

EDNA M. RODRÍGUEZ-MANGUAL: *Lydia Cabrera and the Construction of an Afro-Cuban Cultural Identity*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Lydia Cabrera based her long and productive career on the study of Cubans of African descent. Her fascination with the cultural and religious practices, stories, and folktales of fellow Cubans resulted in the publication of numerous books, beginning in the 1930's until shortly before her death in 1991. Writing in many different genres, including fiction, ethnographic description, and what might be called cultural taxonomy, Cabrera's reliance on informants and participant observation revealed at the very least an agility in crossing racial and class boundaries. What Rodríguez-Mangual seems to be suggesting is that if Cabrera's white upper class origins were radically distinct from those of her less privileged black and mulatto informants, the work was possible in part because they shared national origins.

Rodríguez-Mangual's analysis centers on Cabrera's work. Through detailed descriptions of several of the best-known books, including *El Monte* (1954) and *Cuentos Negros de Cuba* (1940), she aims to demonstrate Cabrera's challenge to many dominant conventions of mid-century ethnography. Eschewing aspirations to objectivity and assertions of truth based on an authoritative scientific voice, Cabrera instead blurred the boundaries between herself and her subjects, inserted long passages of direct quotes by her informants, and refused clear distinctions between fiction, folklore, history, and myth. The author argues that these rhetorical moves opened discursive spaces for the articulation of what she calls an Afro-Cuban cultural identity. This is a persuasive claim with respect to the texts themselves, insofar as Cabrera does not hide her sources or her methods, and thus causes those she studies to be important if not equal participants in the production of knowledge. The book's strength lies in its imaginative exploration of unusual texts. At the same time, the nearly exclusive focus on these texts leaves some key questions unanswered.

Although the author notes the major events and turning points in Cabrera's life, she offers very little by way of cultural or intellectual context. Cabrera's trajectory from member of Cuba's nationalist intellectual elite to life in exile after the revolution of 1959 receives some attention, as does her relationship to her famous brother-in-law, Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz. But, apart from an examination of Ortiz's work by way of introduction to Cabrera's, there is no discussion of other writings about or by Cabrera's Afro-Cubans contemporaries. She argues, for example, that Cabrera's work gave voice to silenced Afro-Cubans. Yet, at the time that works like *El Monte* were published, Cubans of color had created a vibrant and contentious public sphere through newspapers,

radio programs, voluntary associations, and political participation. In effect, the work and writing of activists, journalists, and intellectuals such as Nicolás Guillén, Romulo Lachatañeré, Gustavo Urrutia, and Salvador García Agüero, demonstrates that black and mulatto Cubans not only enjoyed a voice but also set the terms of the debate regarding Afro-Cuban culture and identity. While Rodríguez-Mangual mentions some of them in passing, if she had devoted some attention to the ways these writers transformed understandings of African-derived religious practices, she may have been forced to rethink some of her claims about Cabrera's contribution.

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JONATHAN W. WARREN: *Racial Revolutions: Antiracism and Indian Resurgence in Brazil*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001.

From 16th century *bandeirantes* to 20th century nuclear projects and the ecological catastrophe of Cubatão, long-term movement into Brazil's interior increasingly threatened remote habitats and communities. A discernable dependence of rapidly growing metropolises on the diminishing Atlantic forest marked Brazil's entrance into the 20th century. Determined to extract more resources for profit, the federal government embarked upon a program of "civilizing" the Indians of the interior, created a new political capital, and purged natural resources. Scholars have recently documented abuses of authority, repression of rights and citizenship, and human abuses of land that accompanied the expansion inward. Historians Warren Dean and Seth Garfield conclude, respectively, that the environment cannot adapt to excessive human needs and abuses, and the incorporation of Indians into larger societal networks left one indigenous group – the Xavante – in a state of perpetual dependence.

Jonathan Warren's *Racial Revolutions: Antiracism and Indian Resurgence in Brazil*, situated in the context of late 20th century Indian population growth in Eastern Brazil, documents centuries of mistreatment of Indian communities. Colonial Indian reductions and exorcising missions left a legacy of eradicating Indian life ways – tribal languages, marriage practices, clothing styles, cultures – and missions continued to evangelize, provide Indian slave labor, and encourage mixed marriages. During the old republic, SPI (Indian Protection Service) oversaw the progress of Indians as "Brazilianized" national workers while expropriating land, transforming modes of production, and encouraging miscegenation. FUNAI (National Foundation for the Indian), which replaced the corrupt SPI in 1967, reaped destruction upon Indian communities and failed