

Fernando Ortiz's Cuban Mestizaje and the Notion of African Cultural Survivals

Presented by
Dr. Miguel Arnedo-Gomez



20th-century Cuban scholar Fernando Ortiz is broadly considered a defender of Afro-Cuban culture and Afro-Cubans. In this presentation, Dr. Arnedo-Gomez will probe this reputation by considering two aspects of Ortiz's writings on Cuban national identity and Afro-Cuban ethnography. The first aspect is Ortiz's discourse of mestizaje, which points to an oncoming Cuban future where all racial and ethnic divisions will disappear to be replaced by a single common national culture that is a mixture of African and Spanish ingredients. The second aspect is Ortiz's belief in the idea that Afro-Cubans had basically transplanted African religions to Cuba in a perfectly preserved fashion and were, thus, still engaging in purely African cultural behaviors.

Senior Lecturer in the School of Languages and Cultures (SLC), Dr. Arnedo-Gomez's research focuses on the representation of race and ethnicity in 20th-century Latin American literature and anthropology. He has recently published essays on the anthropological theory of Peruvian writer José María Arguedas, and the Cuban anthropologists Fernando Ortiz and Lydia Cabrera.

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Virtual Event



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