Olívia Maria Gomes da Cunha, *The Things of Others: Ethnographies, Histories, and Other Artefacts*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2020. xvi + 756 pp. (Cloth US\$291.00)

Full disclosure: in my reader's report to Brill on this manuscript, I called it "a path-breaking work, deconstructing the making and potential uses of archives and demonstrating through imaginative analyses the ways archival materials of many kinds—fieldnotes, letters, state documents, photos, postcards, sound recordings, and more—can be brought to bear on historical and ethnographic problems ... I found it a joy to read." The book is destined to take its place next to those of Natalie Zemon Davis, Arlette Farge, and Ann Stoler as a model of archival interrogation, making it required reading for every historian. That Brill has published it with more than 50 photos is admirable. That Brill is charging almost 300 dollars for it is obscene. Let us hope that a paperback edition will follow shortly.

Much of this book directly concerns the Caribbean and most of those parts that do not concern Black Brazil. So, this is not only a work of theoretical import, a veritable ethnography of the archives; it is also a fundamental text for historically minded Caribbeanists and Afro-Americanists. Based on more than two decades' research in archives (and interviews) in Brazil, Cuba, and the United States, it imaginatively examines what da Cunha calls "the things" of "anthropologists Arthur Ramos, Bronislaw Malinowski, Octávio da Costa Eduardo, Fernando Ortiz, Franz Boas, Margaret Mead, Melville and Frances Herskovits, Robert Redfield, Ruth Benedict, Ruth Landes, Ruy Coelho, and St. Clair Drake; the linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner; the writers Édison Carneiro, Nicolas Guillén and Rómulo Lachatañeré; and the sociologists E. Franklin Frazier, Charles S. Johnson, Donald Pierson, and Robert Park"—in other words, "the things" of most of the major figures who played a part in developing Afro-American studies during the first half of the twentieth century.

After a 50-page prologue, rich in ideas and references, Chapter 1 offers the finest deconstruction I have read of what Michel-Rolph Trouillot called the second key moment in the production of history: "the moment of fact assembly, the making of archives" (*Silencing the Past*, p. 26). Here, da Cunha examines "the different processes of donating, organizing and dividing up estates" that held objects related to the fieldwork experiences of Herskovits, Landes, Ortiz, Pierson, Turner, and Ramos, all of whom in the 1930s and '40s "were closely involved in the conceptualization of the 'Afro-American' as a modern object of knowledge" (pp. 42–43).

Chapter 2 examines the ways that Ortiz, at the dawn of the twentieth century, developed his idiosyncratic science of *brujos*. Chapters 3 and 4 explore

the dialogue between Lachatañeré and Ortiz in 1930s Cuba, before considering the important Ortiz-Malinowski interchanges concerning “transculturation,” Ramos’s fieldwork in the southern United States and Brazil, and the planned but never-held 1941 international meeting of the Inter-American Society of Negro Studies (involving everyone from Herskovits, Ortiz, and Ramos to Eric Williams, Jean Price-Mars, and W.E.B. Du Bois), first scheduled for Havana, then Port-au-Prince, as seen largely through the records left by “the prodigious typewriter of Fernando Ortiz and his innumerable correspondents” (p. 45). Chapters 5 and 6 are devoted, first, to the collective creation of the concept of “plantation societies” by a group of researchers centered at Fisk University, in close correspondence with others in Brazil, and then to the role of letters sent (mainly during Pierson’s doctoral research) and their effects on developing concepts back home.

The book’s final two chapters begin with the pre-Brazil correspondence of Landes and Ruth Benedict and move on to a consideration of the effects of research by North Americans on their interlocutors in Bahia and the attitudes of these latter on the results. Da Cunha writes, “Reading the notebooks, booklets, note pads and interview transcriptions [of Frazier, Turner, and the Herskovitses, all of whom were in Bahia in 1940–41], listening to testimonies and the songs recorded allow us to discover not only how they were produced but, above all, what effects these objects had on the relations between researchers and their interlocutors” (p. 47). In these analyses of fieldwork, repercussions of the researchers’ race, class, gender, and linguistic abilities are interestingly revealed. These chapters provide fascinating glimpses into the practices of these pioneer researchers and their interactions with the people of Salvador as well, tellingly, as with each other.

In 2003, armed with copies of photographs taken by Landes, Carneiro, Frazier, and the Herskovitses, and with recordings of interviews and songs made by Turner, da Cunha visited Salvador and sought out “biological and religious descendants of some of the interlocutors” (p. 47). Hearing, in the book’s final pages, these Bahians’ own views on the Afro-American project adds a final exclamation point to a complex work that should stimulate thought and debate for many years to come.

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