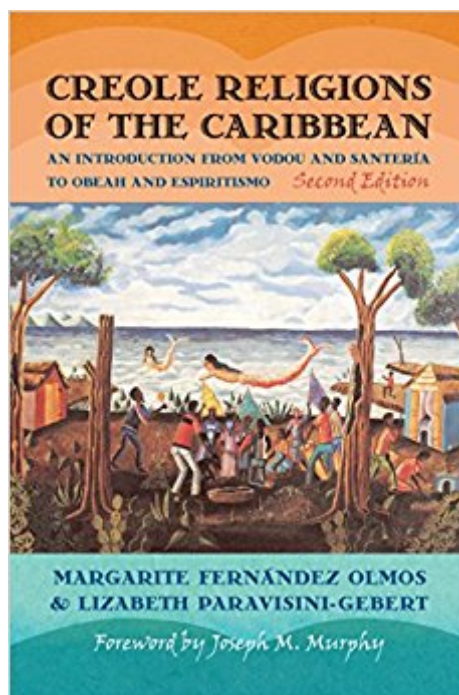




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# Creole Religions Of The Caribbean: An Introduction From Vodou And Santeria To Obeah And Espiritismo (Religion, Race, And Ethnicity)



## Synopsis

Creolization—the coming together of diverse beliefs and practices to form new beliefs and practices—is one of the most significant phenomena in Caribbean religious history. Brought together in the crucible of the sugar plantation, Caribbean peoples drew on the variants of Christianity brought by European colonizers, as well as on African religious and healing traditions and the remnants of Amerindian practices, to fashion new systems of belief. *Creole Religions of the Caribbean* offers a comprehensive introduction to the syncretic religions that have developed in the region. From Vodou, Santería, Regla de Palo, the Abakua Secret Society, and Obeah to Quimbois and Espiritismo, the volume traces the historical and cultural origins of the major Creole religions, as well as the newer traditions such as Pocomania and Rastafarianism. This second edition updates the scholarship on the religions themselves and also expands the regional considerations of the Diaspora to the U. S. Latino community who are influenced by Creole spiritual practices. Fernandez Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert also take into account the increased significance of material culture—art, music, literature—and healing practices influenced by Creole religions.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Fernandez Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert write with evident expertise, keen to uphold our understandings of how the major Creole spiritualities—everything from Vodou to Rastafari—have always dynamically adapted to change to ensure their survival and

flourishing. This second edition is, in short, an extraordinarily rich work for scholars and students alike; it is certain to become the field's standard text."-Darren J. N.

Middleton, Texas Christian University "Creole Religions of the Caribbean is a very effective and sympathetic study of the Caribbean religions, and it provides this story in a more accessible way than other publications."- Equinox "This text successfully dispels the misrepresentations and negative stereotypes societies throughout history have placed on these religions. The authors provide a great deal of research and analysis that is sure to aid both scholars and enthusiasts."-Journal of Folklore Research "Brings to life the living and lively religious traditions of Caribbean peoples. This new edition offers to scholars and students of Caribbean religions and cultures an illuminating introduction to religious continuity, change, and creativity in the Caribbean region in the past 500 years, especially among the Afro-Caribbean population."-Ennis B. Edmonds, Kenyon College "Offers a unique perspective on Caribbean religions and provides well-reasoned explanations for the diverse ways in which African religious traditions were adapted to a new cultural milieu in the diaspora. A brilliant book and a significant contribution to the literature on Caribbean religions. In short, it leaves no stone unturned."-Leslie Desmangles, Trinity College "Creole Religions of the Caribbean is a welcome contribution to contemporary religion."-Jack David Eller, Anthropology Review Database

Margarite Fernández Olmos is a professor of Spanish and Latin American literatures at Brooklyn College, City University of New York. She is the author/coeditor of many books, including *The Latino Reader: An American Literary Tradition from 1542 to the Present*. Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert is a Professor in the Department of Hispanic Studies on the Randolph Distinguished Professor Chair and Director of the Environmental Studies Program at Vassar College. She is the author of a number of books and is coeditor with Fernández Olmos of *Healing Cultures: Art and Religion as Curative Practices in the Caribbean and its Diaspora*.

I will read this book fully and expand my review. I am in one of these traditions, and around people in families who are in others. The author seems to have done her reading of others' works/ literary research, but not from live individuals as far as I have gotten. For example, it states 7 African powers are Orisha, which is a very common misconception. It is sort of in the right section wedged between espiritismo and santería to try to bridge her understanding. In these folk seance and mediumship traditions, the 7 African powers are tribal dead spirit guides, which only some people have, and come out in these spiritual sessions called misa. The statement is not referenced, but an indexed

number reveals that she further explains into inaccuracy, and only seems referenced if you did not follow the attributions. Another example confused Eshu/Echu with Ellegba/Ellegua calling him Echu-ellegua as if echu was a path of ellegua, two different entities. States there is max 30 orisha in cuba, that most have not heard of oddudwa, which I am not in lucumi, and I have heard of them. It is true there is not as much as remembered in Nigeria however. This book goes more into depth of things I did learn from it especially about Ifa. The information otherwise seems reasonably comprehensive for exactly what the title states an introduction. Dry reads somewhat like an encyclopedial bought this used for \$5.44 plus \$4 shipping and would be upset if i bought it for \$28 plus due to content

I've read a number of well written (and poorly written) books on the creole religions of the Caribbean...so what was I doing buying yet another one? Maybe winter boredom and the need for escapism/diversion...who knows? Anyway to my pleasant surprise Olmos & Gebert did an amazing job of research and explanation. I couldn't put the book down and when done went back and reread certain sections a second time....the book is that good! For those who are interested in this subject matter - I highly recommend buying this book...you won't be disappointed!!!

I really enjoyed this book because it gave me a lot of insight into the various African influenced beliefs that exist in the Caribbean and South America. I have in my short lived life encountered a number of people who were Rastafarians, Santeros, Paleros and Spiritistas. When I first met these individuals, I had not read this book, so most of what they were telling me about their beliefs and faith, had me at awe, since I came from a Pentecostal background. The most influential individual that I met was an old Black man I called Papa, from Cuba who was a Santero, Spiritist and a member of the all male society Abakua. Although Papa was sworn to secrecy, a lot of what he shared with me had to do with Afro-Cuban culture and the various religious syncretism that occurred in order for the spiritual systems in Cuba to survive. It was through Papa I received the inspiration to syncretized my own beliefs with my culture unashamed, which I wrote about in my own work, *Â MAA AANKH: Finding God the Afro-American Spiritual Way, by Honoring the Ancestors and Guardian Spirits* and *Â Maa: A Guide to the Kamitic Way for Personal Transformation*. The cool thing was that after losing contact with Papa. Years later, I found this book and most of what he told me about his way of life was written in this book dealing with Santeria, Espiritismo and Abakua. When I realized this, I became very grateful for having met Papa. So in short, I recommend this book if you are interested in getting a general idea about the Afro-Caribbean faiths and

systems.

Interesting read, I haven't finished reading the book completely; therefore, I rated this book 3 stars. Thus far, it seems to be more descriptive in determining political correctness of specific terminology. I noticed excerpts describing interesting stories and events related to terms which actually kept me reading the book instead of repeated discussion in print about correctness of terminology. I understand Creole is considered mixed-blood. Overall, I agree with discussion in print about how Creole is a culture in itself that is evolving Nationwide or Creolizing for one's adaptability or acculturation (tolerance) surrounding one's individual cultural practices, values and lifestyle. It's interesting to discover happenings in other countries during U.S. Historic Slave Trade. From study of U.S. History education the world was affected by U.S. Historic Slave Trade and influenced by U.S. Historic Slave Trade practices. For educational purposes, I recommend reading this book and review contributing factors to culture.

Great writing style! Awesome textbook for undergraduate courses.

This was a class book but I'm keeping it in my personal library. Easy to follow. Just enough background information.

This is a great book if you want to learn about the many fascinating belief systems in Cuba. Its well written and easy to read, I would recommend to anyone.

Its not THAT academic, more like a junior college or state university academic text, but the authors clearly understand anthropology and religious studies, i.e. what religion is and what it is for. I think the authors have written several similar books, so I don't know how much is recycled here. It has a good section on Rastafarianism which discusses its Abrahamic and Black Nationalist elements. Very enlightening.

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