

Ivor L. Miller

October 2013

Senior Lecturer. Department of History & International Studies.  
 University of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria  
 Research Fellow. African Studies Center. Boston University  
 Email: imiller@hampshire.edu; Milleri@si.edu.

## Curriculum Vitae

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### Education

- 1995 Northwestern University  
 Ph.D. Department of Performance Studies. Topic: Historical anthropology of trans-Atlantic Yorùbá cultural systems in colonial and contemporary Cuba.
- 1990 Yale University  
 M.A. African and African-American Studies: Anthropology and Art History.
- 1985 Hampshire College  
 B.A. Senior thesis project comparing history and function in West African, Afro-Caribbean, and African-American performance.

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### Research Interests

African Cultural History and Sacred Arts, Gendered Initiation Societies, African Diaspora. Primary Methods: Visual Anthropology, Historical Anthropology, Oral History, Ethnography.

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### Book Award

- 2010 Elliott P. Skinner Book Award of the Association for Africanist Anthropology. Honorable Mention for *The Voice of the Leopard: African Secret Societies and Cuba*. Based on research in Cuba (1991-2009) and Nigeria-Cameroon (2004-2009).

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### Leadership

- Reviewer** Council for International Exchange of Scholars, West and Central/Southern Africa Peer Review Committee. (2011).
- Organizer** "Recreating Africa in the Americas." April 4-5, 2003. DePaul University. Presentations by leading Africanists, as well as the Cuban Omí Odara ensemble. Sponsors: DePaul University, the City of Chicago Cultural Affairs Department.

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### Courses Taught

- "The Yorùbá Diaspora in Brazil, Trinidad, Cuba, United States"
- "African-derived Initiation Societies in the Americas"
- "Comparative Slavery: Africa and the Americas"
- "Historical Themes in the African Diaspora"
- "Theories of identity and cultural transformation: Creole; mestizo; hybrid"
- "Caribbean musics and identities"
- "Hip Hop Nation: Pop Culture and Urban Youth"

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**Experience**

- 2011-2012** Smithsonian Senior Fellow. National Museum of African Art (NMAfA) and the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH). 12-month appointment.
- 2009-2011** Fulbright Scholar. Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES). Associate Professor Level. Department of History, University of Calabar, Nigeria.
- 2006-2012** Research Fellow. African Studies Center. Boston University.
- 2007-2008** Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Scholar-in-Residence. Twelve-months, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.
- 2005-2006** Rockefeller Resident Fellow. Center for Black Music Research. Columbia College, Chicago.
- 2004-2005** Rockefeller Fellow. Institute for Research in the African Diaspora in the Caribbean and the Americas (IRADAC). The City College of New York (CUNY).
- 2002-2004** Visiting Faculty. DePaul University, Chicago. African Diaspora Studies Program; I designed and taught six new courses.
- 2001-2002** Copeland Fellow. Amherst College. Interdisciplinary research on the African Diaspora in the Caribbean.
- July 2001** Consultant. Efik National Association Inc. Pratt Institute, New York. I helped facilitate an historically unprecedented encounter between Efik masqueraders of Nigeria and their Cuban Abakuá counterparts.
- 2000-2001** Rockefeller Resident Fellow. The City College of New York (CUNY). "Language and Diaspora Culture." Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship.
- 1999-2000** Scholar-in-Residence. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Twelve-month residency, funded by the NEH. Research on the African Diaspora.
- 1997 - 1999** Researcher/Translator. Editorial José Martí, Havana, Cuba. During twenty months, I documented Afro-Cuban traditions.
- 1997** Visiting Professor. Vassar College. Department of Religion and the Africana Program.
- 1996 - 1997** Editor - AIM Books. With Dr. Wande Abimbola, scholar of Yorùbá civilization; a comparative study of Yorùbá religion in West Africa with Lukumí traditions in Cuba and Brazil.
- 1991 - 1995** Thirty months of fieldwork experience in Cuba, supported by the Rice Fellowship at Yale University and the Northwestern University Fellowship.
- 1993-1994** Teaching Assistant. Department of Performance Studies. Northwestern University.
- 1990** Visiting Lecturer. University of Massachusetts at Amherst. "African Diaspora Cultures: Religion and Art," Brazil, Haiti, Cuba, and USA.
- 1990** Editorial Assistant. The Frederick Douglass Papers. Historian John Blassingame, Editor.

- 1987 Group Leader. Operation Crossroads Africa.  
Eight weeks in The Gambia, for the construction of a rural community center.
- 1985 Participant. Operation Crossroads Africa.  
Community work in rural Ghana for two months. Learned traditional dances.

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### Awards, honors, and scholarships

- 2011-2012 Smithsonian Senior Fellow. The National Museum of African Art and the National Museum of Natural History. Washington D.C.
- 2009-2011 Fulbright Scholar. Associate/Full Professor Level. Lecturing/Research. University of Calabar, Nigeria.
- 2010 Elliott P. Skinner Book Award of the Association for Africanist Anthropology. Honorable Mention for *The Voice of the Leopard*.
- 2009 Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. Participant in "Roots: African Dimensions of the History and Culture of the Americas, a NEH Summer Seminar for College and University Teachers. Charlottesville, June 8 - July 10.
- 2007-2008 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Scholar-in-Residence. Twelve-months, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.
- 2007-2008 Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC). Multi-Country Research Fellowship Program. 3 months in Senegal, Cameroon, and Nigeria.
- 2006-2007 Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). Transnational Working Group on Africa and its Diaspora. Dakar, Senegal.
- 2005-2006 Center for Black Music Research. Rockefeller Resident Fellowship. Columbia College, Chicago.
- 2005-2006 Fulbright Scholar to Nigeria. CIES. Declined.
- 2004 West African Research Association (WARA). Post-Doctoral Fellowship for Research in West Africa. African Studies Center, Boston University.
- 2003 City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. Cultural Grant to support my lecture-performance of Cuban music of African derivation.
- 2002 Amherst College Archives and Special Collections. "Ivor Miller Papers," includes research materials related to *Aerosol Kingdom* and ongoing publications.
- 2000 Cuba Exchange Program Fellowship. Johns Hopkins University. Three-month residency at the Centro de la cultura cubana, Havana.
- 1994 Robert S. and Gertrude Breen Memorial Award, for academic excellence. Department of Performance Studies, Northwestern University.
- 1994 Graduate Certificate in African Studies. Program of African Studies, Northwestern University.
- 1993-1994 Department Assistantship. Northwestern University.

- 1990 H. H. Rice Foreign Residence Fellowship. Yale University. 12 months of residency in Cuba to conduct fieldwork.
- 1988-1990 University Fellowship. Yale University.
- 1988-1990 Yale University. Council on African Studies; the J. Enders Research Grant; and the African-American Studies Program. Funding for M.A. thesis research.

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### Selected Publications

#### BOOKS:

- 2011 *Voice of the Leopard: African Secret Societies and Cuba*. UP of Mississippi, printed in Nigeria by the Center for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC).
- 2009 *Voice of the Leopard: African Secret Societies and Cuba*. UP of Mississippi.
- 2002 *Aerosol Kingdom: Subway Painters of New York City*. UP of Mississippi. Foreword by Robert Farris Thompson. Reprinted in 2010, UP of Mississippi.
- 1997 *Ifá Will Mend Our Broken World: Thoughts on Yorùbá Culture in West Africa and the Diaspora*. Wande Abimbola & Ivor Miller. Roxbury, MA: AIM Books. 206 pages.
- In Progress** *Voice of the Leopard: A Cultural History of Cross River Civilizations*. Vol. 2. Pre-colonial civilization in West Africa, focused on the Ekpe society of Old Calabar. (book)
- Voice of the Leopard: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Cuba*. Vol. 3, documents the horizontal integration of various African-derived traditions in Cuba. (book)
- "Battling Genres in the Trans-Atlantic African Diaspora: History and Aesthetics." Co-edited with Dr. TJ Desch-Obi. University Press of Mississippi. (book)
- Cuban Lukumí Batá drumming guilds*. A monograph about a West African classical tradition recreated in colonial Cuba that is now a global practice. (book)

#### ARTICLES:

- Accepted** "The challenges of articulating and promoting a trans-Atlantic African Diaspora: West African Ékpè and Cuban Abakuá within their contemporary nation-states" Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). Transnational Working Groups Edited Volume.
- In Progress** "Life-cycle Rituals in the Cross River Region." The National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Nigeria. With Dr. M. Ojong, University of Calabar.
- "Ékpè 'leopard' association songs from the Cross River region: a thematic and linguistic study." An analysis of some 100 songs in several languages (Agoi, Efik, Ejagham, Igbo, Lokaa, Umon) collected from 2004-2011; with M. Okon, and M. Ojong, University of Calabar. (essay)
- "Interpreting Abakuá phrases through Cross River languages: Cuban recordings from the 1940s." An analysis of field recordings by anthropologist Richard Waterman. *Latin American Music Review journal*. (essay)
- "King-making in Calabar, Nigeria: Historical Photographs of Ékpè Ritual." *Visual Anthropology Review*. (essay)
- 2014 "Abakuá Communities in Florida: Members of the Cuban Brotherhood in Exile."

- 2013 "Bongó Itá: Leopard Society Music and Language in West Africa, Western Cuba, and New York City." *Rewriting the African Diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Ed., R. Adams, Jr. Routledge P. [reprint of 2012 essay]
- "Ékpè 'leopard' society in Africa and the Americas: Influence and Values of an Ancient Tradition." With Dr. Mathew Ojong. In, *Race and Ethnicity in Secret and Exclusive Social Orders: Blood and Shadow*. Taylor & Francis. [reprint of 2012 essay]
- 2012 "Bongó Itá: Leopard Society Music and Language in West Africa, Western Cuba, and New York City." *Journal of Africa and Black Diaspora*. 5.1 : 85-103. Routledge P.
- "Ékpè 'leopard' society in Africa and the Americas: Influence and Values of an Ancient Tradition." With Dr. Mathew Ojong. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. Special Issue on "Secret or Private Organisations, Race & Ethnicity." 36 (2) U.K. Pps. 1-16.
- 2010 "Abakuá Society: African Sources and Structure"; "Language: Efik-Carabali (Abakua)." *Cuba: People, Culture, History*. Encyclopedia: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- 2009 "Naturalizing identity politics." A review of *Herskovits at the Heart of Blackness*. DVD. H-Net Reviews. <<http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showpdf.php?id=252>>
- "Honoring Verger's Legacy': Pierre Verger: Messenger Between Two Worlds." DVD. Grande Premio Cinema Brasil, 2000. 83 minutes. H-Net Reviews in the Humanities. <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=25467>
- "The genesis of African and Indian cooperation in colonial North America: An Interview with Helen Hornbeck Tanner." *Ethnohistory Quarterly*. 56.2 (Spring)
- "Obras de fundación: la sociedad abakuá en los años noventa." *Raza y racismo*. Eds., E. Pérez y M. Lueiro. La Habana. P. 188-214. [reprint of my 2000 essay].
- "Abakuá: The Signs of Power." Program notes for a performance and exhibition of paintings by Leandro Soto. Arizona State University. Phoenix.
- 2007 "Cantos Abakuá de Cuba: examen de la nueva evidencia lingüística e histórica de la diáspora africana." *Catauro: Revista cubana de antropología*. Havana. Año 8. No. 15. pps. 4-33. Translation of my 2005 *African Studies Review* essay.
- 2006 Liner notes to *Tambor Lucumí: Andrés Chacón y Iré Iré*. Música Afro-Cubana. Three CD set. EarthCDs MPM003. 2006. 27 pages.
- 2005 "Cuban Abakuá chants: examining new evidence for the African Diaspora." *African Studies Review*. April. 2005, v. 48. n.1. Pp. 23-58.
- "How I went to Calabar and became an Ékpè Ambassador to the Cuban Abakuá." *WARA Newsletter*. West African Research Association. (Spring) : 11-13.
- Abakuá entry (1000 words). *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*. Colin Palmer, Editor in Chief. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA.
- "Kongo Cruzado: Cuban Lukumí and Kongo Identities in the Art of Francisco 'Gordillo' Arredondo." *International Review of African American Art*. 20. 2 :16-24.
- 2004 "The Formation of African Identities in the Americas: Spiritual 'ethnicity'." *Contours: A Journal of the African Diaspora*. 2, 2 : 193-222.
- "Notes from the Underground: the Increasing Relevance of Hip Hop." *Black Renaissance/ Renaissance Noire*. New York Univ. v. 6, n. 1 : 146-154.

Conde/ Duque. Madrid, Spain. (April-June) : 12-16.

- 2003 "Jesús Pérez and the transculturation of the Cuban batá drum." *Dialago*. n. 7. Center for Latino Research. DePaul University. Spring : 70-74.
- 2000 "A Secret Society Goes Public: The Relationship Between Abakuá and Cuban Popular Culture." *African Studies Review*. v. 43, n. 1 (April) : 161-88. [Mine was the first article in this journal to use tone markers for West African tonal languages].
- "Religious Symbolism in Cuban Political Performance." *TDR: A Journal of Performance Studies*. v. 44, n. 2 (T166). Pp. 30-55. [conclusions of my dissertation].
- "Obras de fundación: la Sociedad Abakuá en los años 90." *Caminos*. La Habana: Centro Memorial Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. nos. 13-14 : 24 - 35.
- 1996 "We, The Colonized Ones: Peruvian Artist Kukuli Speaks About Her Art and Experience." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*. v. 20, n. 1 : 1- 25.
- 1995 "Belief and Power in Contemporary Cuba: The Dialogue Between Santería Practitioners and Revolutionary Leaders." Dissertation. Northwestern Univ.
- "The Singer As Priestess: Interviews with Two Cuban Artists." *Sounding Off*. Eds., R. Sakolsky & F. Wei-han Ho. New York: Autonomedia. Pp. 287-304.
- "Eno Washington: the memoirs of a Mississippi shaman." (with Jill Cutler) *Race & Class* 36. 3 : 21-38.
- 1994 "Creolization for Survival in the City." *Cultural Critique* 27 : 153-188.
- "Celina González: The 'Queen' of the Punto Cubano." (with Idania Diaz). *LUCERO: Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 5 : 9-20.
- 1993 "Guerrilla Artists of New York City." *Race & Class*. v. 35, n. 1 : 27-40.
- 1992 "No More Carnivals: Cubans Struggle to Survive Their Economic Crisis." *International Forum at Yale*. 12. 1 : 23-27.
- 1991 "Night Train: The Power That Man Made." *New York Folklore*. XVII. 1-2 : 21 - 43.
- 1990 "If It Hasn't Been One Of Color: an interview with Roy DeCarava." *Callaloo: Journal of African-American and African Arts and Letters*. 13. 4 : 847 – 857. [Author's title: "Seeing Another America: an interview with Roy DeCarava."]

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### Selected Papers/panels

- 2013 "The Relationship between Calabar Literacy and Cuban Abakuá Manuscripts." Calabar Through Time Conference; University of Calabar. April 24.
- 2012 "Current Research in the Ékpè-Abakuá continuum." 27 August 2012, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution
- "Cuban artists of African descent interrogate their cultural heritage." Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian Institution, June 28.

"Methods of Collaborative Fieldwork in Cameroon, Nigeria, Cuba, and Hip Hop in NYC." Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian Institution, May 24.

"Coded communication between the Catholic church and African-derived institutions in nineteenth century Cuba." Africans, African Americans, and the Abrahamic Religions Symposium. Boston University. 19 April.

"Los Ekpe de Nigeria y los Abakua de Cuba." II Festival de la Artes Escénicas del Gran Caribe. Universidad de Cartagena, Colombia. 28 March.

**2011** "African and Cuban Popular Music Trends in the 20<sup>th</sup> century." George Mason University, Washington DC. 1 December.

"Cross River Civilization in Cameroon and Cuba." National Museum of African Art, Washington DC. With Cameroon and Cuban musicians. 28 November.

"West African Sources of Cuban Abakuá." Conference on Ekpe-Abakuá traditions. Instituto de Antropología. Havana, Cuba. May 26.

**2010** "Cross River Sources and the pathways of Ekpe traditions to the Caribbean." The African Voice in the History of Slavery. University of Buea, Cameroon, December 14.

"Traditional West African Institutions in the Americas: Ifa, Bata, and Ekpe." International Conference on Slavery. UNESCO event. August 24. Osogbo, Nigeria

"Ekpe Performance in the Cross River: Report on Current Research." National Museum, Calabar, Nigeria. August 20.

**2009** "'Mambo Abakuá': initiation-coded social organization in the Arts of the African Diaspora." Art History Department, Univ. of Texas, Austin, March 30.

"Abakuá and Kongo ritual phrases in Caribbean popular music: methods of analysis." Dept. of Linguistics, Harvard University. Prof. A Nevins. April 21.

"Kongo-Angola & Cross River Themes in Caribbean Popular Culture." Hostos Community College. City Lore, funded by the NEH. New York City. April 25.

"Performance in the African Diaspora of Latin America." Stone Center for Latin American Studies. Tulane University. July 11.

**2008** "Visual Evidence in Historical Anthropology: the Ékpè-Abakuá Continuum from Calabar to Cuba." Dept. of Anthropology, Seoul National University, October 21.

"Themes in the Ékpè/ Abakuá Continuum." CODESRIA Transnational Working Groups: Africa and its Diasporas. Dakar, Senegal, October 25-27.

**2007** "The Ékpè/ Abakuá Continuum." Musée Quay Branly, Paris. Pre-performance lecture for an encounter of Nigerian and Cuban Ékpè leaders. December 20-24.

"Cross River Philosophy and Arts in Cuban Abakua." Afro-Cuban Arts, Culture, History. University of Wisconsin/Madison. September 21.

"Conceptos de la Madre en las culturas Ékpè de Nigeria y Cuba." Festival Internacional de Tradiciones Afroamericanas. Caracas, Venezuela. June 20.

**2006** "Themes in the Ékpè/ Abakuá Continuum." African Studies Center, Boston University. October 16.

- 2005 "Leopard Society Music and Language in West Africa, Cuba, and New York City." University of the Virgin Islands, St. Thomas. November 12.
- 2004 "From Cuba to the Cross River Region: Trans-Atlantic Narratives of the Ékpè (leopard) Society." CUNY Graduate Center, New York. October 29.
- "Sése Eribó: un tambor como madre" (I & II). The Centro Conde/ Duque for the exhibition Madre Africa. Madrid, Spain. May 19, 20, 22.
- "Abakuá Practice and Visual Arts in Florida: the Cuban Brotherhood." 13<sup>th</sup> Triennial Symposium on African Art. Cambridge, MA. April 2.
- "The relevance of M. J. Herskovits to contemporary debates about the African Diaspora." Program of African Studies, Northwestern University. March 8.
- 2003 "African-derived ritual lineages and American identities." Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora. Northwestern University. October 2.
- "Cuban Abakuá Chants: Examining new linguistic and historical evidence for the African Diaspora." Dept. of Anthropology. University of Chicago. May 23.
- 2002 "Hip Hop leaders 'represent' in the current struggle." African American Affairs & Africana Studies. New York University. November 22-23.
- "Media, History, Style in the Aerosol Kingdom." American Studies Association. November 14. Houston, Texas.
- "Evidence for the African Diaspora in Cuban Abakuá" (accompanied by five Abakuá musicians). Amherst College. April 19.
- "New Evidence for the African Diaspora in Cuban Abakuá." African Studies, Columbia University. February 21.
- 2001 "Debating the African Diaspora." Plenary panel. African Studies Association's annual meeting. Houston, Texas. November 16.
- "African-derived Religions in Contemporary Cuba." The American University Caribbean Project. Washington, D.C. May 14.
- 2000 "Abakuá Language: A Case for Initiation Dialects from Cross Rivers." Conference on African Linguistics, Boston University. March 4.
- "Abakuá language and popular music." History Department, Dartmouth College, February 10.
- 1999 "Jesús Pérez y la transculturación del tambor batá cubano." Fundación Fernando Ortiz, Havana, Cuba. November 27.
- 1998 "Abakuá in contemporary Cuba: visual and sonic symbolism." Spanish Department, Amherst College, December 5.
- "Havana carnival: family and *barrio* traditions." World Conference on Carnival, Trinity College, Hartford, CT. September 11.
- 1997 "Abakuá History: West African Heritage in Cuba." Repercussions of the Slave Trade, University of the West Indies, Kingston, JA, February 20.



American Studies, Smith College, October 17.

"Afro-Cuban Dance: Origins and Significance." Department of Romance Languages, Amherst College, April 8.

"Performing Cuban African Heritage: Abakuá History." Performance Studies Conference, Northwestern University, March 23.

- 1995 "Methods of Field Work in Cuba." Performance Studies Conference, New York University, March 25.
- 1994 "Camouflaged Practice: Representations of Cuban Religion." Center for Interdisciplinary Research on the Arts, Northwestern University, April 9.
- 1993 "Dance on the Wind: Embodied Black Nationalism." A Pan American Dialogue. Havana, Cuba, December 2.
- 1991 "Afro-Atlantic Naming Traditions in Aerosol Art." The American Name Society, Baruch College, C.U.N.Y., December 15.
- 1990 "Afro-Cuban Sacred Arts in New York." Yale University Law School Student Conference, April 15.

### Radio Programs

- 2011 Rainforest culture: Interviewed on Greenpeace Radio program, October 3, 2011, broadcast on Pacifica Radio Network and podcast on [www.GreenpeaceRadio.org](http://www.GreenpeaceRadio.org) and iTunes. 40 minutes.
- 2010 "Eyenison Kama." Cross River Broadcasting Corp. 33 programs – 30 minutes each - on the history of Cuban Abakua music. With M.C. Ene Ita of Calabar, Nigeria. <http://cubacalabarradio.podbean.com/>
- 2007 "Voice of the Leopard: Ivor Miller talks to Ned Sublette." Afropop Worldwide 60 minute program. <http://www.afropop.org/multi/interview/ID/116>

### Video & DVD

- 2008 The Musée Quai Branly, Paris, video-documentation of Nigerian Ékpè and Cuban Abakuá troupes performing on stage. Approximately 90 minutes.
- 1993 Co-producer, *Dance on the Wind*, a 28-minute color video on West African and African-American dance history. Winner of the 1992 Connecticut Film competition. Judge's Special Merit Award, 1993 New England Film Competition. Dist. by Cinema Guild, Inc.

### Photography

- 2010 Scores of street paintings in New York City (1986-1990). In R. Gastman & C. Neelon, *The History of American Graffiti*. HarperCollins.
- 2000 Santería altars by Juan Boza in New York City. In *Diaspora and Visual Culture*. Nicholas Mirzoeff, Ed. London: Routledge. pp. 128-30.
- 1993 Three Cuban Lukumí Altars. In Robert Farris Thompson, *Face of the Gods: Art and Altars of Africa and the African Americas*. New York: Museum for African Art.

**Translations**

2001 Translator for "Ethnographic Atlas of Cuba: Traditional Popular Culture." Havana: Centro de investigación y desarrollo de la cultura cubana "Juan Marinello." CD-ROM.

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**Languages**

Spanish, writing and speaking: Fluent

Èfik, reading and speaking: Beginner

Abakuá, Lukumí, and Kongo, ritual Diaspora languages: working knowledge of writing and speaking.

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**Travels**

I have traveled extensively through Africa, the Americas, southeast Asia and Europe.

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**References**

Upon request