Wifredo Lam Reconsidered (1)
—Modernism and Beyond—

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“Wifredo Lam places on the canvas a ceremony for all that exists: the ceremony of the physical union of the human body and the world.”

Aimé Césaire

“The all-powerful Way changes body and spirits. The Body is pierced by the Way, and becomes one with the spirit. The person who is formed from this union of spirit and body is called good-person. Then the true character of the spirit is empty, sublimated, and its actual material quality cannot be destroyed by change (it cannot die).”

Yün Chi Ch’in Ch’en

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Introduction

At the beginning of August 1941, Wifredo Lam (fig. 1) returned to his homeland of Cuba after some eighteen years spent in Spain and France. Although this was an escape like a “forçat (transported)” forced by the mounting violence as the Nazis invaded Paris, it is an irrefutable fact that this return to his homeland became an epic-making opportunity for the opening of a
new era in his arts. This is ably demonstrated by the fact that the majority of scholars addressing the issues presented by Lam take his post 1941 works as their principal topic. Let us examine two works, *Mother and Child* (1939)(fig. 2) from his Paris period, and *Jungle* (1942-43)(fig. 3), a representative work painted after his return to Cuba. Compared to the simplification that is reminiscent of one aspect of Picasso and the former’s typical expression of mother and child in an indoor setting, the latter is a group figural work depicting four women, all with large breasts, round buttocks and long tubular arms placed in the midst of a lush forest. *Jungle* has been seen as Lam’s artistic response to Picasso’s *Les Demoiselles d’Avignon* (fig. 4), a work which greatly inspired Lam during his friendship with the artist in Paris. And in that context, we can see how it links with the Picasso-like *Mother and Child*. However, the fact that, no matter how deformed, the pitiful child and loving mother still maintain human shapes, these women of the jungle are created from strange forms, they seem somehow to be equated with sugar cane and leaves, they have a hybrid existence, neither animal nor plant.

Another typical work by Lam, *The Eternal Presence* (1945) placed four hybrid figures before a background of hemp palm leaves and here the figures have been given features that are even further removed from the human than those seen in *Jungle*. For instance, the figure on the left, which has two noses, two mouths, two jaws, and a single breast, is fitted out with a hoof on its left hand. It seems to have the strange form some sort of spooky figure, forms which we find hard to fully decipher. Here we can clearly see evidence of Lam’s thoughts expressed in his comment “être dans leur passage de l’état végéval à celui de l’animal et encore chargés de vestiges de la forêt.”

Thus this mere glimpse of the works from his Cuba period clarifies the new, individual territory opened up by Lam, and the following traits summarize the characteristics of the works that seem to call forth some strange co-existence of disparate elements. 1) The introduction of the scenery of Cuba, and 2) the appearance of a supernatural, multi-formed entity which is a mixture of the human, the vegetal and the animal. If we were to provisionally consider that these are important signals seen in the works of the period after his return to his homeland, then what was the source, the meaning of Lam’s iconographic and formal transformation in the 1940s?

This essay will take this question as its point of departure, and will then, from the author’s viewpoint, clarify the special characteristics of Lam’s arts and present a single framework for
the interpretation of Lam. Thus said, with Lam's formal shapes spread before our eyes, the very intensity of the great expanse, the great depth of the jungle he portrays seems to hinder our path, seems to be constructed as if to reject our plan. This article will not clarify the entirety of Lam's arts, but rather will limit its regard to a few narrowly defined issues. However, as will be seen below, I must note that I believe that these very issues conceal the key to an understanding of Lam. And we might consider that this key is also concealed in the subtitle to this essay "Modernism and Beyond."

1. Prior to Lam’s Transformation

Before considering Lam's works of his time in Cuba, we must first think about the special cultural characteristics of his homeland of Cuba, and his own unique existence. Of course, it is self-evident that his works would constitute our entire argument if we were to take a supremacy-of-the-art-object stance, and we would thus be unprepared for an explanation of the issues surrounding the external conditions which generated these works of art. And that we would arrive at a similarly superficial conclusion if we were to take a purely topographical stance. However, the meaning and contents contained in a work differ from the palette and forms that simply appeal to the viewer's sensibilities, and they are obstructed by a barrier known as a cultural system. Considering that they are thus always difficult to understand the confirmation of the cultural context from which these works were generated is never without meaning. To clarify, this is especially apparent in a case like that of Lam, and the return to the very earth of those arts is indispensable for the further discussion.

Lam's homeland of Cuba was, along with Puerto Rico, the final stronghold of Spanish colonialism in the Caribbean until the end of the 19th century. As is well known, Cuba gained its independence from Spain as a result of the Spanish-American War (1898), and was established as an American protectorate in 1902. Prior to this date, and since the 16th century, Cuba had a long history as a slave port, a place where men and women from the southeast coast of Africa (from Senegal in the north to the Congo and Angola in the south) were carried to work as slaves, primarily in the sugar cane plantations. In addition to slaves from Africa, there were others who arrived in Cuba, people from other Caribbean islands, such as the Antilles, Jamaica and Haiti, Jews, Portuguese, French from Europe and Chinese from Asia. In an intermittent flow, these immigrants set out to work in Cuba. The Lucumi, descendants from the Yoruba tribes, constituted the majority of the population in Cuba until 1900, but whether through
coercion or volition, Cuba's multi-racial population, with Spanish at one extreme and Africans at other, came to have a culture with far-flung and diverse roots. And inevitably this cultural mixing and transformation finally resulted in the loss of cultural identity.

Indeed, Cuba's culture was thus fundamentally fated to have a history in which it was impossible to maintain culturally "pure blood," in terms of an uninterrupted continuation from past to present, and then to future. Namely, the "consanguineous" that is very opposite of "pure blood" is the strongest cultural and social characteristic of Cuba. Thus the "monoculture" with sugar as its sole product is underlain by Cuba's specifically "multiculture," as noted in an excellent metaphor constructed by Fernando Ortiz. According to this foremost anthropologist of the Caribbean, Cuba's culture is a soup, an "ajaco" created from an extreme array of ingredients, and the soup that seethes at the top of this pot represents the national character that is its overall product. The inexplicable aspects of Wifredo Lam can be found in this very cultural diversity and multiplicity cited by Ortiz.

We must note that both Cuba, given character by the accumulation and transformations of externally derived cultures, and indeed Lam born in 1902 the year of Cuba's independence, were engraved by this same multiplicity. Lam's father was Chinese, and his mother was a mulatta, a woman of mixed African and Spanish descent. He was born in the town of Sagua La Grande with a population of about 12,000 in the region near Santa Clara, and like regional towns in Cuba, his town was made up of a variety of peoples, whether blacks, Chinese, or whites. While these various peoples did not live in separated areas, there did exist two carefully delineated regions. There was the Chinese region made up of those Chinese who had come to Cuba in the middle of the 1800s as contract laborers to work in the sugar industry, and the black quarter, home to the "Blacks of the Nations," who had arrived in the 1880s and were deeply rooted in African culture. For the fourteen years that Lam lived in this Sagua la Grande, he was at home both in the Chinese community, via his father, and also a frequenter of black society, through his mother and through godmother who helped raise him. In this manner, no matter how coincidental, Lam had ancestors who traced their descent to three continents, Asia, Africa and Europe. And his important painterly qualities were formed by this external and internal history; indeed, the history of his country was the very history of Lam's own birth.

However, this self-generated benefit, Lam's own consciousness of his position as "the fruits of Cuban and Caribbean culture," was not something that came idly to Lam. His clear consciousness of the place and time of his own birth came to him after some degree of psychological pilgrimage. For the time being, we can propose that this provided two
opportunities. While familiar to those who research Lam, let us here retrace a brief outline of these opportunities.

First, Lam interacted with Pablo Picasso, an artist known for his an early interest in African sculpture and for waging war upon established forms of painting.\[13]\ From the following almost fable-like tale of Lam's we can see the depth of the interaction between Picasso and Lam.

"After greeting me Picasso led me to a room where there were African sculptures. I was immediately attracted to one—a head of a horse—it seemed to be alive."What a beautiful sculpture! he said....and added "You should be proud!" "Why?" I asked. "Because this sculpture was made up by an African and you have African blood."\[12]

This conversation which took place before the African sculpture in Picasso's studio on rue des Grands Augustins in Paris speaks of the process by which Picasso's enthusiasm for his discovery of non-western cultures encouraged, to no small degree, Lam's own awareness and his own country.

In fact, we can indicate the following about the crux of Picasso's evaluation of Lam.

"Probably Picasso found in Lam the only affirmation he could have, that of a man who had reached a similar state to his own by taking the inverse path. He drew on the marvelous primitive that he carries within himself to attain the highest degree of consciousness—assimilating the most erudite training of European art, this degree of consciousness was also the point at which he made contact with the artist—Picasso who was at first the most accomplished master in his discipline,"\[13]

According to this author Picasso and Lam were sympathetic because of the former's regard for "African things," and the fact that he discovered this same character in Lam. The person who emphasized this fact is André Breton, the surrealist poet who Dora Marr, mistress of Picasso, introduced to Lam. Here Breton's opinion can be seen as nothing other than one of his pronouncements, his position statements, and this is a true indication of one of the reasons that Surrealism stimulated Lam's self understanding as "the fruits of Cuban and Caribbean culture."

Surrealism is well known as an aesthetic that seeks the "marvelous," "le merveilleux,"\[14] in the midst of the arts of the mad and children, and in "primitive" culture. A perusal of such magazines as Documents, or La Révolution surréaliste shows these marvel-filled things that
Surrealism found to respect. Then the Lam-related issue of these “marvelous” can be found in the context of the arts of “primitive” cultures.

Namely, Lam, a Cuban of mixed African and Chinese descent, was “primitive” in the sense that he was non-western, and his very existence was an unexpected embodiment of the “marvelous.” The Surrealists were attracted to this strange, strongly magnetic existence. This was during so-called “Black Deco” years in Paris during the 1920s to 1930s, a period of a subtle blending of tastes, with Joséphine Baker, known as La Bakaire, as the black star of the Folies-Bergères, a period characterized by a strong interest in the “African” quality found in jazz. We can also note that the first jazz clubs were founded in Paris, and it is very suggestive that one of them bore the purely Surrealism moniker of “Le Boeuf sur le toit.”

Thus Lam returned to his homeland making the adoration of “primitive” and “the marvelous” embraced by Picasso and Breton a preamble to his own juncture. Lam said that his return to Cuba was “a great stimulation of my imagination ...the externalization of my world has always responded to the presence of factors that emanated from our history, from its geography, tropical fruits and black culture.” Mustn’t Lam have gradually arrived at the belief that the sole road to originality lies in a sincere deepening of those things that are given to us in the place and time of our birth?

2. Lam’s Transformation: Santeriá

Then Lam, stimulated by his own cultural heritage, its universality, returned to Cuba. While his expressive methods were those shared by Picasso and the surrealists, he was transformed into an artist whose work “says things that Picasso knows nothing about.”

Returning to the Jungle (1942–43)(fig. 3) noted at the beginning of this essay, let us now consider how the work differs from that of his European compatriots. As previously noted, the Jungle which invites the viewer into the “depths of the forest” shows four life-size totem-like female nudes depicted as nothing more than a part of the jungle growth. Their large hands, feet and buttocks reveal the physical characteristics found in blacks or mulattos, and in the context of this essay, we must note that these nude women appear in the midst of a Cuban landscape. As clearly seen in two works, Composition and Nude in Nature, the works of the early 1940s produced immediately after his return to his homeland begin with one figure and then shift into the depiction of complex hybrids. But, no matter the figural form, these figures are always placed in the natural landscape. In Jungle, air and horizon line are completely concealed by the
dense, luxuriant growth of nature, and this is the most readily recognizable example of this concept. The first iconographic change of his Cuban period can clearly be found in the introduction of landscape.

Thus said, we must note that sugar cane is the nature enveloping these figures, the raw material grown on the sugar plantations begun by the Spaniards at the beginning of the 16th century. This fertile image of nature combines with the luxuriant bodies of the nude women in the foreground; they seem to suggest the inexhaustible continuation of life through reproduction and regeneration. This landscape and these figures evoke the history of Cuba’s blacks, linked in the distance to Africa and Africans, and thus, this primeval fecundity, reproduction and regeneration embrace the idea of eternal time. We have no need for some complicate explanation, the work has a most direct sympathy for living creatures, the wild world, nature’s mythic qualities. This is one of the most poetically beautiful sections achieved by Lam in the Jungle, and it can be said to be one of the critical contributors to the work’s fascination.

In addition to this kind of introduction of the Cuban landscape, as indicated, another important iconographic change can be found in the appearance of supernatural forms that represent an amalgam of plant, animal and human forms. If we were to just speak of the Lam’s interest in male-female combinations among these images, we could then trace our discussion back to works created by Lam in Paris in the latter half of the 1930s. The 1935 work Couple shows the back view of a man with left knee resting on a chair and his right arm outstretched, and a full frontal depiction of a woman, as if to ostentatiously display her body. Then in 1938, a work of the same title shows a couple with arms and legs entwined as they sit on a chair in the middle of the composition.

But then we can see that there is a complete change in this image in the Man/Woman (1942)(fig. 5) created by Lam after his return to Cuba. A figure that has two sets of buttocks, while sharing a single torso and head, is set in a concise composition against a green ground. It is noteworthy that on one hand, the figure seems like a women given the hair flowing down the left side of the figure and breasts, while the testicles beneath its lips seem to indicate a male. Then in addition to these combinations of men and women, there is Woman of 1942 which can be clearly discerned to have female physical characteristics, while it is actually a horse-like animal, the fruit of a mixture with another animal, as seen in its long nose, pointed ears and mane.

The strange elements coexist with other forms and space, while at the same time each of
these things exists as a separate entity. Woman to man, or woman to horse. In the background of this iconographic change of the early 1940s, we can clearly see Lam's connection with the Surrealist “cadavre exquis” method of creating a single image from his reading of a range of elements from different painter's works, or the drawings Lam created for André Breton's *Fata Morgana* poetry collection written in Marseilles in 1940–41. While we can see how this work resembles the methods of his cohorts, it is by no means reduced to their imitation, and it is readily apparent to all that it represents Lam's own artistic territory.

The author would like to provisionally use the term Chimera to indicate these Lam-esque living beings which characterize his Cuba period works, those supernatural entities made up of a blend of animal and plant elements, at once excessive and lacking, those with parts inverted and supplanted, and then combined to make their own specific composite. It goes without saying that for my indication of Chimera I followed the chimera monster of Greece made up of a combination of existing animal elements, but from whence did these Chimera-like living beings of Lam's emerge? What lies at the root of their creation?

When faced with this question, we turn our attention to the folk belief of Cuba known as Santería. The Cubans of African descent tracing back to the slave period brought in and continued the religious traditions of the African continent, and then transformed these beliefs into a Christianized form through their contact with Catholicism. This mixture then formed the unique religion which has been handed down under the name of Santería. This religion consisting of religious ceremonies of dance and song to celebrate the occasions of birth, marriage, illness, death and burial is a fusion of elements of African native religions that began with the Yoruba and elements of Catholicism.

In his hometown of Sagua la Grande, Lam was raised by his godmother Montonica Wilson who was a Santería priestess, and Lam had his first contact with Santería through her office. This Santería which continued in the pretext of the unconscious forms one of the focal points of today's study of Lam, and it is a topic that must be taken up by those who would understand Lam. Here we will consider a brief overview of the elements of Santería necessary for the furthering of our discussion.

Among the Santería sacred pantheon of gods known in West Africa as *orisha* and in Cuba as *oricha*, the author would like to indicate that Changó is the god who must be considered first in the context of Lam's works. Changó (Shango in Africa) is the deity who metes out truth and punishment to those who have sinned, and as a symbol of his fearsome quality, he sends lightning down upon the earth. This flash of lightning is the thunder god who chases even the
unrelated to their death.

In the previously noted work Man/Woman (fig. 5) we can see how the first noteworthy element is the fusion of man and woman, and as has been previously noted, testicles, symbol of a man's sexuality and reproduction, are depicted beneath the face. The author would like to suggest a connection to Changó in this oval symbol of man. Indeed, "The first thing Shango looks for is the testicles,"[25] and one makes offerings to this deity by cutting off the head and testicles of Changó's beloved ram. It is known that Lam's godmother Montonica Wilson was a Changó priestess, and that her guardian deity was Changó,[25] and we must see that, in this context, this is more than mere coincidence.

The explication of the connection between Lam's works and Santería was furthered by the rapid development of research on Lam in the latter half of the 1980s, and these studies have designated which Santería gods appear in Lam's works. In addition to Changó, the god known as Eleggua is important in a consideration of Lam. This deity appears at the crossroads and thresholds of homes, and he is known as the protector of the human paths. He is "one who holds the key of fate," and he symbolizes the arrival of something unpredictable that will change fate.[25] For example, according to Julia Herzberg, Eleggua is seen in the small round face riding on the middle of the winged human figure on the work exhibited here, Green Morning (1943).[25] This Eleggua is the motif that appears most frequently in Lam's post 1941 works, and in my opinion, Eleggua with eyes, mouth, and horns can also be confirmed in other works, namely, Clairevoyance (1950) and Les Enfants sans âmes (1964). The painter's repeated use of this motif of Eleggua and the set meaning of this appearance will be discussed in the last chapter of this essay.

The gods of Santería who resides in Lam's works can be confirmed, and we can see how the metal elements of scissors, something completely antithetical to nature, can be found in the previously examined work, Jungle of 1942–43 (fig. 6) Personage with scissors (fig. 7). These scissors symbolize Ogún, the god of war and metal who resides in all things metal. However, as seen in the 1945 work Ogun dieu de la terraille with its central depiction of a horse shoe, Ogún was in general symbolized by the horse shoe and similarly, Green Morning shows the figure carrying Eleggua with legs that end in hoofs.[25]

And what Santería deities can be found in the Eternal Presence, a work that is considered one of the most important from Lam's 1940s works? Let us here consider Lam's own answer to this question.
"The figure on the left is a stupid whore. With her two mouths she feels ridiculous. From her heart comes nothing but an animal's paw. In her heterogeneity she evokes cross-breeding, the degradation of the race. The figure on the right has a knife, the instrument of integrity, but he makes no use of it, he does not fight. He suggests the indecision of the mulatto, who does not know where to go or what to do. The vessel on the right, full of rice and with a head emerging from it, represents religion, the mysteries. And in the central figure with folded limbs we can see the dream."

In this manner the painter has expressed four ordinary people in this work. But then following the comments, Lam, as if to betray his words, confirmed that he had inserted a number of Lucumi related elements into this image. How should we take this? To look once again to Herzberg, she notes that the figures in the painting represent, from the left, the various Santería gods, Oshún, Elegguá, Ogún and Ochosi. We can see how Herzberg's research covers the relationship between Lam and the gods of Santería in a close examination of each work, and the remarkable amount of research in recent years indicates, that while not all, most of Lam's works from his Cuba period are based on the iconography of Santería.

Thus we can provide a provisional summary of the preceding discussion. Lam's paintings after his return to Cuba exhibit the two iconographic changes noted at the beginning of this essay, namely 1) the introduction of the Cuban landscape, and 2) the appearance of the multiformed, super-natural beings derived from many sources whether animal, plant, man, or woman. To these we can then add the introduction of Afro-Cuban religious symbolism as one of the defining iconographic elements of these works.

And yet the iconographic sources for the Santería images that appear in Lam's works, even though persuasively explained by Herzberg, do not themselves form the "meaning" of Lam's paintings. Christian Zervos has indicated "Lam is not the metaphysician of African thinking," and moreover, clearly his paintings are not fully explained on the basis of Santería iconography. Gerardo Mosquera, known for his profound understanding of Latin American art, offered the following explanation for this point.

"In Lam there does not exist a precise symbology. (.....) His references to Afro-Cuban religious cultural complexes are very indirect."

Then what was Lam expressing in his use of Santería iconography? As we cannot fully explain
this point, we cannot pierce the genetic source of the Chimera-like entity with its multi-origins, its super natural forms. Indeed such an explanation would be easily criticized and riddled with difficulties. Thus the next chapter of this essay will establish the new theme of Chinese alchemy and proceed with a consideration of Lam from a different view point. I believe that such a discussion, albeit on a limited scale, will gradually provide us with a key to an understanding of Lam's paintings which will assist us when we then return to this issue. (To be continued.)

Notes


[2] This essay is deeply indebted to the great wealth of scholarship on Lam which developed rapidly through the 1980s and 90s, and the Catalogue Raisonné of his oil painting is one indispensable work among this wealth. The author was greatly enriched by this work, believes that it will be indispensable for future studies on Lam, and here expresses his sincere appreciation to its principal author Lam's widow, Mrs. Lou Laurin-Lam, and all those involved in its production. Wifredo Lam: Catalogue Raisonné of the Painted Work, Volume I 1923–1960 (Lausanne: Sylvio Acatos, 1996).


[8] Lam's father Lam Yam was born in Canton around 1829 and left China for the Americas in the 1860s. He came to Cuba via Mexico, having worked in the United States on the construction of the transcontinental railroad. As most Chinese immigrants in nineteenth-century Cuba, Lam Yam most probably worked as an indentured agricultural laborer. By the time his son was born, he had become a merchant with his own shop and served as a scribe for the local Chinese community. Lam's mother, Ana Serafina Castilla was born in Cuba in 1862 of mixed African and Spanish heritage, a descendant from the Castilian family Cabeza de Vaca. Catalogue Raisonné, op.cit., p.172.


[12] “Picasso, después de saludarme, me llevó a una habitación en la que guardaba varias esculturas africanas. Una de éstas, la cabeza de un caballo, me atrajo inmediatamente.(....) como si estuviera viva. -¿Qué escultura tan hermosa !(....) Y añadió: -Vd. debe estar orgulloso. -¿De qué ?. Le pregunté. -De que esta


[16] We must not forget another opportunity for Lam to become aware of the special characteristics of his homeland. This stimulus was provided by the people he met on the island of Martinique on his way back to Cuba. On March 24, 1941, Lam, his wife Holzer, Breton and his family, Victor Serge and his wife, Benjamin Peret and others were among the 300 passengers who set sail on le Capitaine Paul-Lemerle bound for Cuba via Martinique. One month later they arrived in Fort-de-France, and they spent six weeks on Martinique. On this occasion Lam and Breton encountered the people of their own homelands, those people who believed in the necessity of refusing the various values that had been forced upon them by the powers of this immigrant land. These were Aimé Césaire, his wife Suzanne, and his faithful student René Menil. In the 1940s Césaire founded the magazine *Tropiques*, opening the pages of his magazine to the folkloric, artistic and poetic stimuli of the culture of the west Indies. He thus spread a cultural and political philosophy known as *Ngritude*. As indicated by the striking fact that in 1942 Lam provided the illustrations for Césaire’s epic poem *Caiers d’un Retour au Pays Natal*, his interaction with this Martinique poet was undoubtedly an opportunity for Lam to reconfirm his own heritage as an Afro-Cuban. In French, one introduction can be found in Georges Nagal, *Aimé Césaire: Un homme à la recherche d’un patrie* (Paris: Presence africane Editions, 1994).


[20] The Cuban critic Alejo Carpentier found “la magia de la vegetacion tropical, la desenfrenada Creacion de Formas de nuestra naturaleza—con todas sus metamorfosis y simbiosis,” Alejo Carpentier, “Lo Real Maravilloso de America,” *El Nacion* (1948), Archives S.D.O Wifredo Lam. Carpentier had friends among the Surrealists in Paris in the 1920–30s, published articles on Cuban music in *Document* and returned to Cuba in the 1940s. He was one of Lam’s most important friends. I would like to express my appreciation to Lam’s descendants in Paris who sent me this material. I am greatly indebted to Mrs. Lou Laurin-Lam, Mr. Eskil Lam, and Ms. Unity Woodman.

[21] To that degree, we cannot forget the effects of Surrealism which opened up new possibilities for a transformation of existing methods of expression which in turn liberated Lam from traditional expression. However, Lam’s multi-formed existence first became a possibility upon his return to his homeland and this will become clear in this article. For Lam and Breton’s interactions in Marseilles, see the following work by Lam’s second wife, Helena Holzer Benitez, *Wifredo Lam: Intertlude Marseille* (Copenhagen: Edition


[27] Elegguá is Esh-Elégba in the Yoruba god language, or is known as Esh-Elegguá. He is also described as a homeless wandering spirit, and as one who inhabits the market place, the crossroads, and thresholds of houses." Joan Wescott, "The Sculptures and Myths of Eshu-Elegba, the Yoruba Trickster," *Africa* XXXII (October 1962), p.337.


[29] Ibid.


[31] "Oshún, orisha of the river and fresh water(...) uses her sensuality to win conflicts. According to legend, Oshún enticed Ogún out of the woods by luring him with honey, an element with which she is associated, and the bird in Oshún's hand could be interpreted as a reference to this tale. Elegguá's eternal presence(...) is manifested(...) by the now familiar little round head with horns(...) and also by the votive image at the lower right(...). Ogún, the warrior-blacksmith deity, is symbolized by the knife in the hand of the figure at the right, which, when used in ritual sacrifice, is guided by the orisha's power. Ochosi, the god of the hunt and of the mysteries of the forest, keeps close company with Ogún and Elegguá(...) in this painting, the lance, one of Ochosi's symbols, serves to identify the oricha." Herzberg, "The Havana Years, 1942–1952," *op.cit.*, p.44–45.

[32] Lam's use of Santería iconography in his works may have been based in the context of Afro-Cubanismo (1928–38) begun in Cuba in the 1920s. This gives meaning to the search for Cubanidad "Cuban culture, a complex body of spiritual state, sentiments, concepts and attitudes that can be found among the characteristics of the dynamic mixing of Indian, Spanish and African heritage." Juan A.Martínez, "Una Introduccion: A la Pintura Cubana Moderna 1927–1950," *Cuba siglo XX* (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Centro Atlantico de Arte Moerno, 1996), pp.43–68. Also Martínez is the author of the following on Cuban Modernism. Juan Antonia Martinez, *Cuban Art and National Identity: The Vanguard Painters, 1927–1950* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994).


[34] "No existe tampoco una simbólica precisa en Lam(...) Sus referencias a los complejos religiosos-culturales afrocubanos son muy indirectas," Gerardo Mosquera, "Modernidad y africanía: Wifredo Lam en su isla," *op.cit.*, p.35.