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equidad y la compasión como formas de lidiar con la situación de las drogas y la violencia. A mi juicio, es aquí donde radica la importancia de esta etnografía. La mirada etnográfica que aborda los problemas desde la perspectiva de los implicados procura un entendimiento contextualizado de las expresiones cotidianas y significados de la marginación social más allá de los reduccionismos y esencialismo individualistas resguardados en estadísticas, que además, no se recogen de forma adecuada en Puerto Rico.

*En busca de respeto* es una obra ya clásica que provee un importante referente teórico, metodológico y político para aquellos estudiosos del tema de la antropología de las drogas, estudiantes de antropología y todo aquel interesado en una mirada sensible, pero sin cortapisas, de las condiciones de marginalidad y desarraigo que enfrentan los puertorriqueños y otros grupos minoritarios en los Estados Unidos.

### Nota

- <sup>1</sup> Traducción del libro original *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack en el Barrio* (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

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Anthropologist J. Lorand Matory said of the history of Afro-Atlantic religious cultures that, “[the] lifeways, traditions, and the social boundaries they substantiate endure not *despite* their involvement in translocal dialogues, but *because of it*” (Matory 2005:1, emphasis in original). This focus on the dialogic nature of the creation of the

Afro-Atlantic religious world can be extended to our understanding the complexities that create the living religions of the Caribbean. Two books, Ennis B. Edmonds and Michelle A. Gonzalez, *Caribbean Religious History* (New York University Press, 2010), and Nathaniel Samuel Murrell, *Afro-Caribbean Religions* (Temple University Press, 2010), seek to do comparative work on the historical dialogue revealed in the analysis of the multi-layered traditions of the vernacular religions of the region. In this vein, other volumes have attempted to bring a historical and cultural introduction to the religions of the Afro-Atlantic world that includes a distinct focus on the creole traditions of the Caribbean. For example, Carolyn Morrow Long's *Spiritual Merchants: Religion, Magic, and Commerce* (2001), gives us a view of the religions' economic diaspora that expands the idea of the region's reach to places like New Orleans and Spanish Harlem through the study of spiritual sundries sold in *botánicas*, *yerberías*, and root shops. Another volume that looks at the religions of the Caribbean comparatively through the lens of Queer theory is the experience-centered *Spiritual Traditions: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Participation in African-Inspired Traditions in the Americas* by Randy P. Conner and David Hatfield Sparks (2004). Along these lines, *Creole Religions of the Caribbean* by Elizabeth Paravisini-Gebert and Margarite Fernández-Olmos (2003) also provides an introduction to the diverse array of traditions found in Caribbean religious life. The task of providing an introduction and overview to such a complex and layered set of phenomenon is one fraught with difficulties as it is the very specifics of vernacular religions that create their texture and context. Thus, the very generalizing that is required in initiating such projects also must be guided with a very specific topical focus and grounded with a clear theoretical trajectory. In this regard, works like Kamari Maxine Clarke's *Mapping Yorùbá Networks: Power and Agency in the Making of Transnational Communities* (2004), serve as useful models to navigating the complexity of the transcultural work that goes into the construction of Caribbean religiosity. In this regard, Edmonds and Gonzalez, as well as Murrell, give their readers a mixed look at the history of the religions of the region in terms of the trajectory and scope of their volumes.

In *Caribbean Religious History*, Edmonds and Gonzalez offer nine chapters plus a conclusion that include a refreshing consideration of Amerindian, Afro-Christian, Islamic, and Asian influences on the creation of religious cultures in the region. They emphasize the processes of "accommodation, adaptation, and transformation" in examining Caribbean religions like Cuban Santería, Trinidadian Spiritual Baptism, Jamaican Rastafarianism, and Haitian Vodou, to name a few examples (p. 1). The organization of the vast terrain of Caribbean religious culture that the volume seeks to both describe and put into historical perspective

reminds one of how perhaps Émile Durkheim or Melville Herskovits would order the comparative analysis of such diversity. The authors explain different theories of understanding religious admixture in the Caribbean, from detailing some the components of George Beckford and Orlando Patterson's plantation theory, to describing *mestizaje*, as well as explaining creolization as understood by Edward Braithwaite, among other approaches (pp. 8-12). Even within the consideration of these disparate perspectives, Edmonds and Gonzalez aptly recognize the wisdom of allowing specific historical and cultural contexts guide their different discussions of Caribbean religions. However, in the process, they do not fully reveal what informs their choice of topics, religions, and historical epochs that are covered in the volume.

Two chapters exemplify the ways that this more general approach, in terms of theorizing the history of religious culture in the Caribbean, may simultaneously be instructional yet provide only a partial portrait of any of the traditions described in the work. Chapter 3, "Early Colonial Catholicism" (pp. 45-64), and Chapter 5, "Creole African Traditions: Santería, Palo Monte, Abakuá, Vodou, and Espiritismo" (pp. 93-119), both offer a compendium of historical information that leaves the reader longing for a more in-depth and detailed explication of the lived nature of the religions discussed. For instance, Edmonds and Gonzalez whet our appetites by observing that the Medieval Spanish Catholicism that came to the Caribbean, alongside having a Moorish influence, also contained an "aesthetic influence" that developed "the strong presence of processions, devotionals, and performative rituals" (p. 46). One can certainly see how this early aesthetic influence also marked Caribbean religion in profound ways. In this regard, Edmonds and Gonzalez are clear to point out specific instances of this aesthetic in the history of religion in the Caribbean, like Marian devotion (p. 52). The authors also include an overview of vernacular Catholicism in Cuba, Haiti, and also an important case of cross-transference of religious admixture in the Congo (pp. 54-60). All of these sub-sections of the chapter include vital information about the history of Catholicism in the Caribbean that generates an stimulating introduction. Yet, the "broad brushstrokes" applied to the book as a whole may be too broad in terms of providing a window with which to view the ways that vernacular religious praxis also informed the development of the very structures of Caribbean religions (p. 221). In other words, a little more prose on how local innovation shaped tradition would have added just the right amount of texture to some of the very well selected historical examples provided in the text.

As mentioned above, the chapter on Creole African traditions in *Caribbean Religious History* also provides a good source for contemplating the balance of Edmonds and Gonzalez's religious history. Again, we

find very important religious cultures and practices being covered in one chapter: Santería, Vodou, Abakuá, Palo Monte, and Espiritismo. Indeed, other authors have dedicated whole volumes to just one of these traditions. Lydia Cabrera's seminal work on Afro-Cuban religions, *El monte: igbo, finda, ewe, orisha, vititi, nfinda* (2006 [1954]); and Raquel Romberg's study of *Espiritismo* in Puerto Rico, *Witchcraft and Welfare: Spiritual Capital and the Business of Magic in Modern Puerto Rico* (2003) are two studies that come to mind in this aspect. If one looks at how the Afro-Cuban religious tradition of Palo Monte is described by Edmonds and Gonzalez, we get a general overview of the history, practices and places important to Palo (pp. 102-107). The authors briefly cover some of the main branches of Palo, like the *La Regla Kimbisa de Santo Cristo del Buen Viaje*, with an eye towards providing a quick ethnographic description of religious work under this style of practice (p. 103). However, it would be more telling to the reader to point out the significance of Kimbisa as one of the earliest examples of a creolized religious practice in Cuba that specifically sought to document the integration of white Cubans into an Afro-Cuban religious community as part of its folklore, rites and oral history (See Cabrera 1986). In other words, the tensions, conflicts, and creativity that practices like Kimbisa generated and continue to generate in the Caribbean can point towards significant sociological and cultural discussions that need to be debated in any study of Caribbean religions. Edmonds and Gonzalez point to these important topics for the introductory reader with a large amount of information that is not directly interpreted into a larger theoretical framework. The result is, as the authors acknowledge in the conclusion to the volume, an "entry point" to the deeper and complex worlds of Caribbean religious cultures (p. 221). Though one is left wanting for a more detailed discussion of many topics, the comprehensive selection of the materials that are covered in the volume is impressive and the volume would be a great help in the undergraduate classroom.

Samuel Murrell's *Afro-Caribbean Religions* is also an ambitious venture in terms of the breadth and scope of the religious traditions it seeks to introduce and discuss. This volume takes a different approach than *Caribbean Religious History* in that it squarely places the trajectory of the religions discussed within an Afro-Atlantic geographic and historical framework. Following works like such as Matory (2005), Jacob K. Olupona and Terry Rey (2008), as well as that of Mercedes Cros Sandoval (2007), the book works comparatively with African and Afro-Caribbean religious traditions to create a conversation about the importance of witnessing spaces of cultural innovation and resiliency in the practice of diaspora.

Murrell offers us a volume of five parts broken down into fourteen

chapters with an introduction and conclusion. The topical framing includes African religions (pp. 13-36), Vodou (pp. 57-91), Cuban drumming cultures (pp. 95-155), Creole religions (pp. 159-222), and Jamaican religions (pp. 225-320). The section on Creole religions includes Brazil, which is a wise choice for Murrell as he is following cultural movement rather than geographical distinctions in his understanding of how Afro-Caribbean religious communities came into being. Like Edmonds and Gonzalez, the vast array of religious cultures, historical detail, and social forces Murrell attempts to deal with creates a situation where some vital information and central discussions found in the detailed analysis of these traditions must be left out of the work. The result is one where Murrell adopts specificity in a spotted fashion that also leaves readers with unanswered questions.

With that being said, Murrell does provide readers with a clear idea of his perspective on the importance Afro-Caribbean religious admixture. In his introduction to the volume, he clearly emphasizes how pluralism, cross-cultural diffusion, and attenuating to complex historical realities are guiding principles to organizing the encyclopedic amount of information offered in the volume (pp. 6-9). Yet, in several places a more in-depth discussion of certain complicated topics would be appropriate. For example, in looking at the role of women in African religion, Murrell gives general impressions about women's roles in ritual and society from several African nations (pp. 42-45). Yet, he does not emphasize the diversity of ideas on gender *vis-à-vis* the distinct cultural, national, and linguistic differences found among these groups, namely the Yoruba, Zulu, and Sierra Leonian communities being referenced. The result is one where the complexity and nuance of the experience of gender in a range of African religious contexts is lost. For example, the kinds of negotiation about gender that may occur in different Yoruba religious contexts, as explored by Oyeronke Olajubu in *Women in the Yoruba Religious Sphere* (2003), can truly inform comparative works like Murrell's. This is especially beneficial to consider when it comes to conceptualizing African practices and cultures in ways that add to our understanding of the ongoing, shared contexts of religious change on the continent as well.

Another place where readers are left a little short is in the discussion of Afro-Cuban religious practices. Again, in the interest of space, it is understandable that Murrell had to make some painful choices as to what to include and exclude. However, the presentation of female and male orichas found in the volume is somewhat sparse, especially in terms of describing the importance that different avatars of each deity makes in developing an understanding of how mythology, oral tradition, divination, and ritual come together for the religious community. This

connection between the different *caminos*, or roads, of the orichas and the myths that explain them is a vital key to unlocking the aesthetics and semiotics of embodied phenomenon like spirit possession and creative practices like altar building. For example, in discussing the deity Ochún, Murrell only identifies one manifestation for Cuba, that of Ochún Kole, who he erroneously describes as the most sensuous and flirtatious road of the divinity (p. 111). As Lydia Cabrera makes clear in *Yemayá y Ochún* (1980), there are at least five roads of Ochún, with distinct personalities and conditions of worship, found in Cuba (pp. 70-71). Cabrera also tells us that Ochún Kolé-Kolé or Ochún Ibú Kolé is a road where Ochún is a great sorceress that is associated with the buzzard (p. 71; Castellanos 2001:35). The road of Ochún Yeyé Moró or Ochún Yeyé Kari, however, (and perhaps this is the manifestation Murrell had in mind), “Se pinta, se mira en el espejo, se perfuma . . . / Makes herself up, looks in the mirror, puts on perfume . . .” (Cabrera 1980, p. 70, translation mine). In other words, the details in this regard matter very much because they allow for the opportunity to reveal important strategies to gaining religious literacy in Afro-Cuban religions.

*Afro-Caribbean Religions* does cover a vast amount of material, albeit perhaps too broadly. Murrell himself states in his conclusion that, “no attempt was made to offer a systematic exposition” of the religious cultures he explores (p. 321). Indeed, like *Caribbean Religious History*, the volume leaves the reader wondering what to do with the large array of snapshots into complex religious cultures without a succinct theoretical or topical objective as a guide. Perhaps by focusing on the translocal dialogues that created the diversity and richness of religious communities in the Caribbean the authors of the two introductory books would have been better served. That is, in more robustly theorizing a few aspects that link Caribbean religions together, and illuminating these in specific, detailed discussions, the volumes would have come to life more clearly for their intended audiences. Yet, Edmonds and Gonzalez, as well as Murrell, must be commended for their efforts to include new populations and pairings in their wide considerations of the religions of the Caribbean.

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"Ennis Edmonds and Michelle Gonzalez have produced an interesting and necessary addition to anyone's church history library...which is well worth reading, and which ought to inspire others to dig deeper into the areas so fascinatingly highlighted." "As reflecting the ongoing power of the past in the present, and as an introduction, Caribbean Religious History is very much alive and complete." -Yvonne Chireau, Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture. "Many inside the academic community and out will find much to benefit from in this well-crafted volume." -Natalia M. Imperatori-Lee, Journal of American Academy of Religion. "[Caribbean Religious History] is indispensable in the study of Caribbean religions." -N. Samuel Murrell, New West Indian Guide. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS New York and London www.nyupress.org © 2010 by New York University All rights reserved Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Edmonds, Ennis Barrington. Caribbean religious history : an introduction / Ennis B. Edmonds and Michelle A. Gonzalez. p. cm. Includes bibliographical references and index. ISBN-13: 978-0-8147-2234-3 (cl : alk. paper) ISBN-10: 0-8147-2234-2 (cl : alk. paper) ISBN-13: 978-0-8147-2235-0 (pbk. : alk. paper) ISBN-10: 0-8147-2235-0 (pbk. : alk. paper) 1. Caribbean Area--Religion. I. Gonzalez, Michelle A. II. Title. BL2565.E36 2010 200.9729 Read the full-text online edition of Caribbean Religious History: An Introduction (2010). Paying careful attention to the region's social and political history, Edmonds and Gonzalez present a one-volume panoramic introduction to this religiously vibrant part of the world. Excerpt. The successful transatlantic crossing of Columbus and his crew in 1492 brought the Caribbean and the rest of the Americas into the mainstream of world history, initiating a process through which the area became an important arena in which European powers competed for political and economic dominance. This colonial experiment spawned the diversity of peoples, languages, and cultures that is the present