In 1929, the Cuban criminologist Israel Castellanos published La delincuencia femenina en Cuba. Relying heavily on statistics gathered from a number of penal establishments between 1909 and 1927, Castellanos presented a series of analyses of female criminality: the frequency, type of crime, regional concentration, correlation with race, marital status, age, and national origin all fell under the study’s broad scope. By all measures this was a complex, labor intensive text to assemble. It included three volumes, hundreds of pages of statistics, charts and graphs, discussions of major criminological theories, and an engagement with previous statistical analyses of Cuban criminality. Perhaps most arresting are 400 pages of mug shots, front and side, of women convicted and serving their sentences in the Carcel de la Habana.1 La delincuencia femenina en Cuba received one of the greatest honors for criminologists of his day: As the recipient of the Lombroso Prize for the best work in

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Criminal Anthropology sponsored by the Italian *Archivio di Antropologia Criminale, Psychiatria e Medicina Legale*, Castellanos was the first author in the Americas to be so rewarded.²

This text raises many questions: why the interest in female criminals at that moment? The prolific Castellanos had already produced several studies of Cuban criminals, but he had not seemed particularly interested in women. Moreover, through Fernando Ortiz’s invention of the negro brujo in 1906, criminology in Cuba had come of age rendering masculine a criminal type (the witch) very often deemed female.³ As in other Latin American criminologies, women had not traditionally received much attention.⁴ This new fascination demands some explanation. In addition, beyond heralding the emergence of the ‘female criminal’, the text itself allows for an exploration of how this social science, increasingly influential in Cuban state-making, constructed gender and delinquency. But these volumes, unusual for their relentless display of technologies of measuring and recording, also call attention to the very nature of the production of knowledge in a society in avid pursuit of modernity. The unprecedented and somewhat staggering multitude of statistics and

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photographs combined lend it a somewhat baffling character. A more interesting question emerges: how did the contemplation of female criminals change the production of criminological knowledge?

Historians of Latin America interested in exploring the relationship among state formation, the production of knowledge, and social control have recently focused their interests in studies of criminality and criminology. They have demonstrated the ambiguity of criminological discourse that both inflects and is inflected by the society and criminals it purports to describe. Many have observed that criminological discourses are both analytical and normative, both cobbling together insights together from hereditary and environmental theories as they seek to explain criminality and offering prescriptions for the prevention of crime and treatment of criminals.5

The introduction of gender into the study of criminology has yielded insights into the construction of masculinities, femininities and sexuality. When historians have looked in particular at criminology’s constructions of female criminals, they have examined the ways social science defined women, using gendered assumptions about their sexuality, responsibility for crime, natural virtue, and capacity for redemption.6 In many cases these


discourses, though they may borrow from distinct traditions and incorporate potentially contradictory assumptions, appear to be in full control of their objects of study, to reveal their intentions quite transparently, and to execute those intentions quite directly. My aim here is not to overturn these interpretations of criminology as much as to provide a counter-example and reflect on this specific instance of the collision between gender and social science. Following the lead of historians who have used close readings of texts to excavate coexisting understandings of criminality, this paper will examine the text and context of *La delincuencia femenina en Cuba*. It examines the ways in which social science and criminology were a conglomeration of several ways of seeing and knowing, and argues that in this particular instance the introduction of gender and the tools with which Castellanos represented it resulted in a text that undermines itself.

**POLITICS AND SUFFRAGETTES**

During the early 1920’s Cuba witnessed a period of increasing popular inclusion and participation. In the immediate aftermath of WWI, elevated sugar prices initiated the ‘dance of the millions’ a period of unparalleled prosperity and heightened expectations. The dance was short-lived, however, as a crash in sugar prices in 1921 reminded Cubans of the fragility and danger of depending on sugar. The economic crisis gave rise to a political crisis, and by 1923 a growing number of oppositional groups began to express their discontent over continued dependence on the US and rampant corruption. Student groups, veteran groups


Buffington, R. *Criminal and Citizen in Modern Mexico*, (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2000), Ch. 3.
and intellectuals articulated demands for nationalist reform. Gerardo Machado was elected in 1924 riding this wave of nationalist fervor and promising to relieve Cuba’s dependence on the US and to alleviate economic and social troubles.\(^8\)

This was the context into which women’s groups entered public debate. Women’s organizations had become more visible with the founding, in 1917, of the Club Femenino de Cuba, whose interests were mostly reformist and somewhat paternalistic. During the next decade women’s organizations became more visible as they held National Women’s Congresses in 1923 and 1925 and initiated a series of projects and campaigns. Not surprisingly, women’s groups were divided on several issues. For some, a reformist impulse informed their calls for ‘moral campaigns’ such as the restriction of prostitution. The most radical of these called for legal and institutional reform including the creation of women’s prisons and juvenile courts. Others, whom K. Lynn Stoner has identified as more conservative, were more interested in beautification of the city and contributing to charitable organizations. Their most violent disagreement was over the status of illegitimate children, as each group deemed its resolution crucial to proper definitions of femininity and motherhood. Despite their ideological and cultural differences, one of the few issues upon which they agreed during the First Congress of 1923 was the adoption of female suffrage.\(^9\) Gaining access to the vote and to electoral politics became by this time a central demand of most women’s groups.

The campaign for female suffrage received a boost from political contingencies. Machado had been elected by appealing to many constituencies even as he sought to repress others, such as labor. Once in office he sought out traditionally marginalized groups and created new bases of mass support to counteract his alienation of organized labor. In 1925, during the Second National Women’s Congress, he declared his support for female suffrage, promising that women would receive the vote during a second term, if he stayed on.\(^9\)

Two years later, Machado convoked a constitutional assembly in order to extend his term and allow him to seek re-election. Critics, dismayed at what they perceived as a rapid transformation from liberal nationalist to autocratic dictator, raised vociferous protests. Machado, in turn, responded by both terrorizing opponents and insisting on his commitment to democracy: According to Stoner, “women’s suffrage was touted as evidence that Machado would hold elections in 1934 in which all Cubans could participate.”\(^10\) Thus as Machado drew it into controversies about his own autocratic tendencies, the issue of women’s suffrage came to occupy a central place in political debate.

At the same time, women had become more publicly visible during this period as a result of a heightened campaign against prostitution. Prostitution in Cuba was not illegal during this period, but women engaged in the marketing of sex could be convicted for ‘escándalo público’ or ‘corrupción de menores’, if their activities were deemed too publicly disruptive or involved girls under 18. The enforcement of these laws probably depended on the

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\(^9\) K. Lynn Stoner, From the House to the Streets: The Cuban Woman’s Movement for Legal Reform, 1898-1940 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), Ch. 3

\(^10\) Stoner, From the House to the Streets, pp. 65-70. Machado also appealed to Cubans of color during this period, promoting many to prominent positions in his administration and receiving praise from many Sociedades de Color. See De la Fuente, A Nation for All, and Alejandra Bronfman, “Reforming Race in Cuba, 1902-1940”, Ph.D. diss, Princeton University, 2000.

\(^11\) Stoner, From the House to the Streets, p. 72.
complex dynamic between national and municipal regulations, and between the immediate interests of the departments of *Sanidad* and *Beneficencia*, to whom the problem of prostitution had been relegated, and the practices of local police. According to Castellanos, after years of inaction police chief R Zayas Bazán had initiated a campaign against prostitution, using the regulations against *escándalo público*, *ofensas a la moral* and *ofensas al pudor*, between 1925 and 1927. Through electoral politics and policing, women had become objects and subjects of contention in the early 1920's.\(^{12}\)

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**SOCIAL SCIENCE AND THE STATE**

As part of his program to buttress nationalist sentiment and accelerate modernization, Machado supported and encouraged scientific and social scientific activity. In a speech delineating his ambitions for Cuba, the production of knowledge occupied a prominent role: “We must stimulate literary and scientific production . . . since we have received so much knowledge from the rest of the world, we must participate and reciprocate with our own contributions.”\(^{13}\) More specifically, he looked to those social scientific endeavors which had practical application and could be put to use as part of a particular modernizing project.

Eugenics, for example, received a great deal of attention in Machado’s regime. An official decree in 1924 announced the creation of a *Comisión Sanitaria de Congresos Nacionales e Internacionales* whose task it would be to control scientific gatherings, all to be held in Havana.

\(^{12}\) Rafael Roche Monteagudo, *La policía y sus misterios en Cuba*, (Havana: La Moderna Poesía, 1925), p. 589; Castellanos, *La delincuencia femenina en Cuba*, V. 2, p. 83. My assessment of prostitution regulations and their enforcement is speculative and tentative. This subject requires further study.

in the next few years. These included the Primera Conferencia Panamericana de Eugenesia y Homicultura, the Sexta Conferencia Panamericana de Higiene, and the Cuarto Congreso Internacional de Eugenesia.\textsuperscript{14} Through these conferences Cuban eugenics attained a visible national and international profile. It had become by this time what Nancy Stepan has termed ‘negative’ eugenics, rooted in Mendelian genetics, and more interested in preventing miscegenation and ‘purifying’ races than in engineering social environments to promote a healthier or more ‘acceptable’ populace. Although in the end some of the more radical proposals such as sterilization campaigns enjoyed differential success, others, such as immigration restrictions, dovetailed with the ambitions of several groups, including nationalists and some labor groups, and came to fruition.\textsuperscript{15} In any event, interest in eugenics, hygiene and other forms of social engineering experienced a peak during Machado’s regime.

By contrast, the newly founded Sociedad de Folklore Cubano, created in 1923, floundered for several years due to lack of funding, and ultimately closed down. In keeping with the animating impetus of many folklore societies in that period it proposed to study and unearth cultural roots in order to provide a solid foundation upon which to build nationalist pride and sentiment.\textsuperscript{16} Although the Sociedad completed a number of studies and created a


quarterly journal, the study of folklore was, compared to eugenics, a more passive participant of national regeneration. With its fixation on the past and its lack of aggressive visions for reform, it suffered from lack of official attention and funding.  

Of the social sciences, criminology enjoyed the most support from Machado’s administration. Certainly part of the reason for this interest was criminology’s utility in controlling and repressing political opponents. But criminology also met Machado’s ambitions to propel Cuba into the community of modern nations. Criminology was one of the social sciences most engaged in developing new technologies and updating its theoretical foundations. The restoration of the *Presidio Modelo*, built on the Isle of Pines, and modeled after the Benthamite plan famously interpreted by Michel Foucault, evinced Machado’s aims in both arenas. As part of this project he asked Fernando Ortiz, Cuba’s most prominent criminologist of the day, to write a proposal to replace the penal code, in use since the colonial era, with a new one that incorporated all the newest scientific theories. Ortiz complied and created a proposal informed by the assumptions of Italian criminology and its recent shift of focus onto the criminal rather than the crime. It was only through thorough study and analysis of the person and their propensity to commit crime, Ortiz argued, whether that stemmed from biological or environmental factors, that the repression of crime could become a properly rational, scientific endeavor. Beyond this theoretical innovation, Ortiz’s proposal laid out plans for the creation of new institutions in which these practices would take place. Ortiz envisioned a centralized *Junta Nacional de Prevención y Represión de la*  

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18 Jorge Domínguez, “Seeking Permission to Build a Nation: Cuban Nationalism and US Response Under the First Machado Presidency”; Gerardo Machado y Morales, *Ocho Años de Lucha* (Miami: Ediciones Históricas Cubanas, 1982); Foreign Policy Association,
Delincuencia, staffed by government officials and experts, whose role it would be to direct not just the repression of crime, but also the acquisition of knowledge. Since the criminal was at the center of cutting-edge criminological theory, it would be necessary to study him or her carefully. A significant aspect of the proposal involved the collection and systematization of data, including statistics, measurements, and ‘psychological data.

If Ortiz was the first to suggest these reforms in the penal system, his friend and colleague Israel Castellanos would become fully involved in their implementation, as director of the evolving penal apparatus and devoted student of the delinquent body.

A CAREER IN CRIME

Israel Castellanos would eventually become the most powerful criminologist working in Cuba. In 1921 he was appointed director of the National Bureau of Identification, an institution established in 1909 for the purpose of identifying criminals. By 1928 he was also director of the Laboratory of Penitentiary Anthropology, a laboratory created as part of Machado’s project of penal reform and intended to gather, record and analyze anthropological data from inmates. He would remain at this post, weathering the upheaval of the 1930’s (not without twice resigning after facing considerable opposition) until the end of 1958, when he was forced to flee the country as nationalist revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro brought Fulgencio Batista’s regime to an end. He clearly supported and was supported by both Machado and Batista, for it was only when their power was imperiled that his faltered as well. He must have been deeply implicated in the attempts to control and


19 “Ponencia a la Comisión Certificadora” Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, Colección Manuscrita Ortiz, Carpeta 356, Proyectos de leyes.
repress persons deemed criminal or delinquent during these periods. His precise role and influence are difficult to gauge due to the difficulty of finding police or penitentiary records for this period. His prolific writings, however, demonstrate his lasting interest in the biological and measurable sources of criminality.  

A self-described auto-didact, he had been so taken with Lombroso’s theories after hearing a lecture on them at age 17 that he had decided to dedicate his life to the study of positivist criminology. After a period during which he accumulated and absorbed the works of Ferri, Garofalo and of course Lombroso, he embarked on a series of empirical studies, somehow obtaining permission to work in jails, insane asylums and juvenile correctional centers where, by his account he managed to “weigh jaws, measure heads, collect photographs, study tattoos, take fingerprints and investigate every aspect of the human body.”  

His interest in criminal anthropology became a fascination with the possibility of using technology to thoroughly render and represent human bodies. The organizing principle of his long and variable career was an ambition, through statistics, measurements, fingerprints, and blood analyses, to map the Cuban body. Any piece of a body could be plumbed for the truths it might reveal. His efforts to create a system of racial classification, for instance, led him to the study of hair. Mestizaje had produced such a range of skin colors, he argued, that it had become difficult to read race (which he understood in biologically determinist terms) using only that criteria. A study of hair, however, would produce the kind of certainty he sought. This became the impetus for the strange but

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thorough *El pelo en los Cubanos* (1933) which includes hundreds of pages on hair classification, including diagrams, charts, and graphs.

This and other publications were well received by the Cuban, European, and Latin American scientific establishments. He was a member of scientific associations in Madrid, Paris, Vienna, Mexico, Lima and Rosario, Argentina, and he published in Spanish and Italian criminological journals. In Cuba, he became director of the journal *Vida Nueva*, to which he contributed articles on race, criminality and degeneration, including “Los músculos faciales y la fisonomía de un delincuente” (1916), “Brujería, locura y necrolatría” (1916), and “Los estigmas somáticos de la degeneración en las razas de color” (1927). Several of his book-length publications, including *La brujería y ñañiguismo en Cuba* (1916), *La talla de los delincuentes en Cuba* (1926), *El peso corporal en los delincuentes de Cuba* (1927) and *El pelo en los cubanos* (1933), received prizes from the Cuban Academy of Medical, Physical and Natural Sciences.  

Political and professional conditions, then, proved auspicious for the study of female delinquency. The simultaneous campaigns for women’s suffrage and against prostitution lent an air of relevance to Castellanos’ investigation. The state’s efforts to modernize the penal establishment afforded him a distinct set of tools with which to proceed.

**THE NUMBERS**

*La delincuencia femenina en Cuba* expresses much more interest in displaying the power of statistics and photography than it does in issuing prescriptions for repression or reform. Ironically, these technologies ultimately work against one another in the text and call into

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22 Galera, *Ciencia y Delincuencia*; Letters from Castellanos to August Vollmer, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, Collection August Vollmer, Box 7.
question the notion of objectivity, casting doubt on the possibility of knowing the women and bodies they scrutinize. Castellanos did not open his three volume study of female delinquency with a discussion, or even a mention, of female delinquency. He did not invoke terrible crimes, bemoan a recent rise in evidence of criminality, or even note the absence of criminality with an invocation of female virtue. Rather he filled the first volume with a torrent of data on female bodies, mapping, in his words: “their morphology, normal physiology and delinquent activity.”

The second volume opens with an epistemological reflection on the history of statistics in Cuba, asking on the first page “when did the quantification of things, persons and events concerning Cuba begin?” The answer to this question is a narrative of haphazard, uneven information gathering. Castellanos lamented the lack of a systematic approach to counting and classifying that has characterized Cuba in both the colonial and the national periods. Without proper counting and codification, he argued, there can be no understanding of criminality.

What then, do Castellanos’ numbers reveal about female delinquency? According to all available data Cuban women demonstrated very low delinquency rates when compared to both Cuban men and to women in other parts of the world. Castellanos included a number of ways to calculate female delinquency. He cited numbers asserting that between 1909 and 1913 for every 5,000 inhabitants, fewer than 1% of women were sentenced. Of all the people

23 Castellanos, *La delincuencia femenina*, Vol. 3, p. 5. This volume is unavailable in the United States. Although this analysis is of course incomplete, it is possible nonetheless to use the second and third volumes to make an argument about the nature of the tools Castellanos uses and their implications with regards to the production of social scientific knowledge.  
25 For a history of the developing relationship between statistics and statecraft, see Silvana Patriarca, *Numbers and Nationhood: Writing Statistics in Nineteenth-Century Italy*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Castellanos’ approach stands in contrast to Ortiz, who used anecdotal evidence, the citation of authoritative texts, and comparative ethnology to support his claims.
convicted for assorted crimes in the years 1914 and 1915, women made up 1.78% of those
sentenced in Audiencias, and 3.78 and 3.47% of those sentenced in Correcionales. Compared to
Uruguay and Chile, Cuban women had much lower rates of criminality.26 By all accounts
Cuban women retained their position as virtuous, or at least not criminal. His position at the
head of the penal establishment and the efficacy of his methods rendered him the obvious
person to announce this to the world:

this is why, when we began our work at the head of the Central Laboratory
of Penitentiary Anthropology….we decided to dedicate our first work to
female delinquency in Cuba, to prove, with all the resources of positivist and
experimental science, that Cuban women are rarely delinquent, and that they
commit crimes with greater rarity than in any other part of the planet.27

Briefly extending his domain to the political debates of the day he suggested that such
numbers provided a justification for female suffrage. Citing and clearly supporting another
social scientist who believed that low levels of criminality justified granting women the vote,
he articulated what could almost be called a feminist viewpoint: “quizas ahi estuviera el
remedio de muchos de nuestros males.”28

But this incursion into politics, surprising as it is in its use of criminological discourse
to advocate the extension of suffrage, is a muted aspect of the text. Nor was Castellanos
particularly interested in pondering an explanation for these remarkable numbers. While he
did assert that low levels of female criminality demonstrated women’s well developed moral
capacity and their ‘immunity to the criminal virus that…attacks and germinates even amongst

26 Castellanos, La delincuencia femenina, Vol 2, pp. 24-27, 96.
28 He cites Cristobal de la Guardia 1914-1915 on criminality:
p.26 “la mujer cubana de todas las razas, lo mismo en las salas de las Audiencias que en los
patios de las cortes correcionales, se condenaron 288 mujeres, que venian a ser el 3.47% del
total de condenados. Esto habla muy alto en favor de la mujer cubana y nos hace
reafirmarnos mas en nuestra creencia de que tienen derecho a intervenir con sus votos en
nuestras luchas politicas. Quizas si ahi estuviera el remedio de muchos de nuestros males.”
the most refined social classes”, he backed away from elaborating an extended theory. After briefly invoking the theories of Lombroso (women are inferior physically), Tarde (women are superior morally) and Colajanni (economic and social conditions are most important), he dropped the discussion and returned to his “resources of positivist and experimental science”. What was needed, he argued, were more and better statistics.

In great detail he described the nature and utility of his sources, the *ficha dactiloscópica*, the *prontuario u hoja histórico penal*, and the *ficha inquisitiva*.29 The ficha dactiloscópica recorded all inmates’ fingerprints. The hoja histórico penal was a sheet filed with very specific biographic and physical data, including race, civil status, age, profession, ‘instrucción’, ‘anthropological data’ including descriptions of hair, nose, ears, ‘complexion’, and tattoos. This sheet also listed all previous infractions. Finally the ficha inquisitiva included a photograph and some of the same data as the hoja historico penal. Castellanos proudly argued that his was the most thorough collection of data in the Spanish speaking world. “We believe also that this is the first work of its kind published in Spanish America, and that none of the other works of this kind, either in Europe or the Americas has used such complete data or used better techniques for gathering exact numbers and attaining the most realistic reproduction of female delinquency in a country.”30

Despite his enthusiasm for his statistics and data gathering enterprises, the more deeply he probed the possibilities of recording female criminality, the more doubts about his methods came to plague the text. Castellanos encouraged the production of comparative data from other parts of Latin America because of the importance of what he called ‘anthropological, physical and social factors’ shared by those nations. The question of race

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and its relationship to criminality, he argued, was unique to the Americas (and something from which Europe was happily exempt) and ought to be studied in comparative context. But race proved elusive.

In other works, such as *La brujería y ñañiguismo en Cuba* and many articles, Castellanos had demonstrated his conviction of the connection between race and criminality. Here he introduced his arguments about the ‘scientific truth’ of mestizaje. Resisting what he deemed North American racial puritanical tendencies which tended to hide scientific truths by denying mestizaje and relying on a binary racial system, he insisted on including the mestiza in his racial categorizations. Moreover, the mestiza was important to his scheme because she had the highest rate of criminality: Cuban mulatas, he argued, were the ‘sacerdotisa del amor criollo’ and so displayed the highest rates of crimes related to sexuality. Yet attempts to classify women’s bodies rendered his theories contradictory. He argued for instance, not only that mulatas had the highest rates of criminality, but that criminality increased in proportion to skin color. Both of these could not be true at the same time. He solved this (or made a greater mess) by arguing that the Cuban ‘race of color’ was actually moral, but that foreign blacks were not. In the end racial determinism broke down in the face of gender stereotypes (the sexualized mulatta) and national chauvinism.  

Ultimately, the confrontation with women’s bodies led to an acknowledgment of the limits of statistics and statistical method. Although mestizaje was a scientific truth, he argued, people weren’t properly trained in identification, and women who were marked as *mulata* showed up as *negra* in subsequent files, or women marked as *blanca* showed up later as *mulata*. The hojas, he had to admit, weren’t always reliable with regards to race.

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Putting race aside and turning to female bodily functions, he again acknowledged that statistics and hojas had proved particularly limited. If pregnancy, menstruation, and menopause might explain incidences of criminality, then the statistics were inadequate as they didn’t reflect those conditions. Castellanos’ faith in numbers and their capacity to fix and demonstrate so many truths faltered with his admission of their failure to capture the entirety of female bodies. The second volume ends on an ambiguous note. Statistics could demonstrate incontrovertible evidence of Cuban women’s aversion to delinquency. But they could not provide a reason for this phenomenon, nor totally encompass that which they purported to count.

THE PICTURES

The final volume of _La delincuencia femenina en Cuba_ was dedicated to photography, another technology about which Castellanos expressed a great deal of enthusiasm. Yet his use of this technology would significantly undermine his thesis. If statistics fell short of offering explanation or wholly representing women’s bodies, the photographs contradict the claim that Cuban women were immune to crime.

The publication of 400 photographs of female criminals is remarkable for a Cuban criminological text of this era. Other books of this type in circulation, including _La policía y sus misterios en Cuba_ and _Negros Brujos_ (reissued in 1917), included photos, but in far fewer numbers, and very few of women. In fact, apart from passing references, women are quite absent from both texts. The sheer number of photographs raises the question of their role in this text and of their relationship to Castellanos’ claims. Susan Sontag argues that when photos are placed in the service of science, the intention is to both create an illusion of objectivity, and an illusion of possession. Photos, she argues, make objects that don’t
necessarily lend themselves to control suddenly collectable and therefore more controllable. Indeed, this is a relevant reading for these photographs. Yet I would suggest that this reading does not exhaust the meaning of the images in this book. Roland Barthes observations about photographs raise two intriguing points. First, he argues that “whatever the origin and the destination of the message, the photograph is not simply a product or a channel but also an object endowed with a structural autonomy.” That is, despite what ‘social science’ may assert, the photos might or might not convey the same message. If La delincuencia femenina en Cuba asserts the striking absence of female criminality, the photographs take on a life of their own and suggest otherwise. The women look murderous, or guilty, or dishonest. Look for example at Evelia Ampudia Rodriguez, sentenced for disobedience, or Gregoria Faure, sentenced, in 1922, for homicide. Evelia looks down her nose, unflinchingly, at the photographer, with an air of defiance, while Gregoria glowers at the camera. Others, like Cesarea Allende Fuentes, from Spain, sentenced for robbery, look very contrite.

But many of the photos are more difficult to read. Margarita Pérez, for instance, looks out at her audience with a placid half-smile in the frontal photograph, and modestly lowers her eyes in profile. Her hair is neatly braided, and her clothes and jewelry suggest a certain level of prosperity and concern for her appearance. Ramona Mercado Castillo looks pensive, if not lugubrious. Her glasses and upswept hair create a prim, schoolmarmish image, and her clothes are similarly proper. She may look somewhat forbidding, but she does not look ‘delinquent.’ Finally, María Coureaux’s wistfully tilting head and serious, tired gaze

suggest a soulful, almost moral character. Again, the ruffled clothes and fastidiously neat hair speak of bourgeois gentility rather than a propensity to violence.

Here, Barthes’ observations about captions are instructive. Captions, he argues, reverse the relationship between text and image. While usually the photo illustrates the text, in the case of the caption, the text offers an explanation of the photo. Thus it is through the captions that we learn that Margarita has frequently been at the center of public scandal (and is probably involved in prostitution), that Ramona has been convicted of perjury, and María of parricide. Furthermore, we also learn that Margarita has tattoos, which Lombroso associated with tendencies to criminality. In the case of María, specific details connote a less than genteel existence. The initials s.o.a (sin otro apellido) immediately after her name suggest that she is illegitimate. These initials were used in Cuba in two distinct situations, either after the name of a slave or former slave who had been given only one last name, that of his owner, or to denote illegitimacy. Either way s.o.a carried with it the taint of impropriety. Her physical description betrays another potential source of criminality. The term ‘prognatismo’ was very often used by Lombrosian criminologists to describe an prominent jaw, which in their view signaled an atavistic physical type, prone to criminality. Since this was most often used to describe people of African descent, its use in this instance is particularly telling. These details allow for a very different ‘reading’ of María than the photograph on its own. The caption not only offers information about her unhappy social status, it also hints that her biological heritage is partly African, and therefore inherently criminal. As Barthes observes, “the text loads the image, burdening it with a culture, a moral, an imagination…” Added to these innocuous or at most ambiguous images, the text

created a system of connotation, constructing the language, both visual and linguistic, by which the female criminal could come to be spoken, and if not understood, at least recognized.\textsuperscript{35}

Thus the photographs and their captions suggest both that it is possible to ‘see’ criminality, and that it is very easy to hide it. In contrast to the statistics, which claim that female criminality scarcely exists in Cuba, these photographs imply that it is everywhere. But \textit{La delincuencia femenina en Cuba} is neither, in the end, a totalizing discourse about Virtuous Woman or Immoral Woman. It is rather a contradictory text that celebrates, through statistics, female virtue even as it creates a gallery, in black and white, of female vice. Swept up in his fascination with the tools of the trade, Castellanos sought to represent female delinquency in as many ways as were available. But the tools themselves betrayed the author, for Castellanos put together a text that cannot offer a coherent construction of ‘female delinquency.’ Instead, the examination of female criminals underscored the inadequacy of criminological categories and their inability to explain or contain contradictions. In this meeting between gender and social science, the bodies wrought disorder in the discipline.