

Preface

IN THE spring of 1993 I was on my way to Cuba with Nereida García-Ferraz, a friend with whom I had made the journey many times. Changes in both Cuban and U.S. policies sometimes facilitated a return to the island, and at other times made it impossible. It was the latter case that spring. We had been promised a reentry permit to the island by a Cuban functionary who had since lost her job in a political purge. Nonetheless, we headed to Miami, hoping that the permit would arrive anyway. (This was not the first time that we waited in Miami until the very last day to learn whether our trip would be allowed.) Once in Miami, it became clear that we would not be able to travel to the island. We suddenly had two unplanned weeks in the city we considered enemy territory, for it was here in Miami that our lives were threatened when we had returned to the island earlier.

Miami had just been a point of transfer for us, a place in which we feared spending time because of terrorist acts against those who traveled to Cuba, but now the city was changing. We found many of our friends from the island living there. The coming of our contemporaries from Cuba to Miami necessarily forced us to reconceptualize both the nation and exile. Meanwhile, we were witnessing the coming of age of the second generation of Cuban exiles already living in Miami, who had a sense of entitlement about making their voices heard there. We found ourselves in the curious position of knowing both the world of recent arrivals and

the world of those who were raised in the United States. Although we had been in some ways outsiders to both worlds, we were part of both. Miami became the place where we could actually talk and rethink our relationship to the island, the exile community, and ourselves.

What we found initially was common ground, converging visions that crossed the Straits of Florida in both directions. Certain events marked our journey; there were common points of reference, particularly moments of illusion and disillusion. There were differences as well, a broken conga line, discontinuity. A project of national reconciliation needed to be based on an understanding of our differences, not just our commonalities. Throughout these various times, the women seemed able to talk more openly than the men about the ambiguities and the changes that were occurring in our lives. We did not feel a need to defend old political positions, nor deny them, for that matter. Rather, we needed to explore the ambiguous zones, to disagree, to look at our histories and ourselves in ways that helped us to understand how we could continue to engage with the people and places we loved so deeply without losing ourselves in the process. We did not pretend to make statements for anyone; we were just trying to find our moorings.

It had been women from many different perspectives, after all, who had played important roles in forging a paradigm of politics and identity that was inclusive of both home and host countries, mindful of multiple points of reference. Surely, men have been involved,¹ but women have been most critical to the endeavor and have seldom been recognized publicly. Lourdes Casal, a poet and sociologist who reconciled her exile by returning to and dying in Cuba, made the most dangerous and difficult journey, the first return to the island. She built a bridge that has allowed all of us to return.

María Cristina Herrera, founder and director of the Instituto de Estudios Cubanos, was instrumental in promoting a dialog with the Cuban government. Marifeli Pérez-Stable, a founder of

the Antonio Maceo Brigade and *Areíto*, forged a vision of unity. Mariana Gastón, Miren Uriarte, Ana María García, Vivian Otero, Dagmaris Cabezas, and Rosario Moreno sought links through the Antonio Maceo Brigade. Alicia Torres for years headed a committee that lobbied for normal diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba. In Spain, Anabel Rodríguez had done the same. Hilda Diez helped run a travel agency that chartered flights to the island, Silvia Wilhelm continues to work with Puentes a Cuba, and Elly Vilano Chovel opened the past for Operation Pedro Pan children and extended a hand, through the Catholic Church, to those who were still on the island.

Within the academic and cultural worlds, Ruth Behar, Eliana Rivera, Sonia Rivera, Iraida López, and Cristina Nosti all worked on various projects aimed at building bridges, oftentimes at great personal sacrifice, as has been the case of María Romeu, who promoted island music before the Buena Vista Social Club phenomenon and was red-baited from her job at MTV Latino. Then there were the visual artists, such as Ana Mendieta, whose earth sculptures, slowly weathering into the caves of Jaruco and Varadero, testified to her return, and Mercedes Wanguemert, whose paintings and installations explore her obsession, as well as ours, with the island. Playwrights such as María Irene Fornés and Dolores Prida wrote about the intimate sides of exile, nation, and identity. Carmelita Tropicana returns to the island to recapture her lost memory in her play, "Milk of Amnesia." Most recently, Carmen Peláez, a young Cuban born in Miami who defines herself as an exile, has provided intimate glimpses into women's experiences with the revolution and its aftermath in her one-woman performance, "Rum and Coke." Women writers such as Achy Obejas and Cristina García have returned as well. In *Dreaming in Cuban*, García's main character, Pilar, returns to the island, and Celia, her grandmother, who has stayed behind, gives her the task of remembering for the nation. Pilar is an active exile, engaged with the island, not one drowning in nostalgia. In Obejas' novel *Days of Awe*, the very essence of Cuban culture is reexamined through the lens

of the Jewish diaspora, thus widening and deepening the sense of cultural heterogeneity on the island and in the exile community.

This anthology has come to life with the support of many. Most importantly, the students in my class on *Diasporas: The Politics of Gender and Identity*, have renewed my enthusiasm to combine teaching and research with compassion and theoretical exigencies. Claudia Gomez, Stephanie Hoehne, and Ashley Gegg helped with research and preparation of the manuscript.

Doris Braendel had faith in the project, and the staff at Temple University Press followed through. Charlotte Sheedy and Neeti Madan encouraged and supported its publication. Patricia Boero and Woody Wickham, formerly of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, made the initial grant to support the project. Bill Díaz, formerly at the Ford Foundation, facilitated the actual grant made by Rebecca Nichols. Lisandro Pérez and Uva de Aragón hosted our first public encounter at the Cuban Research Institutes' conference in Miami. Quizqueya Enríquez and Consueló Castañeda provided many insights. Achy Obejas read and made important editorial comments on the manuscript. Lisa Milam-Pérez and Eliana Rivera made invaluable comments as well. Translation from Spanish to English was done by David Frey and from English to Spanish by Eduardo Aparicio. Without their talent to build a linguistic bridge, this anthology could not exist. Raquelin Mendieta gave permission to use her sister's artwork on the cover of the paperback edition and supported the project in a very important way.

To Matt Piers, my husband, and Alejandra and Paola Piers-Torres, thank you for your love.

To the authors who have so generously and unselfishly shared their memories and opened their/our hearts, I give my thanks for their trust. Someone asked how the writers to this volume were chosen. At first there was a conscious effort to have representative writers from the island and from the exile community, but these lines were constantly blurring as writers whom I had asked to contribute started leaving the island. There was also an attempt to present a chronology of the exile community by having people

who left at different times. Most importantly, though, were the personal connections that we had with each other through which we were able to defy the restrictions that both governments placed on our getting to know each other.

I place this book in the tradition forged by women seeking political and personal reconciliation, the same tradition forged by so many women on the island and in exile, including our mothers, who refused to sever ties with their relatives or their histories. We know that this book cannot yet be published in Cuba. It's not that women on the island do not strive to shorten the distance between us, but exile is still a forbidden place, and to recognize it or engage with it outside the official channels has been simply impermissible.² It is our deepest desire to be able to return to the island to bring together the authors of these essays, to engage them in the same way we have been able to gather in Miami to discuss gender, identities, and politics of diaspora and nation and to share our personal stories with each other.

Notes

1. Among the publications written by men seeking to understand the Other are Román de la Campa (*Cuba on My Mind: Journeys to a Severed Nation*. New York: Verso Press, 2000), who writes about his journey; Juan Pablo Balaster, María Elena Escalona, and Iván de la Nuez (*La Isla posible*. Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1995). Also see *Encuentro*, edited by Jesús Díaz in Madrid, Spain. There have also been a series of aesthetic projects, such as Eduardo Aparicio's photo exhibit, *Entre Miami y La Habana*.

2. On the island Pablo Armando Fernández has always provided a bridge (*Los niños se despiden*. La Habana: Editorial Casa de las Américas, 1968). Most recently the walls in Cuba have started to come down a bit. *Vigía*, published in Matanzas, was the first publication to publish authors who had left. Ambrosio Fornet has advocated for including voices from exile in publications (*Memorias recobradas*. Santa Clara, Cuba: Ediciones Capro, 2000). Víctor Fowler (*Rupturas y homenajes*. La Habana: UNEAC, 1998), has explored the other side, as has Jorge Luis Arcos (*De los inféros*. La Habana: UNEAC, 1999). Most explicit has been the work of visual artists such as Los Carpinteros, Kcho, and especially Tania Bruguera, whose work is included in this anthology.

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Introduction

María de los Angeles Torres

“BY HEART,” in English, “*de memoria*,” in Spanish: Both suggest memories that can be recalled with ease, as well as those that contain intimate knowledge of past events or people. These essays are written from that intimate place of memory, not from the ease of recollection. The authors were born in Cuba, an island/nation only ninety miles from the United States. Our lives were forever altered by a revolution in 1959 that captured the political imagination of all those who dreamed of a future marked by social justice.

We had been an island nation bounded by a seawall floating between seemingly contradictory coasts, sometimes Europe and the New World, other times North and South America. However, the revolution unfolded in the era of the Cold War, whose geographical concerns insisted on placing an island in the Caribbean at the center of a struggle between East and West, communism and capitalism. This great, global ideological fault line has made it difficult to explore the divisions within our nation, which in our experiences ran much deeper. In this new conflict, our moorings were unhitched, and *el malecón*, the Havana seawall that hugs the central part of the city and is such an intimate part of our national iconography, went from containing a nation to dividing its people. Staying or leaving became a litmus test to prove loyalty and ulti-

mately *cubanía*. For those in exile, the island was forbidden, just as the exile was off limits to those on the island. The Other was erased from official memory, as travel was prohibited by both states, communications were made almost impossible, and exchanges were criminalized. For the island and the exile, collective and personal memories became a militarized zone sharply demarcated and jealously guarded by those bidding for power.

This book brings together the voices and images of women who have met during their unauthorized travels beyond these boundaries. Some of the authors have lived most of their lives on the island, others in exile; some have only recently left the island. Each post-revolution exile generation is represented: the Operation Pedro Pan generation of the 1960s, the Freedom Flights of the 1970s, the Mariel boat lift of the 1980s, and the “low intensity” exiles of the 1990s, thus providing a personal chronology of exile history.¹ Some of the authors have been able to return to the island for long periods; others have been refused reentry by the Cuban government. Those writing from the island witnessed each exodus and each return. They too have spent time abroad exploring the forbidden exile. We have all endured separations from parents, children, family, and friends.

Our encounters with our Others gave us an opportunity to meet and build relations with our counterparts on the island/in exile. We have found among us common ground as well as differences, and we have developed shared points of references. In the process, we learned that we could not make sense of either our past or our present with only militarized conceptions of our identities. We felt constrained by rigid identity schemes, particularly those tied to notions of singular nation-states or implacable political programs. These essays chronicle our travels outside the geographical and ideological confines of nation and exile, boundaries demarcated by two feuding states in the Cold War era. They are also searches for more complex frameworks with which to make sense of identity(ies) that were not exclusively rooted in either host or home countries; in one of two political dogmas, in solely the intellect or the heart.

Perhaps our revolution and its exiles are unique. They are embedded in a long history of external and internal exiles. The Cuban nation, its landscapes, physicality, and spiritual values were imagined from the distant gaze of exile (*la lejanía*), causing certain anxiety about its precise location. The nation is imagined from abroad in the poetry of José María Heredia and Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda.² Félix Varela and José Martí envisioned the modernist nation from the United States. An U.S. invasion interrupted this utopian dream, and thus, the United States acquired a unique place in the island's history, and Cuba and its exiles would come to occupy a central location in the colonial imagination of the Right and the Left. Perhaps it is this relationship, coupled with the dramatic moment in world history in which the Cuban revolution occurred, and the moment of rupture in U.S. society unfolding at the time of our emigration, that make us think of our national destiny and our displacement as exceptional. But our search for nationhood and the consequent displacement of people are not unique. After all, the twentieth century in part is defined by political struggles for independent nation-states that then engendered authoritarian regimes. Nationalism has an essential association with exile.³ Exile, after all, is the antithesis of nation. It creates a strongly knit community based on commonality, whereas exile represents those who are different. Exiles, in turn, also erect tightly woven places with clearly demarcated boundaries.

Cuban nationalism also shares similar gendering processes with other movements, which in turn placed women in a potentially oppositional location. The struggle for independence of modern nation-states was often symbolized through feminine imagery⁴—a woman draped in the national flag unshackling the chains of colonialism. However, these movements gave rise to a modern form of patriarchy in which the state (note that in Spanish it is preceded by a masculine adjective: *el estado*) assumed authority over the nation (family): *la nacion* and *la familia*, both preceded by a feminine adjective.

In its most severe form, these patriarchal states became authoritarian and demanded nothing less than complete loyalty as a

condition for membership. The disloyal were banished and the loyal prohibited from having contact with those who had left. In the case of Cuba, travel within the island as well as to and from the island was restricted and monitored. Cuba became one of the few countries in the world in which its citizens had to ask for permission to return to visit as well as to travel abroad. Although travel in modernity can be construed in many ways,⁵ in this case it became a means to defy the official order. Women, in particular, were the ones to travel to maintain contact with their relatives.

Each journey, in its own way, challenged the foundations of the boundaries, which defined who we are. The essays do not attempt to present a new cartography, but perhaps one more nuanced. Internal and external exiles provoke a particular gaze,⁶ perhaps a more complex understanding of our realities, which provide new ways of thinking even about nations.⁷ Our purpose here, however, is to suggest different ways, not new ways, of defining nations, more layered, definitely more intimate ways of defining/becoming who we may be.

Contesting the Boundaries of Exiles and Nations

Our travels are aquatic, fluid, and thus the volume opens with "The Boat" (*"El Bote"*), a poem written by Achy Obejas, whose family made the journey from Cuba to the United States in a small boat. She writes, "we don't seem to leave the country, you and I, always with an open map, searching the borders and open coasts."

What is the difference between exile and nation? Liz Balmaseda begins her poetic appreciation of Miami by stating, "It is, at its most luminous stretch, a reflection." "Havana, twinkles in Miami." While growing up in the main port of entry for Cuban exiles, the island existed for Liz "only in the most poetic terms." Thus begins the search for a space between memory and reflection where the clearly demarcated political boundaries between exile and nation blur.

If exile is to live in a place where there is no house in which we were children,⁸ nation must be the place where this house still ex-

ists. Why does *home* have to be constructed in one geographical place? Indeed, the homes of our childhood stand erect in our memories and remain intact when we revisit them as adults. Even their sizes as we remember them from childhood remain intact in our memories, although they are in reality much smaller when we re-experience them as adults. Thus nations also live in our memories, not only in politically fractured geographical zones.

I was sent to the United States unaccompanied, at the age of six, through a secret U.S. State Department–coordinated operation named Pedro Pan. In my essay “Where Ghosts Dance *el Guaguancó*,” I write about how my search for home first led me back to the island with the Antonio Maceo Brigade. “The homecomings were intense. We had a sense of mission and community, which bonded our generation in a very special way. . . . We were a political phenomenon, children of the exile returning home.” Over the next few years, I was to experience a deep sense of disillusionment, which paradoxically I shared with my newfound friends on the island. I came to understand that the political culture that drove me away from the exile community also characterized those in power on the island. Still, I did not want to renounce the island, my nation, nor did I want to accept exile on its terms; rather, I needed a place in which I could bring together these seemingly contradictory parts of who I am and who I wanted to be. I found this place outside the state institutions, a place where nations are fluid, where they are sustained by collective and personal recollections. Nations are, after all, our souls. They are where our past and present meet to imagine a future, create new homes.

We typically think of the boundaries of nations almost exclusively in terms of geography.⁹ Exiles are bound by that geography as well, because it becomes a point of reference. Maybe it is easier for those bidding for power to lay claim to a physical territory than to control the other components that constitute nationhood.

Geography is also experienced personally, however. Nereida García-Ferraz’ family made the decision to leave the island in the early 1960s but were not able to depart until 1970. She remembers

the time that preceded her “Freedom Flight”: “I learned to keep my eyes fixed on the landscape: I knew that one fine day I wouldn’t be there anymore, so I enjoyed it all in a very special way, as if to keep it from escaping my memory.” It was the images of her relatives in the 1950s that “helped me rebuild myself, to place pieces of the puzzle, searching always for that bigger image that will help me understand what paths everyone took to get to the places they are today.” The photographs of her relatives helped inform her sense of family geography, for “they bring the consolation of knowing that, at one time, my family had lived whole eras in a single place, had belonged to a place: the island.” By returning, Nereida was able to reconnect with both her family and her landscape.

For many of us displaced from our homeland our greatest desire was to return there to live, but the Cuban government would only permit us to visit. Yet our visits, taking place after nearly twenty years of exile from Cuba, had a tremendous impact on the island nonetheless. *55 Hermanos*, a documentary film about the first group of young exiles permitted to visit the island, caused a sensation in Cuba. The book account, *Contra viento y marea*, won the testimonial literary prize from Casa de las Américas. Both in the exile community and on the island, those of us who traveled back to Cuba represented the antithesis of the official positions. Our travels dispelled the myth of irreconcilable, separate realities. For the exile community, our returns somehow questioned the essence of exile—that is that you cannot return. We were met by an extreme terrorist backlash. For the island, we were living proof that Cubans lived outside the boundaries of the state, thus challenging the state’s authority to de-nationalize those who left. The Cuban government kept close tabs on us.

Our travels provided us with an opportunity to establish a human link with our homeland. Two great poets, Eliseo Diego and Pablo Armando Fernández, opened their homes to *los Brigadistas*. Their daughters, Teresa de Jesús Fernández and Josefina de Diego, became my close friends. For Teresa de Jesús Fernández, the

boundaries between nation and exile were edged in her sense of self, not in geography or ideology. Her passage from childhood into adolescence and the loss of innocence were intricately interwoven with the departure of her best friends into exile. In “From This Side of the Fish Tank” (the glassed-in passenger waiting area at the airport), she remembers, “Some of my most wrenching memories belongs to this stage in my life: the last night we slept under the same roof. This was the beginning of an endless incision.” “Exile,” she explains, “tends to be seen as *des-tierra* (landless); seen this way, it is only those who leave who suffer.” For her, this is an incomplete definition, for it does not include “the Other; the internal exile who is left with the estrangement.” If the departure of her friends edged a painful incision, the return of young exiles marked her passage into adulthood. Teresa was at first ambivalent about the returning youth; after all, we were allowed to criticize the government in a manner that would incur punishment for those on the island. She “discovered that they had a different way of looking at things; more than just seeing them, they imprinted them.” At first she did not understand this process, but when she thought that someday she might be in their place, “I started being more careful about the way I experienced my own city.” She now lives and works in Italy most of the year.

Josefina “Fefé” de Diego’s family had almost left the island in the early 1960s, which marked them forever with the “original sin” of having once thought about leaving. Her curiosity about what could have been her parallel life in the United States drew her to the returning young exiles. In her essay “Through Other Looking Glasses” she reflects on how her family history contributed to her more fluid view of her Other as well as her sense of time itself. Fefé knew well the dynamics of displaced geographical memories. Her grandmother had spent ten years in New York as a child. She had taught English to her son, Eliseo, “because she couldn’t imagine his company without finding that odd underground river of communication that can only be established through the nuances of one’s first language.” For Fefé, lan-

guages both bound and blurred her nation and its boundaries and changed her sense of time. “For me,” she writes, “meeting some of these young people has meant recovering very dear friends, friends who, as my father would say, enlarge time for us.”

For the Cuban public in general, the government’s reversal of its long-standing policy of keeping exiles off the island was traumatic as well. Unlike the U.S. press, which had heralded the successes of the “golden exile,” the Cuban media was mostly silent on the exile community, except for periodic reports of how poor life was for them in the United States. This image was shattered after more than 125,000 exiles returned to the island in 1979 to visit relatives. Regardless of how difficult life was in the United States, the exile community as a whole had more access to consumer goods than did residents of the island. Political and economic discontent began to rise.

In April of 1980, shortly after the Cuban government announced that those wanting to leave could do so through the Peruvian Embassy, thousands of people jammed the compound beyond capacity. Finally, an arrangement was made to transport refugees to the United States through the Cuban port of Mariel. Mariel cut to the core. The island again split wide open as those who stayed were encouraged by the government to organize *Actos de repudio* (Acts of Repudiation) in the homes of those who were leaving. The official boundaries between nation and exile were once again reinforced. Those who left via Mariel became known as *Marielitos*. Ironically, both the Cuban state—and the U.S. media—constructed images coincided to portray *Marielitos* as *la escoria* (the undesirable scum).

Beyond this ideologically driven image were the individuals who became the new exiles. In “La Salida: The Departure,” Mirta Ojito describes how the departure plan unfolded for her family. In retelling her story she asks, What is the essence of one’s identity? Mirta was sixteen at the time that her parents decided to leave via Mariel. Her account of the fourteen days before her departure document the process of shedding all those familiar points of ref-

erence that define who we are and where home resides. Mirta writes, "A home is a hard place to abandon. Where does one end and the home begin? Are treasured possessions just things?" After her family left behind their material belongings they were taken by police car to a makeshift detention center called El Mosquito, which Mirta describes as "the final stop to strip us of our identity and possessions." It was here that people were clustered by different categories and classified according to which boats would take them to the United States. "From then on, our names become unimportant. The Valley Chief had become our new identity."

Carmen Díaz recounts her own Mariel departure in her essay, "The Recurring Dream." As a young girl she believed in the utopian dream of the revolution and thought, "I would have loved, secretly and with such passion, to have joined the guerrillas. I would be a guerrillera." In 1978, Carmen was teaching physics at the University of Havana. Revolutions, after all, should be a continual process of reflection and criticism, and it was in the hard sciences that critical thinking flourished at the time. Soon she realized that the regime would not permit this. Carmen writes, "I left because that world became too narrow for me." But *Marielitos* were met with contempt in the United States. The same authoritarian political culture they had hoped to leave behind was also institutionalized in the exile community, and two feuding states that "play the immigration question like a game of ping pong without paying much attention to how they were tearing people apart were costing me my life." Carmen had left two young daughters behind, thinking that it would only be a matter of months before she could reclaim them. Carmen writes, "Time is irretrievable." She dreamed repeatedly of saying goodbye to her two young daughters and to her hopes of being part of a revolutionary dream.

Young exiles returning home physically crossed paths with a generation that was leaving. We still believed in the utopian vision, whereas they were beginning to view exile as a viable alternative to what had become their lost dream. Yet the more time we

spent in Cuba, the more aware we became of how corrupt the system was. We also met a generation on the island, intellectuals, and artists of the 1980s, and as trust began to build, we shared our disillusionment with these friends. The 1989 Arnaldo Ochoa Sánchez trial and his execution became a defining moment. The increasingly transparent ideological veil that had given a sense of coherence to the revolution project unraveled. We scrambled to make sense of the moment as well as the past. For those on the island, part of this process meant recouping what had been lost, including what was lost in exile. Initially, many tried to do this by engaging in an intellectual and aesthetic contestation of power on the island as we were trying to do through exchange programs, but we soon discovered the limits to this endeavor. Exile soon became a condition that defined not only those outside of the national territory, but also those inside as well. The Ochoa trial left no doubt that claims of democracy and justice were official deceptions. Dreams and illusions dissolved into stark and hopeless reality. Islanders, just as exiles, realized their impotence, for few had access or permission to construct the collective project that now imposed a collective memory and future and a grim one at that.

In “Only Fragments of Memory,” Raquel Mendieta Costa recalls “that if anything defines the way I looked at the world during the first years of the Revolution, it is amazement.” For a young girl, the early 1960s were years of wonderment. Although some of her relatives left for the North, her family stayed. In her essay she weaves fragments of her memories about political and personal events. Throughout, she explores the contradictions in the promises of the revolutionary government and her personal experiences living with the consequences of decision made by those who held the reigns of power. In contrast to the heroic tales of success, which she parallels with her own experiences as a competitive swimmer, she offers a personal account of the failure of the collective project. In offering her version, she in effect questions how history itself is constructed. Raquel’s break with official history took her to exile as ours had taken us back to the island.

In “Words Without Borders,” Madelín Cámara explores her journey in search of a Third Option, neither exile nor the island’s political model. Madelín, a member of what has been called *La Generación de los Ochenta*, the 1980s Generation, left the island in search of philosophical positions not rooted in either side of the geographical/philosophical divide of Miami/Havana in which she could explore a new paradigm.¹⁰ She begins her essay by stating, “The history of an exile does not begin the day we leave the country, but on the day we feel that the country has abandoned us.” Her first departure was to Mexico, a neutral zone that at the time was home to over 4,000 Cuban intellectuals, artists, and writers, but pressure from the Cuban government soon forced her to cross into the United States.

Tania Bruguera, a visual artist, was one of the first on the island to explore the loss felt on the island when people left. Exile as a forced physical separation severs contact with the familiar points of reference that contribute to the creation and sustenance of memory. It also alters the landscape for those who stay behind. To explore the loss of exile was somehow to violate the official stand that the revolution was stronger and purer, without those who left. Very few academics were even permitted to write about the community abroad. The impact of the exodus of the 1990s was dramatic. Thousands of people left on makeshift rafts, and hundreds of intellectuals, artists, musicians, writers, and filmmakers made their way to “third countries.” Tania began her journey to understand exile through the work of Ana Mendieta, an artist who had emigrated to the United States as part of Operation Pedro Pan. She, too, had returned to Cuba to work. After her death, little was said about her work on the island. Tania recreated Ana’s work to recover for the nation its parts, which lived in exile. She continued exploring the sense of loss through a multifaceted project, *Memory of the Postwar Period (Memorias de la posguerra)*, which began as an unofficial publication that dealt openly and honestly with the loss that exile leaves on the island and the longing for those who leave nostalgia in reverse,

some could say. Yet this project was short-lived; the official world censored it.

Ana's work is on the cover of our paperback edition. A cloth washed ashore finds an anchor on a piece of driftwood. Our journeys have made us who we are.

This book, which began in Miami looking toward the island, ends on the island as it gazes toward the exile community through her work. These are our journeys to nations and exiles, forbidden places for each of us yet deeply etched in our beings. Exiles and nations, after all, are constructions intimately woven into memories, recollections, and dreams. As all human constructions, they can be bound and unbound and even reconfigured through an ongoing process of reflection, confrontation, and creation.

Notes

1. The post-revolutionary Cuban exodus was commonly classified by different waves defined by mode of entry and exit. These have included early exiles (1959–1961), when entry into the United States was facilitated by an extensive visa waiver program that ended at the time of the October Missile Crisis; the Freedom Flights (1965–1973), begun as a response to the Cuban government's opening of the port of Camarioca and permitting anyone wanting to pick up relatives to do so; Mariel (1980–1984), another opening of a port in Cuba and consequently, another immigration treaty; the Balsero crisis and low-intensity exile (1987–1995); and the present.

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4. Kaplan, Caren, Norma Alarcón, and Mino Moallem, eds., 1999. *Between Woman and Nation: Nationalisms, Transnational Feminisms, and the State*. Durham: Duke University Press.

5. Kaplan, Caren. 1999. *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*. Durham: Duke University Press.

6. Said, Edward. 1994. *Representations of the Intellectual*. New York: Vintage Books.

7. Kristeva, Julia. 1993. *Nations Without Nationalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

8. Casal, Lourdes. 1981. *Definición*. In *Palabras juntan revolución*. La Habana: Casa de las Américas; English translation by David Frye, *Bridges to Cuba/Puentes a Cuba* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995).

9. Phillips, Richard. 1977. *Mapping Men and Empires: A Geography of Adventure*. London: Routledge.

10. Homi Bhabhi, An Interview: Third Space. In Rutherford, Johnathan. 1991. *Identity, Community, Culture and Difference*, pp. 207–221. London: Lawrence & Wifhart.