz as important elders; the former also names Marcela Cárdenas (this could be Panchita, Regla's *camarera* at church) and a certain "Mario" and "Pastora," but does not give surnames for the last two, 66.
[115]Gómez Luaces points out that the streets in Regla were originally named after saints, but that the first Republican government, between 1900 and 1901, changed the names to correspond to figures from recent Cuban history.
[116]Ramos, "The Empire," 147. Maceo lost his life in the battle of Punta Brava, 7 December 1896.
[117]Ramos, "The Empire," 147.
[118]This was Regla's resident population according to the census of 1943. Gómez Luaces, *Historia de Nuestra Señora de Regla*, 25.
[119]Although infamous, this rivalry was far from unique, and in fact paralleled a territorial dispute consequential enough to merit its own title: *La División de La Habana*. Ramos, "The Empire," 145.
[120]According to one of Ramos's informants, Susana's images came inside the church to be blessed, but Pepa's remained at the door. Ramos, "The Empire," 167.
[121]This observation is based on several photographs of each image and, in the case of Pepa's image, research conducted by this author in the Church of the Virgin of Regla, Havana, Cuba, December 1999.
[122]Brown, *Santería Enthroned*, 318 n. 4.
[123]In order to sidestep a number of thorny interpretive issues, I leave untranslated Lévi-Strauss's term from *The Savage Mind*, altering only the gender and adjective from plural to singular. See, Edmund Leach, *Claude Lévi-Strauss* (Chicago, IL, 1970), 32 n. 8.
[124]Brown, *Santería Enthroned*, 221.
[125]González and Rodríguez, *La Casa de Todos*, identify Carmen as Susana's daughter, 64–5; Ramos calls her Susana's niece, "The Empire," 148. The processions ceased in the early years of the Cuban Revolution, whereupon the cabildos' inheritors assumed the responsibility of caring for the statues.
[126]Brown, "Garden in the Machine," 264. Pepa died in her 90s, so it stands to reason that she did not discharge the duties of procession leader in her final years. Perhaps revealing a debt of gratitude to Panchita as a storyteller, Rómulo Lachatañeré dedicated his volume of myths, *O mío Yemayá* (1938; repr., Havana, Cuba, 1992), to her.
[127]Bryant, *The Foremother Figure*, 28.
[128]Brown, *Santería Enthroned*, 221.
[129]Ibid.
[130]Ibid., 67, and 318.
[131]Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York, 1959).
[132]Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (1966; repr., New York, 2001).

[133]*The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1980), 186.
[134]Robin D. Moore, "Representations of Afrocuban Expressive Culture in the Writings of Fernando Ortiz," *Latin American Music Review* 15 (Spring/Summer 1994): 35.
[135]William Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish, IIIa," *Res* 16 (1988): 109.
[136]Webb Keane, "From Fetishism to Sincerity: On Agency, the Speaking Subject, and Their Historicity in the Context of Religious Conversion," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39 (October 1997): 678.
[137]The statue of Regla on permanent display within the church wears seven strings of precious stones reminiscent of the consecrated beads worn by Lucumí practitioners, called *elekes*. It is unclear when Regla acquired these jewels. Gómez Luaces, *Historia de Nuestra Señora de Regla*, 3.
[138]Ramos, "The Empire," 148.
[139]J. Lorand Matory, *Sex and the Empire That Is No More: Gender and the Politics of Metaphor in Oyo Yorùbá Religion* (Minneapolis, MN, 1994), 212.
[140]Paul C. Johnson, "The Fetish and McGwire's Balls," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion 68* (June 2000): 249.
[141]William Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish, I," *Res* 9 (Spring 1985): 12.
[142]De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life,* 86.
[143]Johnson, "The Fetish," 249.
[144]Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy,* vol. 1 (New York, 1992), 168. The emphasis is mine.
[145]Igor Kopytoff, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 1986).
[146]Patricia Spyer, "The Eroticism of Debt: Pearl Divers, Traders, and Sea Wives in the Aru Islands, Eastern Indonesia," *American Ethnologist* 24, no. 3 (1997): 516.
[147]J. Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago, IL, 1982), 100.
[148]Hilary M. Beckles, *Centering Woman: Gender Discourses in Caribbean Slave Society* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1999), xviii.
[149]Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (London, 1972), 81; Díaz, *The Virgin, the King, and the Royal Slaves,* 371 n. 41.