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From Ajiaco to Tropical Soup: Fernando Ortiz and the Definition of Cuban Culture (Dialogue #93)

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PREFACE

Gustavo Pérez Firmat is associate professor of the Department of Romance Languages at Duke University. He is the author of Idle Fictions: the Hispanic Vanguard Novel, 1926-1934 (Duke University Press), Literature and Liminality: Festive Readings in the Hispanic Traditions, and In Other Words: Translation as Cultural Practice in Modern Cuban Literature. His poetry has appeared in numerous anthologies and literary magazines, including Linden Lane Magazine, The Bilingual Review, Término, and Mariel.

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Richard Tardanico
Editor
Occasional Papers Series Dialogues

FROM AJIACO TO TROPICAL SOUP:

FERNANDO ORTIZ AND THE DEFINITION OF CUBAN CULTURE

Ir más allá es un regreso.

Severo Sarduy

During my first lecture I attempted to distinguish between Cuban exile and Cuban-American literature by resorting to the notion of ethnicity, which one might define in a telegraphic sort of way as contradiction without conflict. Today I am going to take this line of reasoning one step further by trying to persuade you that the criteria that define Cuban-American culture are also constitutive of mainland Cuban culture. I want to argue that Cuban culture is itself a hyphenated creation, that it is also constituted by the non-synthetic (but also non-conflictive) combination of disparate elements. In other words, I want to argue that, as a cultural entity, Cuba is defined not by the criteria of nationhood but by those of ethnicity. Many good and bad poets, myself included, have often compared the island to a lizard--un lagarto, un cocodrilo, un caimán; it now seems to me, however, that Cuba resembles nothing so much as a hyphen--a curved hyphen no less: which is to say, a hyphen on the way to becoming a question mark.

In order to answer the question dormant in Cuba's topography, I will focus on the period that is generally regarded as having produced the least hyphenated, that is, the most local, idiosyncratic and provincial kind of literature. I am referring, of course, to the literature of the so-called criollista epoch, a period that covers roughly the first four decades of this century and that, in generational terms, includes the writers that make

up the first and second generations of Cuba's Republican era. My choice of this period is dictated by practical as well as polemical considerations. Coming in the wake of the island's independence from Spain, and punctuated by several episodes of U.S. interventionism, the first decades of this century were a time of intense national reflection. This was the time when the Cuban "ethos" was being formed, an interlude of several decades when the dominant concern of Cuban writers and intellectuals was nothing less than the forging of a national identity. It is enough to peruse the contents of such journals as Cuba Contemporánea, Revista Bimestre Cubana, Revista de Avance Social, or Archivos del Folklore Cubano to get a sense of the vigorous discussion that was taking place during these years, one that involved all strata of Cuban culture, material as well as ideological, high-brow as well as popular. This was the period that saw the publication of seminal works of literary and cultural speculation by writers of the caliber of Ramiro Guerra, Jorge Mañach, Juan Marinello, and Fernando Ortiz, among others. In the literary sphere, this was the period of Guillén's Motivos de son (1930), of Loveira's Juan Criollo (1927), and of Salinas' Alma Guajira (1928), to name only one representative work from each genre. It would seem, therefore, that if one wanted relief from hyphenation, the writings of the criollistas would be the place where one would find it.

Although the temporal limits of criollismo are imprecise, there is fairly widespread agreement on the aesthetic program of this tendency. As the word suggests, works of this persuasion attempted, arguably for the first time, to capture the specificity of American nature and culture. Thus, criollist literature is characterized by its attention to native landscapes, regional dialects, rustic characters, and autochthonous themes. Mario Vargas Llosa has called these writers "primitives"--a somewhat

misleading characterization but one that does reflect the current consensus on this body of work. For Vargas Llosa, these writers are "primitive" in two related senses: first, because of their anachronistic literary techniques, which go back to the nineteenth-century realism, and second, because of their concentration on "primitive" themes like the struggle between man and nature.[1] According to this view, which has been perpetuated in countless essays and manuals, criollismo is a nativist reaction to the cosmopolitan excesses of modernismo. Unlike his modernista predecessor, the nativist writer was someone who had his gaze fixed on American reality. As Rufino Blanco Fombona once put it, criollismo is "tener dentro del pecho un corazón americano y no un libro extranjero."[2]

Against this opinion, I want to argue for the internationalist character of criollist literature. Although many of these works are indeed "sample cases of folklore," to quote Vargas Llosa again, other works in the criollista canon raise and explore issues that have little to do with folklorism. My own position is that, at least as regards Cuban criollismo, foreign books are not incompatible with American feeling; indeed American feeling, and particularly Cuban feeling, is nothing other than a certain way of reading foreign books. Said differently: Cuban criollismo is translational rather than foundational. To be sure, many works of criollist intent are little more than registers of regional customs. But there is another side--an outside if you will--to this movement. The most powerful works of this persuasion compel precisely by their attention to foreign precedent, and by their deliberate and nuanced cosmopolitanism. My term for this tendency is "critical criollismo." I use the adjective to underscore the exegetical slant of these works, which do not limit themselves to a docile emulation of foreign usage; their stance is "critical" in that it entails a

self-conscious, selective, and sometimes even willful manipulation of literary tradition. As a kind of intralingual translation, a work of critical criollismo knows that in order to keep its words, it must keep its distance. These works have a double edge. On the one hand, and as one has come to expect, they record regionalisms of all kinds; but on the other hand, their regional bias is countered by or filtered through an awareness of the inherited or traditional forms that local usage has displaced. The result is an interesting tug-of-words between insular usage and peninsular precedent. Recognizing that the search for a literary vernacular can be furthered only by recasting, refashioning, adapting--in short, by translating--exogenous models, critical criollists shade local color with foreign hues.

Let me provide a small but clear-cut example of this shading. In Loveira's Juan Criollo, one of the masterworks of Cuban nativist fiction, one finds the following sentence: "Dentro de tal estado de cosas llegó la gran comida, o no hablando en criollo, la gran cena."[3] This remark displays the translational sensibility that I regard as characteristic of Cuban criollism. By saying both cena and comida, Loveira makes a point of mixing the exotic and the demotic, of recording the "standard" word as well as its local equivalent. Even if his overall aim is to write en criollo, there is a certain pressure upon his text that manifests itself in the acknowledgement of peninsular usage, and this pressure complicates and enriches a novel that begins to broadcast its criollo standing on the title page. Loveira's double focus is typical of the "critical" strain within Cuban criollism. Like this sentence from Juan Criollo, works of critical criollism willingly get caught up in a counterpoint between the native and the foreign. The best among them--and Loveira's novel is an example--find interesting and

innovative ways of resolving the counterpoint, of having their comida and eating it too. As we will see shortly, Fernando Ortiz imaged the results of process with a culinary metaphor: the ajiaco, a Cuban stew characterized by the heterogeneity of its ingredients. In the best of cases, the translational, contrapuntal performances of critical criollism produce a savory linguistic and literary ajiaco: food for thought, words of mouth.

The fundamental difference between critical and primitive criollismo, between one that accepts its chains and the one that tries to bolt them, can be expressed in terms of the opposition between "originality" and "aboriginality." The primitive criollista believes in aboriginal achievement; thinking that he has the strength, in William Carlos Williams' phrase, to throw away the rotted names, he maintains that it is possible to begin from scratch, ab origine. His critical counterpart has a less ambitious but perhaps more realistic aim: he wants to inflect, rather than efface, European culture. Thus he seeks a relative, relational "originality" rather than an absolute, Adamic "aboriginality." In the sense in which I use the terms, "aboriginality" designates the illusory ambition to shed what Juan Marinello once called "los grillos sabios de Europa," while "originality" designates the ability to make music with their clanging. The former defines primitive criollismo; the latter defines critical criollismo. One is a foundational enterprise, while the other is a translational enterprise.

I will now explain what I mean in more detail by looking at several texts by Fernando Ortiz, the eminent Cuban polymath. I use Ortiz because, given his long and productive attention to Cuba, any serious discussion of his work engages issues that define the very nature of what it means to be Cuban. There is a kind of "legend" surrounding Ortiz, a legend according to which the author of Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar is something

like the quintessential criollo, the very paradigm of cubanidad: Liborio with reading glasses and index cards. In his life and his work, Ortiz personified the essential lineaments of the Cuban ethos. His mastery of all facets of Cuban culture made him "Cuba's Third Discoverer," as he was labelled by Marinello, or "Mister Cuba," as he was once called by Lino Novás Calvo.[4] According to Nicolás Guillén, it was Ortiz who laid the foundations for the cultural integration of the Cuban people.[5] And Ortiz himself invested his career with symbolic value by interpreting the gradual acceptance of his research into Afro-Cuban folklore as a reflection of the history of race relations in Cuba.[6] Apparently no man is an island--except Ortiz, whose life and work and nickname are synonymous with Cuba.

Although Ortiz wrote no novels like Carlos Loveira or poems like Nicolás Guillén, to my mind he is Cuba's most important nativist writer. Indeed, were it not for his seminal work on black folklore, much of the Afro-Antillean literature of the third and fourth decades of this century is unimaginable. Ortiz's research helped create the climate that produced such works as Motivos de son (1930), Ecue-Yamba-O (1933), or Cuaderno de poesía negra (1934), to name only three of the better-known titles in this canon. What makes Ortiz's nativism noteworthy, though, is his conviction that it was not possible--or, if possible, not desirable--to study Cuban culture apart from its European and African antecedents. Ortiz's whole career is nothing but a sustained examination of how the foreignness of Cuban culture, of how its exogenous roots took hold, grew, and changed in the island. In spite of his superficial resemblance to some of the "primitives," Ortiz has no illusions about aboriginal achievement. Indeed, he insistently pointed out Cuba's lack of an aboriginal culture. Like other writers of a "critical" bent, he believed that whatever originality there was to achieve, it

had to emerge from the judicious--and even malicious--manipulation of foreign imports.

His work, therefore, offers an example of what I have termed "critical criollismo." Even while stressing the autonomy of Cuban culture, he remained aware that, especially in Cuba, cultural autonomy is a difficult and problematic notion, and that it cannot be achieved by shortsighted concentration on the picturesque or idiosyncratic. This position is already evident in his famous essay of 1940, "Del fenómeno social de la transculturación y de su importancia en Cuba," where Ortiz introduced the term transculturación to explain the phenomenon of culture contact.[7] The first thing to say about this term is that, true to its meaning, the neologism is itself a transculturation of the hegemonic word, "acculturation," since it emerges from Ortiz's desire to correct the terminological imprecision of what he terms "la voz anglo-americana" (p. 135). Just as Cuban culture emerges from the translation of foreign elements, the term that designates these translations is itself a translation. According to Ortiz, "acculturation" is imprecise because it highlights only one aspect of a complicated, multifaceted phenomenon. Acculturation names the acquisition of a new culture by an outsider; but this is only part of what happens when, as in Cuba, different cultures come into contact. The phenomenon of culture contact actually has three phases: "deculturation," or the shedding of certain elements from the culture of origin; "acculturation," or the acquisition of elements of another culture; and "neoculturation," or the new cultural synthesis created by the merging of elements from the old and new cultures. By replacing "acculturation" with "transculturation," Ortiz means to find a more comprehensive and therefore more exact label for this phenomenon.

The validity of the neologism, however, is not only theoretical but empirical, since the word emerges from the specific circumstances of cultural interaction in Cuba. According to Ortiz, the outstanding feature of this interaction is its unfinished state, the fact that it has not ripened into a national synthesis. As he put it on another occasion: Cuban culture is "un concepto vital de fluencia constante" rather than "una realidad sintética ya formada y conocida."[8] In other words, Cuban culture has not reached the stage of neoculturation; its distinctive feature is its imperfective, processual aspect. The following passage explains the rationale for this view:

> No hubo factores humanos más trascendentes para la cubanidad que esas continuas, radicales y contrastantes transmigraciones geográficas, económicas y sociales de los pobladores; que esa perenne transitoriedad de los propósitos y que esa vida siempre en desarraigo de la tierra habitada, siempre en desajuste con la sociedad sustentadora. Hombres, economías, culturas y anhelos todo aquí se sintió foráneo, provisional, cambiadizo, "aves de paso" sobre el país, a su costa, a su contra y a su malgrado. ("Del fenómeno social de la "transculturación," p. 133)

Since Cuba's indigenous civilizations did not survive the Spanish conquest, and since the island for several centuries was predominantly a way station for travelers on their way to the American mainland, Cuban culture is characterized by mutability, uprootedness, and change. Indeed, given this state of affairs, it might not even be appropriate to speak of a "culture," since the term implies a fixity of configuration that is belied by the fluidity of the Cuban situation. Note the number of words with the tras- or trans- prefix in this passage: trascendentes, transmigraciones, and transitoriedad. In the rest of the essay, this processual particle continues to recur in such words as tránsito, transmutación, transplantación, transmigrar, transitivo, transición, traspasar, and trance. In this light, it is not surprising that Ortiz would prefer "transculturation" over

"acculturation." The crucial difference is that his prefix underscores the processual, imperfective aspect of culture contact, and hence it is more apposite for Cuba. More than a comprehensive rubric for the sum or result of culture contact, transculturation is the name for the collision of cultures, for that interval or hyphen between deculturation and neoculturation. Although at one point Ortiz states that transculturation names the "synthesis" of cultures (p. 130), the word properly designates the fermentation and turmoil that precedes--and even forestalls--synthesis, and for this reason it is the best name for the Cuban condition.

A look at another of Ortiz's essays will make clearer his imperfective, processual view of Cuban culture. The opening words of the passage quoted above allude to another well-known essay, "Los factores humanos de la cubanidad," also published in 1940. Here Ortiz makes essentially the same argument as in the essay on transculturation, but employing a different vocabulary and style of argument. Instead of anchoring his analysis in a theoretical coinage, in "Los factores humanos de la cubanidad" he proposes a homey and aromatic metaphor, the ajiaco; for Ortiz, this stew of Indian origin is the culinary emblem of Cuba. He justifies the metaphor in a number of ways. First, since the ajiaco is made by combining a variety of meats and vegetables, it conveys the ethnic diversity of Cuba. Second, the ajiaco is agglutinative but not synthetic; even if the diverse ingredients form part of a new culinary entity, they do not lose their original flavor and identity. So it is with Cuba, where the mixture of cultures has not lead to a neoculturative synthesis. Third, an ajiaco is indefinitely replenishable, since new ingredients can be added to the stew as old ones are used up. In this respect, this dish symbolizes the continuing infusion of new elements into the Cuban cultural mix, those "continuous

transmigrations" that he had mentioned in the other essay. Lastly, ajiaco is itself an onomastic ajiaco, since it combines the African name of an Indian condiment, the ají or green pepper, with a Spanish suffix, -aco.

Beyond this, the coinage responds to motivations that might be labeled, in a broad sense, political. As I already mentioned, in the essay on transculturation Ortiz states that his theoretical neologism is intended to replace "la voz anglo-americana." Underlying this assertion are the related questions of cultural autonomy and explanatory privilege. Ortiz's implicit claim is that Cuban ways are best explained in a Cuban way, that Cubans can speak for themselves, in every sense of the expression. The coining of the neologism, therefore, is an anti-authoritarian, anti-colonial gesture. When he substitutes transculturation for acculturation, Ortiz replaces a foreign term with a "native" one, and by implication calls into question the authority of Anglo-American anthropology. The issue, as Ortiz suggests, is finding or founding a vernacular voz, in both senses of the voz: a vernacular word and a vernacular voice.

This same issue arises in "Los factores humanos de la cubanidad." Ortiz's advocacy of a home-grown metaphor for transculturation is also an anti-colonial gesture, since the ajiaco also takes the place of a foreign notion, that of the crisol or melting pot:

> Se ha dicho repetidamente que Cuba es un crisol de elementos humanos. Tal comparación se aplica a nuestra patria como a las demás naciones de América. Pero acaso pueda presentarse otra metáfora más precisa, más comprensiva y más apropiada para un auditorio cubano, ya que en Cuba no hay fundiciones en crisoles, fuera de las modestísimas de algunos artesanos. Hagamos mejor un símil cubano, un cubanismo metafórico, y nos entenderemos mejor, más pronto y con más detalles. (9)

The political animus behind Ortiz's "metaphorical cubanism" becomes even more evident in a slightly different version of the same passage:

> Se dice con frecuencia que América, toda la América, es un crisol, un melting pot. Acaso sea buena esta metáfora para la América que tiene fundiciones metalúrgicas, donde el símil puede ser comprendido hasta por el vulgo. Pero los americanos del Caribe podemos emplear una semblanza más apropiada. Para nosotros América, toda América, es un ajiaco. (10)

Here again, although the coinage is made partially in the name of comprehensiveness and precision, the determining criterion is what Ortiz calls "appropriateness." In fact the meaning of the new metaphor is close to that of the old one; but ajiaco is a "native" word, one that grows out of the environment it describes, whereas melting pot is a term imposed from without. The substitution of ajiaco for melting pot is a political move as much as a scholarly or scientific one. Here also the intent is to translate an "Anglo-American word" into a home-grown vocabulary. Indeed, to call Cuba a "melting pot" is not only an act of onomastic colonialism but also an ironic reminder that the lack of precious metals was precisely one factor that transformed the Caribbean basin into a melting pot. Ortiz responds to North-American colonialism with a colonialism of his own: all of America is an ajiaco, he says, even though this metaphor is as inappropriate for the continent as a whole as that of the melting pot is for the Caribbean.

As an edible emblem of cubanidad, the ajiaco criollo gives concrete shape to the abstract notion of transculturation. Transculturación is the cubanismo teórico, ajiaco is the cubanismo metafórico. And both are cubanisms for "cubanism" itself, for whatever it is that makes Cubans Cuban. Compare now the following statement from "Los factores humanos de la cubanidad" with the other essays' emphasis on the processual:

> Acaso se piense que la cubanidad haya que buscarla en esa salsa de nueva y sintética suculencia formada por la fusión de los linajes humanos desleídos en Cuba; pero no, la cubanidad no está solamente en el resultado sino también en el mismo proceso complejo de su formación, desintegrativo e integrativo, en los elementos sustanciales entrados en su acción, en el ambiente en que se opera y en las vicisitudes de su transcurso.

> Lo característico de Cuba es que, siendo ajiaco, su pueblo no es un guiso hecho, sino una constante cocedura. Desde que amanece su historia hasta las horas que van corriendo, siempre en la olla de Cuba es un renovado entrar de raíces, frutos y carnes exógenas, un incesante borbor de heterogéneas sustancias. De ahí que su composición cambie y la cubanidad tenga sabor y consistencia distintos según sea catado en lo profundo o en la panza de la olla o en su boca, donde las viandas aún están crudas y burbujea el caldo claro. (p. 169)

With Cuban culture the operative term is not fusión but cocción. In this passage Ortiz makes Cuba's imperfection a distinctive feature of its culture. He is not simply regurgitating the commonplace that, because of the youth of the Latin-American republics, cultural syntheses have not yet taken place.[11] His position, I believe, is closer to that of the Venezuelan philosopher Ernesto Mayz Vallenilla, who has defined Latin-American culture as indefinite deferral, as a "no-ser-siempre-todavía."[12] It is not only that at the time Ortiz was writing Cuba was in a stage of cultural and political ferment, but that this stage is actually a permanent, defining condition. As he puts it: cubanidad is to be found not only in the "result," but also in the "process."

In its original (and yes, aboriginal) version, the ajiaco was prepared by opening a hole in the ground, putting in whatever ingredients were available, adding the condiments, and letting the whole thing bake in the sun; as the contents of the hole became depleted, new and perhaps different ingredients were added. As a symbol, the ajiaco signifies less a particular substance or combination of substances than a certain openness or receptivity to multiple and unpredictable ethnic and cultural permutations. Ortiz's point is not unrelated to the one made by Jorge Mañach when, in a memorable but forgotten essay, he labeled Cuba a "patria sin nación."[13] By describing Cuba in this way Mañach intended to designate a condition of social and political incoherence; Ortiz, in his formulations, provides the

anthropological basis for that incoherence. Because of a peculiar combination of historical circumstances, Cuba is fated to suffer--or enjoy--a never-ending state of ferment that manifests itself in all spheres of Cuban society. As Ortiz says in the essay on transculturation, Cuban forms of life have always been "provisional," "changeable," and "migratory." A few years later, in an essay called "Los negros y la transculturación," he used even more emphatic language: Cuban culture is "inconexa," "esquizoide," and "convulsa."[14] The essence of Cuba lies in not having one; it lies in that "constante cocedura," in the incessant simmering of the ajiaco, an image that denotes the lack of a stable, enduring core of cultural indicia. Cuba is always cooking. Cubans are always cooking. Occupying a liminal zone where diverse cultures converge without merging, Cuba lives in a trans-, in a trance. In Cuba, transcience preceeds essence. In Cuba, the raw and the cooked give way to the half-baked.

Now, that liminal zone that marks the spot of Cuban culture is precisely the abode of the ethnic. The ethnic also lives in a trance; he also is defined by the processual prefix of such words as transculturación, transmigración, and transitorio. He also occupies an interval between deculturation and acculturation. Thus, by proposing the ajiaco as the emblem of Cuba Ortiz is adopting what might be termed an "ethnic" perspective on Cuban culture. Like me, Mr. Cuba also thinks in hyphens. It is often said that in Cuba there is a long-standing and deeply rooted tradition of exile writing. According to this view, exile is an almost congenital condition of the Cuban writer. From Heredia to Sarduy, the Cuban writer has always worked from a position of physical and emotional alienation--or so this story goes. I believe that in the texts of Ortiz and others one can recover a different, and equally legitimate Cuban literary tradition--a tradition

not of alienation but of hyphenation. The hyphenated writer is as much a Cuban product as the alienated writer. The ethnic who enjoys his tropical soup is no less Cuban than the exile who pines for his ajiaco.

Moreover, if Mr. Cuba's recipe for Cubanness is correct, if it is true that Cuba's condition of possibility is hybridness, heterogeneity, hyphenation, then it follows that one sure way not to be Cuban is to turn Cubanness, narrowly conceived, into a fetish. To adopt a purist stance toward the preservation of Cuban culture is to betray the spirit of that culture, which thrives on mixed engenderings. Consider the subject of roots. During my last lecture someone mentioned that many young Cuban-Americans seem now to be going back to their roots by speaking Spanish, listening to Latin music, and so forth. But what the Alex Haleys among us need to remember is that we Cubans have a rather peculiar relation to our roots: we eat them. Indeed, what is the ajiaco if not a root roast, a kind of funeral pyrex? You take your favorite aboriginal roots--malanga or ñame or yuca or boniato--and you cook them until they are soft and savory. In keeping with your roots' roots, you might even cook them in a hole in the ground (which could then be called a root bier). But then you consume them. You don't freeze them. You don't preserve them. You don't put them in a root museum. You don't float them down a root canal. You eat them in the knowledge that only such conspicuous consumption will let you remain faithful to--what else?--your roots.

NOTES

1. Mario Vargas Llosa, "Primitives and Creators," Times Literary Supplement, 14 November 1968, pp. 1287-88.

2. Rufino Blanco Fombona, "El criollismo," Repertorio Americano, 18 (1929), p. 263.

3. Loveira, Juan Criollo (Havana: Cultural, 1927), p. 137.

4. Marinello, "Don Fernando Ortiz. Notas sobre nuestro tercer descubridor," Bohemia, 18 de abril de 1969, pp. 52-60; and Novás Calvo, "Mister Cuba," Americas (New York), 2, no. 6 (1950), pp. 6-8, p. 46. The Portuguese version of this article appeared under the title "Cuba en pessoa"; the Spanish version was called "Cubano de tres mundos." The notion that Ortiz is Cuba's "third discoverer" has even infiltrated tourist literature; in Hildebrand's Travel Guide: Cuba, right after a discussion of "Sunburn and Socialism," one finds a section devoted to "The Three Discoverers of Cuba" (Columbus, Humboldt, and Ortiz), where Ortiz is credited with having made the "process of cultural integration...part of the national consciousness."

5. "Ortiz hizo familiar, cotidiana, la noción de mestizaje nacional, y fijó para siempre el carácter de nuestra cultura, partiendo de un punto de vista estrictamente científico" (Guillén, "Ortiz: Misión cumplida," Casa de las Américas, 10, no. 55 [1969], pp. 5-6). Along the same lines, Fernando G. Campoamor remarks, "Tenemos ahora arquitectura, canto sobre canto, porque Ortiz nos encontró piedra y argamasa. Sabemos quiénes somos, porque Ortiz nos identificó....Afirmamos, sin asomo de hipérbole, que es la suma de la cultura insular" ("Fernando Ortiz, el Maestro fuerte," Repertorio Americano, 47 [1952], pp. 225-26).

6. Ortiz, "Por la integración cubana de blancos y negros," Revista Bimestre Cubana, 51 (1943), pp. 256-72. This was originally a speech delivered before the Club Atenas, a black society, on the occasion of Ortiz's induction as an honorary member.

7. This essay was originally published in the Revista Bimestre Cubana (1940) and subsequently included in Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar, whose first edition dates also from 1940, the annus mirabilis in Ortiz's career. Here and elsewhere I will be quoting the essay from the Spanish edition of the Contrapunteo (Barcelona: Ariel, 1973); all page references in my text refer to this edition.

8. Ortiz, "La cubanidad y los negros," Estudios Afrocubanos, 3 (1939), pp. 3-15.

9. Ortiz, "Los factores humanos de la cubanidad," Revista Bimestre Cubana, 21 (1940), p. 167.

10. Ortiz, "América es un ajiaco," La Nueva Democracia, 21, no. 11 (1940), p. 20; italics in the original.

11. A typical expression of this view: "Si las nacionalidades americanas están en diversos grados de formación--lo que es un hecho cierto--el criollo, que sería su producto representativo, ha de carecer de específica uniformidad como tipo. Pero eso no puede negar su realidad más o menos lograda, y, esencialmente, su realidad potencial" (Félix Lizaso, "Criollismo literario," Cuadernos de la Universidad del Aire [Havana], no. 35 [30 de septiembre de 1933], p. 448).

12. El problema de América (Caracas: Publicaciones de la Dirección de Cultura de la Universidad Central, 1959), p. 63.

13. Mañach, Historia y estilo (Havana: Minerva, 1944), p. 64.

14. Ortiz, "Los negros y la transculturación," La Nueva Democracia, 31, no. 1 (1951), pp. 34-38.