Part VI Cold War, Church, Revolution and the Family

Before Castro's 1959 victory, Cubans could not agree on a political course that would rid them of Batista's dictatorship. The seven or eight of the nation's Catholic preparatory schools that educated the elite, moreover, did not hold a united political position. Larger currents within Catholicism in the wake of the Spanish Civil War and at the outset of the Cold War created a spectrum of beliefs within the middle class that would only widen with the revolution.

The "triumph of the revolution", as it is referred to on the island, did not end with the military defeat of Batista but continued as the top to bottom transformation of Cuban society. Teresita Batista and Eduardo "Eddy" Casas, my parents, were active players in this epic change. According to some of their closest relatives, this was a betrayal for the revolution had morally dispossessed their class through the closure of its schools, churches and clubs. In our extended family as in those of many Cubans, the fault lines of politics cracked the centuries-old bedrock of kinship and society.

A noted scholar of cultural memory Marianne Hirsch argues "... not only are family, community, and nation unstable and mutable concepts, [they are] inseparably interconnected… when one or the other declines in importance, it seems, the other(s) rise(s) commensurately."[1] Hirsch links this phenomenon to the dominant significance of the family for genocide survivors and exiles as people that can no longer identify a country as home.

Eddy and Teresita started their own family in the midst of a revolution. They were witness to the sudden leave-taking of many other young families during the early days of Castro's power and then, several years later, to parents taking part in a panic-driven airlift of children that was triggered by counter-revolutionary messages. Behind the alarm felt by these parents about the prospect of their children being brainwashed was the less ominous but objective reality that in its mission to re-make society a revolutionary state sets out to rival the family as the primary formative influence on citizens. Many Cubans who left the country shortly after the revolution never abandoned hope of return and so entered into an un-ending state of exile. By extension their children, in contrast to those back on the island who identified with a utopian future, were caught up in the memorializing their (home-country) family past. This generational task is examined in the writings of such Cuban American writers as Gustavo Perez Firmat and Carlos Eire for both its burdens and strengths.

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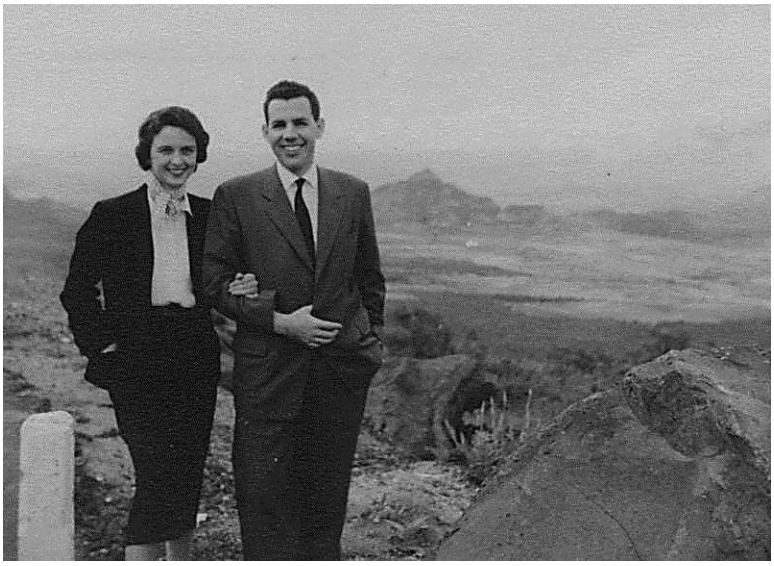
[1] Hirsch, Marianne. "Pictures of a Displaced Girlhood, (Re)Locating "Home" and "Community" *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*. ed. Angelika Bammer. (Indiana University Press, 1994)

In our childhood my siblings and I, far from our Cuban American cousins, in the living room of our Canadian suburban house were surrounded by objects from our parents' past. Diplomat friends had brought them most of their most treasured books and artworks after their leaving Cuba in 1966. Above the sofa was the series of René Porocarrero prints, also on the walls was *Dia de Reyes*, a Miahle print, and on the shelves were various books on Cuban history and culture published by the Casa de las Americas along with the leather-bound memoires of Julia Batista Gonzalez de Mendoza. A fixture above the fireplace "Doňa Micaela" looked mournfully down at us from under her veil. This original collection of my parents comingled with a new one in the form of Inuit soapstone sculptures, wooden Windsor chairs, and lamps made from old stoneware jars. For me, the meaning of that remote part of our lives spent in Cuba was mysteriously held by the objects from our pre-immigrant past. I came to realize much later that for my parents the living room display was not merely an affirmation of old and new cultural loyalties. Acquired studiously, with what little extra money they had, the Cuban art and books from the 1960s had been a home investment for Eddy and Teresita; they stood for the fact that they had backed the cultural awakening and social reform that was the initial stage of the Cuban revolution.

Chapter 17 Eddy and Teresita "Catholics of the Left"

Born respectively in 1928 and 1930, the years when a failed revolution gave rise to a dictator, Eddy and Teresita grew up in a society where corruption and injustice were commonplace and practically accepted as a national inevitability. From the earliest moments of their relationship and as an element of their courtship, my parents were in the process of defining a moral position beyond the prevailing ideological simplicities. In the end, their conscientiously defined stance kept them outside of the dominant camps. In the highly gregarious Cuban society, they were regarded as very odd indeed.



Teresita Batista and Eduardo Casas, on honeymoon, Mexico, 1956

At a time when labels were becoming important, the young couple referred to themselves as "Catholics of the Left." This was a perplexing contradiction for most. After all, the Church in Cuba answered to a Vatican entrenched in its Cold War rejection of leftists.

In fact, Eddy and Teresita identified not with the official Church but with a grassroots Catholic movement that had grown from Church encyclicals earlier in the century. These had denounced capitalism's victimization of the poor, calling believers to relieve their suffering and address the sources of inequity. This work, the couple felt, was congruent with the social reforms of the revolution.

"Fascist Priests" versus "Communists"

A decade before the start of the Cold War, the ideological conflict of the Spanish peninsula was carried to the island with its immigrants and refugees. Eddy's neighbors were Falangists who proudly hung a portrait of Franco on their living room wall while, on the other hand a close friend of his family, Gerónimo García Gallego, who had been elected to the Republican government, grieved.[2]

Franco's 1939 victory provoked fear that the Spanish clergy, which controlled the Church in Cuba, would convert the island's youth to Fascism through their influence as teachers. Many of Eddy's fellow students at the University of Havana in the 1940's, including Fidel Castro, came from the six or seven Catholic preparatory boys' schools throughout the island. The objective reality behind this fear was that the Cuban Church, largely staffed by conservative Spanish clergy, was on a collision course with anything that challenged its long-held values. Its priests saw themselves as stewards of the people leading a war against the spread of the twin minions of the devil—Atheism and Communism. By the late 1950's the middle class looked to them for guidance on how to respond to a revolution that was imminent.

After he came to power but before he had worked out an ideological framework for his government, Castro recognized that the Church held the power to protect and organize opposition. To counter this he revived memories of the Church as an instrument of colonialism. Denouncing it for thwarting the self-determination of a people, he invoked its checkered past on the island.

For their part, Church leaders provoked panic with declarations that Castro was a Communist. Jay Mallin, an American raised in Cuba who covered the years preceding the revolution for *Time* magazine, describes the back-and-forth denunciations in 1960 before Castro had declared himself Marxist. From an August 1960 Joint Pastoral Letter of Cuban Bishops came the declaration:

> Catholicism and communism respond to two totally different concepts of man and the world which it will never be possible to conciliate. We condemn...communism...because it is a doctrine which is essentially materialistic and atheistic... (and) because it is a system which brutally denies the most fundamental rights of the human being... The absolute majority of the Cuban people, who are Catholic, are against materialistic and atheistic communism, and only by deceit or coercion could be led to a communist regime.[3]

[2] Eduardo Casas

[3] Mallin, Jay. *Covering Castro: Rise and Decline of Cuba's Communist Dictator.* (Washington, DC: U.S.-Cuba Institute Press. 1994) 33

Mallin recounts how the day after the Pastoral was read, the regime's daily, *Revolucion,* charged that the letter was "a plan contrived by those privileged ones whose interests have been affected by the revolution" and who were leading "some ecclesiastical authorities" into a position "of opposing the people." Castro then countered with a four-hour harangue in which he said: "You know that the revolution is being repeatedly and systematically provoked by a group of counter-revolutionaries who have wanted to seek refuge in temples in order to fight the revolution."

According to Mallin, the crowd broke into cries of "Paredon, paredon!" (To the execution wall!) and Castro continued, "The public know perfectly well how respectful the government has been in matters of religion." He declared that there were "two types of priests," those who served "poverty" and those who served "great wealth." "To serve wealth is to betray Christ," declared Castro, adding, "there is no doubt that (Spanish dictator Francisco) Franco has a sizeable group of fascist priests in Cuba." From that moment, Mallin observed, "Fascist priests" became the put-down of choice.[4]

The rhetoric of fear and prejudice was self-fulfilling. Castro and the Church polarized a confused population into two camps. The Church gave the middle class a moral imperative to reject the revolution, a move that perversely resulted in the radicalization of its course and the consolidation of Fidel's power. The firmly drawn battle lines blurred what in reality had been a complex and nuanced history of Catholicism as a moral and intellectual force for personal development among the members of the Cuban middle class.

Cuban Sovereignty versus the Spanish dominated Cuban Church

The heroic story of the revolution centers on guerrillas who came down from the Sierra Maestra to rout the despot's army. Their triumphal entry into Havana, liberating the populace from decades of Batista's rule, has a legendary quality that has only grown with time. The people's romance with the guerrilla commander, Fidel Castro, consolidated the revolution. In a society that for decades had mourned the aborted leadership of the original revolutionary hero José Martí through his death on the battlefield, Castro's appearance at the gates of Havana was like the second coming of the messiah. The latter quickly learned how to use the mythic dimensions of his victory.

Not only did Castro adapt his persona to echo a historical model, he also used an adaptive style of leadership to exploit existing prejudices and so play one powerful group against another. For many Cubans, this divide and conquer strategy had its most hurtful consequences in the division of their society along class lines. And because class was largely determined by who could and could not afford to attend the prestigious religious schools these came to occupy the eye of the storm. As Castro rightly states in a narrated autobiography, "Religion in Cuba was disseminated, propagated, mainly through private school –that is, schools run by religious orders–which were

[4] Mallin, 33

attended by the children of the wealthiest families in the country, the members of the old aristocracy, … the children of the upper middle class and part of the middle class in general." [5]

The Order of the Sacred Heart, its school and charities had been the lodestar of Chea Mendoza's female descendants. However, the sons of Antonio Mendoza attended secular schools according to his wishes. Yet after the death of the patriarch in 1906, they chose to ignore his anti-clerical position and sent their own sons to a religious school. Nevertheless, consistent with their father, they rejected the existing school that likely they regarded as narrow-minded in its Spanish conservative orientation. The French de La Salle Christian Brothers, purveyors of the most elegant European intellectual legacy, had no Spanish colonial baggage. Around 1916 the Mendoza house on Amargura was given over to the Brothers to launch their educational work in Havana. The teachers of Academia de La Salle introduced their students to habits of intellectual discipline and respect for the European cultural canon.[6] The de La Salle students, along with those of the pre-existing Jesuit *Colegio de Belén*, where in 1941 Fidel Castro began his high school studies, were groomed to be the leaders of Cuban society.

Alumnado del Colegio La Salle del Vedado reunidos en el gimnasio del plantel University of Miami, Cuban Heritage Collection

By 1925 the new *Colegio de La Salle* building in El Vedado was ready for students. Enrolled in 1933, Eddy Casas' academic cohorts were Teresita's cousins, the sons of Agustín Batista and Viriato Gutierrez whose homes bordered the school. Agustín Batista financed the mortgage for this Catholic primary and secondary school for boys, and would later put up much of the money for the founding of the first national Catholic university, Santo Tomas de Villanueva.[7]

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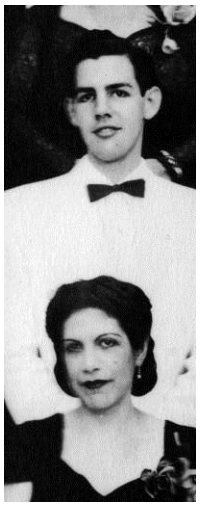
[5] Skierka, Volker *Fidel Castro: a biography* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004) 340

[6] The de La Salle Christian Brothers was a teaching order founded by French Priest Saint Jean Baptiste de la Salle who was canonized in 1900. He created a network of quality schools throughout France that featured students grouped according to ability and achievement, integration of religious instruction with secular subjects, well-prepared teachers with a sense of vocation and mission, and the involvement of parents., http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institute_of_the_Brothers_of_the_Christian_Schools (accessed. 19 June, 2011)

[7] Eduardo Casas

Batista Falla



Casas Rodriguez

Gutierrez Falla

from group portrait of Colegio de La Salle, El Vedado, Class of 1945

When Ramon Casas, and then, years later in 1945, Eddy graduated from de La Salle and entered the University of Havana, they joined the *Juventud de la Acción Católica*, (Catholic Action Youth). Eduardo described the group as a general movement that included farmers and workers along with secondary school and university students Since its goal was to help the Catholic Church in its evangelizing mission, it was necessary that its members represent all sectors and branches of political and social life. In its origins, the Juventud was the Church's response to the revolutionary student movements that began in 1928. Its first members, graduates of the handful of the island's Catholic boys' preparatory schools, were intended to counteract the anti-clerical, anti-Catholic sentiment by spreading religious ideals and practice among fellow university students. The group was part of a larger initiative by which the Church hoped to recover its authority destroyed with the fall of the colonial government.[8]

Grupo San Juan Bautista De La Salle, La Federacion de la Juventud Catolica University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection, founding members (Ramon Casas front row fourth from right)

Castro's view of the Church as an enemy of the nation had long roots. According to historian Enid Logan, its historical seeds are found in a constitutional debate in proto-republican period

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[8] Puron, Esperanza."La Accion Catolical Cubana" www.http://espaciolaical.org/contens/06/0640.pdf. (accessed 29 April 2010).

Also "Grupo San Juan Bautista" photograph, University of Miami Collection Note: La Federación de la Juventud Católica fue fundada el 11 de febrero de 1928 por el Hno. Victorino de la Congregación de los Hermanos De La Salle, con delegados de distintos colegios católicos de La Habana. En 1936 se reorganizo, cerrando distintos grupos, que fueron multiplicándose por todo el territorio nacional. El primer grupo que se creo en ese año fue el Grupo San Juan Bautista De La Salle, constituido en su mayoría por estudiantes que aparecen en esta fotografía.

between 1899 and 1902. At this time the island was a protectorate of the United States and Antonio Gonzalez de Mendoza sat as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The debate challenged the traditional role of the Church in Cuban society, characterizing colonialism and Catholicism as the barriers to sovereignty and secularism.

Cuban Nationalism and the Separation of Church and State, the 1899 Marriage Law Controversy

The 1899 controversy took place when the Cuban republican government was under the supervision of the American administration. It was sparked by the publication of a marriage law that declared that henceforth only civil marriages would be recognized by the state. This removed the Church's traditional power to make birth, marriage and death official. Inevitably, it provoked a bitterly divisive debate.

As chief justice of the Supreme Court, Mendoza's unequivocal opposition to the Church's traditional power to legalize a marriage followed a basic principles of civil society: that the power of the state took precedent above that of all other institutions; and, most importantly, that this authority was a touchstone of nationhood. The new law subsumed the powers of the Church to those of the state. It became a rallying point for the nationalists in their resolve to curtail the powers of the Church, formerly a pillar of the colonial power structure and an agent in suppressing insurgencies against Spain.

A June 22, 1900 letter to the American administrators from Antonio Gonzalez de Mendoza in his judicial role outlines the arguments of Cuba's political and intellectual elite. It underscores that marriage is "the most important act of civil life", a "solemn contract, from which all social functions are derived," and "perhaps the most important institution in civil society." The letter states that the regulation of marriage is among the unique functions of the liberal state. These included "surrounding the family with the regulating rights and obligations of citizens."[9] The family was the essential cell of the larger system of social governance and as such it could be called into being only by the state.

Cuban nationalists backed the law, Catholic prelates opposed it, and the U.S. military administrators who had the power to determine the outcome took wary note of the fierce nationalist spirit it triggered. In this moment of passage from its colonial past Cuba's future as an independent state was still very much up in the air. Witnessing such foundational debates on the nature and right of Cuba as a sovereign state put Washington's guard up, for the American administration on the island wanted to safeguard the likelihood of annexation. The law was overturned.[10]

Don Antonio's avowed wish for Cuba's annexation to the United States as a solution to its political immaturity was based on an idealized view of his northern neighbor's capacity to act under its democratic, anti-colonial founding principles. This belief was given a blow as the

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[9] Logan, Enid Lynette. "The 1899 Cuban marriage law controversy: Church, State and empire in the crucible of nation." *Journal of Social History* 42.2 (2008): 469+. *Academic OneFile*. (accessed. Apr. 2010).

[10] Ibid.

marriage law controversy offered an initial example of behind-the-scenes manipulation of political process that would come to be the hallmark of the American Cuban relations. Two years later he retired from the bench.

Winning Converts Back to the Church through Youth Organizations

During the colonial period Spanish priests and teachers with no accountability had been the deeply resented, pampered recipients of life-tenure positions in each community. In the ensuing Republican era, the Church had to deal with this unflattering legacy in its attempts to draw in members. Gradually it began to appoint more Cubans as priests and bishops as well as to create new parishes throughout the island. The goal was to re-evangelize a population that had lost connection to Catholic doctrine and to demonstrate the Church's commitment to the improvement of the new Cuban society.

Yet within the Cuban Church itself there were different tendencies. This was a direct result of teaching staff in the religious schools, who also served as leaders of the Catholic lay organizations, espousing a range of ideology. This diversity was reflected in the contrasting political orientations between the two Catholic groups whose members crossed paths at the University of Havana in the pre-revolutionary decades.

According to Eddy Casas, the more socially progressive *Juventud de Acción Católica* had a broad-base of members from all walks of life while the right-wing conservative *Agrupacion Catolica Universitaria* was composed largely of graduates of the Jesuit-run Belén. While the former group was nationalistic yet officially eschewed politics, the latter, influenced by the, deeply conservative and some openly Falangist Spanish priests, aspired to intervene in politics. Franciscan Basques who were strongly anti-Franco and exerted a pro-democracy, anti-dictatorship influence within the group supervised the Juventud. In short, the echo of Republican Spain as much as Fascist Spain existed in Cuba through its religious schools and lay organizations, providing two contrasting models of faith-based civic engagement.

The Spanish Republican Priest, Don Geronimo and Catholic Social Doctrine

After the fall of the Spanish Republican government, political refugees congregated in Havana. One of these was Don Geronimo Garcia Gallego, a priest who had been elected to the Spanish constitutional assembly as part of the Republican government. He became a close family friend of the Casas Rodriguez family influencing deeply the attitudes of its members, and most particularly those of Eddy. Catholicism and liberalism were not in opposition to each other, Don Geronimo argued, rather they were part of the same tradition in which the welfare of people was the primary concern of Church and state.

Geronimo García Gallego (left) and Eduardo "Eddy" Casas

Don Geronimo was part of a historical impulse to apply Catholic social teaching to public policy that had taken official form in Christian Democratic parties as far back as the nineteenth century in Europe and Latin America. Although he had not been defrocked, he did not say mass due to his stated refusal to serve in a Church that went against his beliefs. Instead, Don Geronimo eked out a living by publishing essays and giving the occasional lecture at the *Sociedad Cubana de Cultura*. He lived in poverty in a hotel, supported by contributions from such friends as the Casas Rodriguez family. Beyond his warm friendship, he contributed broadening conversation and expertise in religious matters during a period when first Celia and then Ramon became converts.[11]

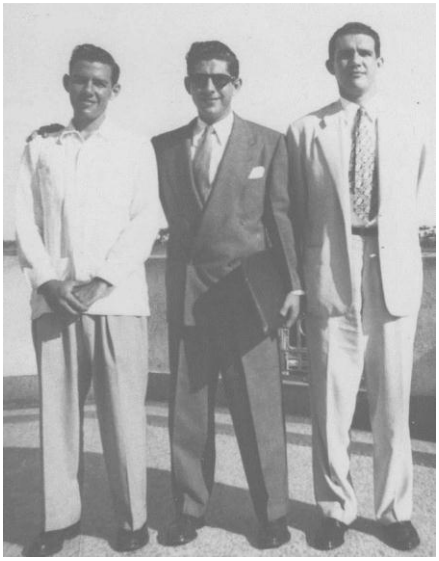
Celia Rodriguez had become a practicing Catholic through independent study. She found Don Geronimo's blend of scholarship with political and spiritual beliefs consistent with her appreciation of religion as a source of individual consciousness and testimony to the human experience. The Spaniard's view of the importance of the Church's social doctrine was also a formative influence for Eddy, who for years assisted the elderly priest in his writing by organizing his notes. The sacrifice of his religious career for his political convictions made Don Geronimo a tragic hero to the Casas family. When he dropped on the streets sometime in the early 1960s, felled by cardiac arrest, Celia buried him in the family tomb.

Triumphalist Anthems

While his brother, Ramon, a doctor, expressed his faith and social conscience by becoming a leader in the Accion Catolica, Eddy, an introvert and a scholar, was more interested in the gospel's relevance to moral intellectual development. Raul, the middle son, had a strictly secular

[11] "In Cuba, he stayed on the margins of the Church both because he did not want to be part of the machinery of the monarchical-style of institution that was the diocese, and because he had been forbidden to practice as a priest." Eduardo Casas

outlook; moreover, already in the late 1940s he had left Havana to do his medical residency in Cook County Hospital, Chicago.



Raul Casas, centre, the day of his leave for the United States, 1948

Eddy obtained his law degree in 1950. Luckily, because he was completely uninterested in practicing law, he received a timely full, one-year scholarship to train as a French teacher in Paris. On his return to Havana, he enrolled in Psychology, a field in which he could amalgamate most of his previous studies.[12]

Politics on campus had reached a new intensity as the direct result of growing frustration with a series of governments that had shelved a constitution passed in 1940. The culminating offense was Batista's coup pre-empting the democratic elections set for 1952. J. Dominguez in *Cuba: order and revolution* stresses the perception of that coup as a watershed event:

> Elections had been reasonably honest and decisive since 1939, but the coup stopped constitutional and electoral legitimation dead in its tracks. To implement the Constitution it would be necessary to overthrow the government. While Cuba had not been free of military influences in politics before 1952, the role of the military had declined since the 1930s beginning with Batista's first presidency when he adopted measures to de-militarize the administration and subdued a serious attempt at a coup. After 1952, however, the military emerged as the arbiter of political regimes...[13]

[12] Ibid.

[13] Dominguez, Jorge I. *Cuba:order and revolution.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978) 123

Juventud de Acción Católica, Law students of the University of Havana, mid 1940s, Eddy Casas seated second row, second from right

Eduardo knew of Fidel Castro, who had been a talented organizer and leader of anti-government action, a year ahead of him in the Law Faculty between 1945 and 1950. Campaigning for the elections scheduled for 1952, Eddy Chibás, leader of the *Partido Ortodoxo*, used a broom as symbol of his promise to sweep away corruption. Castro, a party member was, like many other young members of the middle class, outraged by Batista's pulling the rug out from under him in this hotly contested election.

Batista justified and obtained approval for his military coup from the American Ambassador by accusing Eddy Chibás and members of his party of being Communists. In reaction to the March coup, Castro led 60 revolutionaries in an attack on the Moncada military barracks in Santiago on July 26th of that year. They were overpowered, many were tortured and killed, and Castro was jailed. The resistance went underground in Havana. Sales of bonds to support the *Movimiento 26 de Julio* (26th of July Movement) skyrocketed despite the danger of torture and death if one was caught in act of buying or selling them.

Eddy Casas describes his political position as in step with the majority of the population who favored bringing down a dictator who had so flagrantly quashed democracy. His sympathy lay

with those who were risking their lives by selling bonds to support the armed insurgency. As he explains:

> There were many bombs and the army and the police hunted down [its] members... They were fighting for democracy and legal representation and they had the support of 90% of the population but in spite of this the police persecuted them. To raise money for the cause they sold bonds but if they were caught doing this the police arrested, tortured and often killed them. I had friends who sold bonds and tried to sell to me and I had a friend, a fellow member of the Juventud Católica that they killed, they tortured and killed him. I saw the corpse covered with blood, they left it on the street where his brothers picked him up and buried him.[14]

Eddy's identification with both the Left and the Church put him outside of the defined camps, a paradox within the binary opposition of ideologies. This made him the object of derision from his Marxists friends who teased him about the seemingly retrograde spirit of La Juventud. Eddy recalls their reaction to the group's anthem.

> ...some of the words of the anthem were, "with the star and the cross as our emblem our march will be triumphant." Other words were, "Viva Cuba, faithful and happy, Viva Christ, ideal sovereign!" And, of course, all of that sounded horrible to my university friends because 80% of the academics were Marxists, and they knew of the Agrupacion Catolica Universitaria that was a similar Catholic group but very right-wing. In contrast, the Acción Católica had a nationalist, democratic position that's why they used the star symbol; but the words of the anthem were triumphalist and that sounded a terrible note to the secular students, especially to the Marxists. Because the Church was very influenced by the Falangist attitudes, the Marxists and all left-wing people were suspicious of La Juventud.[15]

Among those suspicious of all forms of Catholic influence was Fidel Castro, a product of the Colegio de Belén's Jesuit education.[16] More than half a century after learning it Castro also vividly recalls his school anthem. Its words praise the Jesuit's founder, former soldier Saint Ignatius, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus; an organization that trained its members for military-like and unquestioning obedience to the Church's authority and hierarchy. [17]

Castro recites, perhaps even sings, the words he must have repeated many times, interspersing them with his interpretations of the legacy of the Jesuits. *"Fundador sois Ignacio y general de la compañia real, que Jesús..." It was an anthem of war (against the devil and his minions), and St. Ignatius was a general of the order. That's why I may criticize, but I'm also capable of*

[14] Eduardo Casas
[15] Eduardo Casas

[16] Dominguez: xv

[17] "Ignatious of Loyola" http://en.wikipedia.org/ (accessed. January 11, 2011)

recognizing that they were far superior in their education to the priests of La Salle. They had made a vow in perpetuity, and they had to study a very great deal, study for several years longer.'[18] Unconscious of the irony of his attitude Castro echoes the crusading tone of an anthem that evokes the battles of the Counter-Reformation against heretics and infidels. The words moreover, re-awaken his competitive attitude towards the rival high school, the Colegio de la Salle, source of many counter-revolutionaries.

Castro's popular title "Comandante" reflects a model of missionary-military leadership that, like Superior General Ignatius, has deep echoes in Spanish history. This passage from the narration of his life, when he considers and flexes the meaning of deeply etched words, reveals his mental habit of re-tooling culturally familiar rhetoric and images as political maxims and slogans. This was an invaluable ability for supervising a revolution whose rules he worked out through his extemporized speeches.[19] Another example of this habit was his use, in 1960, of the Church's "Extra ecclesiam nulla salus" [20]"Con Dios Todo Sin Dios Nada" (With God Everything Without God) to justify the censoring of the arts that were not explicitly pro-revolutionary. His version of the dogma for that occasion became: "Within the Revolution everything; outside the Revolution, nothing." The air of certainty behind this line-in-the-sand statement hid the shifting ideological terrain that Castro opportunistically occupied in the years immediately after the revolution.

Roman de la Campa, author of *Cuba on My Mind: Journeys to a Severed Nation*, writes of the essential schism that was to determine the course of post-revolutionary Cuba: "the Church's opposition to Castro... emerged before he even took power, and when the revolution unfurled its socialist laws, it intensified through private schools and organizations such as the Catholic Action groups, to which my parents belonged."[21] In the end, the triangulation of opposition—Church, middle class and elite schools in implacable resistance to change, charted the course for Castro.

In the *Catholic Historical Review*, John C. Super affirms that, like everywhere else in America, the Church in Cuba was working within its customary framework in addressing social needs. [The church] ...created and maintained hundreds of social and educational programs that sought to improve life in Cuba. The theology and social philosophy behind these programs was neither more nor less conservative (or progressive) than in the rest of Latin America in the 1950's."[22]

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[18] Ramonet, Ignacio**.** *Fidel Castro: my life : a spoken autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008) 6

[19] Eduardo Casas

[20] Gonzalez, Servando. *The secret Fidel Castro: deconstructing the symbol*. (IntelliNet/InteliBooks. 2001), 401

[21] de la Campa Roman. *Cuba on My Mind: Journeys to a Severed Nation*. (New York: Verso, 2000), 25

[22] Super, John C. "Interpretations of church and state in Cuba, 1959-1961." *The Catholic Historical Review* 89.3 (2003): 511+. *Academic OneFile*. (accessed. 10 April 2010)

In explaining why his sympathies lay with Castro in his stand-off with the Church and middle class, Eddy Casas points to the urgent need for reform along with the lack of representation in the Church of the people who most needed its protection. Like many Cubans who throughout their history had seen the promise of reforms swept aside because of the leveraging of the powerful in society, Eddy felt that this was an inevitable outcome if a more radical solution was not followed:

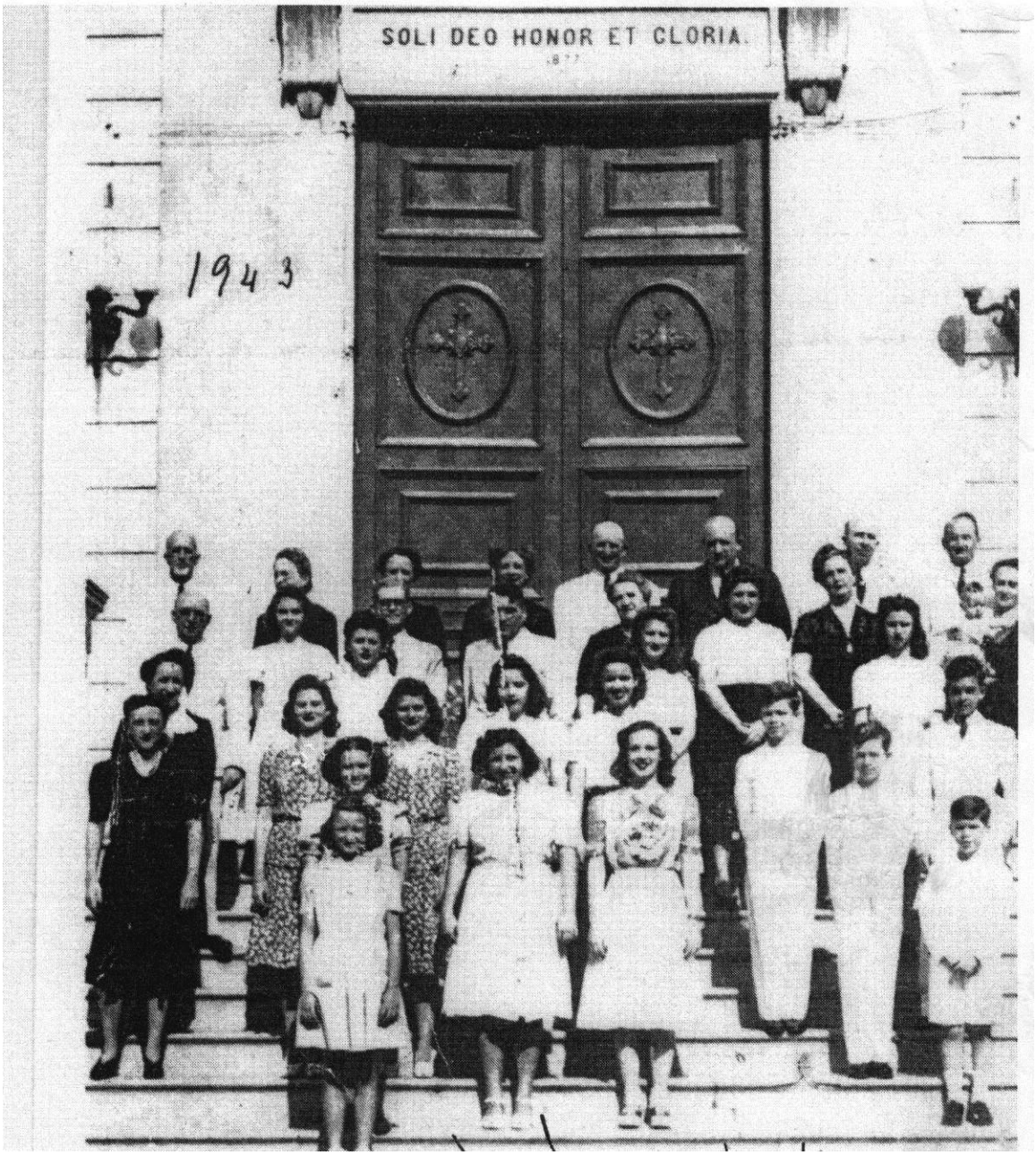
> All that time I felt what was needed was the necessary political transformation to ensure a more democratic state, less corruption and solutions to social problems. The Church did as much as possible to relieve social needs but the general attitude of the dominant class, the bourgeoisie, was that the Church belonged to its members and so primarily should serve the needs and the political ends of their class. Christianity was indispensable to maintain the political structure of the middle class.

Eddy's father, Ramon Casas, with his disastrous experience of Machado-era politics still fresh in his memory, worried in the early 1960's because his eldest son, Ramon, was then president of the Juventud de la Acción Católica. In this role, Ramon drew the attention of the new government who had targeted the Church as a dangerous counter-revolutionary force. According to Eddy he inadvertently drew attention to himself through his personal services to the bishop of Havana: "... [he] had many dealings with the bishop, who would ask him to go here and there, until Ramon made himself suspicious as the man who frequently visited the bishop and then went to many different places. Inevitably, Ramon was forced flee his 1961 arrest warrant by taking refuge with his family in the Belgian Embassy and shortly after leaving Cuba for the United States as a political refugee."

While the members of the lay Catholic organizations disappeared from Havana in the years after the revolution, Teresita and Eddy barely noticed. Although it had brought them together, the Accion Catolica was a small part of a familiar Cuban society that had irrevocably disappeared. The couple, now raising a growing family, was busy establishing a domestic base and professional lives within the new political order. Yet they continued as practicing Catholics in what was, after 1961, officially a Marxist state. Their religious convictions, gained as young adults by crossing institutionally bound perspectives, made them feel in-step with developments greeted bitterly by most Cuban Catholics.

Religion, Education and Identity

A 1943 portrait of the entire Batista family with their spouses and children shows the centrality of the Sagrado Corazon School to their identity. All family members pose under the proscenium of the school bearing the motto: "Soli Deo Honor et Gloria" (Everything Done is for God's Glory).



When the Society of the Sacred Heart celebrated the centenary of its Havana founding in 1958, four generations of Mendoza women had been formed by its educational practices and religious mission. The two eldest Batista daughters were nuns of this teaching order whose schools had spread throughout Latin America in the first half of the century. Matilde was posted to schools in different countries, Adolfina became the Director of the Cerro branch of the Havana school between the years 1941 to 1947. The "best families" continued to send their daughters to this Havana school. Without any consciousness of irony, its new branch in the western suburbs was

referred to at that time as the Sacred Heart of the Country Club "el Sagrado Corazon del Country Club."[23]

Nevertheless, the education offered by the Sagrado Corazon School would not do for Guillermina Villareal Batista; she determined that her daughter would not be left to the influence of an institution best known for producing debutantes with a religious bent. After an enriched pre-school formation with an English-speaking nanny, Teresita attended St. George's School and then Ruston Academy. Accelerated through her primary and secondary studies, Teresita found herself at the age of sixteen at the Ursuline-run College of New Rochelle just outside New York City. Here, she had the luxury of weighing the outlook of her mother—positivist, secular, progressive—against the legacy of her devoutly Catholic female relatives.

The Batista pride rested on the talent of its family members that, through the historical example of Chea and Antonio, was beneficently shared with Havana society through their leadership. Beyond this noblesse oblige attitude, there was a love of the religious life expressed through Batista Mendoza nuns. Teresita remembered the regular family convent visits and the role the aunt nuns played in her life:

I knew Matilde because my father loved her dearly and my mother took me to visit her whenever she [Matilde] was in Cuba. Those convent visits were unique. On Sunday afternoons many members of the family would gather in the convent parlour.

> Adolfina I never knew well; she was reputed to be a rather rigid, difficult person. Enriqueta did not enter the convent until quite late, the fifties in fact. She entered the Visitation, a contemplative order for older women. I knew her well, she was Agustín's private secretary, and as such she managed Abuela's investments, paid my college fees, etc. Sometimes she invited me to go to a movie, and I'd see her at daily mass at Santa Rita.

In contrast to the activity of these women expressing loyalty to the Church through its education and charity networks, at the College of New Rochelle Teresita learned that the Catholic faith

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[23] *Estaba nuestra familia vinculada a la Sociedad del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús por Fuertes y antiguos lazos. Cuando en 1958 la Sociedad celebró el centenario de la apertura de su primer colegio en Cuba, por sus aulas habíamos pasado cuatro generaciones de los De Mendoza: la primera de ellas intregrada por mamá y mis tías Julia y Maria Antonia; la cuarta, por cuarenta niñas de la familia que en aquel momento estudiaban en el Sagrado Corazón del Country Club. Dos de mis primas se hicieron religiosas de la Sociedad del Sagrado Corazón: Matilde y Adolfina Batista; esta última fue Superiora del Colegio del Cerro de 1941 a 1947. Al cumplir la Sociedad sus cien años de vida en Cuba, mi prima Maria Antonia Batista ocupaba la presidencia de la Congregación de las Hijas de Maria, cargo que con anterioridad habian ostentado mi abuelita Chea Pedroso (de 1881 a 1884) mi tia Maria Antonia (de 1909 a 1921), quien fue nombrada Hija Benemerita de la Iglesia, honorificación pontificia que tambien fue otorgada a Lila Hidalgo de Conill.* Nena Aróstegui, in del Rio, 84

could be integrated with critical inquiry and social activism. Far from the traditional Cuban religious environment, she grew familiar with the social doctrine and call for action that had been published by the Church earlier in the century. To the irritation of her atheist mother, Teresita came back from the North more religious than when she set out.

Becoming a practicing Catholic was part of Teresita's emancipation from her mother. At New Rochelle she struck up a relationship with a faculty member, Mother Judith, who encouraged her to fight against her mother's possessiveness. Attempting to reduce the damage Guillermina charged Mother Judith with being "a hysteric", but it was too late. She was blind to the fact that her daughter's spirit of rebellion came directly from her.[24] In the end, Teresita's conversion was likely given force by the need to find a means for personal integration.

Teresita's Batista relatives' identity, in contrast, lay in their family pride: they belonged to a leading family with talented and mutually supportive members. The women in the family buffered Teresita from the worst effects of her mother's domineering personality.

Left: Adolfina, Matilde, Consuelo and Maria Antonia Batista Right: Adolfina and Matilde Batista

All the same, Teresita identified with her mother's sense of independence from Havana society, from its dictates and entitlements. In becoming a specific type of religious convert she killed two birds with one stone: as a "Catholic of the Left" she, perhaps unconsciously, rebelled against both sides of her formative equation by offending both in equal measure.

Movies and Morals pre-revolutionary Cine Clubs—interpreting movies through Faith or Ideology

Teresita and Eddy met in 1955 in the office of *Cine Guiá*, the journal of the Juventud de la Accion Catolica's film club. The *Cine Club* organized screenings of recent films in tandem with debates on the artistic and moral issues that these raised. The Archdiocese of Havana sponsored it and supervised its activities as an outgrowth of the Vatican's International Office of Cinema, an initiative to direct Catholics to movies with strong moral values.

[24] *"la conversión religiosa de Teresita fue contra la orientación de Abuela. Ella se sentía ambivalente hacia su familia; Abuela era orgullosa pero rebelde, Teresita recogió su rebeldía."* Eduardo Casas

From the earliest moments of the movie industry the Vatican had been worried about the power of movies to undermine public morality. It issued papal bulletins (encyclicals) that warned of this at the same time acknowledging the new medium's potential for moral uplift and education. It was through the advocacy of the Church that Hollywood came to adopt the censorship guidelines commonly known as the Hays Code that governed its production from 1930 to 1968.

In Cuba, the Archdiocese of Havana published *Guía Cinematográfica*, a guide that rated movies according to their assumed moral influence. For *Cine Guión* magazine, on the other hand, a film would be assigned to a film club member who wanted to submit a review. The critique could be broad-minded and artistic in its focus however, the magazine editor/cine club director always added a paragraph after the review on the position of the Church on the movie; clarifying what it found inadequate from a Catholic moral perspective. In this way Church's dual approach to film, on one hand as a source of moral inquiry and, on the other as a vehicle of positive or negative values, was handled by separate branches within the Archdiocese. As Eddy Casas remembers:

> At the outset Andrés Ruskovski was one of the officials of the Vatican's Catholic Office of Cinema that helped to define the approach of the Cine Club in Havana. His orientation was to keep to the Vatican line but not so that it reduced the understanding of the film or censored it altogether—that was more the work of the *Guía Cinematográfica* in which they classified all movies according to a moral code. A-1 meant the movie was for the entire family. A-2 was only for adults, A-3 meant the movie contained some morally objectionable content, C meant morally inadmissible. That guide was published and distributed to all the Catholic schools because parents demanded guidance on what movies were appropriate for their children.

Eddy's interest in film had developed in 1950 during his year in Paris. Enrolled at the Institut Catholique de Paris and the Alliance Francaise he had spent much of his spare time at the Cinematheque Francaise, a museum of the cinema that offered daily screenings from their collection. In particular, he was struck with the aesthetic of the Italian Neo-Realists who, "...without the resources to make standard movies, began to take their cameras out to the street and use people there as actors. The themes were those of the problems of life, most notably the poverty of the post-war period after the American invasion."

In a university residence for Cuban students, Eddy also met a young architect, Ricardo Porro, who would become a life-long friend. Like him, Porro came from a religious school that provided students with a strong foundation in European culture. That year they travelled to Italy to absorb the atmosphere of such places as Venice. The singular feel of the spaces in the canal city would feed Ricardo Porro's evolving notion of indigenous Cuban architecture as something that should emerge organically from the particulars of place and time.

Back in Havana, Eduardo began studies for a career as a Psychologist. Throughout the 1950's he pursued a Ph.D. in "Filosofía y Letras" at the University of Havana and a Doctorate in Psychology from the University of Santo Tomás, Villanueva where the founder of the Psychology program, Jose Ignacio Lazaga, had, on the strength of Eduardo's faith and foundation in Humanistic philosophy tapped him as his eventual replacement. To finance his

graduate studies as well as, after his marriage in 1956, his young family, he gave private French classes and tutored students.

His prolonged studies brought him into contact with individuals working with student organizations to respond to the political situation of the fifties. Among these was Alfredo Guevara who became a friend through their shared love of film. A Marxist, Guevara worked with "Nuestro Tiempo" (Our Times), a campus-based group set up in 1950 to use primarily theatre, cine-club debates, and printed media to educate and politicize underprivileged youth in Centro Habana.[25] Its president, Harold Gramatges describes the group growing out of the need for young writers and artists to create work that engaged with the neediest audiences and most prescient issues because "...young people...were pursuing their artistic and cultural activities in ...a regime of semicolonial exploitation and misery, [and] the art-public relationship was limited to a privileged class...." Nuestro Tiempo, heavily influenced by such Marxists as Guevara, recalls Gramatges, "...embarked on ... the task of proselytizing among the youthful masses..."[26]

Many of the writings in the group's eponymous magazine pushed for the development of an authentically Cuban culture to replace the habits of cultural imitation and nostalgia. In a 1957 article, Ricardo Porro outlined what a distinct national architecture should be based on:

> Today, architecture has two aims. The first is to have a consistent social content... The second is to have an architecture that is less international, more rooted in the tradition... Tradition does not stand for a faithful copy of the past... It is the result of a people's way of life, with specific customs and habits... It is the perceptible incarnation of their frame of mind. ... It is the expression of the mutual action between man and the environment in which he develops his life..., the expression of the spiritual characteristics common to a people.[27]

Alfredo Guevara, who was also a friend of Castro, was installed first as director of the cinematographic department within the *Dirección de Cultura del Ejército Rebelde* (Culture division of the Rebel Army) and in March of 1959, as director of the freshly minted ICAIC (*Instituto Cubano del Arte y la Industria Cinematográficos*). Film, according to the first culture law of the revolutionary government, "...is the most powerful and provocative form of artistic

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[25] Chanan, Michael. *Cuban Cinema*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2004) 105

[26] Ibid. 106

[27] Ricardo Porro, "El sentido de la tradicion," Nuestro Tiempo 16 (Havana: 1957) as quoted in Rodriguez, Eduardo Luis, "Theory and practice of modern regionalism in Cuba", *Docomomo No. 33*, September 2005, http://www.architecturebeyond.eu/publications-vault/theory-and-practice-of-modern-regionalism-in-cuba/ (accessed 29 April 2010)

expression, and the most direct and widespread vehicle for education and bringing ideas to the public."[28]

ICAIC, now officially part of the state, continued the consciousness raising that had been the underground work of Nuestro Tiempo. Documentaries of the unfolding events of the revolution such as the first convening on Havana of the *campesinos* to celebrate the July 26th anniversary of Castro's attack on the Moncada barracks were also quickly turned out. Representing the revolution as the central hinge of history, other ICAIC films such Manet's *El negro*, traces racial discrimination in Cuba from the time of slavery to its legal eradication with the rebels' triumph. ICAIC filmmakers joined other Cuban intellectuals opposing foreign cultural and economic influence by creating works that they felt would propel Cuba towards its true historical course and place in the world.

According to Cuban film historian Michael Chanan, the Catholic Church's development of its film club program was an ideological response to that of Nuestro Tiempo. In this national proliferation of *cine clubs*, which he describes as a movement, Chanan credits those of Nuestro Tiempo as being the roots of ICAIC because they constituted "...a breach in the defenses of cultural imperialism."[29] While it is true that the Marxist and the Catholic cine clubs set out to exert a moral and intellectual influence on Cuban youth, likely overshadowing this agenda was the audience's eagerness to uncritically and enthusiastically participate in a night out. The cineclub screenings were, after all, parent sanctioned opportunities to mingle with the opposite sex.

Personally, Eddy Casas was opposed to film debates that served specific political or religious agendas. In leading discussions after the screening of a film at Juventud de la Acción Católica cine club meetings, he asked members to consider the film in distinct terms. "[Guevara] was more proselytizing within the political principles of Marxism. I didn't want to be proselytizer for Catholicism as such rather I wanted to highlight the human values... [Instead, I preferred to discuss films] from the standpoint of moral conscience, universal principles, humanism, and not strictly theological teachings."

In the contemporary ideological quagmire of mid-1950's Havana society the Cine Club of the Juventud de la Acción Católica helped Eduardo and Teresita quickly measure each other up and find that they were in agreement about most things. Although they met through its offices and

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[28] Cubacine. El Portal del Cine Cubano. http://www.cubacine.cu/index.html.

[29] The church in Cuba had set up a cinema commission just before the Second World War that afterwards member of the international Catholic cinema organization. The Church's strategy seems to have taken a new turn in the early 1950s, when it started setting up cine-clubs of its own, in which it showed major films accompanied by cine-debates. The chronology suggests that this was at least in part a response to the initiative of the leftist militants. The Catholic cine-clubs in turn stimulated further development of the idea, spawning cine-clubs around the country that were not directly under the church's control and only loosely linked with the central organization. A report presented to the Congress of the International Catholic Office of Film, which was held in Havana in 1957, listed forty-two clubs of this kind.

programs he had previously had known her at a remove through his membership in the *Acción Católica* choir, a group directed by her cousin Martha Fernández Morel y Batista and included the latter's sister, Isabel, and her husband Gustavo Erviti. Eddy remembers that the singing of carols in parks at Christmas was the soft-pedal evangelizing typical of this Church-based group.

"Boy scout" was an affectionate tease from some of Eduardo's friends who pegged him as idealistically naive. An academic rather than an ideologue, he was uncomfortable with the crudely pitched "Christian" versus "Communist" battle of words. Summing-up his position he states: "I believed that what has a humanistic value does not have to have a Catholic moral value and therefore within what is Catholic there has to be a diversity of opinion on art, society and on politics." That his moderate and reasoned attitude was at odds with the climate was beside the point, at least one other person admired his position and she became his wife.

At the family table when we were very young we would always ask our parents the same thing as the starting point for what we kept hoping might turn out to be a good story: *When did the family denounce you because you declared your support for the revolution?* Their answer was difficult to understand. It didn't have the elements of a heroic drama. Instead, for a story that centered on revolution, it was disappointingly concerned with abstract definitions and historically remote ideas. My father's explanation was typically pedantic:

> People would leave but the thinking was that the revolution would not last long. Yet they wondered why we wanted to stay. We felt there were positive aspects to the revolution to which we wanted to contribute such as addressing the social inequities, racial discrimination, etc. We approved of many of the social programs because they were consistent with the Church's social doctrine as defined by Vatican encyclicals especially those of the 20th century. …

We quickly stopped asking.

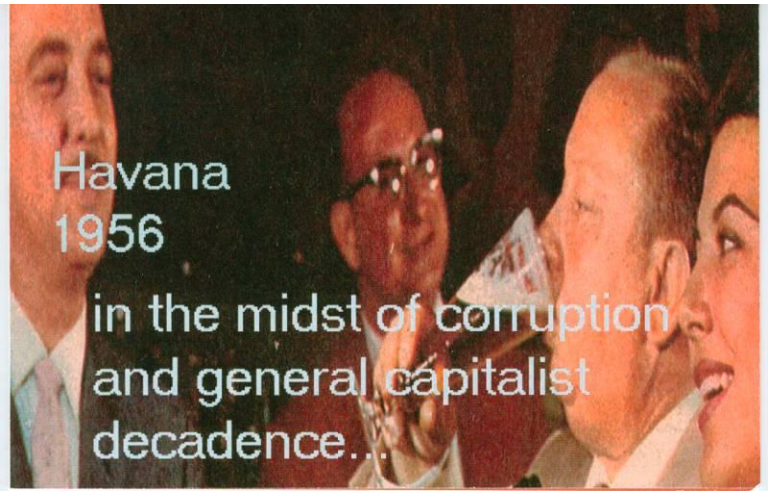
Breaking-away to stay behind

The important back-story to our immigration has two aspects. The first is that Eddy and Teresita developed and affirmed their own values against the dominant political and religious categorizations and the disapproval of much of the family. The second is that these values, that kept them on the island when most of their class left, would not prevail after the initial years of the revolution.

From a young age, like most members of their generation, the political corruption and social injustices demanded that they assume an ideological position as part of their coming of age. They struggled to find a nuanced position within what many saw as oppositional principles of Marxism versus Catholicism. In their participation within their middle class organizations, they rejected religious proselytizing in favor of promoting a social conscience in keeping with a liberal Catholic tradition. In this, they expressed intellectual currents overlooked by histories preoccupied with middle class opposition to the revolution.

My mother loved the invitation that I designed for their 50th anniversary celebration. It was a hit because the joke played on the historical context that was at the heart of the couple's self-

definition. Their wedding coincided with a cataclysmic moment of 20th century world history that forced them to take a stand together.



Within this context, the idea of their denunciation by a section of the family, as we always suspected, *does* have an important narrative role. Framed by this issue, as told by my father now that he is older the story acquires more drama because it is more personal:

> At the start of the revolution Maria Teresa [Falla] would complain that the people in the *Movimiento 26 de Julio*, the opposition to Batista and supporters of Castro that sold bonds to support their cause had approached her and demanded money. The custom among corrupt journalists was to blackmail the rich. They would say, "If you don't give me money I will publish something damaging to you. The same thing was done to politicians. Maria Teresa complained that her family, in this respect was viewed as the goose that laid the golden eggs. But I said to her, "You have to be careful Maria Teresa because those people in the *Movimiento 26 de Julio*, will end up governing the country. I said that to her in '56, somewhat prophetically. But she looked at me completely taken aback. They knew that I had nothing to do with that but they also understood that I was a very left-wing Catholic and that Teresita also had her ideas relating to social justice. It was

> understood that there was an incompatibility. Nevertheless Maria Teresa and Agustin treated her always very well, they were very generous to her. They would tell her, "You are very Batista."
>
> ... Teresita had some ambivalence towards her extended family. Her Falla Bonet relations were very rich and pursued their social advancement. They would eventually become European royalty; the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg is the daughter of Maria Teresa Batista Falla, Teresita's cousin, and Antonio Mestre. She married Prince Henri of Luxembourg after they met in Switzerland while attending college. The Mestre Batista family had a mansion, a Rolls Royce, they lived like aristocrats; they were bankers in Creux de Genthod. ... The family did not set out to get a title through commercial means, they were nationalist Cubans and that was not consistent with their values but they *were* interested in social status. So, Teresita's problem was how to deal with the difference between her values and those of that side of the family. Because we stayed in Cuba until 1966 they always considered Teresita to be a rebel, politically. They thought of us as practically Communists and did not communicate with us until 1987 when Maria Teresa Batista was very ill and we were visiting Isabel [Erviti] in Miami. She then spoke on the phone to Teresita and informed her that she was about to die and wanted to greet her and also say goodbye. She was very kind, she took the initiative to say goodbye saying that she was in peace and in union with the Crucified Christ and his pain of the passion, in short, in a very devout Catholic context describing her preparation for death. After that, we met in Isabel's home and she took pains to issue us a Christian pardon. This process made very dramatic the discrepancy between her values and ours, but we were never in doubt of her honesty and sincerity. And, Agustin was well known as a great business man, founder of the "Trust Company of Cuba, a series of banks throughout the island. He had multiplied the Falla inheritance through his own commercial dealings. He was also a great patron of the arts, especially supportive of the Philharmonic. He avoided politics altogether. And with the revolution, of course, all of that was swept away. With the exception of Maria Teresa's goodbye, they never wrote to us.

Eddy and Teresita formed their political values through the influence of their families and religious schools but also, abstracting from these and independently elaborating on them as students, teachers, and as members their social class. They supported the revolution as an act of moral conscience as Catholics of the left, a position that challenged family solidarity and later, inevitably, went against the Marxist regime. In maintaining their participation in the Church while at the same time, working for a socialist state in the early to mid 1960's their attitudes and actions reflect a small yet significant minority that chose to work for the creation of an equitable society despite the discomforts of material shortages, increasing repression of civil liberties and danger of war. These politically moderate, idealistic Cubans, "those who stayed" ended up marginalized within a radicalized state. But, in the heady years immediately after the revolution, they were at the centre of the world's stage optimistically and in isolation creating a brave new world.

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Chapter 18 Revolution, Education, and the Family

> *All revolution is an extraordinary process of education...Revolution and education are the same thing*.—Fidel Castro[30]

Early on the morning of January 3, 1959, Teresita Batista told her husband Eduardo Casas that it was time to leave. They drove carefully through the streets of Havana. Forty-eight hours earlier, newscasts had announced that Batista had bolted from the New Year's celebration at the Presidential Palace. He was seen hastily boarding a private plane with family and aides. The following day the streets were flooded with jubilant crowds greeting Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos as they led the first revolutionary troops into the city. Hourly radio bulletins reported the progress of Castro's victorious rebel army as they headed westward towards the capital. Meanwhile, Teresita and Eddy drove-up to their destination. The call came later that morning to Eduardo who had returned home to await the news—it was a girl.

Like other events of my parent's early-married life, my arrival was somewhat in step with historic events. They were married in June 1956 six months before Castro's small guerrilla army ran their yacht, Granma, aground on the southwestern point of Oriente province. A year later, my father, Eddy, was permitted to defend his doctoral thesis despite the fact that the University of Havana had been temporarily closed-down after a student attack on the Presidential Palace. He obtained a Master's degree, this time in Psychology, from the University of Santo Tomás, Villanueva; yet not long after beginning to teach there, it was closed by the new Revolutionary Government as part of the abolition of all private educational institutions. Despite this unpromising start, the professional lives of both would pick-up after Castro's victory. Using the money from expropriated property and the services of professionals who like them "stayed

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[30] Fagen, Richard, *The transformation of political culture in Cuba*. "The transformation of Cuban man into revolutionary man is at the heart of Cuban radicalism; it is seen by the leadership as a requisite for the success of the new institutional order, and the regime spares no energies in its pursuit. In the Cuban view, there can be no successful and lasting Leninist politics, agrarian reform, economic transformations, or international realignments without education and re-education of the Cuban masses. As Castro said, "All revolution is an extraordinary process of education...Revolution and education are the same thing." 2

behind," the Revolutionary Government kick-started a social transformation of unprecedented pace and scale.

Solidarity from Hatred of Batista

Bohemia, founded in 1935, was a Havana weekly that covered politics, culture, and sports. The photo tabloid connected its readers with events captured by a camera in the midst of the action. The February 8, 1959 edition reflects a nation involved with the tasks that follow the bringing-down of a long-ruling dictator.

Interpreting the events of the last month, the editorial titled "Ours is not the course of Russia" asserted that the revolution was a home-grown phenomenon that transcended Cold War ideological divisions. The victory of the rebel troops was interpreted as the triumph of "Cuba Libre" the nation's long struggle for national sovereignty.

Batista's legacy of torture and assassination was featured in the same issue. A photographic retrospective of his henchmen's bloody work was printed alongside reports of the unfolding retribution for these crimes. A standard story was that of a senior police officer hugging family members and confessing to a priest before going before the firing squad. This content is interspersed with lighter, human-interest pieces such as that of a Castro look-alike, shown in his rebel costume uniform, drawing decent-sized audiences to his one-man stand-up Havana comedy show. Among the advertisements for Valentine's Day gifts, Esso gas, and Philip Morris cigarettes, are the feature articles. Their focus is what the tasks of the revolution should be.

advertisement, *Bohemia*, February 8, 1959

Hatred for Batista powered the revolution. After almost three decades under his increasingly authoritarian rule, frustration ignited into outright rebellion. According to Richard Gott, it was not a widespread perception of the need for social reform that gave the uprising its momentum. He points to the relative prosperity of the country within Latin America. It had a large middle class and enjoyed the second-highest per capita income in the region. "On a range of other socio-economic indicators– urbanization, literacy, infant mortality and life expectancy – Cuba was among the top five countries." For Gott, it was disgust with the dictator that gave the revolution

its early, wide solidarity across the deep divisions in Cuban society.[31] Because the person of Batista was the lightning rod for widespread discontent, in its initial moments, the revolution stood for the opposite of whatever he had symbolized.

Bohemia, February 8, 1959

First Reforms

On January 8th 1959 Castro addressed Cubans from Camp Columbia, Batista's former military headquarters. The speech focused on the righteous downfall of popular foes and suggested how a just society would emerge from the ashes of their destruction. One month later, in the pages of *Bohemia*, the writer Mario Llerena's metaphors for Camp Columbia flow with pent-up emotion: "the shipwreck of civil authority, the nest-refuge for law-defying rats and the backdrop for the betrayal of our homeland."[32] "He applauds Castro's proposal to turn the facility, erected by the American army of occupation and inherited by Machado and then Batista as part of the machinery for their repression civil liberties, into an educational complex.[33]

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[31] Gott, Richard. *Cuba: a new history*. (New Haven:Yale University Press, 2005) 166

[32] *"Es el remolino donde naufraga la autoridad civil. Es el nido donde se alojan las ratas que violan su juramento de lealtad a la Constitución y a la Ley. Es el escenario donde se consuman las traiciones de lesa Patria."* 37

[33] *De todas las afirmaciones y promesas salidas de voces responsables de este ciclo revolucionario, ninguna tan llena de signo y contenido como la expresada por Fidel Castro en relación al destino que deberá correr el tristemente famoso campamento de Columbia: ser abolido y destruido para dejar sitio a una hermosa ciudad escolar." Llerena, Mario, "La palabra de orden: Del CUARTEL a la ESCUELA." Bohemia*, February 8, 1959

Llerena then contextualizes education over combat as a foundational principle in a free Cuba, tracing Castro's proposal to Estrada Palma, the first Republican president's wish for a civil society with "more teachers than soldiers."[34] He proposes that the revolution transform a populace who, without proper schooling or alternative sources of employment to the military, had often participated in their own repression.[35] Re-named Ciudad Libertad one of the first official acts of the revolutionary regime was to convert Camp Columbia into a "school city" and to install within it a national Ministry of Education. [36] Eduardo Casas was to work there on the ambitious social-makeover that began with the re-structuring of the relationship between the state and its citizens.

Bohemia, February 8, 1959

Manuel Urrutia, the first President appointed by "military commander-in-chief Castro" in January 1959, immediately abolished casinos and brothels.[37] Prostitution and gambling were

[34] Ibid. 36

[35] Llerena points to the contemporary thinking that correlated a weak civil society with a dearth of education for its citizens*:"...no cabe otra explicación que la de una profunda falla educacional, fama que preside los anos formativos de las generaciones republicanas. Esto cuenta a las minorías que sirvieron de vehiculo a Batista. Y a las mayorías que carecieron de la suficiente preparación cívica para impedirle el acceso a un poder al cual jamás debía haber llegado en la tierra de Martí."* 159

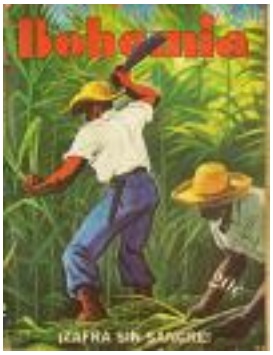
[36] Fagen, Richard R. *The Transformation of political culture in Cuba*. (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1969) 41

[37] Gott, 170

outlawed along with the rest of the infrastructure of sin-and-sun tourism. To drive this home the *rebeldes* installed their first administrative offices in the Havana Hilton. Other changes quickly followed. Un-popularly high telephone and electricity rates charged by American subsidiaries were lowered. These moves by the new government, targeting symbols of national subservience to outsiders, won the wide support of nationalistic Cubans. The message was clear: Cuba was for Cubans and it would protect its most vulnerable citizens from exploitation.

Land reform was another of the revolution's stellar goals because it took aim at exploitation of peasants, a systemic form of injustice in Latin American. Castro with great fanfare announced the first changes to the agricultural sector in the spring of 1959. Because it met such a widely acknowledged need, land reform, points out Thomas Wright, consolidated support for the Urrutia-led government:

> The extreme left promised radical agrarian reform in order to mobilize peasant support for the revolution. Reformist parties pushed land redistribution as a means of attacking the power of the large landowners and the national oligarchies, as well as a step toward social justice and economic development. Acknowledging the potency of the issue, even some conservative parties and interest groups embraced token to moderate agrarian reform as a means of preempting the revolutionaries and reformers. The United States also embraced agrarian reform as a means of countering Cuban [exile] influence and made it a centerpiece of the Alliance for Progress.[38]



Bohemia, February 8, 1959, cover

Prior to these reforms, at the height of the harvest season, the February 8, 1959 edition of *Bohemia* gives proof of Cuba's private sector enthusiasm for aligning their companies with history. The General Motors Company declared itself: "Al Servicio de Nuestra Recuperacion Economica en esta Zafra" (At the Service of Our Economic Recovery during this Harvest), its

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[38] Wright, Thomas C. *Latin America in the era of the Cuban Revolution*. (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2001) 46

trucks had the engine muscle to provide "all the necessary economic power." The ad for Pheldrak, producers of electricity cables of avowed Cuban copper, features a sketch of two men digging in the plowed soil where they have buried rifles. In the background, the chimney of an electric-powered mill energetically spews smoke. The accompanying legend reads, "Enterremos las armas y a trabajar por Cuba" (Let's bury our arms to work for Cuba). The International Harvester Company of Cuba ran a photo of their trucks in military formation with the caption: Camiones Cañeros International para entrega Inmediata" (Harvest Trucks Immediately Available for Duty). The wheels were to roll-off this collective corporate bandwagon as early as summer of the same year.

Equity to rural citizens, agrarian reform/educational outreach

The law came down from the mountain. Castro outlined it before cameras and *campesinos* in the Sierra Maestra in May 1959. It declared all large estates to be property of the state. Castro announced that approximately 40 percent of Cuban farmland would be turned into individual 67-acre plots, and larger ranches and plantations were to be converted to agricultural cooperatives.

Bohemia, February 8, 1959

The message of solidarity with peasants was expanded one month later, in the town of Santa Clara. There, Castro declared that the revolution would provide for Cubans long dispossessed by the powerful interests in Havana: "From now on, the children of the peasants will have schools, sports facilities, and medical attention, and the peasants will count for the first time as an essential element of the nation." To symbolize the new inclusiveness, all peasants were invited to

the capital city for the first national celebration of the Moncada attack on July 26th. On that date, in an iconic mise èn scene, Castro described to a sea of supporters in the new revolutionary plaza how land reform would usher-in a new age.[39]

The New Bureaucracy

For many, the details of Castro's agrarian reform confirmed fears that he was a Communist. Divisions temporarily covered-over by the euphoria over Batista's fall, opened into yawning chasms. President Urrutia, on speaking-out against the communist attitudes reflected in the land reforms, was fired by Castro in June 1959. As the exodus of the middle class began to gain momentum, Castro quickly put the expertise of those professionals who remained. Two social ministries were established, a Ministry of Social Welfare and a Ministry of Housing.[40] Individuals who had fought with Castro or otherwise proven their commitment to reform were appointed to head these.

Among those recruited to the ranks of bureaucrats of the revolution were Eddy and Teresita. They were both at professional crossroads. After her 1956 marriage, the latter taught at Merici Academy, a highly regarded Catholic private school for girls. Teresita's courses incorporated the social doctrine of the Church, a subject close to her heart. However, the school's commitment to progressive Catholic thinking was non-existent, a fact that was revealed when the administration asked her to resign because in her visibly pregnant condition she was "setting a bad example to the students." Pointing-out that this was a profound offense to her femininity Teresita washed her hands of Merici Academy. The academic grove of the forward-thinking Ursulines of the College of New Rochelle where she had studied must have seemed very far away. She would have to find another way to put her principles to practice.

Teresita had always admired Maria Teresa Freyre, a woman of her mother's generation who was part of the family network. Her credentials as a nationalist and politically engaged intellectual were impressive. She came from a family of prominent liberals, her father had been a General during the war of independence and her uncles had been assassinated by Gerardo Machado. Maria Teresa herself had been exiled during Machado's last years in Paris where she worked to publicize the atrocities of his regime. In Paris she studied Library Science and on her return to Havana introduced these professional practices by founding a similar training program at the university.

As a noted opponent of Fulgencio Batista, Maria Teresa was in exile in Paris for a second period beginning in 1957. With Castros' victory she was put in charge of the National Library where she instituted such programs as the "biblio-bus" that brought reading material from its collection to the farthest reaches of the island. She also recruited numerous intellectuals and writers to work

[39] Gott: 170-1

[40] Gott: 170

at the Library turning it into a cultural engine for the heady early days of the revolution. [41] One of the key tasks for intellectuals in post-revolutionary Cuba was the recovery of a nationalist history long obscured by the island's post-colonial condition. Teresita obtained her Library Science degree at the University of Havana so that she could work under Maria Teresa. She shared in the latter's vision for an open culture founded on literacy, access to books and knowledge of Cuban heritage. During her period there, Teresita was the principal author of a catalogue of Cuban periodicals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries based on the José Martí National Library's holdings. These newspapers and magazines because their runs were often brief or interrupted due frequent periods of censorship were a highly ephemeral part of the historical record. Teresita's 1965 bibliographic work continues to be an important source for understanding the existence and scope of colonial-era Cuban periodicals.[42]

Teresita Batista, right with a student, Merici Academy, Havana, circa 1955-6

Ministry of Social Welfare closed: the state itself is the source of universal welfare

The outset of the revolution found Eduardo Casas teaching Psychology as an aspect of Catholic Humanistic thought at the University of Villanueva. His student attendance must have gone into steep decline as the most committed members of the Church joined the exodus out of the island.

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[41] Rodriguez Beltran, Rafael. "Carpentier, Maria Teresa y el combatel anti-machadista en Paris" *La Jiribilla*. 18 February 2010. Web. July 20, 2011. http://sugieroleer.blogspot.com/2010/02/carpentier-maria-teresa-y-el-combate.html

[42] Schulman, Ivan A., and Miles, Erica. "A Guide to the Location of Nineteenth Century Cuban magazines" *Latin American Research Review*. Vol. 12. No. 2. (1977) pp. 69-102 . http://www.jstor.org/stable/2502597 (accessed. 20 July 2011).

In October 1959, an Article of the newly passed constitution authorized the government to regulate the educational system. It abolished all private schools and set out to re-design the national school curricula. The doors to the University of Santo Tomas, Villanueva, opened only a decade earlier, closed forever.[43]

Sometime in 1959 rapid knocking on their apartment door startled Eddy and Teresita. Their upstairs neighbor asked to use their phone to make an urgent phone call. Flustered and angry she turned to them. 'Imagine', she said, 'they want me to report for work!' The woman had been on the payroll of the Ministry of Education for years as a public school teacher.

Even before Castro had declared the revolution to be Communist, a new conception of the central role of the state in the formation of its citizens was at play. As Denise Blum states in *Cuban Youth and Revolutionary Values: Educating the New Socialist Citizen*, "Educational policy in post-1959 Cuba established transformational tasks for the schools and defined new standards of conduct that required active cooperation among schools, families, and the organized community."[44] A new system of education was to be the hub for the development of the entire society.

The guarantee of the Revolutionary Government was not only that it would see to the welfare of all of its citizens but that it would eradicate class differences. The latter was to be achieved through universal access to education, and as Blum points-out, a nationally coordinated education system and curricula was crucial also to develop a unified workforce and a militia ever ready to defend against invasion. This meant that the value of teaching in a Catholic Humanistic orientation, as Eddy had set out to do, was now null and void: the state had taken-over in shaping the conscience of Cuban youth.

A new educational bureaucracy was set-up. At this juncture, Eddy as a Psychologist and Educator, was among the most valued skilled workers. In the wake of a radical re-structuring of the school system his research, expertise could provide empirical evidence to design services and the techniques to optimize the educational reach of the revolution.

Before 1959, at the same time as teaching at the University of Villanueva, Eddy had his first position as a practicing Psychologist in a clinic within the Ministry of Public Health. Set up during the Batista years, the Clinica de Orientación y Conducta and was based on an American institutional model. In his words:

> It served families; children and adolescents through the team-work of a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a social worker. A team would analyze the psychological problems of the children who came to the institution. …With the revolution, this clinic disappeared. It was supposed that [it] was an outmoded

[43] Bunck, Julie Marie. *Fidel Castro and the quest for a revolutionary culture in Cuba*. (Penn State Press, 1997)

[44] Blum, Denise. *Cuban Youth and Revolutionary Values: Educating the New Socialist Citizen*. (Austin: University of Texas Press. 2011), .6

institution based on the pre-revolutionary society because it served the needs of individuals. The revolution, in contrast, dedicated itself to the needs of the system. The issue was the system not the distinction of individuals according to their need."

Atenciòn a Niños con Trastornos Emocionales

Funcionarios y personal técnico de la Clínica de Orientación y Conducta, en el acto de su inauguración. Aparecen el doctor José Pérez Villar, Jefe de la Clínica de Conducta; doctora Ana Julia Abalos, Jefe del Negociado de Clínicas de Conducta del ministerio de Bienestar Social; doctor Vladimir Ramírez; doctor Eduardo Casas; doctor René Rojas; doctor Celestino Vasallo; María Cristina Morán, Asela Alvarez, trabajadoras sociales y otros.

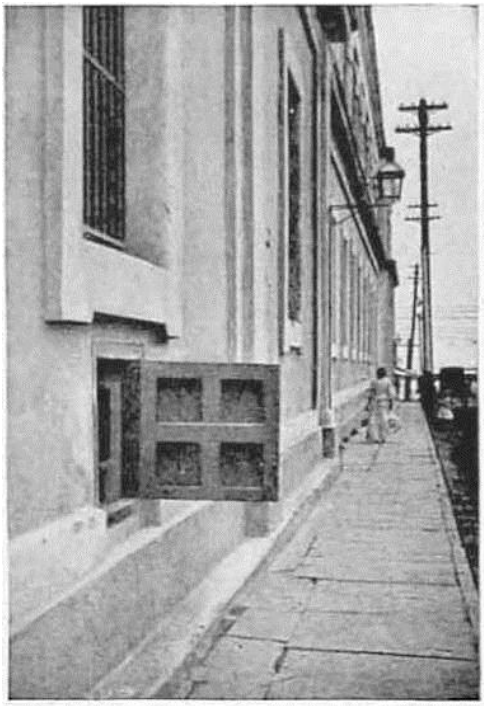
Following the service re-structuring, Eduardo transferred to the Ministry of Education where he worked in a department overseen by Elena Freyre, the niece of Maria Teresa Freyre, and wife of his long-time friend Ricardo Porro. There, his work was not geared to clients but rather addressed staff development and research for interventions to meet the needs of the de-institutionalized *internados*, those children who had been in such orphanages as *Havana's Casa de Beneficiencia* before the revolution. As Eddy Casas remembers "... the children's development was very poor in these orphanages. The revolutionary government was determined to end the institutionalization of children... The Ministry carried out a study that gave proof of the developmental problems in the orphanages. The *Beneficencia* was closed."... In 1959, the

Ministry of Social Welfare was created wherein it became the obligation of the state to provide for minors in need." [45]

Since the 19th century, a newborn could be left anonymously at the orphanage run by the nuns of Saint Vincent de Paul by placing it in a revolving fixture within the orphanage wall on Belascoaín Street in Havana. A bell summoning a nun would ring when an orphan deposit was made. Cubanidades

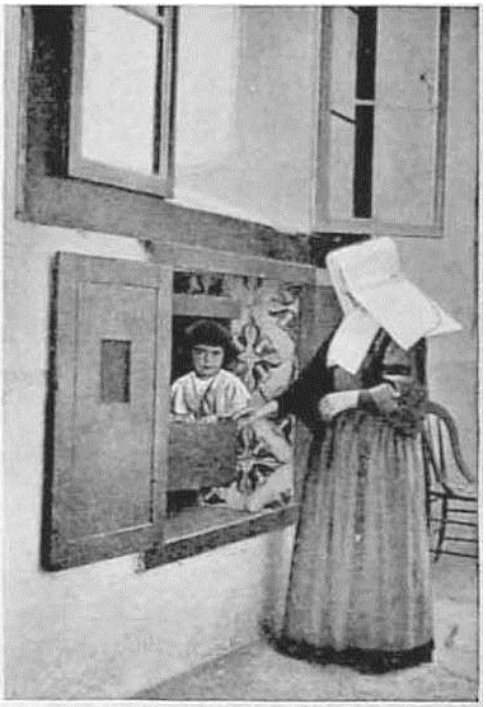
Choir of orphans Cubanidades

[45] Skaine, Rosemarie. *The Cuban family: custom and change in an era of hardship*. (Jefferson: McFarland, 2004) 11



AN EVER OPEN DOOR

To this hatch in the wall of the orphanage unwanted children, usually illegitimate, may be brought by their mothers under cover of night. The turning stile rings a bell inside



BROUGHT TO A QUIET HAVEN

No child thus brought to the orphanage is turned away. Carefully tended, they are taught some industry whereby they may earn a living on leaving the home at twenty-three

WHERE THE SUMMER CALM OF CHARITY PERPETUALLY REIGNS

Notable among the many charitable and benevolent institutions of Havana is the Casa de Beneficencia, founded by Las Casas and opened in 1794. It comprises an orphanage, maternity ward, infirmary, lunatic asylum, and home for vagrants. In the long nursery ward the babies, watched over by a motherly sister, are laid on matting on the floor to rest and stretch their limbs

Photos, A. W. Cutler

1483

[secretos cuba]

Teresa Casas Batista

"hijos de la patria" sons of the state

Orphans were the most prominent recipients of charity before the revolution. In Havana they were cared for in the ancient *Casa de Beneficiencia y Maternidad* by the nuns of St. Vincent de Paul. Individual donations and national lottery profits (an orphan drew the balls with the winning numbers) supported the charitable institution. After the rebels took power, orphans were declared *hijos de la patria* (sons of the state). The designation reflected a concern with the marginalized along with the paternalistic style of government that would now prevail. There would be no more charity—the state would look after the welfare of all Cuban children in equal measure.

The orphans were placed in group homes with staff trained to provide them with a nurturing environment, to support their education and to identify psychological problems that required treatment. Eduardo Casas researched the pattern of learning disabilities in this population and recommended treatments.

> The children were labeled Becados (grant recipients) and they were placed in houses... The Ministry of Education was put in charge of organizing those homes "casas de internados" as residences for out-of-town students as well as for the orphans. My work involved giving professional assistance to the young women who took care of the primary school age children in these homes. I gave workshops to help them communicate effectively with the children. The assumption was that these small group homes with staff trained in child development was an improvement over the environment of an institution. The Ministry asked its staff psychologists to organize a program based on a study of the mental and intellectual development of the children and to offer services so that the internados could improve their academic performance as they were not at the level of other students.

Literacy campaign

In its first years of governing, the revolution was in overdrive to eliminate social injustice. Orphans and other dispossessed members of society were the first to benefit from legislation and changes to social infrastructure. However to create widespread support for the revolution its leaders had to entice others to participate in a broad social transformation. The benefits on offer were not material but moral.

On July 5, 1960 all business and commercial property in Cuba was nationalized. Three months later the United States imposed an embargo prohibiting all exports to the island. To counter-act the fall-out over this, Castro's announced that 1961, the "Year of Education" would feature a campaign to wipe-out illiteracy on the island.[46] The initiative gave credibility to a revolution that at this point had collected many critics inside and outside the country. It recruited the population

[46] As early as April 1959, a literacy commission was established in the Ministry of Education. It organized literacy centres and recruited teachers, particularly in urban areas. Fagen: 28 Fagen, Richard R. *The Transformation of political culture in Cuba*. Stanford University Press, 1969

into the spirit of social activism that was the single greatest selling point of the massive changes taking place. Anyone Cuban who could read was asked to reach-out to fellow citizens who were illiterate. According to Julie-Marie Bunck this was a calculated measure to check alarm over the government's growing unilateral power. Nevertheless, the recruitment of youth as volunteers for this initiative touched-off panic.[47] In April of the Year of Education, secondary schools across the island closed temporarily so that students could take part in a nation-wide initiative. Those who met the basic pre-requisite, of having passed sixth grade and being at least thirteen years-of-age could apply to be a member of the literacy brigades. One hundred thousand were selected and from this larger group was formed the *Conrado Benito Brigade*. These would, in berets and uniforms imitating those of the rebeldes, travel to the most remote parts of the island to teach illiterates to read.[48]

Young teachers carrying giant pencils to symbolize literacy. Still from documentary "Maestra" on the 1961 Literacy Campaign. Maestra

Literacy volunteers were given two books *Alfabeticemos* (Let's Alphabetize), and *Venceremos* (We Shall Triumph) prepared by a team from the Ministry of Education. The former offered step-by-step instructions for literacy workers and the latter was a reading primer that used Cuban

[47] Bunck, 26

[48] Ibid., 26

spoken rhythms and images. For example, to teach the letter M it offered the rhyme: "Mi monito maromero salta de la mata al muro/mi monito maromero come platano maduro."[49]

Julie Marie Bunck contends that the textbooks were culturally specific also in their carrying key political messages of the revolution. "Although the books did not explicitly mention socialism, communism, or Marx, each consisted of twenty-four "themes of revolutionary orientation" that covered such topics as imperialism and nationalization, racial discrimination and anti-Americanism."[50]

Richard Fagan in *The Transformation of political culture in Cuba* describes goals of the campaign as being less about ideology and more about preparation for a new form of citizenship. "Both the illiterates and the literacy workers were expected to emerge from the encounter with a deeper understanding of national problems, a new concept of citizenship, and a willingness to work for the transformation of the old society.[51]

In creating the foundation for a new society, the government needed the solidarity of a population that felt involved in a moral battle. This struggle was not only about bringing about domestic reforms but defending these, and the revolution, against enemies. The two roles, activist and a vigilante, were essential for participation in the revolution. The significance of the literacy campaign, organized as a focus for 1961, the Year of Education, according to Bunck, was that it became the model, in its messages and means, to galvanize the population, "... rhetoric charged the movement with dramatic imagery of national emergency, revolutionary battle, and heroic victory."[52]

On a more abstract level, as one of the first major revolutionary initiatives, the Literacy Campaign pointed to a new contract struck between the state and its citizens. The revolutionary government would provide for everyone so long as every individual actively and continually worked towards its goals and was at the ready to defend it from its critics.

Over the Cuban airwave a message rang-out in November 1960, 'Cuban mothers don't let them take your children away! The Revolutionary Government will take them away from you when

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[49] Eduardo Casas

[50] Bunck, 25

[51] Fagen, 37

[52] Bunck, 26

they turn five and keep them until they are eighteen.' Listeners were told to report to their parish priest for further instruction. The broadcast came from an off-shore CIA-funded station.[53]

Since the summer after the rebel victory, rumors had been circulating that the government was about to suspend "Patria Potestas," the law that protected parent's rights to have control over the lives of their children. The term referred to a Roman law that Cuba inherited via Spanish Feudal Law. It reinforces parents' legal custody of their children with the caveat that if they cannot fulfill their duties as caregivers, the state takes over as trustee. The mass recruitment for youth literacy volunteers was interpreted by many as a confirmation of the imminent state control over their children.[54]

The panic fed participation in an airlift of Cuban children code-named "Operation Peter Pan" that had begun in December 1960. Organized by Father Bryan Walsh, a priest working in Miami director of Catholic Welfare Bureau it was part of a concerted CIA-backed counter-revolutionary campaign.[55] Elly Chovel, a Pedro Pan refugee, remembered that it was the school shut-downs and literacy campaign recruitment that drove numerous parents' to send their children out of the country.[56] The airlift continued even after the 1961 U.S. backed Bay of Pigs invasion. The following year however, the Cuban Missile Crisis brought to an abrupt end all flights from Havana to the United States. The operation had lasted 22 months. Many parents were not able to leave Cuba—their children would grow up in foster care.

The closure of private schools targeted the systemic inequity in education that was at the root of class division. However, it irrevocably tore the fabric of Cuban society along that very fault-line.

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[53] Dubinsky, Karen, *Without Borders: Adoption and Migration Across the Americas*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2010). , 25

[54] Ibid.

[55] Allatson, Paul, *Key terms in Latino/a cultural and literary studies*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2007. "Operation Pedro Pan was a covert scheme that brought 14,048 unaccompanied middle class children from Cuba to the USA between December 26, 1960, and the onset of the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. The scheme's name is attributed to Miami journalist Gene Miller, who introduced the term (derived from the novel by British writer J.M. Barrie) in his article "Peter Pan Means Real Life to Some Kids," in the Miami Herald on March 9, 1962. Althought he scheme had no official name, it was called El Rescate de la Ninez (Rescue of the Children) in CIA documents (Angeles Torres 2003). The operation was facilitated by such figures as George Guarch and Father Brian Walsh (Catholic Welfare Bureau), and James Baker (who had run a school in Havana for many years). They liaised secretly with Cuban families and government officials in Cuba, the USA, and a number of Caribbean states in order to obtain exit permits and flight reservations, and then met the unaccompanied children on their arrival in Miami or other Caribbean destinations. Many of these children were later reunited with their parents, although a large number were not. 183

[56] Pedraza, Silvia. *Political disaffection in Cuba's revolution and exodus*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 81

For those loyal to religious schools, the revolutionary leadership's claim that it occupied the moral high ground was an outrage since they were accustomed to, in their support of the Church's charitable work providing for the needy. The most impressionable, encouraged by the Church, saw youth recruitment through the cloudy moral lens of the Cold War. For them, removing children from the revolution took on the urgency of the global struggle between Capitalism and Communism. In their view, nothing less than who would control the minds of children, was at issue.

Family, Church and State

The debate over the distribution of power between family, Church, and state went far back and evolved in response to twentieth century political developments. Don Antonio Gonzalez de Mendoza Chief Justice in the first years of the Republic had spoken-out to protect the state's primacy over the Church as the exclusive legal arbiter of marriage. The secular state, he argued, was the only body with the power to recognize such as union because, 'the family is the essential unit of a civil society.'[57] The revolutionary government would revive the association of sovereignty with secularism and secularism with justice, central to Mendoza's political outlook. On the other hand, his sense that the family was the building block of a society had no currency in revolutionary Cuba.

The historical problem was that Cubans had been unsuccessful in establishing a strong civil society to guarantee the rights and welfare of all of its citizens. Pushed to the margins, poor families had floundered while those of the middle class under the influence of the Church through private schools had circled the wagons to create a prosperous, educated and largely morally attuned group that at the same time was incapable of altering the larger social reality. In the pre-revolutionary period, the grievance of this group was the suspension of their democracy and constitution by a dictator propped-up by foreign economic interests.

With the revolution's triumph, the constitution and the centrality of the family as the building block of a caring society was no longer an inspirational rallying point. The rebels equated sovereignty more radically with the imperative to eliminate any individual's potentially exploitive involvement in the economy and with the need for state to assume a paternalistic control over the welfare of all. Everything was to be public and nothing to be private. Accordingly, they set out to dismantle the middle class by eliminating its organizational scaffolds, namely Church, clubs and schools. This included, paradoxically, faith-based organizations that were dedicated to the public good.

The 1960 literacy campaign recruitment of youth, in the eyes of many parents, was part of a strategy to subvert their moral influence and to force them to give-up their children to the mind-control of a totalitarian state. At issue was the question of what reach the state should have within the social microcosm of the family and what control over its members the family should give-over to the state in order for all to reap the rewards of the new society.

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[57] Logan, Enid Lynette. "The 1899 Cuban marriage law controversy: Church, State and empire in the crucible of nation." *Journal of Social History* 42.2 (2008): 469+. *Academic OneFile*. (accessed. 29 Apr. 2010)

The shadow of the patriarch archetype lurked behind the patria postestad alarm. In this light, Castro, as the embodiment of the paternal Communist state was pitted against the post-war middle class "Papi." who ruled the family. A vivid depiction of the emotional effects of this clash of the titans is found in Carlos Eire *Waiting for Snow in* Havana where he describes a 1950s Havana childhood mired in a *machista* culture that ends with his abrupt removal from the influence of both his father and Castro. Behind his father's back, his mother arranged the exit of Carlos and his brother through the airlift. Decades later, Eire feels the presence of a lizard's tail, in his pocket. This, a symbol of male impotence, is his legacy as a Peter Pan refugee.

A key passage begins with a description of the petty cruelties of his brother while they were still in Cuba where the latter, like many other boys played with lizards.

> There was also a lizard's tail in his pocket. He loved to pull them off. Sometimes he caught lizards just so he could rid them of their tails, and watch the tails wag, all on their own, apart from the lizard. They had life of their own, and it was amazing to see them move. On most lizards, I think, the tail grew back. But on some, it didn't. We had one lizard in the backyard we always recognized because of the stump of a tail. It looked almost human, with its tiny stub at the rear.[58]

Denied both versions of the father, Castro who was demonized both in his home and his school, Colegio de la Salle del Vedado, and his father, with whom he had a very conflicted relationship Eire describes an experience beyond displacement. Exiled from the fatherland as well as from his father he is, in essence, as many exiled Cubans have described themselves, a cultural phantom limb.

[58] Eire, Carlos. *Waiting for Snow in Havana: Confessions of a Cuban Boy*. (New York: The Free Press. 2003). 156

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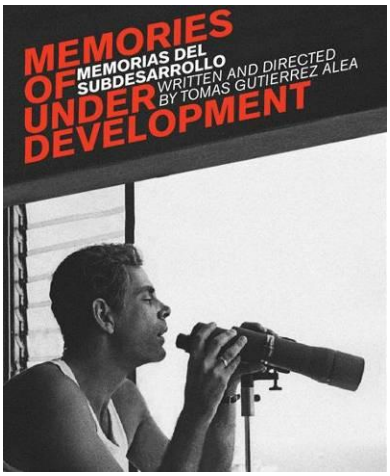
Chapter 19 Under the Shadow of the Missiles

> ...there were people, like me, who thought that within the Socialist framework under Fidel Castro, the Socialist project, there were many Christian values. However, the political part degenerated into a dictatorship and then all control was lost.—Eduardo Casas

Revolutionary Charades

Memories of Underdevelopment is perhaps the best-known Cuban film. Set in Havana on the eve of the 1962 Missile Crisis, it recreates a moment that was still fresh in collective memory at the time of its making six years later. In one of the movie's first scenes, the camera shares the view of the central character as he peers through a telescope. The panning shot pauses on tanks passing by the Hotel Nacional, turns to examine rooftop anti-aircraft artillery, and with equal interest, takes in the women peacefully sunning by the pool. Through the viewpoint of a typified resident, director Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, invites us to enter Havana at a historical moment marked by confusion and contradiction.



Sergio is a middle-class businessman who, free of his family's expectations now that all of his relatives have left, hopes to realize his potential as a writer in the new Cuba. However, he can't seem to feel at ease there. His purpose in life more murky than ever, the would-be writer wanders through Havana streets trying to identify how it has changed.

The movie is made vivid by the hand-held camera that follows the protagonist's movements and the inclusion of authentic news footage. These documentary elements flesh-out the stream-of-consciousness of the fictional Sergio. In an emblematic scene, footage of the city's pre-eminent department store burning from a saboteur's bomb accompanies the character's reflections on life after the revolution: *Havana is like a provincial town since El Encanto burned down... To think Havana was once known as the Paris of the Caribbean. That's what the whores and the tourists called it. Now it is the Tegucigalpa of the Caribbean. Not only because they burned down El*

Encanto and the shops are half-empty. It's the people. What hope do they have in life? What hope do I have? But I'm not like them. Following others' lead, Sergio struggles to absorb the lessons of recent history only to be tripped-up by the suspicion that whatever he produces as a writer wouldn't mean much anyway: Cuba, he laments, is a cultural backwater, made more marginal than ever by the international fall-out from the revolution.

A humorous social chronicle in its day, Gutierrez's movie skewers a pseudo-intellectual, unconscious that he carries the hang-ups of his class, trying to find himself in a society transformed beyond his grasp. As he takes in the view from his balcony, attracted as much by the sight of lounging women in bikinis as he is by the signs of preparation for war, he muses on his alienation. *Nothing's changed. Life goes on. It suddenly looks like a stage-set, a cardboard city. ...Everything looks so different today. Have I changed or has the city?* Unable to pin his confusion on any concrete factor his thoughts spin unproductively—is the change outside or inside of him?, is it based on the disappearance of all North American consumer goods?, or, could it be his new consciousness at work?

http://www.videos.cubacineonline.com/categorias/Peliculas-Cubanas-Gratis-y-Completas/Memoriasdelsubdesarrollo1968?videotitle=Memorias+del+subdesarrollo+%281968%29

Sergio is a man-about-town stranded in a city that, once the compass of his identity, is now imperceptibly transformed. Gutierrez, in this portrayal satirizes of an element of the middle class that must have already been archaic at the time of the film's 1968 release. Today, what emerges most strongly is the situational irony of the larger historical picture. For the feckless character who has thrown his lot in with the revolution, like all Cubans, is a bystander in events far out of his control.

The political climate of the 1962 Missile Crisis comes to the fore at various moments in the movie. Televised news footage, incorporated to highlight the disjuncture between the mindset of the character and his surrounding events, has a historical weight that overshadows its intended narrative role. Key scenes from history include the speech by Fidel proclaiming Cuba's sovereignty, and the trials of the men captured at the Bay of Pigs with the official narrator

condemning these as signal specimens of an abject bourgeois society. The events reflected in this footage set the island on a new political course, one that would deeply affect authentic intellectuals and other middle class supporters of Castro's reforms. The lampooned alienation of Gutierrez's subject was, in fact, an important aspect of early post-revolutionary society.

http://www.videos.cubacineonline.com/categorias/Peliculas-Cubanas-Gratis-y-Completas/Memoriasdelsubdesarrollo1968?videotitle=Memorias+del+subdesarrollo+%281968%29

Art as a Mirror to Society

Gutierrez' film, based on a novel by Edmundo Desnoes, was among the first feature-length productions of the *Instituto Cubano del Arte y la Industria Cinematográfica*, ICAIC. As a feature, it departed from instructional and documentary filmmaking that was the priority immediately after the revolution. Such messages as proper agricultural practices, the importance of participation in public health campaigns, and the need to use the new schools and clinics, were at the centre of these early productions. Fleets of trucks outfitted with projection equipment brought the revolution's lessons from its Havana headquarters to every corner of the island.

By the early 1960's, ICAIC under its director Alfredo Guevara was ready to take-on more artistically ambitious work that at the same time held to his idea of the social role of the medium. This involved using film to tell stories so that audiences could identify with the characters and their problems, and use this experience to search for solutions within the framework of the revolution.

Guevara, along with many others working in the arts, had been members of the anti-Batista 26th of July Movement. The hope in 1959 was that Cuba's cultural evolution, long arrested by its colonial condition then by neo-colonial domination by the US, would be jumpstarted by the revolution in its re-defining of the national patrimony and ensuring universal access to it. Accordingly, the Casa de las Americas was set-up to recover, publish and economically print works that comprised the Cuban literary canon and seminal historical works. ICAIC, also involved in holding up a mirror for Cubans to better see themselves, produced works that traced such endemic problems as racism in light of the revolution's goal to eradicate these.

The question was how, beyond the reclamation of the nation's history, cultural expression could advance the revolution's goals. With this practical focus, the experimental impulse of the 1960's was increasingly at issue. Did international arts movements strengthen or weaken art in the singular path required of it in Cuba?

The problem fed debates in the cafes of La Rampa where artists and patrons, the established and the emerging Havana cultural communities intermingled for a few brief years. An architect, beginning his practice at the time, offers a cameo of the heady scene:

> One coffeehouse, El Carmelo de Calle Calzada, briefly hosted a social mosaic of patrons who flocked to it to enjoy the best ice cream in the city. ... Former members of the Yacht Club and Vedado Tennis who had not yet gone into exile would sit at their regular tables. Proud waiters would look pejoratively at the new clients who were dressed in clothing purchased at the low-quality stores along Monte Street. Those shabbily dressed patrons arrived mesmerized at this Havana "Mecca" of such elegant consumption and *dolce far niente*. ...Here too, gathered ballet goers who would heatedly comment on the fine points of ballet foueté while they ...[would] become comically alarmed by the extemporaneous nature of a bearded rebel soldier with hand grenades hanging from his belt.
> The casting of this new collection of social characters was enriched by a group of young readers of the cultural supplement *Lunes de Revolución*. These youth were ardent fans of the recently created Cinemateca and would sit there discussing recent recitals by the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda. Only a few tables would separate them from the ballet-goers, and they might ostensibly turn their back toward them, for they were deemed silly and superficial. These young intellectuals would be enthralled over the next film of Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, and they would inevitably call him by his nickname, Titón (Titan), to impress those who might be eavesdropping. ... Seated at yet another table at the café one could find Cuban writers who might have frequented the Casa de las Américas, such as Edmundo Desnoes, Lisandro Otero, or Ambrosio Fornet, quietly chatting with Argentine writer Julio Cortázar. [59]

[59] Coyula, Scarpaci and Segre. *Havana Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 2002), 133

El Carmelo restaurant, ca. 1958 secretos cuba

Cubanidad

The post-revolutionary period produced a valuable artistic legacy created within a climate of nationalist aspiration. Nourished by the revolution's experimental impulse and dedication to social development, there was a search within each artistic medium for a formal language with which to express the nascent Cuban consciousness. For many, the route to the future lay in a fresh return to the past. In this light, Adriana Mendez credits, Alejo Carpentier and Lezama Lima with re-inventing the Cuban novel through immersive research of the roots of their culture.

> The archeology of the past has followed two different methods of historical inquiry, offered by Alejo Carpentier and Jose Lezama Lima, respectively. Carpentier's *El siglo de las luces* (Explosion in a cathedral), 1962, established a model for historical fiction characterized by the epic treatment of revolutionary episodes and the vast sweep of a period. Works written in the wake of Carpentier expose the problem of how to fictionalize history, focusing either on the writer/protagonist or on the temporal structure of the novel."[60]

Carpentier developed a baroque style to express the historical scope as much as the complex cultural viewpoint of his protagonists. The central character, in his novel, *El Reino de Este Mundo* (1949), for example is a black slave in revolutionary Haiti of the late 18th century, who as a form of human cultural intersection, experiences the dominant European culture through his own African legacy.

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[60] Adriana Mendez Rodenas. 'Literature and Politics in the Cuban Revolution: The Historical Image', *A History of Literature in the Caribbean: Hispanic and francophone regions*, Volume 1, ed. Albert James Arnold, (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1994) 284

Another of Carpentier's novels, *Explosion in a Cathedral* (Spanish title: El Siglo de las Luces, *The Century of Lights*) (1962), which he wrote while working at the Casa de las Americas, explores the repercussions of the French Revolution in the New World through the adventures of a set of characters. The style, most notably in the passages describing the geography and sights of the Caribbean is rich and sensual, with complex rhythms. Its opposing emblems, the guillotine and the printing press, gave prescient warning of the violence that, along with progress, is the byproduct of every revolution.

The Baroque, for Carpentier, as much as for Lezama Lima, was not limited to being a style of the past but was the formal language and spirit of cultural fusion that is Cuba. Expressing the patterns of thought and custom as these emerge out of a historical intertwining of cultures was, in their eyes, at the heart of Cuban literature. Its task was to ground readers in the poetics of the precise place and past to which they belonged.

Cubanacán Monument to the Revolution

While film and literature were central to Cuban revolutionary culture, architecture did not occupy the same role. This was due not only to the scarcity of resources but because this branch of design was associated with the dictator-era private wealth. Among the few commissions was a new series of buildings to house a National Schools of the Arts. Ricardo Porro's Visual Arts and Dance buildings (1960-64) became emblematic of the entire complex known as Cubanacán.

Porro had a suitably epic conception of architecture with which to tackle the challenging project. In 1957 he had written in the journal *Nuestro Tiempo* that architecture in essence is '...the expression of the mutual action between man and the environment in which he develops his life [and]..., the expression of the spiritual characteristics common to a people.'[61] The School of the Visual Arts embodies the idea of syncretism as a source of cultural resurgence. For the artists who were to train in the building in the following decades it was a tantalizing trace of a forgotten time. With its recent recognition as a national monument, it has at last assumed an official place in history. The school stands for a vision of the place of art in revolution—one obliterated by the economic and political strictures that began after 1962.

"Within the revolution everything; outside the revolution, nothing."

Already by1968, the year Memories of Underdevelopment was released, the foundational debates and initial creative explosion had begun to recede into history. The bellwether event was Castro's 1961 Words to the Intellectuals speech, a response to concern over government censorship of a film showing Cubans out on the town in Havana. Castro, in the national library, set out a formula: "Dentro de la Revolución todo; contra la Revolución nada."(Within the Revolution, everything; against the Revolution, nothing.")

[61] Ricardo Porro, "El sentido de la tradicion," *Nuestro Tiempo* 16 (Havana: 1957)

Adriana Méndez describes how artists and intellectuals, from being among the visionaries of the revolution's project at its outset, gradually became secondary players in the new political climate.

> In the cultural arena, these tensions resulted in the first debate over the nature of revolutionary art and the role of the intellectual, the famous "Conversations in the Library" held in June, 1961 that led to the demise of *Lunes de Revolucion*, the literary supplement of Carlos Franqui's leading daily which gathered the most innovative writers of the "new" Cuba (Luis [1990] 498-99). The members of the *Lunes's* editorial board – Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Pablo Armando Fernández, Heberto Padilla, Virgilio Piñera, César Leante, among others – struck a daring note, turning *Lunes* into a vehicle of national and international culture. *Lunes* thus marked that moment of plenitude during the early years of the revolution that opened Cuba to the world and made it a model for the rest of Latin America. After the defeat of the Bay of Pigs invasions in April, 1961 and the declaration of the socialist character of the Cuban revolutions, Cuban writers were subject to political criteria and all artistic creation was judged according to "to the Revolution's prevailing social, political and artistic parameters.[62]

Pilgrims to Havana

As historian Karen Dubinsky notes, it was ironic that the revolution had tremendous youth appeal outside the island at the same moment when the Peter Pan airlift was saving Cuba's young from Communism. The high-minded rebels in their rumpled uniforms, tousled hair and devil-may-care attitudes looked even better to the young baby boomers beside contemporary world leaders. 'Dwight Eisenhower, Charles de Gaulle, Harold MacMillan, Nikita Krushchev, and Mao Tse-tung, all born in the nineteenth century, had already been in power for many years.' Cuban revolutionary leaders, moreover, were re-tooling Socialism at a moment when it was a beacon for youth. New Leftists in Europe and North America, according to Dubinsky, saw in the Cuban Revolution an inspiring illustration of youth culture in action. 'Fidel, like James Dean and the Beatles, was alarmingly hip.'[63] Underscoring the global significance of what was happening on the small island, Jean Paul Sartre went to view first-hand the great experiment. For him, among others, what was unfolding was nothing less than the necessary next step in political and social evolution begun with earlier revolutions. During his March 1960 visit, he stated that what made it distinct from the French and Russian antecedents was that its political theory emerged not from pre-existing dogma but responsive action. With man and freedom as its central aims, the Cuban revolution had, in his eyes, effectively stood-up to the greatest of contemporary ills, colonialism and imperialism.

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[62] Méndez Rodenas, Adriana, *A comparative History of Literature in European Languages, A History of Literature in the Caribbean: Hispanic and francophone regions.* Ed; Albert James Arnold. (Dopico Black [1979], 19:108) 284

[63] Dubinsky, 38

Sartre's remarks were given weight during his Havana stay by counter-revolutionaries' blowing-up of the ship *le Coubre*, in the harbor as it prepared to unload armaments from Belgium. In solidarity with his hosts, he denounced this act of American imperial aggression. On another occasion during his visit, he praised Cuba's brand of socialism an important feature being what he described as direct democracy, as free of the type of ideological stranglehold that afflicted East-bloc states. The Cuban revolution, he claimed, 'embodied that magic moment of "fusion" in which "each person is linked to all the others in a collective enterprise.'

In the United States, the ideals of the revolution attracted many followers who began to watch developments with interest. In the same year as Sartre's visit, from the New York editorial office of *The Catholic Worker* Dorothy Day wrote to her readers about the situation in Cuba, adding, "We have been invited to visit by a young woman who works in the National Library." Day had been carefully weighing the positive with the negative trends. The troubling reports of the persecution of the Church, its priests and the faithful came in alongside those of ambitious national programs to eliminate hunger, racism, homelessness, illiteracy and other root sources of poverty.[64]

[64] In announcing her intention to visit Day had written: We are on the side of the revolution. We believe there must be new concepts of property, which is proper to man, and that the new concept is not so new. There is a Christian communism and a Christian capitalism... We believe in farming communes and cooperatives and will be happy to see how they work out in Cuba. We are in correspondence with friends in Cuba who will send us word as to what is happening in religious circles and in the schools. We have been invited to visit by a young woman who works in the National Library in Havana and we hope some time we will be able to go. "About Cuba"by Dorothy Day

Day was not put-off when the following year after the Bay of Pigs invasion Castro declared Cuba a Marxist Leninist state. During the Depression, she and the French fellow leftist Peter Maury had drawn followers to their work tending to the homeless who drifted through New York's inner city. Publicized through a journal they founded in 1933, their experiences created the Catholic Worker movement. Its members were committed to nonviolence, voluntary poverty, prayer, and hospitality for the homeless. Uncompromised by belonging to official Church or government, they were free to protest injustice, war, racism, and violence of all forms. It was in this context that transcended ideology and politics that Day looked to Cuba for new grass-roots models for creating social equity. 'There is a Christian communism and a Christian capitalism... We believe in farming communes and cooperatives and will be happy to see how they work out in Cuba.'

Dorothy Day, far right Catholic Worker Movement

On balance, Dorothy Day approved of the revolution. But while she identified with Communism's goal of creating a just society, she condemned the militarization and atheism that Communism entailed. Troubled by the paradoxes at the heart of the revolution, in 1962 at the age of 65 she embarked on one of her pilgrimages to witness and report on the condition of the poor in different parts of the world.

The Catholic Worker, July-August 1961, 1, 2, 7, 8.
http://www.catholicworker.org/Dorothyday/reprint.cfm?TextID=246Summary

If Sartre's pilgrimage to Cuba was fueled by disgust with the French involvement in Algeria and the failure of European Communism, Day was drawn to the island by a desire to witness an alternative to America's materialist postwar culture. Social development, she believed, came through the experience of God. Lamenting Americans' distorting of Christianity to foster a sense of Cold War moral superiority, she wrote, 'Certainly we have kept God out of our own school system here in the United States. What is worst of all is using God and religion to bolster up our own greed, our own attachment to property and putting God and country on an equality.'

Teresita Batista, the young woman who had extended the invitation to Day, received an acceptance the following year. As Eduardo Casas explains, for them, the work of the elderly woman reflected the synthesis of their liberal Catholic values with the spirit of social reform at the heart of the revolution:

> She supported many principles of the revolution and that was my position as well—that there were very positive changes taking place and that the capitalist system had to be transformed to meet social needs such as those of the literacy campaign, to stop institutionalization of the orphan schools, to dismantle private clubs that permitted racial segregation (there were many beaches and sport clubs that barred blacks), as well as putting an end to the inequality between rich and poor. These were all principles that had been defended by the Catholics but had not reached a political expression that called for the transformation of institutions.

Dorothy Day arrived on the island at a moment when Cubans themselves were trying to understand which way the winds were blowing. The revolution still in its hopeful, formative phase increasingly was tinged with alarm. In March 1961, a CIA backed and trained army of exiles had landed at the Bay of Pigs where they were summarily defeated by Castro's army. Within Cuba, the invasion fanned widespread fear of further counter-revolutionary violence. The public humiliations of the rag-tag army of exiles in televised show trials whipped up popular anger and consolidated support for more unilateral government power to respond to the threat to national sovereignty.

Missile Crisis

Day's visit coincided with the second event that determined the political course of the island. She arrived in October on the eve of the Missile Crisis, a development that caused authorities to revoke her journalists' pass and cancel all direct flights between Cuba and the U.S. In discussions with Day, her hosts discussed the rapid escalation of hostility. In their view, Castro's denouncement of Yankee imperialism and American accusations of his Communism was an interdependent dynamic. Many decades later Eduardo reiterates how they saw the situation:

> By characterizing the changes after the revolution as Communist, before they were defined as such, it ironically served to affirm and give legitimacy to Communism in Cuba. The revolutionary government seemed to say, 'Well, if you insist that we're Communists then we're Communists and will continue to fight for justice and for our sovereignty.

The outcome of self-fulfilling threats, the Missile Crisis held a bleak prospect for those in Cuba who, like Eduardo and Teresita, realized that, in this Cold War brinksmanship, Castro had lost all control. However, unlike North Americans who had, throughout the 1950's been steeling themselves for its eventuality, most Cubans found it hard to imagine nuclear war. "If they had said that American planes were on their way,' remembers Eduardo, 'or something that was part of a conventional war, and connected to what, for example had already happened in the Bay of Pigs, that would have been imaginable. Everything was set-up to repel a conventional invasion. But nuclear war was impossible to imagine.'

Under the circumstances, it was fortunate that the demands of their growing family helped to keep the young couple focused on their day-to-day concerns of school, diapers, and meals. Spurred by the imminent arrival of a third child, late in 1960, they had bought their first family home. Located on 28th Street between Third and Fifth Avenues, it was just around the corner from a park with a marble columned bandstand beside the church of Santa Rita. The neighborhood was Miramar, that part of Havana that would see the most radical re-purposing in the immediate post-revolutionary period as part of a broad urban reform program. Dorothy Day, staying with the Casas family in the formerly quintessential middle class neighborhood in the fall of 1962 would be in a good location to witness the results of the revolution's first attempts to solve the most urgent social issues in Havana. These took the form of changes to education and housing.

Miramar Cradle of the New Society

Urban historians Scarpaci, Segre and Coyula in *Havana, Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis*, describe the dual nature city at the time of the revolution. They contrast the designed and well-serviced districts, with the places of poverty 'a seemingly endless number of subdivisions leading out to the southeast, south, and west.' As urbanists they relate the problems of the poor to the isolation from the service grid, road network and poor quality housing. The revolutionary government identified the same marginality as the source of a profound social schism that they meant immediately to repair.[65] Fidel Castro, in a dictated autobiography, describes how within the first days of power the rebels razed the most notorious Havana slums. Shortly after, more systematically, the revolutionary government set out legislation and policies to address the roots of urban poverty. "At first, we put an end to some of the marginalized *barrios*. But a culture of marginality already existed. Even though you built new houses, the phenomena that occurred in that place tended to continue to occur, unless a new culture arises on the basis of education." [66]

To eliminate the segregation of rich and poor, black and white, in their respective neighborhoods the government took a two-pronged approach. It both leveled the social playing field by providing universal access to education and, secondly it altered the homogeneity of the city's privileged districts, allowing for the settlement of the formerly deprived beside its traditional

[65] Coyula, Scarpaci and Segre. 99

[66] Ramonet, Ignacio**.** *Fidel Castro: my life: a spoken autobiography*. (New York: Simon and Schuster), 231

residents. Miramar, where there was good housing stock, parks and schools was where the effects of the government's policy became most visible.

The homes of those who had fled the country, most notably in Miramar, came into government ownership. Many of these became residences for students from outlying areas with substandard schools. Other new inhabitants of the district were the formerly institutionalized orphans who, in the former private homes, had more nurturing living quarters. Miramar would now be the spawning grounds of the well fed, sheltered, educated and racially integrated work force dedicated to the progress of the revolution.

Neighborhoods were designated for segments of Havana's population according to new ranking. Reserved for senior government officers and diplomats, were the most exclusive neighborhoods where swimming pools and sprawling gardens surrounded houses linked by serpentine streets.[67] Off-setting this top-down control was a spirit of individual enterprise as Havana became a centrifuge of out-migrating and in-migrating groups. In this withdrawal out and advance into the existing housing stock, one person's closure was another's fresh start in life. Mansions left by the wealthy became the homes of former domestic servants who, in turn, invited family and friends to move-in. Many members of the rebel army, and *campesinos* who had been welcomed in the capital through an official campaign, successfully joined the scramble and stayed for good.[68]Illustrating this new reality Eduardo Casas describes his Miramar neighbors:

> Beside us another house that had been vacated was now the home of the maids that had worked there. Many houses were used for residences for the *Becados* the students from outside of Havana that were sent to the better schools in the city and there were given free room and board. The house to the north of ours was one of these and on the other side was a woman who had declared herself Socialist and would eavesdrop on our conversations and denounced us to the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution.

[67]Coyula, Scarpaci and Segre. 136

[68] Coyula, Scarpaci and Segre, 2002

28th Street home of Casas Batista family 1962-66, kitchen window (photo: T. Casas, 2005)

The Eyes and Ears of the State

The *Comité de Defensa de la Revolución*, driven by both fear and opportunism, was the government's response to the socio-political circumstances of the period. It drew on the desire of those who had profited from the revolution to protect it and advance their lot under the new regime. The year 1960 had seen the emergence of the counter-revolution that took the form of economic sabotage through bombings inside Havana and, as well, air hits to such economic targets as cane fields and oil refineries. The revolutionary government now had to divide its efforts between the re-design of society, and defense from both its internal and external enemies. A nation-wide network of neighborhood organizations was set-up to be the 'eyes and ears of the revolution.' Members of the CDR, who were most often women, kept detailed records of their neighbors, so extending the vigilance of the state deep into the private lives of its citizens.[69] The notes on Eduardo and Teresita were not only to expose misdemeanors but also to create a working profile of their political reliability. With the pretext of defense against its enemies and exploiting individuals' desire for advantage, the government began to extend itself into all aspects of life.

[69] Sanchez, Isabel, Cuba's Neighborhood Watches: 50 Years of Eyes, Ears, *Associated Press*, September 27, 2010, http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gq3GU2QzFyRWT84_YNvI3mgOy7tg?docId=CNG.cd0ab416a2c7901c0abb23f392c5057d.ad1 (accessed, August 10, 2011)

In December 1960, Teresita had asked her architect uncle Eugenio Batista, to carry out an inspection of a small three-bedroom home.[70] Given the thumbs-up, they applied to buy it. "Because the homes that had been vacated by those who had left were the property of the government," remembers Eduardo, "one had to request it from the government and then pay the government the rent for the house. However, one only made payments until the time that the mortgage was paid. In other words we had three years of payments and then the house belonged to us as long as we remained living there."

Underscoring that private property could become a public resource if one betrayed the revolution by leaving, the local CDR carried out an inventory of personal belongings in every household. To receive an exit visa it was essential to show that all property remained in good condition with the home.

Dorothy Day Tours Havana

As invigilators of the neighborhood, the members of one of Miramar's CDR would have noted with great interest the presence of an American guest in Eddy and Teresita's home in October of 1962. In their tour of Havana to show Dorothy Day representative sights of the revolution, Teresita and Eduardo stopped to view a re-purposed building with family associations. As he recalls,

> —we went to the house of "Tia Bebita" (Tia Isabel) as Teresita called her...Isabel had a fabulous house[71] in El Vedado, very luxurious... that house, now state property had been converted into an information centre or something like that. Female militia officers, *milicianas*, who carried revolvers, were posted there and on seeing them Dorothy said, 'No, no, no, women should not carry revolvers, women are for giving birth not for producing death.' (laughter) She had a very similar attitude to ours, one that kept us in Cuba in the early stages of the revolution.[72]

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[70] The architect's own home built in 1944, in Miramar (3 #1205, between 12 and 14 Miramar, Playa.

[71] The daughter of Miguel Mendoza, Margarita, and her husband Manuel Carvajal in 1915 commissioned the American Thomas Hastings to design a residence at Seventeenth and I Streets I in El Vedado. Hastings, a leading exponent of the American Renaissance style created a mansion in which Classical symmetry was solidly anchored by colossal twin Corinthian columns supporting a two-story portico that, in turn, was flanked by twin royal palm trees and guarded by a pair of bronze dogs cast from the originals at a French chateau. The house was bought by Isabel Falla and her husband David Suero in 1932.

[72] Eduardo Casas

To be an analphabetico, means to be an illiterate.
My hostess in speaking of Marjorie Rios,
said she had alphabetized Rosa, her maid.
And every night in Havana every person,
hotel clerk, waiter, dishwasher
goes to school for an hour and a half.

"On Pilgrimage In Cuba"--Part II
The Catholic Worker, October 1962, 1, 2.

To the readers *of The Catholic Worker*, Day wrote about her contact with the professionals engineering the new educational system,

> I telephoned Lou and Lanna (sic) Jones, they told me of this final meeting of educational leaders at which Fidel was to speak. They both work in the Ministry of Education, one as a psychologist and the other as a social worker. We were accompanied by Elena Freyre de Andrade whose grandfather had been mayor of Havana and who was head of one of the departments. ... In my opinion, having heard Fidel on radio many times and this time face to face he is truly a great speaker, clear, distinct, and repeating the points he wishes to strike home over and over again. 'He is the greatest teacher in Cuba,' Lou Jones says.[73]

Lou and "Lena," the latter named in honor of Vladimir Lenin, Jones were American Communists, who had come to Cuba to work in solidarity with the revolution. Along with Eduardo Casas they were employed in the Primary Education department in which Elena Freyre was as an administrator. Maria Teresa Freyre, the aunt of Elena, in the same years had hired Teresita to work at the National Library. Elena was married to Ricardo Porro, architect and friend of Eduardo.[74] The Casas-Jones-Porro couples were friends whose common values and professional ties held them together at a moment such networks were dissolving among most others of their class.

Eduardo Casas and the Jones's were part of a project-team for the Ministry's Vanguard Teachers, *Maestros de la Vanguardia*, campaign. The brainchild of then director of Primary Education Abel Prieto, it was one of a number of measures to improve school standards

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[73] Day, Dorothy, "About Cuba" *The Catholic Worker*, July-August 1961, 1, 2, 7, 8. http://www.catholicworker.org/Dorothyday/reprint.cfm?TextID=246Summary

[74] Eduardo Casas

throughout the island. Teachers were trained by the Ministry staff to carry out professional development of fellow teachers in the most remote schools. Along with this, the Eduardo Casas used the *Maestros de la Vanguardia* to carry out a research project on the social conditions that affected the education in rural areas and to track the impact of government interventions. The resulting research gave empirical evidence of improvements within the span of two years. The study, published in a magazine *Psicología y Educación*, informed subsequent programs. [75]

Left to right: unidentified visiting East European psychologist, Teresita Batista, Eddy Casas, Lena Jones, Lou Jones, wife of psychologist, Tropicana Club, Havana, ca. 1964

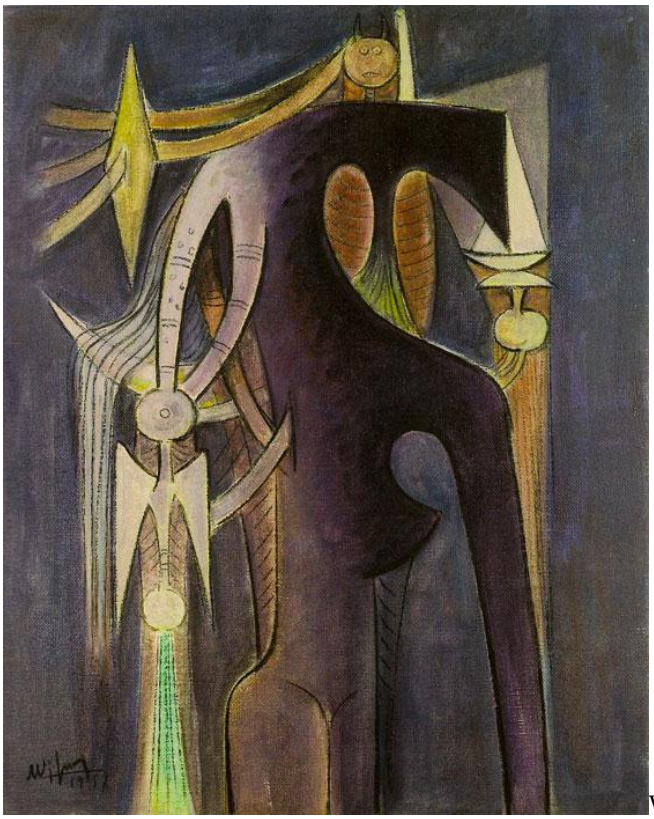
Tradition from a New Angle

Signaling the importance of education, a complex of buildings for professional training in the arts was ordered constructed shortly after the revolution. Just as Batista's army barracks was renamed Ciudad Libertad, and transformed into an educational centre, the neighboring Country Club that had served as meeting ground for the elites, was renamed Cubanacán and chosen as the site for the arts schools.

[75] Ibid.

Following Castro's victory Porro had returned to Havana after living for several years in Caracas, Venezuela where he had taken refuge, fearing arrest for his involvement in the urban underground. On his arrival, he was sought-out to design the Cubanacán complex, according to the functionary who hired him, because Fidel had ordered the most cutting-edge architecture. From among the series of buildings to be constructed, Porro chose the Visual Arts and Dance schools and recruited two Italian architects Roberto Gottardi and Vittorio Garatti to carry-out the others.

In conceiving of the plan for the two schools, Porro looked to the spirit of Afro-Cuban culture. He felt this to be an appropriate reflection of that historical moment when the Catholic elite was fleeing the country so making way for the ascendance of the other, formerly repressed half of the national patrimony. The animism of Santeria, already the source of inspiration for such modernist artists as Wilfredo Lam, became Porro's essential point of reference.



Wifredo Lam's "Untitled (Femme Cheval)" (1957) Web., September 15, 2011, http://www.artinfo.com/news/enlarged_image/29471/127736/

Escuelas Nacionales de Arte, Artes Plasticas, arq. Ricardo Porro, photo: Adrián Mallol i More, 2008, Web. Sept. 15, 2011, http://www.panoramio.com/photo/2308159

Escuelas Nacionales de Arte, Artes Plasticas, arq. Ricardo Porro, photo: Adrián Mallol i More, 2008, Web. Sept. 15, 2011, http://www.panoramio.com/photo/2308161

The architect took the elaborate rhythmic structures and organic forms of Afro-Cuban art translating these materially in compositions of brick hand-constructed vaults. In speaking of the School of Visual Arts he explains, that above all, he meant his buildings to be an echo of primordial creative energy. 'I conceived of the building as a manifestation of Eros... the point of departure of my School could have been Gaia, the Greek goddess of fertility, and equally Ochun. The theme was Eros, and of course it was the Eros that we inherited from Africa.[76]

It represented, according to Porro, a response to a moment in which the Cuban culture was taking a new course.

> In returning to Cuba at a time of profound social change I was forced to reconsider its tradition and to see it from a new angle. I didn't want to continue copying the patio, the mosaics and the louvers of the colonial home and to synthesize these with the architectural fashion seen in magazines. Tradition involves capturing the spirit of a people. ...But, it is also designed in the image of a city....
>
> However, in the School of Dance, the content is totally different. ... I wanted to capture the moment of the Revolution. **...** Revolutions have never been expressed much in art.... I tried to reflect in this other school something of what I was living through, an emotional explosion of a people, a feeling of exaltation. The entire entrance to the School of Dance is a form of explosion that begins in the ground and expands outward and up so that the vaults seem to be lifted, inflated by this force....I wanted to reflect also the lightness and lift of the dancers as this movement would refract in space.... And, of course it was also in the image of the city, a city that was the revolution.

Escuelas Nacionales de Arte, Danza Contemporanea, arq. Ricardo Porro, photo: Adrián Mallol i More, 2008, Web. Sept. 15, 2011, http://www.panoramio.com/photo/2308476

[76] *Encuentro* 32 primavera 2004, "Architectura: Homenaje a Ricardo Porro", Ricardo Porro entrevista por Juan Luis Morales. 17

While Porro insists that he was breaking from the project of modernist colonial architecture, Eduardo Rodriguez puts his design for the schools within the trajectory initiated with the cultural nationalism debates of the 1920's. (Rodriguez: Theory and Practice of Modern Regionalism in Cuba) In that period, Leonardo Morales argued for the Cuban regionalist adaptation of international modernism. Eugenio Batista, the most accomplished exponent of this trend summarized the modern national architectural vernacular in the three P's –puerta, persiana, portal. (*portal* or portico/veranda, louvers/persian blinds, and courtyard/patio).

Manuel Guiterrez, 1954, House of Paulino Ingelmo Arquitectura Habanera

Batista was not advocating a nostalgically regressive quotation of a past but a continual re-working of the capacity for built design to address social needs. '...but we should not make the mistake of thinking that by copying our colonial houses we will solve today's problems...Although the natural environment has remained the same, the social environment, however, is different. Climate and landscape are the same, but that is not the case for our customs."[77] Rodriguez argues that the Cuban regionalist movement encompassed a great formal diversity nevertheless it was united in the quest for a creative balance of varying influences. Each construction was a reconciliation of the seemingly opposite categories: modernity and tradition, the universal and local, international vanguardism and national identity. The height of innovation within this approach had been in the 1940's and 1950's in the form of domestic architecture for

[77] Batista, Eugenio. "La casa cubana," *Artes Plásticas* 2 (Havana: 1960): 4-7 Rodriguez, Eduardo Luis, Theory and practice of modern regionalism in Cuba, Docomomo, September 2005

Havana's suburbs.[78] In this context, Porro was in fact adhering to the principles that had been in development for the past four decades but applying them to another scale and function of building. Instead of being concerned with home-building he was creating a monument to a conception of a national culture in a highly original way. His buildings were made to evoke and celebrate nothing less than the visceral sensation, the gut-feeling, of revolution.

In the recently republished best-seller *Revolution of Forms, Cuba's Forgotten Art Schools*, John Loomis describes the story of Porro's master works as one of 'revolutionary passion, betrayal, and redemption. The author, a prominent American architectural historian, makes the claim that it was the publication of his book that forced the Cuban government to declare the National Schools for the Arts a national monument in 2010.

> Prior to the publication of Revolution of Forms in 1999, few were aware that the most outstanding architectural achievement of the Cuban Revolution, the Escuelas Nacionales de Arte (National Art School), stood neglected just outside Havana. Three architects who aimed to reinvent architecture just as the revolution hoped to reinvent society were commissioned. However, before construction was completed, the school was subjected to an ideological attack that branded it as not in keeping with revolutionary ideals. The organic complex of brick and terra-cotta Catalan-vaulted structures was abandoned, until the original publication of Revolution of Forms brought it to the attention of the world...'[79]

The story of the architectural complex's rise and fall from grace is given an insider's spin in *Dancing with Cuba: A Memoir of the Revolution*, Alma Guillermoprieto's reminiscences of teaching modern dance at the school in the early seventies. She points to the revolutionary government's distaste of the sexual and religious content as a major problem for the architect. It was, she explains, anathema for a monument to an internationalist Marxist revolution to, for example feature a papaya fountain that was so obviously a '...stamp of ego-centric, sensualist bourgeois decadence at odds with ideological rigor required of revolution..[80]

Loomis too, emphasizes the originality that made the schools a target for revolutionary zealots. It was the hand-laid brick vaults, the unique feel of the spaces and the worldly content that would cause it to be denounced as 'bourgeois' by association. Individualistic and expressive not strictly functionalist, purpose-built, and universal in form and content it was taboo in a revolutionary society. "... the accusation put forward by the enemies of Porro, Garatti, and Gottardi as they plotted their fall from grace [was that] The Escuelas Nacionales de Arte revalidated

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[78] Rodriguez: The first valid results of the modern regionalist thought that developed for over twenty years were erected at the end of the 1930s; the trend grew slowly during the 1940s, saw many of its best models realized in the 1950s and reached its apex with the five National Art Schools of Cubanacán in Havana (1961-1965), by architects Ricardo Porro, Vittorio Garatti and Roberto Gottard.

[79] http://www.revolutionofforms.com/

[80] Guillermoprieto, Alma. *Dancing with Cuba: A Memoir of the Revolution*, (New York: Vintage, 2007) 271

individualistic and skill-based craftsmanship... the schools were built of brick and not prefabricated modules, they promoted sensuality and alluded to ideas of *cubanidad* and Africanness that were unacceptable to the Revolution, which was proletarian, committedly internationalist, and resolutely opposed to any and all manifestations of decadence."

The denunciations, that had begun as early as the start of construction in 1960 swelled in 1963 and by 1965, according to Loomis, the project became a source of discontent for Fidel too at which time the Ministry of Construction ceased to fully support the building program, leaving the complex of schools unfinished. Without ceremony students and faculty moved in by 1965 and for decades coped with the deterioration that was in part due to the aborted fabrication of the complex.

According to Loomis, Porro tried to speak to Fidel to ask that he be allowed to leave Cuba on good terms. In 1966, Celia Sánchez herself notified him that the plane tickets that would take him and his wife into exile in Paris had been authorized.

In a tribute to Loomis in the 'Revolution of Forms' promotional website Ricardo Porro states, "While many officials attacked my architecture, Loomis defended it in front of the world. It made many in Cuba discover that architecture can be poetry. In fact, the freedom of forms of the buildings influenced several generations of young artists who studied there. ..."[81] Notable among the generations of young artists inspired by their school are those that came to the fore in the 1980s, giving new prominence to Cuban contemporary art. While most of these now work outside the country, younger artists such as Carlos Garaicoa explicitly address the yearning to reconcile the initial revolutionary dreams with its subsequent fractured reality.

[81] http://www.revolutionofforms.com/

He describes the subject of his art as "...the phenomenon of modernity in its incompleteness and the correlating frustration and decay of 20th century utopias and social dreams..."A token fiction framed his early drawings and installations as being the works of an architect/urban planner envisioning a new city from the architectural remains of a remote era:

> I would present myself as an "architect" who, on encountering fragments of ruins while roaming around in Havana, would reinvent the city, a city that, by the way, was almost entirely constructed in the '60s. Those works aimed at constructing a utopian project for the future amid a city inhabited by frustration, human and urban decay. The fragmentation of the city would become a metaphor for a "possible" physical and ideological reconstruction by means of first-world alternatives related to notions of luxury and comfort foreign to Cuba, at least in the last 40 years.[82]

Nuevas arquitecturas o una rara insistencia para entender la noche (New Architectures or a Rare Insistence on Understanding the Night), 1999-2001, Japanese paper with lights, wood, and wire. Courtesy of the artist and Lombard-Freid Fine Arts.

[82] Garaicoa, Carlos. Interview by Holly Block. ***BOMB 82/Winter 2003***, ART ***http://bombsite.com/issues/82/articles/2523***

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Garaicoa, Carlos. Interview by Holly Block. BOMB 82/Winter 2003, ART http://bombsite.com/issues/82/articles/2523

Chapter 20

Epilogue: An Island Outside History

Without the Soviet Union, the Cuban Revolution survived by turning itself into a new temporal category: the Special Period. Cuba became, for Cubans and foreigners alike, an island outside history, lingering in a sort of timeless eternal... [83]

Kathryn Hernandez Reguant

Left Behind

A scene of bike riders opens the 1994 Cuban feature *Madagascar.* Framed individually, each rider leans forward; personal effort merges into an image of collective strain as the audience sees one cyclist after another pedalling against the wind. The swelling orchestral music subsides and a woman's voice fades in. “The fact is,” she says as the camera follows the close-up medical examination of her ears and eyes, “I sleep. I sleep and I dream but my dreams consist of the reality of everyday life... I would like to dream about something... anything. But no, it's always the same.” In these first scenes director Fernando Perez establishes the bleak mood that was the hallmark of Cuban life in the 1990s.

The movie focuses on the life of a Havana physics professor who struggles to provide for her elderly mother and adolescent daughter during a time of economic hardship. Proud of her grip on reality she nevertheless mourns her inability to dream, the only measure available to escape the day to day grind. The daughter rejects her mother's hard-edged view of life, seeking to transport herself from her surroundings she is drawn to spirituality, music, art and the dream of travel. “I’m going to travel to Madagascar. ... It's the unknown.” The name of this faraway place becomes a personal incantation. Panoramic views of Havana reveal people standing on rooftops hands lifted, eyes closed, as they echo the girl's chant through the city. The daughter who seeks out transcendent states of mind to escape the drabness of life alongside the mother worn down by the effort of survival symbolizes the complementary aspects of Cuba's Special Period experience.

[83] Kathryn Hernandez Reguant *Cuba in the Special Period: Culture and Ideology in the 1990's* (New York:Palgrave MacMillan, 2009) 12

In 1989 as the Berlin Wall came down Castro warned of imminent shortages of basic necessities. The Special Period, as it became known, was dominated by the government's belt-tightening measures to cope with the loss of Soviet economic support. Without generously subsidized fuel imports the agricultural and industrial sectors ground to a virtual halt. Food rations dwindled to subsistence-level. Alternative systems for accessing basic goods and services such as person-to-person bartering developed in the place of the state regulated transactions. Bikes replaced cars on the streets of Havana. Produce gardens were planted in vacant lots. Forced into sudden self-reliance Cubans' perception of the relationship between individual, society and state irrevocably shifted.

Madagascar was among the last films made with full funding from ICAIC (*Instituto Cubano del Arte y la Industria Cinematográficos*) before the Special Period forced Cuban filmmakers into co-productions with foreign producers.[84] The nurturing, protective bubble of the national agency that had given rise to the country's most prestigious and popular art form was suddenly popped. Almost thirty years before, Tomas Gutierrez Alea's *Memories of Underdevelopment* (1968) enjoyed international acclaim and went on to have a wide and lasting influence. It was proof of the artistic success of the revolution through investment in its cultural infrastructure.

Although they represent opposite poles, the beginning and end, of the most important chapter of Cuban cinema, the two films have parallels. Both open with characters struggling to adjust their perceptions to a changed reality. Situated in Havana they use the movement of protagonists through its spaces to crystallize the sense of individual crisis. In Gutierrez Alea's film the central character Sergio, sees through his balcony telescope the scene of readiness for military confrontation during the Missile Crisis. The middle class bon vivant struggles to define, beyond this, what it is about the larger city that makes it feel so different from before. He is eventually able to discern that Havana is caught in a drama in which his part has been written out. Not integrated in the revolutionary process Sergio is a loose thread in the new social fabric of his city.

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[84] Venegas, Cristina. "Filmmaking with Foreigners" *Cuba in the Special Period, Culture and Ideology in the 1999s.* Hernandez Reguant, Ariana. ed. (New York: MacMillan Palgrave, 2009) 37

A recurring scene in *Madagascar* shows the family, three generations of women, not travelling but moving house from one urban location to another. They are squeezed into a car filled with their possessions, the vistas outside the window blocked by a mirror that reflects the daughter's inward, disconnected state. As in *Memories of Underdevelopment,* the central characters restlessly move through the city, in their case repeatedly shifting residences. However, while Sergio is the object of satire, a human residue of an earlier era, the women in *Madagascar* stand for the futile escapist manoeuvres of an isolated population. The suffering of the Special Period reinforced the impression among Cubans that they were collectively alone, like Sergio, the central character in *Memories of Underdevelopment;* their country had become a historical anomaly.

Economic Crisis, Tourism and Market Reform

Desperation and invention, suspicion and competition were the forces that shaped and bonded all those who lived through the Special Period. The prolonged crisis, initially promoted as a short-term emergency plan for the eventuality of a siege following an American invasion, suggested to Cubans that they were alone in a world that had rejected Communism and that their leaders had no clear vision of the road ahead. Describing the ethos of those years, Ariana Hernandez Reguant highlights how people were brought together by hunger and the fatalistic understanding that they were in the midst of a historical closing without direction to a future.

> The Special Period...brings up memories of deprivation and hopelessness; of hunger and heat; of wheeling and dealing, of dreams of a life elsewhere. Raising pigs in bathtubs, making omelets without eggs and pizzas with melted condoms, getting married for the state-allocated free case of beer, and other epic tales of survival, seldom void of black humor, form the lore of the time. As the state was forced to withdraw from everyday economic activity, leaving the population to fend for itself, many began to wheel and deal, unleashing a thriving black market of goods and services. The fierce competition for extremely scarce resources further cleaved a society already divided by suspicion and distrust., but also created a strong cohort-type consciousness based on the common experience of those years. A sort of anachronistic self-awareness—as socialist survivors in a sea of global capitalism—together with the national gloom over Soviet abandonment, further colored the experience as a radical break from the past. In the Special Period, there was a "before," which was stable, perhaps purer in its altruism and high ideals, a "now," which was confusing and unsettling, and a future that was, for many, another country. The experience was intense, yet the period was construed as a time of waiting; as an irresolute transition."[85]

[85] Hernandez Reguant, Ariana. ed. *Cuba in the Special Period, Culture and Ideology in the 1999s.* (New York: MacMillan Palgrave, 2008), 2

Thousands of Cubans for years had been risking their lives on flimsy rafts to cross the Straits of Florida. Despite severely restricted communication with the outside world, remittances from family members who had left served as constant reminders of the gap between life inside and outside the island. To stem the population hemorrhage which grew with the level of desperation in the early nineties the government began to permit private ownership and enterprise. As the new freedoms began to take effect, the resulting relaxing of control over the public sphere was monitored carefully by the state. The challenge was to kick-start food production and distribution; this in turn would ease the political pressure from the starving population without letting independent initiative turn into dissidence.[86]

Agricultural market reforms were among the first to be introduced, but the need outpaced food production on the island. Hunger was rampant and malnutrition was causing blindness among the most vulnerable. In August 1994 the shortages of food, fuel, water and electricity triggered riots in Havana. These were quickly shut-down but the summer served as a watermark for popular discontent. The Cuban state could no longer take the acquiescence of their citizens for granted; it redoubled its efforts to tap into sources of hard currency.

The most successful gambit for immediate cash proved to be the opening up of the country to tourism. The government partnered with Canadian and European companies for the necessary infrastructure and managerial expertise. In 1993, giving a blow to the historical claim of independence from their capitalist neighbor, the Cuban congress de-criminalized the American dollar. The state accessed hard currency through their stores where individuals, including Cubans, with dollars could buy otherwise inaccessible goods. Overnight Cubans' marginal existence in the global economy was brought home to them in the dramatic power difference between domestic and American currencies. The glimpses into restricted resorts, where a vastly superior standard of living prevailed, confirmed the impression. Beyond the lucky ones who could count on overseas money orders, the winners in the Special Period were those who worked in the tourist industry, especially managers of state companies, owners of family-run *paladares*, living room restaurants, or individuals who could rent out bedrooms in their homes to foreign visitors—all those with contact to outsiders—the losers were the many left outside this exclusive circle with recourse only scant rations, the devalued Cuban dollar and the barter economy.[87]

Even as the new levels of private enterprise gave much needed grass-roots momentum to the marketplace, the government became alarmed by its lack of control over the black market, theft from state owned companies and sudden private wealth. It raised business taxes, tightly regulated agricultural production and routed state workers lining their pockets with pilfered goods and

[86] Hernandez Reguant, 6

[87] Whitfield, 26

illegal transactions. The early Special Period alternated between new freedoms and their sudden and unexplained withdrawal. [88] The official dance of one reform step forward followed, after a period to observe its effect, by another back became familiar.

Bisneros and Gallegos: Parallels and Returns

It is 2009; my father Eduardo Casas and I are in Havana in the elevator of the Hotel Nacional. Beside us a man greets my father, mistaking him as a fellow Spaniard from the province Galicia; he enthuses about the investment horizons on the island. The man is on a short-term business scouting trip: he would shortly leave and perhaps return only for week-long visits to monitor his investment. Cuban law ensures that the state has the upper hand in economic partnerships with foreigners and moreover, they are not urged to stay.

The Special Period invitation to outsiders to help reconfigure the economy has a strong historical echo embodied in the immigrant Spanish merchant archetype known as the *Gallego*. The elevator encounter between a Gallego entrepreneur with the grandson of another who came to the island in search of his fortune presents a neat parallel. Eduardo Casas arrived from the village of Sada, Galicia in the period between the wars of independence (1879-1895) when colonial authorities adjusted immigration policies to lure loyal citizens to the island. At that moment, in contrast to today, it was seen as imperative and urgent that the Spaniards remain. The 1879 treaty between Spain and Cuban was designed to appease rebel nationalists by guaranteeing economic reforms and freedom of press and assembly. To counter the empowerment of the native population and to lower the threat of countryside insurrections, Spanish men were drawn to the island with the promise of cheap land. The newly arrived economic players brought a level of independent entrepreneurial activity that had never been allowed to flourish within criollo society.

The contemporary Cuban *Bisnero*, the name a distortion of "businessman," is a reflection the *Gallego* and equally the object of derision, resentment and respect. Like his predecessor from the Spanish peninsula, the Bisnero prospers through his ability to draw advantage from economic disarray. His ear to the ground for news of goods arriving on the black market, he is plugged into a multitude of networks that allow him to convert, transfer, package distribute and ultimately sell for profit whatever may become available. However, the Bisneros are big fish in a small pond. Their prominence as players in the Special Period economy pale in contrast to the real celebrities: those whose fame and fortune were launched by external market forces. It is the cultural producers that expose the dynamics unique to the historical moment. In their strategies for producing and disseminating their work, evading censorship and reflecting their society, artists, musicians, writers and other members of creative communities best reveal the problematic of life in contemporary Cuba.

[88] Hernandez Reguant, 7

The Cuban state to this day controls all media and severely limits internet access. The Special Period's social claustrophobia and outsiders' looming influence generated widespread efforts to penetrate the signal blockade. Thousands of hand-made parabolic antennas sprouted on Havana rooftops. These were plucked-out through mass police raids in 1994. Two years later, Fidel Castro announced the launch of the "Battle of Ideas." Targeted at youth, the ultimately unsuccessful campaign sought to win back a population sidetracked from the revolution by the spread of capitalist values and ideas. A much more successful campaign was developed around the Elian Gonzalez drama. By invoking the pain of family separation and the privation caused by the American embargo to fuel anger over the US refusal to return a refugee boy to his father on the island, Castro rallied the population once again at a difficult point late in the decade. Beyond this, periodic announcements of reforms bought time for the government. Eventually the tourism sector was working effectively and Venezuela, after Hugo Chavez's 1999 presidential victory, stepped-up to provide economic support for the island in the form of oil. The worst of the crisis was over by 2008 and when Fidel handed the reins of power to his brother.

Beyond the hunger and scarcities the beginning of the Special Period is best remembered for its open-ness. Cuba was forced to venture out of its long isolation and, as it looked to rejoin trade, cultural and academic networks, there was greater freedom and support for conference-hosting and individual travel. As the country joined the global market for culture, artists were faced with new criteria for their work. Foreign financing meant that they had to produce for the desires of foreign audiences. Within Cuba the long-held assumption that culture was defined first and foremost by the revolution waned. Ariana Hernandez Reguant, Esther Whitfield and Cristina Venegas carried out academic residencies during this paradigm-shift moment. Their published studies explore how the commercial and intellectual exchange with the outside reshaped Cubans' cultural production in step with an understanding of their place in the larger world.[89]

It was tourism and the way it triggered interest in Cuban artistic expression that had greatest impact upon the larger culture. Music producers scouted talent on Havana streets. Art dealers dropped-in on the newly instituted Havana Biennial. Editors pored over manuscripts by writers based in Cuba. From self-taught artisans who sold their wares in the craft markets to professional musicians, writers and artists who had signed with foreign agents, all cultural producers could obtain a license to be self-employed as long as a significant portion of their earnings was submitted as tax. Not only was this revenue valued by the state but the freshly minted cultural celebrities and Havana-based international festivals projected Cuba as a vibrant, pluralistic and open society.

Hernandez Reguant underscores how Cuba's entrance into the global marketplace forced the state to admit new players in the economy and this in turn spread attitudes and expectations that had until then been carefully controlled. Exposed to external pressures, influences and opportunities, the seal that had kept Cuban life and culture regulated, and safely circumscribed by authorities, was broken. Within the arts, this led to a blurring of the official hierarchies of

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[89] Hernandez Reguant, Ariana. ed. *Cuba in the Special Period, Culture and Ideology in the 1999s.* (New York: MacMillan Palgrave, 2008), Hernandez Reguant, 6-7

high and low culture that had been preserved thanks to artists' complete economic dependence on the state. Now, with the backing of foreign agents, those who once had only street-level recognition could enjoy world-wide fame overnight. On the other hand, due to the lack of domestic cultural industry and censorship some artists who became household names outside the island were little-known inside Cuba even while continuing to live there.

The dollar scrambled existing value linked to profession, forcing doctors and lawyers and engineers to serve tables or drive taxis in order to make ends meet. With their hard currency contracts, musicians and other artists found themselves at the top of Cuban society. They were permitted extended stays outside the country. Despite living outside the country they retained their status as producers of authentically contemporary Cuban work because they continued to be active, albeit from a distance, in their creative communities on the island. This highlighted the fact that Cuba's culture was to a significant degree being produced and disseminated from beyond the country's borders. [90] The Special Period therefore raised the spectre of something that during the heyday of the revolution in its preoccupation with sovereignty and counter-revolution would have been anathema, a de-territorialized Cuban national identity. Cristina Venegas points to the ultimate significance of this in reference to the transnational infrastructure of Cuban filmmaking in the nineties, "Just as the events of the Special Period contributed to the visual representation of the individual self as apart from the state, the nation began to be constructed as independent from the revolutionary state."[91]

Revolution Full Circle

The nineties' *nuevo boom Cubano*, new Cuban boom, echoed an earlier one in the sixties. At that time international audiences were riveted by the quality and vision of books and films produced in Cuba with the support of its new institutions. Culture was a primary vehicle of the revolution. It was an instrument of social change and solidarity, a defence against imperialist influences and in its most accomplished artistic form, fuel for national pride. The economic disaster of the Special Period forced Cuban culture from this program and into an international marketplace that had specific expectations for it. Fascination with the fading iconography of the revolution, preserved elements of Cold War culture and the capitalist nemesis of prostitution shaped the commodification Cuban culture in the Special Period. As Esther Whitfield points out: "...while the 1960s Boom coincides with the Revolution's ascension, Cuba's "new boom" was bolstered by representations of Cuba's demise.[92]

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[90] Hernandez Reguant, 75

[91] Venegas, 41

[92] "The Boom of the 1960s, too, was propelled by a rapidly expanding market for Latin American fiction beyond the places in which it was written; a market incited as Angel Rama (1981) commented, by widespread fascination at the triumph of the Cuban Revolution. And yet it is this factor in wht success of the first boom, its coincidence with the rise of the young Fidel Castro, that most distinguishes it from the "new Cuban boom" of the 1990s; for while the 1960s Boom coincides with the Revolutions' ascension, Cuba's "new boom" was bolstered by representations of socialism's demise." Whitfield, Esther. "Truths and Fictions: The Economics of Writing

Exactly half a century from the date when Castro's victory started the clock on Revolutionary time in Cuba my father and I are in Havana, it is January, a week after my 50th birthday. Billboards and signs celebrate fifty years of the nation's solidarity against its enemies. It's almost a year since Fidel Castro stepped-down as President so starting a new, perhaps final chapter in the revolutionary struggle.

My father has invited me to Havana to see first-hand the sites I've come to know vicariously through old family documents and photographs. There are few family snapshots after the 1962 trade embargo with the U.S. deprived my parents of Kodak film. As we eat at the cafeteria of the Hotel Nacional, he recounts how by 1965 his friends and colleagues at the Ministry of Education Elena Freyre and Lou and Lena Jones were disenchanted. Elena's husband, the architect Ricardo Porro had been marginalized for his design for the National School for the Arts. He had become a target for the type of criticism that flourished in the wake of Castro's 1961, "Words to the Intellectuals" speech , in which he had invited ideological critique of all artists with the words "Within the Revolution, everything; against the Revolution, nothing."[93] Uncomfortable with the climate of intolerance, the Jones', an American couple who had been working in solidarity with the Revolution, began packing.

A student was assigned to monitor my father's teaching at the University of Havana after he revealed that he was not a Marxist Leninist.[94] The opportunity to leave arrived with the visit of a Canadian Member of Parliament on an official tour to study the island's educational reforms.

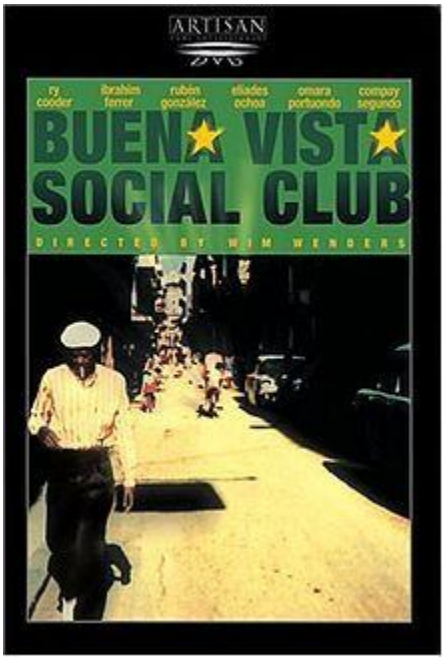
1994-1999", *Cuba in the Special Period, Culture and Ideology in the 1999s.* ed. Hernandez Reguant, (New York: MacMillan Palgrave, 2008) 22

[93] Loss, Jacqueline, "Wondering in Russian," *Cuba in the Special Period, Culture and Ideology in the 1999s.* ed. Hernandez Reguant, (New York: MacMillan Palgrave, 2008) 105-121. In 1961, directed by Sabá Cabrera Infante was a short film that featured the night life of Havana. It was censored and the cultural supplement edited by Sabá Cabrera Infante's brother Guillermo Cabrera Infante, *Lunes deH Revolución* was subsequently shut down. controversy resulted in Fidel Castro's 1961"Words to the Intellectuals", the most memorable part of which is frequently quoted. "Dentro de la Revolución todo; contra la Revolución nada."(Within the Revolution This, everything; against the Revolution, nothing."

[94] "But in '65 Ricardo decided that he was leaving, they weren't giving him work. And then I had a problem with the University of Havana. They invited me to give classes around '63. The University of Santo Tomás was nationalized I was giving classes, teaching there before '60, at the start of the revolution. At the University of Havana I lasted only one year because it was necessary to sign a document saying that I, as a university professor, was a Marxist Leninist. And so I said, "I'm not Marxist Leninist, my position is that I help the revolution through social justice projects but I am not ideologically Marxist-Leninist." Everyone knew that I was a Catholic but no one made a big deal out of that, there was no religious discrimination; it was only that I was not a Marxist-Leninist. Many people thought I was a *come mierda*. (laughter) I taught at the university between '64 and'65. At the same time I worked in the Ministry of Education, there, no one was interested in whether I was a Marxist Leninist or not because we only did research and so did not have the ideological influence of a university professor. Since they did not want me in the university they said that if I wanted to stay I would have to work under the supervision of a student."

While showing the politician around Havana my father spoke of his hopes for the Revolution and how the decline in personal freedom had eroded these. To his surprise, the Canadian offered to arrange an exit visa. Colin Campbell, MP for Nanaimo Cowichan the Islands in British Columbia made good on his promise. On his return he went as far as submitting my father's resume to universities, sending him the job offers, and stick-handling arrangements for our 1966 arrival and settlement in Ottawa. [95]

After breakfast we walk out onto the ocean-view gardens above the Malecón. Being taped for a promotional video against the Havana skyline I recognize Alex Cuba known widely in Canada for his pop-soul reworking of classic Cuban music. Originally Alex Puente from Artemisa, a town one hour west of Havana, he now lives in the remote village of Smithers, British Columbia fourteen hours north of Vancouver. He is emblematic of the phenomenon of the off-island Cuban artist who produces for a world music market. Despite the nationalistic badge of his assumed name, Alex's music has moved with him, integrating new cultural influences. He has resisted the temptation to produce to limiting expectations of a stereotypical Cuban sound.



The hit feature-length documentary *The Buena Vista Social Club* (1999), follows musician/producer Ry Cooder as he reassembles a Havana band to, along with them, revive music that had not been heard for many decades. Implicitly the film treats the ageing musicians as venerable relics, vessels of a culture whose authenticity had long been protected from market corruption. The nostalgia behind this ethnomusicological encounter is given visual force through director Wim Wenders' kinetic shots of the musicians playing in such quintessential Havana locations as graceful colonial interiors with peeling paint. The movie ushered in a veritable industry, a flood of music, art, photography portraying an island outside history. For, as Ariana

[95] Eduardo Casas

Hernandez Reguant points out, the treatment of Cuba as a static cultural moment endures thanks to the circumstances that came into play in the nineties. “There was to be no official end to the Special Period. Without the Soviet Union, the Cuban Revolution survived by turning itself into a new temporal category: the Special Period. Cuba became, for Cubans and foreigners alike, an island outside history lingering in a sort of timeless eternal...” [96]

The Circulation of Cuba in Images: the postcard, the personal camera and photo-journalism

The habit of seeing the island through dual lens, as a picturesque ruin and as a place of investment, has long roots. American interest in Cuba peaked in 1898 with the start of the Spanish-American war. William Randolph Hearst used his newspapers to whip-up support for military intervention with sensationalist stories accompanied by images of starving Cuban war victims, executions and to greatest effect, the sunken Maine, flagged mast poking from the waters of Havana harbour. With the American military occupation at the conclusion of the war came a flood of investors and tourists. Americans arrived to take stock of the closed colonial island society in which they had psychologically invested and extended themselves through the war's coverage in the national press. They sent back postcards, a relatively new convention that gave evidence of the traveller's safe arrival and witness of the depicted scene. The postcard’s popularity had taken off with the 1893 Columbian exposition where they were sold in the millions. The iconography of the exposition postcards, idealized civic spaces and grandiose architecture along with exotic human representatives in costume representing remote cultures became the stock and trade of postcards and those from Havana were no exception.

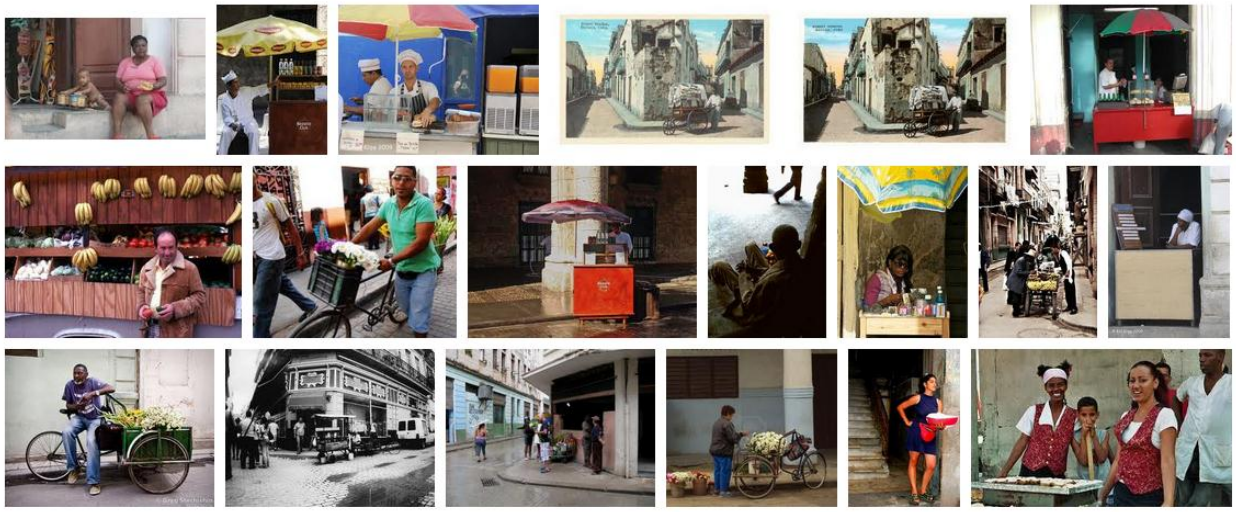
The newly accessible personal camera and the popularity of the postcard circulated images that coined the island and its society for those far away. Tourism, the commodification of the unmediated experience of another culture, went hand in hand with the popularity of travel photography. In the American conception of their cultural superiority Cubans were creatures of a spent empire, an economic backwater whose retrograde customs were barriers to modern commerce. They exemplified the worst of Latin traits, namely, indolence, sensuality, and a child-like love of colour and noise. In the University of Miami's Cuban Heritage Collection's online image database one can see an American girl's organization and interpretation of her experience of her 1907 visit to Havana through her photographs in the album labeled “Our Trip to Cuba.” One photo labelled “A Typical Cuban Family” shows an appreciation of poverty as picturesque.

[96] Hernandez Reguant, 12

The picture below shows a typica
ban family. All the lower class
ve in little shanties such as th

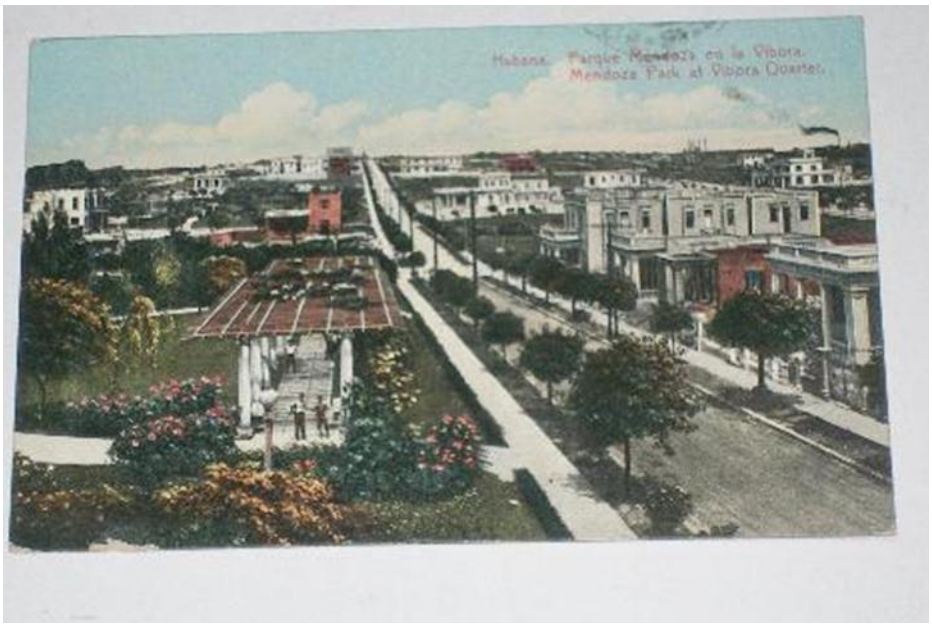
Our Trip to Cuba 1907

Postcards and tourist photography of Cuba promoted imagery that became the foundation for a cultural imaginary that persists. Reflecting parallel moments of Cuba's opening to outsiders' gaze, the iconography is revealed with such Google image searches as “Havana street vendors.” Just as the *Bisnero* mirrors the *Gallego* of a century ago, contemporary Havana street vendors coexist in the image archives of Google with their century old predecessors. Some factors that make peddling attractive then and now for those without other means to earn cash include colonial Havana's narrow streets, low overhead costs, the possibility of commuting from outlying areas, and quick escape in the event of official crack-down. In the comingling of images separated by a century yet otherwise identical one can see an enduring iconography, based on parallel circumstances and shaped by outsiders' interest. The diversity of characters in the theatre of the streets popular a century ago on postcards reappears in photo sharing sites and commercial photography as one of the enduring emblems of the Havana tourist experience. An ultimate layer of peddling occurs on the internet, where vintage postcard dealers as well as photographers of today's Havana street vendors put up their wares for sale, presenting a virtual parallel to the street-level presentation of eye-catching goods.



In the nineteen twenties and thirties, Cubans entrepreneurs, often in partnership with Americans, created real estate developments that gave new dimensions to Havana. Views of these were featured on postcards sold and resold to a variety of printers and publications. The same image might appear in the pages of the American Census of Cuba, travel books on the country as well as such trade publications such as *The Cuba Review* published by the *Munson Steamship Lines* and the Cuban Tourist Board's publication *Cuba the Wonderland of the Caribbean*. The selective representation of Cuba shows an island ripe for investment. For the most part, the postcard images are testaments to rich natural resources, carefully managed agricultural sector, good roads with scenic outlooks, handsome civic plazas and buildings representing political stability, and

lushly landscaped real estate developments. The Gonzalez de Mendoza family's real estate interests and grasp of the levers of influence to government is seen in the remarkable number of reproductions of views of their subdivision and park in La Vibora as an emblem of the tidy and bucolic character of residential Havana.



Habana, Parque Mendoza en La Vibora/Mendoza Park in the Vibora Quarter. Postmarked 1923, Printed by the Cuban Tourist Board Todo Coleccion

In contrast to the postcard iconography, the contemporaneous *postalitas*, collecting cards inserted in tobacco packaged for the domestic market, more closely reflect Cubans' own definition of cultural symbols. These feature, along with famous sugar mills, churches, civic buildings, and rural scene such non-postcard subjects as famous political figures and historic military episodes.


secretos cuba

Teresa Casas Batista

The flip side of Cuba's ready-for-visit or ripe-for-investment depictions of the late twenties and early thirties was revealed for Americans in the photography of Walker Evans. *The Truth About Cuba*, illustrated with his views of street life and images taken from newspapers showing bloodied victims, exposed of the brutality of the Machado regime that lay hidden behind the scenes of real estate, golf courses and landscaped tropical gardens. The ultimate counterpoint to the postcard view of Cuba came in 1959.

Just as postcards projected an inert, touched-up colourized version of the island that was consistent with popular, commercial and political agendas 50 years earlier, in the 1960's photojournalism ushered in the new coining of the Cuban reality. Press photography became valued for its power to tell an unmediated and unvarnished story as it unfolded in the moment. It etched the Revolution indelibly on the North American public memory through the pages of such magazines as *LIFE*. The entrance of tanks bearing bearded revolutionaries along the Malecon above euphoric crowds became a universal photographic flashback reference after photos of the scene were relayed to world presses.

Fidel himself developed the iconic images that shaped the global collective memory of the triumph of the revolution. In a signal example of this he invited the press to witness him and Che Guevara playing golf in a course just outside Havana. As carefully staged as an allegorical painting from the French Revolution's ateliers the Cuban revolutionary leaders project their conquest of the island in its guise as a recreational amenity for Americans and the Cuban elite. Notable for its absence in the online digital image database of the Cuban Heritage Collection, these are as ubiquitous on the internet as their twin carriers of Cuban nostalgia, the vintage postcards.

Today, in the book stalls around the Plaza de Armas vendors display publications illustrated with images of Che and Fidel for the many tourists who come searching for mementos of the utopian impulse that has been echoed in posters and t-shirts of many generations of students all over the world. As a fellow consumer of primary material of Cuban history, from these vendors I bought a copy of the American 1919 *Census of Cuba*, several issues of *Bohemia* from the year of the revolution, and a 1924 copy of the society magazine *Social*.

Alongside the 'timeless eternal' of a revolution preserved in its commercialized product form is the version of Cuba as a world poignantly collapsed under the weight of its first, colonial, and last, utopian illusions. This Cuba is revived through the brisk trade in art photography coffee table books featuring the highly aesthetic ruins around which colourful, scantily clad residents live their open air lives in the streets.[97] This as Whitfield describes it "...the exoticism of a closed society that is at the same time so sensual and welcoming to tourists" is again short-hand for the island nation the world over.

Sensual and Welcoming... Authenticty and Testimony: an insider's tell-all portrait for outsiders

Walking back to the Hotel Nacional in the dusk my father and I pause across the street from a building emanating pulsating beats of dance music. Outside, milling around the entrance are well-dressed Cuban men. Is this because admission is restricted to foreigners? Then it occurs to us at the same time, this is a congregation of pimps monitoring from the outside the activities of their *jineteras,* hookers. I remember that among the first measures taken by the revolutionary government was abolishing prostitution for in 1950s Havana it was a painfully visible symbol of foreign exploitation.

From its outset the revolution had celebrated the testimony of the poor as a way of giving a space in culture to those who had previously been denied it. It redressed history, bringing to centre

[97] For a review of these see: Freeman, Belmont. "Havana: Nostalgia is a Dangerous Business" The Design Observer Group 05-13-10. permanent link. Web 12 April 2012. http://places.designobserver.com/feature/havana-nostalgia-is-a-dangerous-business/13498/

stage groups previously marginalized by their race, gender and occupation. These, the *campesinos*, the working women and poor blacks, who had never been part of official history, became known within the country as the authentic voices of national identity. Their stories, microcosms of the collective oppression of the Cuban people under American neocolonialism and capitalism, would serve as the core of revolutionary culture. This testimony, the collective memory of the revolution was produced in Havana and carried to all corners of the island in posters, textbooks, documentaries and films.

In contrast, during the Special Period it was outsiders' desire for "authentic" testimony of life on the edge, as it was lived amidst urban ruin that fueled the most representative cultural export of the 1990s. Special Period fiction celebrated a new typification of the Cuban. Designed to capably stalk readers' imaginations this being was sold as the product and sovereign of his habitat, a landscape of individual and collective disintegration.

Esther Whitfied examines the period of 1994-2004 when the dollar was the de-facto domestic tender. In that era's fiction, she argues, the pervasive theme of *jineterismo*, hustling, reflected writers' and the larger culture's anxiety over the moral costs of earning dollars. Pedro Juan Gutierrez's novels,[98] according to Whitfield, hold up a mirror to the prurient interest in Havana as a geography of sexual encounter. *Dirty Havana Trilogy* his bestseller depicts the city through characters of such unrelentingly base natures that they are caricatures of human abjection. Writing in the first person, he seems to provide intimate testimony of the hyper-sexualized creature that he is. Whitfield argues that in so doing he spurs readers to consider their role as consumers of this exhibitionism,[99] for they are in effect compliant participants in his own hustle. "Gutierrez's novels critique the success—voyeurism on which their success is built." [100]

Todo Sobre Pedro Juan

[98] Other writers who explore the writer's place in Special Period society according to Whitfield are, Ronaldo Menendez, Marilyn Bobes, Karla Suarez, Souleen del' Amico.

[99] Whitfield in citing Graham Huggan, 2001: "...the practice of exoticizing can be understood both conventionallly 'as an aestheticizing process through which the cultural other is understood and relayed back through the familiar'(ix); and at the same time, because of the particularities of the postcolonial context, as a practice that is 'repoliticised, redeployed both to unsettle the metropolitan expectations of cultural difference and to effect a grounded critique of differential relations of power "repoliticised", redeployed both to unsettle the metropolitan expectations of cultural difference and to effect a grounded critique of differential relations of power.' (x). p.24

[100] Ibid. 34

Gutierrez lives in Centro Habana, his website shows him in his famously derelict milieu yet his work is published and officially available only outside the island. His residence in Havana is likely based in part on commercial interest because, as Hernandez Reguant points out, what Cubans produce once living off the island does not carry the same weight with international audiences. Speaking of both intellectuals and artists she points out that foreign success is dependent on their being representative of life on the island. "Cuban intellectuals—like visual artists before them—had to negotiate diverse intellectual circles while acquiescing to revolutionary ideology and hierarchy, for it was precisely their official status within the island that endowed them with a cultural capital desirable abroad."[101]

Special Fiction's Undermining of the Role of Art in Cuban National Identity

Revolutions need art to inspire the redesign a society by its members. *Memories of Underdevelopment* (1968), is a satire skewering a bourgeois' blindness to the transformative process of the early years of the revolution. As such, the film reflects the goal of replacing capitalism's emphasis on the individual with the solidarity necessary for change. *Madagascar* (1994) marks a new environment for cultural production and a corresponding shift in the focus of filmmaking. While earlier Cuban productions tended to recede individual characters within the larger social drama, in the nineties the characters and their subjective worlds came to centre stage. Cristina Venegas offers the film as an example of story-telling that re-emerged during the Special Period seeing its importance as 'the possibility of separation between Self and State.'[102]

The role of art in shaping and projecting a national identity was an issue at the outset of the revolution and reappears in a new light now at its end. Fifty years ago in Cuba the determination that work was inside or outside the revolutionary process was an important arbiter of its artistic merit: Did it provide a compelling vision of the country's struggle or was it merely a work of isolated self-expression? In contrast, today's Special Period fiction overshadows all other literary output in its popularity. By the end of the 1990s condemnation of the novels had grown both within the island's literary establishment as well as in the Cuban intellectual community in exile. Within Cuba, according to Esther Whitfield, the crisis was seen as one of, "market values threatening to usurp revolutionary values, the latter being closely related to aesthetic integrity." In Madrid, capital of Spanish language publishing and headquarters of a Cuban exile artistic community the danger, was alternatively viewed as both the undermining of a proud literary tradition as well as the exploitation of the country's tragedy.[103] In short, Special Period fiction was an offense both to the revolution in marketing its demise and to the traditionalists for subsuming the country's true heritage in sensationalist representations of its current sorry state.

Outside Cuba, *Memories of Underdevelopment* was admired not only for its formal command of filmmaking but also for its portrayal of a revolution through the viewpoint of a marginalized character that was at the same time in its eye storm. Its enduring popularity rests, in part, on its

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[101] Hernandez Reguant, 6

[102] Venegas 40

[103] Whitfield, 21-22

resemblance to a documentary. In retrospect it can be seen as a harbinger of a formula for a "made in Cuba" narrative in which a character consumed by his sexual conquests operates against the surreal backdrop of a dysfunctional state.

Waiting inside and outside the static city

While tourists are mesmerized by the sight of a city fossilized within a revolution, life within the 'timeless eternal' of the physical walls of Havana homes breeds a peculiar existential reality. Cecelia Lawless' essay "Urban Performance Pieces", probes one of Antonio Jose Ponte's stories in, *Cuentos de Todas Partes del Imperio*, for its pivotal themes.

> [In] 'Un arte de hacer ruinas' (A knack for making ruins) Havana and its underground replica, Tuguria, serve as the labyrinthine setting for a new kind of mapping of the city.... [It] tells the tale of everyday living in Havana that involves cohabitating with many extended family members, building a *barbacoa,* or loft, to augment the living space, and buying a goat to alleviate the apartment's sense of claustrophobia. The latter action reveals how living within a cramped space with a goat can actually be worse than without one. By eliminating the goat after three days, life appears immeasurable better, although of course it reverts back to just what it was before: a paradox, change with no change or the process of life in a Havana that reveals that the process is stasis. Space and time do not change in this city...[104]

The stoppage of time for the city's residents waiting for change within the country is qualitatively different from the experience of time of those who are looking back to their city from another place in the globe. While inside the city temporary relief is based on strategies for adaptation to an unchanging reality, outside the island relief from homesickness relies on the city's unchanging appearance as an important source of memory.

Spatial Memory and the Internet for Displaced Habaneros

In Google Earth's Havana map/satellite view, place-markers hyperlink precise geographic locations to street-view photographs. These, taken by private individuals are typically linked to the photo sharing site, Panoramio. Alongside the "I was here" tourist Havana depictions are those of former inhabitants. The latter, shots of humble homes and schools, are identified by former residents as a plea for news from fellow displaced neighbors. The challenge, thrown down by returning Cubans who photograph and post images of street corners, houses or vacant lots, is to collaboratively identify obscure Havana sites as these are depicted online.[105] Beyond

[104] Lawless, Cecelia, "Urban Performance Pieces" *Havana Beyond the Ruins: Cultural Mappings After 1989.* ed. Birkenmaier and Whitfield (Duke University Press. 2011) p. 201

[105] Roberto Lam one of the principal contributors to these types of photo collections states: "my interest of the photos was to place them in Google Earth through Panoramio and try to gather here all Cubans interested in commenting on their neighborhoods, stories and anecdotes and thus achieve the interrelation which many have found again and that is our primary objective." *http://www.panoramio.com/photo/741173* All these were taken in Havana last January because I left from Cuba more than 8 years ago and Havana was my City for more than 40 years. *http://www.panoramio.com/photo/749048?comment_page=1#users_comments*

recognizing these as addresses, people enthusiastically write of their memories of family networks, school communities, contemporary neighbors, that these images bring to life. The discussion crosses generations and leave-taking dates, reflecting the reality that Havana's streetscapes and buildings are little altered through the decades. It reveals cultural memory in a state of negotiation through remote interpretations of an ordinary place as a historical site. The participatory interpretation of the same site from different locations on the globe and individuals representing different gender, racial and generational experiences of an urban site highlights the Web's power to reveal and register a complex psycho-geographical landscape, a virtual city composed of numerous subjective memories. As such Google Earth facilitates a return, via a community of memory rather than a physical journey.

Habanero trails as a guide to imagining the city from afar

In researching this family history I relied on Google maps to study the lay-out of Cuba and Havana in particular. I orientated myself in the city through the movements of my relatives living and dead. I drew the Havana of my mind as well from the quintessential national novel *Cecilia Valdez* in which Cirilo Villaverde described the colonial city through the daily wanderings of the story's central characters. In writing his novel in exile many years after leaving Havana, the writer was forced to recreate the city as an element of his characters. I followed his lead in focusing on the city's spaces as cross-over points between private and public, domestic and political realities, in my case to provide a theatre of action, a setting for the characters in the family album. This family history is thus organized around my highly personalized view of the city was based on a specific set of vantage points.

In the chronicles of my colonial era female ancestors, the city is mentioned as these women know it—addresses as short-hand references for a chapter in their lives, a neighborhood internalized in moving through it on daily journeys between its woman-centric hubs of Catholic schools and parish church and charity. For the sons and daughters of Antonio and Chea the rise of the Republican El Vedado district of Havana marks the historical juncture when they moved on from their father-governed Amargura colonial-era extended family compound to create their own legacies within their architecture-designed homes along the broad avenues of the new urban zone.

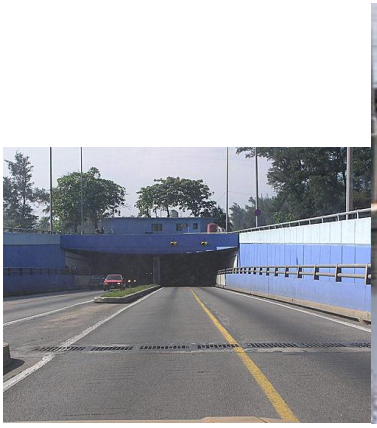
The 1919 bridge over the Almendares River built by Ramon Gonzalez de Mendoza, suburban real estate developer, marks a half-way point in the family urban chronicle in various respects. Its construction initiated the gradual transition from Beaux Arts El Vedado to Modernist Marianao and Miaramar. This next chapter of the city’s growth is embodied in Nena Bolivar, exemplar of the 1920s love of movement, who equates the road-based expansion of urban space with her sense of autonomy and power as a car-loving flapper and denizen of the sports and recreation clubs.

The violence of the 1933 revolution is centered in sites of intersecting political and familial significance. Almost a decade and a half after his father’s construction of the bridge, Ignacio planted a bomb to kill President Machado where it connects Havana to the residential districts developed by his father. Months later, the Hotel Nacional was the scene of the pro-Machado officers’ stand against Batista. Not only did the action implicate several family members both inside and outside the hotel, but the rocky promontory on which the hotel is located looms over

the “Castillo Piloto” that had been the site of the unhappy life of the Piloto Rodriguez family during the Republican years.

Less than three decades later, the Miramar homes of those who left shortly after the 1959 revolution were repurposed by Castro’s government as the nurseries of the new man, the citizen moulded from childhood to uphold revolutionary values. There, my parents Eddy and Teresita began their own family, attended the local parish church of Santa Rita and became part of the bureaucracy that was empowered to re-structure every aspect of Cuban life. By 1966 however, the initial utopian impulse of the revolution was spent along with national treasury; it was to be replaced by increasing intolerance of civil liberties. Eddy and Teresita transplanted themselves from a Havana suburb to one in Canada’s capital for the balance of their child-rearing years.

The tunnel that replaced the Miramar bridge to connect the older parts of the city to its western suburbs appears as a motif of transition, an uncertain passageway, in the feature film *Madagascar*. In an initial scene, commuters push their bicycles across a parallel crossing point, a rusting structure, shuffling in sync into the city. The film’s closing scene features a mirror crossing, this time within the darkness of the tunnel. At this point mother and daughter appear together in a sea of bike commuters, but they have now switched roles. The mother who has begged her daughter to “face reality” and turn away from her dreams of travel and spirituality now urges the daughter to confront the fact that it is time to leave. However, perversely the daughter has acquired her mother’s understanding of “reality” and so assumes her former attitude of forbearance. She will now make the focus of her life the fight for survival or, in colloquial Cuban, to *resolver*, (make do). How long Cubans will be forced to *resolver* remains an open question.



Panoramio Roberto Lam Tunnel to Miramar

Puente de Hierro, detail

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Timeline

Abbreviations: b-birth m-marriage d-death

1934	Eddy Casas attends Colegio De La Salle in El Vedado with his two older brothers; he is in the same year as Agustín Batista Falla and the latter's cousin, Laureano the son of Viriato Gutierrez Falla.
1935	"Titi Maria", Maria Piloto de Rodriguez, the widow of Antonio moves into the home of Ramon Casas and her niece Celia Rodriguez. At the same time, the widower Saturnino, Celia's father, also moves in with the Casas Rodriguez family. Eddy begins private French classes financed by his grandfather, Saturnino Rodriguez.
1936	Guillermina sets up a private school, first with a partner, a woman who lived with the family in their apartment for a year, and then independently, the school prospered until, after the death of Jorge, she was forced to sell it.
1937	First Communion of Eddy Casas and his mother Celia Rodriguez at La Salle
	Jorge and Guillermina move to a house on 14th and B.
	d. Jorge Batista Gonzalez de Mendoza of brain haemorrhage
	The widow Guillermina, with daughter Teresita, moves into household of Julia's single adult children: Melchorito, Consuelo, Enriqueta. She maintains membership as widow of member in Havana Yacht Club where she teaches herself how to swim.
	Teresita learns to speak Spanish and English at the same time with an American governess. She attends St. George's School for her primary and Merici Academy and Ruston for secondary schooling. She turns to her Batista aunts, notably Clemencia, for comfort on the many occasions that she feels dominated by her mother. Her closest family cohorts are Isabel Fernandez Morrel Mendoza (daughter of Maria Antonia), Rosa Hernandez Trelles Mendoza (daughter of Clemencia) and Maria Teresa Batista Falla (daughter of Maria Teresa Falla).
	Throughout the 1940s and '50s a Spanish refugee—a Republican priest who had also been an elected member of the Spanish legislature, Don Gerónimo García Gallego, is a frequent visitor to the Casas Rodriguez home. Extremely poor because he is forbidden to say mass, he scratches out a living doing lectures and writing on the Spanish Civil War

and the Second World War. Eddy, for years, assists Don Gerónimo with his writing through organizing his notes. He is inspired by Gerónimo sacrifice of his career to uphold the importance of the social gospel to the Catholic Church.

Eddy Casas continues to study French with a private tutor. He is also sent to a business college to learn typing and clerical skills so that he can support him studies if his father is unable to do so.

1945 Eddy Casas Celia graduates from La Salle with high honours. He studies Law at the University of Havana along with French and Humanities. While he is a university student he belongs to the support group for the Catholic Church called La Juventud de la Acción Catolica.

1946 d: Saturnino Rodriguez father of Celia after months-long painful struggle with cancer

Celia Rodriguez, after giving palliative care to her father suffers a severe depression. She is treated through psychotherapy and shock therapy, advised to find an occupation outside the home and accordingly works as a filing clerk for the following 10-12 years

Teresita Batista begins studies and lives in residence at College of New Rochelle, Long Island. She Majors in History. Her mother, Guillermina rents an apartment in New York City during the first year to be in close contact with her.

1947 Raul Casas completes his medical degree and leaves for his residency at Cook County Hospital, Chicago, Illinois.

1950 Teresita Batista graduates from College of New Rochelle and returns to live with her mother in an apartment in Havana (Linea and A Streets). Her uncle and godfather Agustín Batista rewards her, on her graduation, with a car.

Lasaga, one of the few practicing Psychologists in Havana establishes and directs a Psychology program at the new Catholic University of Santo Tomás de Villanueva on the outskirts of Havana. He plans to nominate Eddy Casas as his successor once the latter has finished his studies in Psychology.

1950-51 Eddy Casas obtains Law Degree and with a grant from the Alliance Francaise goes to study French for one year in Paris. He also studies at the Institut Catholique in Paris where they have just launched a program of Psycology. He lives at a residence for Cuban students with the architect Ricardo Porro. He learns about the history of film and Italian Neo-realism catches his interest.

1952 Former president Batista, supported by the army, seizes power thus aborting democratic elections planned for that year. *March*

Some 160 revolutionaries under the command of Fidel Castro launch an attack on the Moncada barracks in Santiago de Cuba. *July 26*

Many bonds to support the "July 26 Movement" are sold despite danger of torture and death if caught in act.

1954 Batista dissolves parliament and is elected constitutional president without opposition. *November*

Eddy Casas Celia graduates from the University of Havana with a Doctorate in "Filosofía y Letras." He gives private French classes and tutors to finance his graduate studies for a PhD in Psychology.

Teresita Batista teaches Catholic Social Doctrine at Merici Academy, a Catholic private school for girls in Havana.

d: Rita Bacallao (Havana, approximate date) she leaves Eddy the photo portrait of the Casas Bacallao family hanging on her bedroom wall that she has seen him study closely.

1955 Eddy Casas and Teresita Batista meet at the offices of *Cine Guia*, a magazine of cinematography linked to Catholic and humanistic discussion and the organ of the Cine Club that organizes film seminars in the homes of its members. Overhearing Eddy Casas lecturing in her home, Guillermina is impressed with his intelligence.

Fidel and surviving members of his movement are released from prison under an amnesty from Batista. *May*

Teresita: trip to Europe with several female friends. She uses Eddy's Michelin guide with his notes and in Paris is taken to eat at Maxim's by her uncle Agustín and aunt Maria Teresa.

1956 m: Eduardo Casas Rodriguez Piloto & Teresita Batista Villareal Bonet *June 24*

Castro with some 80 insurgents including Raúl Castro, Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos, lands in Oriente Province *December 2*

1957 Teresita is fired from Merici Academy because she is visibly pregnant.

Living with Guillermina proves untenable for Teresita and Eddy Casas. The conflict surrounding this living situation along with the economic and academic pressures causes Eddy to enter his first episode of bipolar disorder.

Eddy and Teresita move to their own apartment on 34th Street

b. Eduardo Casas Batista *August 25*

a group of university students mount an attack on the Presidential Palace in Havana. Batista forewarned. Attackers mostly killed, others flee and are betrayed. *March 13*

1958 Eddy is permitted to defend his thesis even though the University of Havana is temporarily closed-down by the government. He graduates with a PhD in Psychology with further academic credentials in Psychology from the University of Villanueva.

A general strike, organized by the 26th of July movement, is partially observed. *April 9*

Batista sends an army of 10,000 into the Sierra Maestra to destroy Castro's 300 armed guerrillas. By August, the rebels had defeated the army's advance and captured a huge amount of arms. *May*

Rebels seize Santa Clara. *September 28*

1959 President Batista resigns and flees the country. Fidel Castro's column enters Santiago de Cuba. Raul Castro starts mass executions of captured military. Diverse urban rebels, mainly Directorio, seize Havana. *January 1*

Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos arrive in Havana *January 2*

b. Teresa Casas *January 3*

Fidel Castro arrives at Havana, speaks to crowds at Camp Columbia. *January 8*

The *Instituto Cubano del Arte y la Industria Cinematográficos* (ICAIC) is founded as part of the Culture division of the Rebel Army *March* of 1959

The Cuban government enacts the Agrarian Reform Law *May 1*

1960 All businesses and commercial property in Cuba is nationalized *July 5*

U.S. imposes embargo prohibiting all exports to Cuba *October 19*

Casas Batista family moves to Calle 28, Miramar

Eddy Casas works in Psychology Department of Ministry of Education with Elena Freyre and Lou and Lenna Jones

1961 U.S. government breaks off all relations with Cuba

Cuban government initiates national literacy scheme. *January 1*

b: Maria Casas *January 7*

Ramon Casas, in danger of arrest, takes refuge in Belgian embassy, leaves and settles in Chicago where Raul his brother has lived since 1947

Ricardo Porro is chosen to design a complex of national arts schools in the outskirts of Havana to be called *Cubanacan*

Bay of Pigs invasion *April 15*,

1962 U.S. establishes air and sea blockade in response to photographs of Soviet missile bases under construction in Cuba. U.S. threatens to invade Cuba if the bases are not dismantled

and warns that a nuclear attack launched from Cuba would be considered a Soviet attack requiring full retaliation. *October 23*

Catholic Action leader Dorothy Day visits Cuba, in Havana she stays with Teresita Batista and Eddy Casas *October*

Khrushchev agrees to remove offensive weapons from Cuba and the U.S. agrees to remove missiles from Turkey and promises not to invade Cuba. *October 28*

1964 Eddy Casas teaches Psychology at the University of Havana but on refusing to sign-on as a Marxism-Lenininism is kicked-out

1965 d: Ramon Casas y Bacallao (Havana)

Support for the construction of the National Schools for the Arts is withdrawn. Students and teachers move into the incomplete buildings.

Ricardo Porro and Elena Freyre decide to leave. Lou and Lena Jones decide to leave.

Teresita and Eddy decide that it is time to leave and ask their Canadian diplomat friends for help. A Canadian Member of Parliament, Colin Cameron and wife, come to Havana on official trip, they meet Teresita and Eddy through Canadian contacts and offer their support.

1966 Casas Batista family and Guillermina Villareal obtain exit visa *January*

Casas Batista family and Guillermina Villareal arrive in Ottawa and are met there by Ramon and Raul Casas, a rented, furnished home is prepared for them by friends of Colin Cameron, *May 17*

1986 d: Guillermina Villareal de Batista

1991 d: Maria Cecilia Rodriguez y Piloto, Chicago (April)

2006 d: Teresita Batista Casas

2007 Eddy Casas and Teresa Casas attend Gonzalez de Mendoza family reunion, Miami

2009 Eddy Casas and Teresa Casas week-long visit to Havana