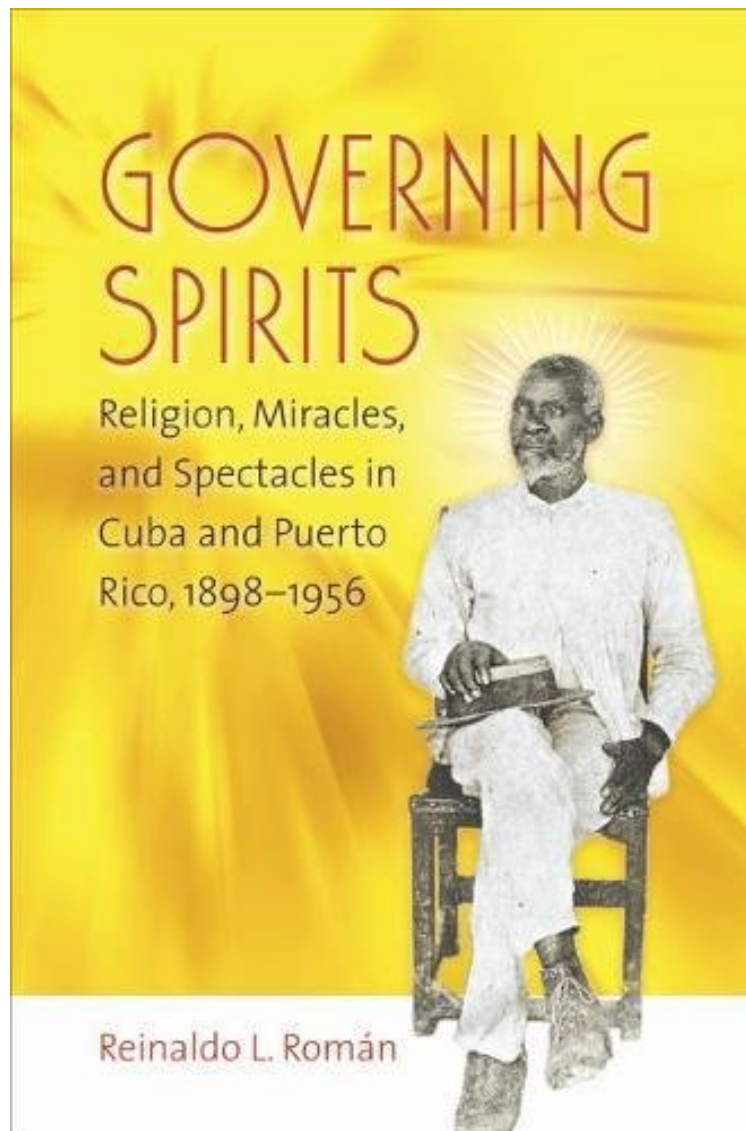


Governing Spirits: Religion, Miracles, and Spectacles in Cuba and Puerto Rico, 1898-1956

Reinaldo L. Romn

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Reinaldo L. Romn : Governing Spirits: Religion, Miracles, and Spectacles in Cuba and Puerto Rico, 1898-1956
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Governing Spirits:
Religion, Miracles, and Spectacles in Cuba and Puerto Rico, 1898-1956:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Very informative book!By hurbistoI really enjoyed this book as it is
the only source I have found describing the religious situation (especially with Espiritistas) at the turn of the century. It

was also very nice how one can compare the situation between places like Cuba and Puerto Rico. And I finally got to find out who San Hilarion was (I heard many songs about him but never knew who he was). Also very illuminating was the topic of the murdered white girls and how that negatively impacted black Cubans at that time. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By E Miranda excellent conditions

Freedom of religion did not come easily to Cuba or Puerto Rico. Only after the arrival of American troops during the Spanish-American War were non-Catholics permitted to practice their religions openly and to proselytize. When government efforts to ensure freedom of worship began, reformers on both islands rejoiced, believing that an era of regeneration and modernization was upon them. But as new laws went into effect, critics voiced their dismay at the rise of popular religions. Reinaldo L. Roman explores the changing relationship between regulators and practitioners in neocolonial Cuba and Puerto Rico. Spiritism, Santería, and other African-derived traditions were typically characterized in sensational fashion by the popular press as "a plague of superstition." Examining seven episodes between 1898 and the Cuban Revolution when the public demanded official actions against "misbelief," Roman finds that when outbreaks of superstition were debated, matters of citizenship were usually at stake. He links the circulation of spectacular charges of witchcraft and miracle-making to anxieties surrounding newly expanded citizenries that included people of color. *Governing Spirits* also contributes to the understanding of vernacular religions by moving beyond questions of national or traditional origins to illuminate how boundaries among hybrid practices evolved in a process of historical contingencies.

A fascinating exploration of the historical dynamics. . . . Thoroughly researched and skillfully presented . . . first-rate contribution.--*The Journal of American History* A much-needed study of the Puerto Rican and Cuban governments' control of superstition in the first half of the twentieth century. . . . An excellent historical account of the interplay between religion, politics, and public discourse in early twentieth-century Cuba and Puerto Rico.--*Journal of Law and Religion* An instrumental text for investigating the history of Caribbean derived religions.--*Religious Studies* This is a fine book, well written and carefully researched." --*American Historical Recommended* --*Choice* The true contribution of this fine historical project lies in the careful detail through which Roman tells . . . how various institutions and actors coconstructed religious miracles and spectacles as they worked out what religious modernity would look like.--*American Ethnologist* Offers us an insightful comprehension of the governance of moral bodies and consumption of spiritual forces in a context of capitalist expansion.--*Caribbean Studies* Eloquent and engaging. . . . Roman's carefully construed compilations of historical material are fascinating reading.--*CENTRO Journal* More than being merely an absorbing case study, *Governing Spirits* is methodologically useful for students of different temporal and geographic focuses.--*Canadian Journal of History* Roman has set a new standard for historical research on Caribbean religions.--*New West Indian Guide* Too often religious manifestations have been dismissed as irrelevant by historians of both Cuba and Puerto Rico, or they have been reduced to mere symptoms of economic or political malaise. By skillfully analyzing his sources, Roman has exposed journalists' narrative strategies, counterpoints between public and private appraisals of the phenomena, gender roles, the symbolic and emblematic elements displayed, and the typically Caribbean ploys of playful irreverence. Thus Roman's exposition is not restricted to a lineal narrative of events, but is a cumulative comparison of societies, periods, and discursive strategies.--Fernando Pico, University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras Roman's *Governing Spirits* beautifully illuminates the mutual interpenetration of secular rationality and popular religiosity in the governance of postcolonial (or, perhaps more accurately, neocolonial) societies of Cuba and Puerto Rico during the first half of the twentieth century. It is at once a major contribution to our understanding of Caribbean politics and publics, a pioneering work in the historical study of Caribbean Spiritism, and a remarkably nuanced exposition of the complexity, heterogeneity, and luxurious overdetermination of motives, practices, and concerns of those for whom miracles, witchcraft, and other numinous interventions into the public life of Cuba and Puerto Rico came to represent social facts they could not help but confront--whether they believed in their reality or not.--Stephan Palmie, University of Chicago About the Author Reinaldo L. Roman is associate professor of history at the University of Georgia.