

# Contesting Anthropology's and Ethnomusicology's Will to Power in the Field: William R. Bascom's and Richard A. Waterman's Fieldwork in Cuba, 1948

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*Abstract: This article critically examines the fieldwork materials of American anthropologists William R. Bascom and Richard A. Waterman collected in Cuba in 1948. As founding scholars in the research of culture and music of the African diaspora, Bascom and Waterman represent significant case studies in the historiographical critique and analysis of these research fields as well as anthropology's and ethnomusicology's construct of the field itself. By employing Nietzsche's notion of will to power, the article argues that unlike much of their published scholarship, Bascom's and Waterman's field materials constitute fertile ground for the analysis and interpretation of their Cuban informants' positioning in and resistance to the epistemological power relations that defined and circumscribed the anthropological field.*

*Résumé : Cet article analyse les matériaux recueillis sur le terrain par les anthropologues américains William R. Bascom et Richard A. Waterman à Cuba en 1948. En tant que scientifiques qui ont posé les fondations de la recherche sur la culture et la musique de la diaspora africaine, Bascom et Waterman représentent des cas exemplaires pour la critique et l'analyse historiographique de ces champs de recherche, ainsi que pour l'examen de la construction de ces champs eux-mêmes par l'anthropologie et l'ethnomusicologie. En recourant à la notion de « volonté de puissance » de Nietzsche, cet article avance que, contrairement à la plupart de leurs travaux publiés, les matériaux de terrain de Bascom et de Waterman représentent un terreau fertile pour l'analyse et l'interprétation du positionnement de leurs informateurs cubains et de la résistance qu'ont opposée ces derniers aux relations épistémologiques de pouvoir qui définissent et circonscrivent le champ anthropologique.*

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L labelled “Cuba – 1948,” the first page of American anthropologist<sup>1</sup> William R. Bascom's fieldnotes starts: “Trip: Left Evanston June 18 and arrived in Havana [June] 21. Drove to Miami with Berta Montero, Richard Waterman, David and Barbara Ames in Ames' car, and flew to Havana” (Bascom 1948a: 1). On June 24, six days after Bascom and his colleagues from Northwestern

University left Evanston, Illinois for Havana, Cuba, the *Havana Post* announced the arrival of these “U.S. Anthropologist[s],” reporting that they “have come to Cuba on a scientific mission and will engage in anthropological studies in the eastern and western sections of the island” (“U.S. Anthropologist Arrives in Havana” 1948). David Ames, who at the time was a graduate student in anthropology under Melville J. Herskovits’s supervision, concentrated his research on Afro-Cubans and housing in Havana, the work of which he would later publish in *Phylon* (Ames 1950). Richard A. Waterman, who was an assistant professor of anthropology and the director of the Laboratory of Comparative Musicology, devoted his fieldwork to making approximately 300 field recordings of Santería, Abakuá, Palo, Arará and rumba music in Regla, Havana and Cárdenas, Matanzas (R. Waterman 1948a).<sup>2</sup> After travelling to Holguín, Santiago and Santa Clara searching for fluent speakers of Yoruba (as spoken in southwestern Nigeria), William R. Bascom, who was also an associate professor of anthropology, and his research partner and graduate student of anthropology, Berta Montero, settled in Jovellanos, Matanzas, where they too made field recordings in addition to collecting 700 pages of typewritten fieldnotes of Yoruba speakers and practitioners of Santería (Bascom 1948b).<sup>3</sup>

Although each pursued a distinct area of research, they all aimed to study the degree to and processes by which African-derived cultural practices had changed in Cuba. As Herskovits’s students they were inspired by their mentor’s theory of acculturation, which approached the study of cultural change as a two-way dynamic in the context of cultural contact. Bascom’s and Waterman’s fieldnotes and recordings, documenting mostly Afro-Cuban religious practices and music making in Matanzas, Cuba, from June through September 1948, are invaluable for several reasons. First, they reveal insight into their Afro-Cuban informants, including their informants’ African lineages (usually only two generations removed); their knowledge of African history, geography, and religion; rivalries among community religious leaders; and their dialogues with contemporaries in Africa and the black Atlantic. Second, their fieldnotes document attitudes toward homosexual male participants in Santería ceremonies in addition to other aspects of religious practice and rural Cuban life, all of which fell out of the purview not only of their acculturation projects but also of mainstream American and Cuban anthropology and folklore of the 1940s.

Third, they reveal the “shadows” of Bascom’s and Waterman’s Cuban and American predecessors as articulated by their Afro-Cuban informants (see Cooley and Barz 2008). Because of anthropology’s and folklore’s episteme in the 1940s, scholars of New World Negro studies as well as Afro-Cuban

folklore rarely identified their informants by name, nor did they address their informants' points of view in their published scholarship. Johannes Fabian theorized these discursive gestures as anthropology's denial of its Other's coevalness (Fabian 1983: 154). That is, he argues that even though fieldwork requires that fieldworkers and informants interact in the same place and at the same time—they are coeval—historically anthropologists treated their informants as spatially and temporally different from themselves, often considering them to be primitives or from a static, unchanging culture. The absence of the Cuban informants' voices in their published scholarship was symptomatic of Bascom's and Waterman's positioning as modern scientists studying primitives, tradition-bearers or even stand-ins for the African ancestors of the modern New World Negro. In these unpublished fieldwork materials, however, Bascom's informants in particular emerge as dialectically engaged interlocutors by virtue of their agency, selectivity and motivations in entering the anthropological "field." Finally, Bascom's and Waterman's fieldnotes reveal their informants' reception of the work of the founding scholars of New World Negro studies and Afro-Cuban folklore, Melville J. Herskovits and Fernando Ortiz, respectively. Their reception of Ortiz specifically portrays a rather damning portrait of Cuba's most lauded intellectual, a national figure who "embodies an entire discursive formation in Cuban culture" (Rojas 2007: 49). In short, Bascom's and Waterman's fieldwork materials from Cuba, together with Bascom's scholarship based on this research, provide new and invaluable insight into the methodological and intellectual histories of acculturation theory and comparative musicology, and the disciplinary histories of anthropology and ethnomusicology in general, and New World Negro studies and Afro-Cuban folklore in particular.

In this article I analyze Bascom's and Waterman's Cuban field materials and scholarship as untapped sources in the intellectual histories of New World Negro studies and Afro-Cuban folklore and also analyze their primary methodologies at the time, acculturation and comparative musicology. Their scholarship in New World Negro studies, and Waterman's in comparative musicology, remain formative in the history of ethnomusicological study of black music and culture (e.g., R. Waterman 1952). Yet, we know little or nothing about the historical, social and ideological contexts in which they carried out their work. In analyzing their unpublished materials, I first draw from V. Y. Mudimbe's analytical approach to the discourse of Africanism, which he conceives as an epistemological mechanism invented by early European travellers to Africa and later perpetuated by both European and African anthropologists to spatialize and temporalize so-called traditional or primitive Africans as racially and historically Other (Mudimbe 1988: 9, 82).

This discourse of Africanism was an underlying theoretical component of Herskovits's acculturation theory and, thus, greatly informed Bascom's and Waterman's uses of methodologies from folklore, ethnology and comparative musicology in their study of Afro-Cuban religion, language and music.

In fact, it compelled them to travel to the field in Cuba to do fieldwork in the first place. For instance, Bascom's choice to start his fieldnotes by chronicling their journey from Evanston to Havana gestures toward this presupposition of fieldwork as a spatializing and temporalizing practice, or in Fabian's words "travel as science" (1983: 7). These anthropologists embarked on, as the *Havana Post* noted, a "scientific mission" to the field to record and collect African linguistic, religious and musical retentions whose practitioners in effect would function in place of Africans of the New World's past.<sup>4</sup> It was precisely the anthropological field's normalizing presupposition of Western historical time and its effects of racial Othering that predetermined the epistemological validity of Bascom's and Waterman's acculturation and comparative musicology projects as well as the fields of New World Negro studies and Afro-Cuban folklore.

All of these assumptions, however, troubled their Afro-Cuban informants, as Bascom's fieldnotes in particular reveal. But Mudimbe and other intellectual historians of African and African-diaspora scholarship such as Kevin A. Yelvington and Eleni Coundouriotis have tended to look only to the published work of native novelists and academics along with postcolonial theory to inform their critiques of colonialism's legacy in their fields of research.<sup>5</sup> Ethnomusicologists have similarly tended to overlook the unpublished voices in others' fieldnotes in their quests for "profound self-critical reflection in the face of [ethnomusicology's] colonial legacy" (Cooley and Barz 2008: 11; see also Barz 2008). This article, however, lends a critical eye to Bascom's and Waterman's Afro-Cuban informants, whose formal education was negligible at best, yet their voices signaled resistance to and subversion of the episteme and will to power of North American and Cuban anthropology and folklore in ways that anticipated postcolonial theoretical formulations. Indeed, these field materials lend themselves to the kind of postcolonial reading for which Homi K. Bhabha advocates when he describes the "unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order" (1994: 245).

Accordingly, my aim is for this article to serve as an epistemological intervention in both the historiographical literature of New World Negro studies and Afro-Cuban folklore, and the analysis of past anthropological and ethnomusicological fieldwork and scholarship. I do this by unearthing

informant voices from the Western and neo-colonial archive, reconstituting their subjectivities as coevals with their fellow moderns (i.e., Herskovits, Ortiz, Bascom and Waterman). Drawing from Friedrich Nietzsche's discussions of the will to power, as these pertain to notions of truth, objectivity and energy (Nietzsche 1968) as well as from reflections on these themes by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1997: xxiv-xxv) and Michel Foucault (1972: 12-13), I examine not the "truthfulness" of informants' statements but rather the conviction with which they conveyed their knowledge in the face of anthropology's and folklore's epistemological dominance over the "truth." Whereas ethnomusicologists have used fieldwork conducted today to reconstruct the musical past, I argue for the restudy of archival materials, as Anthony Seeger did nearly thirty years ago, to help us better understand the power relations that shaped these encounters in the field (Bohlman 2008; Seeger 1986). In short, I take Steven Loza's important critique of the Eurocentric training of ethnomusicologists in the United States one step further by identifying the centrality of the voices buried in the Western and neo-colonial archive in order to decentre academic hegemonies (Loza 2006).

To get at these informants' voices, the issues of their mediation (via the processes of writing and recording in the field) and the power relations that distinguished these voices (politically, economically and epistemologically) must be further addressed. The authorial problems of ethnographic writing have long been topics of reflection among anthropologists, folklorists and ethnomusicologists. James Clifford, for example, points to M. M. Bakhtin's concepts of dialogism and polyvocality to question the notion of ethnography as monophonic or the sole creation of the ethnographer (Clifford 1986: 15). Whereas Bascom and Waterman singularly transcribed their own words and those of their informants in their fieldnotes, *what* they transcribed constituted, according to Clifford's observation, utterances or dialogized texts, making the contents of these materials unique to that historical, social and ideological moment (Bakhtin 1981: 272-84). Similarly, Erika Brady shows that even during the earliest period of the phonograph's ethnographic use (1890-1935), informants often exerted their control over the field recording event, determined and negotiated their cooperation in the first place, sometimes used the recordings as political tools, and even used these opportunities to engage in joking behaviour at the expense of the collector (Brady 1999: 89-117). It is important to stress, therefore, that the collection of these fieldnotes and recordings played out amid asymmetrical power relations that, on the one hand, distinguished the social positions of these Afro-Cuban informants and that of their American and Cuban interlocutors but, on the

other, seemed to have only stirred their Afro-Cuban informants to posit their own viewpoint in resistance to those of Bascom and Waterman, according to Nietzsche's contention that "every specific body strives to become master over all space and to extend force (—its will to power: ) and to thrust back all that resists its extension" (1968: 340). As a result, fieldnotes produced prior to anthropology's and ethnomusicology's self-reflexive turn, such as Bascom's and Waterman's, reveal informants who actively decentered the authorial voice of the fieldworker while exerting their power vested by their social standing in their community.<sup>6</sup>

To his credit, Bascom described and commented on his informants' ambivalence toward the anthropological enterprise in the field and interventions in the ideological discourse of Africanisms. In other instances, he unwittingly demonstrated the fragility of and unresolvable contradictions in the acculturation project, moments that "genuinely threaten[ed] to collapse that system" (Spivak 1997: lxxv). I focus on these key analytical moments in these materials, which are few, often fleeting, and nestled within hundreds of pages and many hours of recordings that otherwise contain richly detailed information about Afro-Cuban religious practices, music and culture. As I will argue, such key moments display Afro-Cuban informants insisting on their modern subjectivities and epistemological legitimacy, moments of counter-hegemonic articulation that are only now recovered from Bascom's and Waterman's unpublished fieldnotes and recordings.

## The Archival Materials in Context

William Bascom's and Richard Waterman's materials from their research trip to Cuba in 1948 remain unpublished and are currently archived in various institutions in the United States. Bascom's fieldnotes are included in the William R. Bascom Papers, which are held in The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. Bascom's field recordings are held in two institutions, the Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Archives of Traditional Music at Indiana University. Unfortunately, Waterman's fieldnotes have not been collected and deposited in an archive, but I have read his correspondences with Melville Herskovits, which include portions of his fieldnotes. These materials are held in the Melville J. Herskovits (1895-1963) Papers, 1906-1963 at Northwestern University, while Waterman's field recordings are held at the Archives of Traditional Music at Indiana University.

Bascom received his PhD in anthropology in 1939 from Northwestern

University where he studied with Herskovits. Bascom's training under Herskovits was entrenched in his mentor's acculturation methodology. As Jerry Gershenhorn points out, Herskovits's acculturation project crystallized in "A Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation," co-authored with Robert Redfield and Ralph Linton in 1935, which undercut "previous assumptions about cultural contact that stressed Western superiority" (Gershenhorn 2004: 88). In the context of the study of the New World Negro, the acculturation methodology presupposed research among multiple African and New World Negro cultures as the best scientific way to gauge 1) the African provenance of New World Negro cultural practices and 2) the extent to which these New World Negro practices underwent acculturation as a result of contact with other African and non-African cultures. Bascom first conducted extensive fieldwork in Nigeria in 1937 and 1938, and, because of the acculturation method, he complemented this research by conducting fieldwork among the Gullah in Georgia in 1939 and eventually the Lucumí (Cuban descendents of the Yoruba) with Berta Montero in Cuba in 1948.<sup>7</sup>

According to his former student Simon Ottenberg, Bascom "felt strongly that the ethnographer must get at native terms, concepts and classifications, at native reasons for doing things the way that they do, as well as developing sound anthropological ideas applicable cross-culturally" (Ottenberg 1982: 6). He described his mentor's fieldwork approach as "working intimately in a few crucial places with a few key informants over long, and if possible, steady periods of time" (Ottenberg 1982: 6). Although Bascom's time in Cuba was relatively short (four months), he worked with twenty-three informants and, along with the assistance of Montero, compiled an impressive amount of data detailing their familial backgrounds; their *asientos* (orichas to which they were initiated by their godfather or godmother); Yoruba terms for a variety of items including foods, plants, herbs and musical instruments; and general concepts and practices in Santería including myths, proverbs, costs for becoming initiated and hiring musicians and singers, the divination systems *dilogun* and *Ifa*; and, finally, animal sacrifices, preparations for rituals and frequency of ceremonies. Along with taking detailed notes during these sessions (which he copied in typewritten form each evening), he occasionally used a wire recorder to record his informants identifying Yoruba terms, singing songs and playing *batá* for orichas, recounting myths and discussing African geography.

Richard Waterman completed his PhD in anthropology at Northwestern University in 1943. In 1944 he helped establish the Laboratory of Comparative Musicology in the department and worked there as its director while also teaching courses. During this first period of his scholarship, Waterman focused

his research on music of the New World Negro. He analyzed Herskovits's field recordings from Trinidad and Brazil and made his own recordings beginning in Puerto Rico and Cuba where he conducted fieldwork in 1946 under the joint sponsorship of the Library of Congress and the Office of Information for Puerto Rico. He dedicated his fieldwork to recording music for the purpose of conducting comparative musicological analysis, as developed by Erich M. von Hornbostel and his protégée Mieczyslaw Kolinski, which entailed in part the transcription and identification of recurring musical and stylistic traits (see Blum 1991). Waterman also utilized Hornbostel's comparative method from an acculturation perspective to identify the characterizing traits of African music in order to explain the processes of change in the music of the New World Negro (Merriam 1964: 297, 314). Unlike Bascom, however, Waterman did not seem to take systematic fieldnotes. His field recording collection at the Archive of Traditional Music contains scant information on the contents, but the recordings themselves cover a broad range of secular and sacred Afro-Cuban music recorded mostly in Cárdenas, Matanzas.

Bascom delivered his first paper drawn from his fieldwork in Jovellanos at the meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Toronto on December 30, 1948. He later published this paper as an article titled "The Focus of Cuban Santería" (Bascom 1950). In this article, Bascom applies Herskovits's concept of "cultural focus" to hypothesize that the use of stones, sacrificial animal blood and herbs in Santería is African in origin but, more importantly, that the spiritual *value* placed on these aspects of Santería ritual in Cuba seems not to have an analogue among the Yoruba in Nigeria, or else it demonstrates a shift in emphasis as a result of culture contact with Catholicism. One of, if not the earliest, mention of the notion of "cultural focus" in acculturation theory appears in Redfield, Linton and Herskovits's article "Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation," which was originally published in *Man* in 1935 (see Redfield, Linton and Herskovits 1935: 147). Herskovits continued to formulate the function of "cultural focus" in the acculturative process through the 1940s: "The hypothesis of *cultural focus*, which points the way toward a comprehension of the primary concerns of a people, and, in contact situations, illustrates the carryover of aboriginal modes of custom in unequal degree as the different aspects of culture lie within the focal area or outside it" (Herskovits 1948a:1, 3-4, emphasis in original; see also 1990 [1941]: 136). In spite of his findings, however, Bascom stressed that more research on the cultural focus of stones in West African religious systems is needed in order to arrive at a definitive conclusion.

Bascom's second paper, which he delivered at the 29th International Congress of Americanists in New York City in September 1949, was



later included in *Acculturation in the Americas: Proceedings and Selected Papers* (Bascom 1952b). In it he compares the Cuban divination systems *'dilogun* and *Ifa* with their Yoruba and Dahomean analogues, arguing that the Cuban systems demonstrate a high degree of African retention. Both of these papers continue to factor greatly among contemporary ethnomusicologists working on Santería music (e.g., Hagedorn 2001: 212).

Waterman's paper "African Influence on the Music of the Americas" was also included in *Acculturation in the Americas: Proceedings and Selected Papers* (R. Waterman 1952). This is his only published article in which he references his Cuban fieldwork, saying that "many of the insights documented in this paper" stemmed from his "ethnomusicological study among African-derived religious cults in Cuba during the summers of 1946 and 1948" (R. Waterman 1952: 207n1). He does not, however, directly analyze or cite any of his Cuban field recordings in this work. Nevertheless, it is his most important contribution to the comparative analysis of the music of the New World Negro in which he introduces his notion of "metronome sense," which he described as the "focal value" (from Herskovits's notion of cultural focus) rhythm carried in African music and which "usually lies somewhat dormant" in European music (R. Waterman 1952: 211). Waterman proposed his theory of metronome sense to explain how African musical values such as off-beat phrasing of melodic accents were retained, syncretized and reinterpreted based on the perceptual equipment of musicians, dancers and listeners (see C. Waterman 1991: 172-76 and C. Waterman 1993). Indeed, Waterman's theory of metronome sense continues to inform scholarship (particularly on the organization of rhythm and metre) in ethnomusicology and most recently music theory (e.g., Kvifte 2007; Temperley 2000).

Whereas Bascom wrote his first two articles on the acculturation of Yoruba religious practices in Cuba for American academic journals, he published his third and fourth articles in African colonial periodicals. While doing fieldwork in Oyo, Nigeria, in 1951, he wrote a letter to Waterman, relating the following:

Oh yes, you'll be interested to learn that the stuff about Cuba caused so much excitement among our staff and informants that I wrote a short piece on it for Duckworth's NIGERIA.... We get letters from Raul, Trinidad, Miguel and sometimes Baro here, and the people come to see them and to read the Lucumi lines they add, and to help find parrots [*sic*] feathers, camwood, cola nuts and other things they ask for. (Bascom 1951a)

Edward Harland Duckworth was a British colonial educator who began working in Nigeria in 1930 (see Bodleian Library of Commonwealth & African Studies at Rhodes House 2013). From 1937 to 1953, Duckworth also edited *Nigeria*, whose readership was in all likelihood primarily Western-educated Nigerians. Titled “The Yoruba in Cuba,” Bascom’s article describes Yoruba cultural retentions in Santería and Cuban society (Bascom 1951b). He stressed the significance of the Yoruba language’s retention in Cuba, stating that these fluent speakers of Yoruba “could make their way about Yoruba country with little difficulty” (Bascom 1951a: 17). Bascom recorded some of these Cuban Yoruba speakers and played the recordings for Nathaniel Adibi, a Nigerian student studying at Northwestern University, whom Bascom in turn recorded speaking a greeting in Yoruba. Upon returning to Cuba in 1950, Bascom played Adibi’s greeting for his informants and recorded their reply.

These instances of “supraregional conversations” among Nigerian and Cuban Yoruba speakers in Evanston, Jovellanos and Oyo demonstrate what J. Lorand Matory identifies as the Afro-Atlantic’s enduring dialogue and the coevalness of Africa and its diasporas. What is significant here is the fact that Bascom instigated these dialogic greetings in the broader context of conducting acculturation research, which, as Matory points out, conceptualized African cultural continuity in the New World as involving mostly “psychological and unconscious ‘dispositions’” as opposed to “agency and strategy in the reproduction of cultural forms” (Matory 2005: 159). Bascom went further by reflecting on the temporal equality and interconnectedness of so-called “old African culture” and its “survival” in the New World by suggesting that “those who are seriously interested in the future of Nigeria” (i.e., elite Nigerian readers of Duckworth’s *Nigeria*) take Santería’s importance and widespread popularity in the modern city of Havana as “a profound lesson” in their assumption that “African culture is inevitably doomed to disappear” in cosmopolitan cities (Bascom 1951b: 20). Solimar Otero’s work on the Afro-Cuban Yoruba diaspora shows that, in fact, the circulation of Yoruba religious practices from the diaspora (namely, Cuba and Brazil) through the Bight of Benin had been impacting, for example, Lagosian culture and Nigerian national identity since the 19th century (Otero 2010). Bascom’s Cuban material constitutes a small part of this history taking place in the late 1940s and early 1950s.<sup>8</sup>

Bascom published his fourth article in *Mémoires de l’Institut français d’Afrique noire*, an academic journal published by the Musée de l’Institut Fondamental d’Afrique Noire in Dakar, Senegal (Bascom 1953). It appears in a special volume entitled *Les Afro-Américains*, alongside articles by other prominent figures in the early scholarship on New World Negro studies.

Bascom's article, "Yoruba Acculturation in Cuba," contains much of the same information and insights found in his article published in *Nigeria*, including his admonishment of Africans who "maintain that African culture ... must rapidly disappear in the face of Western civilization" (Bascom 1953: 165). As in his *Nigeria* article, Bascom gives detailed examples of Africa's importance to Cubans for the African readers of *Mémoires de l'Institut français d'Afrique noire*, such as the ability of his Cuban informants to name Yoruba cities (e.g., Abeokuta, Ibadan, Oyo, Ife, Ilesha and Ijebu), give relatively accurate estimates of the geographic distance between and locations of these cities, name the kings of Dahomey (modern-day Benin) in the order of their succession, and speak other African languages such as Bantu (known as "Congo" in Cuba), Efik (known as "Carabali" in Cuba), and Fon (known as "Arará" in Cuba). Although he does not identify these Cuban informants by name, he is referring mostly to Esteban Baró, whose fieldwork relationship with Bascom is analyzed below.

Although Waterman's and Bascom's Cuban fieldwork contributed significantly to their theoretical formulations, the paucity of published scholarship focusing on this material is curious. Regardless, the analysis of their unpublished Cuban material provides an opportunity to shed new insight into not only the disciplinary histories of ethnomusicology, anthropology and New World Negro studies but also contemporary work on African diasporic studies. For example, Bascom's two articles published in British and French colonial periodicals in Lagos and Dakar, respectively, are little known, but are nevertheless significant products of the transcultural and transnational formation that Paul Gilroy theorized as the black Atlantic (Gilroy 1993). Furthermore, his provocative suggestion that Western-educated Africans consider the lessons in Santería's cultural significance among modern urban dwellers in Cuba anticipated by at least three decades the epistemological interventions of Western historical time and its notions of tradition and modernity by, for instance, Mudimbe and Gilroy (Mudimbe 1988: 4-5, 51, 191-92; Gilroy 1993: 190-91). But while these examples of Bascom instigating the "live dialogue" between Africans and Afro-Cubans posit these interlocutors as temporal equals, we must not lose sight of the political and economic inequality that distinguished Bascom and Waterman from these Afro-Cuban and West African interlocutors and the interlocutors from each other (see Matory 2005: 169-170; Guridy 2010: 11-12). As the next sections show, such inequalities between Bascom and Waterman and their informants unfolded in ways significant to the historiography of their fields of research.

## In the (Shadows and Margins of the) Field, Jovellanos, 1948

Bascom's and Waterman's field materials provide important insight into the agency, selectivity and complexity of members of Jovellanos's Santería community. On the one hand, Bascom's informants conveyed apprehension in working with him and some even refused to cooperate; on the other, many made demands to be properly compensated for their knowledge. Elsewhere, both anthropologists documented their observations of gay, effeminate male participants in Santería ceremonies; in addition, Bascom consulted with one informant about the dual-gendered nature of Changó, the *oricha* or deity of thunder and lightning in the Santería religion. Such insight paints a much more dynamic picture of Afro-Cuban culture than their acculturation and comparative musicology methodologies were equipped to capture.

In 1948, Alberto Jenkins was fifty-four years old and a respected leader and musician in the Santería community in Jovellanos, Matanzas. Bascom met Jenkins on July 19, the third night of the anniversary celebration of the initiation of Florencia Baró (no relation to Esteban Baró) into Santería. Bascom described Jenkins as an excellent singer and a very good speaker of Yoruba, adding, "Most impressive were his greetings—half spoken half sung in Yoruba to the gods when the possessions occurred" (Bascom 1948b: 29). Jenkins accepted Bascom's invitation to be interviewed in the middle of the celebration, as Bascom recounts in his fieldnotes: "He pushed through the crowd to me and began talking to me in Yoruba, and I greeted him and complimented him on his singing, in Yoruba. He understood, and talked some more Yoruba. Evidently the word had gotten around, and he wanted to make sure that we would use him as an informant" (Bascom 1948b: 29).<sup>9</sup> Obviously, the presence of these American anthropologists at ceremonies stirred the curiosity of attendees, and Bascom routinely utilized his ability to speak Yoruba not only to gain their acceptance but also to secure the cooperation from community leaders to be interviewed.

Their first session took place on July 23. Before Jenkins agreed to begin working with Bascom, however, he seemed to be apprehensive, asking Bascom what the purpose of his work was. Bascom wrote only that he answered (without giving details of his answer) and showed him "some publications" (Bascom 1948b: 35). Based on the discussion that followed, however, we can surmise that Bascom's answer was that he was studying the Yoruba origins of Santería. Eventually, Jenkins expressed his agreement to work with Bascom for \$1 per session, stating he "wouldn't hold back any secrets" (Bascom 1948b: 35). After more discussion, however, Bascom showed him his wire recorder which Jenkins "examined carefully and exclaimed with great surprise when

it said back his name to him. Agreed to \$2 if we used the machine” (Bascom 1948b: 36). After experimenting with the recorder and expressing his wonder, Yenkins restated that he could not work with Bascom for less than \$2: “The gods have forbidden him to say anything. If not he will lose his voice and everything. That is why \$2. These are secrets from the divine providence. If we take this machine to Africa, what he says will be very important” (Bascom 1948b: 36).

As Bascom’s fieldnotes here and elsewhere indicate, Jovellanos’s Santería community had an established anthropological marketplace in which informants set the monetary value of their religious knowledge and by extension their reputation as religious authorities based on their information’s accuracy and fidelity to its African origins. Part of setting prices and establishing their reliability involved questioning the accuracy of others’ informants and scholarship. For instance, Bascom and Yenkins dedicated their session on August 3 to discussing the secular and sacred differences of organologically related musical instruments such as maracas and *güiro* or *ágbe* (calabash gourd idiophones which are beaded). When the discussion turned to *tambores* (drums) and *batá* (the three sacred hour-glass shaped, double-headed drums used in Santería ceremonies) in particular, Yenkins indicated that the name for the *iyá* (largest drum of the *batá* set) player is *ilú bàta* and that the “mouth” or *omó ògbo* is the name for the *iyá*’s larger head: “Mouth is the lower tone than the other end; Ortiz is wrong.... Discussion broke up, saying that Ortiz had spent \$4000 probably for this information, and it was wrong. Then went to discussing Africa, the work, and its importance, among themselves” (Bascom 1948b: 86). Neither Bascom nor Yenkins specifies the publication in which Ortiz gave this supposed misinformation. In one of his articles published in 1938, however, Ortiz uses the terms *olori* and *kpuataki* instead of *ilú bàta* for the player of the *iyá* (Ortiz 1938: 93-94). One possible explanation for this discrepancy in terminology might be the regional differences between Havana and Jovellanos; Pablo Roche, Ortiz’s main informant, was born in Havana where Santería practices, including musical style and drum rhythms, exhibit differences from those of Matanzas. What is certain is that the founder of modern Afro-Cuban folklore, Fernando Ortiz, was a lightning rod for questioning not only his authority but that of his informants—that is, Yenkins’s competitors in the anthropological marketplace.

Not unlike Yenkins, other Cubans expressed their apprehension over Bascom’s intentions. On July 28 he interviewed Dorotea Cuesta Delgado, whose grandmother, according to Delgado, was from Oyo. After the interview began, Bascom indicated that Berta Montero left to bring back the wire recorder in order to record Delgado recounting myths. They recorded Delgado

telling two myths, Oggún singing on his way to kill Changó and Oshún singing to Yemayá, both of which Bascom also transcribed in his fieldnotes (Bascom 1948b: 59-62). After she began telling another myth, Bascom wrote:

[Delgado's] daughter came and took her away, and she left without saying goodbye. We went and asked the daughter why. Got two stories here and there—one that we were making movies and would get lots of money; the other that we were going to say bad things about Cuban religion—as others had before. In two visits we think we convinced the daughter, but the story telling session was ended. (Bascom 1948b: 57)

The choice made by Delgado's daughter to remove her aging mother (Bascom describes her as an "old woman") from this encounter in the field demonstrates what Timothy J. Cooley and Gregory Barz describe as the fieldworker's shadows joining other shadows, past and present, to include the personal histories of informants and colonialism's legacy in anthropology, ethnomusicology and folklore (Cooley and Barz 2008: 5). In this instance, Delgado's daughter points directly to studies of Afro-Cuban culture such as Ortiz's earliest publications (before the 1920s) in which he demonstrated a disdain for African-influenced expression and condemned Santería as sorcery and the cause of an increase in crime in Havana and Matanzas (see Moore 1997: 34 and Hagedorn 2001: 154-55).

Furthermore, we can add the recording machine's indexical representation of popular culture's history of exploiting Afro-Cubans and Afro-Cuban culture for profit to the shadows that shaped the interaction between fieldworker and informant. In fact, the effects of the recording machine on this interaction are many and cross-cultural, one of which is humour expressed by informants at the expense of fieldworkers (see Brady 1999: 94-117). We can hear an example of this in one of Bascom's field recordings in which his informants identify themselves by name. The third informant to speak says his name is Marcelino Guerra, and the seventh speaker says his name is Marcelino Guerra as well, inciting laughter. Marcelino Guerra was a Cuban singer of *son* music whose rise in popularity began in the early 1930s; by 1948 Guerra had moved to New York City where he continued his singing career. Curiously, Bascom did not document this recording session in his fieldnotes.

Another significant aspect of both Bascom's and Waterman's fieldnotes involve the multiple instances in which they commented on men they either met as informants or whom they observed participating in ceremonies and who displayed mannerisms that deviated from conventional, normative masculine

ones. This involved their conflation of gay slurs and common American English labels for men who exhibited gay identities. For instance, on the first day of Florencia Baró's anniversary of her initiation, July 17, Bascom, Montero and Waterman arrived at her home at six in the evening to observe the animal sacrifices for the orichas (see Bascom 1948b: 24-27). Bascom and Montero left before the sacrifices were completed and returned later that evening at the start of the drumming, singing and dancing:

The middle aged [*sic*] women danced on the "back porch" (a roofed over space between the house and the kitchen). They were from about 50-70, and only women danced except for the white Shango boy, whom they said was a fairy. (Bascom 1948b: 26)

Again, on the third night, Bascom, Montero and Waterman arrived at ten in the evening and immediately observed that possessions had already started to take place, beginning with Elegbá. They entered the saint's room to greet Elegbá before moving on to the living room to watch the drumming, singing and dancing. In both their notes, Bascom and Waterman agreed on the total number of possessions:

Altogether there were 12 possessions tonight. The first was the Elegba woman, before we arrived. Second was the white boy—the fairy—with Ogun. We had found out earlier that he was possessed by Ogun on the first night, and not Shango as noted before.... The white boy went through the posturing and face making of the santos, and "looked" possessed, but the Negroes were laughing at him. The drummers and singers were the only ones who took him seriously, and played harder to work him up. After he had finished Florencia asked me if I thought he was good. When he was possessed, he did not enter the saints room to be consulted, but went outside. (Bascom 1948b: 30)

Just as we got there a white kid ("hombrita" ...) got possessed in a sort of miscellaneous fashion and put on a big show, running around all over the house and dancing pretty well. (I am not counting him as a man dancing, because they didn't. Apparently homosexuals don't count either way.) Counting him (which I think was part phoney [*sic*] and part hysterical) there were twelve possessions. (R. Waterman 1948d)

Assuming *hombrita* (literally “little effeminate man”) was the term used by the participants, and not by Waterman himself, we can conclude that this teenage white male was homosexual and *pasivo*. As Ian Lumsden explains, pre-Revolutionary Cuban terms for gay men distinguished between the effeminate male who was perceived to be the *pasivo* (passive) and the *activo* (active), the latter of whom could pass as a “real man” as long as he displayed masculine mannerisms and fit traditional male roles (Lumsden 1996: 30). Moreover, Santería ceremonies constituted unique spaces in which sanctions against non-normative masculine behaviour were relaxed and, thus, gay effeminate men could perform explicitly erotic acts (Lumsden 1996: 48). Bascom’s assertion that his Cuban informants said he was a “fairy,” on the one hand, confirms his effeminacy but, on the other, introduces American terminology for the roles of gay men. In this case, both “hombrita” and “fairy” refer specifically to men whose publically effeminate comportment marked them as homosexuals, in contrast to gay men who maintained their masculine identity by “acting” masculine in public (Lugowski 1999: 5).

To my knowledge no monograph exists of the history of sexuality in Cuban Santería.<sup>10</sup> In his discussion of satirical and derisive songs in Cuban music, however, Ortiz mentions several songs “against lesbians” and “sodomites,” whose “sanctioning power” are nevertheless weak because “the frequency of homosexuals is increasingly noticeable every day in Santería festivals” (Ortiz 1993 [1951]: 439). Apparently, Bascom did pursue the nature of gender and sexuality in Santería. The following excerpt written on August 8 documents his conversation with Pablito Crespo in Cárdenas, Matanzas (where Waterman conducted most of his fieldwork), who explained the dual gendered identities of Shango and his Catholic equivalent St. Barbara:

[Shango’s] only work is lightening. He is the owner of lightening... Santa Barbara is male; Santa Barbarita is female; both can be male and female. Both are Shango. He has many names. Aláfin Oba koso, [which translates as] King not hang himself. So kó sògbo is the one who is both male and female; Shango is the same. Ogódo. In each land he went he gave a different name to his women. Because he is the man who dances best. Not permanent. Like a fairy can go with men or with women. (Bascom 1948b: 105)

The cultural focus of Changó’s dual-gendered *caminos* (paths) among the Yoruba in Africa compared to among Santería devotees in Cuba could have been studied within the acculturation project if not for the dominant intolerant societal attitudes toward homosexual and transgendered identities



as illustrated in Ortiz's, Waterman's and Bascom's discourse above. In fact, American anthropologist Ruth Landes published "A Cult Matriarchate and Male Homosexuality" in 1940 in which she analyzes the status and religious function of openly gay passive men in Candomblé houses in Bahia, Brazil. In it, Landes explains that

most "fathers" [gay Candomblé house leaders] are votaries of Yansan, the African goddess identified with the English St. Barbara. Psychologically this is an apt situation, for in African tradition Yansan is a masculine woman, or even a man. She is a warrior; at times she is the wife of the warrior-king, Shango, and at times she is his sister. Old wood carvings found in Bahia, made there or in Africa, represent Shango as a male figure and as a female. (Landes 1940: 395)

Whereas passive homosexual men in Brazilian society constituted an outcast group, Landes shows that they not only served as leaders in important Candomblé houses but also were feminized as they themselves desired by virtue of performing ritualized roles reserved for women. Regardless of her path-breaking work, the "attention [Landes] paid to the homosexuality of many male cult leaders prompted [Brazilian anthropologist Arthur] Ramos to malign Landes publicly and privately. He began to spread rumors about Landes's supposed unethical fieldwork conduct" (Yelvington 2005: 73). It is difficult to determine definitively what prompted Bascom to avoid the topic of homosexuality in Santería in his publications, even though he did write about it in his fieldnotes. We might surmise, however, that Bascom was, like his Brazilian colleague Ramos, operating in accordance with their discipline's and dominant society's largely heterosexual, misogynist and patriarchal episteme.

According to Gregory Barz, fieldnotes are "often personal and inconsequential, forgotten, and missing from archives and collections of field materials" and "seldom, if ever, assume an authority in ethnographic writing" (Barz 2008: 208). Apart from the fact that Bascom's fieldnotes are not missing from archives, this definition of the significance of fieldnotes in the 2000s accurately describes the fate of both Bascom's and Waterman's field materials of 1948. Indeed, Bascom's and Waterman's fieldwork contain much more insight into the knowledge, practices and experiences of Yoruba speakers and Santería believers in Jovellanos and Cárdenas than their analytic metaphors of acculturation and comparative musicology could accommodate in their published articles. In addition, while Barz's contention that fieldnotes for the contemporary ethnomusicologist should "act as ongoing and changeable

scripts for the mediation between experience and interpretation/analyses” may not have pertained to Bascom’s or Waterman’s methodology, it greatly informs the work of those of us interested in analyzing these primary documents in their social, political and epistemological contexts (Barz 2008: 209). Bascom’s multiple sessions with one particular informant, Esteban Baró, reveal additionally rich historical insight into the Santería community in Jovellanos and its collisions with Cuban and American ethnologists, folklorists and anthropologists.

### Esteban Baró and Anthropology’s Epistemological Ethnocentrism

Among the many religious authorities Bascom consulted in Cuba, Esteban Baró stands out for at least two reasons. First, he identified himself as a second-generation Arará of Dahomey heritage who was a fluent speaker of both Lucumí, the Cuban term for Yoruba, as well as Arará or Fon, the language of Dahomey. The Arará have received much less scholarly attention in general than the more dominant Afro-Cuban groups Lucumí and Congo. Second, the seventy-two-year-old Baró, more than the others whom Bascom interviewed, asserted an authoritative knowledge of African history, religion and geography that nevertheless often appeared unreliable within the episteme of Bascom’s anthropological training and research in Nigeria. Mudimbe defines anthropology’s episteme as the “intellectual atmosphere which gives to anthropology its status as discourse, its significance as a discipline, and its credibility as a science in the field of human experience” (1988: 19). Indeed, Bascom often expressed his frustration with Baró’s insistence in wanting to *teach him* about African history, religion and culture instead of discussing the changes in African cultural practices in Cuba. In fact, Baró’s agency, selectivity and motivation constituted a will to an authoritative knowledge that exceeded acculturation’s discursive formation and, thus, threatened its discursive authority.

In accordance with Herskovits’s acculturation methodology, both Bascom and Waterman sought Afro-Cuban informants whose linguistic skills, religious knowledge and music manifested the dynamics of change. In other words, without evidence of the syncretism of Spanish and Catholic traits with the Yoruba language and religious practices, respectively, Bascom’s project could not result in a proper study of acculturation. Bascom wrote a letter to Herskovits dated July 23 explaining that most of the rituals he had seen thus far in Cuba were “so African that it is difficult to see much of a problem in cultural change, with the exception of the syncretism with

the [Catholic] saints.... [I]f I can get a complete picture of the shift from African to Criollo [Creole] ritual, I will have something important” (Bascom 1948c). He then indicated that the use of foods, songs, colours, beads and chromolithographs “all point to the development of a new but standardized set of ritual paraphernalia,” and that he wanted to check the “doubtful points on the African ritual with Baro.” Herskovits responded in a letter written on July 27, saying that

it is [in the Criollo cult where] you will have your significant materials in terms of the dynamics of change from African to mixed Afro-European elements. Since you have such an intelligent man to work with [i.e., Baró], you might get his reactions to the changes which have occurred in these less orthodox cults. (Herskovits 1948b)

Two days prior to Herskovits writing his response, however, Bascom consulted with Baró, as he documented in his fieldnote entry for July 25:

We showed [Baró] the machine and his comment was that the music from Cardenas was criollo.... Today he said it was alright to go and ask the Criollos, but that the truth would come from him. Said he would think it over as to whether or [not to] work with us. We said we didn't want to impose on him. Etc. Showed him [Herskovits's] Dahomey, and he commented on it “with authority.” (“this [*sic*] is right. this is wrong”), without having had it thoroughly explained in Spanish. (For this kind of work he does not seem to be reliable, but I want him for something else).

...I still think he can be extremely useful for filling in on the African picture, but he is too African to use as a steady informant for any acculturation study, or for any picture of Santeria in Cuba. (Bascom 1948b: 43)

This excerpt of Bascom and Baró positioning themselves in the field is *thick* with insight into their concerns over, and motivations in, entering into a fieldwork relationship. In other words, we see how the collision in their mutual exertion of the truth is, in fact, a product of their mutual will to power (see Spivak 1997: xxii). Baró puts his knowledge forth as authoritative first by delineating himself from Criollos—that is, Afro-Cubans whose ancestral lines do not exclusively reach back to Africa, and second by momentarily guarding his knowledge while he considers whether or not to share it with Bascom.

Bascom responds by implying that Baró's participation is inconsequential ("We said we didn't want to impose on him") to their work. Then, Bascom shows him Herskovits's book *Dahomey: An Ancient West African Kingdom*, a gesture also of the will to power, given the book's indexical signification of Western science, to which Baró responds by exerting once again his authoritative knowledge of African history ("this [sic] is right. this is wrong"). Bascom, then, exerts his epistemological ethnocentrism by determining Baró's assessment of the content of Herskovits's *Dahomey* to be unreliable. In short, Bascom enacts what Mudimbe describes as "the belief that scientifically there is nothing to be learned from 'them' [the anthropologist's Other] unless it is already 'ours' or comes from 'us'" (1988: 15). Finally, Baró threatens to collapse the epistemological integrity of the acculturation project by virtue of Bascom's positing of Baró as, on the one hand, "too African" and, on the other, not reliable on things African. The effect of Baró's collisions with Bascom was the dissolution of the opposites Africa/New World, African/New World Negro, and History/fantasy (Spivak 1997: xxviii).

The following are additional examples in which Bascom and Waterman document Baró's and other informants' versions of African history and geography, the epistemological collisions and agreements of which are met by Bascom and Waterman with scorn and surprise, respectively. In their first meeting on July 2, Bascom recorded Baró's explanation of African geography: "He said his parents came from Savalu [in modern-day Benin] and Atakpame [in modern-day Togo]. He talked at length about African geography, with surprisingly accurate relationships between place[s] in Dahomey-Nigeria area, but with the Nile ... China, Ethiopia and the Congo rearranged in fantastic ways" (Bascom 1948b: 16). Waterman writes on July 14: "I talked with them [i.e., informants in Havana] about the geography of Africa, which they have pretty well screwed up, with the Nile running through the middle of the Yoruba territory" (R. Waterman 1948b). In his entry for July 17, however, Waterman writes: "Then we started to talk about Africa, a place in which they all have a tremendous interest, and X knew all about the protectorates, and colonies, and where everything was, and who owned what, and so on" (R. Waterman 1948c). Bascom recorded in detail Baró's explanations of colonialism in Africa. His entry for July 21 through 22 reads:

Then [Baró] told his version of colonization: The English pirates came to Dahomey and took the land from the Africans. There was fighting and the French came and asked What is going on here. The French came to the aid of the African people and now Dahomey is French, and they don't like the English. There the Africans own

their own land, but where the British are they have taken it away from them. The whites gave money to bad Africans to collect their enemies, wrap them and sell them as slaves. (Bascom 1948b: 34)

On August 25 Bascom wrote that Baró “repeated his version of colonial history,” stating that, upon the death of King Ghezo<sup>11</sup> in 1790, cannons fired in Africa were heard in Cuba. He continued: “Gezo was succeeded by Tonge, his son, who fought the British in the 1830s” (Bascom 1948b: 224).

A day later, on August 26, Bascom wrote:

Today Baro was difficult again. Interrupted the discussion of Obatala to give a long discussion on the Bible, which he would not let us put in these notes; brought out his Bible (New York 1903). Jehova is Xebiosa, the god of the universe who commissioned his son Jesus Christ to save the world.... This was an interesting lecture; too bad could not get it, and Berta couldn't even translate most of it.... Then another diatribe against O [Ortiz], an usurpador [usuper] of African religion. O is going to die a bad death, and if he comes back B [Baró] will kill him. Kept telling us that we must not give O what we have had, which we had promised earlier; what we have is ten times more than O (in our lessons with B) and worth \$100 a lesson. Then we had to argue again that we knew something about Africa, and that we were not studying to learn about Africa but about Cuba, etc. A difficult session and only half a page all morning.

... Telling Baro what I know about Africa doesn't help much; if it is what he knows he says; igual aqui [it's the same here]. If different he thinks I am wrong and he knows more about Africa than I do. (Bascom 1948b: 225)

This entry is one of many provocative examples of Baró discussing the importance of Africa in the Bible, thereby frustrating Bascom's goal to learn about the importance of the oricha Obatala in Africa and Cuba. It also demonstrates the shadows of Fernando Ortiz and, as we will see later, American folklorist Harold Courlander affecting Baró and Bascom's work.

One of the meetings, if not the first, between Baró and Ortiz is documented in Portell Vilá's article “El folklore en Jovellanos” published in *Archivos del Folklore Cubano* in 1929 (Portell Vilá 1929). Portell Vilá and Ortiz collected the material for this article during a one-day research trip in Jovellanos in May 1928. The author briefly describes Baró, identifying him as the president of the Arará association San Manuel and the “son of *dahomeyanos*” (or descendants of

Dahomeans). He also describes Baró as being bitter over the dwindling number of members of San Manuel. Clearly, Baró was concerned with both the survival of his Arará heritage within the predominately Yoruba- and Congo-descended population of Jovellanos as well as the authorship and ownership of knowledge of his culture's history, language and religious beliefs. And it was regarding Ortiz's knowledge of the latter that he considered Ortiz to be illegitimate, a threat or perhaps even a plagiarist. But Ortiz's scholarship proved controversial among some of his Cuban colleagues, and not only Afro-Cuban informants such as Alberto Yenkins and Esteban Baró.

For example, Cuban anthropologist Rómulo Lachatañeré, who is also credited with establishing Afro-Cuban folklore along with Ortiz and Lydia Cabrera, wrote a letter to Herskovits on November 9, 1940, asking him to review his monograph based on his work on the beliefs of Santería practitioners (Lachatañeré 1940). Herskovits handed the manuscript over to Bascom, validating the latter's expertise in Yoruba Ifá divination to Lachatañeré, and then relayed Bascom's suggestions back to Lachatañeré in addition to his own, which included his recommendation to include Ortiz's work on syncretism (Herskovits 1941). In his response Lachatañeré was quick to express his "reservations, especially over [Ortiz's] first book *Los negros brujos* [in which a] great amount of data are erroneous, possibly because the professor did not question the matter with good informants, or else they deceived him" (Lachatañeré 1941). Ultimately, Lachatañeré agreed with Herskovits that Ortiz had contributed significantly to the scholarship on Afro-Cuban religions and deserved due acknowledgement. Some of Ortiz's informants, however, including Baró, were not so collegial.

In 1940 Ortiz published *Contrapunteo cubano* in which he coined the concept of transculturation, claiming it better theorized the dynamics of Cuban culture change or *mestizaje* than acculturation when in reality it paralleled Herskovits's formulation of acculturation (Yelvington 2005: 71-72). By 1948 Ortiz had published dozens, if not hundreds, of articles and essays on Afro-Cuban culture and history in academic journals and Cuban newspapers, establishing himself as the eminent authority of Afro-Cuban folklore.<sup>12</sup> But as Robin Moore's critical analysis of his scholarship from this period shows, Ortiz's perspectives on Afro-Cuban cultures underwent a gradual shift from one in which he represented the African strains of Cuban *mestizaje* as degenerate and atavistic to another in which these cultures embodied humanity's distant past in general and Cuba's celebrated African heritage in particular (Moore 1994). Ultimately, as Moore argues, Ortiz believed that Afro-Cuban cultures, "with appropriate modifications [i.e., racial and cultural miscegenation or *mestizaje*], could potentially provide a basis for the strong (elite) national culture he finds lacking in the country" (Moore

1994: 38). Moore's assessment contradicts Rafael Rojas's suggestion that Ortiz's national project was "closer to a postethnic discourse ... than to a multicultural citizenry model.... Despite its consideration of the heterogeneity distributed by the Cuban migratory fabric, Ortiz's oeuvre stresses the integration between blacks and whites more through the path of republican civism than that of a mythological miscegenation" (Rojas 2007: 56).

Bascom's reports of Ortiz's reputation among his informants (not to mention his colleagues) represent entirely undocumented perspectives on Ortiz and the nationalist projects he and his contemporaries pursued, perspectives that were based on these informants' actual experiences interacting with Ortiz in and from the field. Surprisingly, even Bascom referenced Ortiz's poor standing among his informants in a letter of support he wrote on behalf of another Cuban scholar, Argeliers León, for his application for a Guggenheim fellowship in 1952. In the letter Bascom wrote that León "had established contacts with informants who are knowledgeable and who had expressed to me their willingness to cooperate with him in his investigations, whereas with Dr. Ortiz, for example, they tried to tell as little as possible and still remain on his payroll" (Bascom 1952a). Even Waterman took note of one Dr. Carlos Mención who, according to Waterman, "hates Ortiz" (R. Waterman 1946). Indeed, there is a lacuna of critical scholarship on Ortiz's research methods and his mythologized standing in Cuban academia and nationalist discourse.<sup>13</sup> Bascom's and Waterman's materials begin to put in stark relief just how threatening, or else irrelevant, Ortiz's research methods and scholarship were for some whose cultural practices, according to Ortiz, were supposedly the fountain of a racially mixing national culture or multicultural society.

In fact, Baró's articulations of his African and, specifically, Arará identity demonstrate the kinds of diasporic and transnational community formations that Solimar Otero argues function as a critique of those "who have studied the African diaspora in the Herskovitsian sense," that is, in terms of Africanism and creolization (Otero 2010: 3). Baró identified not only with Africa in terms of his familial lineage but also with the black Atlantic's marketplace for knowledge in African religion. On August 24, for instance, Bascom's entry reads:

As soon as we arrived, Baro delivered another one of his arguments, or lectures. Didn't want to take the money we had given him. It wasn't enough. He was just teaching us for friendship, etc. People give him \$400 and more for what he teaches, and he has correspondence with Haiti, South America, Los Angeles (a spiritualist center) etc, and is very important. (Bascom 1948b: 208)

In spite of being unverified, Baró's claims to be in correspondence with people in Haiti, South America and the United States provide tremendously significant insight into early 20th-century networks of African diasporic religious communities.

Baró also made efforts to dialogue with contemporaries in Dahomey. In 1926, for example, he wrote a letter addressed to the king of Dahomey, who had been deposed by the French in 1900 (Sogbossi 1998: 53).<sup>14</sup> The French exiled King Agoli-Agbo to Gabon but eventually allowed him to return to Savalu in Dahomey in 1910 under house arrest since there was a movement among Abomey royalty to enthrone him as the King of the Fon. In 1925 he was allowed to move closer to his family in Abomey (see Decalo 1995: 39). It is probable that Baró became aware of the deposed king's return to Abomey via reports in Cuban newspapers and radio. In his letter he greeted the king as his majesty whom he "considers as the king of this arará [Allada] nation of Dahomey," in effect pronouncing King Agoli-Agbo's legitimacy (Sogbossi 1998: 115). He then identified himself as the president of the San Manuel association in Jovellanos and traced his genealogical roots to Savalu and Atakpame where he says his father and mother were born, respectively. Moreover, in stating in his letter that "I am of the same race of this same arará nation," Baró defies what so many Cuban intellectuals, including José Martí and Fernando Ortiz, proposed for the Cuban nation in terms of race and national identity (Sogbossi 1998: 115).

Not every member of Jovellanos's Santería community, however, complied with Baró's authority. In his entry for July 2, Bascom wrote:

[Kata] took us to Baró, the head of the African society-For [sic] San Manuel. On the way he told us about an American who had spent about three weeks in Jovellanos making records, and who had not gotten anything. He had simply annoyed Baró, who told him nothing. He tried to buy people, and Baró and the other people refused to cooperate. Found out later that this was Courlander. (Bascom 1948b: 16)

Harold Courlander's research in Cuba is best represented by the Folkways LP *Cult Music of Cuba*, which was originally released in 1947 on the DISC Ethnic Series. This disc of Santería, Palo, Congo and Abakuá music represents only a small portion of the ten hours of field recordings that he made while in Guanabacoa, Havana and Jovellanos from April through May 1941. Although I have been unable to locate his complete fieldnotes, Courlander did publish his recollections of his fieldwork in Jovellanos, including his interactions with



Baró, in the Archive of Traditional Music's *Resound* newsletter (Courlander 1984). In it Courlander describes Baró as having had "special prestige and influence in the area." After meeting with him twice, Baró requested \$100 for himself and another \$100 for a local military official as payment for being recorded. Obviously, this amount was extraordinarily high compared to the \$2 Alberto Yenkin charged Bascom. After Courlander refused to pay this amount, Baró, with the help of the military official, foiled Courlander's attempts to record music performed at ceremonies. Nevertheless, he was able to make some field recordings with the assistance of other residents of Jovellanos who did not sympathize with Baró's methods of, and reputation for, working with fieldworkers, thereby securing the production of the first commercially available field recordings of Afro-Cuban secular and sacred music for international consumption.

## Conclusions

This article analyzes unpublished fieldwork materials and interprets in its contents exceptional moments in which Afro-Cuban informants contest various parameters of anthropology's epistemological enterprise, including its construct of the "field." I interpret these exceptional moments from the field as inflected by both the dominant social relations that distinguished these informants from American and Cuban anthropologists and the anthropological and nationalist projects that motivated the latter's research. I also consider these moments exceptional for the insights they provide into the lived experiences of those whose knowledge Ortiz, Courlander, Bascom, Waterman and others cannibalized in order to perpetuate their will to power manifested in the discursive constructs of Africanisms, comparative musicology, acculturation, transculturation and afrocubanismo (see Lefebvre 1993: 33-42). Conceiving the anthropological field as a form of social practice further allows us to frame these field materials as documents of the polyvalent and historically specific actualizations of that place (de Certeau 1984: 117). As a result, these informants' actions and words or will to power represent their way of having operated within the "constraining order" of the anthropological field, and their so-called unreliable and fantastic statements in particular represent their strategic "play" within these social relations to turn these dominant discourses to their advantage and, thus, generate within the anthropological field a degree of plurality, creativity and, ultimately, power (de Certeau 1984: 30).

As for the historiographical analysis of New World Negro studies and Afro-Cuban folklore, this article provides new critical insight into individual

Afro-Cuban voices living contemporaneously with American and Cuban anthropologists—that is, real people who actively attempted to engage, influence and disrupt the temporalizing and spatializing effects of the discourses of Africanisms. Some people even exposed unknowingly the acculturation project’s homophobia and patriarchal dominance. However momentarily, Bascom’s and Waterman’s Afro-Cuban informants were able to impress upon them their subjectivities as moderns, while always gauging and engaging the utility in being African, an identity formation that was undoubtedly crucial to the viability of their local standing within Jovellanos’s Santería community. The point here is not to determine the veracity of these informants’ statements as recorded by Bascom and Waterman but instead to regard them as dialogic interventions in the dominant anthropological and comparative musicological practices in New World Negro studies and Afro-Cuban folklore of the 1940s. Their voices—though absent in these scholars’ published scholarship and silenced in much of the contemporary historiographical studies of these fields and their associated disciplines, including ethnomusicology—survive.

V. Y. Mudimbe states that the academic discourse of Africa before the 1950s was “either a geographical or an anthropological one ... a ‘discourse of competence’ about unknown societies without their own ‘texts’” (Mudimbe 1988: 175-76). This article shows that fieldwork materials can reveal these supposed unknown societies prior to the 1950s to have asserted their modern subjectivities and actively contested the anthropological and ethnomusicological discourse of Africa and its diaspora. The materials analyzed here constitute entryways into the ontologies and everyday practices of Afro-Cubans of Jovellanos in 1948, aspects of which Bascom and Waterman, on the one hand, did not consider relevant to their scholarship but, on the other, did consider important enough to record. 🌿

## Notes

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Musicological Society/Society for Ethnomusicology/Society for Music Theory joint conference, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 3, 2012.

1. I identify both William R. Bascom and Richard A. Waterman as anthropologists in this article namely because their terminal degrees were in anthropology, and they held assistant professor positions in the Department of Anthropology at Northwestern University during the time they conducted research in Cuba in 1948. In terms of their fieldwork methods, however, Bascom drew from folklore and ethnology, whereas Waterman occupied himself with comparative musicology. Ultimately, they conducted fieldwork in Cuba to contribute to the same field of study, New World Negro or Afroamerican studies, which their mentor Melville J. Herskovits defined as interdisciplinary and intercontinental (Herskovits 1946: 337-38).

2. *Santería*, *Abakuá*, *Palo* and *Arará* refer to Afro-Cuban religious and cultural traditions with roots in the traditions of the Yoruba, *Ékpè*, Kongo and Dahomey, respectively, of West and Central Africa. *Rumba* is a Creole style of Afro-Cuban music and dance. For further background on these cultural and musical traditions, see Hagedorn (2001), Marks (2003) and Moore (1997).

3. In addition to being research collaborators, William Bascom and Berta Montero were also partners. They married upon their return to Evanston from Havana. Montero continued to assist Bascom in his research and occasionally co-authored articles with him (Crowley and Dundes 1982; see Bascom and Bascom 1951).

4. Their “mission” was compelled by the scientific goals of Herskovits’s acculturation method, the genealogy of which can be traced back to at least 1929 when he first articulated his desire to determine the African origins of spirituals by studying the music of black populations in the Caribbean and South America and eventually Africa. On November 18, 1929, Herskovits wrote a letter to Erich M. Von Hornbostel informing him of the recordings that he made while in Suriname, stating that “this material when it is worked up will go far to solve the problem you have stated so interestingly—that of the origin of the American Negro spiritual” (Herskovits 1929; see also Gershenhorn 2004: 75). In 1930 Herskovits published “The Negro in the New World: The Statement of a Problem” in which he introduced for the first time in his scholarship the idea of “a scale for the intensity of Africanisms” and in which he outlined his scientific program for the comparative study of Africans in the diaspora (Herskovits 1969 [1930]: 5-6). He argued that it is principally in folklore, religion and music that “possible African cultural survivals are to be salvaged” (Herskovits 1969 [1930]: 11).

5. Drawing from V.Y. Mudimbe’s work, Kevin A. Yelvington attempts a “rehistoricization” of the anthropology of Afro-America by analyzing the work of Melville J. Herskovits in its historical and political context (Yelvington 2005: 40). Yelvington characterizes his approach as the “observers observed”—that is, he traces the significance in the correspondences, personal relationships and institution-building among Herskovits, Fernando Ortiz, Jean Price-Mars and Arthur Ramos for the develop-

ment of New World Negro studies. Similarly, Eleni Coundouriotis shows that many African novelists throughout much of the 20th century wrote from an ontological position which they strategically situated between the dichotomous constructions of the colonized African and the so-called real African (Coundouriotis 1999: 20). By looking at only novelists and academics, Yelvington and Coundouriotis as well as Mudimbe are complicit in perpetuating the silencing of those voices “from below” who took an active (dialogic) part in these transnational and postcolonial projects otherwise perceived as the exclusive domain of intellectuals.

6. Not until Steven Feld’s second edition of *Sound and Sentiment*, which has a chapter that includes writing by his informants, was dialogic editing between the ethnographer and her informants so consciously utilized to decentre the authorial voice of the former (Feld 1990).

7. In his Fulbright Application submitted in 1955, Bascom indicated that he conducted “confidential war work in Nigeria” for the Office of Strategic Services in 1942.

8. Otero cites Bascom’s admonition for elite Nigerians to “rethink the paradigms of urbanity and sophistication” in an article he published in 1962 (Otero 2010: 154); it is important to point out, however, that Bascom first posited this in “The Yoruba in Cuba,” which was published eleven years prior.

9. Jenkins also agreed to be recorded by Lydia Cabrera and Josefina Tarafa around nine years later. Morton Marks described Jenkins as “one of the most traditional singers (*olorin*) in Matanzas. Elderly Lucumí worshippers (*aborissás*) from Jovellanos and other towns in the province said he sang ‘old style,’ the way people had sung in slavery times” (2003: 11-12).

10. Salvador Vidal-Ortiz has written a dissertation based on his ethnographic study of the intersections of gender, sexuality and race in Santería communities in New York City from 2000 to 2002 (see Vidal-Ortiz 2005a and 2005b). Although the experiences, attitudes and practices of LGBTs in Vidal-Ortiz’s study are specific to Santería in New York in the 21st century, they allow for comparison with those activities documented by Bascom and Waterman. For instance, *asientos* or Santería houses in New York either consist of predominately LGBTs or more frequently heterosexual-dominant houses accept their participation. Some straight members of these houses described the spiritual and communal pleasure they experienced in sharing spaces of worship with LGBT practitioners. Similarly, Tomás Fernández Robaina confirms that contemporary Santería is the “most open of all the Afro-Cuban creeds about gender and sexual orientation,” though “effeminate males are not allowed to participate in the playing of Reglamento [or sanctified] drums” (qtd. in Lumsden 1996: 206).

11. According to Samuel Decalo, King Ghezo reigned from 1818 to 1858 (King Kpengla died in 1789) and was succeeded by his son King Glele (1858-1889) (Decalo 1995: 184-85, 231).

12. Most of Ortiz’s major tomes, however, such as *La africanía de la música folklórica de Cuba* (1950), *Los bailes y el teatro de los negros en el folklore de Cuba* (1951)

and *Los instrumentos de la música afrocubana* (1952-1955) were not published until the early 1950s.

13. In a recent trip to Havana, I asked one Cuban scholar why Ortiz's work has not been the subject of critical examinations. His response was: "Ortiz is like Fidel [Castro]. You can't criticize him here" (personal communication, Havana, October 16, 2013)

14. According to Herskovits, the last ruling monarch of Abomey abdicated his throne to the French in 1898 (1938: 13).

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