

# Notes

## Introduction

1. *La escalera* (the ladder) refers to the practice of binding suspects to ladders for brutal interrogations that often involved severe whipping. This was a central method used against those allegedly involved in the 1812 conspiracy.
2. To this day this legacy privileges the white Dominican-born General Máximo Gómez of the independence forces as the supreme military hero of a liberated Cuban nation.
3. In this light, recently liberated blacks were figured in paternalistic terms as indebted wards of the independence movement, loyally indebted for their bestowed freedom.
4. Early Cuba's nonracial promise was complicated by U.S. interventionism following the Spanish-American War. Subsequent military occupations of 1898–1902 and 1906–9 secured U.S. capital expansion within the island's sugar economy, enabling U.S. firms to control upward of 75 percent of the island's sugarcane production by the mid-1930s (Jatar-Hausmann 1999: 11). Successive military administrations entrenched discriminatory hiring practices in Cuban state institutions (Helg 1995), while introducing ideologies of racial inferiority by way of Jim Crow–like segregation in U.S.-owned sugar facilities (de la Fuente 2001).
5. Here racialized terror, to borrow from Achille Mbembe, provided a way “of marking [black] aberration in the body politic [where] politics is read both as the mobile force of reason and as the errant attempt at creating a space where ‘error’ would be reduced, truth enhanced, and the enemy disposed of” (Mbembe 2003: 19).
6. Fidel Castro, “Revolución,” March 26, 1959, cited in Fernández Robaina 1993: 103.

7. Calls for national unity assumed added urgency given escalating U.S. hostilities following the failed Bay of Pigs invasion (1961), the Russian missile crisis (1962), and imposition of the U.S. trade embargo (1963).
8. As David Theo Goldberg notes of analogous postracial projects, discourses of anti-racism are often appropriated and collapsed into national “color-blind” discourses of official nonracialism, rendering antiracist avenues of contest debilitated (Goldberg 2009).
9. As will be elaborated upon in chapter 1, an important caveat to such racial erasure occurs in official realms of Cuban folklore, which tends to render blackness ahistoricized and incorporatively bound within the limits of nationhood.
10. Consider here Lisa Duggan’s (2004) critique of the tendency in neo-Marxist/left circles of positing a valuative—and ultimately artificial—dichotomy between “class” and “identity” politics regarding their presumed efficacy as competing forms of social organizing.
11. Along these lines Baker also cites Fernandes 2006, though similar critiques are extended to de la Fuente 2008; Saunders 2008; and West-Durán 2004.
12. Between enduring poles of *negro* (black) and *blanco* (white) comprising Cuba’s informal racial classification system, there is an expansive range of vernacular terms of graduated nonwhiteness given histories of racial mixing and attendant ideologies of *mestizaje*. Contingent on racial markers like skin pigmentation and hair texture, some of the more common terms include *jabao*, *trigueño*, *mestizo*, *mulato*, *indio*, and *moreno*.

## Chapter 1. Raced Neoliberalism

1. The term *Regla de Ocha* or simply *Ocha* (a Spanish contraction of *orisha*) is commonly used by practitioners and aligned scholars for the syncretic Yoruba-derived belief system popularly known as *Santería*. The ethnically tied African cognate *Lucumí* is alternatively used in particular circles to privilege the religion’s African cultural lines. While many simply refer to their religious community as *la religión*, I will generally use the term *Ocha-Lucumí* when referring to the religious tradition.
2. Following independence from Portugal in the wake of its War of Independence (1961–74), Angola’s subsequent civil war unfolded from 1975 to 1991.
3. Established in 1997, this monthly per-rental-room tax was collected regardless of whether rooms were occupied.
4. Between 1990 and 1993 family food consumption fell 33 percent, accompanied by the rise of some neurological diseases tied to poor nutrition (Leogrande and Thomas 2002: 343; Hidalgo and Martínez 2000: 107).
5. The 1992 Torricelli Act designed to restrict third-country commerce with the island halted an estimated \$768 million in annual trade, 90 percent of which involved imports of food and medicine (Leogrande and Thomas 2002: 355). For an extended

- discussion of the U.S. trade embargo's impact on Cuba's public health system, see Hidalgo and Martinez 2000.
6. Escalating efforts to attract global capital included a 1992 constitutional amendment allowing up to 49 percent foreign control of joint ventures, a 1995 law guaranteeing foreign firms protection against expropriation and up to 100 percent ownership in certain sectors, and the establishment of free trade zones in 1996 (Leogrande and Thomas 2002: 343–44). Some early joint venture agreements, however, were reportedly later rescinded in favor of subsequent contracts with Venezuela, China, and Brazil (*The Economist*, March 24, 2012: 6).
  7. In contrast with standing policy limiting foreign investment to joint-Cuban-owned ventures, Mariel's "Special Development Zone"—upgraded with financing from Brazil and operated by Singapore-based PSA International—allows 100 percent foreign ownership of ventures.
  8. A proposal by Raúl Castro to phase out the *libreta* was met with resistance given that large numbers of poor Cubans remain dependent on its subsidized staples, as limited as they may be.
  9. The largest medical personnel swap has been with Venezuela, recipient by 2005 of some fourteen thousand doctors (roughly equivalent to 20 percent of Cuba's physician force) in exchange for oil imports accounting for upward of two-thirds of Cuba's daily consumption (NewsMax.com 2005).
  10. Rather, an autonomous mode of unregulated capital, neoliberalism, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri suggest, operates more akin to "a form of state regulation that best facilitates the global movement and profit of capital" (2004: 280).
  11. Surveying the largest Cuban émigré population, the 2000 U.S. Census recorded 90 percent of naturalized Cubans and 84 percent of Cuban noncitizens self-identified as white (Tafuya 2004: 7). Black Cubans living in the United States, moreover, tend to be poorer, more recent immigrants in comparison to established networks of white Cubans concentrated primarily in the Miami area. Although some black Cubans may have closer immediate links to family on the island, their more limited levels of surplus income translate to fewer financial resources for remittances. For further discussion of racial disparities in remittances, see Blue 2004; de la Fuente 2008; Eckstein 2010; Espina and Rodríguez 2006; Sawyer 2005.
  12. Tourism remained Cuba's principal source of foreign exchange through 2005 when it was surpassed by payments from international contracting of Cuban professionals abroad.
  13. In ways reminiscent of similar practices in Brazil (de Santana Pinho 2010; Goldstein 2003), it has been suggested that darker-skinned Cubans are often excluded from tourism-related employment on the racialized grounds that they lack *buena presencia*, or "good presence" (de la Fuente and Glasco 1997: 65; see also Cabezas 2009).
  14. The time allotted Cubans abroad prior to forfeiture of citizenship was recently ex-

- tended to two years, while additional extensions can be applied for on an individual basis.
15. Examples of revolutionary state institutions dedicated to the study of Afro-Cuban cultural forms include the Instituto Nacional de Etnología y Folklore (est. 1961) and the Departamento de Folklore del Teatro Nacional de Cuba (est. 1962).
  16. A key architect of Cuba's post-1959 cultural policy, Armando Hart Dávalos served as the revolution's first minister of education (1959–65) and influential minister of culture (1976–97), and wrote prolifically on the role of cultural production as revolutionary instrument.
  17. See also the Conjunto's former artistic director Rogelio Martínez Furé's oft-cited distinction between "positive" and "negative" (i.e., primitive, irrational) aspects of Afro-Cuban folklore in his celebrated work *Diálogos imaginarios* (Martínez Furé 1979).
  18. Like many Afro-hemispheric music traditions, rumbas are customarily held on Sundays, historically the day of rest and leisure for working-class Afro-Cubans dating back to enslavement.
  19. Similar strategies among young black men have been observed by Katrin Hansing in the context of Cuba's Rastafarian community (Hansing 2001) and comparatively documented by Steven Gregory in tourism zones of the Dominican Republic (Gregory 2006).
  20. Some of the state-related costs associated with Cuban travel, such as the infamous "carta blanca" (white card), have been recently curtailed under Raúl Castro.
  21. For further discussions of the raced character of Cuba's sex-trade, see Cabezas 2009; N. Fernandez 1999; Fusco 1998; O'Connell Davidson 1996.
  22. Denise Brennan (2004) and Steven Gregory (2006) have noted similar dynamics between white male tourists from the United States and female sex workers in the Dominican Republic.
  23. Quoted from [http://cuba-sex.com/cuba\\_prostitutes.htm](http://cuba-sex.com/cuba_prostitutes.htm), accessed May 4, 2004.
  24. See, for instance, "US Stands by Cuban Sex Tourism Allegations after Castro Denials," *CubaNet*, July 28, 2004, accessed March 23, 2012, <http://www.cubanet.org/htdocs/CNews/yo4/ju104/28e7.htm>.
  25. Jesús María, for instance, is host to one of Havana's largest communities of Abakuá, the secretive all-male Afro-Cuban fraternity that has been historically associated with a (black) criminality and related Afro-cultural archaisms (Miller 2000). References to the Abakuá are in fact ambivalently drawn in the subsequently mentioned film *De cierta manera*.
  26. Following Gómez's untimely death in 1974, *De cierta manera's* final cut was finished with the help of the fellow auteur Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and others.
  27. All Spanish-to-English translations of song lyrics, interviews, and Spanish text are done by the author unless otherwise noted.

## Chapter 2. Hip Hop Cubano

1. Antonio Eligio Fernández, aka Tonel, is an accomplished artist and art commentator from Havana now residing in Vancouver, British Columbia.
2. Fernández Díaz's 2000 article in the state-run, youth-targeted periodical *El Caímán Barbudo* touches upon many of the historical elements mentioned in our conversations.
3. Personal interview in English, January 10, 2002. All quotations of Ariel Fernández Díaz in this chapter are from this interview unless otherwise noted.
4. Personal interview in Spanish, August 2, 2002.
5. The song "Lo Negro" was eventually released on their 2003 self-issued album, *Paisanología*.
6. Initiates of Ocha-Lucumí are usually governed by one leading orisha, commonly referred to as their personal santo (saint).
7. Ifá deviation is traditionally mediated through *babaláwos*, or male "priests" of Ocha-Lucumí.
8. Personal interview in Spanish, July 31, 2006. All quotations of Alexis "D'Boys" Rodríguez in this chapter are from this interview unless otherwise noted.
9. Personal interview in English, July 20, 2012. All quotations of Pablo Herrera in this chapter are from this interview unless otherwise noted.
10. Personal interview in Spanish, September 29, 2012.
11. Personal interview in English, July 26, 2012.
12. Personal interview in English, July 26, 2012.
13. *B-boy* is a U.S.-derived hip hop term coined to refer to male breakdancers.
14. See introduction.
15. "We both speak African" is a simplified rendering of Gillespie's original phrasing, "bo peek African," which he used as an approximation of Chano's Cuban-inflected English.
16. Regarding the racial contours of Mario Bauzá's life and work, see J. Moreno 2004, and for Arsenio Rodríguez, see R. Fernández 2006 and García 2006.
17. Personal interview in Spanish, July 31, 2006.
18. Capoeira is a Central-African-derived, Afro-Brazilian dance/martial art form with some striking stylistic similarities to breakdancing.
19. Regarding state circulations of U.S.-produced media more broadly, North American film has long been a popular staple in revolutionary Cuba in theaters and on state-run television. Television broadcasts of *The Sopranos* and *Grey's Anatomy* are some of the more recent expressions of such diffusion.
20. La Piragua continues today to be an important official locale for music performances.
21. The hijacking of a Havana–Regla ferry on August 4, 1994, was in fact the third of a series of similar ferry hijackings within just over a week.
22. This frenetic moment is captured in Charles Bosch and Joseph Maria Doménech's

- Oscar-nominated 2003 documentary *Balseros*, produced for Spanish television channel TV3. New York-based photographer Janis Lewin has also documented the moment through her exhibited collection of photographs of the episode.
23. Other early Cuban la moña DJs included two associates of Adalberto's, Randell Villalonga Davalos and Miguel Caballero.
  24. Personal interview in Spanish, July 4, 2002.
  25. Freestyle refers to the practice of improvised rapping, often occurring in a group setting or cypher.
  26. The Asociación Hermanos Saíz is named after the brothers Luis and Sergio Saíz, celebrated urban youth activists of the Movimiento 26 de Julio (the revolutionary guerrilla force led by Fidel Castro). The brothers were killed by Batista's police in 1957 outside a movie theater in western Pinar del Río.
  27. Personal correspondence, August 9, 2009.
  28. Primera Base's *Igual Que Tú* album was released in 1997 on the Panama-based label Caribe Productions.
  29. Personal interview in English, August 5, 2003.
  30. Personal interview in Spanish, August 1, 1999.
  31. *Cruzao* is a Cuban term most often used in religious contexts to refer to the syncretistic fusion of African-derived religious forms in everyday religious practice.
  32. The competition component of the festival was phased out in succeeding years.
  33. Original Spanish text by Joel "Pando" Heredia, as cited in Pacini Hernández and Garofalo 2000. English translation by the author.
  34. The former Black Panther and journalist-activist Mumia Abu-Jamal is serving life imprisonment for the alleged murder of a Philadelphia police officer in 1981. Supporters and various human rights organizations maintain that he is a political prisoner and have coordinated a long-running international campaign for his release.
  35. References to Mumia Abu-Jamal can be found in the lyrics of foundational groups such as Obsesión, Los Paisanos, Anónimo Consejo, EPG&B, and Junior Clan, to name a few.
  36. The dance workshop was organized by Yvonne Daniel, the U.S. academic and author of *Rumba* (1995).
  37. Hoch's solo performance piece *Jails, Hospitals & Hip-Hop* was first published in text in 1998 and later translated into the 2000 film of the same title. The work's Cuban section involving Pablo grew out of Hoch's involvements with Havana's hip hop community, to which I will return, dating back to the mid-1990s.
  38. Distributed by New York City-based Papaya Records, the disc featured Anónimo Consejo, Explosión Suprema, 100% Original, Instinto, Hermanos de Causa, Obsesión, Justicia, Junior Clan, Grandes Ligas, Reyes de las Calles, Bajo Mundo, Alto Y Bajo, and Cuarta Imagen.
  39. Personal interview in English, September 24, 2012.
  40. See chapter 1.
  41. Pablo was initiated into Ifá around 2012 while living abroad in Edinburgh, Scot-

land, bestowing upon him religious status as a babaláwo, or religious leader/priest in Ocha-Lucumí.

42. The World Festival of Youth and Students, held periodically since 1947, was traditionally hosted in Soviet-aligned countries. The 1997 event, with the slogan “For Anti-Imperialist Solidarity, Peace and Friendship,” was hosted in Villa Panamericana (Pan-American Village) in the municipality of Cojimar in Habana del Este. The facility and adjoining apartment complex was initially constructed to host the 1991 Pan-American Games.

### Chapter 3. New Revolutionary Horizons

1. Although Magia and Alexey separated as a married couple in 2010, they continue to maintain an active partnership through their artistic work as Obsesión.
2. A Regla ferry, or *lanchita*, was hijacked in the summer of 1994, setting off the crisis of the huelgas discussed in chapter 2. A Regla ferry was again commandeered in 2003 by an armed group of Cubans attempting to flee to the United States. Following their apprehension by Cuban commandos, three hijackers were executed after a brisk tribunal hearing, triggering considerable international condemnation. The incident was the first of a series of hijackings in 2003—two involving domestic airplanes—that signaled an elevated point of social crisis amid Cuba’s post-1989 hardships.
3. A 1974 Spanish-language translation of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* published in Cuba has assumed collectible status within Afro-Cuban circles.
4. Personal interview in Spanish, August 1, 1999.
5. In ways reminiscent of other Caribbean settings (de Albuquerque 2000; Phillips 1999; Pruitt and Lafont 1995), Katrin Hansing (2001) suggests dreadlocks have also been taken up by some young black men involved in the informal tourist trade including forms of sex work. Within such economies of exchange, dreadlocks serve as an authenticating marker of black Caribbean masculinity, one often associated with a raced virility.
6. A recorded version of “Los Pelos” set to a funky bass line was released on Obsesión’s 2007 album, *Supercrónica*.
7. Personal correspondence in Spanish, November 15, 2012.
8. DJ Roger Martínez left Obsesión and immigrated to the Los Angeles area in 2002. The duo of Obsesión was later joined by producer Yelandy Blaya roughly between 2003 and 2005, and DJ Isnay “El Jigue” Rodríguez between 2007 and 2012.
9. Though *mensaje* literally means “massage,” Alexey explained that within this vernacular context it refers to Bandera’s refusal to bow in the face of danger.
10. The line “no metan forros” translates literally as “don’t mess with the cover/or lining,” but in Cuban vernacular the expression is used to imply “do not tell lies or cheat.” The expression thus doubles as a pun—i.e., “no metáforas” (no metaphors).

11. In Cuban vernacular, *rebambarambara* refers to a tremendous problem/fiasco/mess. In this context “¡Rebambarambara!” can thus be translated as “making hell!”
12. Following independence the former combatant leader Quintín Bandera was reportedly unable to find employment beyond that of a janitor. In 1906 he was assassinated by government troops after becoming involved in organizing resistance to the U.S.-aligned administration of Tomás Estrada Palma (Ferrer 1998b).
13. Personal interview in Spanish, August 11, 1999.
14. For a YouTube video of Alexey’s “Esta es mi mama,” see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Chd8THiZX1s>, accessed February 13, 2014.
15. A hip hop/reggaetón CD compilation titled *Havana-Cultura* was later released under EGREM in 2009. *Obsesión* also represented the first hip hop album produced in Cuba. The album’s producer, Afro-Cuban jazz pianist Roberto Fonseca, helped facilitate access to state recording facilities, and the album was distributed through state-run music stores for Cuban pesos rather than U.S. dollars, making it accessible to many young Cubans. Two earlier-recorded hip hop ventures by Primera Base and SBS (Sensational Boys of the Street) were produced overseas in Panama and Spain, respectively.
16. Barbito was a fellow member of the Diez y Diecinueve posse and director of then EPG who died of asthma complications around 1999. Barbito was known for his graffiti work, some of which adorns the patio adjoining Deno’s home. The “B” in EPG&B was added after his death.
17. By late 2003, EPG&B began to unravel due to a series of precipitating events. One member of Grandes Ligas, Yaimir “Pitit” Jiménez, left Cuba for Switzerland on a fiancé visa earlier that year, while the remaining member, Yordis Villalon, was arrested for marijuana possession—an offense under Cuba’s harsh drug laws that carries a minimum one-year prison sentence for even nominal traces.
18. Personal interview in Spanish, July 31, 2006.
19. Personal correspondence, November 11, 2009.
20. Parque Quinta de los Molinos was a former botanical garden and one-time residence of the Cuban independence leader General Máximo Gómez.
21. I will return to a more detailed discussion of Ariel Fernández Díaz’s evolving position within AHS in chapter 5.
22. Ariel’s high-tech DJ equipment was acquired through contacts in New York City.
23. A self-educated radical, prison organizer, and author of *Soledad Brother* ([1970] 1994) and *Blood in My Eye* ([1970] 1990), Jackson was gunned down by San Quentin prison guards for allegedly harboring a smuggled pistol, though many on the left suggest it was a staged political assassination.
24. Reyes de las Calles’s “El mundo va a acabarse” is featured on the 2001 CD compilation *Cuban Hip-Hop All Stars*, Vol. 1, produced jointly by Pablo Herrera and Ariel Fernández Díaz.
25. U.S. artists involved in Black August’s South African tour included Dead Prez, Talib Kweli, and Black Thought of the Roots—all of whom had previously performed or would soon perform in Cuba.



26. These same nationalist traditions drew upon their own concurrent streams of Third World internationalism from Frantz Fanon to Maoism (Bush 2009; Kelley 2003).
27. Pablo Milanés later composed “Canción para Angela Davis,” a celebrated version of which he recorded with Silvio Rodríguez in 1975.
28. In 2013 Shakur’s U.S. bounty was doubled to \$2 million in addition to her rather dubious placement on the FBI’s list of most wanted terrorists.
29. Personal interview, August 5, 2003.
30. Common’s lyrics appear to draw broadly from narrative lines of Shakur’s autobiography.
31. Personal interview in English, August 5, 2003.
32. Personal interview in Spanish, August 1, 1999.
33. See chapter 2.
34. Personal interview in English, July 26, 2012.
35. Personal interview in English, July 20, 2012.
36. The hotel-lined peninsula of Varadero is Cuba’s preeminent beach location for foreign tourists, which has grown into something of a Cuban Cancún. For years it was designated as a dollar-only zone of commerce, and access to its white-powder, palm-treed beaches has long been restricted for most working-class Cubans.
37. Personal interview in Spanish, September 22, 2000.
38. Personal interview in English, January 10, 2002.

#### Chapter 4. Critical Self-Fashionings and Their Gendering

Epigraph: José Martí, *La cuestión racial* (Havana 1959), cited in Pérez (1999: 91).

1. Personal interview in English, August 5, 2003. All subsequent quotations of Ne-handa Abiodun in this chapter are from this interview unless otherwise noted.
2. Personal interview in English, July 26, 2006. All subsequent quotations of Tomás Fernández Robaina in this chapter are from this interview.
3. This time frame reflected strategic considerations given the sensitivity of post-1959 Cuban scholarship on race.
4. Gómez was a white, Dominican-born general of the Cuban independence forces long celebrated as its supreme military leader, and hence a key hero of the Cuban republic.
5. Personal interview in Spanish, August 2, 2002.
6. Nicolas “Miko” Nocchi was the commercial force behind Orishas, a French-produced rap group of Havana expatriates who became an international sensation with the release of their premier album, *A lo Cubano*, in 1999.
7. Ire refers to a self-consciously “natural” vegetarian-centered lifestyle adopted by many Rasta practitioners.
8. Recorded versions of Hermanos de Causa’s “Tengo” appear on *Cuban Hip-Hop All*

- Stars, Vol. 1 (2001), and *La Causa Nostra* (Our cause), Hermanos de Causa's first self-released solo album (2003).
9. Original Spanish text, respectively: “Negro delincuente, concepto legendario / Visto como el adversario en cualquier horario” and “el armamento pesado calibre grueso, alta precisión / Impactando duro al blanco con mi vocación.”
  10. It is worth noting that this artist in question is one of the most highly visible and accomplished “white” members of Havana’s rapero community.
  11. Abakuá members have in recent years participated in a number of exchanges with Nigerian counterparts that, according to Kenneth Routon, have been used to lay claims to an African historical identity (and thus political legitimacy) autonomous of revolutionary jurisdiction and realms of state sovereignty (Routon 2005). The U.S.-based cultural historian Ivor Miller has been instrumental in helping facilitate a number of these encounters. As I have argued, similar appeals to Afro-alterity beyond the revolutionary national have comparable currents within Cuban hip hop.
  12. Sanctions notwithstanding, gender and sexual fluidities do manifest to some degree within broader spheres of Afro-Cuban religiosity. While J. Lorand Matory’s work on Brazilian Candomblé speaks eloquently per example to currents of female religious leadership within the broader circum-Yoruba Atlantic (Matory 2005), this has been less historically so in Cuba. Yet long-standing prohibitions on women’s practice of Ifá divination in the Ocha-Lucumí tradition have for instance come under challenge by a rather controversial movement of *iyanifá*—female initiates to the sacred practice of Ifá divination historically the sole Cuban domain of male *babaláwos*.
  13. The expression *asere* shares a broader Cuban history of urban address among black working-class men.
  14. In addition to levels of cultural and liturgical opaqueness, histories of state harassment and efforts to regulate (if not eradicate) the Abakuá during revolutionary and prerevolutionary periods further discouraged initiates from public disclosure for risk of harassment (see Routon 2005).
  15. Personal interview in Spanish, September 29, 2012.
  16. An Afro-Cuban composer influential in the popular rise of Cuban rumba and son in the early to mid-twentieth century, Ignacio Piñeiro and his Septeto Nacional toured extensively in Europe and the United States and were featured in the influential “G.V. Series” (1933–58) of classic Cuban music impactive of many West and Central African popular music forms into the postcolonial period.
  17. Another pioneering female artist was MC Monica, who performed alongside old-school MC Irak Saenz of the later duo Doble Filo.
  18. For an innovative treatment of Las Krudas, see Celianny Rivera Valázquez’s documentaries *T Con T: Lesbian Lives in Contemporary Cuba* (2008) and *Reina de mí Misma, Queen of Myself: Las Krudas d’ Cuba* (2010).
  19. Personal interview in Spanish, December 18, 2001. All subsequent quotations of Las Krudas in this chapter are from this interview.

20. While Pasa's and her sister Wanga's identification as black women might appear self-evident, Pelusa's very light-brown skin and reddish-tinged hair mark her nearer *jabá* or *trigeña* within Cuba's graduated racial classification system. Yet articulate with forms of black self-affirmation shared by other lighter-skinned MCs discussed earlier, Pelusa in my experience self-identifies politically as *negra*.
21. Kilay is an acronym of participating members' individual names.
22. Omega Kilay interview in Spanish, conducted with the assistance of Sue Harrod, September 9, 2006. All subsequent quotations of Omega Kilay members in this chapter are from this interview.
23. See the original Spanish text at [http://www.hipzoma.com/proyectos/proyecto23/dossier\\_grupo.pdf](http://www.hipzoma.com/proyectos/proyecto23/dossier_grupo.pdf), accessed September 12, 2011.

## Chapter 5. Racial Challenges and the State

1. Personal interview in Spanish, December 22, 2001.
2. Roberto Zurbano assumed directorship of *Movimiento* following the 2005 departure to the United States of Ariel Fernández Díaz, who served as the magazine's first editorial director.
3. Personal interview in English, July 20, 2012.
4. See for instance Belafonte's rather intimate exploration of Afro-Cuban music traditions in his three-part hosted PBS series, "Roots of Rhythm" (1997).
5. Personal interview in English, August 5, 2003.
6. Personal correspondence in Spanish, November 15, 2012.
7. Personal interview in English, September 29, 2012.
8. Orishas' *A lo cubano* album was first released in Spain in 1999 under the Orishas moniker. The group has subsequently released an additional four albums.
9. Personal interview in Spanish, July 24, 2002.
10. The key organizers of the tour were the Miami Light Project under the directorship of Beth Boone, and the New York City-based International Hip Hop Exchange headed by Marinieves Alba.
11. U.S. journalist Eugene Robinson likened Ariel in this capacity to a Cuban "Minister of Hip Hop" (Robinson 2002).
12. Editorial consultants included Rubén Marín, Magia López and Alexey Rodríguez, Sekou Umoja, Yrak Saenz, Joaquín Borges-Triana, Roberto Zurbano, Tomás Fernández Robaina, Pablo Herrera, Víctor Fowler, Ismael González Castañer, Tania Cañet, Yesenia Sélíer, Tatiana Cordero, Gloria Rolando, Maikel García, and Grisell Hernández—virtually all of whom were Afro-Cuban.
13. Personal interview in English, January 10, 2002. All subsequent quotations of Ariel Fernández Díaz are from this interview.
14. There were in fact long tensions between Ariel and Pablo stemming in part from a mutual competitiveness as two among the most resourceful, if not personally ambitious, members of Havana's hip hop community.

15. Such was also conferred to me in private conversations by Roberto Zurbarano and Tomás Fernández Robaina.
16. See chapter 1.
17. Carlos Moore (1989) asserts significant numbers of those purged from the Partido Comunista de Cuba (PCC) were an older generation of black committee members, suggesting the move served in part to eliminate an established guard of influential black politicians.
18. The state-led effort was called “la campaña de rectificación.”
19. Per diasporic comparison, consider Michael Hanchard’s discussion of Brazil’s movimiento negro in its efforts to forge an alternative “black” public sphere via Afro-Brazilian cultural strategies (Hanchard 1994).
20. Personal interview in Spanish, July 15, 2006.
21. Another noted expression of early state openings to racial discussion was a 1993-initiated study of Cuban racial attitudes by the Centro de Antropología de Cuba. The journal *Temas* also broke significant ground with a 1996 issue dedicated to scholarly debates on race and racial discrimination (cf. N. Fernandez 2001).
22. Personal interview in Spanish, August 16, 2002.
23. See the 1997 Decreto 217 Regulaciones Migratorias Internas para la Ciudad de La Habana y sus contravenciones (Decree 217 internal migration regulations for the City of Havana and its violations). See <http://www.cuba-1.com/decreto-217-regulaciones-migratorias-internas-para-la-ciudad-de-la-habana-y-sus-contravenciones/>, accessed May 2, 2015.
24. Yesenia Sélier, an accomplished dance performer, is currently working on a PhD in communications studies at New York University.
25. Diago is the grandson of the pioneering Afro-Cuban artist Roberto Diago (1920–57), from whom he takes his name. The elder Diago also widely exhibited work in Cuba and abroad.
26. Alejandro de la Fuente later helped curate an exhibition on the Santiago-based Grupo Antillano movement, whose artistic work spanning the late 1970s and early 1980s underscored the instrumentality of Africa and the Afro-Caribbean in the making of Cuban nationhood. See <http://www.queloides-exhibit.com/Grupo-Antillano/tablet/index.html>, accessed April 3, 2015.
27. A published novelist, Prieto was president of UNEAC from 1991 to 1997.

## Chapter 6. Whither Hip Hop Cubano?

1. Personal interview in Spanish, July 31, 2006.
2. Original Spanish text: “Hacen revolución con sus textos, educan con su poesía” . . . “incomprendidos, censurados a pesar de portar la verdad en sus manos.”
3. Among those participating in *El Cartel* were Explosión Suprema, Los Paisanos, and Hermanos de Causa. The Cuban hip hop documentary *East of Havana* (2006) gives center stage to a number of *El Cartel* members.

4. The documentary *La Fabrik: The Cuban Hip-Hop Factory* (2005) by the Cuban American filmmaker Lisandro Pérez-Rey narrates the experience of Obsesión and one member of Doble Filo on their 2003 performance tour to New York City.
5. Those profiled centrally in the film were Michel Hermida Martínez, aka Miki Flow, of Explosión Suprema; Magyori “La Llave” Martínez of EPG&B and Omega Kilay; and Soandres del Río of Hermanos de Causa.
6. Participating artists in the annual hip hop festival were customarily chosen by way of auditions before a panel assembled by AHS.
7. Personal interview in Spanish, July 31, 2006.
8. Although relatively scarce in comparison to other Caribbean settings, marijuana has long been available on the island in relatively small quantities. In conjunction with harsh mandatory penalties for possession (e.g., one-year minimum for possession of any recognizable trace of marijuana), the crackdown significantly impacted the availability and circulation of marijuana. While cocaine was said to have been available during my period of research in a significantly more limited degree, those who partook were significantly fewer in number and likely included foreign tourists given its prohibitive cost and scarcity.
9. Alternative Cuban brandings of reggaetón are *reguetón* or *cubatón*.
10. The now prolific genre, which fuses dancehall reggae rhythms with Spanish Caribbean hip-hop-inflected vocals, grew out of Afro-Panamanian pioneerings of *reggae en español*, coalescing among Puerto Rican artists and producers in the commercial formation and global popularization of today’s reggaetón.
11. “Raggamuffin” or “ragga” is a style of Jamaican dancehall (reggae) music originating in the 1980s.
12. Personal interview in Spanish, July 10, 2001. All subsequent quotations from members of Crazy Man are from this interview.
13. For example, the former hip hop crew Gente de Zona shifted toward reggaetón early in their career, eventually garnering a spot as one of Cuba’s premiere reggaetón groups.
14. Personal interview in Spanish, July 31, 2006.
15. Personal interview in English, July 26, 2012.
16. See the discussion of commodified blackness in chapter 1.
17. In addition to previously mentioned works, other foreign-produced documentaries on Cuban hip hop include *Young Rebels* (2005), directors Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck; *La Fabrik: The Cuban Hip-Hop Factory* (2005), director Lisandro Pérez-Rey; and *Cuban Hip Hop: Desde el Principio* (2006), directors Vanessa J. Díaz and Larissa Díaz.
18. See <http://rootsofsalsa.com/details.php>, accessed August 12, 2015.
19. With members from Haiti, Algeria, France, Argentina, Chile, Barbados, St. Vincent, and Grenada, the collective performs in French, English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Arabic.
20. As the nationalized, former family-run Bacardi rum company, the now-branded Havana Club International has operated since 1994 as a 50–50 joint venture with

- the French distillery conglomerate Pernod Ricard, which has reportedly netted almost US\$3 billion in international sales in the first quarter of 2012/13 (Pernod Ricard 2013).
21. See <http://www.havana-cultura.com/en/int/now-showing-havana-cultura>, accessed March 14, 2013.
  22. For a comparative note, “Red Bull Street Kings” brass band competitions were hosted in 2010 and 2013 in New Orleans, awash with Red Bull logos, free cans of the drink, and an elaborately choreographed video production whose material is now part of a Red Bull promotional website.
  23. In recent years Soandres has become active as a spoken-word poet.
  24. Featuring invited MCs Papá Humbertico and El Discípulo, the original Spanish lyrics read: “Siempre a la ofensiva / En defensa de las vidas que anidan heridas / El rap es guerra / La lucha no está perdida / Liberen la verdad cautiva / No se detengan sigan / El rap es guerra / Quieren que llenemos nuestros demos de canciones movidas / Pero se olvidan que el rap es guerra.”
  25. Original Spanish lyrics read: “esclavo de tu nacionalidad, identidad y asuntos . . . esclavo de jodida y pausada agonía . . . esclavo de tus deberes, esclavo de tus derechos . . . esclavo de luchar sin cesar y no hallar felicidad.”
  26. Magia remains an active member of Obsesión with her artistic partner Alexey Rodríguez.
  27. Personal interview in Spanish, October 5, 2009.
  28. Personal interview in Spanish, October 30, 2011.
  29. The example of Alan Gross, a recently freed USAID subcontractor jailed in Havana after being accused in 2009 of clandestinely distributing satellite phones and computer equipment to members of Cuba’s Jewish community, stands as a high-profile illustration of this broader U.S. undertaking.
  30. For additional conspiratorial details of USAID’s Cuban hip hop scheme, see D. Butler et al. 2014a.
  31. The title L3Y8 serves as a numerological reference to “Letras, Cultura y Hip Hop.”
  32. Personal interview in Spanish, September 29, 2012.
  33. Personal interview in English, September 24, 2012.
  34. See chapters 3 and 5.
  35. Personal interview in English, July 26, 2012.
  36. Personal interview in English, July 20, 2012. All subsequent quotations of Pablo Herrera in this chapter are from this interview.
  37. See [http://www.freedomcollection.org/regions/the\\_americas/cuba/ernesto\\_hernandez\\_busto/](http://www.freedomcollection.org/regions/the_americas/cuba/ernesto_hernandez_busto/), accessed April 6, 2013.
  38. Personal interview in English, July 26, 2012.
  39. For related elaborations, see Morales 2013.

## Postscript

1. During two New Orleans visits in which I was involved, Magia and Alexey combined visits to public schools and local cultural organizations, academic talks, and collaborative shows with local MCs and musicians. Institutional sponsorship of these tours was organized through the University of Michigan and the Washington-based lobby the Center for Democracy in the Americas.
2. Circum-Caribbean currents of cultural exchange have long tied New Orleans, Cuba, and Haiti, as have histories of political affinity as exemplified in General Antonio Maceo's 1884–85 exile in New Orleans while mobilizing Cuba's independence struggle with Spain.